



Predictors of Purchase Intention, Price Willing to Pay, and Willingness to Pay a Premium for Men's Mass-Customized Dress Shirts

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Mass customization (MC) is a business paradigm in which the companies manufacture individually customized products within a mass-production system (Pine II, 1993). Through apparel MC, consumers can get a made-to-order product that can reflect personal preferences in colors and styles and fulfill personal needs in garment fit. Previous studies in apparel MC have explored the dimensions of MC (Anderson-Connell, Ulrich, & Brannon, 2002; Yang, Kincade, & Chen-Yu, 2015), the measurement of perceived risk of online apparel MC (Lee & Moon, 2015), and consumers' attitudes, acceptance, and use of apparel MC (e.g., Cho & Fiorito, 2009; Choy & Loker, 2004; Goldsmith & Freiden, 2004). However, few studies examined purchase intention, price willing to pay, and willingness to pay a premium for apparel MC. Studies showed that although consumers may have a favorable attitude toward a certain product, they may not have the intention to purchase the product (Chen, 2007; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Therefore, consumers may not have an intention to purchase mass-customized (M-C) apparel even if they have a favorable attitude toward apparel MC. In addition, consumers may express that they have an intention to purchase M-C apparel, but they may not be willing to pay for it (i.e., price willing to pay) because M-C apparel is more expensive than ready-to-wear. Kamali and Loker (2002) found that generally, consumers show a high level of intention to purchase M-C T-shirts but are not willing to pay much for them. Furthermore, when consumers compare the prices of ready-to-wear and M-C apparel, they may not be willing to pay a premium for M-C apparel, although they have a favorable attitude toward apparel MC. In addition to the need for studying apparel MC, we realized that male consumers have been under-represented in the realm of apparel studies, despite the high annual growth rate of 17.4% in the online menswear sales (Bain, 2015). Given the above gaps in the literature, the objectives of the study were to identify predictors for (a) purchase intention, (b) price willing to pay, and (c) willingness to pay a premium for a men's dress shirt. Identifying predictors can help apparel companies to prioritize their marketing efforts and efficiently use the resources and time to achieve the company's objectives, such as increasing purchase intention. In addition, because the predictors for different types of MC may vary, the predictors to purchase a dress shirt manufactured by using three specific types of MC (i.e., design MC, fit MC, and personalization MC) were also examined.

Several theories and previous studies were used as the theoretical bases for the selection of the predictors in the current study. According to the diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 1995) and related previous studies, fashion innovativeness and technological innovativeness were selected because M-C apparel can fulfill consumers' desire to express fashion in dress shirts and because participating in the MC process often requires using technology at some point along the process. According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and related previous studies, three types of perceived behavioral control—self-efficacy, time availability,

and money availability (Taylor & Todd, 1995), and attitudes toward apparel MC were included in the study. According to the schema theory (Bartless, 1932) and related previous studies, MC experience and product category consumption experience were selected. Lastly, consumers' age, education level, and income level were also included in the study, based on Goldsmith and Freiden's (2004) finding that younger consumers who had a higher level of education and incomes had more positive attitudes toward M-C products.

We employed an online survey design. Our sample of 474 male respondents was recruited through a national market research company. To increase the applicability of the research to consumers who purchase and wear dress shirts, we restricted the subjects to male consumers in sales and office occupations, or management, professional, and related occupations. A questionnaire was developed based on previous studies and was pilot tested to measure all the variables in the study. To avoid the possibility that some respondents were not familiar with the concept of apparel MC, we provided detailed explanations and pictorial aids for each of the three types of MC. We performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the construct validity of the measurement model, resulting in an acceptable model fit (CFI = .97, NFI = .95, GFI = .92, AGFI = .90, and RMSEA = .05), and we also verified the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measures. We checked the variance inflation factor (VIF) values of the 11 proposed predictors and found that "attitudes toward apparel MC" and "time availability" had VIF values greater than 5 (6.77 and 6.21, respectively), indicating a multicollinearity problem (Rogerson, 2001). Since the relationship between attitudes and purchase intention has been confirmed in numerous studies, but few studies have examined the effect of time availability, "attitudes toward apparel MC" was removed from the equations. After the removal of this variable, the VIF values of the remaining 10 predictors ranged from 1.19 to 1.86.

Results of multiple regression analyses showed that among different types of MC, four common predictors were identified for purchase intention—(a) time availability, (b) fashion innovativeness, (c) MC experience, and (d) age. According to the standardized coefficients, time availability was consistently contributed the most in explaining purchase intention. In addition, self-efficacy and dress shirt consumption experience were also predictors in design MC and fit MC. For price willing to pay, fashion innovativeness and income level were consistent predictors in different types of MC. In addition, money availability was a predictor only for design MC, time availability was a predictor only for fit MC, and MC experience was a predictor only for personalization MC. For willingness to pay a premium, age was a common predictor for design MC and fit MC. Self-efficacy was the most important predictor for design MC, time availability was the most important predictor for fit MC, and MC experience was the only predictor for personalization MC.

This study examined three types of apparel MC specific to men's dress shirts. It filled gaps in the literature, and its results provide bases for developing effective merchandising strategies in menswear MC. For example, menswear companies that offer M-C dress shirts may want to select young male consumers who are fashion-conscious as their target segment. Companies may want to consider limiting the number of choices for MC and providing recommendations to help customers reduce the time for decision making during the MC process.

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