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The impact of True Fit Technology on Consumer Confidence in their online clothing purchase

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As online shopping gains traction, consumers have more choice from where they buy clothing, however, it also comes with the worry that because they are buying a clothing item sight-unseen, it is not likely to fit and hence will be a waste of money. Research has found that there are significant variations in clothing sizes across different apparel brands with the average online apparel retailer experiencing a return rate of 28%, and 80% due to fit issues (Vozza, 2016). Different sizing technologies have been developed to address this sizing issue. One is True Fit, which unlike other sizing technologies, uses mathematical algorithms to compile large amount of data from designers. The algorithms created, calculate a customer's size and shape based on information they have provided and then compares this to the specs of the garment they are thinking of purchasing (Binkley, 2012). It then recommends a size and describes the fit of the garment. Thus, the purpose of this study is to first look at consumer confidence in the fit of a garment purchased online and to second examine the association between True Fit sizing technology and consumers' confidence in their sizing decision.

Sizing Issue: The fit of a garment is very subjective to the individual and differs in how people describe a good fit of a garment and how they prefer a garment to fit their body (Pisut, & Jo Connell, 2007). There are many contributing features that contribute to the fit of a garment including the comfort, aesthetics, and personal choice (Pisut, & Jo Connell, 2007). Due to this, it has been extremely difficult for one sizing method to fit the needs of all consumers. Sizing charts try to fit the needs of the greatest number of the population with the fewest number of sizes (Gill, 2015). Also, following sizing standards is completely voluntarily which gives designers the liberty to size their product to best fit their consumer (Kasambala, Kempen, & Pandarum, 2016). Due to this it creates a wide range of sizes and scales on the market, which makes it extremely difficult for the customer to find the correct size online and have confidence in the sizing decision they have made.

Conceptual Framework: The framework is adapted from technology acceptance model (TAM) and theory of uncertainty (TOU). TAM explores how current advances in technology are influencing consumers' behaviors and attitudes (Rauniar et.al., 2014). TOU states that individuals have a need to reduce uncertainty by gaining information and this information can be used to predict behaviors (Berger, 1986) such as confidence in online clothing size. The conceptual model proposed for this study extends TAM and incorporates the theory of uncertainty reduction (See Figure1)

Proposed Methodology: The proposed methodology is to use a quantitative approach using a stimulation and then questionnaire. The research will be conducted in three stages: (1) consumers will be surveyed on their pre-conceived notion with respect to sizing online prior to exposure to True Fit ® technology; (2) participants will be asked to browse/search and select a pair of jeans

on a retailer's website that they would like to buy; after selecting a pair they would be prompted to make their size selection based on True Fit® sizing technology; (3) participants will be surveyed on their level of satisfaction and confidence in the online sizing they have selected based on True Fit® technology (see Figure 2). \*\*

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

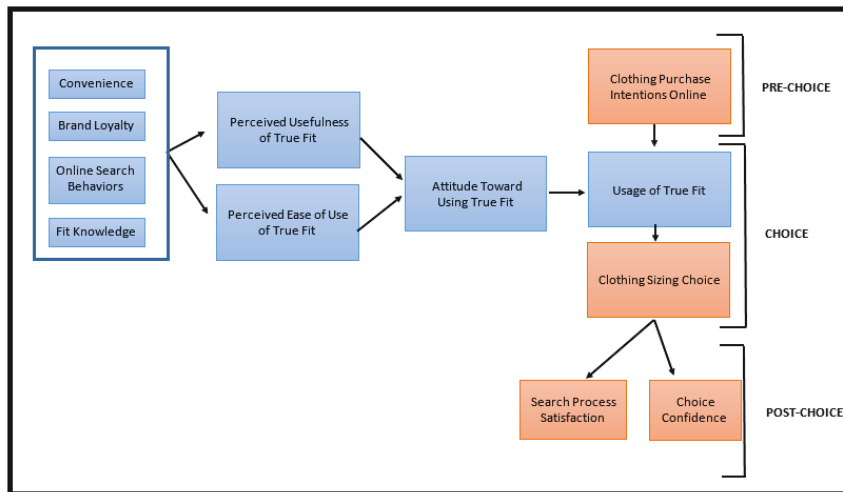
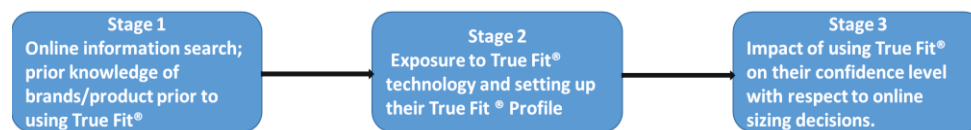


Figure 2. Proposed Research Methodology



\*\* *In talks with True Fit® for research support*

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