Promotion of E-Commerce in Fashion Technology

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Abstract – Fashion in today's world is affecting all walks of life. People of all age are all going crazy over the upcoming trends. Celebrities and Film-stars play their own role in promoting different kinds of life style among the people. But it is not always easy to find the desired product in the local areas. With the advent of E-commerce in the world of fashion technology, it becomes easier for the people to get what they are looking for easily. E-commerce has revolutionized the fashion technology in such a way that it has become easier to get whatever one wants in just a blink of an eye. In this paper, an attempt has been made to propose a hypothetical model for E-commerce which may help in promoting e-commerce in the fashion industry.

Index Terms – E-commerce, Fashion, Technology Acceptance Model.

1. INTRODUCTION

Fashion is a common term everyone has heard of. But how in particular 'fashion' is defined, is a matter of question. In most discrete terms, fashion can be defined as a popular style, may be of clothing, lifestyle product, footwear, makeup, accessories, hairstyle or body. It is the prevailing style in behavior, and newest creations of the technologists, engineers, designers and the design managers. It is a distinctive trend in the style in which a person dresses.

Fashion Trends are influenced by various factors:

- Political Influence: Political figures are an important factor in affecting the fashion trend all over the world. Political leaders and their dressing styles are creating an enormous impact on the youngsters. For example, in 1960s, First lady Jacqueline Kennedy became the fashion icon for promoting the formal wear among the general public.

- Technological Influence: Technology is playing an important role in promoting the fashion trends in the society. With the advancement in technology, it has become possible to develop new fabrics, new designing tools are developed and also the technical equipments have become more of a fashion product today. For example, Google watches is the new inventions developed to monitor the activities of a user and also looks good on a person's hand, thereby promoting fashion trends.

- Economic Influence: With the growing economy, fashion industry has also started to grow. People in today's world act on the saying-"Spend now, Think later". This type of thinking has forced people to try every type of product available in the market and thus creating an urgent need of developing more and more products [1].

Fashion Technology is defined as developing and creating new products and techniques so that the market is always filled up with a new kind of trend. Technological advancement has made it possible to develop new kind of fabrics whether natural or artificial which provides a boom to fashion industry. New products are developed every now and then and thereby creating a large variety of options available to user to choose from. Thus, Fashion technology today has provided researchers a great area to work with [2].

E-commerce is the practice of buying or selling products or services online over the internet. Boost in the internet technology and availability of affordable online services in every hand has made E-commerce a great success in today's world. Also, technologies like Mobile Commerce, Electronic Fund Transfer, Internet Marketing, Supply Chain Management, Inventory Management and data collection has made E-commerce a huge success[3]. E-commerce has boosted the fashion technology to a larger extent. It has made product available to remote areas with just one click. E-commerce has revolutionized the world of fashion technology so much so that the researchers have started to think about the models and techniques to promote E-commerce in fashion technology. In this paper, an attempt has been made to study various model of e-commerce in fashion technology and suggest some changes to improve the productivity [4].

2. BASE-MODEL SUPPORTING E-COMMERCE IN FASHION TECHNOLOGY

Technology Acceptance Model: Developed by Fred Davis and Richard Baggozi, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an information system that defines factors which may influence a user's behavior in accepting a new technology. It defines two factors affecting users' preferences:

- Perceived Usefulness (PU): Davis defines this as the degree to which a person believes that using a new technology/system would enhance his or her job performance.

- Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU): This was defined by Davis as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort.

Most E-commerce models today are an extension of this very model. A variety of other factors including the above two are believed to affect the decision of the user [5].
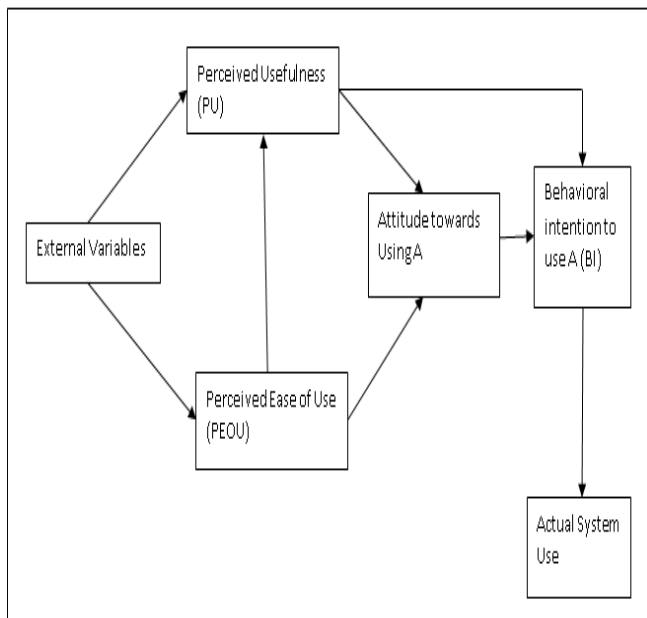

Figure 1: Original TAM Model Developed by Davis and Baggozi [6].

In this model as depicted in figure 1, it was believed that the Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use of the system tend to affect users' Attitude towards using the system. Users' attitude in a way affects his/her Behavioral Intention to use the system, which in turn affects the actual use of the system.

Based on the above model, here we try to propose a model which might help in promoting the e-commerce in fashion industry.

3. HYPOTHETICAL PROPOSED MODEL

The proposed hypothetical model for E-commerce promotion in fashion industry is based out on features provided to Indian Customers by various e-commerce sites. As proposed by Chen and Tan [7], the use of 'Virtual Stores' is affected by a number of factors such as: product offerings, information richness, usability of the store front, perceived service quality and perceived trust. Based on these factors, a new model based on the Technology Acceptance Model, was proposed which affected the decision of the buyers in purchasing goods from online stores. Working along the same line, here we try to list some factors which might affect the e-commerce adoption in fashion industry. Recommendation system of products on the social networking sites is also considered as an important tool

in expanding the use of actual system. The various factors taken into consideration are: virtual fitting rooms, recommendation based on user input, quality check before actual delivery, Perceived Trust and recommendation on social networks. Figure 2 shows the proposed hypothetical model.

Virtual Fitting Rooms

Virtual fitting room is the virtualization of actual trial rooms provided in the bricks and mortars stores. In this, a user can create a model of specified height and weight, based on the consumer for whom the product is to be bought, and then dress their virtual model which the item of their preference. This would increase the usefulness of the system as the user can now easily visualize if the item is suitable for him/ her or not. Many e-commerce sites like, Clothia, Mimicme already provide this service, but the commonly used websites in India like Amazon, Myntra, etc are still far away from using it [8].

Recommendation Based on Users' Input

Input given by user is saved in the memory of the system and later on based on user data, products can be recommended by the system. This helps when the same user is up for shopping next time. Now, the user needs not to submit all the details again. This directly influences Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) of the system and user's attitude towards using the system.

Quality Check before Actual Delivery

Recent study has revealed the users' are complaining regarding the quality of the product is not as per their expectations. Sometimes the duplicate products are delivered in place of the original ones. These kind of behavior tend to affect the user's attitude towards using the system as he/she might not be willing to shop online again. Retailers need to have a proper quality check of the product before the delivery so that the user might not feel deceived.

Perceived Trust

A number of studies have revealed that the reason a lot of customers have not started shopping online yet is due to lack of trust in online business. Trust can be defined as feeling secure or unsecure about relying on an entity. In the context of online shopping, the influencing factors for consumer's lack of trust in the online shopping sites are found to be personal information privacy and data security concerns. Consumers are not willing to share their personal information especially related to account information over the internet. Improved payment gateway and high focus on cash-on-Delivery might help promoting e-commerce in fashion industry [7].

Recommendation on Social Networking Sites

Online sites that provide people to communicate and share with each other over the internet, without the boundaries of known and unknown are termed as Social Networking sites. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc are the perfect examples of this. In

recent times, people of almost all age group are active on the social media. Thus recommending products on these sites to the friends of customers seem to be a logical idea to expand the usage of E-commerce for buying products as the user can trust the product if his/her friend has recommended it. So, there is a need to properly maintain the recommendation system to help promote the use of e-commerce [9]
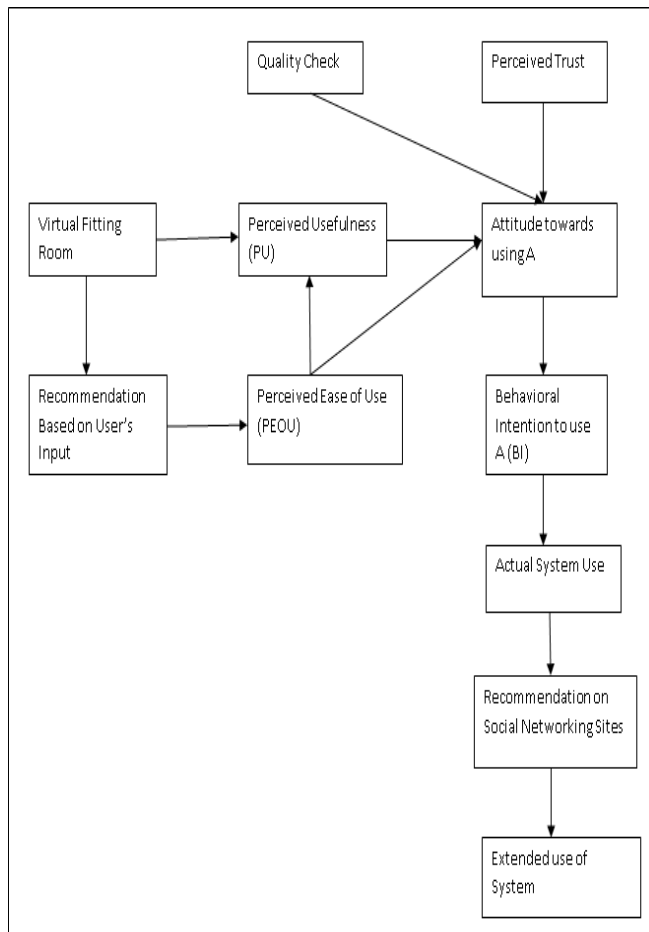

Figure 2: Proposed Hypothetical Model for E-commerce in Fashion Industry

As depicted in the figure 2, these factors contribute towards a more reliable E-commerce system which also enhances its user database based on the recommendation framework.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey is the predominant research methodology used in this work. A questionnaire is developed to include all the items that might affect e-commerce and various users' data was captured to get to some majority concerns. Domain of this questionnaire included people of all age group irrespective of their gender. The items are written in the form of statements with which the respondent is to agree or disagree on a 5-point Likert scale [10]. Some of the items were generated from previous research

projects and modified to fit the context of virtual stores when necessary. New items were developed through a thorough literature review on the topics. From the results of the survey, the most frequently mentioned salient beliefs include:

1. Using an e-commerce site is convenient (40 percent).

2. Using an e-commerce site is helpful in saving time (45 percent).

3. Buying from e-commerce sites is not secured as financial transactions are involved (70 percent)

4. The fact that I cannot judge how the product fits on me, making me abstain from online buying (55 percent).

5. The range of products offered on e-commerce site is very large (75 percent)

6. Using an e-commerce site is costly (30 percent)

7. Using an e-commerce site puts my privacy at risk (40 percent)

8. Do I like to buy something from e-commerce sites if one of my friends has already bought (40 percent)?

From the result of the questionnaire, it was found that though the users think that the e-commerce sites are offering a large variety of products, still they don't want to shop online because of the security concerns of the financial transactions or the fact that actual look of the product is unknown. Also it shows that online a small number of people think that the online stores are a costly option to go for. People also seem to agree on the fact that recommendation might help promoting e-commerce in the fashion industry.

5. CONCLUSION

The above study shows that the use of e-commerce in fashion industry is increasing as it saves users' time in the hectic schedule of today and they got to choose from a large variety than the brick and mortar sore. But at the same time, there are some concerns which need to be worked to promote its usage like security factors. Thus E-commerce today is showing a great alternative to the traditional brick and mortar store and in future it has the ability to overtake the traditional stores.

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