



Factors Influence on Purchasing Intention of Fashion Clothing Through Online Platforms

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the impact made by social media characteristics on purchasing Intention towards fashion clothing through the online platforms. The main research objective of the study is to identify the level of influence made by the characteristics of trust, perceived online risk, convenience, and online reviews on the consumer buying intention. The survey method was used to collect data from the sample and a sample of 204 consumers was selected through convenient sampling method. A properly structured questionnaire was distributed among the selected sample. Likert scale questions were analyzed by coding different values for each response. Correlation and regression analysis have been employed to test the hypotheses based on the result. Qualitative data via open ended questions were used to get a deeper understanding on consumer purchasing intention and online platforms used by the industry. There is a strong positive relationship between online reviews and the consumer purchasing intention. Further, it was found out that there is a moderately positive relationship exists between the trust and the consumer purchasing intention. The empirical evidence suggesting the negative relationship of risk and the consumer purchasing intention was not supported with the statistical data and analysis of the study. This research would have given a broader idea on online buying intention if conducted covering all the segments in Sri Lanka. As a conclusion remark of the study, researchers recommend fashion and clothing companies to focus more on their core business activities on online platforms which may lead to positive reviews and recommendations. This would enhance the consumers' purchasing intention in the long run. Further the study recommends that the online businesses should pay more attention on factors emphasized by the customers in purchasing clothing online.

Keywords: *Convenience, Purchase Intention, Risk, Reviews, Trust*

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship existing between dressing and the idea of individual expression is complex. It may be perceived in people daily life through use of the same clothing colors, brands and fashion tendencies. Many people use contrasts and colors that express feelings according to their lifestyle and mood (Davis,1985). Thus, the product properties like design, comfort, individually have a decisive role in apparel buying behavior, which may vary depending on the set of factors.

There is a widespread identification that consumer behaviour is the key to contemporary marketing success. In this way, the field of consumer behaviour has been categorized by a diversity of viewpoints. In this context the understanding of consumer behaviour could appeal to a set of different areas of knowledge such as psychological, cultural, social etc.

Over the past years the intersection of consumer behaviour and interactive marketing has received a stream of conceptual and empirical attention. Psychological and social network theory offers considerable promise for enhancing the understanding of internet marketing along a number of dimensions such as consumer interaction with internet, complexity on internet transactions, exposure to different stimuli and online platform support in sharing information.

With the upsurge in the apparel sector, consumer has wide choices for their purchases. The competition among the online and offline apparel sectors has become stiffer. Consumer has become more knowledgeable than before. Online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest have been contributed more towards the online purchase motivation for the consumer. responses, reviews and feedbacks from peer groups and facility of comparison provided by web stores have further strengthened the knowledge of the consumers about the products.

Consumers also have become more demanding in terms of affordable prices, trust and convenience from online shopping platforms (Jiang, et al, 2012). The evolving apparel sector has been forced to be competitive and provide almost everything that consumer demands. To be able to compete, online retailers they have also been opening offline stores and offline retailers are going online since they want to avail themselves for the advantage of both retail formats.

Many people prefer to shop online and buy products from several brands and companies that they cannot find or are not available for purchase in their home countries (Kau et al., 2003). Nowadays, and with the help of the new technology and the internet, people from all around the world started to purchase items online by simply sitting in their homes.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Sri Lanka has a long history that supports sustainable fashion. With its award-winning fashion manufacturing industry, Sri Lanka is now positioned to become part of the Fashion Revolution with its newest fashion industry sector. Fashion industry, multibillion-dollar global enterprise devoted to the business of making and selling clothes. Some observers distinguish between the fashion industry (which makes “high fashion”) and the apparel industry (which makes ordinary clothes or “mass fashion”), but by the 1970s the boundaries between them had faded. Fashion is best defined simply as the style or styles of clothing and accessories worn at any given time by groups of people. There may appear to be differences between the expensive designer the mass-produced sportswear and street styles sold in malls and markets around the world.

Technology plays a large role in most aspects of today's society. Technological influences are growing more apparent in the fashion industry. Advances and new developments are shaping and creating current and future trends.

Internet technology such as online retailers and social media platforms have given way for trends to be identified marketed and sold immediately. Styles and trends are easily conveyed online to attract the trendsetters. Posts on Instagram or Facebook can easily increase awareness about new trends in fashion which can create high demand for specific items or brands (Kotler, 2016)

Fashion trend goes beyond the aesthetic values; it emerges as an expressive tool for designers to deliver their message about the society. With the influence of social media, celebrities and bloggers, their voice is easily being heard and have impact on fashion and trend at any time.

Social media, such as blogs, micro blogs, podcasts, photo and video sharing sites have all become increasingly important to fashion public relations (Cassidy.L, Fitch.K, 2013). The interactive nature of these platforms allows practitioners to engage and communicate with publics in real time, and tailor their clients' brand or campaign messages to the target audience. With blogging platforms such as Instagram, and other sharing sites, bloggers have emerged as expert fashion commentators, shaping brands and having a great impact on what is ‘on trend’.

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media is about conversations, community, connecting with the audience and building relationships. It is not just a broadcast channel or a sales and marketing tool.

- Authenticity, honesty and open dialogue are key.
- Social media not only allows you to hear what people say about you but enables you to respond. Listen first, speak second.

- Be compelling, useful, relevant and engaging. Don't be afraid to try new things but think through your efforts before kicking them off.

Popular social media tools and platforms can be shortlisted as below which has enabled the facilitation of empowering fashion industry.

- **Blogs:** A platform for casual dialogue and discussions on a specific topic or opinion.
- **Facebook:** The world's largest social network, with more than 1.55 billion monthly active users. Users create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including status updates. Brands create pages and Facebook users can "like" brands' pages.
- **Twitter:** A social networking/micro-blogging platform that allows groups and individuals to stay connected through the exchange of short status messages.
- **YouTube:** Video hosting and watching websites.
- **Instagram:** A free photo and video sharing app that allows users to apply digital filters, frames and special effects to their photos and then share them on a variety of social networking sites.
- **Snap chat:** A mobile app that lets users send photos and videos to friends or to their "story." Snaps disappear after viewing or after 24 hours. Currently, we are not allowing individual departments to have Snap chat accounts but asking that they contribute to the Tufts University account.

Social networks and other online media are great tools for engagement and two-way communication, but given the nature of this two-way, real-time communication, there is the potential for significant risks associated with inappropriate use. While the tools of social media are easily accessible, the rules of the road are not necessarily intuitive. It's a new communications landscape, with tremendous opportunities but also a lot to learn.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

After a thorough analysis of the existing research papers which have been attempted to address this issue a gap was identified to understand the dynamics of consumer purchasing intention in the online apparel market.

Hence this research area is practical and applicable for the today's business context to understand on how to manage the dynamic behaviour of the consumer which is crucial for an online business to be identified to make sure that the best shopping experience is given to the consumer and also on the hands of the business to retain in the competitive market.

The fashion industry is evolving therefore a business which invests to facilitate the customers to give the online shopping experience should make sure that the business purpose is understood first. This

purpose diverse to a vast area which not only limits to the profit maximization which is short term but in a long-term perspective to retain in the competitive market. Therefore, to retain in the market customers should retain with the online apparel store. This is the point where this research plays its role to identify how a business can evaluate the customer retention and what facilitates customers to retain with the particular store.

Therefore, through this research expectation is to find about the factors which encourages the consumer to move towards online purchasing with the use of evolving technologies and evolving social platforms. Also, through this research researcher focus on highlighting the effectiveness of the factors that influence customer preference to choose online apparel stores. Hence this research intends to investigate “the effectiveness of the factors influence to purchase fashion clothing via online platforms”.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Under this research study following objectives are expected to achieve.

- To identify the key factors that influence purchasing fashionable apparel online
- To investigate the relationship between identified variables and online purchasing intention.
- To measure the influence made by each identified variable on the customers’ online purchasing intention.
- To make recommendations to the industry to improve the online shopping experience of consumers.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1. Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI)

The present studies address this topic and is among the first to investigate online fashion consumption using the Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI), a basic shopping orientation comparable to the concept of personality in psychology (Sproles, 1986). This measure has been used successfully to study apparel buying in other contexts, and so it shows promise as a tool for understanding online fashion apparel consumption.

CSI was considered as a validate measure of eight basic consumer decision making characteristics each of which independently represents an important mental approach to consumption. The eight characteristics covered by the concept of CSI are perfectionism, high quality consciousness, brand consciousness, novelty apparel consciousness, and recreational shopping consciousness, value for money shopping consciousness, impulsiveness, and confusion from over choice and habitual brand loyal orientation.

5.2. Online Shopping Acceptance Model

Based on the detailed review of extant literature on consumer factors that have influence on online shopping acceptance and the relationships among those factors, a reference model has been developed called Online Shopping Acceptance Model (OSAM) – online shopping acceptance model by synthesizing the identified factors and presenting a holistic view of factors on consumer acceptance of online purchasing behaviour. OSAM extends the technology acceptance model by taking specific characteristics of online shopping environment into consideration.

This work extends the reference model (Chang, 2005) provides an in-depth analysis of consumer factors associated with online shopping acceptance. Moreover, a holistic customer oriented view provides OSAM with a unique edge and focus that facilitates the organization of related literature. Product characteristics and different operationalization of constructs are drawn upon to explain and reconcile conflicting findings.

5.3. Technology Acceptance Model

The perceived benefits of online shopping in relation to traditional store shopping are one of the driving forces in the motivation for consumers to purchase online. Along with the widespread adaptation of the Technology Acceptance Model in information system research, perceived usefulness has been used to explain consumer acceptance of online shopping. (Pavlou, 2003). perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system like online shopping sites would enhance their job performance.

5.4. Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action has been successfully used to predict behavioral intention with many different products (Ajzen, 1988). This theory (TRA) is based on the assumption that human beings are quite rational and make systematic use of the information available for them. The theory focuses on the influences of relevant factors on the individuals purchasing intention and the intention to perform or not to perform behaviour is views as the immediate determinant of the action.

The classic theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behaviour and technology acceptance model have been extensively adopting for explaining and predicting user behaviour in online shopping environment. (Pavlou, 2003). TAM has been extended to include subjective norms to explain perceived usefulness and usage intentions in terms of social influence and cognitive instrumental processes (Venkatesh, 2000).

5.5. Online Shopping

Online shopping could be defined as a concept of buying and selling of goods over the internet. From the perspective of the seller, it is the attempt on the seller's part to attract and persuade the prospect to conduct the purchase decision making process and ensure satisfaction and loyalty. From the perspective of the buyer, online purchasing behaviour is the degree to which consumer access, browse, and shop and transacts the repeat the behaviour. With the change in the consumer mindset of purchase made from a physical store to online buying, the industry has witnessed the ever-increasing columns of online transactions (Wijesundara, 2008). It can be defined that online retailing as use of an electronic via media through which the customer and the marketer may enter into transactions or sale and purchase, so as to benefit both the parties in the long run. The rapid use rate of the buyer transacting online has been due to advances in technology, and situational influences.

Research were done to investigated online fashion clothing shopping and they identified that the positive attitudes were associated with buying apparel on internet (Goldsmith R.E & Goldsmith, 2002). In addition, they found that online apparel buyers purchased over the internet more often than non-apparel buyers, were more confident in their ability to buy online and were more innovative and knowledgeable about the internet. They also spend more time online and were more likely to buy online in the future than were non buyers. Further (Goldsmith R.E & Flynn, 2005) investigated online fashion clothing shopping; consumers have a general enthusiasm for buying and the history of remote apparel shopping were the best indicators of future online apparel purchase.

5.6. Purchasing Intention

Referring to intention, it has been deemed as the co-native component of attitude, while behavioral intention refers to an individual's subjective like hood of performing some certain behaviour (Ajzen, 1988). They also stated that intentions are related to affect attitude components to some extent. (Ajzen, 1988) and (Chen Y., 2005) claimed that the behavioral intention which is known as the purchase intention based on the TPB theory purchasing intention is basically determined by three factors.

One of the factors is the attitude that the person holds towards involving in the behaviour which perceived as purchasing attitude (Ajzen, 1988) (Chen Y., 2005). (Ajzen, 1988) elaborated that an individual attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norm concerning that behaviour will determine intention to perform a behaviour. This intention is deemed as the direct determinants of the corresponding behaviour.

According to previous research consumer emotions lead to various consumer response behaviour such as purchasing intention (Ha, 2010). Many numbers of research studies have found that consumer emotions play a major role in purchasing intention, evaluation and the decision-making processes. In a

study of online apparel products (Park J, 2004) found a negative relationship between perceived risk and purchase intention in an online context. Thus, it is a reasonable factor to hypothesize that perceived risk will negatively influence consumer's purchasing intention.

5.7. Shopping Convenience

Numerous shopping motivational studies have identified convenience as a distinct motive for store choice in the online setting. Research relating to this area have suggested that convenience is an important factor; particular because location becomes irrelevant in the online shopping context. The online shopper may be motivated by the convenience of placing orders online at home or at office any time of the day. Consistent with the past research regarding time and effort savings. Hence it is considered that the time and effort savings as a part of overall shopping convenience construct. Therefore, overall convenience is defined as time and effort saving in shopping.

Online consumers tend to be convenience oriented, and recreational and economic shoppers appear to become dominant recently. Consumer's proclivity to purchase products online is not found to vary across different online shopping orientation (Swaminathan, 1999)

5.8. Online Consumer Reviews

Online consumer reviews can be defined as peer-generated product evaluations posted on company or third-party websites. Retail websites offer consumers the opportunity to post product reviews with content in the form of numerical star ratings usually from 1-5 and open-ended customer-authored comments about the product.

Leading online retailers have enabled customers to submit product reviews for many years, with other retailers offering this option to consumers more recently.

Some other firms choose to buy customer reviewers from the parent site or other third-party sites and post the reviews on their own electronic store-fronts. In this was reviews themselves provide additional revenue for the online retailers.

With the Internet ever increasing popularity, online consumer reviews are becoming a powerful source of information in the consumer marketplace. Online consumer reviews are user generated opinions that purchases of products or services post online. These reviews of products or retailers are found by other potential consumers. Online reviews tend to contain both objective and subjective information. (Ghose, 2007). Objective information echoes the product descriptions offered by the company. Some of the attributes-based reviews used to rate the physical features and functions of product may be more objective. (Park J, 2004). Subjective descriptions offer more opinionated information concerning use of the product, which can often be based on experiential knowledge known only through the use of the

product. (Ghose, 2007). Currently numerous online communication channels collect consumer opinions including discussion boards, personal blogs and online forums provided via retailer web sites. These reviews usually include a written evaluation, often accompanied by a numerical rating. As reviews represent a combination of other's experiences, they might give insight into determining product quality (Park J, 2004)

5.9. Perceived Risk

Perceived risk is defined as the consumer's subjective belief of suffering a loss in pursuit of the desired outcome (Pavlou, 2003). It has a strong correlation with willingness to shop online than convenience.

It is visible that perceived risk has been defined differently defined according to the focus of the study. For instance, with the focus on internet experience, concerns regarding the privacy and security issues, and online purchasing. (Miyazaki, 2001) interpreted perceived risk as risk associated with the buyer's internet experience and a buyer's concerns regarding the privacy and security issues related to the online purchases. With the focus on information that the buyers required to purchase an online brand product it is described that perceived risk being associated with online pre-purchase information (ex: brand, word of mouth communication, customized information) and an online purchase by the consumer.

5.10. Consumer Trust

Trust is the prerequisite in online buying; the phenomenon encompasses trust in the company image, web site content and the very process of online buying. It includes within its ambit, safety of personal information, misuse of private consumer data, transaction privacy and security, and hacking fraud and scams. Trust is an attitude of confident expectation in an online situation of risk that ones's vulnerabilities will not be exploited (Corritore, 2003).

The rapid growth of internet over the past two decades, as a platform for buyer- seller interaction. Constituting a practiced scenario is indicative of the degree of acceptance of an online transaction. With the emergence of e commerce there has been a considerable increase of online transactions.

While the customers of today, driven by functional motives, like to search the internet and search products and services, they often find themselves with a sense of discomfort, apprehension when it comes down to the actual physical and monetary exchange. The basic underlying issue here is the lack of trust especially with regard to financial and personal information

Online retailers need to understand the basic issues that would help develop trust among buyers in the online buying process. Development of online trust is based on the positive expectation of the potential online buyers that the online marketer will not act opportunistically through online dealings. It implies familiarity and risk. This is impacted by knowledge and familiarity about the online seller. Online trust

is a belief that the online seller can be trusted. It is a feeling of confidence and security towards the online transactions.

6. METHODS

6.1. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, a conceptual framework was developed to explain their relationships between identified variables. For this task, the data obtained are used to test the four hypotheses of this research. Consistent with the aims for research, the research model has given main four features. It examines each of the four independent factors (trust, perceived online risk, convenience, and online reviews) on the dependent factor (consumer buying intention). The conceptual framework is shown in Fig. 1

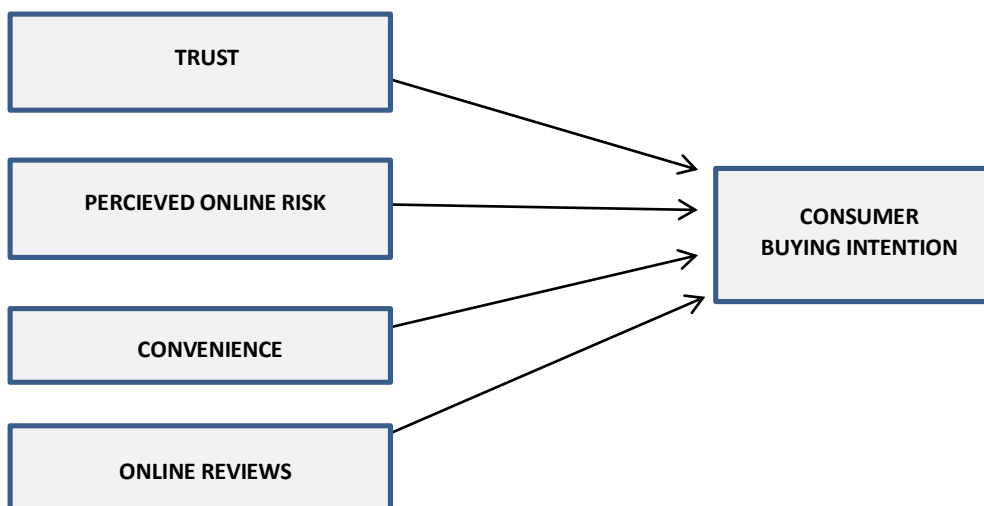


Fig. 1: (Source: Developed by researcher)

Based on the theoretical and empirical support from the literature and above theoretical framework, following hypotheses constructed.

- H1 – There is a positive relationship between the trust and the consumer’s buying intention
- H2- There is a positive relationship between perceived risk and the buying intention of the customer.
- H3 – There is a positive relationship is between the convenience and the customer buying intention.
- H4 - There is a positive relationship between online reviews and the purchasing intention of apparel online.

7. DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

The study focused on the influence of factors affect a consumer to select an online store for fashion clothing in Colombo district. Therefore, the universe of this study consisted of youth consumers in

Colombo district. Within this universe the youth consumer between the ages of 15-29 were considered as the population.

The sample of 250 was selected for the study through convenience sampling method. However true target population is unknown; therefore, it has been suggested that a sample of between 200 and 1000 respondents for populations of 10,000 or more is preferable (Alreck & Settle, 1985; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Primary data were collected through a pre structured questionnaire. 250 questionnaires were distributed among the selected sample and 211 returned. 7 questionnaires have to be rejected due to incompleteness.

Completed questionnaires were checked and coded before the raw data was entered for analysis. Data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 16.0. Several statistical techniques were applied to test and interpret the results of the data analysis. For reliability testing Cronbach's alpha was computed. Pearson correlation has been employed for the checking of the relationship among variables. Hypotheses were tested using correlation analysis.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis covered the demographic factor analysis, interpretation and the analysis and interpretation of the background factors relating to the study. Research was completed by 204 respondents which comprised of 65% of females and 35% of males. Mainly respondents were fallen under the age category of 22-25 years. Looking at the income distribution many respondents fallen into the category of income between the range of 20001- 40000.

Further the statistics from a sample of 204 respondents, 54% people use Facebook to keep them updated about fashion, follows by respondents using websites and Instagram and other platforms. 36% of respondents use online platform on 3-4 hours per day. And 87% of the respondents believed that using social media/ websites they can keep them updated about fashion apparel.

8.1. Reliability Testing

Table 1 Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Independent Variables		
Risk	0.871	3
Reviews	0.810	4
Convenience	0.835	4
Trust	0.763	3
Dependent Variable		

Consumer Purchasing Intention	0.801	5
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Researchers examined the Cronbach values of consumer purchasing intention with other variables risk, reviews, convenience and trust are 0.801, 0.871, 0.810, 0.835 and 0.763 respectively (Table 1). Hence, identified factors which were affecting to consumer purchasing intention in online purchasing, such as risk, reviews, convenience and trust are fitting with the proposed research frame work As a standard mechanism it is suggested to have minimum 0.6. Cronbach's alpha for early stages of research to assess its reliability (Nunnally, 1967) hence the constructs were deemed to have adequate reliability to continue the data analysis.

8.2. Validity Testing

Table 2 Validity Test

Variables	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	Number of Items
Independent Variables		
Risk	.632	3
Reviews	.792	4
Convenience	.681	4
Trust	.676	3
Dependent Variable		
Consumer Purchasing Intention	.797	5

The rule of thumb for the validity test is that if between 0.6 and 0.8 is considered as good validity. Based on the results in table, risk, reviews, convenience, and trust the consumer purchasing intention record excellent validity with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin of 0.632, 0.792, 0.681, 0.676, and 0.797 respectively (Table 2).

9. HYPOTHESES TESTING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hypothesis 1:

H1 – There is a positive relationship between the trust and the consumer's buying intention

According to the correlation analysis between the trust and the consumer purchasing intention the Pearson correlation of 0.289. This shows a weak positive relationship between trust and purchasing intention. Therefore, H1 is accepted.

Hypothesis 2:

H2- There is a positive relationship between perceived risk and the buying intention of the customer.

According to the correlation analysis between the risk and the consumer purchasing intention the Pearson correlation of 0.362 and it shows a positive relationship between variables. Hence null hypothesis is rejected and H2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3:

H3 – There is a positive relationship is between the convenience and the customer buying intention. According to the correlation analysis between the convenience and the consumer purchasing intention the Pearson correlation of 0.443 shows that there is a positive relationship between variables. Therefore, the alternative hypotheses H3 (A positive relationship is visible between the convenience and the customer buying intention) is accepted and the null hypotheses is rejected.

Hypothesis 4:

H4 - There is a positive relationship between online reviews and the purchasing intention of apparel According to the correlation analysis between the reviews and the consumer purchasing intention the Pearson correlation of 0.563 shows that a positive relationship between variables. Therefore, the alternative hypotheses H4 (There is a positive relationship between online reviews and the purchasing intention of apparel online) is accepted and the null hypotheses is rejected.

Summary of Hypotheses analysis shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary table of hypotheses

Hypothesis	Coefficient	P- Value	Result
H1- There is a positive relationship between trust and the buying intention of the customer.	0.289	0.000	Accepted
H2- There is a positive relationship between the perceived risk and the purchasing intention of apparel online.	0.362	0.000	Accepted
H3 - There is a positive relationship is between the convenience and the customer buying intention. online.	0.443	0.000	Accepted
H4 - There is a positive relationship between online reviews and the purchasing intention of apparel	0.563	0.000	Accepted

10. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Throughout this study, the researcher has tried to accomplish the key objective by using dependent and independent variables. It is to assess the relationship between the identified factors and online purchasing intention towards the fashion clothing. Hypothesis as well as other analysis has somehow proved that the factors such as risk, reviews, convenience and the trust have a relationship with the consumer purchasing intention. Yet with the research findings it was found all the four factors found

which was supported by the literature has a positive relationship with the consumer purchasing intention. And from the study it was found that a strong positive relationship relies between the online reviews and the consumer purchasing intention. Comparatively there is a moderately positive relationship exists between the trust on online vendors and the consumer purchasing intention. Most importantly, the empirical evidences suggesting the negative relationship between the risk and the consumer purchasing intention was proven to be wrong with the statistics related to the research findings.

Based on the information gathered from the study on factors affecting purchasing intention of fashion apparel using online platforms, the researchers have established several implications that might useful in assisting online fashion apparel outlets to increase the consumer loyalty and consumer retention among fashionholic target market.

In the fashion market the competition is immense. Any profitability outlet would focus on grabbing consumers and retention. If such a business can focus more on what factors they should excel in in order to give consumers a unique shopping experience they can attract more consumers and retain them.

According to the survey it was found that online reviews impact on consumer purchasing intention is high. Therefore, the business should focus more on their services and the trust they have which would create more positive reviews in social media. Bad reviews on products and service offered by the company could lead destroying the brand reputation of the business that they have built up over the years. So, reviews are crucial for the businesses specially emerging in the online platforms.

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