

The Anti-Consumption Effect on the Car-Sharing Utility

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the motivations that prompt customers to use commercial sharing services (CSSs) and the relationship between anti-consumption and the perceived utility of CSSs in the fashion-sharing business. There have been many studies of the utilities that are related to the use of CSSs, but little research has yet dealt with the perceived utility of CSSs. Therefore, this study tries to understand how the two types of anti-consumption can differentially affect consumers' perceived utility to use CSSs. In particular, as the types of CSS have diversified and many consumers have used them, it can be expected that the influence of anti-consumption on the perceived utility of CSSs can change, depending on the field where the CSS is applied. This study found that (1) two types of anti-consumption (voluntary and selective) differentially affect the perceived utilities to use CSSs, and (2) the two types of anti-consumption differentially affect the perceived utility to use CSSs depending on the level of the brand.

KEYWORDS

Anti-Consumption, Brand Luxury Level, Commercial Sharing Service (CSS), Perceived Utility

INTRODUCTION

Recently, a variety of businesses based on sharing platform have emerged, and people have become able to use sharing services for a variety of items, such as cars, bicycles, clothing, and accessories (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). Based on these sharing services, consumer preference is changing from the focus of ownership to the focus of experience and access (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Belk, 2014). The sharing economy is no longer an unfamiliar concept, but a new form of business with the development of information and communication technology. Some 44% of the world's population have used one of the various forms of shared services, and the forms of sharing service are changing from peer-to-peer (P2P) to increasingly professional providers (B2C) (PWC, 2017). Traditionally, the sharing of products, such as cars, clothing, and accessories, which has been performed on peer-to-peer sharing platforms, is now taking place on a sharing platform as a business. Why is the use of sharing services increasing as a business? Beyond inter-individual transactions, consumers are exploiting and expanding the sharing services offered by corporates. What causes these consumer behavior changes? These questions are important to better understand the sharing services, and to help establish a consumer-oriented marketing strategy. Although there are studies that explore growth and sustainability in terms of companies providing sharing services (Martin et al., 2015), there is a lack of understanding of the various underlying mechanisms that affect the use of sharing services, and the type and impact of the benefits from sharing service (Yang et al., 2017). Despite growing practical importance, there is a lack of quantitative studies on motivational factors that affect consumers' intentions and word-of-mouth towards sharing services (Hamari et al., 2016).

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The goal of this study is to investigate the benefit of sharing services in order to explore these questions by explaining why consumers consistently use sharing services (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002; Yang et al., 2017), to examine the cause and effect of these benefits of sharing services, and to examine whether there are differences in the types of sharing service. Many studies have explored the benefits of sharing services at a level derived from the relationship between consumers and personal service providers (P2P) (Belk, 2007; Yang et al., 2017). However in this study, we will examine the various benefits that may arise at the level of relationship between consumers and sharing platform.

The purposes of this study are threefold: first, this study will present a classification of benefits that can lead to the continuous use of consumers and word-of-mouth (WOM) in sharing services; second, this study will determine the differentiated effects of anti-consumption on the perception of benefits of sharing services; and finally, this study will investigate the relative strengths of the benefits, which can affect consumer use of the sharing service and WOM, according to the luxury brand level. To achieve this goal, we will conduct a survey of consumers who are aware of each of the different sharing services to identify the types of perceived benefits, and to examine the impact of anti-consumption on perceived benefits according to the sharing services sector in South Korea.

This study can contribute to the following in the field of sharing services. First, this study will provide insights into various benefits between consumers and sharing service corporates. Second, this study can help to establish an effective sharing service marketing strategy by identifying anti-consumption as a motivation for using sharing services, and verifying the differential effects of these on the benefits of various sharing services. Finally, this study reveals that the various benefits of the sharing service can have a relatively different effect on the use of the sharing service by the luxury brand level of the sharing service, and can inform the necessity of different consumer-oriented marketing by sharing of luxury brand level. Although there has been growing interest in sharing services, previous researches have focused on the motivation to use sharing services at the user level (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2007), or the technology of sharing service platform at the supplier level (Matzner et al., 2015). The benefits that have different impacts in sharing service area covered in this study will help to better design and operate sharing services.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Anti-Consumption Lifestyle: Voluntary Simplicity and Selective Consumption Reduction

Lifestyle refers to what people do, why they do so, and what their acts mean to themselves and others (Blackwell et al., 2001). Lifestyle influences environmental attitudes (Aydin & Unal, 2016). Anti-consumption lifestyle refers to activities that reduce or avoid purchasing, and are caused by various factors, such as environmental sustainability, economic reasons, and psychological reasons (Lee et al., 2009; Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010). Lamberton & Rose (2012) state that there is no relationship between the use of car sharing service and anti-consumption, and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2007) maintain that in the case of illegal file sharing, anti-consumption does not work. However, those are the results of approaching anti-consumption in the strict traditional sense of reducing or avoiding consumption. Recently, various types of anti-consumption can help to understand the psychology of customers who use sharing service.

Voluntary Simplicity

Nepomuceno and Laroche (2015) distinguished anti-consumption as frugality, voluntary simplicity, and tightwadism with regard to the motivations behind anti-consumption. Among them, voluntary simplicity refers to the anti-consumption adopted by people who want to live a simple life (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Etzioni, 1999; Shama, 1981). It is considered as a way of life that rejects the high-consumption, materialistic lifestyle, and affirms what is often called ‘the simplicity life’ (Aydin

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