



# CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS APPAREL PURCHASE INITIATED BY DIGITAL MEDIA

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## ABSTRACT

Consumer attitude towards apparel purchase has rapidly changed, with the advent of online options. Now, customers can compare products available in different sites, add enough filters to match their criteria with reference to style, fabric, budget etc; all this from the comfort of their homes. This project is being conducted to better understand the behaviour of people who make clothing purchases through a digital interface.

This research primarily focuses on factors influencing buyers when selecting apparel/fashion apps, understanding the most chosen digital medium such as shopping websites, apps, etc. and determining the factors that makes them buy - such as online ranking & analysis, review videos of fashion influencers, social media advertisements and so on. The shift in impulse buying behaviour due to digital marketing is also studied. According to the report, buyers shop digitally to save time, money and to reach a broader variety of products and services. Consumer's choice of digital channels does differ based on their age, gender and income level. Furthermore, there is a link identified between the ability of social media blogs and reviews to influence buying decision and gender and age.

**Key Words:** digital marketing, consumer, online, review, impulse purchasing.

## INTRODUCTION

The Internet has now become a ubiquitous feature, having become a necessity from the luxury that it was a few decades ago. It plays an essential part in everything-from helping people interact with those in the remotest of regions through the use of e-mails, video conferencing, chat forums, social media around the world, to buying products or services via digital media and is also being used increasingly for entertainment in the form of watching movies, playing games and so on.

The fashion industry, fuelled by e-commerce, has increased its business and reach massively in the last decade or so. This is a result of the strengthening of digital marketing, advertising, and the creative use of technology combined with the most popular trends. With time being one of the scarcest resources in the world and people increasingly subscribing to gratification provided by materialism, digital technology has become quite close to people, since they have easy accessibility to almost everything available world over.

In a study conducted in Indonesia (Suleman, Zuniarti, Sabil 2013) two of the most important factors that drive online purchases in the fashion segment are the perceived usefulness and the trust factor. The fact that due to the spread of the online business model, a wide array of choices presents to the customer has been pointed out in a study (Çelik, 2011). Online shopping has several advantages over shopping in person, some of the basic ones being shopping from the comfort of your home, having a variety to choose from, being able to access suppliers from anywhere in the country or even the world and compare prices before buying. However, as there is the big disadvantage of not being able to see the goods physically, consumers increasingly need more, factual and useful information to guide their purchases. (Hsu, Lin, & Chiang, 2013). This is where retailers, manufacturers have to work on differentiating themselves from their competitors in ways that makes the customer come back to them for future purchases. Many studies have brought out yet another important aspect of online shopping, that is high on the customer's mind and that is trust. The trust that the payment has gone into genuine hands, the trust that the item purchased will exactly fit the description given on the site with reference to material, size, quality and overall value for money. (Aribowo & Nugroho, 2013).

This study will look into many of these aspects including which social media sites influence buying decisions, how popular are fashion related blogs among the sample surveyed, is there any preference shown of choice of digital platforms, social media sites specific to gender and age, among others.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

**Factors influence on purchasing intention of fashion clothing through online platforms (2020) Bimali Wijesundara, Sanjaya Thilakarathne.** This paper explores the effects of digital marketing features on buying motivations for fashion apparel mostly through social media platforms. The study's primary research goal is to determine the degree of influence that integrity, interpreted digital threat, ease of access, and review sites have had on consumer's buying motives. The paper found that buying intention is strongly influenced by reviews available online for the products. The research was able to conclude quite confidently that the future for the fashion industry is in focusing on the online platform.

**Preference and satisfaction towards online apparel purchase: a customer perspective (2020), Kushwaha, Durga Wati.** This paper aims on the different factors that are helping the growth of the apparel buying behaviour via app, also the satisfaction level of the service that the online retailers provided to the consumers. According to the study, a large number of consumers surveyed favour the online methods of purchasing decision over the conventional method of purchase, and they are comfortable with the services and other factors of e-retail benefits rendered by these online outlets apps.

**Acceptance of online customization for apparel shopping (2009) Hira Cho, Susan S. Fiorito.** The goal of this study is to identify the success factors in garment customization in e-commerce thereby providing useful inputs for managerial recommendations for strategic planning. The study points out that customers are

comfortable with the idea of online customization of apparel, provided the website protects their data and is secure. Companies which can balance security of website and a reasonable level of ease of use of website will do exceedingly well on this platform.

**Role of Digital Marketing in Retail Fashion Industry: A Synthesis of the Theory and the Practice (2018) Udayangani Rathnayaka.** The study's primary objective is to establish the impact of digital technology on buying behaviour, with an emphasis on the fashion industry. It has recognised how competent marketers' talents, tendencies, and perception must be moulded in organising relationship with customers to the fashion industry on the online world.

**Shopping orientation and online clothing purchases: the role of gender and purchase situation (2009) Torben Hansen, Jan Møller Jensen.** The purpose of this paper is to look into buying behavior as well as online fashion purchases in 4 distinct sexual preference buying contexts. The study interestingly points out a unique feature each for the categories of men and women, which seems to be an impediment to online purchasing. In case of men they would prefer a more fun experience online while purchasing and in the case of women, they would want the difficulty level in selecting items to be lower to improve their online shopping experience.

**Social network online communities: information sources for apparel shopping (2012) Huiju Park, Hira Cho.** The study focused on how commitment to an online community increases the interaction among the members with regard to seeking advice on various issues. This could be leveraged by apparel manufacturers to have their own brand specific dedicated online community which would aim to positively influence garment buying decision. Making the online community a fun place and turning it into a close-knit, trusted group would benefit the apparel retailers.

**Fashion portals and Indian consumers: an exploratory study on online apparel retail marketing (2019) Pradeep Kautish , Sushil Kumar Rai .** The study was based on the factors which enhance online purchasing behaviour including the use of clothing platforms among Indian customers. The study found that online shopping convenience is a major factor in driving the online purchases of apparel, with risk not being perceived as a major threat.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the change in impulse purchasing behaviour due to digital marketing.
- To find out factors affecting the consumers while choosing apparel/fashion apps.
- To understand the most preferred digital platform like website, apps, etc.

## HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- 1) H0: There is no influence of age on the choice of digital platform to buy clothes.
- 2) H0: There is no influence of gender on the source to observe latest trend.
- 3) H0: There is no influence of age on the source to observe latest trend.
- 4) H0: There is no influence of age on the social media sites which influence buying decisions.
- 5) H0: There is no influence of gender on how often shop online for clothes

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH DESIGN

This research made use of descriptive research design and is of an exploratory nature.

The convenience sampling method is used to acquire information for this research, through self-designed questionnaire. The population is the consumers who buy clothing through digital platforms. The sample is the consumers in Kerala who purchase clothing using digital technology. The survey was conducted through online mode. The sample size of the data collected for research is 151.

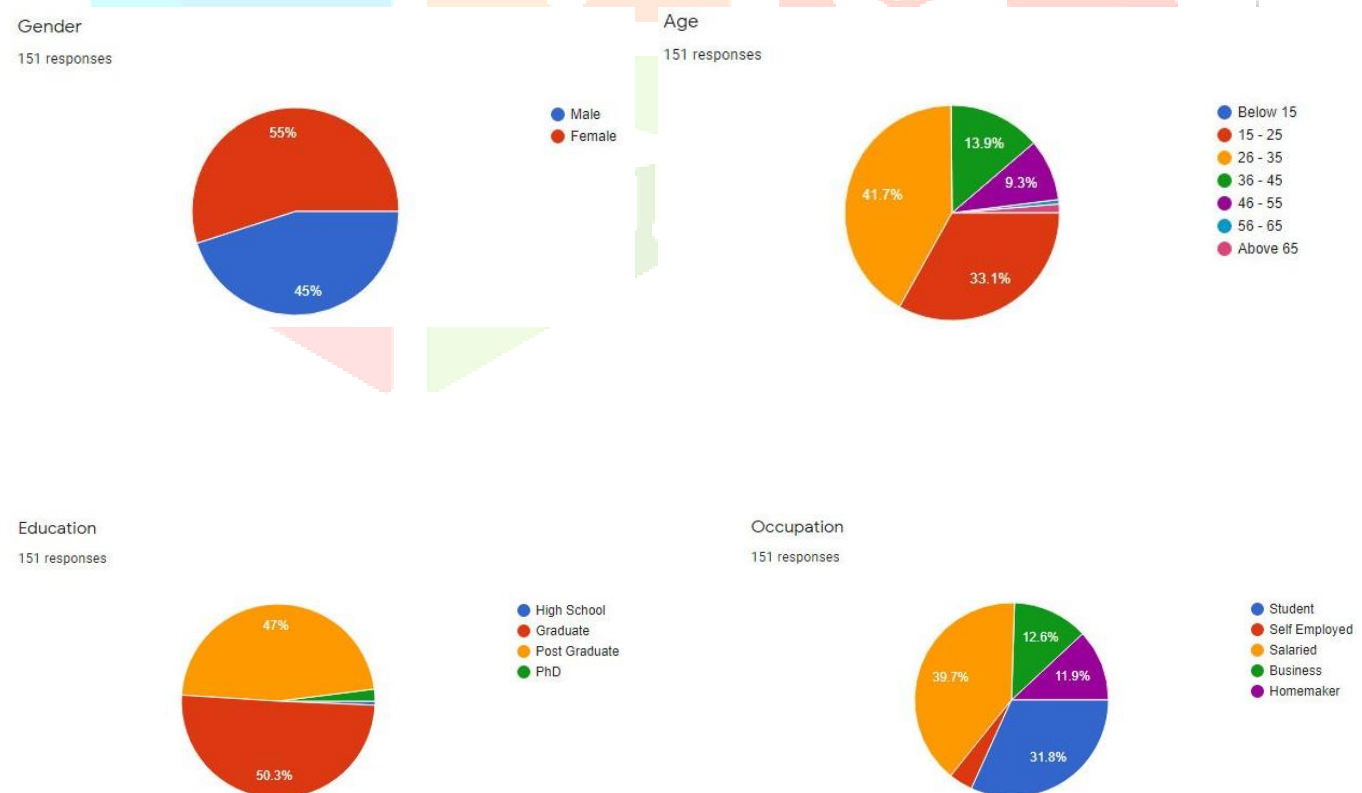
Secondary Data was collected through the internet and other media. Newspapers, magazines, blogs, websites and research papers were also used.

The tool used to analyse and interpret the data is SPSS. Specifically, the data analysis techniques used for the analysis are

- Factor analysis
- Chi-Square
- Excel for charts and tables

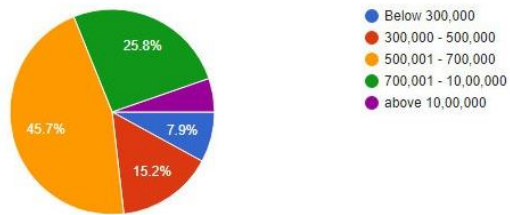
### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The demographic data is analysed in the first five charts:



## Income (Annual Family Income)

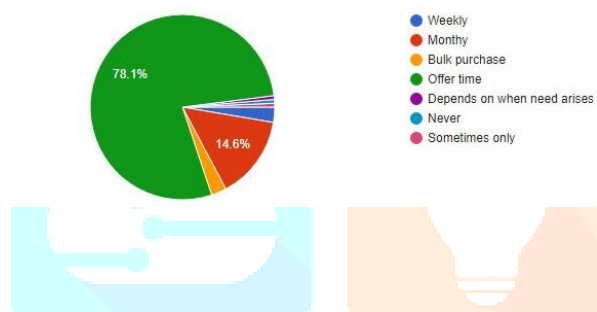
151 responses



## How often do you shop online for clothes?

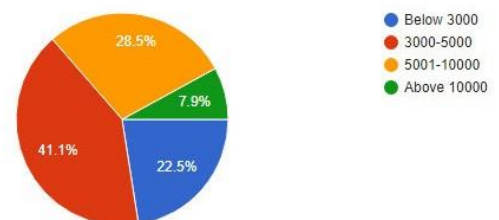
## How often do you shop online for clothes?

151 responses



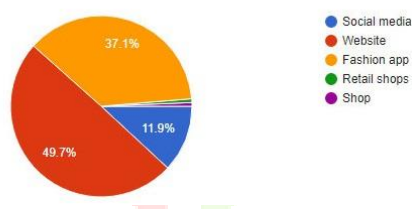
## How much do you spend on clothing per year?

151 responses



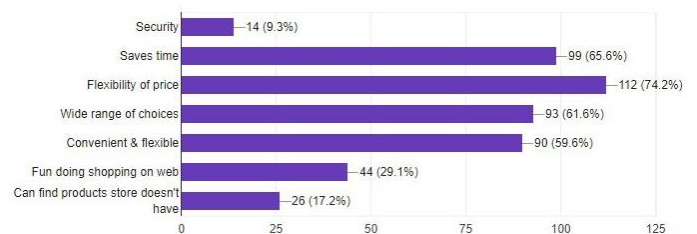
## Which digital platform do you usually prefer to buy clothes?

151 responses



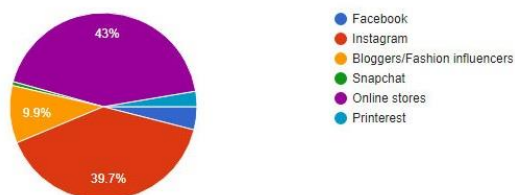
## Why do you prefer online shopping?

151 responses



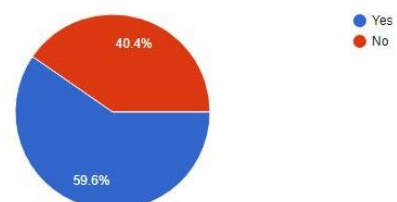
## What social media sites influence your buying decisions?

151 responses



## Do you follow fashion brands on social networking sites?

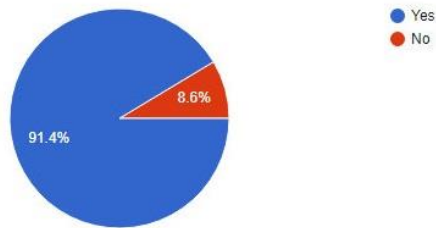
151 responses





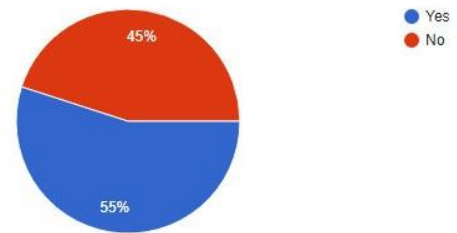
Have you noticed apparel advertisement on social media?

151 responses



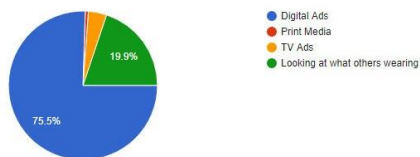
Do you follow fashion related blogs?

151 responses



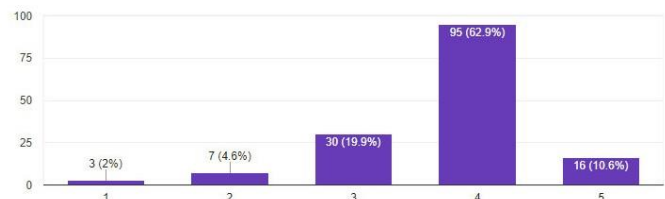
How do you observe the latest fashion trends?

151 responses



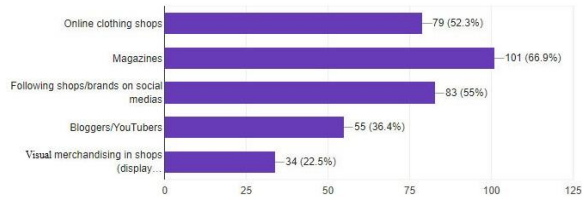
Do you copy fashion from social media?

151 responses



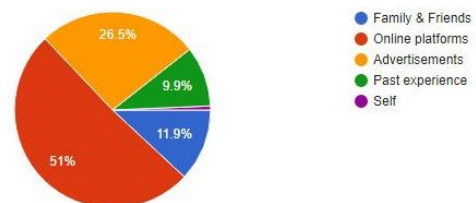
Where do you find inspiration regarding what clothing to purchase?

151 responses



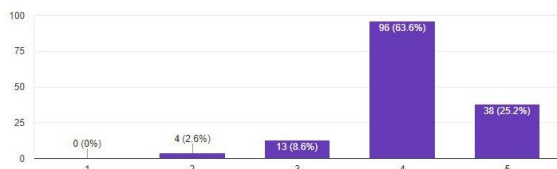
What source of information influence your buying decision?

151 responses



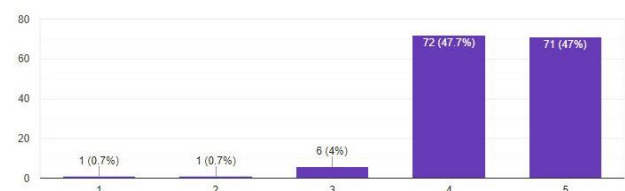
How much do you agree that social media helps in acquiring information about fashion trends?

151 responses



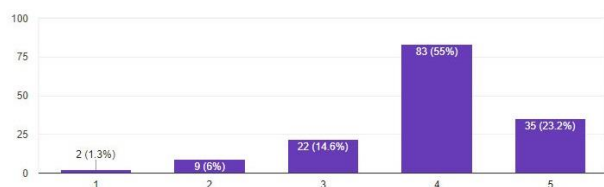
Do reviews and ratings affect your buying decisions?

151 responses



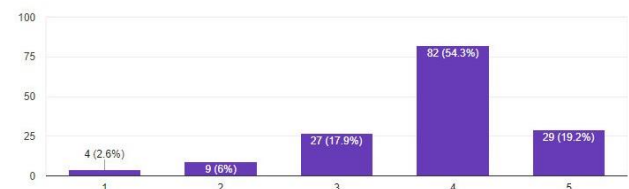
Do social media influencers influence your online purchases?

151 responses



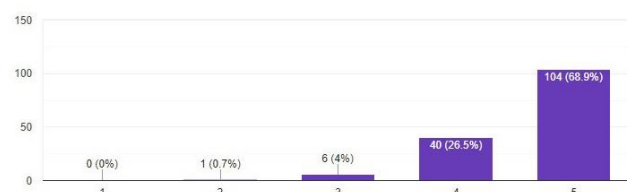
Do watch review videos of fashion influencers before purchasing?

151 responses



Do delivery charges impact your decision to buy from online retailers?

151 responses



## FACTOR ANALYSIS

### 1) How important are the following factors in your choice of an apparel

#### KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.930
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3956.013
	df	300
	Sig.	.000

#### Total Variance Explained

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues		Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	15.276	61.103	61.103	15.276	61.103	61.103	7.897	31.586	31.586
2	1.536	6.143	67.246	1.536	6.143	67.246	6.686	26.743	58.329
3	1.164	4.656	71.902	1.164	4.656	71.902	3.393	13.573	71.902
4	.854	3.416	75.317						
5	.819	3.278	78.595						
6	.720	2.879	81.474						
7	.555	2.221	83.695						
8	.508	2.032	85.728						
9	.440	1.759	87.486						
10	.405	1.618	89.105						
11	.350	1.402	90.507						
12	.310	1.239	91.746						
13	.279	1.116	92.862						
14	.257	1.028	93.890						
15	.249	.994	94.885						
16	.231	.924	95.809						
17	.180	.721	96.530						
18	.174	.696	97.226						
19	.145	.582	97.808						
20	.127	.510	98.318						
21	.107	.430	98.747						
22	.098	.393	99.140						
23	.097	.389	99.529						
24	.064	.258	99.787						
25	.053	.213	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Component		
	1	2	3
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Personal preference]	.813	.322	.230
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Standard]	.738	.398	.307
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Durability & Easy care]	.735	.392	.203
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Advertising & Promotion]	.732	.150	.374
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Design]	.716	.495	.141
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Workmanship]	.697	.183	.330
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Fabric softness]	.671	.547	.066
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Trend]	.654	.333	.491
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Uniqueness]	.642	.399	.329
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Style]	.639	.216	.577
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Fashion]	.623	.569	.146
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Pattern]	.607	.545	.230
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Texture]	.596	.581	.058
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Discounts and Offers]	.232	.804	.133
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Price]	.135	.767	.283
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Size]	.440	.761	.091
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Varieties]	.480	.693	.247
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Availability]	.330	.675	.362
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Value for money]	.489	.654	.284
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Quality]	.593	.611	.195
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Comfy]	.544	.558	.197
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Brand]	.122	.010	.846
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Material]	.273	.499	.622
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Color]	.250	.445	.563
How do the following factors affect your choice of an apparel [Lines]	.406	.290	.546

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

The KMO value is .930 and Bartlett's test is significant. This indicates that factor analysis is permissible with given data 25 variables have been reduced to 3 factors which account for 71.902% of the variance in the data. Factor 1 consist of personal preference, standard, durability & easy care, advertising & promotion, design, workmanship, fabric softness, trend, uniqueness, style, fashion, pattern, texture. Factor 2 consist of discounts and offers, price, size, varieties, availability, value for money, Quality, comfy. Factors 3 consist of brand, material, color, lines.

- Factor 1 is termed as Variety and quality
- Factor 2 is termed as price and discounts and offers
- Factor 3 is termed as brand



## Chi-Square Test

### 1) Age & Which digital platform do you usually prefer to buy clothes?

Crosstabulation

Count		VAR00010						
		Fashion app	Retail shops	Shop	Social media	Website	Which digital platform do you usually prefer to buy clothes?	Total
VAR00004	15 - 25	29	1	0	7	13	0	50
	26 - 35	19	0	1	5	38	0	63
	36 - 45	7	0	0	2	12	0	21
	46 - 55	1	0	0	2	11	0	14
	56 - 65	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Above 65	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
	Age	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		56	1	1	18	75	1	152

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	187.231 <sup>a</sup>	30	.000
Likelihood Ratio	45.824	30	.032
N of Valid Cases	152		

a. 32 cells (76.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no influence of age on the choice of digital platform to buy clothes.

The significance value is lower than .05. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis.

We conclude that there is influence of age on the choice of digital platform to buy clothes.

## 2) Gender & How do you observe the latest fashion trends?

Count

Crosstabulation

		VAR00016					
		Digital Ads	How do you observe the latest fashion trends?	Looking at what others wearing	Print Media	TV Ads	Total
VAR00003	Female	62	0	18	0	3	83
	Gender	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Male	52	0	12	1	3	68
Total		114	1	30	1	6	152

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	153.614 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	14.021	8	.081
N of Valid Cases	152		

a. 11 cells (73.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no influence of gender on the source to observe latest trend.

The significant value is less than .05. Hence we reject the null hypothesis. We conclude that there is influence of gender on the source to observe latest trend.

## 3) Age & How do you observe the latest fashion trends?

Crosstabulation

Count

		VAR00016					
		Digital Ads	How do you observe the latest fashion trends?	Looking at what others wearing	Print Media	TV Ads	Total
VAR00004	15 - 25	37	0	10	0	3	50
	26 - 35	45	0	17	1	0	63
	36 - 45	18	0	2	0	1	21
	46 - 55	12	0	1	0	1	14
	56 - 65	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Above 65	1	0	0	0	1	2
	Age	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		114	1	30	1	6	152

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	173.007 <sup>a</sup>	24	.000
Likelihood Ratio	29.304	24	.209
N of Valid Cases	152		

a. 29 cells (82.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no influence of age on the source to observe latest trend.

The significant value is less than .05. Hence we reject the null hypothesis. We conclude that there is influence of age on the source to observe latest trend.

#### 4) Age & What social media sites influence your buying decisions?



Crosstabulation

Count

		VAR00012						What social media sites influence your buying decisions?	Total
		Bloggers/Fa shion influencers	Facebook	Instagram	Online stores	Prnterest	Snapchat		
VAR00004	15 - 25	5	2	19	22	2	0	0	50
	26 - 35	5	3	26	26	2	1	0	63
	36 - 45	5	0	13	3	0	0	0	21
	46 - 55	0	1	2	11	0	0	0	14
	56 - 65	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Above 65	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Age	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		15	6	60	65	4	1	1	152

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	179.014 <sup>a</sup>	36	.002
Likelihood Ratio	43.170	36	.192
N of Valid Cases	152		

a. 40 cells (81.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no influence of age on the social media sites which influence buying decisions.

The significant value is less than .05. Hence we reject the null hypothesis. We conclude that there is influence of age on the social media sites which influence buying decision.

### 5) Gender & How often do you shop online for clothes?

**Crosstabulation**

Count

		VAR00008								Total
		Bulk purchase	Depends on when need arises	How often do you shop online for clothes?	Monthly	Never	Offer time	Sometimes only	Weekly	
VAR00003	Female	0	0	0	11	1	69	0	2	83
	Gender	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Male	4	1	0	11	0	49	1	2	68
Total		4	1	1	22	1	118	1	4	152

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	161.048 <sup>a</sup>	14	.004
Likelihood Ratio	23.659	14	.050
N of Valid Cases	152		

- a. 20 cells (83.3%) have expected count less than 5.  
The minimum expected count is .01.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no influence of gender on how often people shop online for clothes

The significant value is less than .05. Hence we reject the null hypothesis. We conclude that there is influence of gender on how often shop online for clothes.

### MAJOR FINDINGS

1. 78.1% of respondents are shopping for clothes during promotional periods. 14.6 % of them make monthly purchases. So, promotions and offers are an important influence on buying decision
2. Among those who responded, 49.7% prefer to purchase apparel from a website, 37.1% prefer a fashion app, and 11.9% prefer social media. So dedicated shop websites are still preferred
3. 43% of respondents are inspired by online retailers and advertisements, 39.7% by Instagram, and 9.9% by fashion bloggers. The trend of following fashion bloggers is still only picking up.
4. 59.6 percent of the respondents follow fashion brands on social networking sites.

5. 91.4 percent of the respondents are aware of clothing advertising on social media.
6. Fashion-related blogs are followed by 55 percent of those surveyed.
7. 75.5 percent of respondents observe the latest fashion trends from digital ads, while 19.9 % observe trends through what others are wearing.
8. 62.9 percent of those polled said they are likely, 10.6 percent said they are very likely, 19.9 percent said they are neutral, and the rest said they are not likely to copy fashion trends seen on social media.
9. According to the survey, when deciding what clothes to buy, 66.9 percent are affected by magazines, 55 percent are prompted by following shops/brands on social media, 52 percent are inspired by online clothing stores, 36.5 percent are encouraged by fashion influencers/bloggers, and just 22.5 percent are influenced by visual merchandising in stores (display/mannequins).
10. Online platforms influence about half of respondents, advertisers influence 26.5 percent, and friends and family influence just 11.9 percent.
11. The majority of those polled agreed that social media aids in the retrieval of information about fashion trends. 63.6% agreed, 25.2 % strongly agreed, 18.6% were neutral, and the remaining 23.6 % dissented.
12. Among those who responded, 47.7 percent agreed, 47 percent strongly agreed, 4 percent were neutral, and the remaining respondents objected that reviews and ratings affect their buying decision.
13. Out of the questionnaires distributed, 55% agreed, 23.2% strongly agreed, 14.6% were neutral, and the rest of the respondents disagreed that social media influencers have an influence on their online purchases.
14. Out of respondents, 54.3% were likely, 19.2% were most likely, 17.9% were neutral, and the remaining respondents were reluctant to watch fashion influencer review videos before purchasing.
15. Out of those polled, delivery charges influence their purchasing decision in 68.9 percent of cases, likely in 26.5 percent of cases, 4 percent of cases are neutral.

### **Summarised result of factor analysis**

The most influential factors in choice of apparel, came out as the following three: Factor 1 - Variety and quality, Factor 2 – price, discount and offers and Factor 3-brand

### **Summarised results of chi-square test**

From the output that we have obtained, it is clear that

- There is influence of age on the choice of digital platform to buy clothes.
- There is influence of gender on the source to observe latest trend.
- There is influence of age on the source to observe latest trend.
- There is influence of age on the social media sites which influence buying decision.
- There is influence of gender on how often shop online for clothes.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

- Make it more convenient for the consumer by matching all accessories with the clothing, such as shoes, ornaments, and so on. This will also benefit consumers who have limited knowledge of the latest fashion. Furthermore, they do not have to search the entire site or shop for suitable matching.
- To find the best fit for the products their customers select, online retailers should improve technology, such as virtually illustrating the size.
- Create a virtual platform to serve 3D 360 shopping experiences that will make customers feel the experience as real.
- Develop 3D body scanning in digital platform for clothing, which will make more genuine for consumers, and with this technology, they will be able to understand which items are more suitable for them, similar to visiting a shop.
- Conducting surveys allows us to learn about people's perceptions and, as a result, we can determine what features they require.
- Provide more user-friendly features in apps and websites for purchasing apparel.
- The trend of following fashion bloggers is still low now, it needs to be followed to see if there is an increase in the future. If it does, there is a good opportunity to provide personalised service like a blog dedicated to reviews of the brand and advice from fashion experts and influencers

### **CONCLUSION**

It is seen that there is a lot of scope for the success of this industry by maximising the benefits of internet and technology, which has permeated every corner of the world. The apparel retailers have to perfect their online customer service and match it with that which is provided in person, in a showroom or a retail store. Studies of this type help in identifying those aspects of the buying experience that are most important to the customer and what more the customer expects. In a world of growing consumerism, where the customer is spoilt for choice, it is in the interest of their own survival that retailers and manufacturers must act without delay in maximising the customer delight while shopping for fashion apparel through the online mode.



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