

The Effects of Webpage Background and Store Brand on Consumers' Responses in Online Shopping

온라인 쇼핑에서 웹페이지 배경과 브랜드가 소비자 반응에 미치는 영향

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Abstract

본 연구의 목적은 웹페이지 배경과 브랜드가 소비자의 감정과 점포이미지에 미치는 영향을 조사하는데 있으며, 또한 소비자의 감정과 점포이미지가 소비자 행동의도에 미치는 영향을 조사하는데 있다. 본 연구는 가상의 웹사이트를 활용하여 2 (웹페이지 배경: 유 vs. 무) x 2 (브랜드: 인지도 고 vs. 저) 집단간 실험설계를 하였다. 382명의 응답이 가설검증을 위한 연구결과 분석에 사용되었다. 본 연구의 결과를 살펴보면, 웹페이지 배경이 소비자의 긍정적 감정과 점포이미지에 유의미한 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났으며, 브랜드의 경우 인지도가 점포이미지에 유의미한 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. 또한 구조방정식 모형의 유의미한 결과를 살펴보면, 긍정적 감정이 점포이미지에 긍정적 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났으며 점포이미지가 소비자 행동에 긍정적 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. 본 연구는 이론적 측면에서 온라인 환경에 대한 연구 분야에 공헌하였으며, 마케팅적 시사점을 제시하였다.

주제어 : 웹페이지 배경, 브랜드, 감정, 점포이미지, 온라인 쇼핑

I. Introduction

Environmental psychologists have emphasized the important roles of atmospheric cues (Turley & Milliman, 2000). Atmospheric is defined as the designing of space, especially buying environments, and has been known to influence specific emotions of buyers that enhance purchase probability (Kotler, 1973-1974). Although atmospheric cues have been studied in the in-store shopping context (Baker *et al.*, 2002; Moye & Kincaede, 2002; Turley & Milliman, 2000), researchers recently started studying online

atmospheric cues (Eroglu *et al.*, 2001; McKinney, 2004).

Like atmospheric cues in traditional shopping, such as store layout, interior display, interior and exterior (Turley & Milliman, 2000), atmospheric cues in online shopping are likely to influence consumers' affective, cognitive and behavioral responses (Eroglu *et al.*, 2001). While prior research in online atmospheric cues has focused on cues related to shopping tasks, such as manners of product presentation, descriptions of products (Park, 2009; Park *et al.*, 2005), recent research has emphasized the importance of cues irrelevant to

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shopping goal attainment, such as webpage background. Mandel and Johnson (2002) found the impact of webpage background on consumer product choice.

Another important cue is store brand because it is known to be a contributor for differentiating retailers from their competitors (Zeithaml, 1981). When online shoppers feel lacks of information about products, services and websites, they tend to use store brand name as a strategy to reduce their perceived risks (Park & Stoel, 2005). In particular, if they have any experience of being exposed to the store brand name from other shopping formats or advertising and previously using the store brand, they are likely to recognize the brand. Online shoppers tend to take well-known brands into consideration because they perceive well-known brands as being higher quality and therefore trustworthy (Leggatt, 2007). According to previous studies, well-known brand has positive effects on consumers' perceived risk, product quality and store image (Dean, 1999; Park & Stoel, 2005; Park & Lennon, 2009).

The current study focused on examining how webpage background and store brand on consumer's responses, including consumers' positive mood, perceived store image and behavioral intention. Several researchers identified that atmospheric cues can stimulates consumers' affective states (e.g., positive mood), influencing consumers' cognitive and behavioral states (Baker *et al.*, 2002; Eroglu *et al.*, 2001; Moye & Kincade, 2002). In particular, as the number of web surfers who enjoy browsing without any shopping goal increases, their affective states seem to be critical while spending time online. Thus, online retailers strive to make pleasant online shopping environments to enhance online shoppers' affective states and to let shoppers and browsers spend more time in their websites.

Making positive store image and good impressions of websites on consumers is a key for online apparel retailers to achieve and sustain success in an increasingly competitive marketplace. The ability to build good store image depends on the way to manage diverse atmospheric cues (Baugh & Davis, 1989; Turley & Chebat, 2002). In the electronic marketplace

consumers discriminate between websites based upon their perceptions of product and website characteristics. Before searching product information and making a purchase decision, online shoppers form store images of diverse websites and select some to shop products from selected websites which have good and positive impressions. In forming store image, diverse cues, such as webpage background and store brand can be used.

Although a number of studies have discussed the importance of atmospheric cues in terms of affecting consumers' responses, not much systematic research attention has been given to the roles of webpage background and store brand in online apparel shopping contexts. Therefore, the purposes of the present study is to examine the effect of webpage background and store brand on consumers' positive mood and store image and to investigate the influence of positive mood and store image on behavioral intention.

II. Literature Reviews

1. Webpage Background

Eroglu *et al.* (2003) classified two online atmospheric cues: high-task relevant cues (e.g., contents relevant to shopping goal attainment, such as style, price and color of a product, delivery and return policy) and low-task-relevant cues (i.e., contents irrelevant to the completion of shopping task, such as webpage background, background color, music), and maintained that both high-task and low-task relevant cues are important. Although most studies have focused on the importance of high-task relevant cues, the roles of low-task relevant cues have been recently emphasized.

Mandel and Johnson (2002) conducted experiments to find the effect of webpage's visual primes on choice and developed three webpage backgrounds: Orange background with flames (to prime safety), blue background with clouds (to prime comfort) and green background with pennies (to prime price). Mendel and Johnson found that visual priming derived from webpage

backgrounds influenced customer choice. Decorative and colorful webpage backgrounds may enhance hedonic quality of shopping experience (Eroglu *et al.*, 2001) and influence product choice (Mandel and Johnson, 2002). Stevenson, Bruner and Kumer (2000) emphasized that webpage backgrounds influence commercial effectiveness. A complex background may be used to get online shoppers' attention. However, it seems unlikely that shoppers would browse the website containing the complex background for a long time or repeatedly. It is possible that extensively complex webpage backgrounds may reduce commercial effectiveness (Stevenson *et al.*, 2000). Thus, online retailers need to select and use appropriate webpage background to enhance effectiveness of a website and influence customer positive responses.

2. Store brand

Another important atmospheric cue is brand. Brand name is considered as an extrinsic cue which is not related to product physical features (Richardson & Dick, 1994). A brand refers to a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or combination of them, and is used to identify goods and services of a seller from its competitors (Kotler, 1991). When there are lacks of physical differences among goods and services, brand plays a critical role in differentiating them from competitors and give attention (Zeithaml, 1981). Previous researchers have emphasized the roles of well-known brand name. At the time of product evaluations and decision making, consumers tend to attach importance to product attributes for which information is available. In particular, if they exactly do not know the category of products and are unsure of product quality, a brand name becomes an important cue to decrease perceived risk and evaluate product quality (Dean, 1999).

According to brand schemata theory, a well-known brand makes it easier for consumers to retrieve information about a product (Peter & Olson, 1987). When consumers are exposed to a well-known brand

name, they are more likely to devote attention or information processing and remember information about other attributes of a product as compared to when they are exposed to an unknown brand name (Shen, 2001). Brand familiarity or awareness influences consumers decision making because the well-known brand will be in a consideration set and the familiarity enhance positive brand associations and brand image (Chen & He, 2003). Richardson and Dick (1994) found that well-known national brands were evaluated more favorably than private label brands. Baugh and Davis (1989) found that well-known brand names influence consumers' responses to a product in apparel shopping contexts. Well-known brand names, such as designer brand names, tend to influence consumers' perceptions of products because the well-known brands are associated with high quality, status, image, prestige and price.

3. Consumers' Responses to Store brand and Webpage Background

There are two approaches in environmental psychology which explains the relationships between physical environments and human behaviors in those environments. Both approaches focused on the effect of physical environments on consumers' affective and/or cognitive responses. The first approach is based on the emotion-cognition theory (Zajonc & Markus, 1984). According to the emotion-cognition theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Park & Lee, 2009), store atmospheric cues firstly influence consumers' affective responses and, in turn, the affective states affect cognitive responses, finally influencing behavioral responses. On the other hand, the second approach, the cognition-emotion approach (Lazarus, 1991) maintained that store atmospheric cues firstly influence consumers' cognitive responses and, in turn cognitive states influence affective states, subsequently affecting behavioral responses. This present study was based on the first approach, the emotion-cognition theory, because low task-relevant cues are likely to firstly stimulate consumers' affective states and then influence cognitive

states (Eroglu et al, 2003). The present study considered positive mood as consumers' affective responses, perceived store image as consumers' cognitive responses, and behavioral intention as behavioral responses.

1) Positive mood

As consumer characteristics, such as age, gender, occupation, and shopping motives, have been diversified in the modern society, it has been difficult to predict consumers behaviors. Instead of involving in rational or traditional shopping behaviors, certain consumers consider their positive mood in shopping situations (McGoldrick & Pieros, 1998). Since mood exists whenever they form their initial evaluations of products, brands or stores, it may be a critical determinant of the evaluations (Barone, Miniard, & Romeo, 2000). Mood is defined as an affective state which is changeable according to a specific time and situation (Jeon, 1990). Consumers' affective states have been shown to be influenced by information and environmental cues and to influence evaluations of products or situations (Eroglu et al., 2001; Schwarz, 1986). Research on in-store atmospherics found that pleasant store atmospherics (e.g., wide entrance, bright colors, well-structured layout, and natural light) improve positive mood in in-store shopping environments. Retail stores evoking positive mood are more likely to enhance the positive evaluation of products as compared to the stores eliciting negative mood (Spies et al., 1997).

Like in-store atmospherics, online store atmospherics are also important factors in influencing customer affective and cognitive responses in online shopping environments (Eroglu et al., 2003). Eroglu et al.'s research (2003) examined the effect of online store atmospheric cues by manipulating high task-relevant cues (e.g., descriptions of company and services, pictures of products) and low task-relevant cues (e.g., background image of products, brand logos), and found the effect of online store atmosphere on consumers' pleasure. However, Eroglu et al. did not focus on

finding the impacts of specific atmospheric cues on consumers' affective responses. Although the important roles of low task-relevant cues (e.g., webpage background, background images of products, layouts of product pictures, tpestyles and fonts, animation) have been emphasized, not so much research has investigated the effect of specific cues on positive mood. Therefore, the present research investigated the effect of webpage backgrounds on positive mood. Fiore (2002) emphasized that certain website background can stimulate elaborate fantasies and mental imagery. Photographic images may evoke elaborate fantasies and help consumers imagine sensory images and have affective pleasure (Fiore, 2002). For example, in a Christmas season, a website including a background with snows and deer may help customers to evoke Christmas scenery. The elaborated webpage background may entertain consumers and increase positive mood.

Another important factor enhancing consumers' positive mood can be brand familiarity. While processing and understanding information, consumers utilize emotions associated with a brand and evaluate a product or a brand regarding their affective responses (Ruth, 2001). In particular, when consumers are uncertain about evaluating product quality or are provided with an extensive amount of information, they tend to engage in selective processing of information. Consumers may have a willingness to pay attention to a well-known brand name. Since well-known brands are highly recognizable, they reduce perceived risk concerning purchase decisions (Erdem & Swait, 1998) and increase positive evaluation. It is possible that more attentive processing of information about a well-known brand may lead to better memory and positive feelings and affective responses (Shen, 2001). Therefore, based on the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses were developed.

H1. People who are exposed to a webpage background will have more positive mood as compared to people who are exposed to a website without

background.

H2. People who are exposed to a well-known brand website will have more positive mood as compared to people who are exposed to an unknown brand website.

2) Store image

People make an inference about store image from a set of perceptions of store attributes (Bloemer & Ruyter, 1998). Store image is a way for retailers to communicate with target consumers. Consumers evaluate store attributes by rating the importance of the attributes, and the evaluated store image influences consumer behaviors (Bloemer & Ruyter, 1998; Osman, 1993). Researchers have identified important store image attributes which can influence customer shopping behaviors. Collins-Dodd and Lindley (2003) come up with five attributes: variety, product quality, low prices, value for money, and pleasant atmosphere. Previous research on store image has been conducted in an in-store shopping context and a need for research on store image in the online shopping context has been recognized. According to Wilde, Kelly and Scott (2004), store image theory based on the in-store shopping context can be applied to the online shopping context, but attributes of e-tail store image should be different from attributes of traditional store image. Wilde *et al.* identified three attributes (i.e. core demands, institutional factors, and information) of e-tail store image. Kim (2004) developed a store image scale reflecting the context of online apparel shopping, based on in-store image scales (Chowdhury *et al.*, 1998). The scale included six attributes: service, product quality, product selection, atmosphere, convenience, and price/values.

The important roles of store image have been emphasized in terms of creating competitive advantages for retailers as well as enhancing profitability (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Osman, 1993). Past research found that retailers should provide appropriate and consistent store environments relative to store image (Collins-Dodd & Lindley, 2003). Baker *et al.*

(1994) found that store atmospherics influenced store image and perceived quality of merchandise and service. Childers *et al.* (2001) emphasized that appropriate site atmospheric elements can enhance consumers' interactive shopping experience and website design and configuration of a website can influence customer attitudes and purchase intention. Park and Lennon (2009) found that brand familiarity plays a role in enhancing positive perceptions of online store image, finally influencing purchase intention. Although the effect of webpage background on store image has not been reported, it is expected that appropriate and attractive webpage background would enhance positive store image. According to the emotion-cognition approach (Eroglu *et al.*, 2003; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Park & Lee, 2009), store atmospherics are known to play a role in influencing not only consumers' affective states but also cognitive states. This discussion led to the development of the following hypotheses.

H3. People who are exposed to a webpage background will have more positive store image as compared to people who are exposed to a website without background.

H4. People who are exposed to a well-known brand website will have more positive store image as compared to people who are exposed to an unknown brand website.

The present research proposed the relationships among positive mood, store image and behavioral intention. Affective states generated from site atmospherics may serve as internal information and function to improve consumers' cognitive responses to a product and a website (Eroglu *et al.*, 2001). Park *et al.* (2005) found positive mood influenced by enhanced visual product presentation (e.g., rotation) decreased perceived risk. Research on online shopping environments found that pleasure created by site atmospherics influenced favorable attitudes toward a website and a product, finally affecting approach or

avoidance behaviors (Eroglu *et al.*, 2003; Fiore, 2002; Fiore *et al.*, 2005). Consumers' cognitive states affected by consumers' affective states influence behavioral responses (Eroglu *et al.*, 2001; 2003). Park and Lennon (2009) found the positive relationships between store image and behavioral intention (e.g., consumers' willingness to purchase a product, patronage intention and loyalty). Based on the emotion-cognition theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Park & Lee, 2009), the present study postulated the relationships among positive mood, perceived store image and behavioral intention and considered perceived store image as a moderator between positive mood and behavioral intention. Thus, the study proposed that positive mood (affective states) generated from atmospheric cues (webpage background and store brand) influence store image (cognitive states) and, in turn, store image (cognitive states) influence behavioral intention. Based on the rationale the following hypotheses were developed.

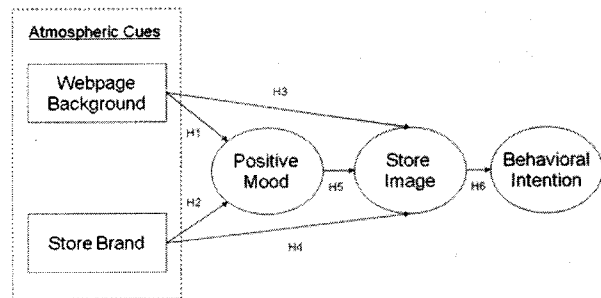
H5. Positive mood will positively influence perceived store image.

H6. Perceived store image will positively influence behavioral intention.

III. Methods

1. The Development of the Framework of the Study

Figure 1 illustrated the framework of the study. The framework firstly focused on examining the effects of webpage background on positive mood (H1) and store image (H3). The study expected that a website with webpage background would enhance consumers' positive mood and store image as compared to a website without webpage background. It was also proposed that a well-known brand would enhance positive mood (H2) and favorable perceptions of store image (H4) as compared to an unknown brand. The last part of the framework focused on investigating the relationships



[Figure 1] The Framework of the Study

among positive mood, store image and behavioral intention (H5-H6).

2. Experimental Design and Sample

This research performed an experiment in order to examine the effect of atmospheric cues (store brand and webpage background) on positive mood, store image, and purchase intention. An experiment was designed based on the online apparel shopping context. A 2 (Webpage Background: Background vs. no background) x 2 (Store brand: well-known brand website vs. unknown brand website) between-subjects factorial design experiment was conducted using mock online websites.

1) Pretests

A stimulus sampling technique was used for selecting appropriate stimuli (apparel items, a webpage background and a well-known brand name). The purpose of pretest 1 was to select one appropriate product category for use in the main experiment. Since the webpage background used in the experiment is related to a Christmas season, one apparel category which is more likely to be used in Christmas season should be chosen. A convenience sample of female college students (n=30) who enrolled in an undergraduate class in a Midwestern university participated in the pretest 1. Sweaters (80%) were selected as apparel items presented in mock websites.

In the pretest 2, another convenience sample of fifty two female college students evaluated mock websites

including ten sweaters and five webpage backgrounds. Since fashionability or attractiveness of garments may affect consumers' responses to a store or a brand (e.g., positive mood and store image) and purchase responses (e.g., purchase intention), the study selected two sweaters which have a medium level of fashionability and garment attractiveness. In addition, ten different sweaters which were presented in mannequins were selected from popular apparel websites in order to reduce the effect of presentation manners of products on consumers' responses. The size, resolution, and background of each picture were controlled by using Adobe Photoshop. Pretest participants evaluated the 10 sweaters on garment style (i.e., attractive/unattractive, fashionable/unfashionable, likable/unlikable, and likely to purchase/unlikely to purchase) (Kim, 2004) by using 7-point Likert scales. Since the four items were reliable (all Cronbach's $\alpha > .70$), the scores from four items of a garment style measure were averaged for each picture. Based on mean comparisons, two sweaters with medium mean scores were selected for the main study. In addition, t-tests were conducted to examine the differences in the garment style between two different sweaters. There were no differences between two sweaters in terms of garment style ($M_{Sweater1}=3.84$, $M_{Sweater2}=3.64$; $t=.73$, $p=.47$).

The participants of pretest 2 also evaluated five webpage backgrounds in terms of attractiveness of webpage background. Webpage background is defined as the space behind main structures and pictures of products in a webpage. The scale of attractiveness of webpage background was developed and included four items (i.e., attractiveness, favorableness, likeability, and pleasantness). Because this study considered the effect of website background on consumer responses, it was necessary to provide a webpage background which is more favorable and attractive to online shoppers. Since the study focused on the special Christmas season, five webpage backgrounds related to Christmas themes were selected from online. Since the four items were reliable (all Cronbach's $\alpha > .95$), the scores from four items were averaged for each background. Based on mean

comparisons, one webpage background (snow pattern) with the highest mean score was selected for the main study.

In the pretest 2, the most favorable and the most famous apparel brand websites were assessed by using open-ended questions. Since *Gap* was appeared to be most famous brands, *Gap* was selected as a well-known brand for the main experiment. An unknown brand name, *Fashionia*, was created by the researcher of this study. Pretest 1 and pretest 2 were performed in January 2006.

2) Main study

Mock websites for young women's specialty apparel stores were developed. Once two different brand names (i.e., *Gap* and *Fashionia*) and two background conditions (i.e., snow pattern, white) were selected, four different mock websites (i.e., four different experimental conditions, see Table 1) which included two similar sweaters were created. When participants clicked on a URL, they were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions. Before they were exposed to a website, they were asked to read a scenario. The scenario was as follows: "Imagine Yourself in the following situation. During a *Christmas season*, you are browsing an apparel website, and are planning to shop a sweater from the website, *GAP* (*Fashionia*) for yourself. You are now searching the website."

Young female consumers are considered to be potential online apparel shoppers because they frequently visit online stores and purchase apparel and beauty products online (Internet Retailer, 2004). For the main experiment, a convenience sample of

<Table 1> Experimental Conditions for the Study

		Store brand	
		Well-known store brand	Unknown store brand
Webpage Background	Background	Well-known store brand + Webpage background	Unknown store brand + Webpage background
	No background*	Well-known store brand + No webpage background	Unknown store brand + No webpage background

* White background is called 'no background' in the study.

undergraduate female students enrolled in a midwestern university in the United States was used. An email was sent to 420 students including a research URL and an invitation message which explained the purpose of the study, time expectation for the completion of the survey, and confidentiality. The main experiment was performed in February 2007.

3. Instrument

The study used two independent variables (i.e., store brand, background) and three dependent variables (i.e., positive mood, store image, behavioral intention). Positive mood was measured using Izard's (1972) Joy scale. Participants were instructed to indicate the extent to which each word described them using a Likert type scale ranging from "very strong (7)" and "very slightly (1)." To measure store image in the online apparel shopping context, Kim (2004) modified Chowdhury *et al.*'s (1998) Store image Scale consisting of six dimensions: services, product quality, product selection, atmosphere, convenience, and price/values. The current study used the Store Image Scale developed by Kim (2004) for the online apparel shopping context. A total of 24 items was presented, using a 7-point Likert format ranging from "strongly agree (7)" to "strongly disagree (1)." Behavioral Intention Scale developed by Kim (2004) was used. Three items were presented, using a 7-point Likert scale with endpoints "very likely (7)" and "very unlikely (1)".

IV. Results

1. Preliminary Analysis

Among 420 original invitation emails sent, 392 were responded by completing the online experiment and 382 usable responses were analyzed for hypothesis testing. The average age of respondents was 21.4, and approximately 77.3% of respondents were Caucasian. Information about participants' general online shopping

was obtained. About 92 % of respondents had experience in purchasing any products online. Respondents purchased clothing (65%), books (31%), and jewelry (28%) through online.

For manipulation checks participants were asked to evaluate brand familiarity and favorability of webpage at the end of experiment. Four items for brand familiarity (e.g., familiar / unfamiliar, well-known / unknown) and 4 items for favorability of webpage (e.g., attractive / unattractive, favorable / unfavorable) were measured with a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from "strongly agree (7)" to "strongly disagree (1)". Since brand familiarity ($\alpha = .89$) and favorability of webpage ($\alpha = .95$) were reliable, each measure was averaged to test for significant differences in manipulations. t-tests revealed that there were significant differences between two store brands ($M_{Gap} = 6.02$, $n = 189$, $M_{Fashionia} = 3.30$, $n = 192$; $t = 23.99$, $p = .000$) and between different webpage backgrounds ($M_{Snowpattern} = 5.00$, $n = 190$, $M_{White} = 4.73$, $n = 190$; $t = 2.28$, $p = .02$). Therefore, store brand and webpage background used in the experiment were successfully manipulated.

Reliabilities of each variable were calculated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha and the measurements of positive mood ($\alpha = .88$) and purchase intention ($\alpha = .93$) were found to be reliable. Total measurement and each dimension of store image was assessed and were found to be reliable because all Cronbach's coefficient alphas were bigger than .70 (total store image = .96, product quality = .72, product selection = .88, services = .91, atmosphere = .91, convenience = .92, price / values = .78). In order to check convergent validity of the measurements, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Since six dimensions of store image were used as indicators for the store image latent variable, items of each dimension was averaged. Three indicators for positive mood and 3 indicators for purchase intention were used. The measurement model was refined and respecified based on Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step modeling approach. The measurement model was refined and respecified based on Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step modeling

approach. One indicator of store image (product selection) was deleted because the indicator had a low factor loading (.40) and a low squared multiple correlation (.16) as compared to other indications of store image. Although chi-square statistic was significant ($\chi^2=152.179$, $df=41$, $p=.000$), indicating that the proposed model failed to fit the data, other fit indices were considered because chi-square statistic tends to be affected by a large sample. Other fit indices revealed the good overall model fit (GFI=.93, AGFI=.89, NFI=.95, TLI=.95, RMSEA=.08). Since the t-value of each factor loading was significant, the convergent validity of the measurements was approved (see Table 2). Chi-square difference tests were conducted to test discriminant validity. Since all the chi-square difference tests were significant, discriminant validity of the measurements was also achieved.

2. Hypothesis Testing

1) MANOVA results

Hypotheses 1 through 4 were tested using a multivariate analysis of covariance, which addressed the effect of store brand and webpage background on positive mood and store image. The results found significant multivariate main effects of store brand and webpage background (see Table 4). The results of univariate analyses of variance revealed significant main effects for webpage background on positive mood and all five dimensions of store image. Inspection of cell means showed that when people were exposed to a website with a webpage background, people perceived more positive mood ($M=4.79$) than people who were exposed to a website without a webpage background ($M=4.02$). The results also showed that when people were exposed to a website with a webpage background, people perceived higher store image ($M_{product\ quality} = 4.97$, $M_{service} = 5.23$, $M_{atmosphere} = 5.22$, $M_{convenience} = 5.53$,

(Table 2) Measurement Model Results and Reliabilities

	Standardized item loading	SE	t	Cronbach's α
Positive mood (ξ_1)				.88
(M1) Happy	.85	.05	20.19***	
(M2) Delighted	.84	.05	20.85***	
(M3) Joyful	.94	.05	23.60***	
Store image (ξ_2)				.96
(S1) Product quality	.73	.05	16.19***	
(S2) Services	.85	.04	20.31***	
(S3) Atmosphere	.86	.05	20.63***	
(S4) Convenience	.85	.04	20.11***	
(S5) Price/value	.76	.05	16.94***	
Behavioral intention (ξ_3)				.93
(I1) How likely is that you will shop for apparel via this online store?	.94	.07	23.93	
(I2) How likely is it that you will purchase apparel via this online store?	.91	.07	22.87	
(I3) How likely is it that you will recommend this store to your friends?	.87	.07	21.14	

Note: *** $p < .001$

(Table 3) Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Correlations between variables	Store image	Behavioral intention	Mean	SE
Positive mood	.41***	.29***	4.40	4.14
Store image	-	.56***	5.16	.93
Behavioral intention	-	-	3.54	1.69

Note: *** $p < .001$

<Table 4> MANOVA and ANOVA Results

Source	Dependent Variables+	Mean		ANOVA Result		
		Background	No background	F (1,378)	p	Partial η^2
Webpage Background	Positive mood	4.79	4.02	49.39	.000	.116
	Store Image					
	Product quality	4.97	4.67,	6.55	.011	.017
	Services	5.23	4.98	6.15	.014	.016
	Atmosphere	5.22	4.92	6.74	.010	.018
	Convenience	5.53	5.15	12.64	.000	.032
	Price/value	5.06	4.68	11.07	.001	.028
	<u>MANOVA Result</u>	Wilk's λ =.87, $F(6,373)$ =9.33, p =.000, Partial η^2 =.130				
Store brand	Positive mood	4.46	4.35	.54	.464	.001
	Store Image					
	Product quality	5.01	4.63	11.25	.001	.029
	Services	5.30	4.90	16.71	.000	.042
	Atmosphere	5.29	4.86	14.28	.000	.036
	Convenience	5.54	5.14	13.98	.000	.036
	Price/value	5.01	4.74	5.22	.023	.014
	<u>MANOVA Result</u>	Wilk's λ =.95, $F(6,373)$ =3.45, p =.003, Partial η^2 =.053				

+ Dependent variables were one factor from positive mood and five factors from store image in MANOVA and ANOVA tests. Thus, averaged score of each factor was utilized.

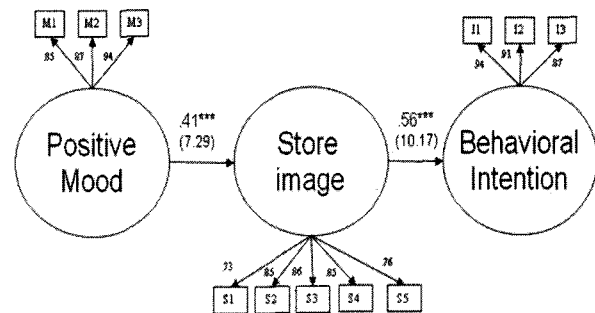
$M_{price/value}$ = 5.06) than people who were exposed to a website without a webpage background ($M_{product\ quality}$ = 4.67, $M_{service}$ = 4.98, $M_{atmosphere}$ = 4.92, $M_{convenience}$ = 5.15, $M_{price/value}$ = 4.68). Therefore, H1 and H2 were supported.

Univariate analyses of variance also revealed that the effect for store brand image on positive mood was insignificant. However, there was a significant main effect for store brand on all five dimensions of store image. Inspection of cell means showed that when people were exposed to a well-know store brand, people perceived higher store image ($M_{productquality}$ = 5.01, $M_{service}$ = 5.30, $M_{atmosphere}$ = 5.29, $M_{convenience}$ = 5.54, $M_{price / value}$ = 5.01) than people who were exposed to an unknown store brand ($M_{productquality}$ = 4.63, $M_{service}$ = 4.90, $M_{atmosphere}$ = 4.86, $M_{convenience}$ = 5.14, $M_{price/value}$ = 4.74). Therefore, H3 was not supported, but H4 was supported.

2) SEM results

A SEM analysis was performed to test H5 and H6. H5 and H6 addressed the relationships among positive

mood, store image, and behavioral intention. Fit indices of the model revealed the satisfactory overall model fit (GFI = .93, AGFI = .89, NFI = .95, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .08, χ^2 = 154.21, df = 42, p = .000). The results of SEM revealed that positive mood positively influenced store image (γ = .41, t = 7.29, p = .000) and store image positively influenced behavioral intention (β = .56, t = 10.17, p = .000). Therefore, H5 and H6 were supported.



[Figure 2] SEM Results

V. Discussions and Implications

The present research examined the effect of webpage background and store brand on consumers' responses in online apparel shopping contexts. The study conducted an experiment by using a mock apparel website and test hypotheses with MONOVA and SEM. The research hypothesized the main effects for webpage background and store brand on positive mood and store image (H1 through H4). The findings of the study found that as an online atmospheric cue, webpage background is useful in helping to enhance consumers' positive mood and perceptions of store image, supporting H1 and H2. Although previous research has emphasized the effect of atmospheric cues on consumers' affective and cognitive responses (Eroglu *et al.*, 2001, 2003; Fiore, 2002), not so much research has actually tested the effect of webpage background on consumers' responses. The findings of the study provided theoretical implications in terms of providing the evidence of the critical role of webpage background in affecting consumers' positive mood and store image. Moreover, the results revealed that webpage background can influence five dimensions of store image: services, product quality, atmosphere, convenience, and price/values.

The results of the study also supported the main effect of store brand on store image (services, product quality, atmosphere, convenience, and price/values), supporting H4. When consumers are exposed to a well-known store brand, they tend to favorably evaluate store image as compared to an unknown store brand. The finding is supported by prior research suggesting that a well-known store brand easily receives attention, is favorably evaluated, and enhance positive store brand associations and store image (Chen & He, 2003; Park & Lennon, 2009; Peter & Olson, 1987; Shen, 2001). However, the study failed to find the effect of store brand on positive mood (H3). The non significant result might be explained by the fact that well-known store brand name used in this study was not enough to raise customer positive mood. It is also possible that instead

of brand, other atmospheric cues are useful to influence consumer's positive mood. In particular, certain atmospheric cues easily stimulate consumers' senses (e.g., sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste) and are likely to be effective to influence positive mood. For example, colorful pictures, and detailed pictures of products may be useful to stimulate consumers' positive mood (Park, 2009). In addition, previous research maintained that ambient music and scent have an impact on consumers' mood (Chebat & Michon, 2003; Eroglu *et al.*, 2005).

In addition, the findings of the study supported the hypotheses testing the positive effect of positive mood on store image and the positive effect of store image on behavioral intention. As hypothesized, positive mood positively influenced perceived store image (H5) and perceived store image had a positive influence on behavioral intention (H6). The findings are congruent with prior research supporting the important roles of positive mood on customer cognitive evaluation. Previous research suggested that people in positive moods are likely to consider positive features of a product and a website and have a favorable attitude toward a product and a website, (Eroglu *et al.*, 2001; 2003; Park & Lennon, 2009). As people have positive perceptions of store image in online shopping, they are more likely to purchase the product from the website and to recommend the website to friends. The results are consistent with prior research supporting the positive impact of perceptions of store image on purchase intention (Park & Lennon, 2009).

The present research provided managerial implications. This study suggested that online apparel retailers need to consider the importance of webpage background. In this research, webpage background was selected based on the attractiveness and favorability of the background in a pretest. A snow pattern webpage background was selected because it was related to Christmas themes and was perceived as being favorable and attractive in pretest. Since website design is an important issue, online retailers need to create effective online shopping environments by developing attractive and decorative

websites. Creating attractive webpage background and applying a seasonal theme (e.g., Christmas or Thanksgiving themes) to website background can be an effective visual merchandising strategy because favorable webpage background enhances consumers' positive mood and positive store image, finally increasing purchase intention. In particular, when people do not have specific goals of evaluation and purchase, they tend to engage in hedonic browsing (Eroglu *et al.*, 2003; Schwarz, 1986). When people search new websites without specific goals, attractive webpage background is likely to increase consumers' positive mood and positive store image. Subsequently, positive mood and store image may be used as information available to help in final purchase decisions.

This research also has implications for online retailers who need to understand the impact of brand familiarity. Unknown brand websites could cause poor store image, whereas well-known brand websites have the ability to enhance positive store image and result in positive consumer behaviors. Online shopping malls sell diverse brands such as well-known and unknown brands, designer and private brands and so on. The retailers can use well-known designer brands to bring consumers into the websites and to enhance website store image. It will be effective to display well-known brands in the front page of the website or in the noticeable position of the website. However, since unknown brands influence store image, retailers should be careful to display both well-known and unknown brands in the same webpage.

Further questions seem worth to be investigated in future research: How specific atmospheric cues, such as colorful webpage backgrounds, backgrounds of product pictures, and music, influence online apparel shoppers' positive mood? What impacts do they have on other cognitive and behavioral responses, such as satisfaction with their purchases and websites and website loyalty? How store image formed by core brands influences the evaluation of new brands? What are effective visual merchandising strategies to display both well-known and unknown brands in a website?

In addition, the model of the study was developed based on the emotion-cognition theory which supported the atmospheric cues influence mood (affective states) and, in turn, store image (cognitive states). There is the cognitive theory of emotion which is another approach to the relationships between atmospheric cues and consumer responses. The theory posits that atmospheric cues affect cognitive states and, in turn, affective states. Therefore, future research need to examine whether the emotion-cognition theory or the cognitive theory of emotion is appropriate to explain the effect of online atmospheric cues on consumers affective and cognitive states.

There are some limitations. The sample of the study was female college students and was not a random sample. Thus, the findings of the study may not be generalizable to all online apparel shopper groups. Future research needs to use samples from other populations with a random sampling. In addition, since the study used mock apparel websites, future research needs to investigate the topic of the study under real online shopping contexts.

Keywords : webpage background, store brand, positive mood, store image, online shopping

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