

# Consumer Medium-Related Drivers on Online Purchase Intention of Fashion Clothing: An Application of Reflective-Formative Second-Order Constructs in PLS

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore how motivational drivers impact the online purchase intentions of young consumers in fashion clothing. Online shopping is a growing phenomenon, especially prevalent in developed countries. The paper introduces a conceptual framework designed to enhance the understanding of consumer purchase intentions. The study proposes an effective framework that comprehends various possible drivers that will lead to intention to purchase fashion products online. The research identified several media-related drivers based on the previous investigation of online purchase intention and related theories. The proposed conceptual model is made up of one main independent variable (medium-related drivers), mediator (consumer commitment) and one dependent variable, online purchase intention. The independent variables are taken as a formative higher-order construct made up of reflective sub-constructs (lower order). Thus, the study aims to evaluate motivational drivers, including trust in social network sites, perceived media credibility, and interactivity with mediating role of consumers commitment on online purchase intention of fashion clothing. The suggested framework for consumers' motivational drivers will function as a comprehensive model for consumer behaviour based on medium-related drivers. The proposed conceptual framework provides a strong theoretical basis for an empirical grounded study on online shopping in the studied area.

**Keywords:** Medium-related drivers, Consumers commitment, Online purchase

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, online shopping has experienced a remarkable surge worldwide compared to traditional brick-and-mortar retail method [1]. With the ongoing rise in online purchases globally, it is necessary to identify the key drivers driving consumers' decision making. The number of online buyers has recently increased globally [2], [3]. In 2021, the number of people expected to purchase goods and services online globally is expected to exceed 2.14 billion, up from 1.66 billion digital buyers worldwide in 2016 [4]. With global internet availability and adoption are seeing significant increase, with the number of internet users worldwide, now reaching 5 billion, the number of people engaging in online purchase is continuously rising [4]. Global retail e-commerce sales are expected to top 6.3 trillion U.S. dollars in 2024, with further anticipated in subsequent [5]. The rise in global e-commerce can be linked to the advantages that the internet offers to consumers, such as increased smartphone usage, the convenience and safety of purchasing daily essentials and luxury products from home, the availability and variety of products and sellers, and rapidly evolving technology that includes voice recognition, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence [6]. Furthermore, it illustrates that the initial assumptions, misconceptions, and customer concern regarding online shopping have been dispelled by the benefits it provides [7].

The global e-commerce retail sales reveal that Asia-Pacific region leads with (\$2,448.33 trillion), followed by North America (\$749 million), Europe (\$92.91 million), Latin America (\$83.63 million) and the Middle East & Africa (\$41.56 million) [8]. From the above, Asia-Pacific contributes to 62.6% of total digital sales, amounting to \$2.448 trillion overall [8]. In this region, 90% of customers shop online, significantly surpassing the 80% of consumers in the Western world [6]. The achievement in Asia arises from shifting consumers habits and increasing adoption of communication and information technology [7]. Furthermore, the increase

prevalence of smartphones, tablets, and laptops has significantly transformed the e-retail business [10]. These devices facilitate quicker and more convenient exchanging product information and allow businesses to receive instant customer feedback on their items [9].

Despite severe economic challenges, internet penetration is remarkably dominating among Nigerian consumers [10]. In 2020, Nigeria had approximately 76.7 million online buyers, establishing it as one of African most leading competitive e-commerce markets [11]. Nigeria has one of Africa's highest ratios of online retail sales. 7% of all purchases made in Nigeria in 2021 were online, more than other African countries like South Africa, Kenya, Morocco, and Egypt [11]. As of 2023, the internet penetration rate in Nigeria is 40.72%, which is set to rise to 48.11% by 2027 [11]. Consequently, online shopping has become a vital component of marketing strategies in Nigeria [12]. The rise of online retail platform in Nigeria, including mystore.com, Jiji.com, Konga.com, Kymu.com, jumia.com, Slot.ng along with international giants like Amazon, eBay, and AliExpress has made the online shopping accessible and convenient for modern-day Nigerians. As of 2020, Jumia was the most popular online marketplace for physical goods, with an estimated 147 million annual visitors, followed by Jiji and Konga [11]. The companies were based in Nigeria and operate across several African nations.

Nigeria is the largest online shopping market in Africa, boasting over 100 million internet users in 2022 [13], and it is expected to grow to 144.99 million by 2029 marking a new peak in internet usage [14]. The rise in internet usage in Nigeria is attributed to growing adoption of mobile phones and enhance access to information technology [15]. Consequently, the increase accessibility of the internet has led to the development of various digital activities and services, such as social networking, online shopping, and mobile payments [13]. Although internet usage has expanded, studies shows that online shopping in Nigeria is at the emerging stage as it remains a relatively new method of shopping [15], [16]. The sluggish acceptance of internet shopping hindered its growth in the country [10]. Nigeria has been alleged for a low rate of adoption of online shopping in the country due to distrust in social network sites because of weak internet infrastructure within some large cities and towns across the Nigeria landscape [10]. Despite Nigeria having one of the highest rates of mobile traffic on the African continent, this hesitancy delayed the progress of online retail [14] the government, similar to many other developing countries, is challenged with the slow acceptance of internet shopping, and this has slowed down the expansion of online shopping in the country [17].

Although the difficult business environment in Nigeria, online shopping continued to play a significant role in driving economic growth and fostering social advancement [18], [19]. Recently there has been a significant increase in demand for fashion products among online retailers, resulting in a significant portion of online transactions being attributed to this category [19]. Apparel is the dominant category of fashion products that customers predominantly buy online. Nevertheless, accessories and footwear continue to generate substantial revenue in the online fashion market [19]. According to [20], predicts that the number of users in Nigeria's online fashion product projected to increase by 4.8 million users (55.43%) reaching an anticipated that by 2029, the number of users will reach 13.5 million, marking a new peak. Remarkably, the number of consumers in the fashion e-commerce market has consistently risen in recent years. The range of fashion products available for online buying continues to grow. The most favoured categories for online fashion purchases among Nigeria consumers are clothing and shoes, with 51% and 49% of consumers respectively opting for these items [21]. To success in today's digital marketplace and leverage the fast-growing online market in Nigeria [22], to effectively tackle both the unmet prospects in the sector, researchers need to identify the drivers influencing consumers' decision to purchase fashion clothing product online in Nigeria. This will result in significant progress for the nation's economy [23]. This paper's conceptual framework is grounded in the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT).

Gap in the literature: most of the previous studies indicate that there is a greater focus on research into online purchase in developed nations: Asian region [24]- [26], United States [27], [28] and the European context [29] with online purchase receiving less attention in developing countries like Nigeria [16]. In developed countries, online purchases have been a major success, yielding significant economic and social advantages; unfortunately, the situation in underdeveloped countries is not the same [30], particularly in Nigeria. Numerous challenges have impeded the development of online shopping in these countries.

Most recent studies conducted on consumers' online purchase intentions in Nigeria include [31], [32], [15], [33], [16], [34], [10] none of them, however, tend to examine these medium related drivers (i.e., trust in social network sites, interactivity and perceived medium credibility) with mediating role consumers commitment to online purchase intention. This absence of prior studies with inconclusive findings motivated scholar to expand their comprehension of online fashion clothing purchasing in Nigeria. Furthermore, based on the literature review, no previous study has been found that utilized a model incorporating the influence of medium-related drivers (trust in social network sites, interactivity and perceived medium credibility), with mediating role of consumers commitment on the intention to purchase fashion clothing online. Most recent studies conducted on consumers' online purchase intentions include [35], [24]-[26]; none of them tested any of the variables taken as a formative higher order construct made up of sub-constructs (lower order) that are reflective. The current study aims to push the boundaries' of understanding online purchase intention for fashion clothing in Nigeria.

## LITERATURE

*Theoretical Background:* The uses and gratifications theory (UGT) has been extensively utilized to investigate the evaluation of individuals' motivation for media usage [36]. The Uses and gratifications theory is a widely accepted model for analyzing the essential needs of consumers and how those needs influence their behavior patterns [37]. The use and gratification theory is widely recognized as a prominent framework for understanding consumer desires and the impact of various behavioral intentions [26]. Medium-related drivers are derived from the technological gratification part of the UGT theory. Therefore, the technological part of UGT should be considered as a useful framework for analyze the impact of medium related drivers such as trust in social network sites, interactivity and perceived media credibility with mediating role of consumer commitment on online purchase intention.

*Online Purchase Intention:* Intentions are a great way to predict people's actions [38]. It has been demonstrated in scholarly research that an individual's intentions can be used as a reliable indicator of their actual behavior [39]. The construct of purchase intention, derived from this theory, is widely utilized in various contexts [40]. Behavioral intention has been consistently studied and validated as the most significant predictor of individual behavior over the technology acceptance stream [41]. The online purchasing intention of consumers is of utmost importance as it serves as a reliable indicator for predicting their actual buy behavior [31]. Online purchasing intention is a predictive factor for consumer behavior when it comes to completing an online purchase transaction on the Internet [42]. Online purchase intention is the inclination of a customer's readiness and desire to buy products or services from a website of an online seller [43].

## Hypothesis

*Trust in Social Network Sites and Online Purchase Intention:* Social network sites are characterized as the extent to which an individual perceives social networking site usage to be trustworthy and dependable [44]. Recently, consumers' engagement in social networks improved relations between people and disseminate information, thereby increasing trust levels [45]. The trust of an SNS user lets her/his feel at ease and comfortable utilizing SNSs to make her purchase decisions [46]. [47] emphasized the relevance of social networking sites in enabling consumers to share their brand experiences, thereby providing a useful source of information for other customers. Trust plays a pivotal role in the service delivery process as it has the potential to positively influence behavioral intentions [48]. In line with this view, SNS's increased usage for online purchases, there is a serious concern about its potential influence on consumer's intention to purchase online. Therefore, it is hypothesized that consumers with higher trust in SNS may buy online. *H1:* Trust in SNS is significantly positive to online purchase intention of fashion clothing.

*Interactivity and Online Purchase Intention:* Interactivity is an important part of social media that fulfills an individual's social gratification [49]. According to [50], online social interaction positively influences information contribution behavior in social online communities. Overall, social media networks are considered vital for connecting with consumers and engaging them to impact their purchasing decisions [51]. Therefore, studies have identified a robust connection among interactivity, trust, and the intention to make online purchases [52]. [53] discovered evidence indication that interactivity elements enhance perceptions of website effectiveness, such as increasing purchase intention. Thus, a high level of interactivity online could lead to

online purchase intention of fashion clothing *H2*: Interactivity is positively related to online purchase intention of fashion products.

*Perceived Media Credibility and Online Purchase Intention*: Perceived media credibility has been linked to the perception of believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, bias, and completeness [54]. Other research attributes medium dependency, interactivity, and transparency as factors that affect consumers' perceived medium credibility [55]. [56] carried out a cross-national study comparing the factors influence online shopping intention between Iranian and Malaysia consumers. The study revealed that website trust greatly impacted the frequency of online purchases in the Malaysian context, whereas it had no substantial effect in the Iranian context. Building on the literature review above, this study hypothesizes that there is a positive relationship between perceived media credibility and online purchase intention. Therefore, it is expected that a high level of perceived media credibility could lead to online purchase intention in social-mediated marketing. *H3* perceived media credibility positive related to online purchase intention of fashion clothing.

*The Mediating role of consumers commitment*: [57] Commitment is defined as a persistent inclination to uphold a cherished relationship. Commitment is a fundamental function and a prerequisite for attaining a company's objectives [26]. Commitment is essential in online transactions, as numerous individuals on social networks express their opinions regarding various businesses' products and services [58]. Consumer commitment to shops and brands has proven advantageous by offering customers benefits in online environments [59]. Consequently, it is asserted that commitment in social media contexts holds substantial value, prompting buyers to consider purchasing the goods. It is therefore hypothesised that consumer commitment mediates the relationship between medium-related drivers and online purchase intention.

### Research Model

This paper introduces a research model (see Figure 1). This model is developed based on an extensive review of previous and recent studies on online purchase (e-commerce).

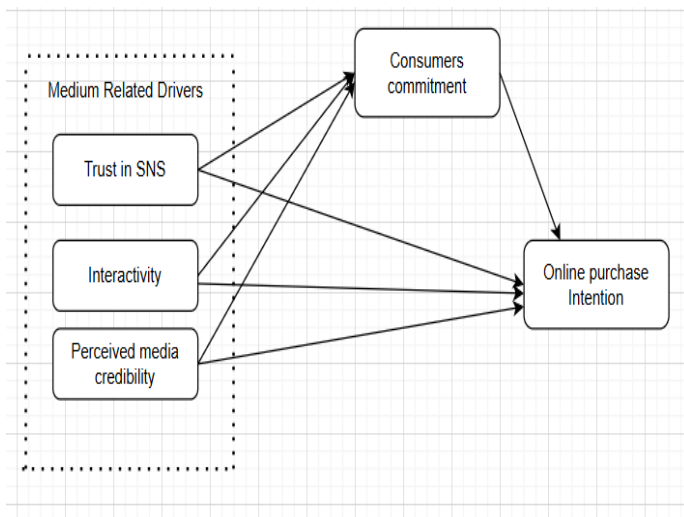


Fig 1. Propose research model

### METHODOLOGY

The proposed method for this investigation is a quantitative approach. In quantitative research, the aim is to explore specific concepts (variables, factors, or constructs), acquire numerical data and analyze it using mathematical processes including statistical methods. The independent variables are taken as a formative higher-order construct made up of reflective sub-constructs (lower order). The data of this research will be collected through a self-administered online survey questionnaire created using Google Forms. The study utilized primary data collection method, with questionnaire as a principal instrument. The proposed model examines the medium drivers of intentions to purchase clothing online, using data from a purposive sample of 388 responses. Therefore, the model is developed as a reflective formative type II construct [60].

## Future Researchers

This research presents three lower-order constructs that could bridge the current knowledge gap regarding online purchase intention of fashion clothing. Future scholars should also consider four low-order constructs. Future researchers could examine potential moderators that could impact the connection between user motivational drivers and the propensity to purchase intention of fashion clothing online. While this study is primarily theoretical, it is recommended that future scholars carry out empirical based on the conceptual model given in this paper.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on motivational drivers, this study created an integrated model that would help marketing managers understand the relative importance of each driver on consumers' intentions to buy online, particularly, Nigeria. The study also develops a model to help online retailers comprehend the future requirement of online shoppers. The suggested conceptual framework utilising UGT will provide theoretical meaning in comprehending the impact of media related drivers on consumer purchasing decisions regarding clothing. This study would enhance the comprehension of online retailers regarding the drivers that influence consumers online purchase intentions for clothing in Nigeria. Consequently, future studies to empirically test the model to assess its validity and dependability.

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