

COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION OF APPAREL

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ABSTRACT

With the advancement in information and communication technologies, collaborative consumption enables people to acquire and offer or share goods and services through community-based online services. Therefore, this paper aims to review the antecedents of sustainability consumption, particularly for the collaborative consumption of used apparel. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is used to examine one's intention of swapping, purchasing, or selling used clothing based on her or his attitude and subjective norms. The result is expected to enlighten online retailers to provide peer-to-peer online platforms for users to collaboratively consume apparel.

Key words: Collaborative Consumption, Attitude, Subjective Norms

INTRODUCTION

In the age of Web 2.0, a generational shift in consumer values and purchasing preferences has created a new form of socio-economic activity. This is because the business activities in the 21st century are characterised by the practices of shared costs and economic cooperation or access to products or services, as well as social motivations for participating in the sharing economy (Erickson and Sorensen, 2016). Consumers eschew the ownership of goods and choose to pay for the short-term experience of accessing them (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012). This sharing economy is interchangeably called as access-based consumption (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012), collaborative consumption (Johnson, Mun and Chae, 2016), collaborative economy, on-demand economy, peer-to-peer economy, zero-marginal cost economy, crowd-based capitalism (Selloni, 2017) or the mesh (Gansky, 2010). The 'sharing-economy' was introduced around since the early 2000s. However, the term started to gain popularity in 2007-08. There are five major industries in sharing economy: online staffing, peer-to-peer lending and crowdfunding, peer-to-peer accommodation, car sharing, and music and video streaming (Lin and Dula, 2016).

The term of collaborative consumption is commonly used in extant literatures and adopted in this paper. According to Belk (2014), collaborative consumption is defined as a resource is acquired and distributed by people with a charge or other compensation. Also, Botsman and Rogers (2010) found that collaborative consumption is an economic model to allow people to access other's ownership of products and services through sharing, renting, trading or swapping, particularly for underutilised assets or services. On the other hand, Grybaite and Stankeviciene (2016) argued that collaborative economy opens multi-sided

digital platforms and markets for individuals and businesses to access services and products. With the advancement in information and communication technologies, collaborative consumption enables people to acquire and offer or share goods and services through community-based online services (Hamari, Sjöklint and Ukkonen, 2016). Based on several studies, people participate in collaborative consumption due to environmental sustainability (Hamari et al., 2016), enjoyment of the activity (Hamari et al., 2016; Grybaite and Stankeviciene, 2016), social benefits such as relational and communitarian (Erickson and Sorensen, 2016; Rowe, 2017) as well as economic gains (Hamari et al., 2016; Grybaite and Stankeviciene, 2016) in terms of allocative and profit-seeking (Erickson and Sorensen, 2016).

Collaborative consumption is the economic backlash to hyper consumption, as well as poverty and pollution alleviation (Hamari et al., 2016). For examples, Uber and Airbnb which offer ride-sharing and home-sharing services are the most stand-out companies that have infiltrated traditional marketplace and emerged as disruptive forces in long-established service industries like taxi and hotel industry. Other peer-to-peer markets include bike-sharing programs and online borrowing programs such as digital versatile discs (DVDs), fashion, bags, or jewelry (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012). In fact, collaborative consumption is long practised between family members and friends to swap clothes and other items using pooling resources (Botsman and Rogers, 2010). Currently, advanced web and mobile networks, as well as information infrastructures have facilitated the collaborative economy that allows strangers to borrow and rent goods via the peer-to-peer online platform. Through the Internet, interpersonal relationships can be built and it would be able to support a new economic model based on partnership (Gansky, 2010).

Despite the increased popularity of the sharing economy platforms in the world, studies about collaborative consumption in Malaysia are very limited. Examples of studies in Malaysia include car sharing of Uber (Hawapi et al., 2017) and peer-to-peer accommodation (Razli et al., 2017a; Razli et al., 2017b). Till now, no study is about the online collaborative consumption of fashion goods such as apparel in Malaysia. Therefore, this paper focuses on social-economic aspects and antecedents of the collaborative consumption movement to swap donate, purchase, or sell used clothing using the Internet. As stated by Selloni (2017), there are three distinct systems in collaborative consumption: redistribution markets, collaborative lifestyle, product service systems. Thus, this study investigates the redistribution markets of apparel where the ownership of the product is transferred from one individual to another.

THEORY OF REASONED ACTION (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) has been widely used to predict the antecedents of sharing economy, likewise the participation in the collaborative consumption of apparel (Johnson et al., 2016). According to TRA, an individual's intention to perform her or his behaviour is dependent on both attitude and subjective norms (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude is defined as the belief and feelings of herself or himself in either a positive or a negative way (Ajzen, 1991; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Oldham, 2012). On the other hand, the subjective norm is how an individual perceives that important others think that he or she should or should not perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Fisher, Fisher and Rye, 1995; Ham, Jeger and Ivkovic, 2015). For this study, attitude toward collaborative consumption of apparel is about one has a positive evaluation on swapping, purchasing, or selling used clothing using the Internet. Subjective norm is the

perceived social pressure to swap, purchase or sell used clothing (Johnson et al., 2016). Drawing on the idea of TRA, this paper postulates two research objectives: 1) attitude toward the collaborative consumption of apparel influences the behavioral intention of consuming used apparel; 2) subjective norms concerning collaborative consumption of apparel influences the behavioural intention of consuming used apparel.

CONCLUSION

In Malaysia, this paper is the first study to review the antecedents of sustainability consumption, particularly for the collaborative consumption of used apparel. Future research is recommended to test the relationships between attitude toward the collaborative consumption of apparel, subjective norms and behavioural intention of consuming used apparel using empirical data. The result is expected to enlighten online retailers to provide peer-to-peer online platforms for users to collaboratively consume apparel.

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