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# The Effect of Consumers' Personal Characteristics on Attitude toward Social Commerce: Focused on the Theory of Reasoned Action\*

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**JEL Classifications** : M10, M12, M31, M39, N35.

## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study investigated the effect of consumers' personal characteristics on their attitude toward social commerce focusing on the theory of reasoned action. Specifically, consumers' personal characteristics were further classified into personal characteristics, personal values concerning social commerce consumption, and consumption emotion concerning social commerce.

**Research Design, Data, and Methodology** – The study investigated the relationship among consumers' personal characteristics, and the personal values of affirmative beliefs and attitudes of individuals toward social commerce based on the theory of reasoned action. A total of 151 copies questionnaires were evaluated, after excluding 13 copies having poor answers.

**Results** – Consumers' personal characteristics were found to have a significant positive effect on their attitude toward social commerce. In addition, the most important personal characteristic affecting consumers' attitude toward social commerce was utilitarian value. Consumers' personal values were found to have a significant positive moderating effect between shopping value (i.e., hedonic and utilitarian values) and their attitude toward social commerce.

**Conclusion** - The findings suggest that consumers' attitudes when trading with social commerce are affected by utilitarian value, and that companies should increase consumers' shopping value and build positive value about social commerce itself.

**Keywords** : Personal Characteristics, Shopping Value, Consumption Emotion, Personal Value, Attitude Toward Social Commerce.

## 1. Introduction

The social commerce makes use of social network at e-commerce that makes use of consumers' personal connections at the marketing in connection with not only social media but also online media to help sell or buy products and/or services on-line (Lee et al., 2011). In South Korea, social commerce made appearance with "Wipon (wipon.co.kr)" in March 2010, and social commerce market grew up remarkably to reach 184 social markets as of December 2010 and more than 500 as of May 2011 (Kim, 2011). The supply market of social commerce product in 2011 was as many as 8 times larger than that in 2010, and consumption market of the product as of March 2011 increased as many as six times than previous year to let 3,575,510 consumers buy products through social commerce. Local social commerce market recorded turnover of 50 billion Won in 2010 to be likely to record 300 billion to 500 billion Won in 2011 that was about 10 times up than previous year, and to be likely to record 700 billion to 800 billion Won in 2012 (Lee, 2011).

Consumers are commonly influenced by various kinds of factors at purchasing decision. Such an effect can be applied to not only off-line but also on-line. Studies on the effect of consumers' personal characteristics upon purchasing decision and/or business types were extremely rare. This study empirically examined consumers' attitude toward social commerce considering their personal characteristics.

The purposes of the study were as follows. First, the study examined factors that consumers had influence upon attitudes toward social commerce. Consumers' personal characteristics was divided into personal characteristics, personal values concerning social commerce consumption, and consumption emotion concerning social commerce: And, the study investigated effects of consumers' personal characteristics upon consumers' attitude toward social commerce. Second, the study investigated what personal characteristics of consumers would have influence upon attitude toward social commerce. The findings were likely to give conditions for sound consumption and to give social commerce businesses direction for consumers. Finally, the study investigated relations among consumers' personal characteristics, personal values of individuals' affirmative beliefs and attitudes

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toward social commerce based on reasonable behavioral theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). According to Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), behavioral intention can produce individuals' acts, and personal value that governs reasonable act is likely to have influence enough. This is because personal value has influence upon standards of behavioral intention of the consumers who take reasonable actions.

## 2. Theoretical Background

Personal characteristic was defined to be peculiar thought, emotion and behavioral style that could distinguish a person from others to be continuous over time and situation (Phares, 1984). The factors of personal characteristic are likely to distinguish consumers' buying acts from purchase decision. This study has examined not only extroversion but also openness to experience. This is because the ones having extroversion like mutual reaction with others to draw attention from others and the ones having high extroversion express their emotion frankly and like to make friends (Park et al, 2010). So, consumers having high extroversion are likely to be active at not only SNS (Social Network Service) activities but also social commerce. The openness to experience means degree of intellectual stimulus, changes and variety. So, the ones having high openness to experience have plenty of imagination and culture to be creative and to have much interest and to be open to new things and to be intelligently sensitive (Park, 2010). In other words, consumers having high openness to experience are likely to join latest social commerce actively.

The shopping value means continuous belief and/or values that consumers have at shopping situation and/or acts (Kim, 2012; Song & Yang, 2012; Zeithaml, 1988). The consumer behavior research classified shopping values cognized by consumers into utilitarian shopping value as well as hedonic shopping value, and consumers could obtain goal of product buying not only by utilitarian value but also by hedonic value such as pleasure and interests (Jin & Koh, 1999). The utilitarian shopping value allows consumers to buy in planned and effective way, while the hedonic shopping value does consumers to cognize values not by subjective and personal goal but by interests and pleasure (Hirschman & Holbrook 1982). The hedonic shopping value means not only visible results after buying products but also emotional benefit and/or shopping value that consumers experienced at shopping. So, consumers who join social commerce may expect of different attitude toward social commerce depending upon degree of utilitarian and/or hedonic value.

The consumption emotion that is collection of emotional reaction produced by use and/or consumption of the products (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986) to have direct influence upon customer satisfactions, and either positive emotion or negative emotion can have influence upon overall size of customer satisfaction (Babin & Darden, 1996; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). And, consumption emotion is related to hedonic and/or emo-

tional value of the product to be consumer's knowledge that makes appearance by consumer's familiarity with product and/or service at consumption (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). At previous studies, consumption emotion was reported to be factor that had influence upon buying intention (Choi, 2011), and that could enhance consumer value (Kim & Cho, 2013; Yang & Ju, 2012). In this study, consumers' positive and/or negative emotion toward social commerce may have influence upon attitude toward social commerce.

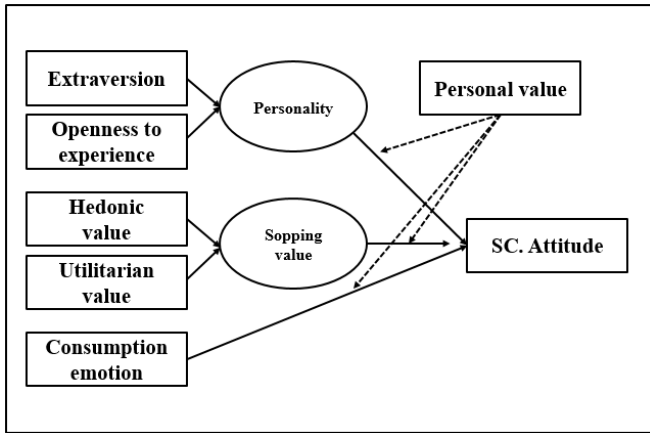
Rokeach (1968) argued that the value is said to be a wide range of believes that take actions and judge to overcome individuals' believes on ideal state and/or ultimate pattern and behavior pattern of individuals to be free from positive and/or negative object and situation. The value can make change of shapes depending upon individuals' needs, and it can make change of men's behavior pattern to reflect pattern values and to connect cognition system that is stable for a long time comparing with attitude (Rokeach, 1973). Therefore, the value is placed at center of human life considering its own value to have influence upon human attitude and behavior (Kamakura & Novak, 1992).

Reasonable behavior theory has adopted subjective norms comparing with other models that explain consumer attitudes (Lee et al., 2011). In other words, before selecting behavior giving the largest profit, consumers consider profits that can be produced by expenses and behavior in accordance with behavior (Bagozzi et al., 1992; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) that is a premise of reasonable behavior theory, and that accounts for effects of individuals' values.

Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) argued that the attitude is function of the belief, and consumers' attitude toward commodities can be mediated by belief in attributes of the commodities. But, according to Mitchell & Olson (1981), at exposure to specific advertising, consumers can take purchasing action by attitude toward the advertising. In this study, we invoked Lutz's (1985) definition of attitude toward social commerce has been defined to be favorable and/or unfavorable reaction at consumers' transaction through social commerce.

## 3. Hypotheses and Research Model

In this study, consumers' characteristic toward social commerce attitudes has been divided into personality such as extraversion and openness to experience, shopping values and consumption emotion, and effect of consumers' personal values upon attitude toward social commerce was investigated by using reasonable behavior theory. Research models was shown in <Figure 1> and hypotheses were as follows:



SC: Social Commerce.

<Figure 1> Research Model

- Hypothesis 1. Personality such as extroversion and openness to experience shall have positive influence upon attitudes toward social commerce.
- Hypothesis 2. Shopping value such as hedonic and utilitarian value shall have positive influence upon attitude toward social commerce.
- Hypothesis 3. Affirmative consumption emotion shall have positive influence upon attitude toward social commerce.
- Hypothesis 4. Personal value shall moderate between personality (i.e. extroversion and openness to experience) and attitude toward social commerce.
- Hypothesis 5. Personal value shall moderate between shopping values such as hedonic and utilitarian value and attitude toward social commerce.
- Hypothesis 6. Personal values shall moderate between consumption emotion and attitude toward social commerce.

## 4. Methodologies

### 4.1. Designs and Data Collection

The subject was college students who were thought to experience SNS based social commerce much. 151 copies of the questionnaire were used after giving up 13 copies having poor answers. The demographic characteristics of the interviewees were: 82 male students (54.3%) and 69 female students (45.7%), and 19 years old to 29 years old to be 20.35 years old on average.

### 4.2. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of Costa & McCrae (1992) each 5 item of both extroversion and openness to experience (Ahn & Chae, 1997). Likert 7-point scale was used. The shopping value

had Mathwick et al.'s (2001) each 5 item of both hedonic value and utilitarian value, and consumption emotion had Richins (1997) 3 item, and likert 5-point scale was used, respectively. Personal value that was moderating variable had Kahle (1983) 9 item, and attitude toward social commerce that was dependent variable had Choi (2010) 5 item, and likert 7-point scale was used, respectively.

## 5. Empirical Analysis

### 5.1. Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Scale

In this study, Cronbach  $\alpha$  was used to test reliability of measuring items, and confirmatory factor analysis was done to test validity of the variables. Nunnally (1978) reported that Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient shall exceed 0.7. In this study, variables at empirical analysis had reliability of 0.817~0.900 to be reliable. However, the openness to experience was excluded from hypothesis test considering Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of 0.630 as well as no estimation of both construct reliability and Variance Extracted. The findings of reliability and validity were shown in <Table 1>.

<Table 1> Reliability and Validity

Variables	First item	Final item	Cronbach $\alpha$	Construct reliability	Variance extracted
Extroversion	5	5	.898	.875	.586
Hedonic value	5	3	.817	.838	.636
Utilitarian value	5	4	.815	.832	.554
Consumption emotion	3	3	.900	.912	.776
Personal value	9	6	.870	.835	.518
Attitude toward SC	5	4	.885	.809	.515

### 5.2. Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was done to inspect directional properties and relations of factors that were found at confirmatory factor analysis were shown in Table 2.

<Table 2> Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Matrix (N=151)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Extroversion	(.586)					
2. Hedonic value	.118	(.636)				
3. Utilitarian value	.280**	.396**	(.554)			
4. Consumption emotion	.050	.417**	.453**	(.776)		
5. Personal value	.533**	.190*	.313**	.090	(.518)	
6. Attitude toward SC	.156	.170*	.359**	.301**	.191*	(.515)
Mean	6.30	3.13	3.28	2.86	5.38	4.75
Standard Deviation	1.19	0.82	0.76	0.88	0.90	1.18

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, variance extracted is marked in ( ).

### 5.3. Hypothesis Test

Z-score was used to offset difference of scale of the variables. The results of regression analysis for the purpose of investigate between consumer's characteristic and attitude toward social commerce with control of gender and ages were as follows. Specifically, Extroversion ( $\beta = .167, p < .05$ ), hedonic value ( $\beta = .165, p < .05$ ), utilitarian value ( $\beta = .361, p < .01$ ) and consumption emotion ( $\beta = .285, p < .01$ ) had significantly positive influence upon attitude toward social commerce. Therefore, hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 were partially supported.<sup>1)</sup> Multiple regression analysis was done to test what factor had the most influence upon attitude toward social commerce, the result showed that only utilitarian value ( $\beta = .273, p < .01$ ) was found to have significantly positive influence.

For the purpose of the findings of moderation effect, the results of multiple regression analysis were as follows:

Specifically, personal value had no significant influence between extroversion and attitude toward social commerce ( $\beta = .091, p = .270$ ), consumption emotion and attitude toward social commerce ( $\beta = .068, p = .385$ ), respectively. But, personal value had significant influence between hedonic value attitude toward social commerce ( $\beta = .176, p < .05$ ), and utilitarian value and attitude toward social commerce ( $\beta = .163, p < .05$ ), respectively. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was supported, but hypothesis 4 and 6 were not supported.

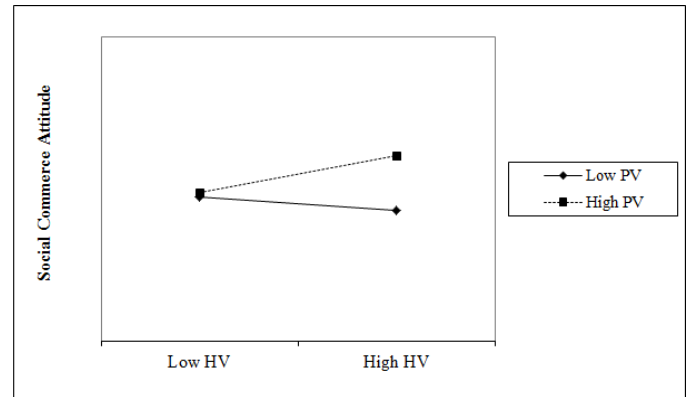
## 6. Discussions and Summary

This study examined effects of consumers' personal characteristics upon attitudes toward social commerce from point of view of reasonable behavior to clarify relations with personal

values.

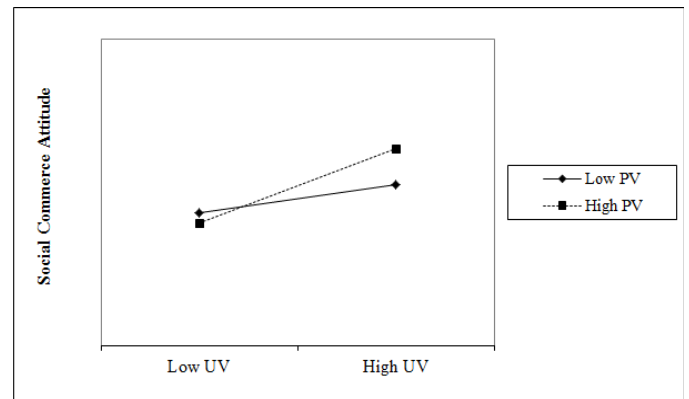
Consumers' personal characteristics had significantly positive influence upon attitude toward social commerce. Such a fact evidences that consumers' personal characteristics are to be important to build up attitudes toward social commerce. So, social commerce business had better give consumers actual benefit and/or interest of purchase to get competitiveness.

Not only between hedonic value and attitude toward social commerce but also between utilitarian value and attitude toward social commerce, personal value had significantly positive influence. These results, shown in <Figure 2>, means that consumers who had affirmative values on social commerce thought of pleasure and interests of social commerce business in affirmative way had affirmative attitude toward social commerce. But, customers who had low level of social commerce had low attitude toward social commerce. So, social commerce business had better appeal affirmative aspect of social commerce to consumers.



\* HV: Hedonic value, PV: Personal value

<Figure 2> Moderation effect of Personal value between hedonic value and attitude of Social commerce



\* UV: Utilitarian value, PV: Personal value

<Figure 3> Moderation effect of Personal value between Utilitarian value and attitude of social commerce

1) Because of the openness to experience was no reliability and validity, as we reported partially supported.

However, consumers should make effort to enhance not only affirmative values of social commerce itself but also utilitarian values. The results were shown in <Figure 3>.

This study had limitations as follows:

Almost no studies researched consumers' personal characteristics so far: So, this study could not make use of openness to experience. Another type of test tools should be introduced, or a variety of consumer groups had better be researched in the future. The subject was college student to be difficult to generalize the findings. A variety of classes were needed to investigate.

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