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Elena E. Karpova
Iowa State University, karpova@iastate.edu

Nancy N. Hodges
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to revisit conceptual frameworks and existing models in order to develop a revised adoption model, and (2) to empirically test the proposed model by establishing distinct segments within a consumer fashion market.

Keywords
adoption, innovativeness, segmentation, Russia

Disciplines
Fashion Business | Marketing

Comments
Using Dispositional Adopter Identity to Explain Fashion Adoption Behavior: A Segmentation of the Russian Apparel Market

Elena E. Karpova
Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50010 USA
Nancy J. Nelson Hodges
University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC 27410 USA

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Adoption has been a subject of interest in theoretical, empirical, and practice-oriented research for decades (Rogers, 2003). The adoption process is an important market phenomenon because it determines the success or failure of new products and services introduced everyday around the globe. It is particularly important for fashion-driven goods, such as apparel, where trends change very quickly. Despite the noticeable progress achieved by researchers in explaining the adoption of new products, as well as how consumer segments differ in terms of innovativeness, this area is still replete with many conceptual difficulties as well as gaps in the knowledge base. Previous empirical research often produced confusing and contradictory findings due to disagreements among scholars in the conceptualization of consumer innovativeness and the adoption process (Behling, 1992; Roehrich, 2004); specifically, the differentiation between innate vs. actualized innovativeness and dispositional vs. actualized adopter identity (Midgley & Dowling, 1978; Steenkamp, Hofstede, & Wedel, 1999). A need for a newly revised model was acknowledged (Behling, 1992).

The purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to revisit conceptual frameworks and existing models in order to develop a revised adoption model, and (2) to empirically test the proposed model by establishing distinct segments within a consumer fashion market. The Russian market was selected as the focus of this research because (1) the Russian Federation constitutes an attractive market for apparel and retail businesses (Drain, 2004; Parshukova, 2003); (2) to date, very little research has been done on the Russian consumer; and (3) the country’s transition from a centrally-planned to a market economy provides a unique opportunity to study consumer behavior in a changing economic and social environment.

A revised fashion adoption model was proposed based on the analysis of existing models (Midgley & Dowling, 1978; Miller, McIntyre, & Mantrala, 1993; Rogers, 2003; Robertson, 1971; Sproles, 1979). An important contribution of the revised model is that it incorporates the concept of dispositional adopter identity. Dispositional adopter identity ultimately defines actualized adopter identity at the time of purchase of a particular clothing style. However, these two identities are not always the same due to various communication and situational factors, which might force a consumer to adopt early or later as compared to other members of the social system. To address the second goal of the study and test the proposed adoption model, a
quantitative methodology was employed. The sample for the study was drawn from college students enrolled at three major universities in St. Petersburg, Russia (N = 334). Participants completed a five-page survey questionnaire. SPSS was then used to analyze the data. Cluster analysis was employed for segmentation purposes. To profile the identified adoption groups and test proposed hypotheses, univariate analysis of variance and discriminant analysis were used.

In this study, the Russian consumers were segmented into four adoption groups based on their dispositional adopter identities, which were determined using two major motivations for clothing consumption in this market: need for uniqueness and status consumption. The proposed segmentation scheme proved to be successful, in that it was found that the four adoption groups, labeled as Innovators, Opinion Leaders, Followers, and Laggards, not only possessed unique characteristics (conformity, fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership) but also differed significantly in their reported behaviors and attitudes, such as information sources used to learn about new clothing, importance attached to various clothing attributes at the point of purchase, clothing acquisition behavior, and leisure time activities. The characteristics of the four adoption groups were congruent with the profiles of fashion innovators, fashion opinion leaders, fashion followers, and laggards, as conceptualized within the existing adoption literature.

Detailed profiles were created for the four adoption groups, which may be useful for apparel manufacturers and retailers in designing products and developing positioning and promotional strategies tailored to a particular adoption group. Although the findings of this research are market specific, they have important implications for general fashion adoption research. This study demonstrates usefulness of the concept of dispositional adopter identity in explaining fashion adoption behavior. To our knowledge, this research is the first to employ dispositional adopter identity for identifying distinct adoption groups within a fashion market.

References:


