

## **Influence of Shopping Involvement and Perceived Control on Approach Responses Toward an Online Apparel Retailer**

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Apparel is one of the top five products purchased over the Internet (Seckler, 2001). However, many consumers are hesitant to purchase apparel online due to limited sensory information delivered online. To help remedy this, apparel web sites have added a number of interface features to provide more sensory information, such as enlarged product images and 3-D virtual models, in order to simulate "trying on" the product. Fiore and Jin (2003) suggested that such interface features may influence consumers' approach responses towards an online apparel retailer due to increased consumer involvement and perceived control, but they did not provide empirical evidence to support this statement. Thus, the present study investigated the influence of shopping involvement and perceived control created by web site interface features (i.e., product images and a 3-D virtual "try-on" model) on consumers' approach responses (i.e., attitude and behavioral intentions) toward an online apparel retailer.

Seventy-four female student volunteers from various majors at a midwestern university examined online products and tried the products on a virtual model for 15 minutes using computers with high-speed connections. Subjects then completed a questionnaire including the 10-item Revised Personal Involvement Inventory (McQuarrie & Munson, 1986) to measure shopping involvement and five items created to measure perceived control which were based on the work of Koufaris, Kambil, and LaBarbera (2001). We developed new and also modified established multi-item approach response scales (Engel et al., 1995) for the questionnaire.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients showed that each of the multi-item measures had internal consistency. Factor analysis showed that shopping involvement had two separate factors, importance and pleasure, as we expected. Also, factor analysis provided evidence that shopping involvement and perceived control variables achieved construct validity. Multiple regression analyses showed that shopping involvement (pleasure factor) and perceived control predicted consumers' global attitude toward the online retailer ( $p < .05$ ). However, shopping involvement and perceived control did not significantly predict consumers' willingness to purchase apparel products from the online retailer. Only shopping involvement (pleasure factor) predicted consumers' willingness to (1) purchase from the brick-and-mortar store, (2) spend more time than planned, (3) recommend the online retailer to others, (4) patronize the online retailer, and (5) patronize the retailer's brick-and-mortar store (all at  $p < .05$ ).

Results showed consumers' involvement with an online apparel retailer positively influenced their patronizing intention to both the online retailer and its brick-and-mortar outlet. Implications for the online apparel retailers include considering consumers' resulting shopping involvement-especially pleasure-and perceived control when designing the web site interface and using interactive product presentation features (such as a virtual model) when developing an apparel shopping web site.

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