

Game-based Mobile Coupons Work Better for Utilitarian Products: Conditional Indirect Effect of Affect and Product Type

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출처 (Source)	한국방송학회 학술대회 논문집 , 2019.4, 101-102(2 pages)
발행처 (Publisher)	한국방송학회 Korean Association for Boarding & Telecommunication
URL	http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE08735690
APA Style	송하연, 김희진 (2019). Game-based Mobile Coupons Work Better for Utilitarian Products: Conditional Indirect Effect of Affect and Product Type. 한국방송학회 학술대회 논문집, 101-102
이용정보 (Accessed)	이화여자대학교 203.255.***.68 2020/05/18 04:01 (KST)

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The mobile phone is one of the most popular personal communication devices and mobile marketing is promising. Limited information is available regarding what specific ways to deliver mobile marketing information to consumers, for example, when, where and how the mobile coupons should be distributed and what would motivate consumers to redeem mobile coupons. Thus, the goal of this study is to 1) empirically test the effect of location-based mobile coupons; 2) identify effective ways to deliver mobile coupons by comparing three different ways to offer mobile coupons (i.e., free coupon, game, and survey); and 3) further reveal if there are any differences exist depending on the product types.

We believe offering coupons in compensation for customers' putting some effort will increase their perceived value of coupon, which results in stronger intention of coupon redemption. This hypothesis is underpinned by the effort justification explanation (Aronson & Mills, 1959). Effort justification, derived from cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), explains that one gives greater value to outcomes that require greater effort to obtain, to justify the greater effort. That is, individuals tend to value highly those goals or items which have required considerable efforts to achieve.

Then, what types of tasks should be given? The more the effort to put, the higher the value or is there optimal amount of effort which provide best results? In a way to investigate whether various tasks would have different effects, the current study proposes to test the effect of game based tasks compared to more traditional task such as survey. A 2(product type: hedonic vs. utilitarian) x 3(activities to receive coupon:

none vs. questionnaire vs. game) between subject design experiment was conducted. Findings suggested a significant main effect of activity type and interaction effect of activity and product type on perceived value of a mobile coupon. The result also revealed that affect mediated the effects of two-way interaction of activity and product type on perceived value (indirect effect = $-.51$; 95% CI $[-1.00, -.14]$), supporting the hypothesis that the positive affect experienced from playing game has differential influences on the consumers' evaluation of coupon value depending on the product type. Specifically, conditional indirect effects excluded zero for both utilitarian (indirect effect = 1.05 ; 95% CI $[.62, 1.47]$) and hedonic products (indirect effect = $.55$; 95% CI $[.30, .93]$). Next, same test was ran on the responses from game and survey condition only, revealing a significant moderated mediation effect (indirect effect $-.28$; 95% CI $[-.55, -.02]$). Conditional indirect effects for both products are significantly for both utilitarian (indirect effect = $.66$; 95% CI $[.43, .88]$) and hedonic products (indirect effect = $.37$; 95% CI $[.19, .61]$). Thus, game-based mobile coupons are shown to work better for utilitarian compared to hedonic products. Both theoretical and practical implications are discussed.