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Beauty and Lifestyle Subscription Services: A Modern Retailing Format for the Vigilante Collaborative Consumption Consumer

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BEAUTY AND LIFESTYLE SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES: A MODERN RETAILING

FORMAT FOR THE VIGILANTE COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

CONSUMER

by

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CONSUMER

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Advancements in technology and ease of use of online shopping via phone applications (apps) and subscription services have fundamentally changed how consumers shop. Now more than ever, consumers are turning to time-saving technological tools that are subscription services. Subscription services provide a multitude of benefits to consumers and contribute to collaborative consumption in nearly every product and service category from coffee to apparel. To investigate beauty and lifestyle subscription services and collaborative consumption this study will utilize a mixed methods convergent design to analyze user experience including price sensitivity, subscription service apps and ease of use. Anticipated contributions to the field include qualitative and mixed method methodology in a subject that predominantly utilizes quantitative methodology, and expanded consumer demographics including males that are typically underrepresented in academic literature of subscription phenomenology. Data was collected via an online survey created on Qualtrics and disseminated via Amazon Mechanical Turk. A total of 93 surveys were collected and then coded through SPSS analysis. Multiple regression was conducted to investigate the variables of the S-O-R model. The results of this study indicate expanded demographics result in strong

consumer evaluation data including price sensitivity, WOM mechanisms, and the

differences of SBRS users at different educational level.

Dedicated to Cindy Spilinek

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to offer a very genuine thank you to my advisor, Dr. Jennifer Johnson Jorgensen, for her dedicated and passionate guidance. I am particularly grateful for her advice toward my graduate coursework, research opportunities, and sharing her passion for consumer technology with me, where this study ideation began. Her passion for merchandising and consumer technology has translated to my passionate interests for the same topics. I could not be more grateful for Dr. Jorgensen as my mentor through my Master's journey. I would also like to express my great appreciation to my other committee members, Dr. Andrew Zimbroff and professor Surin Kim, for their time, suggestions, and mutual excitement about the future of subscription services.

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Wayne Spilinek, who encouraged me to pursue my passion in the soft goods industry when I was still exploring educational opportunities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It seems as if today every retailer, online or brick-and-mortar, is taking to the subscription format. There has been a large shift from a buying or purchasing economy to a shared or collaborative economy (Lang et al., 2019). Collaborative consumption (CC) is a peer-to-peer (P2P) based action of trading, bartering, or swapping of goods through community-based online services (Belk, 2014; Hamari et al., 2016). Instead of purchasing individual items, subscriptions offer a different approach to consumption. Subscription-based online services (SOS) are e-commerce businesses that offer subscription-based retail services (SBRS) for a set fee that are then sent out on a set delivery schedule decided by the consumer; They are often personalized utilizing computer algorithms, a style or personality quiz or stylists/ personal curators (Bhatt, 2018). Subscribers can simply visit the company website to sign up for the service, enter payment and often immediately take a quiz to customize their experience. Other subscription services, such as book clubs of the month, are standardized each subscription period and all subscribers receive the same curation.

Collaborative consumption (CC) is more important than ever for retailers to consider. Consumers want to feel they are receiving a value (Bhatt, 2018) in order to remain loyal (Bachrach, et al., 2016); Retailers now more than every have to understand that consumers want and seek out a personalized experience, a experiential retailing experience, regardless of their purchasing channel. Many subscription services even market themselves in such a way. FabFitFun (2020) displays on their website homepage

that their service is "$200+ value for $49.99 USD*". As subscription services often have

online community platforms and consumers tend to collaborate with peers, especially via

WOM, CC becomes increasingly important to retailers. Moreover, WOM is an important

aspect of consumer purchasing intentions. WOM also ties into the behavioral response of

the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model utilized in this study. Lee, Sadachar, &

Manchiraju (2019) identified WOM and repurchase intention as two important response

(R) variables.

Traditional retailing practices are simply not enough in today's omni-channel

market that is more competitive than ever before due to the power of the internet that

gives the consumer more purchasing power (Bachrach, et al., 2016). Smartphones and

internet access rapidly changed retailing to an e-commerce and multi-channel process

(Lee, Sadachar, & Manchiraju, 2019). Digital retailing in the last decade has exploded

(Bhatt, 2018). The ways consumers shop has adapted with technology advancements.

Subscription boxes and services have the ability to personalize the experience to users

(Bachrach et al., 2016). Nearly all subscription services and retailers have a phone

application (app) now. Utilizing apps to customize and personalize the experience to each

consumer may help with brand loyalty, as subscription services enter a period of rapid

rise and decline.

Nearly all product and service categories today offers a form of subscription:

apparel boxes such as Stitch Fix, cloud storage, music streaming such as Spotify,

unlimited monthly car washes, premium dating apps such as Tinder+ and Tinder Gold,

auto-replenishment such as Amazon's Subscribe and Save, and smartphone applications

such as photo editing apps. These stem from a long history of delivery services such as

daily newspaper delivery (Noorda, 2019). With such a wide variety of subscription services and omnichannel purchasing options, consumers purchasing power choice is higher than ever before in history (Bachrach, Ogilvie, Rapp, Calamusa, 2016).

Birchbox, one of the original and largest beauty subscription boxes that was considered a pioneer to the subscription box industry, was established in 2010 (Lee et al., 2019), yet since then in just a matter of 6 years, it began to fail as it had to lay off workers (Safdar, 2016). It is not the only large subscription box or service to fail. Plated, a prevalent meal kit delivery box, shuttered in late 2019 (Frias, 2019). One of the largest beauty, fitness, and lifestyle subscription, boxes, FabFitFun, as recently as February 2020, announced that it would be strategically laying off its TV production team (Spangler, 2020). Failures can be broken down into two main categories: bad financials and failure to understand the consumer target market. Thus, it is becoming clear the user experience is being left out. There is a lack of trust to the retailer. Accenture Research discovered when retailers break a promise, 38% of consumers will switch, 10% will continue with the company but alter spending and the remaining 52% will look to switch (Di Somma, 2016). Consumer engagement and trust between consumer and company is critical, especially in a time when consumers have a nearly endless list of companies they can choose to do business with, with several thousand subscription box options on Cratejoy alone, a marketplace for curated subscription boxes (Cratejoy, 2020).

Purpose of Study

This study aims to address subscription-based online services (SOS), mainly beauty and lifestyle subscription box retail services (SBRS). The purpose of this convergent design will be to first qualitatively explore with a small purposive sample and

then to determine if the qualitative findings generalize to a larger sample. The first phase

of the study will be a qualitative exploration of the subscription user experience in which

consumer information themes will be collected from male and female subscription box or

service participants on Amazon MTurk through open-ended "how" and "why" question

prompts in text-box format. From this initial exploration, the qualitative findings will be

used to develop assessment measures that can be administered to a large sample. Topics

and themes that will be discussed in the qualitative portion include user experience

including price sensitivity (Bhatt, 2018), ease of use and subscription service phone apps

(Bachrach, et al., 2016). In the tentatively planned quantitative phase, a survey including

demographic information and Likert-type questions will be collected from the

participants. Both the qualitative and quantitative portions will contribute to the overall

study.

Significance of Study

It is anticipated that the results of this study will offer retailers, marketers, and

academic researches guidance on reaching expanded SBRS demographics. As technology

is more important than ever, WOM and mobile phone apps play an integral part of the

collaborative culture framework. Retailers must stay in touch with consumer technology

and consumer feedback or they will become obsolete. Researchers will also be impacted

by the S-O-R model. Based on the results of this study, researchers should be able to

evaluate how the adapted S-O-R variables impact SBRS consumers. The goal of this

research study is to build upon many of the foundational subscription retailing studies to

create additional variables in the S-O-R model to understand consumer perceptions and

expectations across beauty and lifestyle subscription services and research fields based

upon the S-O-R model. Past studies have focused on utilizing S-O-R as a foundational model in SBRS. However, an adapted S-O-R model with additional variables is needed. For these reasons, this study will contribute to the body of SBRS research, as well as the use of qualitative and mixed methods within SBRS research.

S-O-R Model

The S-O-R in the S-O-R model stands for environmental impacts in stimulus (S), the internal state of the organism (O) in response to the stimulus, and the behavioral response (R) that results from the process (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The proposed hypothesis variables will be examined in the context of the S-O-R model. The mobile app component will be the stimulus. The organism process will include consumer evaluation, purchase intention, price sensitivity, attitude, risk, surprise, ease of use, WOM, and collaborative consumption (CC). The response or output then is evaluated by the re-purchase intention, quantity bought, consumer loyalty, and consumer feedback.

Gaps in Literature

Since much groundwork on this topic is still relatively new research from the last decade and most recent as less than a year old, rapid developments in this subject area are growing. Therefore, there is a plethora of contributions and implications for retailing in subscription services and boxes still to be discovered. One known limitation of subscription services so far is a severe lack diversity, in terms of consumer demographics and research study countries (Lee et al., 2019). Another limitation is lack of positive feedback research, as most is focused on negative feedback (Nasr et al., 2014). Therefore, this study will attempt to expand consumer demographics research developed on prior

research antecedents in a convergent mixed methodology design. Due to a multitude of limitations, this study will have participants from only the United States.

Gaps in literature are extensive. The most extensive literature or categories pertain to online beauty and clothing subscriptions (Woo & Ramkumar, 2018) and most focus on consumers with considerable deposable income, at approximately $78,000 or higher (Bhatt, 2018). Other areas such as men's and categories such as food delivery or budget boxes are lacking in depth or existence. While women do make up the majority of subscriptions, 42% of men have three or more active subscriptions, compared to 28% of women (Chen et al., 2018). Most studies conducted examine online-only retailers, with a few acknowledging but not examining brick-and-mortar additions. Thus, a limited scope and depth of literature on consumers has been conducted, especially in terms of socioeconomic status and user experience. Prior research has focused extensively on the ideas that the services are 'adventure shopping' or something of a gift to self (Bhatt, 2018) and convenient, with little regard or acknowledgment to the financial cost of the service. Price sensitivity in subscription service literature is lacking, but is commonplace topic in online CC forums such as Reddit subthreads and Facebook groups.

Ethical Considerations

The review and approval of the proposal of this project was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Nebraska- Lincoln in order to meet protocol. Protocol required submission of the purpose, procedures, informed consent forms, recruitment texts, and survey questions. These documents are available in Appendices A-C. Additionally, the research questions were submitted and reviewed by a committee of professors in addition to IRB. Moreover, social and behavioral human

research training was completed with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

(CITI) prior to the start of this study. There are no known risks or harm to participants for

participating in this research, as the topic does not require or contain sensitive

information. The IRB approval letter is available in Appendix C. Anonymity of

participants was kept by not collecting identifiable information in the survey. Data

collection was maintained in a password-protected file and will remain in a password-

protected file in a secure location.

Participant compensation was initially set at $0.10, but was later adjusted to

$.0.25 and again to $0.50 to attract more participants to take the survey. Additionally, the

MTurk qualifications of having a geographical location of the United States was set to

ensure participants only from the United States after the pilot showed participants from

Europe and Asia regardless of the instructions detailing participants must reside in the

United States in order to participate (due to differing international laws and permissions

regarding research and data collection). Survey submissions were reviewed at minimum

of once every 24 hours. If 24 hours were to pass without inspection, MTurk was set up to

automatically to compensate the participant. Participant responses were rejected if there

were 2 or more responses missing throughout the survey. Participant responses were also

rejected if participants failed to meet the minimum requirement of 75 characters in the

open-ended questions. This measure was put into place after a number of participants in

the pilot responded unethically with responses such as "good" and "x" for every question.

Thus, having a measurable way to define completion was necessary. Giving thoughtful

responses, here defined as a minimum response of 75 characters or more per qualitative

question, ensured thoughtful responses and strong data collection. While there were many

answers that did not meet the 75 character minimum, compensation was given if responses were thoughtful regardless of length.

Moreover, as one of the goals of this study was to expand subscription research demographics, the wording of the demographics in this study utilize inclusive language. The American Psychological Association's guidelines for its most recent 7th edition requires bias-free language (2021). This language can include individual characteristics such as racial and ethnic identity, gender, and more. Therefore, the demographic section of the survey reflects these recent changes. In the gender demographic section, participants were given the option to not identify male or female by selecting the third option to not identify with these terms. Another section adaptation of this is the ethnic identity section. For example, instead of having either black or African American listed, both are listed. It is entirely possible and not uncommon for participants to identify as one but not the other, thus the necessity for this grouping. This is the same case as white or Caucasian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic or Latinx, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. These can be seen in the demographics section of Appendix E.

Researcher Positioning and Reflexivity Statement

During this study, the researcher utilized a postpositivist worldview in the quantitative phase. This implies that the theories and frameworks and hypothesis could be tested and verified. The qualitative phased utilized an constructivist worldview. Constructivism implies that phenomenon experiences by participants has meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Moreover, as a user of SBRS, I as the researcher have a duty to I have a duty to bracket out my biases and personal beliefs as they reflect upon the way I conduct and interpret my research. In bracketing, I acknowledge a "heightened

awareness of the self in the process of creation and how one's beliefs have been socially constructed" (Grbich, 2013, p. 113). I also acknowledge that due to my researcher and academic background as a graduate student, I am conceding my social position (Reyes, 2018, p. 212). I am also a white, hetero-sexual woman and a US citizen. I acknowledge my background and personal interest in SBRS. I also recognize that my own identity, experiences, biases, and assumptions shape the lens which I view my research through. I acknowledge my biases by providing raw, rich description and introspective analysis.

Definition of Terms

Beauty- An attractive physical appearance that is subjective. For the purposes of this study, beauty is adapted to embody SBRS that apply to beauty. This includes skincare, cosmetics, etc.

Subscription model- a product or service that is offered at a standardized delivery interval period for a set cost per that interval period and is reoccurring.

Lifestyle- The way of life in which a person lives. For example, a vegan lifestyle. For the purposes of this study, lifestyle is adapted to embody SBRS that apply to one's lifestyle. Categories include streaming, beauty, apparel, hobbies, meal kits etc.

S-O-R model- a model and paradigm with the components of stimulus (S) or input, internal state of the organism (O) in response to the stimulus, and the behavioral response (R) or output from the process.

Collaborative Consumption- a peer-to-peer (P2P) action of borrowing, renting, donating, swapping, buying used, common, or idle resources in consumer or peer networks (Roos & Hahn, 2016) and is seen as an alternative way of consumption

(Botsman & Rodgers, 2011; Heinrichs, 2013; Leismann et al., 2013; Prothero et al., 2011).

Convenience- in regards to SBRS, aspects of SBRS that are convenient for SBRS consumers. There are many aspects of convenience, such as periodic at-home delivery.

Curation- A SBRS that has been curated for a specific individual or group of individuals. Curation generally occurs around a theme or personal tastes, as often generated via an algorithm or personal shopper. SBRS that are curated, especially to individual or group interests, is often seen as a convenience aspect for the consumer.

SBRS- Subscription Box Retailing Services.

WOM- Word of Mouth. Generally speaking, a form of informal communication between two or more individuals such as families, friends, or colleagues usually in regards to the usage, performance, characteristics or ownership of particular goods or services (Westbrook, 1987). WOM can be negative, neutral, or positive in order to persuade others to purchase usually based upon personal experiences (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Identified by Lee, Sadachar and Manchiraju (2019), as a leading variable in response output in early SBRS S-O-R paradigm framework research.

SOS- Subscription-based online service.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Subscription services are offered by many companies for a number of product and service categories. Due to technological advancements, online subscription services are just one of the benefits consumers can reap. Subscription services themselves offer a number of benefits to consumers. In this study, variables of technology, price sensitivity, consumer feedback, and collaborative consumption will be attributed the S-O-R model.

Theory

Several prominent theories are examined in the studies pertaining to subscription-based online services (SOS) and subscription box retail services (SBRS). Appendix D includes a summary of previous studies in subscription services that utilize the S-O-R model. The survey questions can be found in Appendix E. This study will utilize and focus on the S-O-R model. The S-O-R model examines the relationships of stimuli, organism, and response (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). See Figure 2.1 for the S-O-R model. The environmental impacts including the marketing act as the stimulus (S) which influences the individual's internal state (O). Organism is the process and includes characteristics and internal influence psychological. This drives the individual's behavioral response (R) or output. The output can look like purchasing, amount bought and choices made. In this context, that refers to the aspects of products such as WOM, re-purchase intention, loyalty, and attitude (Lee et al., 2017). See Figure 2.2 to see how the hypothesis variables fit into the S-O-R model. Theories and constructs concerning behavioral motivations including the behavioral science theory, behavioral reasoning

theory, and utilitarian (UTL) and hedonic motivations (HED) are also mentioned in terms of functional goals compared to emotional or aesthetic goals (Lee et al., 2019; Ramkumar & Woo, 2018). The constructs of risk, surprise (Ramkumar & Woo; Woo & Ramkumar, 2018) and reward to the consumer is also heavily mentioned and examined (Lee et al., 2019; Bischof et al., 2020).

Consumers evaluation takes into consideration the risk and surprise of SBRS and SOS (Ramkumar & Woo, 2018; Woo & Ramkumar, 2018). Predetermined or curated subscriptions generally contain no surprises to the consumer. They are low risk of surprise, but they still bring enjoyment as they are tailored to certain interests generally through a profile quiz (Bischof et al., 2020). Alternatively, surprise subscriptions have higher risk, and as such are a higher risk of disappointment with their user experience (Bischof et al., 2020). Both risk and surprise are factors in the decision making process, therefore, they are integrated into the organism response of the S-O-R model.

Additionally, consumer reward is mentioned. Consumer reward is evaluated by factors such as consumer enjoyment and satisfaction, personalization or a curated experience, a positive user experience, and product assortment and uniqueness (Lee et al., 2019; Bischof et al., 2020). These factors are also considered into the organism response of the S-O-R model and measured by the output or response from the consumer, as seen in Figure 2.2. This study will seek to build onto the S-O-R model by addition of technology and price sensitivity based variables (see Appendix D).
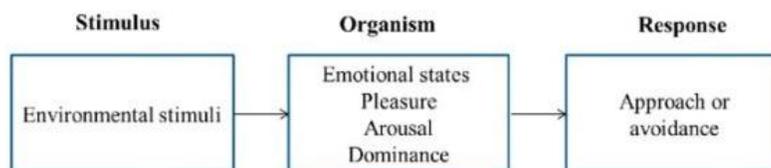
Figure 2.1: The Stimulus-Organism-Response Model
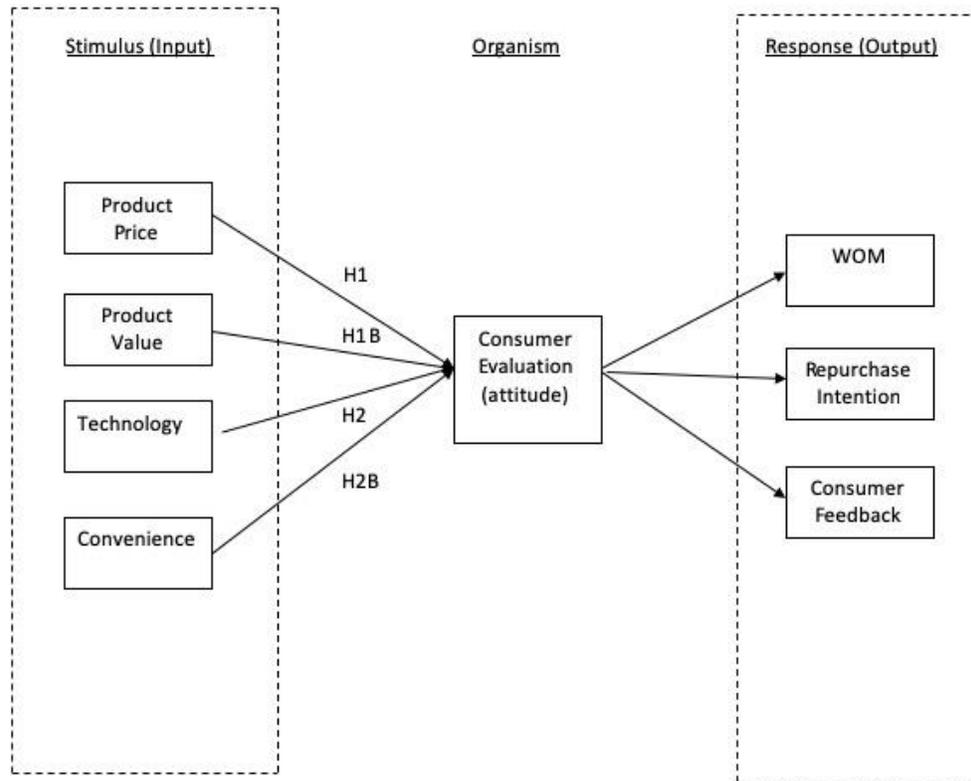
Figure 2.2: Hypothesis variables as they fit into the S-O-R Model.

Subscription services: past, present, and future

Subscription services began with the newspaper subscription (Noorda, 2019). However, since then, there has been a rapid evolution. The subscription e-commerce market was $57 million in 2011 and grew to $2.6 billion in 2018 (Chen et al. 2018). There are many categories of subscription-based online services (SOS) and subscription box retail services (SBRS). Some categories include art, beauty, food and beverage, fashion, and pets (Ramkumar & Woo, 2018). However, there are many more including specific hobby interests, as the demand for subscription growth grew over 30 times between 2013 and 2016 alone (Noorda, 2019) and SBRS are projected to grow by over

232 million subscribers from 2018 to 2027 in the United States (Bischof, Boettger, & Rudolph, 2020). Ramkumar and Woo (2018) have dubbed it the "subscription economy". While many subscription services today are purely available via e-commerce and ship to your door, some retailers who have physical brick and mortar locations have launched e-commerce subscriptions. For these reasons, subscription services are very convenient to consumers. One of these players is Sephora. Play! By Sephora is a set of sample-sized beauty products that is customized and personalized (Randall et al., 2016). Many other retailers have followed suit including Gillette razors, to compete with several other razor subscription services already in the category.

More and more companies are moving away from the traditional model of pay per product or item towards a subscription-based model (Whitler, 2016). One early model of subscription services can be seen in public lending libraries (Noorda, 2019). Individual subscriptions vary in their offerings to consumers. However, little research has been done about the target customers of SOS, or the consumers drive to purchases SOS (Woo & Ramkumar, 2018). A study by McKinsey & Company(2018) found that e-commerce subscribers generally fell into three categories. The first (32%) subscribing for replenishment, where the key consumer value is to save time and money. The most prominent example of this is Amazon's Subscribe and Save, which is the most popular subscription site by both genders according to McKinsey & Company (2018). The second category is subscribing for curation (55%), where consumers seek to be surprised by product variety. The last group (13%) is subscribing for access, such as exclude or "VIP" content similar to that of a membership. Of the three categories of consumers, all categories stated the most important triggers when initializing the subscription was a

recommendation by a friend, financial incentive and thought to try something new (Chen, 2018). The This further exemplifies to the connection between SOS, SBRS, and CC.

Bischof, Boettger and Rudolph (2020) offers a different viewpoint, and groups the categories by research areas: customer lifecycle value/ lifetime feasibility (1), business models and churn management (2), profit maximizing by leasing or subscriptions compared to traditional sales (3), and consumer good subscriptions (4). Some subscription boxed offer variations in surprise level: curated to general surprise (Bischof et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019; Noorda, 2019; Ramkumar & Woo, 2018; Woo & Ramkumar, 2018). Predetermined subscriptions contain no surprise and usually are replenishment subscriptions, such as Amazon's Subscribe & Save program while curated surprise subscription boxes are chosen by the retailer, but tailored to the consumer usually through a profile quiz (Bischof et al., 2020).

Moreover, Bischof, Boettger and Rudolph (2020) further distinguishes categories of SOS by replenishment services, delivery interval choice, and predefined subscriptions. Notably, little research has examined the extent of how the level of surprise impacts consumers (Bischof et al., 2020). Extensive calls to research have been made, as the 'pioneer' subscription services began only in 2011 (Noorda, 2019).

Convenience

Convenience factors are important in subscription services, as many seek to make the process of subscribing and receiving goods easy. A 2018 study by Spurgeon and Niehm found that consumers liked the convenience of SOS package delivery and ease of website navigation. As Woo and Ramkumar (2018) state, convenience includes the entire subscription process: the ease of subscribing online and the convenience of time saving

by preventing in-store shopping and searching. Subscribing even solves the "decision fatigue" many consumers feel. Moreover, subscribing is convenient, but still satisfies the hedonic shopping experience. The additional benefit of in-home shopping is another convenient time saving factor (Ramkumar & Woo, 2018). There is also convenience benefits to curated subscription box services in the case of predetermined subscriptions as they are already prepared for the consumer (Bischof et al., 2020). The consumer is spared as they do not need to take additional time and resources to travel to a physical location and shop. Bischof, Boettger and Rudolph (2020) additionally state curated surprise subscriptions offer direct inspiration that has been conveniently tailored for the consumer.

Price Sensitivity

Lee, Sadachar and Manchiraju (2017) found that the price assortment was not a significant determinant of attitude toward subscription box retailers. Moreover, Ramkumar and Woo (2018) state that subscription services offer cost benefits as discounts for boxes compared to purchasing items individually. Lee and Overby (2004) outline two types of value: utilitarian and experiential or perceived value. This further implicates that while price assortment may not be a factor to SBRS and SOS consumer, but rather a focus on receiving quality goods at what consumers perceive as a good value. Lee, Sadachar and Manchiraju (2019) state that perceived product quality and perceived value is what matters to consumers. Take for example BoxyCharm, a seasoned subscription service, introduced a product 24K Gold Foil Moisturizer by Faccia. Faccia was not a known brand, and claims to retail for $100 on the BoxyCharm website. Yet upon investigation, BoxyCharm purchasing orders revealed the purchasing cost of each item to be $2 each from a questionable Chinese factory. This topic "went viral" in

community groups such as Redditt subthreads and Facebook beauty groups as well as Instagram and Youtube. This case study is yet one example of how subscription service companies examine perceived product value and fail to recognize the value of the user experience.

Value

Value in SBRS and SOS are generally defined as the value they bring to the consumer. These values extend beyond the obvious monetary value of the products and services. The value to the consumer consists of convenience factors (Woo & Ramkumar, 2018; Ramkumar & Woo, 2018; Bischof et al., 2020), price (Lee et al., 2017), and ease of use especially in terms of the user- experience and technological components (Lang et al., 2019). All of these factors help the consumer to evaluate the value being offered in the SBRS and SOS. Hedonic and utilitarian motivations also play an important role in understanding the consumer evaluation of value. Hedonic motivations are driven by desire to achieve aesthetic or emotional goals as an experiential experience while utilitarian motivations are seeking to achieve functional goals such as buying groceries (Ramkumar & Woo, 2018). According to Ramkumar and Woo, they both play an important role in understanding the consumer's perception of value in SBRS and SOS as they help to form the consumer attitude.

Technology

With consumers ever increasingly utilizing mobile phone applications, technological components of the user experience are essential. Technology use as it pertains to mobile phone applications of SBRS and SOS is the focus. Supported by

collaborative consumption online, mobile phone apps play an integral role in developing

brand or company trust (Lang et al., 2019). Additionally, mobile phone applications also

play a role in the convenience aspect of SBRS and SOS, as there is ease of use. As

previously mentioned, SBRS and SOS research tends to emphasize consumer motivations

in decision making. However, they fail to mention that technological components also

play a role, especially in today's tech-savvy world. Due to the importance of the online

platform used for purchasing and browsing, the mobile phone apps are the stimulus in the

adaptation of the S-O-R model used in this study. Technological components are an

important part of consumer evaluation of SBRS and SOS.

Consumer Feedback

Consumer feedback comes in many forms. Feedback can be either positive,

negative, or neutral. Feedback can also be solicited or unsolicited (Celuch & Walz,

2020). Feedback can come in the form of online reviews (Hu et al., 2006), WOM

(Dellarocas et al., 2006), customer profiles, requests, as well as algorithms that can be

developed to suit consumer tastes and preferences (Jin & Shin, 2020). Consumer

feedback can provide direct feedback in the form of knowledge and information about

consumer services and products and reduce defection of SBRS, which can keep profits

considerably higher (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016). Additionally, customer satisfaction which

can be evaluated from consumer feedback, can predict retention, loyalty, and product re-

purchase (Milner & Furnham, 2017). However, due to personal attitudes, customer

satisfaction can vary greatly as it is subject to personal attitudes. For this reason, there is no

single correct way to analyze user feedback data, thus is such a reason to evaluate it from

multiple perspectives and as one of the variables in consumer evaluation (Gerdes et al., 2008).

Consumer Evaluation

In addition to consumer evaluating value of SBRS and SOS, consumer evaluation also includes delivery interval periods. For example, consumers of surprise subscriptions are at a higher risk of undergoing a negative delivery experience compared to those of predefined subscriptions (Bischof et al., 2020). However, on average, consumers value both surprise and predefined or no surprise SBRS to nearly the same level of value satisfaction. Both offer different values, but they depend upon the consumer evaluation and wants and needs of the consumer. New SBRS and SOS consumers are especially critical in their consumer evaluation, as they are more concerned with the risk. Free returns are an important part of the consumer evaluating risk. The frequency of intervals also is a consideration in the risk evaluation. Moreover, the consumer wants to have a positive, enjoyable user experience.

Therefore, this research study aims to fulfill this gap in literature by examining the primary motivations that drive consumers to subscribe to subscription-based services. The following hypothesis are tentatively proposed as the first phase of the convergent design will consist of qualitative and quantitative research that will be collected in a similar time frame. The hypothesis are proposed and subject to change based on findings in the qualitative and quantitative phases.

Proposed Hypothesis 1: Consumer evaluation of subscription services includes price sensitivity.

Proposed Hypothesis 1b: Consumers evaluate the value of the subscription service and its products.

Proposed Hypothesis 2: Technology and mobile phone applications (apps) demonstrate a strong relationship in regard to the convenience of online-only subscription services.

Proposed Hypothesis 2b: Convenience of mobile apps or technology ease play into the usage of subscription services in traditional brick-and-mortar.

Most studies focus on quantitative methodology and there are calls for qualitative and exploratory methodology (Lee et al., 2019). Customer evaluations (Bischof et al., 2020), user-experience compared to non-subscription users (Lang, Seo, & Liu, 2019) and diverse samples (Lang, Seo, & Liu, 2019; Bhatt, 2018) all have calls for further future research. Most notably there is a lack of diversity in gender sampling in academic literature, male subscribers are underrepresented (Lee et al., 2017) and overlooked in subscription phenomenology (Woo & Ramkumar, 2018). Lastly, no current research literature explores the role phone apps play in the decision making process of subscription services. Therefore, a proposed convergent mixed methodology study will fulfill these needs.

CHAPTER III

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

Mixed Methods Design

Mixed Methods research likely originated in 1959 when Campbell and Fiske used multiple methods to study validity of psychological traits (Creswell, 2014). Mixed methods utilizes both qualitative and quantitative aspects of research design. The results from one method can help to develop or form the other (Greene et al., 1989). Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative design can yield strong outcomes in both theoretical and applied research (Gerdes et al., 2008). Within mixed methods, there are a few approaches. This study utilizes a convergent design. A convergent mixed method design collects both qualitative and quantitative data in a similar timeframe. Both the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis occur in parallel at the merge of information to form the interpretation. One of the main reasons to use this study design is to expand (previous research) quantitative findings with open-ended qualitative data.
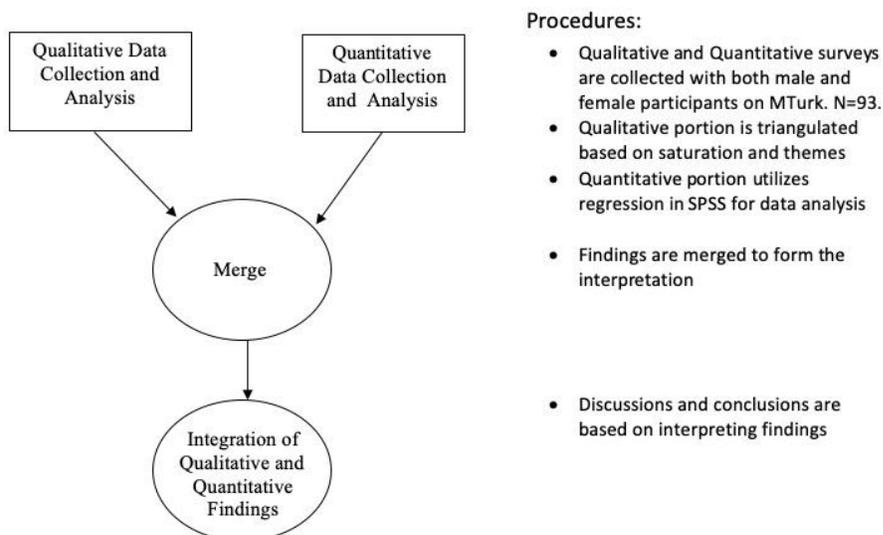
Figure 3.1: Procedures of Convergent Mixed Methods Research Design

Qualitative

This study was created Qualtrics and disseminated through Amazon MTurk. Participants found the post on MTurk, opted to take the survey, and then were re-directed to the Qualtrics platform to take the survey. The online data collection for the survey collected both the qualitative and quantitative portions that both contribute to the overall study. Participants of both the qualitative and quantitative portions must be or have been a subscriber of at least one subscription service. As this is a convergent study, a range of ages in participants is necessary. However, younger people (18-44) are more likely to subscribe to at least one subscription service offer and more likely to be subscribed to more than one subscription service compared to those over 45 years of age (Bray et al., 2021). Therefore, to align this study with the target market of beauty and lifestyle subscription services and follow research data, this study will utilize participants age 21- 35 years old. This phase had a goal of equal male and female participants with a minimum of 100 participants. Qualitative sample sizes are generally small, to develop a "thick" description and understanding from participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Saturation in qualitative research is met once themes reoccur. Saturation will only result in new data confirming conclusions already reached (Harding & Whitehead, 2015). Using MTurk selection parameters, only participants over the age of 21 to age 35 were allowed to participate. These participants answered the proposed open-ended questions in a combination of blank text boxes available on the form for the qualitative section. Participants were asked about their experiences with the how and why factors of their experiences with subscription services. The how and why variables that the participants were asked include subscription services' mobile phone apps, price sensitivity, brand or

company loyalty, value, consumer feedback, and price sensitivity. The survey instrument used can be found in Appendix E.

Following phenomenology qualitative data analysis, the analysis was a separate step following data collection (Schneider & Whitehead, 2015). Once data was collected, the thematic analysis consisted of extracting and identifying the appropriate amount of themes. Quotes, codes and themes all come from the qualitative data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants' qualitative responses are then triangulated until themes are identified by reaching saturation with participant responses. Then, following the convergent method procedures, themes are compared to the proposed research questions and determine what changes need to be made to the Likert-type questions in the quantitative phase based on the initial qualitative phase.

Quantitative

In the quantitative phase, the same participants continue the survey from the qualitative section into the quantitative section. In this section, participants were asked to answer questions on a 5-point Likert-type scale to ensure validity and reliability. The survey instrument can be found in Appendix E. The results were then interpreted in the analytical software SPSS utilizing regression. Themes that are expected include consumer loyalty, perception of value of the goods in the subscription service to be a good value and that mobile applications play a part in ease of use resulting in loyalty and re-subscribing.

Participants

Participants were recruited through MTurk and compensated $0.10, $0.25, or $0.50 for their time. Compensation was increased after few initial quality responses. The age ranges obtained were 21-35 years old for participants, meaning both gen Z and millennials were recruited for this study. While it was intended to be equal, the amount of males and females were not equal. Participants were required to have used at least one beauty or lifestyle subscription service in the past of currently in order to fill out the survey, which was determined from a survey question.

Survey Instrument Design

A survey with 16 qualitative questions and 22 Likert-type questions were adapted from the previous S-O-R model study on SBRS. Appendix D includes a summary of previous survey instruments, and the instrument for this study is available in figure 2.2. The qualitative questions were asked in an open-ended manner to encourage rich data. The Likert-type questions for each S-O-R variable was asked on a five-point continuum of "Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree". Basic demographics including age, gender, household income, education level, and ethnicity were asked at the end of the survey.

Statistical Analysis

Qualitative data was coded by hand and quantitative data was coded through the Qualtrics program and exported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The Excel spreadsheet was uploaded into SPSS, where statistical analyses were conducted. Regression, t-tests, post-hoc tests, and ANOVA tests were conducted. A confidence level of 95% and probability of less than or equal to .05 was used, as this is considered

statistically significant. The NEAR Center was consulted three times to assist with analyzing the data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

For this convergent study, participants were recruited online via MTurk. A total of 228 surveys were collected and 93 were deemed usable. The response rate cannot be determined easily due to the survey utilizing MTurk for recruitment and payment validation and Qualtrics for data collection. There were a large number of blank surveys "completed" on Qualtrics, likely by wary prospective participants who did not know how to remove themselves from completing the HIT or decided not to participate after viewing the survey. The informed consent form was shown to participants before they could proceed and surveys with two or more answers left blank and those who did not meet the age requirements were rejected. Some participants interpreted certain a feedback question in different ways. The question "Do you provide feedback about subscription services (directly or indirectly)? If so, what aspects do you give feedback about most?" had a varied responses. Some did not understand what direct or indirect feedback to the company meant. All responses were automatically coded for analysis.

Respondents entered their age in a text box during the final demographics section and during the analysis the results were divided into 3 categories, as seen in Table 4.1. Ages were divided into those belonging to Gen Z who are ages 21-24 (17.2%), and millennials. For research purposes, the millennial group (ages 25-35) was subdivided into younger (44.1%) and older millennials (39.8%). Respondents were a majority females (79.6%), with males comprising of 20.4%. No participants chose rather to not specify their gender. The educational levels ranged from high school diplomas (21.5%) to doctoral degrees (2.2%). There were 6.5% of participants that carried Associate's

degrees, 51.6% with Bachelor's degrees, and 18.3% with Master's degrees. There was no representation for those with a GED. Moreover, a majority of the participants were white or Caucasian (76.3%), followed by the second and third largest groups which were black or African American and Asian which were both 9.7%, respectively. 4.3% of respondents identified as Hispanic or Latinx. There was no representation of American Indian or Alaska Natives or Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. The ranges of household income were diverse, with 5.4% of participants making under $10,000 and 16.1% making above $110,001. 9.7% made $10,001-30,000, 25.8% made $30,001-50,000, 18.3% made $50,001-70,000, 15.1% made $70,001-90,000, and 9.7% made $90,001-110,000. A breakdown of the participant demographics can be found in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics and Frequencies.

Variable	Categories	Frequencies	Percent
Age	21-24	16	17.2%
	25-30	41	44.1%
	31-35	37	39.8%
Gender	Male	19	20.4%
	Female	74	79.6%
	Would Rather Not Specify	0	0.0%
Education Level	GED	0	0.0%
	High School Diploma	20	21.5%
	Associate's Degree	6	6.5%
	Bachelor's Degree	48	51.6%
	Master's Degree	17	18.3%
	Doctoral Degree	2	2.2%
Ethnicity			
	White or Caucasian	71	76.3%
	Black or African American	9	9.7%

American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0.0%
Asian	9	9.7%
Hispanic or Latinx	4	4.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0.0%

Household Income		
Under $10,000	5	5.4%
$10,001-30,000	9	9.7%
$30,001-50,000	24	25.8%
$50,001-70,000	17	18.3%
$70,001-90,000	14	15.1%
$90,001-110,000	9	9.7%
Above $110,001	15	16.1%

Note. N= 93

Qualitative

The survey began with open-ended textbox questions. These questions asked about the user experience with subscription services, reasons they like and dislike them, and what they enjoy about them. The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix E. Saturation was met when participant responses began to reoccur without any new themes or codes developing. The first question asked what subscription services, past and present, participants have used. These can be found in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Participants Use of Beauty and Lifestyle Subscription Services (Past and Present)

Subscription Service	Category	Frequency
Ipsy	Beauty/ Cosmetics	43
BoxyCharm	Beauty/ Cosmetics	16
Play! By Sephora (discontinued in 2020)	Beauty/ Cosmetics	6
Allure Beauty Box	Beauty/ Cosmetics	4
BirchBox	Beauty/ Cosmetics	10

Stitch Fix	Apparel	5
Fabletics	Apparel	3
FabFitFun	Lifestyle	15
CauseBox	Lifestyle	5
HelloFresh	Meal Kit	9
Netflix	Streaming/ Lifestyle	11
Hulu	Streaming/ Lifestyle	6
YouTube Premium	Streaming/ Lifestyle	5
Amazon Prime	Streaming/ Lifestyle	8
Spotify	Streaming/ Lifestyle	3

There are thousands of subscription services offered currently. In this study, participants were asked what beauty and lifestyle subscriptions they participated in. This allowed for participants to interpret what lifestyle meant to them. Some of the subcategories of lifestyle included apparel, meal kits, and streaming services for entertainment. In Table 4.2 above, only those with a frequency of 3 or greater are represented. The following subscriptions each had a frequency of 2: Blue Apron, Dollar Shave Club, Harry's Razor's, and Disney+. Moreover, there were a total of 38 other subscription services that had a frequency of only 1. Due to the plentiful amount of subscription services currently available, those with a frequency of one are listed separately from the table by category. The apparel subscription services that participants have taken part in either past or present with a frequency of one are Nadine West, MeUndies, and Nordstrom's Trunk Club. The streaming and lifestyle subscription services are NPR Coffee Club, Sling TV, Discovery+, TDS TV, DStv, PlayStation Now, Xbox Live, and Tidal. Those in the meal kit category include Eatery, MunchPak, Weight Watchers, HomeChef, Imperfect Foods, and Green Chef. The lifestyle category includes

those of hobbies or significant lifestyle distinctions, such as Bump Box for a new infant,

Vinyl by VNYL for the vinyl enthusiast, and CatLadyBox and BarkBox for the cat moms

and dads. The other lifestyle subscription services with a frequency of one are Who Gives

A C*** TP (toilet paper), Martha Stewart Living Magazine, Scout Life Magazine

(formerly Boys' Life Magazine), Barbell Box, and HelloBox. The last category with a

frequency of 1 for each is the beauty category. This beauty category includes the Kinder

Beauty Box, Target Beauty Box, Walmart Beauty Box, GlossyBox, Julep Nail Polish

(formerly Maven, discontinued in 2019), Curology, The Clean Beauty Box, The

AmazeBox by Limelife, Dollar Shave Club, Happy Legs Club, FaceTory, and Petit Vous.

The plentiful responses with a frequency of 1 only demonstrate the wide variety of

subscription services available.

Following the first question asking what subscription services they utilize, they

were asked the time period intervals they receive them in. Most receiving beauty,

cosmetics, and apparel received them in monthly deliveries unless they were only offered

quarterly. Most subscriptions are offered at a standard interval period, however some

allow participants to select the delivery interval period or skip regular deliveries. For

example, one participant receiving the meal kit HelloFresh "every few week, with breaks

in-between at times." Another example is Stitch Fix, an apparel subscription service. One

participant stated they receive their delivery every 2-3 weeks, but recently changed it to

every other month due to their closet getting full. Several participants stated they

sometimes skip deliveries or will sometimes cancel if they have too many products built

up that have went unused.

Table: 4.3 Length of time participants have been subscribed to subscription services

Length of time	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 week	1	1.1%
Less than 1 month	3	3.2%
More than 1 month but less than 6 months	12	12.9%
More than 6 months but less than a year	17	18.3%
1-2 years	27	29.0%
3 years	13	14.0%
4 or more years	20	21.5%

Note. N=93

Convenience and value benefits

Participants said their main reasons for using subscription services were to have items to gift to friends, save money, easily discover high-quality new products and brands, enjoyment of trying new things at a less expensive price than retail, not have to travel to stores, and the overall convenience of having life made easier by utilizing them. The benefits of the subscription services according to participants include discounts on full-priced products after trying miniature or sample sizes, building loyalty rewards, incentives such as free gifts or products, learning new trends and skills, access into exclusive pop-up sales and add-ons, automated billing, the convenience of not having to complete research before buying new products, stress relief, and the value of receiving goods at a retail price higher than what the consumer paid. The monetary value savings are made clear by one participant:

"The yearly subscriptions that I pay for are between $150-200, and each individual box contains items up to $300. I get a great deal."

Another stated:

> *"I feel I get a better deal purchasing products via subscription services than buying from traditional retailers because I generally don't stick with products long enough to use the full sizes. With subscription boxes I can get trial sizes so that I minimize the waste of products".*

Moreover, another participant specifically stated:

> *"Subscription services are the perfect solution to indecisiveness."*

Similarly, another participant stated about their HelloFresh subscription:

> *"Figuring out what to cook is the hardest part… having it decided and sent to me was much easier."*

Shopping fatigue is certainly problematic, and subscription services can help ease it (Woo & Ramkumar, 2018). Most participants stated they stayed subscribed as long as they felt they were benefitting from the service. One participant stated they felt:

> *"Sustaining my membership is good for my mental health and gives me an good ego boost".*

Offering variety in products and product categories, consistent pricing models, a product selection that held their value consistently through delivery intervals, and an easy way to skip or cancel membership made or break whether participants stayed subscribed past the initial trail period. One participant noted:

"My satisfaction level had lowered a lot in the past year. I think the novelty of the subscription service wears out pretty quickly. I was excited for the first 3 shipments. After that, items started repeating and creativity wears out."

A Way of Life

However, some participants feel subscription services "are the way of life for me." Two rationales provided were:

"I decided I had too much to worry about in life… my wife agreed we have the extra moolah to use some subscription services to make our life more convenient."

"Most of my friends are married with kids and that [subscription services] is the perfect lifestyle for these family types."

Another stated:

"I heard about Dollar Shave Club and decided to try it out. They had some kind of welcome offer which made me interested. I noticed how much I enjoyed the quality and service and kept using it. It's now been maybe 5 years and I do not see myself cancelling anytime soon."

This validates prior research in this period in time being dubbed the "subscription economy" (Ramkumar & Woo, 2018).

Table 4.4. Situational Map of Main Concepts

Main Concept	Conceptual Elements
Convenience	Quick at-home delivery

	Meal kits are pre-portioned
	Prevent decision fatigue
	Choose delivery interval
	Product & trend research done by SBRS
	Consistent, automated billing
Value	Paid less than retail pricing
	Personalized products
	No hidden fees
	Quality, high-end products
	Test new products & brands
	Access to pop-up, add-ons & exclusive sales
	Re-purchase discounts
WOM/ Collaborative Consumption	Discuss SBRS experiences with friends & family
A way of life	Gift items to friends
	Multiple subscriptions, multiple categories
	Entertainment
	Small indulgences & gifts to self
	Removes the need for consumer research
	Discover new trends and skills
Loyalty	Good customer service & support
	Loyalty rewards points & free products
Technology (app)	Social media
	Online platforms/ communities

WOM and Collaborative Consumption

Shopping and retailing in general tend to be a collaborative experience. Whether it is friends, family, or social networking platforms people discuss their purchases via WOM—the good and the bad.

"I have a handful of friends that also use Me Undies, we talk about the new prints and make plans to order the same ones and coordinate outfits."

"My brother-in-law and I both do the food service [meal kits] and talk about those whenever we are both preparing them on Facetime and whatnot."

"I think the only thing we talk about is if we get the same things. Otherwise, it is sort of materialistic which I do not feel any of us are really into. Also, if something is not as expected or damaged, that definitely comes up."

Responses about the initial reason for signing up for the service varied. However, more than half initially signed up due to a special promotion and ended up staying subscribed to overall satisfaction with the subscription service and products. Also, many participants were recommended to the subscription by friends or given as gifts initially. These elements all tie together the collaborative consumption framework and WOM.

Consumer Feedback

A component with limited research. "I like that you can leave notes and have correspondence with your stylist/ chemist in order to receive not just receive producers based on a questionnaire but on an actual conversation and ideas." Some SBRS companies have noted how crucial consumer feedback is for their business: "You can review the products you have received and in return you get Ipsy points you can redeem for free products." Participant responses also revealed SBRS companies that had strong

customer service substantially increased the participants satisfaction with the SBRS service.

"StitchFix has been great about helping me quickly and easily exchange items that are the wrong sizes, or just returning pieces I didn't like."

However, many participants stated they preferred the convenience of not giving feedback unless it benefitted them.

Technology

Participants who most frequently utilized the SBRS app was those in the streaming category. It was noted that downloading movies, videos, and other media helped to save limited cell phone steaming data by utilizing Wi-Fi at home to download. The most liked SBRS app was Amazon for its ease of use and seamless experience, such as the ability to make wish lists, manage returns, and make purchases all within one interface.

Many beauty and other lifestyle SBRS users noted they preferred to use the full websites out of convenience when needed, as there was no need to have the SBRS app. Some even noted they were unsure if the SBRS even had a phone app. Those who did use the apps stated they used it to check on the delivery tracking, product review recommendations, and play "rating" games that can help the algorithm or personal stylists select more personalized products per the customer and determine the style of that consumer.

Quantitative

Reliability

Participants were asked about their experiences with subscription services

utilizing questions adapted from Lee, Sadachar, & Manuchiraju (2019). The survey

contains 22 questions with Likert-type scale questions that were adapted for each variable

in the S-O-R model. The reliability for each scale is available in Table 4.5. The Likert-

type questions for each variable of the S-O-R model are on a five-point continuum of

"Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". Demographic questions including age, gender,

household income, ethnicity, and education level were asked at the end of the survey and

are available in Appendix E.

Table 4.5 Reliabilities for Variable Scales

Variables	M	SD	Cronbach's α
Product price & product value	2.17	1.65	.764
Technology	2.72	1.28	.451
Convenience	2.29	1.35	.666
All Stimuli Variables	2.34	1.42	.822
Consumer Evaluation (Attitude)	1.76	1.05	.821
WOM	2.59	1.66	.761
Repurchase Intention	1.99	1.20	N/a
Consumer Feedback	3.42	1.99	N/a
All Response Variables	2.73	1.75	.783

Product value, technology, convenience and consumer feedback measures were

adapted from the literature review and implemented from Mehrabian and Russell's 1974

S-O-R model including the original variables of product price , consumer evaluation

(α=.821), WOM (α= .761), and repurchase intention, which reliability was not found due

to only one survey question for this variable. Additionally, the original S-O-R variable of

product price is grouped with the adapted variable product value due to similarity as

noted below.

The first adapted variable is convenience from Bichof et al., 2020; Ramkumar & Woo, 2018; Spurgeon & Niehm, 2018; and Woo & Ramkumar, 2018. An example of this variable includes "I feel what I receive is personalized to me". A moderate high reliability was found for convenience (2 items: α= .666).

The technology variable was adapted from Lang et al., 2019. An example of the survey question for this variable includes "The subscription service's app makes the experience better". Low reliability was found for technology (3 items: α= .451).

The product value variable was adapted from Bischof et al., 2020; Lang et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2017; Ramkumar & Woo, 2018; Woo & Ramkumar, 2018 and combined with the variable product price due to similarity. Product price and product value was found to have a high reliability (6 items: α= .764).

The variable consumer feedback was adapted from Celuch & Walz, 2020; Dellarocas et al., 2006; Gerdes et al., 2008; Hu et al., 2006; Jin & Shin, 2020; Kumar & Reinartz, 2016; and Milner & Furnham, 2017. Consumer feedback reliability was not found due to only one survey question for this variable. The mean for consumer feedback was 3.42, meaning between neither agree nor disagree and disagree. The standard deviation was 1.99, meaning most consumers agree that they give consumer feedback online.

Hypothesis Testing

Testing H1 and H1B: influences on price sensitivity and consumer evaluation. The results of the multiple regression indicate that price sensitivity (product price and product value) against age (R^2= .028, F= 1.288 , p> 0.05), gender (t=.886 , F= .005, p> 0.05), and income (R^2= .075, F=1.134, p>0.05) were found not to be significant

and the variance explained is low. Price sensitivity (product price and product value) against education (R^2= .092, F= 2.186, p> 0.05) was found to be significant for groups those with high school diplomas, master's degrees, and doctoral degrees. The results of the multiple regression ANOVA tests indicate that consumer evaluation against age (F= .642, p> 0.05), gender (t=1.863 F= .580, p>0.05), and income (R^2= .073, F= 1.098 , p>0.05) were not significant. Consumer evaluation and age were found to be significant (R^2= .086, F=2.030 , p>0.05). H1 is supported only for education and price sensitivity. H1B was supported only in price sensitivity and education and also consumer evaluation and age.

Testing H2 and H2B: influences on convenience and technology towards the consumer evaluation. The results of the multiple regression indicate that convenience against age (R^2= .042, F= 1.932, p> 0.05), gender (t=1.676, F= .112 , p> 0.05), and income (R^2= .086, F=1.310 , p> 0.05) were found to be not significant. Convenience and education (R^2= .121, F= 2.959 , p< 0.05) was found to be significant for those with high school diplomas and master's degrees. The results of the regression of technology against age (R^2= .027, F= 1.210 , p> 0.05), income (R^2= .081, F= 1.229, p> 0.05), and gender (t= 1.024, F= .811, p> 0.05) were not found to be significant. Technology and education (R^2= .113, F= 2.746, p <0.05) was found to be significant for those with high school diploma and master's degrees. Similar to variables H1 and H1B, H2 and H2B for technology and convenience was found to be supported only for educational levels of high school diplomas and master's degrees.

Additional variables of the influences of WOM, repurchase intention, and consumer feedback. These variables are grouped together due to them all being consumer

response variables in the "R" of the S-O-R model. As a group, they are found to be significant only for age (F=2.112, $p < .05$). The R^2 is .893, meaning 89.3% of the variability is explained by the WOM, repurchase intention, and consumer feedback on age, gender, income and education. The individual variable WOM against income ($R^2=$ .048, F= .712 ,$p > 0.05$), and education ($R^2=$ .106, F= 2.539 , $p < 0.05$) were found to not be significant. Age ($R^2=$ .128, F= 6.469 , $p < 0.05$) and gender (t= .216, F= 3.658 , $p >$ 0.05) was found to be significant. The individual variable repurchase intention age ($R^2=$ .005, F= .199 , $p > 0.05$), gender (t=1.145, F= .193 , $p > 0.05$), and income ($R^2=$ .028, F= .397, $p > 0.05$) were found not to be significant. Education and repurchase intention was found to be significant ($R^2=$ .125, F= 3.067 , $p < 0.05$), but no individual groups were found to be significantly different. The consumer feedback variable against gender (t=1.121, F= .288, $p > 0.05$), income ($R^2=$ .068, F= 1.016 , $p > 0.05$), and education ($R^2=$ .047, F= 1.053, $p > 0.05$) were found to not be significant. The variable consumer feedback and age ($R^2=$ .071, F= 3.342 , $p < 0.05$) was found to be significant.

All of the "S" variables: product price, product value, technology, and convenience were grouped together as the S variables in the S-O-R model. Collectively, age (F= 1.511, $p > 0.05$), gender (t=1.266, F= .530, $p > 0.05$), and income ($R^2=$ .097 , F= 1.507, $p > 0.05$) were found not to be significant. Education ($R^2=$ .132, F= 3.281 , $p <$ 0.05) was found to be significant. R^2 for all "S" variables account for .888 or 88.8% of all explained variance. This aligns with the findings in H1 and H1B.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Convenience

Participants in this study validated, both qualitatively and quantitatively that SBRS are convenient for them and their lifestyle. Convenience is an important aspect of SBRS. Value is just one factor of convenience supported by participants in this study and previous researches (Woo & Ramkumar, 2018; Ramkumar & Woo, 2018; Bischof et al., 2020), price (Lee et al., 2017). As Woo and Ramkumar (2018) state, convenience includes the entire subscription process: the ease of subscribing online and the convenience of time saving by preventing in-store shopping and searching. Additionally, some components of convenience participants felt were quick at home delivery, meal kits were pre-portioned, prevent decision fatigue, choosing delivery intervals that worked best for them, automated and consistent billing, and product and trend research was done by the SBRS company. These are first supported by McKinsey & Company (2018) which found subscribers fell into replenishment, curation, and subscriber for access categories. In fact, delivery at home is a time-saving convenience factor many participants were pleased with and supported by Ramkumar & Woo, 2018. Moreover, as noted by a large share of participants in this study, and supported McKinsey & Company (2018 and Chen (2018), the most important triggers when initializing the subscription was a recommendation by a friend, financial incentive and thought to try something new. This further exemplifies to the connection between SOS, SBRS, and CC. This is further supported by the multitude of participants who initially signed up due to a special offer, friend recommendation, and/ or a sign-up bonus. These themes can be found in Table 4.4.

Price Sensitivity

Lee, Sadachar and Manchiraju (2017) found that the price assortment was not a significant determinant of attitude toward subscription box retailers. However, Lee, Sadachar and Manchiraju's study focused on the upper middle class. In early pioneering SBRS research, this was an important group to focus on. However, in an effort to expand demographics in SBRS research (including income), this study had large range of income level: from under $10,000 to over $110,000. In the quantitative testing, education and price sensitivity were related between participant groups with education level of high school diplomas and master's degrees. These two groups generally have significantly different household income levels. While income level was not specifically found to be significantly different, this could be also due to small sample size. Another reason could be this study did not section subscription services into pricing tiers, such as under $20, $20-50, and $50+. Additional research by Ramkumar and Woo (2018) state that subscription services offer cost benefits as discounts for boxes compared to purchasing items individually and participants frequently stated this in multiple of the open-ended questions. Perception of value also matters. Most participants felt they received a good value, but some felt that the SBRS retail pricing labels were inflated. Thus, perceived value research by Lee, Sadachar and Manchiraju (2019) is supported.

Technology

Supported by collaborative consumption and SBRS online phone apps, consumer trust and technology are important parallel variables (Lang et al., 2019). No participants stated any themes relating to trust and technology such as phone apps. However, multiple participants stated they felt the apps were convenient and easy to use, which can build

consumer trust and loyalty through a strong user experience (Lang et al., 2019). Multiple participants also noted that ease of website navigation were enjoyed supported by the 2018 study by Spurgeon and Niehm. Moreover, technology and educational levels were significantly different between those with high school diplomas and master's degrees. Thus, the SBRS companies must now more than ever be aware of their consumers demographics and psychographics.

WOM and Collaborative Consumption

Statistically, age and gender and WOM were statistically significant. This is due to men and women participating in WOM differently, and that women's SBRS tend to be more collaborative in nature. Additionally, it is well known that generations have different means of communication and WOM. As WOM is an original variable of the S-O-R model, this is not a surprise. When customer's trust increases, positive WOM generally increases (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). However, additional research on the differences between male and female WOM influences may prove beneficial.

Consumer Feedback

Participants in this study for the most part only gave feedback to the SBRS companies if it benefitted them, such as receiving better targeted products, requesting assistance from customer service, or gaining loyalty points. Consumer feedback and age proved to be statistically significant as well. This is supported by feedback in online forums (Hu et al., 2006) or via WOM (Dellarocas et al., 2006), that can solicited and unsolicited (Celuch & Walz, 2020). However, consumer feedback, especially negative feedback, is key to SBRS success as seen by many SBRS companies no longer in

business in just the last few years. Since SBRS consumer acquisition is costly, retention should be a focus of SBRS companies. Consumers that are satisfied are loyal and can the "R" behavior of the S-O-R model: repurchase intention (Milner & Furnham, 2017). This is another reason mobile phone apps and strong SBRS online platforms are of utter importance, as algorithms can be developed to suit consumer tastes and preferences (Jin & Shin, 2020).

Previous literature on SBRS research on the relationships of both genders, age generations, educational level, and household income is limited and in this study were found to be of significant importance. The significant relationships found were the education on price sensitivity, convenience, repurchase intention, and technology. Age also was a factor in consumer evaluation, consumer feedback, and WOM. Gender was found to be significantly different in WOM. The impact of these variables should be considered to be added to the adapted S-O-R model for subscription services.

Limitations

As there is extensive gaps in literature, the topic is rapidly evolving and some limitations are to be expected. A limited sample recruitment size of 93 participants in the quantitative phase is one main limitation, however 93 qualitative responses well-reached saturation. Ideally, there would have been 200-400+ participants to ensure quantitative validity and rigor. Due to time restraints, difficulty recruiting, and the removal of ineligible surveys, 93 were identified. Due to the limited sample size, demographics may not be representative of the population of SBRS users and only representative of the sample taken.

Initially, a pilot test was set up in MTurk with 10 participants at a compensation of $0.10 each. This was to ensure the survey and MTurk worked together, and participants understood the survey questions and gave quality responses. The title of the listing as visible to participants in MTurk read "Beauty and Lifestyle Subscription Services Survey". The description read: "This online survey is about consumers' use of beauty and lifestyle subscription boxes & services. You must have at least one subscription to a beauty or lifestyle subscription, and must be between the ages of 21-35, and live in the United States." Pilot responses were limited and short. Compensation was then increased to $0.25 and later $0.50, which gave rich responses. Identifying an appropriate compensation amount can vary depending on the length of the survey and how targeted or specific the survey requirements are.

Utilization of Amazon's Mechanical Turk may also be viewed as a limitation. MTurk can recruit people of certain demographics or mindset. One concern of utilizing MTurk is that people utilizing MTurk may routinely participate in HIT's in return for monetary compensation. These HITs often include research projects and thus these participants may be more exposed to research procedures. These individuals are also comfortable utilizing the internet. This is evident in one participant answering *"The other answers in this survey answer this question several times over. I get that you are trying to make sure you are getting viable responses".* However, MTurk was found suitable for this study for its ability to reach a wide range of demographics in the United States who participate in beauty and lifestyle subscription services. A small amount of compensation was given to participants in response for a valid response. Due to pilot testing resulting in responses of "good" and "x" for every question and the general nature of respondents

typing into open-ended text boxes, a requirement of 75 characters per qualitative question was added. This resulted in some participants getting frustrated and giving repeat answers on multiple questions. However, most participant responses were rich. This requirement should be revised for future studies that are adapted for online involving human research and qualitative online interviews.

Another limitation is the geographic location. One factor to be considered is the limitations by those beyond the continental 48 states, but still United States territories and states. Those living in what is now Alaska, Hawaii, or other pacific islands may have very different lifestyles and access to SBRS. Participants responses did come from a variety of U.S. cities, both rural and urban. Participants were not targeted for the population density of their residence.

With many consumers now taking at least some part in subscription services, this study may fail to encompass all viewpoints of subscription service users, but focus on the main new adapted variables of technology, price sensitivity, consumer feedback, and collaborative consumption based on the S-O-R model. Thus, participants were asked to self-interpret beauty and lifestyle subscriptions as lifestyle is very subjective and the SBRS market is very diverse. For this reason, participants may have not realized all SBRS they participate in. For example, it is likely a higher percentage of participants utilize Netflix or other streaming services than stated. However, this option was selected over a list due to the extensive amounts of SBRS in the market currently. Furthermore, streaming services were grouped together in Table 4.2 as "streaming/ lifestyle". This is due to streaming services being very much a way of life, or lifestyle.

Moreover, the last limitation is the S-O-R model. Much of SBRS research is viewed from lenses that are not the S-O-R model. SBRS research lenses utilize a number of different theories and frameworks. Analyzing variables across the multitude of theories and frameworks and adapting them to the S-O-R model is a limitation. Thus, generalization beyond this survey's sample is limited.

Managerial Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

Retailers, marketers, merchandisers, and researchers can all benefit from the outcomes of this study with thousands of subscription services currently on the market. Consumers are more commonly subscribing to more subscription services in multiple categories. Retailers can benefit from offering their customers subscription services with variables such as delivery interval choices and giving loyalty rewards to those who give consumer feedback. Academic researchers can benefit from this study as it is one of the first to include men and a broader range of demographics that more accurately represent Americans as a whole, as many previous studies only studied the upper middle class, those making $78,000+ (Bhatt, 2018). Yet, this study reached household incomes of under $10,000 to those above $110,000. No longer are there expensive subscriptions that only cater to the upper middle class and the rich. There are now subscription services that appeal to every age, gender, income level, hobby, and lifestyle influences. This study proves this and justifies the need for more SBRS research. There continue to be a wide range of subscription services on the market.

Future research studies should continue to explore expanded demographics, such as ethnicities, countries of origin, gender identity, rural vs urban population density, etc. Additionally, focuses on sub-sects of the population is needed as well. For example, since

there is a lack of males studied in SBRS research, it may prove beneficial to target just

males. This is one of the first SBRS studies to include males. This can be achieved by

targeting males in recruitment texts or qualification settings to prevent recruitment

difficulties. While premium qualifications do incur additional fees, the ability to target

specific groups of people or those with certain skills is beneficial. It can also be achieved

by including males within the title or description of the survey within MTurk.

In order to setup MTurk batches, some recommendations for future researchers

are as follows. Ensure a title and description that gives a brief overview of what the

participant will be answering. Ensure reward or compensation is fair for the time spent.

For example, it would not be recommended or ethical to ask participants to answer an

hour-long survey for $0.50, however, for a survey of under 20 minutes that compensation

may be fair. Start with a small number of respondents, especially for new researchers, to

pilot the survey and participant understanding of the questionnaire and survey. Allot a

reasonable time for the participant to complete the survey, but not too long as participants

may not take the HIT if this time is lengthy as it is often perceived as the time required to

take the survey. For example, a survey that will take under 30 minutes should have about

one hour of time allotted. The allotted time should never be substantially more than the

estimated time to complete the survey as it will not encourage participants. Moreover, it

is also recommended to auto-approve and pay workers in 1-2 days for ethical reasons, as

IRB tends to want to ensure participants receive compensation within a reasonable

amount of time if the researcher neglects approval of HITs.

While women do make up the majority of subscriptions, 42% of men have three

or more active subscriptions, compared to 28% of women (Chen et al., 2018). Future

research including men or containing only men is highly recommended. Additionally, inclusive language in demographic collection is strongly advised and there is little to no data in any research field about the impact of this on data collection. It is also not mentioned in any SBRS research. Additional exploration of demographics should include upper age generations as these generations have more free time for hobby interests such as hobby SBRS. As most SBRS research focuses on beauty and clothing (Woo & Ramkumar, 2018), additional categories should be examined in future research. Some categories identified in this study include streaming, entertainment, meal kits, and hobby interests. Streaming services specifically is one that lacks SOS research. This group may prove different from other lifestyle SBRS in future SBRS research based on the functional nature of streaming services compared to other groups.

Moreover, while many SBRS remain only for online-only purchases, brick and mortar SBRS have picked up pace yet academic research is not following these trends, making examination of H2B difficult. This fails to examine the scope of user experience and socioeconomic status of those utilizing SBRS. Since user experience is crucial, further exploration of the technology variable is encouraged.

The last noteworthy suggestion for future research that has not yet been discussed in depth is the element of sustainability. With sustainability at the forefront of many retailers and academic researchers, it is surprising SBRS research as not yet addressed this topic to any degree. Receiving deliveries at regular intervals has the possibility of putting a substantial burden on the environment and consumers receiving a build-up of unused products. One participant noted: "I get trial sizes so that I minimize the waste of products." Moreover, as many participants quit SBRS due to a "pile up of products" .

Addressing sustainability in SBRS is a vital next-step. Companies need to heavily consider sustainability best practices as sustainability is at the forefront of business ethics and vigilante consumer's minds currently.

Conclusion

A lack of existing academic literature in SBRS, collaborative consumption, and several adapted S-O-R variables utilized in this study may prove to lay the foundation for and provide directionality for future qualitative and mixed methodology studies in subscription services research. Price sensitivity, consumer evaluation of a variety of subscription services and tools, user-experience, consumer feedback, subscription service technology, and mobile applications were examined. Moreover, this literature will contribute to diversity in sampling as the underrepresented population of men in subscription services phenomenology is this study is noteworthy. This study gained in-depth responses regarding price sensitivity in determination of subscription services, evaluation of the consumer's perception of value of the service and its goods and the role mobile phone apps play in the overall experience. Open-ended questions gave insight into consumer's responses and insight into the consumer's role in participation in the subscription services model. The qualitative and quantified data proved to be a strong mixed methods convergent design. Variables including age and education proved to be significant on the variables price sensitivity, technology, WOM, and more.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Electronic Recruitment Text

You have been selected to participate in an online survey about consumers' use of beauty and lifestyle subscription services. You must have at least one subscription to a beauty or lifestyle subscription, and must be between the ages of 21-35. You must also live in the United States. Most questions will require a minimum response of 75 characters (approximately 4-6 sentences). Compensation will be denied if participants fail to meet the minimum character length of 75 characters for questions #4-15. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and you could receive $0.10 in compensation after completing survey. There are no known risks to this study. We greatly value your input and time spent completing this survey.

Appendix B: Electronic Informed Consent

Hello,   IRB# 20210120916EX
        You have been selected to participate in an online survey about beauty and lifestyle
subscriptions. Your participation in this study is instrumental to understanding how
consumers interact with subscription box services and technology. The survey will take
approximately 15minutes to complete. We greatly value your input and time spent
completing this survey. In addition, please understand that:
•You must be between the ages of 21-35 years of age to participate.
•You must have at least one beauty or lifestyle subscription (e.g., Ipsy, FabFitFun,
SnackCrate, etc.)
•Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time
without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-
Lincoln, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise
entitled.
•There are no perceived risks or personal benefits for participants.
•All of your responses will remain confidential and will be kept in a password protected file
of de-identified data indefinitely. De-identified data may be shared with colleagues in future.
•The data collected from the survey will be only used for research objectives and will not be
used for any other purposes
•MTurk doesn't share workers personal information with investigators. The Qualtrics Survey
Software also ensures anonymity by encrypting data during transit through Transport Layer
security and are sent to secure, certified servers.
•The results of this research will benefit marketers, retailers, and consumer behavior
researchers
•The research records will be securely stored electronically through University approved
methods and will only be seen by the research team and/or those authorized to view, access,
or use the records during and after the study is complete. Those who have access to your
research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other
person, agency, or sponsor as required by law or contract or institutional responsibility. The
information in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific
meetings and may be reported individually, or as a group or summarized data but your
identity will be strictly kept secretly confidential.
•You will receive $0.10 for participating in the survey. After completing the survey, record
the code given on the *Thank you* page and return to MTurk's website. Type the code into the
Provide survey code here textbox for compensation. The investigators will review submitted
codes twice daily.
•Please note: If investigators fail to review codes within 24 hours, participants will
automatically be compensated by MTurk. Compensation may be denied if the survey is
missing more than two responses or fails to meet minimum amount of 75 characters on
questions #4-15.
•Compensation may also be denied if participants fail to meet the minimum character length
of 75 characters for most of the open-ended text response questions (Questions #4-15) as
outlined in the directions. This is to ensure thoughtful responses and strong data collection.

By continuing with the survey, you consent to be a participant in this research study. If you
have any questions, comments, or concerns, please send an email to jbjorgensen@unl.edu. If
you would like to speak with someone other than the researchers, please call the Research

Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6965 or irb@unl.edu. Please be sure to print or save a copy of this informed consent page for your records.

Sincerely, Jennifer Jorgensen and Melisa Spilinek

Contact: Jennifer Jorgensen
Dept. of Textiles, Merchandising, and Fashion Design
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Tel: 402-472-5462
Email: jbjorgensen@unl.edu

Contact: Melisa Spilinek
Dept. of Textiles, Merchandising, and Fashion Design
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Email: melisa.spilinek@huskers.unl.edu

Appendix C: IRB Approval

Nebraska Lincoln

Official Approval Letter for IRB project # 20916 - New Project Form

January 21, 2021

Melisa Spilinek
Department of Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design
ASWC 119 (mobile) UNL NE 685880602

Jennifer Johnson Jorgensen
Department of Textiles, Merchandising & Fashion Design
HSB 205 UNL NE 685830802

IRB Number: 20210120916EX
Project ID: 20916
Project Title: Beauty and lifestyle subscription services: a modern retailing format for the vigilante collaborative consumption consumer, a Mixed Methods Study

Dear Melisa:

This letter is to officially notify you of the certification of exemption of your project for the Protection of Human Subjects. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects at 45 CFR 46 2018 Requirements and has been classified as exempt. Exempt categories are listed within HRPP Policy #4.001: Exempt Research available at:
http://research.unl.edu/researchcompliance/policies-procedures/.

o Date of Final Exemption: 1/21/2021
o Certification of Exemption Valid Until: 1/21/2026
o Review conducted using exempt category 2a at 45 CFR 46.104
o Funding (Grant congruency, OSP Project/Form ID and Funding Sponsor Award Number, if applicable): N/A

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:
* Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effecs, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
* Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
* Any protocol violation or protocol deviation
* An incarceration of a research participant in a protocol that was not approved to include prisoners
* Any knowledge of adverse audits or enforcement actions required by Sponsors
* Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
* Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
* Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the participants or others to the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 402-472-6965.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Freeman

Becky R. Freeman, CIP
for the IRB

Appendix D: Previous Studies about SOS using S-O-R

Study	Variables	Survey Instrument(s) Used/ Examples:
Lee, Sadachar, & Manchiraju, (2017).	Mehrabian & Russell, (1974) (S-O-R); Dhar, Hoch & Kumar, (2001) (Stimuli); Marcketti & Shelley, (2009) (Organism); Carpenter, (2008) (WOM, loyalty).	Stimuli: product-related attributes Price Quality Assortment Uniqueness Surprise Response: loyalty Organism: attitude toward subscription box retailers WOM (word of mouth) Re-purchase intention Loyalty
Lee, Sadachar, & Manchiraju, (2019).	Mehrabian & Russell, (1974) (S-O-R)	Price Quality Assortment Product uniqueness Product surprise Attitude WOM Repurchase intention

Appendix E: Survey Questions

Section 1:
(Qualitative phase):

Directions: Be sure to fill out the entire survey in full. Please note (as restated below), that for questions #4-15, there is a minimum requirement of 75 characters per question required. If the survey is not filled out with the minimum amount of characters or more than 2 missing responses, compensation will be denied. Thank you for your thoughtful responses and time.

Please list the subscription service(s) past or present that you have used in the past or currently use. If applicable, please specify which tier it falls under (Ex. Ipsy Glam Bag or Glam Bag Plus). Please note, there is a minimum of 75 characters per question unless otherwise stated (approximately 4-6 sentences). If questions are answered unethically or incompletely, you may not receive compensation. (This question does not require the 75 character requirement)

_____
_____

Is the subscription service(s) you use weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.? Please list for each subscription service you use or have used in the past. (This question does not require the 75 character requirement)

_____
_____

How long have you been using subscription services? (Select One)
Less than 1 week
Less than 1 month
More than 1 month but less than 6 months
More than 6 months but less than a year
1-2 Years
3 years
4 or more years

_____
_____

Please note, for the next section of questions there is a minimum of 75 characters per question for the following questions: (#4-15) (approximately 4-6 sentences). If questions are not answered as per the directions, you may not receive compensation.

What are some of your reasons for using subscription services? (Please name at least 3).

_____
_____

What are some of the benefits you receive from the subscription service(s)?

_____
_____

Why do you stay subscribed to your subscription service(s)?

_____
_____

Why did you initially sign up for the service? (special offer, good bundle value, promotion, referral, friend's suggestion, etc.)

_____
_____

What aspects of subscription service(s) and/or the product(s) you receive from subscription service(s) do you discuss with your friends? (Do you subscribe to any of the same subscription service(s), recommend products, etc.).

_____
_____

Do you feel you get a better deal purchasing products via a subscription service than buying from traditional retailers and why?

_____
_____

Where do you compare subscription service(s) product pricing before purchasing (marketplace, retailer websites, Ebay, etc.)?

_____
_____

Describe your satisfaction level with your subscription service(s) and why?

_____
_____

What aspects of the service do you like or dislike? (*based on what is not already mentioned*)

_____
_____

Describe any good and/or bad experiences with the merchandise or services?

_____
_____

Do you provide feedback about subscription services (directly or indirectly)? If so, what do you aspects do give feedback about most?

_____

Do you use the subscription services' phone application (app)? If so, what features do you like or dislike?

_____

_____

Is there anything else you would like to share that you have not already?

_____

_____

_____

Section 2: S-O-R measures (Phase 2: Quantitative phase, distributed later, after qualitative phase):

Please select one answer to each question which best represents your thoughts about your personal preferences about subscription services.

[Stimuli]	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Subscribing saves me money compared to buying products individually	1	2	3	4	5
The quality of the product(s) is high	1	2	3	4	5
The price I pay is a good value for the products/ services I receive	1	2	3	4	5
I compare product prices in subscription boxes to the retail prices before purchasing	1	2	3	4	5
I feel what I receive is personalized to me	1	2	3	4	5
I feel the subscription service/ products are unique	1	2	3	4	5
The subscription service's app makes the experience better	1	2	3	4	5

I look at online reviews before signing up for new subscriptions	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer using the subscription service's app over their website	1	2	3	4	5
The subscription service app makes the experience personalized to me	1	2	3	4	5
I rely on the subscription's algorithm or online quiz to give me personalized products	1	2	3	4	5

[Organism/ Response]	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoy the surprise/ discovery each time	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy exploring new products/ brands	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy the product assortment	1	2	3	4	5
I am loyal to my subscription service(s)	1	2	3	4	5
My subscription service(s) is/ are popular with friends	1	2	3	4	5
My subscription service is popular on social media	1	2	3	4	5
I follow my subscription service(s) on social media	1	2	3	4	5
I share about my subscription service(s)/ products online	1	2	3	4	5
I give consumer feedback online	1	2	3	4	5
I talk about my subscription service(s)/ products with friends	1	2	3	4	5

I will stay subscribed to my subscription service(s)	1	2	3	4	5

_____

_____

Section 3: Demographics (completed for both sections)

Age (in years): _____

Gender:
Male
Female
Would rather not specify

Education Level:
GED
High School Diploma
Associate's Degree
Bachelor's Degree
Master's Degree

Household Income (annually):
Under $10,000
$10,001-30,000
$30,001-50,000
$50,001-70,000
$70,001-90,000
$90,001-110,000
Above $110,001

Location?: Do you live in the United States? ____
If no, where? _____.

Ethnicity:
White or Caucasian
Black or African American
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Hispanic or Latinx
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Thank you for participating in the survey! You will now be redirected back to MTurk: Please click the "Next" button to obtain your participant code for Amazon MTurk compensation.