



## THE EFFECT OF FAST FASHION BRAND AWARENESS ON PURCHASE INTENTION: A STUDY OF FASHION CLOTHING

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore the influence of brand awareness on purchase intention in fast fashion clothing, survey the marketing strategies of clothing brands on products, recognize the consumer orientation between brands and products, and to examine the relationship of influence by adding three mediators: brand image, perceived quality, and product evaluation.

As time goes by, most modern consumers pursue the characteristics of fast, fashionable, and affordable. The "fast fashion" business model has been created under the condition of constant innovation. Significantly, clothing has gradually become a way of expressing and expressing themselves, consumers follow popular indicators to purchase new products. To enhance consumers' desire to shop, brand stores continue to introduce new products to attract customers. However, previous research has demonstrated that the part of fashion that can be extended to personal needs is still insufficient, including consumer requirements for product quality, price, and wear reliability. Hence, through different cognition, consumers' shopping intention can be understood.

This research provides relevant information about the significance of brand awareness to the management of fast fashion clothing enterprises. The main survey subjects of this research are the consumers of Generation Y and Generation Z, and the survey was conducted through questionnaires. Regarding samples, a total of 303 samples was collected, and the number after removing invalid samples was 283. SPSS-26 and AMOS-24 were used to analyze the differences and correlations among variables and whether the observation results were significant. The results indicate that all the four hypotheses have a positive relationship, which confirms that fast fashion brand awareness has a partial mediating effect on purchase intention.

Keywords: Fast Fashion, Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Perceived Quality, Product Evaluation, Purchase Intention

## Introduction

The object of this research is focuses on the relationship between consumer brand awareness and purchase intentions for fashion clothing. Fast fashion emphasizes mutual recognition of members in social groups, which is a key characteristic of contemporary society with strong desire for status. In other words, the trends led by fashionable clothing and changing consumer habits seem to be inextricably linked (O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2014, p.284). Modern people's participation in clothing has increased significantly, which means that consumers regard their interest in clothing as a meaningful and attractive activity in their lives (Bhaduri & Stanforth, 2016). However, the literature reveals that the driving method of fast fashion consumers is still a field of insufficient research, and consumers can still explore more fast fashion behaviors (Su & Chang, 2018). Particularly, (Lee et al., 2019) the recent research on this topic suggests that the clothing industry can be explored in the future, which will help to comprehend the importance of brand elements on consumer purchasing behavior and further research the significance of different industries. According to past literature have demonstrated that fast fashion remains a sustainability issue, with a specific range of comprehending what sustainability issues may represent and how brand management can meet the challenges of fast fashion customers (Guercini & Runfola, 2020). The researchers mentioned that most young people attach significance to the choice of clothing, and wearing is an essential thing, because they feel that they are being censored by others in society, which can

explain young people's obsession with brands (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017).

To comprehend if the reaction toward the marketing campaign on each generation is different, we have used generational cohorts as Generation Y (born between 1981 and 1995), and Generation Z (born after 1995), following the approach of Kitchen and Proctor (2015) (Rita et al., 2020). Therefore, in this research, the brand is the affordable brand, which means that everyone can own the clothing, especially the clothing brand that the young consumers can afford on the one hand and fashion on the other hand. Therefore, we hope that through this research, we can know whether the brand attaches importance to the young consumers of Generation Y and Generation Z (O'Cass & Choy, 2008; Truong, 2020; Dalziel & De Klerk, 2021).

In summary, the research explores the following viewpoints: this research exhibits a test of overall brand evaluation, in which the development of higher quality products could increase product evaluation. On the reverse side, the development of lower quality products reduces the evaluation takes brand awareness and image shaping as a significant prerequisite for consumers to participate in fashion clothing, and then after the brand in terms of quality, price and appearance, the above factors affect consumers purchase fashion clothing.

However, the participation of fast-fashion clothing usually involves consumers on the premise that they are subjective to brands and products. Therefore, it is vital to comprehend the causes and consequences of fashion-

able clothing. Nowadays, fashionable clothing occupies a significant position in many people's lives, as well as has life-oriented and economic value (O'Cass, 2004).

Through this research, it is possible to realize what consumers are concerned about in brands and products, especially starting with brand awareness, adding brand image, perceived quality, product evaluation, and comprehending the changes in the fast fashion market through consumer behavior, and in-depth discussions on brand and product aspects to promote the market's sensitivity of fast fashion brands. Significantly, it helps fast fashion brands to comprehend the characteristics of consumer consumption habits and preferences, and to clarify consumers' consumption orientation for clothing products, which can be used as a reference for new product design.

## Literature Review

### *Definition of Fast Fashion*

Now, fast fashion is a mainstream research and is considered a new business model, its positioning suitable for responding to a demand-oriented market, resulting in shorter and more flexible supply chains and faster and timely response markets (Gabrielli et al., 2013). Clothing brands such as Zara, H&M., are known for their strategy of updating their product line, which has also attracted media attention and attracted popular (mainly) young customers frequently entering the store (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). It is noteworthy that Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993) proposed brand equity factors and actual brand equity, and developed research

to determine the elements that constitute fashion brand equity, which will become significant references in the future (Kim et al., 2017, p.256).

### *Brand Awareness*

The most basic element of brand awareness is to have a sense of identity with the brand name (Davis et al., 2009). Brand awareness refers to the ability of potential buyers to cognition or retrospect that a brand is a certain product category and have the familiarity with the product. (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Kashif et al., 2018). It follows that brand awareness enables consumers to clearly distinguish between brands they have seen or heard before (Keller, 1993).

### *Brand Image*

Brand image is defined as the perception of the brand, which reflects the imagination of brand association and brand related things in consumers' memory (Keller, 1993). Consumers' strong support for a positive and unique brand associations will lead to strong attitudes and emotions towards the brand (Dew & Kwon, 2010). A review of the relevant literature suggests that (Eastman et al., 1999) claimed that consumers buy and use certain products as mentioned above to increase their self-awareness and shape their image, and to demonstrate them to others (Valaei et al., 2017). In addition, brand image can make consumers feel satisfied with the brand and distinguish the difference between the brand and other brands (Valaei et al., 2017).

### *Effect of Brand Awareness on Brand Image*

As explained earlier, brand awareness is regarded as the consumer's reflection of brand image, which can be measured by the impression in memory, and is a common subjective psychological image (Ross & Harradine, 2011). The brand awareness formed by a product affects consumers' cognitive behavior of the product or brand and enhance the image concept of the brand (Kim, et al., 2017). Brand awareness is generated and enhanced by repeated contact to increase familiarity with the brand, which eventually leads consumers to "experience" the brand, and when consumers see, hear, or think about having enough experience with the brand, the brand concept will take root in memory (Radder & Huang, 2008). Through the establishment of brand awareness and brand image, consumers can more easily develop a positive view of familiar products than unfamiliar products (Liu et al., 2020).

In conclusion, brand awareness can influence consumers' decision-making by influencing the formation and strength of brand associations in brand image, and according to research claims, brand awareness and several valuable brand images will be positively correlated (Liu et al., 2020).

The following hypotheses are thus proposed:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between Brand awareness has a significant positive effect on Brand image.

#### *Perceived Quality*

In the model, perceived quality has been defined as the consumer's

judgment of the overall excellence or comfort of the product (Zeithaml, 1988; Tsiotsou, 2006). Additionally, Zenithal (1988) mentioned that perceived quality is defined as consumers' judgment of the overall quality of a product, and even the perceived quality is not the objective quality of a product, but depends on consumers' subjective evaluation of quality, which can be used as a reference before purchasing a product (Tong & Su, 2018). It is also worth noting that when consumers are relatively unfamiliar with the characteristics of the product or consumers lack experience or knowledge of the target product, the possibility of using price as a quality signal is usually particularly high (Oh, 2000).

#### *Effect of Brand Image on Perceived Quality*

When it is difficult for consumers to distinguish products or services based on quality characteristics, the establishment of brand image can help them choose products or services (Ali et al., 2018). Likewise, Yagci (2001) suggests that brand image is a significant factor, which not only plays a vital role in influencing consumers' cognition and attitude towards product quality, but also plays an essential role in consumers' purchase of products (Haque et al., 2015). Consequently, through the uniqueness of the brand image, consumers can evaluate the quality and identify whether the product is good or bad, to reduce purchase risk and obtain satisfaction (Khan et al., 2015). Significantly, consumers believe that the image emitted by a brand or company can indirectly indicate the quality of the brand's products or services (Wallin Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998).

As pointed out in the introduction to this research, the brand image extended by a brand will be affected by consumers' perceived quality of the brand before any development, and the brand with a positive image strengthens the concept of product quality (Martinez et al., 2008).

The following hypotheses are thus proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Brand image has a significant positive effect on perceived quality.

### *Product Evaluation*

Product evaluation differs in the use of tangible products or intangible products. More specifically, products can be considered as a series of internal (style, design, suitability) and external (price, warranties, brand name) information clues, each clue provides customers with a basis for evaluating products (Bilkey & Nes, 1982). There is evidence that product characteristics, brand names, and the type of decision-making process have an impact on store brands that affect the consumers' evaluation of clothing quality and price (d'Astous & Saint-Louis, 2005).

### *Effect of Perceived Quality on Product Evaluation*

Previous research pointed out that it can be interpreted as a comprehensive assessment of the factors that consumers determine product quality and how brands should reflect these factors (Jung et al., 2014). According to the literature, when consumers are familiar with a brand, they are less focused and demanding on evaluating product. When consumers have a higher con-

cern about the quality of their products, the improvement of product evaluation makes them more willing to buy (Parkvithee & Miranda, 2012).

In addition, the appearance of a product is one of the significant characteristics that affect consumers' perception of quality (Ghaani Farashahi et al., 2018). The research exhibits a test of overall brand evaluation, in which the development of higher quality products could increase product evaluation. On the reverse side, the development of lower quality products reduces the evaluation on the perceived quality of clothing mainly focuses on the external (appearance) or internal information clues (the specific content of the product) used by consumers to evaluate the quality, and the external clues, such as the brand label or where the store buys Related products (Swinker & Hines, 2005). Based on a research, information from multi-sensory stimuli represent a clearer quality signal, which leads to a higher product evaluation of perceived quality compared to the impact of a single-sensory stimulus (Liu et al., 2020).

As mentioned above, research focuses on consumers' evaluation of clothing quality, but most of them are limited to the specific characteristics of the product (external and internal cues), investigating the influence consumers' perception of clothing quality, external prices and brand-related clues and product quality are also extremely crucial (Hines & Swinker, 2001). Research exhibits a test of overall brand evaluation, in which the development of higher quality products could increase product evaluation. On the reverse side, the development of lower

quality products reduces the evaluation (Heath et al., 2011).

The following hypotheses are thus proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Perceived quality has a significant positive effect on product evaluation.

#### *Purchase Intention*

In the literature, purchase intention has been widely used as a predictor of purchase (Grewal et al., 1998). To put it another way, the concept of purchase intention reflects the predictable behavior of consumers when making a purchase decision in the short term (Asshidin et al, 2016). Previous research has revealed that willingness to buy is based on perception and demand for a product or service to consider the initial decision to buy a product or service, however, when the intention to buy, the higher the product awareness, the stronger the willingness to buy, because customers believe that better-known brands are more reliable than unknown brands (Edirisinghe et al., 2020).

#### *Effect of Product Evaluation on Purchase Intention*

Previous researches have demonstrated that when evaluating new products, consumers consider the available specific product attribute information and infer the product performance based on the brand characteristics created by enterprises (Chen & Huang, 2018). Especially, when a clothing brand has high-quality clothing and is highly evaluated, it is often highly evaluated in other aspects (Roth & Romeo, 1992). The macro research divides product evaluation into internal

clues and external clues. The internal clues in clothing include aesthetic, appearance, quality, and practicality dimensions, while the external clues include brand, price, store, and other dimensions, which are significant factors influencing purchase intention (Park & Sullivan, 2009).

The researchers found that product attributes or the overall performance of the product were crucial in consumers' purchasing decisions (Jessie Chen-Yu & Kincade, 2001). Based on these researches, the evaluation of expected product attributes (i.e. product internal and external) directly affects the overall product evaluation and purchase intention (Chen & Huang, 2018).

The following hypotheses are thus proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Product evaluation has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

#### *Research Methodology*

Quantitative in academic marketing is a relatively objective measurement tool, which can be described in detail (de Ruyter & Scholl, 1998). Therefore, the main analysis of this research is quantitative research, in terms of data collection, the main distribution area is Taiwan, and using paper questionnaire survey.

Statistical data on the surveyed indicate that out of a total of 303 responses, 59.7% (181) were female and 40.3% (122) were male. The age distribution of the subjects were: under 19 years old (inclusive) (0.7%, 2 individuals), 20-24 years old (23.8%, 72

individuals), 25-29 years old (39.6%, 120 individuals), 30-34 years old (24.1%, 73 individuals), 35-39 years old (9.6%, 29 individuals), over 40 years old (inclusive) (2.3%, 7 individuals). For education, the results revealed that 1.3% (4) were senior high school, 3% (9) were junior college graduates, 61.7% (187) had a four-year degree, 32.3% (98) had a master degree, and 1.7% (5) had doctoral degree. Their monthly cost of buying clothing (NTD), under NT\$1000 (inclusive) 26.1% (79), NT\$1001-3000 31.4% (95), NT\$3001-5000 17.2% (52), NT\$5001-7000 17.5% (53), and over NT\$7001 7.9% (24). The average purchase of fashion clothing in the past half year were under twice a month (inclusive) 44.2% (134), three times-five times a month 39.9% (121), and over six times a month (inclusive) 15.8% (48).

#### Data Analysis and Results

Through sorting and coding, the structural equation modeling (SEM) was executed, the SPSS version 26 was used to statistically analyze the answers to the questionnaire items, and the AMOS version 24 was used to examine the hypothetical relationship between the various scales of assumptions.

After removing 6 items that caused multiple factors or the load on any factor did not exceed 0.4, this research obtained 5 factors, and 26 items exceeded the conservative 0.4 load cut-off value (Soulard et al., 2020). The factor loading results based on EFA confirm the effectiveness of convergence, and the factor loading is between 0.437 and 0.853. The rule of factor loading is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

metric (KMO) of the Sampling Adequacy (MSA) metric of the identification scale, which is 0.937. The results of CFA indicate that after a total of 12 unsuitable items or highly repetitive items are deleted, the solutions of 20 items are retained, and over the satisfactory critical value of 0.5 is obtained, revealing the results have good convergence and effectiveness. The sampling adequacy measure of KMO scale is 0.916. The results of rotating matrix based on CFA are between 0.637 and 0.817. Moreover, the reliability and validity calculation results are: Brand awareness (AVE is 0.531, CR is 0.818, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is 0.804), Brand image (AVE is 0.552, CR is 0.786, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is 0.798), Perceived quality (AVE is 0.510, CR is 0.805, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is 0.820), Product evaluation (AVE is 0.508, CR 0.804, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  0.782), Purchase intention (AVE is 0.536, CR is 0.852, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is 0.853). The results of Pearson correlations indicated that brand awareness has a significant relationship with brand image ( $r=5.38$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), brand image has a significant relationship with perceived quality ( $r=5.51$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), perceived quality has a significant relationship with product evaluation ( $r=0.520$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), furthermore, product evaluation has a significant relationship with purchase intention ( $r=0.543$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Regarding model fit, the chi square / degree of freedom ratio is 1.857. The goodness of fit of chi square test is ( $\chi^2 = 308.208$ ,  $df = 166$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Likewise, all the fitting indexes are in a reasonable range: goodness-of-fit index (GFI)= 0.904, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)= 0.878, root mean square residual (RMR= 0.049, comparative fit index (CFI)= 0.942, normed fit index (NFI)= 0.884, incremental fit index (IFI)=

0.943, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)= 0.055. Significantly, the fit statistics demonstrate that the model of the research fits the data well.

### Conclusion

This research innovatively puts perceived quality and product evaluation together to survey the significant relationship. Through data analysis found that the most stable and reliable product quality has a good response to the customer's product evaluation, which is a significant relationship between the two variables. The results of the research found that consumers giving good product reviews can effectively increase their intentions to purchase products, thereby enhancing consumers' confidence in the overall fashion brand.

Further, this research has a deep comprehending of managers from the establishment of positive brand awareness and image to deal with consumer preferences. The results of this research reveal that if the brand management wants to increase the brand awareness, it is necessary to increase the brand image and product quality, to increase the favor of consumers, obtain praiseworthy product evaluation and finally improve the product sales (Bhaduri & Stanforth, 2016).

The hypothesis of this research provides an effective causal relationship for the fast fashion industry. Brand management can deeply comprehend the process of consumers in purchasing and owning fast fashion products (Gabrielli et al., 2013). Simultaneously, the findings of this research reveal that fashion consumers

not only depending on the product's trustworthiness, but also on brand awareness and image. Likewise, consumers also pay attention to product quality and worth, and through the research sum up above factors that affect their purchase intention. Through data analysis, it is found that the results of the four hypotheses are obviously significant, which means that the relationship is tenable.

This research explores some limitations and can provide reference suggestions for future research. First, this research is a cross-sectional, which is to collect data about personal attention to brands and products at a point in time or within a short period of time (Levin, 2006). It can easily and quickly gain the interest of specific groups of people, but this may lead to causal deviations, it is recommended that further longitudinal research be used to confirm the sequence of the process and make inferences.

A further limitation of the research is that the geographical restriction of its participants is limited to the investigation in Taiwan, and future research recommendations could be extended to other countries to enhance the effectiveness of the research. The education level of the respondents collected in this research is concentrated in the current group of universities and masters, and it is suggested that other groups can be considered in the future. The previous literature mentioned that the fast fashion market is still growing, and fashionable and cheap fast fashion consumers are easy to buy and abandon, but the post-purchase behavior of fast fashion is often ignored (Joung, 2014). Therefore, it is suggested that fast fashion after-sales behavior or re-



purchase intentions can be researched in the future.

To sum up, as brand awareness and brand image shaping become more positive, consumers will have a higher evaluation of products in terms of product awareness. Significantly, companies should focus on the characteristics that consumers value. This research discovers that consumers can get a sense of value from good products that is more imperative than price.

Additionally, developing novel and diversified products can make consumers feel the difference from other competitive brands and effectively create a more unique product evaluation, to achieve the ultimate goal and increase consumers' desire to buy.

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