Consumer Spatial Behavior for Apparel Products based on Trade Area Selection Criteria

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Abstract The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between consumer spatial behavior and consumer characteristics based on trade area selection criteria. 469 female consumers who lived in the two new towns near Seoul, Bundang and Ilsan, participated in the study by completing questionnaires. Data were analyzed by using cluster analysis, ANOVA, Duncan’s multiple range test, chi-square analysis, etc.

The findings of the empirical research were as follows:
1. Five groups were identified by cluster analysis based on trade area selection criteria of clothing: price-oriented group, time convenience-oriented group, shopping convenience-oriented group, variety/entertainment-oriented group, and passive shopping group.
2. Each group differed in spatial behavior such as clothing shopping area, the visiting frequency, and spatial movement type.
3. Each group showed differences in fashion involvement and demographic characteristics (age, marital status, education, occupation, and social status).

Key words trade area, trade area selection criteria, consumer segmentation, consumer spatial behavior

Introduction
Companies always target relevant markets when they develop marketing activities, and thus understanding the markets flow is a must. It is particularly important to understand consumers' behavior. Accordingly, as trade areas are the venues where companies meet their consumers and consumers show their shopping behavior, they play important roles in marketing activities (Han, 1983). Therefore, trade areas have long been studies with the focus on those places that were under the control of companies who implement marketing activities. However, considering that trade activities could not be performed without consumers, trade areas need understood, as geographic areas from which consumers obtain resources necessary for

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their everyday lives, from interdependent perspectives of companies and consumers.

Consumer spatial behavior refers to consumption behavior in which consumers choose certain regions as shopping destinations to obtain resources for their lives, and consists of static spatial selection and dynamic spatial movement (Kim, 1986). Previous studies on consumer spatial behavior have focused on spatial selection, particularly store choice. In the apparel studies, many studies have dealt with store choice (Bush & Joseph, 1976; Jeong & Park, 1992; Kim, 1991; Kim & Rhee, 2007; Lee & Lim, 1990; Sung, 2008). However, the perspective that regards consumers' choice of shopping destination by shop limits the scope of consumer spatial behavior. Thus, a broader perspective is called for. In addition, clothing items are highly distinctive and affected by trends, and consumers tend to compare many different items from different shops before making a purchase decision (Rhee, 1999). Therefore, consumers' choice of shopping destination should be examined not by individual shops, but by trade area, which is a cluster of many stores.

Golledge and Rushton (1966) claimed that it was critical for consumer spatial behavior studies to understand what information about the urban retail structure consumer value. Craig and colleague (1984) said that different consumers gave different weights to variables that affect their choice of trade areas. Ahn (1990) also emphasized the needs for consumer segmentation by spatial selection criteria, citing studies on consumer spatial behavior have found that consumers used subjective criteria when recognizing space, but such criteria are consistent by each sub-group.

Furthermore, many researchers (Darden & Rerreault, 1976; Davis, 1976; Herman & Beik, 1968; Hubbard, 1978; Reynolds & Darden, 1972) insisted that consumer characteristics had significant influences on their selection of shopping destinations. However, they mostly used demographic variables, like consumers' age, income, social class and family life cycle, failing to consider consumers' internal or psychological variables, like their involvement in the products that directly affected their selection of shopping destinations (Backlin, 1967).

Therefore, this study intends to categorize consumers by the criteria that they value in choosing trade areas, and identify the characteristics of each group. To be specific, this study aims at segmenting consumer groups by the criteria of their trade area selection, and examining consumers' area selection behavior, spatial movement type and their characteristics (i.e. fashion involvement and demographics) that affect trade area selection.

**Literary Review**

**Trade Area Selection Criteria**

**Trade Area**

A trade area is a district where commercial transactions take place between producers and consumers, and a combination of a sales territory (a concept of producers' or sellers' transaction area) and a shopping area (a concept of consumers' transaction area). In other words, a trade area is a place where