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A Study On Online Apparel Consumers' Behavior - Application Of Utaut2

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Abstract

The study found that performance expectancy significantly influences online apparel shopping intention, with a positive path. Effort expectancy positively influences buying intention, indicating ease of use. Perceived risk has an insignificant influence on buying intention. Social norms negatively influence buying intention, but the effect is minimal. Hedonic motivation positively and significantly influences buying intention. The study applies the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology UTAUT2 in online apparel consumers.

Keywords: Social norms, Effort expectancy, buying intention

Introduction

Online shopping is a form of electronic commerce that enables consumers to buy goods or services directly from sellers over the internet using a web browser or a mobile app. Customers can find products by visiting a retailer's website directly or by searching among alternative vendors using a shopping search engine. This method of shopping has become increasingly popular within the internet community. Whether it's clothing, electronics, or pet supplies, the trend of online shopping continues to grow. By 2020, customers were shopping online using a variety of devices, including desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Every year, hundreds of websites and applications are developed to meet this rising demand.

Different online payment methods are available to facilitate transactions, making it easy and convenient for customers to purchase products online. This convenience has made online shopping a preferred option for many, offering a comfortable and efficient way to shop. E-shopping, also known as electronic shopping, was invented by Michael Aldrich in 1979. This innovation allowed online transaction processing between businesses and customers, marking a major milestone in the development of e-commerce.

In 1990, Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web (WWW), the first-ever web browser, which became a key enabler of online shopping. The year 1995 witnessed a significant transformation with the launch of Amazon.com by Jeff Bezos, now the world's largest online marketplace. Around the same time, eBay.com, often referred to as "Auction Web," emerged as a popular platform for online auctions. The evolution of online payment systems was another critical development. In 1998, PayPal introduced a revolutionary payment system, and by 2006, it launched new methods for people to exchange money and shop directly from their cell phones. In 1999, Alibaba.com, a Chinese online marketplace, was established, becoming a key player in global e-commerce. In 2004, Shopify made it possible for small-scale sellers with limited capital to set up their online storefronts, further democratizing access to e-commerce. By 2020, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp became popular channels for conducting online trades, reflecting the growing integration of e-commerce with social networking. Looking ahead, the world is likely to witness a complete shift toward an online shopping era, as advancements in technology continue to shape how we buy and sell products and services.

The primary purpose of online shopping is to enable the purchase and sale of products and services over the internet, eliminating the need for customers to visit physical stores. Online shopping functions similarly to retail shopping but is conducted entirely online. Online shopping platforms offer several features to enhance the shopping experience, including product descriptions, images, price comparisons, customer ratings, and discounts. These features allow consumers to make informed purchasing decisions conveniently from their homes. One significant benefit of online shopping is its direct access to consumers, which helps retailers understand their preferences and behavior. Cookies play a crucial role in this process by tracking customer selections and interactions over the internet.

Online shopping typically operates on two primary models:

- Business-to-Business (B2B**):** Transactions between businesses.
- Business-to-Consumer (B2C): Transactions between businesses and individual consumers.

The shopping cart is one of the most important facilities provided by online shopping platforms. It allows customers to browse various goods and services, select items for purchase, and place them in a virtual cart before proceeding to checkout.

Conceptual framework

Venkatesh et al. (2003) proposed the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) based on a comprehensive review and synthesis of several theoretical models. The UTAUT model explains a significant amount of variance in **behavioral intention** and **usage behavior**, making it a robust framework for understanding technology adoption. To develop the UTAUT model, Venkatesh et al. conducted an extensive study of eight major theories:

1. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) – Fishbein (1975)
2. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) – Davis (1989)
3. Motivational Model (MM) – Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1992)
4. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) – Ajzen (1991)
5. The PC Utilization Model (MPCU) – Thompson, Higgins, and Howell (1991)
6. Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) – Rogers (1962)
7. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) – Bandura (1986)
8. An Integrated Model of Technology Acceptance and Planned Behavior (TAM-TPB) – Taylor and Todd (1995)

By integrating these theories, the UTAUT model provides a unified perspective, capturing key factors influencing technology acceptance and use.

The UTAUT2 model includes cost and benefit-oriented variables in the study. The present study applies the UTAUT2 model for structuring the research design. Chakraborty and Al Rashdi (2018) use UTAUT2 in social acceptance. Khurana and Jain (2019) apply the UTAUT2 Model for fashion products. Huang (2023) also suggests that UTAUT2 is best suitable for digital marketing studies.

Research methodology

A detailed survey will be conducted to collect data and information essential for the study. This research adopts a **descriptive and exploratory approach** to understand the dynamics of online shopping behaviour. The data collection will focus on customers residing in the **Thanjavur district**, ensuring the inclusion of a diverse range of respondents. A well-structured questionnaire will be designed in the simplest manner possible to ensure accessibility and comprehension for all participants. This study will utilize both **primary data**, collected directly through surveys and questionnaires, and **secondary data**, gathered from relevant literature, reports, and online sources.

The study employs Measured Structural Equation Modeling (MSEM) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to meet its research objectives. These methods, widely adopted by modern researchers, particularly with the use of AMOS software, are applied after conducting necessary preliminary analyses. Pre-Model

Analysis Before executing MSEM and SEM, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) are performed to validate the model and ensure accurate loadings for the variables.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):

- Conducted in SPSS software (version 21).
- Aims to test **convergent validity**, **discriminant validity**, and **reliability** of the data set.
- Determines how well the measures of a latent variable share variance and how they differ from other variables.
- **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**:
- Validates the structure suggested by EFA.
- Assesses the **validity** and **reliability** of the measurement model.
- Includes steps to refine the model (from rough to final measurement model).

Variable Screening Before EFA, the following aspects of the dataset are screened:

- Missing Data: Ensures completeness of the dataset.
- Skewness and Kurtosis: Assessed to ensure data normality (via Normality Table). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Parameters

- Sampling Adequacy: Determines if the sample is sufficient for factor analysis.
- Convergent Validity: Examines whether items effectively measure the same construct.
- Discriminant Validity: Ensures constructs are distinct from each other.
- Reliability: Evaluates the consistency of the measurement items.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Parameters - Validity and Reliability Checks: Assesses the strength of the measurement model. Model Refinement: Involves rough modeling followed by adjustments to finalize the measurement model. **Structural Model Analysis** Measured Structural Equation Modeling (MSEM): Evaluates relationships between observed variables and latent constructs, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM): Analyzes the overall structure and relationships within the model. **Descriptive Statistics of Hypothesis Variables:** MSEM has been executed to test the second part hypotheses, which are formed based on UTAUT2 with consumer perceived risk and trust (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The measurement model is also a comfortable fit, and it helps to run MSEM to test the hypotheses of the study.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistic of Hypothesized Variable

Study Variables	No.of items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Effort Expectancy	3	1	5	3.40	0.95
Performance Expectancy	4	1	5	3.59	0.92
Product Risk	4	1	5	3.63	0.88
Social Influence	3	1	5	3.69	1.06
Hedonic Motivation	2	1	5	3.73	0.86
Buyer Intention	1	1	5	3.84	1.00
Buyer behaviour	3	1	5	3.86	0.85

Source – primary data

Measured Structural Equation Modeling (MSEM)

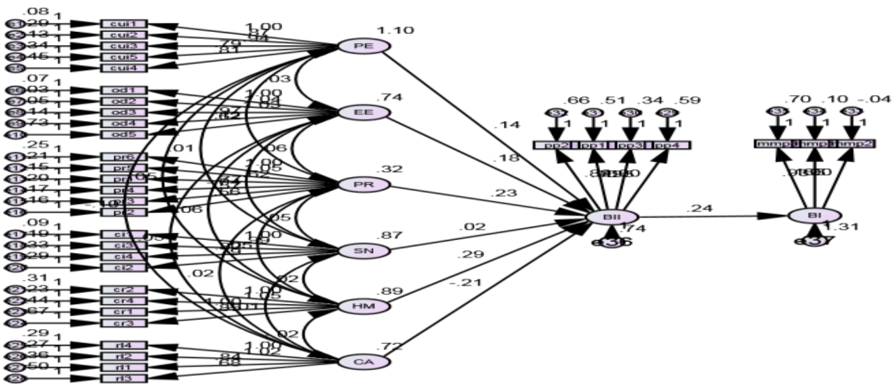

Table 2 Results of MSEM

				Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
H1	Buying intention	<---	Performance expectancy	.137	.067	2.043	.041	Accepted
H2	Buying intention	<---	Effort expectancy	.176	.080	2.208	.027	Accepted
H3	Buying intention	<---	Perceived risk	.225	.134	1.676	.094	Rejected
H4	Buying intention	<---	Social norms	-.018	.074	-.236	.813	Rejected
H5	Buying intention	<---	Hedonic motivation	.291	.077	3.769	***	Accepted
H6	Buying intention	<---	Cost analysis	-.212	.086	-2.455	.014	Accepted
H7	Buyer behavior	<---	Buying intention	.244	.087	2.790	.005	Accepted

Source: primary data

Results of Measured Structural Equation Modeling

H1: Performance Expectancy and Online Apparel Shopping Intention - Result: Accepted, Findings: Performance expectancy significantly influences online apparel shopping intention. The path is positive, with an estimated influence of 0.137 and a p-value of 0.041 .the present results supports Hartinah, Imsiyah, and Himmah (2019) studies in online apparel shoppings.

H2: Effort Expectancy and Buying Intention- Result: Accepted, Findings: Effort expectancy positively and significantly influences buying intention, indicating that ease of use has a strong impact on the buying intent of online apparel shoppers.

H3: Perceived Risk and Buying Intention- Result: Rejected, Findings: Perceived risk has an insignificant influence on buying intention. This suggests that consumers' perception of risk does not significantly affect their intent to buy.

H4: Social Norms and Buying Intention- Result: Rejected, Findings: Social norms negatively influence buying intention, but the effect is not significant. This indicates that the influence of a customer's social surroundings on buying intention is minimal. Khurana and Jain (2019) suggest social norms role is limited and present study suggest SN role positive and not significant.

H5: Hedonic Motivation and Buying Intention- Result: Accepted, Findings: Hedonic motivation positively and significantly influences the buying intent of online shoppers. This finding aligns with prior research (Venkatesh et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2018), suggesting that the pleasure-driven motivation in online apparel shopping continues to affect buying intention.

H6: Cost Analysis and Online Shopping Behavior-Result: Accepted, Findings: Cost analysis significantly and positively influences online shopping behavior. This supports previous studies (Laroche, 2005; Masoud, 2013), showing that shoppers are influenced by cost considerations in their behavior.

H7: Buyer Intent and Online Apparel Shopping Behavior- Result: Accepted, Findings: Buyer intent significantly influences online apparel shopping behavior. This is consistent with earlier studies (Ajzen, 1985; Venkatesh et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2012), confirming that buying intent is a critical predictor of online shopping behavior.

Finding of the study - The study examines the impact of social media on online shopping behavior in Thanjavur district, focusing on the demographics of respondents. The survey included 42.3% males, 57.1%) females and respondents aged 18-25. The majority had monthly incomes between Rs. 20,000- Rs. 30,000, with a smaller percentage earning up to Rs. 10,000.

The survey reveals that 46.15% of respondents have studied up to postgraduate, 35.38% have studied undergraduate, and 13.85% have studied higher secondary. 4.62% are illiterate, and 36.15% are aware of using mobile and TV ads for online shopping. 23.08% of friends and 8.46% of family are aware, and 47.69% use mobile phones for online purchases.

The majority of respondents prefer online shopping for purchasing fashion, electronics, home appliances, and food items.

Online shopping is a popular choice for many, with 35.38% of respondents experiencing quality issues, 26.15% experiencing delivery issues, 20.00% experiencing digital transaction failures, and 18.46% facing unclear website policies. Payment methods include Google Pay, debit cards, credit cards, PayPal, Amazon, Flipkart, Snapdeal, and Big Basket. Credibility and social networking integration are considered necessary features by 36.15% and 30.00% of respondents, respectively. Despite these challenges, online shopping remains a popular choice for many.

Suggestions Based on Study Findings A) Stay Updated with Changing Fashion Trends. Customers should be regularly informed and updated on the latest fashion trends to ensure they make informed choices while shopping online. B) Increase Knowledge About Apparel Products Consumers should be encouraged to gain a better understanding of apparel products, including fabric types, sizes, and quality, to enhance their shopping experience. C) Educate Consumers on Online Shopping Procedures. Efforts should be made to educate consumers about the proper steps involved in online shopping, ensuring a smooth and hassle-free shopping experience. D) Ensure Safe and Secure Transactions It is crucial to ensure that transactions are safe and secure, providing proper assurance to consumers about the security of their personal and financial information during online purchases. Online shopping platforms should prioritize these aspects to improve consumer satisfaction and engagement.

Conclusion

The internet has unlocked significant business potential by facilitating global connections. Based on the findings, it is concluded that online shopping is increasingly popular among the younger generation. However, safety concerns and a low level of trust in online stores remain significant barriers to the growth of online shopping. The key factors driving online shopping for apparel include: Facilities offered by online stores, Time-saving benefits, Promotional offers and advertisements, Competitive pricing, Customer service, Impact on the economy, and Flexibility to adapt to changing market trendsDespite these advantages, challenges remain, particularly in the apparel sector. Problems such as size mismatches, quality assurance, and logistical issues are prevalent. However, improving the supply chain, offering innovative business models, and providing accessible payment options could significantly enhance the success of online apparel shopping.

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