



IMPACT OF WEBSITE APPEARANCE ON THE USER EXPERIENCE IN THE FASHION RETAIL SECTOR

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Abstract: This study helps one to gain an insight into the main premise of the study that is E-Commerce Fashion Retail Apps and User Experience and brings into light how the choice of using a website and the frequency of website depends upon the attributes of website appearance and design.

This research will prove to be helpful to website developers and e-commerce handlers and in turn bring about improved user experience and enhance user engagement.

Index Terms – Website Design, Fashion Retail Sector, Website Appearance, User Experience, Buying Behavior, Online Shopping

1. INTRODUCTION

Fashion Retail Market is a consumer goods market that aims to offer various types of items ranging from garments to accessories and is determined by relatively small time periods, by competition and the evolving needs of the consumers. The ever increasing rise in this segment is understood and relevant and is going to eventually last for the coming years as well, helping retailers that opt for a multi-channel strategy. It's said that fashion retailers need to capitalize on new opportunities, as innovation is expected to sustain the category. (Verdict 2012). According to (Kautish et al., 2019). It is essential for the fashion businesses in India to focus upon evolving their models in order to meet the diverse needs of the current market.

Future models such as e-commerce (purchasing and selling goods and services via electronic media) and m-commerce (mobile-based shopping through hand-held apps that are mostly wireless) have modified fashion business outlooks; other upcoming changes have come into play due to consumer awareness of online retail, which is now on the rise across all different demographics. (McCormick et al., 2014). E-commerce is probably creating the most major change in the retail segment, and this trend is likely to last for the generations to come.

According to (Keshav et al., 2016), E-commerce (Electronic commerce) is a changing shift impacting both marketers and the consumers. Rather e-commerce is adding a way to boost the current business strategies. This significant change in business model is bringing about huge growth around the globe and India is one to adapt to it as well. India is projected to become one of the fastest-growing e-commerce markets in the world, with significant developments in the industry and an increase in the number of Internet users. This inclination towards online shopping is based on the fact that it provides customers to shop anything from any place that makes it convenient to purchase products.

The key factors driving online purchase are:

- Convenience
- Speed
- Assurance
- Accuracy
- Options

Current trends in online shopping in India show that the majority of buyers choose to shop at websites that allow them to purchase a wide variety of items from a range of different stores rather than one, select retail. In the last years, the diffusion of Internet as a new retail channel is developing with a great growth. In a market with a target of more than 1300 million people and more than 70 thousand million dot-com websites in the world the opportunities of trading are almost infinite. (Carlos et al., 2008). One of the countries that has taken the most benefit of the Internet retail revolution has been India. The Retail market in India is projected to reach \$1.375 trillion while the Indian e-commerce industry is expected to cross 200 bn mark by 2026. The E-commerce market in India is also set to grow at a CAGR of 30% for gross merchandise value to reach \$200 bn by 2026, and have a market penetration of 12% compared to 2% currently and the reason for such a significant growth across the country is due to changing lifestyles, convenience and flexibility of shopping from home and option of free home delivery.

As the Internet and E-commerce are evolving, different points of view are arising to determine what could be the key factors of website design. (Gurrea et al., 2009). Through website design, business owners are able to create a user-friendly and accommodating online environment where visitors can receive useful information at any time of the day. Therefore, when there is a well-managed website, it will be easier to use, the content will be more structured and accessible, which will attract customers to the website and also help increase the frequency of visiting the website. The focus issue that needs attention in website design is how to help consumers quickly find the target products and complete the shopping process quickly and clearly. Based on this, it is necessary to strengthen the application of the concept of user experience, meet user needs, increase user volume, and create a good brand effect. (Zhu et al., 2018)

Now, reflecting on one of the most important topics in the online shopping field is user experience, which is a term that refers to the impression that a user has of having communicated with a website. User experience plays a crucial role in determining the customer buying behaviour as well as how satisfied a customer is with the performance of the website.

With the rapid development of the Internet, the architecture of user experience is constantly being optimized, and the constant addition of new elements (including interactive experiences, perceptual engineering, and other related fields) has enabled the concept of user experience to be widely promoted. (Cai et al., 2018)

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Fashion Retail

This particular industry has relatively small product life cycles, extensive product differentiation and is known for its great pace of demand change along with rather long and inflexible supply processes. (Alejandro Mollá-Descals 2012). The fashion retail business keeps growing at a healthy rate, and this, along with the lack of market transition costs and strong product differentiation, means that industry rivalry was no more than moderate. Even in segments like apparel, e-commerce firms have become extremely aggressive throughout the year, offering discounts and holding shopping festivals quite often to play the volume game. (Accord 2014). It has been noticed that in the fashion retail market, a big share of online fashion spending is spent by the 60 million Indian women who are reportedly online. While convenience may be one of the reasons, availability of sheer variety of products, desire to have something unique and discounts are other reasons of shopping online. (Goswami 2015)

The fashion market on the Internet has grown rapidly over the last few years and, increasingly, companies are using this channel as a means for promoting and selling their products on the net (Taylor & Costello, 2017; Torres & Arroyo, 2017).

These virtual shops are information intensive providing customers all the content related to product or services like specifications, cost and feature comparisons, advertisements, offers and discounts. (Hanif Kanjer et al., 2017). Since customers are primarily interested in quality clothing purchases, fashion accessories from multi-brand online retailers and better online atmospheres (Guercini and Runfola, 2015; Kim and Lennon, 2008), online shopping has evolved as a significant fragment of the total retail space which not only offers customer satisfaction but also promises better shopping avenue at an affordable price (Ha and Stoel, 2012; Joung, 2013)

Consumer buying behavior

According to (Bhagat), consumers buying behavior primarily depends upon assurance, empathy, appropriate pricing and website information quality. It was also found that the key factors that affect the online buying behaviour of youths consist of internet facility, ease in process, security of website and timely deliver.

Extended research has found that there is a fundamental difference in behavior between patterns of consumer behavior: those buying online, those browsing online, but buying in-store, and those not shopping online (Robertson et al., 2007). In general, when making purchasing decisions for different types of products, consumers have different orientations. (Kautish et al., 2018)

The effect of the Internet on trading, shopping, marketing, advertisement, retailing and sales practices seems quite important in the highly competitive business environment. (Ege Adamanik Bakis)

In the words of (Gilly et al., 2003) Four aspects affected e-customer satisfaction and suggested that user experience design, compliance / efficiency, confidentiality / protection and e-customer service are strongly predictive of e-customer content and satisfaction decisions.

User experience

ISO (2010) defined user experience as “A person’s perceptions and responses that result from the use or anticipated use of a product, system or service”. Online shopping environments are also evolving with the advancement of digital platforms, and they are able to offer consumers more options in the purchasing process, providing better services and products to them. (Ilias O Pappas 2018)

(Paul 2015) In general, consumers have different orientations when making purchasing decisions for different types of products. Extended research found that there is a fundamental difference in behavior between patterns of consumer behaviour: those buying online, those browsing online, but buying in-store, and those not shopping online (Robertson et al., 2007).

Furthermore, according to (Bucko et al., 2018), User experience is based on more than just the usability of the website but also on other factors such as beauty, emotion, flow of information, engagement and attractiveness. In the words of (Siddiqui et al., 2003), the provision of additional information on fashion and trends can help to improve levels of interactivity, helping to meet growing consumer expectations.

According to (Garrett 2017), Internet usage has increased tremendously and rapidly in the past decade and websites have become the most important public communication portal for most, if not all, businesses. It has been said that the design of a website should create gripping and influential experiences (Solomon, 2008), which engage visitors through the provision of “relevant and rich” information (Kim and Kim, 2004, p. 886). Excellently-designed websites with high accessibility have been shown to have a positive impact on user satisfaction (revisit rates) and buying behaviour (Avouris et al., 2012). Krug (2014) finds the accessible website to be a position where a person with average (or even below average) skills and experience can figure how to use the site in order to do anything. This paper reflects on defining the aspects of web experience that contribute to the connection between customer and fashion apparel online and concludes that the incorporation of both technical and aesthetic details on clothing consumption on fashion websites may make a significant contribution to pleasing customers pursuing both realistic and hedonic online experience.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to determine the impact that various attributes website appearance have on the user experience in the fashion retail sector. Due to the immense growth of fashion retail applications, this research will help in identifying what drives the consumers to choose an application depending upon their experience.

- To focus on the user experience on the basis of appearance of the website, ease in usage.
- To identify whether website appearance has an impact on the frequency of visiting the website.
- To study the buying behaviour of customers in the online fashion retail segment.
- To determine whether effectiveness of the website in meeting needs has an impact on time taken to find an item on the website.

3.2 Statement of the problem:

In the previous years, researchers have studied the user experience in the e-commerce industry but have not predominantly focused on the fashion retail industry. In addition to that, previous researchers have focused upon what drives a consumer to an application in terms of factors such as advertisements, price factors, promotions and referrals but not much attention has been paid to the website design and the various other attributes of website appearance. So, in this research the focus is to determine the impact that website appearance has on the user experience in the fashion retail sector.

3.3 Scope of Study:

- The focus of study is primarily on 5 Fashion Retail Applications that are very widely used by the Indian Population.
- This study focusses on factors such as attributes of website design (Navigation, Simplicity, Aesthetics, Design) and how these factors impact the user experience on a website.
- The literature review helps us gain an insight into the main premise of the study that is E-Commerce Fashion Retail Apps and User Experience and also discusses website design, social media, fashion retail sector, consumer buying behaviour.
- This study also brings into light how the choice of using a website and the frequency of website depends upon the attributes of website appearance and design.

3.4 Variables:

Independent Variables: Website Appearance

Dependent Variables:

- Time Taken to find an Item,
- Frequency of visiting the Website

3.5 Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant relationship between website appearance and frequency of visiting the website.

H1: There is a significant relationship between website appearance and frequency of visiting the website.

H0: There is no significant relationship between time taken to find an item and effectiveness of website in meeting needs.

H2: There is a significant relationship between time taken to find an item and effectiveness of website in meeting needs.

H0: Effectiveness of website in meeting needs does not have a significant impact on time taken to find an item.

H3: Effectiveness of website in meeting needs has a significant impact on time taken to find an item.

3.6 Research Questions:

- To identify the impact of website appearance on the user experience in the fashion retail segment of e-commerce.
- To determine whether website appearance has an impact on the frequency of visiting the website.
- To determine whether effectiveness of the website in meeting needs has an impact on time taken to find an item on the website.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

The tools used to collect the data was a questionnaire which was done on Google Forms and was further shared on various social media platforms in order to acquire the responses.

The questionnaire received 108 responses.

3.8 Sample Design

The data has been collected by the means of primary data. The methodology used to collect the primary data was a structured questionnaire which consisted of 17 questions.

The questionnaire was targeted at customers belonging to the age group of 18-45 all across India and the target sample for this research is consumers who have had experience of online shopping in the fashion retail segment. These questions ranged from basic demographics, website appearance questions and lastly, the decisions impacting their frequency of visiting a website, choice of website and user experience. The sample size is restricted to 108 responses and this type of sampling is referred to as convenience sampling.

3.9 Statistical Tools For Analysis

Descriptive Statistics: Since 3 of the questions were based on Likert Scale, the analysis was done through Descriptive Statistics. Main aspects measured were the skewness of the data, mean, median and mode.

Correlation: In order to find out whether the relationship between the variables were significant, correlation was used. The hypothesis was further accepted/rejected on this basis.

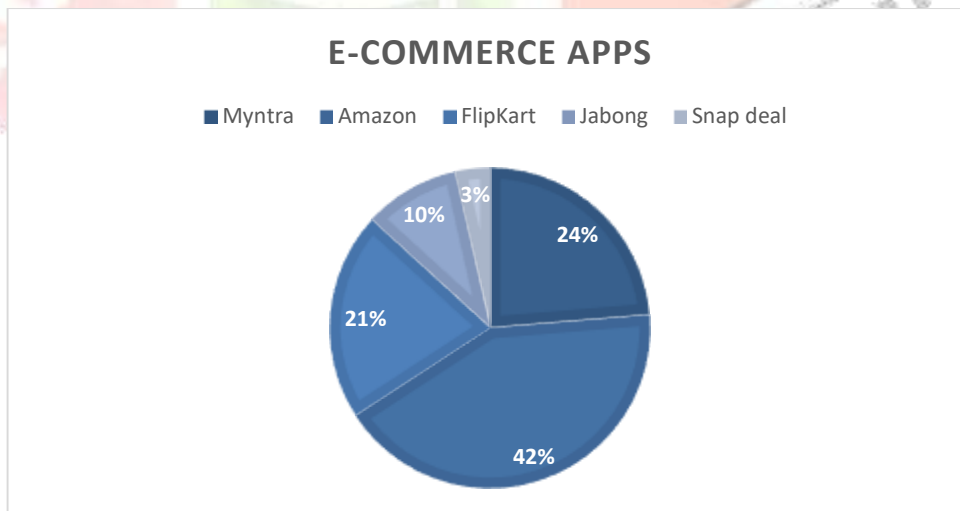
Regression: Since there was only one independent and dependent variable, the linear regression analysis was used. This helped in finding out the dependency of the variables.

3.10 Limitations

- Since the sample size of the research project was based in India and amongst college-going population, and that's considerably a smaller sample size, this study would not be applicable for a larger population.
- The survey was conducted on the assumption that data collected by the respondents is true.
- The survey got a huge proportion of responses from the age group of 18-24 and no other age groups as planned, which otherwise would have given us a better idea of the impact that website appearance has on user experience.

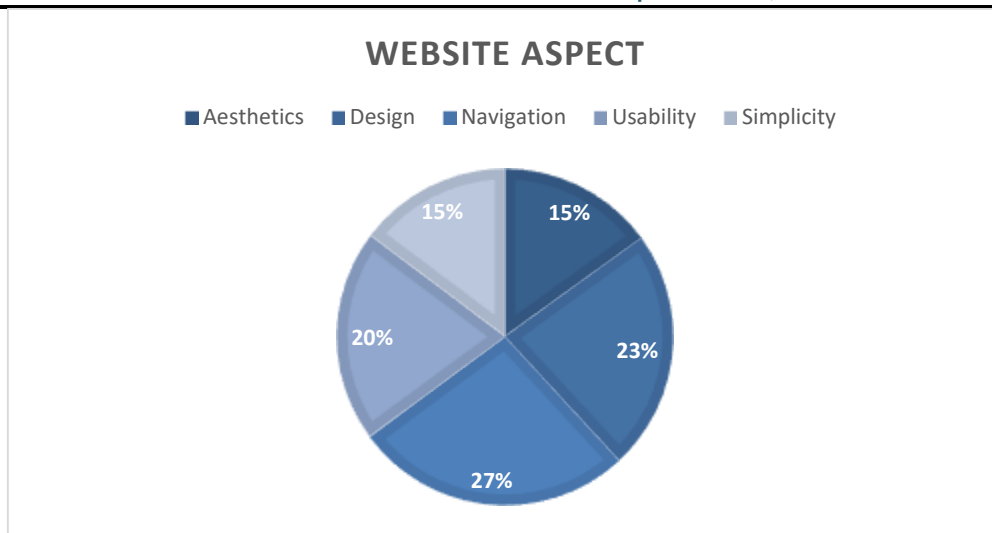
4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Respondent's Profile



This pie-chart takes into consideration the five major fashion retail applications in the E-commerce segment and displays the most preferred application of the respondents. The choice of the application can be due to various aspects of website appearance which have been discussed further.

Hence, it can be perceived that 42% of the respondents shop from Myntra, followed by 24% from Amazon, 21% from Flip Kart, 10% from Jabong and 3% from Snap deal.



There are 5 aspects of Website Design that have been discussed here and each have a significant level of importance for the respondents depending upon what they prefer the most when they visit the website.

From the above pie chart, it can be perceived that 27% focus on the Navigation aspect followed by 23% focus on the design aspect, 20% focus on the usability aspect, 15% focus on the Aesthetics and lastly, the remaining 15% focus on simplicity.

From the data collected, it can be perceived that Navigation is the attribute in the aspect of website appearance that is significantly important to the respondents.

Descriptive Statistics:

Descriptive statistics helps understand the frequency and the distribution, the mean, median and mode. It also helps us understand the skewness of the data. Since we have used the 5 point Likert scale to measure each of the variables, using descriptive analysis we could infer the percentage of respondents felt and perceived who felt a certain way.

The first aspect that was tested through Descriptive Statistics was the effectiveness of the website in meeting the respondents needs

Statistics

How well website met their needs

| N | Valid | Missing |
|------------------------|--------|---------|
| | 108 | 1 |
| Mean | 4.84 | |
| Std. Error of Mean | .040 | |
| Median | 5.00 | |
| Mode | 5 | |
| Std. Deviation | .414 | |
| Variance | .171 | |
| Skewness | -2.677 | |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .233 | |
| Kurtosis | 6.912 | |
| Std. Error of Kurtosis | .461 | |
| Range | 2 | |
| Minimum | 3 | |
| Maximum | 5 | |
| Sum | 523 | |

The values of these were found to be above 3 which is considered neutral intention towards purchase considering that the minimum is 1 and maximum is 5. The skewness value of the data is positive and is asymmetrical which is favorable. Hence, we can conclude from the above table that respondents who took part in the research and were part of the sample population believed that the fact that the website met their needs was considered to be positive.

The second aspect that was tested through Descriptive Statistics was how easy was it to find an item of one's choice on the website.

Statistics

How easy was it to find what you were looking for in the website?

| N | Valid | 108 |
|---|------------------------|-------|
| | Missing | 1 |
| | Mean | 3.96 |
| | Std. Error of Mean | .079 |
| | Median | 4.00 |
| | Mode | 4 |
| | Std. Deviation | .819 |
| | Variance | .672 |
| | Skewness | -.658 |
| | Std. Error of Skewness | .233 |
| | Kurtosis | .723 |
| | Std. Error of Kurtosis | .461 |
| | Range | 4 |
| | Minimum | 1 |
| | Maximum | 5 |
| | Sum | 428 |

Regarding this table helps us understand that the percentage of respondents who believed that the brand had led to a positive perception. The values of these were found to be above 3 which is considered neutral intention towards purchase considering that the minimum is 1 and maximum is 5. The skewness value of the data is positive and is asymmetrical which is favourable. Hence, we can conclude from the above table that respondents who took part in the research and were part of the sample population believed that the fact that it was easy to find an item by the respondent on the website was considered to be positive.

The third aspect that was tested through Descriptive Statistics was how relevant were the images on the website.

Statistics

How relevant did you find the images on the website?

| N | Valid | 108 |
|---|------------------------|--------|
| | Missing | 1 |
| | Mean | 4.07 |
| | Std. Error of Mean | .069 |
| | Median | 4.00 |
| | Mode | 4 |
| | Std. Deviation | .720 |
| | Variance | .518 |
| | Skewness | -.111 |
| | Std. Error of Skewness | .233 |
| | Kurtosis | -1.041 |
| | Std. Error of Kurtosis | .461 |
| | Range | 2 |
| | Minimum | 3 |
| | Maximum | 5 |
| | Sum | 440 |

Regarding how relevant were the images on the website, this table helps to understand that the respondents tended to lean towards the positive side by looking at the mean, median and mode. The values of these are found to be above 3 which is considered neutral intention towards purchase considering that the minimum is 1 and maximum is 5. The skewness value of the data is positive and is asymmetrical which is favourable. Hence, we can conclude from the above table that respondents who took part in the research and were part of the sample population showed that the images on the website were relevant.

Pearson Correlation

The bivariate Pearson Correlations indicates a coefficient of sample correlation, r , which measures the strength and direction of linear relationships among pairs of continuous variables. By extension, the Pearson Correlation assesses whether statistical evidence exists for a linear relationship between the same pairs of variables in the population, represented by a population correlation coefficient, p .

Correlation between Website Appearance and Frequency in visiting the website

Correlations

| | | Frequency to access | Whether website appearance as an important factor |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| Frequency to access | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .064 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .508 |
| | N | 108 | 108 |
| Whether website appearance as an important factor | Pearson Correlation | .064 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .508 | |
| | N | 108 | 108 |

In the above table, it can be noticed that that the P value is 0.508 and the Pearson Correlation is 0.064.

The 2-tailed significance value – which in this case is $P(0.508) > 0.05$ and since the standard alpha value is .05 indicating that the correlation is not significant between website appearance and frequency in visiting the website.

The value of Pearson's r , that is the coefficient of correlation. That's the Pearson Correlation figure which in this case is .064. Pearson's r varies between +1 and -1. In this case, since the correlation coefficient is 0.064, it indicates that there's almost no correlation in this case.

This makes us accept the Null Hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between website appearance and frequency in visiting the website.

The reason that the correlation is not significant between the two variables is because from our research, it was depicted that Navigation is the most important factor for the respondent and not factors such as Aesthetics, Design. So the frequency in visiting the website will be high but it won't be solely because of the website appearance.

Correlation between time taken to find an item and the effectiveness of the website in meeting the needs

Correlations

| | | How well website met their needs | How long did you take while looking for an item of your choice? |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| How well website met their needs | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .476** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 108 | 108 |
| How long did you take while looking for an item of your choice? | Pearson Correlation | .476** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 108 | 108 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the above table, it can be noticed that the P value is 0.000 and the Pearson Correlation is 0.476.

The 2-tailed significance value – which in this case is $P < 0.05$ and since the standard alpha value is .05 indicating that the correlation highly significant between time taken to find an item and effectiveness of the website in meeting the needs.

The value of Pearson's r , that is the coefficient of correlation. That's the Pearson Correlation figure which in this case is .476. Pearson's r varies between +1 and -1. In this case, since the correlation coefficient is 0.476 it indicates that there's a positive correlation in this case.

This makes us accept the Alternate Hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between time taken to find an item and effectiveness of website in meeting the needs.

Regression Analysis

Since the focus of our study is to determine the relationship between one independent and dependent variable, we've chosen Linear Regression.

Variables Entered/Removed^a

| Model | Variables Entered | Variables Removed | Method |
|-------|---|-------------------|--------|
| 1 | How well website met their needs ^b | . | Enter |

a. Dependent Variable: How long did you take while looking for an item of your choice?

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .476 ^a | .227 | .220 | .594 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), How well website met their needs

ANOVA^a

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 Regression | 10.967 | 1 | 10.967 | 31.118 | .000 ^b |
| Residual | 37.357 | 106 | .352 | | |
| Total | 48.324 | 107 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: How long did you take while looking for an item of your choice?

b. Predictors: (Constant), How well website met their needs

Coefficients^a

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | .911 | .674 | | 1.352 | .179 |
| How well website met their needs | .774 | .139 | .476 | 5.578 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: How long did you take while looking for an item of your choice?

R denotes the correlation between time taken and website meeting the needs effectively. In our case, $R = 0.476$. Since this is a high correlation, our model predicts it precisely.

Given only the scores on our predictors, we can predict the time taken to look for an item on the website by computing:

Time taken to find an item on the website = $.911 + 0.744(\text{How well website met their needs})$

The R square in this case is 22.7% which is moderate. This means that 22.7% of the variation in dependent variable can be explained by independent variable.

5. CONCLUSION

With the rapid advance in technology, businesses have been enabled to engage in Internet based businesses. With the use of these web technologies, businesses can reach out to customers, provide information about their products and services, and break through the traditional barriers to grasp new opportunities.

This study analyses the impact of website appearance and looks into the five attributes such as Navigation, Simplicity, Design, Aesthetics and Usability and takes into consideration five most popular fashion retail e-commerce applications in India for a comparison. The main objective of the study was to understand the impact that various attributes and aspects of website appearance has on the consumer experience in the fashion retail sector pertaining to the e-commerce segment. It can be perceived from the study that, Website appearance does impact the user experience and also the willingness of users to purchase a product online

The focus of this study was on three major hypothesis namely: the significant relationship between website appearance and frequency of visiting the website. the significant relationship between website appearance and frequency of visiting the website. dependency of effectiveness of website in meeting the needs with respect to time taken to find an item. In order to test the hypothesis, the tests used were: Descriptive Statistics to analyze the skewness of the data, the mean, median and the mode. Correlation test was used to determine whether there was a level of significance between the two variables and lastly, Regression Analysis was used to determine the dependency of the two variables.

The results and findings were as follows, out of the three hypotheses, the first hypothesis was negative that determined that there was no significant relationship between website appearance and frequency of visiting the website and that was because the respondents preferred the Navigation aspect in the Website Design. In terms of second hypothesis, there was a significant relationship between website appearance and frequency of visiting the website indicative of a positive relationship. Lastly, the third hypothesis suggested a significant impact of effectiveness of website in meeting the needs with respect to time taken to find an item.

In addition to that, it could be perceived out of the five aspects of website design, Navigation was the one that respondents found the most appealing. This indicated that while visiting a website, the respondents prefer to navigate the products, the product information easily. So this highlights one important thing that e-commerce application builders should keep in mind that is, they should ensure that the Navigation aspect is very clear and should focus on maintaining that. A lot of effort should not be spent on maintaining the website design as it was suggested from the research, that the frequency of visiting a website by a consumer may be high but it's not solely because of the website appearance that is the aesthetics aspect. So this study would help the e-commerce application builders prioritize their website design process and ensure its effectiveness.

The study is limited to one sector that is the fashion retail sector and could be extended to other sectors that are very prominent amongst the consumers in order to get a better understanding of website attributes that consumers look for whilst visiting a website. While this study will carve the direction for various e-commerce platforms regarding the website attributes that are of prime importance the study will also provide more confidence as it tackles the various aspects of website appearance that can be further more focussed upon to not only reach out the core audience but also retaining more consumers.

The research asserts that website design is a prime factor in order to attain positive results as it has an impact on consumer behaviour and vision. A website design should emphasize on simplicity and ease in navigation so as to bring about relevant and accessible information in its contents and appearance that calls for the attention of the consumers.

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