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Examining the role of consumer motivations to use voice assistants for fashion shopping: The mediating role of awe experience and eWOM

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence-enabled voice assistant services have received notable scholarly attention. Fashion retailers offer AI-based voice assistants to facilitate online shoppers. However, the consumer motivations to use digital voice assistants and their effect on the purchase intentions of online fashion shoppers are unexplored. To bridge this literature gap, this study presents a unique theoretical model grounded in the consumer innovativeness concept, broaden-and-built theory, and stimulus-organism-response model to explore the effect of motivated consumer innovativeness to use digital voice assistants on purchase intention and awe experience of online shoppers. The study used data collected from 538 users of digital voice assistants for online shopping of fashion products. Structural equation modeling analysis revealed that the functional, hedonic, social, and cognitive motivated consumer innovativeness for using voice assistants affects purchase intention and awe experience. Further, the awe experience mediates the relationship between motivated consumer innovativeness and purchase intention; and electronic word-of-mouth mediates the relationship between awe experience and purchase intention. The study theoretically contributes to the extant literature on consumer innovativeness, AI-based voice assistants, and fashion shopping. The findings offer insights to fashion retailers for improved use of voice assistants by online shoppers.

1. Introduction

Smart speakers are the fastest-growing consumer technology since the smartphone (Simms, 2019), and online shoppers increasingly use artificial intelligence (AI) enabled e-tail services such as voice assistants, augmented, virtual, or mixed reality (Aw et al., 2022; Barhorst et al., 2021; Grewal et al., 2017; Rabassa et al., 2022) to make purchases. The use of VAs in the US is expected to grow up to 130 million users by 2025 (Statista, 2022), presenting an enormous opportunity to many retailers. The use of voice assistants (VA), such as Alexa, Google, and Siri, has substantially evolved to become a common choice for online shopping activities (Brill et al., 2019; Fernandes and Oliveira, 2021; Singh, 2022).

Hoy (2018, p.1) defined VAs as “the software agents that run on purpose-built speaker devices or smartphones”. VAs respond to voice-

based user requests utilizing natural language processing in real time. In the digital fashion retailing context, several companies have introduced voice-based shopping assistants (Kautish and Rai, 2019). For example, the British retailer ASOS launched virtual assistants to help customers find the right size and choose the right holiday gift, whereas Japanese retail clothing ‘Uniqlo’ partnered with Google to offer a conversational agent that assists customers in searching for products and recommendations. Many luxury fashion retailers such as Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Prada, and Tommy Hilfiger also offer AI-based shopping assistants (Chung et al., 2020) positing the growing importance of such technologies for fashion shopping.

The intuitive interface, convenient installation, learning, and intelligent capabilities through voice control of AI-enabled technology have made voice assistants a convenient choice for online shoppers. VA can

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