

Changes in Online Shopping Behavior for Ready-Made Clothes among Saudi Consumers following COVID-19

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Abstract: This study emphasizes the influence of the environment, society, and individual characteristics on consumer behaviour, particularly among Saudi individuals who possess their own customs, traditions, values, and perceptions of clothing purchasing decisions. However, technological advancements, specifically the Internet, have played a role in exposing Saudi society to the cultures of other societies, influencing consumer behaviour.

This study focuses on understanding the factors that have led to a shift in consumer behaviour towards online clothing shopping in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia following the COVID-19 pandemic. The research aims to contribute to knowledge about the post-pandemic behaviour of Saudi consumers, specifically in terms of increased online purchases of ready-made clothes, and align with the goals of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which aims to foster a thriving economy.

The study employs a descriptive analytical approach. The study population consists of Saudi consumers in general across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and a random sample of 125 individuals aged 18-47 and above was selected to complete the questionnaire.

The key findings from the study highlight that consumers prefer online shopping due to the convenience, time and effort savings, ease of ordering, and wide range of choices in terms of clothing models and colours. Online purchasing is also perceived as more cost-effective, offering discounts and coupons that physical markets may not provide. Based on these findings, the study recommends enhancing the accuracy of clothing product descriptions on dedicated online platforms for selling clothes. Additionally, it suggests diversifying the clothing options available in local markets to cater to different tastes and age groups and creating websites specifically for local markets.

Keywords: Online Purchasing, Consumer Behavior, Purchasing Decision, COVID-19 Pandemic, Clothing.

التغيرات في سلوك التسوق عبر الإنترنت للملابس الجاهزة بين المستهلكين السعوديين في أعقاب جائحة كورونا (كوفيد 19)

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المستخلص: تؤكد هذه الدراسة على تأثير البيئة والمجتمع والخصائص الفردية على سلوك المستهلك، وخاصة بين الأفراد السعوديين الذين يمتلكون عاداتهم وتقاليدهم وقيمهم وتصوراتهم الخاصة بشأن قرارات شراء الملابس. إلا أن التقدم التكنولوجي، وتحديداً الإنترنت، لعب دوراً في تعريف المجتمع السعودي بثقافات المجتمعات الأخرى، مما أثر على سلوك المستهلك.

تركز هذه الدراسة على فهم العوامل التي أدت إلى تحول سلوك المستهلك نحو تسوق الملابس عبر الإنترنت في المملكة العربية السعودية بعد جائحة كوفيد-19. ويهدف البحث إلى المساهمة في المعرفة حول سلوك المستهلكين السعوديين ما بعد الجائحة، وتحديدًا فيما يتعلق بزيادة عمليات الشراء عبر الإنترنت للملابس الجاهزة، وبما يتماشى مع أهداف رؤية المملكة 2030 التي تهدف إلى تعزيز اقتصاد مزدهر.

تستخدم الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. يتكون مجتمع الدراسة من المستهلكين السعوديين بشكل عام في جميع أنحاء المملكة العربية السعودية، وتم اختيار عينة عشوائية مكونة من 125 فرداً تتراوح أعمارهم بين 18-47 سنة فما فوق لاستكمال الاستبيان.

وتسلط النتائج الرئيسية للدراسة الضوء على أن المستهلكين يفضلون التسوق عبر الإنترنت بسبب الراحة وتوفير الوقت والجهد وسهولة الطلب ومجموعة واسعة من الخيارات من حيث نماذج الملابس والألوان. يُنظر أيضاً إلى الشراء عبر الإنترنت على أنه أكثر فعالية من حيث التكلفة، حيث يقدم خصومات وكوبونات قد لا توفرها الأسواق المادية. وبناءً على هذه النتائج، توصي الدراسة بتعزيز دقة أوصاف منتجات الملابس على منصات مخصصة لبيع الملابس عبر الإنترنت. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تقترح تنوع خيارات الملابس المتوفرة في الأسواق المحلية لتلبية مختلف الأذواق والفئات العمرية وإنشاء مواقع إلكترونية مخصصة للأسواق المحلية. الكلمات المفتاحية: الشراء عبر الإنترنت، سلوك المستهلك، قرار الشراء، جائحة كوفيد-19، الملابس.

1. Introduction:

Clothing is a symbol in a conscious society, carrying immense significance. It helps form impressions of others based on social status, profession, and role. Additionally, clothing reflects an individual's self-confidence, morals, and personality, contributing to their overall satisfaction and self-actualization (Mohamed Park, 2000).

Clothing marketing serves as a fundamental pillar in understanding consumer needs, gathering their opinions, and fulfilling their diverse desires and requirements. It plays a crucial role in facilitating the sale of clothes through local markets and online platforms (Mugheeth et al., 2022).

Research consistently highlights that young people are the most active Internet users. Numerous studies have examined various age groups, and it has been observed that young individuals have a heightened propensity for using online platforms. This can be attributed to their quick learning abilities, adaptability to new experiences, and active and dynamic lifestyles (Reham & Safaa, 2014).

Websites play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour, particularly in the fashion industry. They serve as platforms for disseminating fashion trends, showcasing the latest designs from fashion designers, and creating awareness among consumers. Websites also prioritize facilitating online purchasing and shopping experiences, catering to the growing demand for Internet-based transactions (Ahmed, 2012).

Clothing stands out as one of the most frequently purchased items through online channels. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of physical retail markets have compelled many individuals to explore online shopping options to meet their clothing needs and desires. This shift in consumer behaviour during the pandemic indicates a noticeable change in their inclination towards online clothing purchases, even though assessing the quality of garments poses challenges when done solely through online platforms (Taghrid & Tahani, 2023).

In 2020, there was a noticeable surge in online purchases, resulting in the depletion of stocks for essential household products and medical supplies due to increased demand. The director of Amazon, a leading e-commerce company, highlighted this trend, stating that their sales rose by 40% to reach a staggering \$88.9 billion. This growth represents one of the strongest performances in years for the company. Additionally, Amazon's profits reached \$5.2 billion during this period. The rising demand for online shopping significantly impacted the company, leading them to hire approximately 175 more employees and expand their warehouses to accommodate the anticipated continued growth. Companies like Amazon, Facebook, and Apple experienced substantial financial gains during the pandemic (Najat, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted various aspects of human life, including the clothing industry. The pandemic led to market closures and restrictions on physical shopping, prompting customers to turn to online purchasing methods, even without physically seeing the products. This shift in consumer behaviour has raised concerns about the potential impact on product quality. Therefore, the researcher was motivated to investigate the effects of the pandemic on Saudi consumer behaviour regarding ready-made clothes and their inclination towards online shopping.

To address these concerns, the study aims to answer the following questions:

2. Research Questions:

- 1- What are the primary reasons for the shift in consumer behaviour towards online shopping for clothes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia following the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 2- How has the closure of physical markets during the pandemic influenced consumers' decision to purchase clothes online in Saudi Arabia?

3. Research hypothesis:

H1/ consumer behavior, such as the shift towards online shopping, impulsive buying behavior, preference for online offers, and the influence of external factors, can significantly impact price competition in the clothing industry

4. Research significance:

- It explores how COVID-19 pandemic influenced Saudi consumers to shop online for clothing more.
- It reveals the factors behind this change and the new preferences of Saudi consumers.

- It contributes to the knowledge of Saudi consumer behaviour and electronic markets.
- This research is useful for clothing businesses that want to understand and adapt to the online shopping trend in Saudi Arabia. It is also useful for the Saudi economy that aims to diversify and transform according to Vision 2030

5. Research Methodology:

This study adopts a descriptive analytical approach to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the behaviour of buying clothes through online shopping.

The descriptive approach is employed in a scientifically rigorous manner to accurately describe the research subject and analyze the obtained results quantitatively and qualitatively. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of various concepts and phenomena related to the research topic (Al-Mahmudi, 2019).

The analytical study design is utilized to examine the relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing behaviour of consumers in purchasing clothes online. This design allows for a systematic analysis of data collected from various sources, such as surveys, interviews, or existing literature, to gain insights into the impact of the pandemic on consumer behaviour (Al-Mahmudi, 2019).

By combining the descriptive approach and the analytical study design, this research aims to provide a detailed and data-driven understanding of the factors influencing the shift in consumer behaviour towards online clothing purchases following the COVID-19 pandemic. The study will employ appropriate data collection methods and analytical techniques to gather and analyze relevant information, enabling the exploration of key insights into consumer behaviour in the context of online shopping for clothes.

6. Research variables

The dependent and independent variables can be defined as follows:

COVID-19 Outbreak: The occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic can be considered an independent variable as it is a significant external factor that may have influenced changes in online shopping behavior. It can be measured by relevant indicators such as the number of COVID-19 cases, government-imposed restrictions, and social distancing measures.

Demographic Factors: Various demographic variables can be considered independent variables, as they may influence changes in online shopping behavior. These include age, education and gender. These factors may help identify specific consumer segments that have experienced different changes in their online shopping behavior.

7. Research Tools:

A survey to assess the shifts that occurred in the purchasing of clothes among Saudi individuals after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Community and Sample:

The study focuses on Saudi consumers as the target population in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A random sample of individuals aged 18-47 and above was selected to gather data. The sample size consisted of 125 respondents who completed the questionnaire.

9. Research Delimitations:

Objective: The research specifically examines the impact of COVID-19 on shopping for clothes.

Spatial: The research is focused on the western region of Saudi Arabia.

Temporal: The study considers data and information up to the year 2023. Limits: The research focuses on individuals aged 18-40, primarily targeting the youth population.

10. Research Terms:

- **COVID-19 pandemic:** COVID-19 refers to the official name of the ongoing pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus. When an epidemic spreads within communities and its detrimental effects become evident in the social lives of individuals, it transforms

from a mere medical condition into a social crisis that poses threats to security and stability. This phenomenon is commonly called a pandemic, as recognized by the International Health Organization.

- **Coronavirus:** Coronavirus is a family of novel viruses characterized by their crown-like appearance ("corona" means crown in Latin). The initial cases of this virus emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan in late December 2019, manifesting as acute pneumonia. The exact source of the virus is still unknown, but it is believed to have been transmitted from a bat or another animal to humans within Wuhan. The Ministry of Health provides this information.

Consumer Behavior: Consumer behaviour encompasses the behaviours and actions individuals exhibit throughout the consumption process. It involves searching for goods and services anticipated to fulfil their needs and desires. Consumer behaviour is a multidimensional concept that analyzes individuals' decision-making processes, motivations, preferences, and purchasing patterns. Abu Talib (1999) provides insights into this topic, highlighting the significance of understanding consumer behaviour in relation to the pursuit of satisfying their needs and wants.

Ready-made clothing: The term "ready-made" refers to pre-made garments composed of various textile materials designed to be worn on the body, whether for indoor or outdoor use. Zainab Farghali (2006) defines ready-made textile commodities as readily available for individuals to purchase and wear.

Additionally, according to Arafat Abdeen (2002), ready-made encompasses all types of clothing that cover the body, both internally and externally. It includes garments commonly referred to as robes or clothing made from natural materials such as cotton, linen, and silk, as well as synthetic materials such as viscose, polyester, and nylon, produced through industrial processes.

11. Theoretical Framework:

The first axis of the theoretical framework focuses on the behaviour of buying clothes and its relationship with individual attitudes, societal values, and the cultural environment. According to Farghali (2002), an individual's clothing choices are influenced by their society's prevalent attitudes and values, reflecting their cultural surroundings.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Thanaa and Khadija (2012) suggests a connection between clothing and psychological and social behaviour. It indicates that there exists either a linear or circular relationship between clothing and behaviour, with some individuals arguing for the circular relationship. In this perspective, clothing significantly impacts psychological and social behaviour, serving as a means to address various pathological conditions.

The Purchasing Decision of Clothes:

The decision to purchase clothes, as discussed by Wafaa Shalaby et al. (2007), involves selecting one alternative from several options to address an individual's specific situation or problem. The aim is to find the best solution, and this choice depends on the information accessible to the individual, which they gather based on specific principles and foundations. Individuals' decisions when buying clothes are influenced by various factors, including the type of society they live in, their intellectual abilities, experience, level of education, and intelligence. These factors, in turn, impact the selection of alternatives.

A study by Rabab and Rasha (2011) explored the methods consumers employ when choosing and purchasing clothes. The research indicated that consumers select from various alternatives to find the optimal and most suitable option. This selection process is aligned with their personal ideas, clothing beliefs, and cultural values.

Factors Affecting Consumer Behavior:

Buying clothes is influenced by a range of complex and sequential stages and various factors that impact consumer behaviour. A study conducted by RAMYA AND MOHAMMED (2016) classified these factors into several categories:

- **Environmental Factors include climate conditions,** geographical and historical factors, and the overall environmental pattern surrounding the consumer.
- **Social Factors:** Social factors encompass customs, traditions, social norms, the influence of social groups, and the opinions of reference groups that individuals associate with.
- **Cultural Factors:** Cultural factors involve ideas, religions, cultural identity, and historical heritage that shape the preferences and choices of consumers.

- **Psychological Factors:** Psychological factors encompass an individual's personality traits, attitudes, values, motivations, tendencies, and the process of imitation or emulation.
- **Economic Factors:** Economic factors encompass the individual's economic level, the price of clothing, and their overall economic income, which can influence their purchasing decisions.
- **Technical Factors:** Technical factors pertain to the importance of aesthetic aspects of clothing, its functionality, fashion trends, and aesthetic decorations associated with it.

These factors, as identified by Muhammad Al-Sayed and Rushdi Ali (2004), collectively contribute to shaping consumer behaviour in the context of purchasing clothing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a multifaceted factor that has significantly influenced consumers and their buying behaviour across various dimensions, including social, security, psychological, economic, and cultural aspects. The impact of the pandemic has been profound, requiring extensive time and a comprehensive evaluation of the social consequences resulting from the preventive and curative measures implemented to combat the virus. According to Dabla (2020), the recovery process from the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to span several years as societies strive to assess and address the wide-ranging effects caused by the virus and the measures taken to mitigate its spread.

The Relationship of COVID-19 in Electronic Shopping:

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a global crisis that has rapidly spread worldwide, resulting in significant human casualties with hundreds of thousands of infected individuals and deaths. This crisis has brought about substantial changes in various aspects, including political, economic, social, and media domains. In response to this crisis, the authorities have been compelled to implement unprecedented measures and develop well-studied strategies to manage and combat the pandemic (Najat, 2022).

In Saudi society, the pandemic threat has had social effects, such as fostering a collective sense of solidarity due to the shared fear of a common threat. This has led to a growing inclination towards electronic social communication and an increased reliance on electronic applications. Cultural factors have also played a role in promoting positive behaviours, encouraging adherence to health precautions, and driving the adoption of electronic platforms (Ibrahim Al-Zabin, 2021).

The COVID-19 crisis significantly impacted various seasons and social events, as individuals had to adhere to preventive measures established by the Ministry of Health for over a year (Ministry of Information). This resulted in challenges for individuals to experience positive emotions as they used to through activities such as buying new clothes to celebrate and visiting relatives and friends (Ministry of Culture). However, the increase in online sales of fashion products during the pandemic period in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia highlights the importance of e-commerce in this context (Statistics Authority).

With people fulfilling their needs from home via the Internet, the state facilitated remote work and streamlined procedures even in the most challenging circumstances. During the pandemic and home quarantine, the General Authority for Statistics confirmed an increase in online presence, especially among females, who also outperformed males in online shopping. Social networking sites play a crucial role in keeping up with developments.

A study by Tahred and Congratulations (2023) emphasized that in March 2020, several sectors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia experienced emergency and exceptional changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Gathering places were closed, and individuals had to stay home, work remotely, and study online to safeguard public health and prevent virus transmission. The consumption sector was one of the sectors affected, witnessing changes in purchasing behaviour. Sales of clothing for special occasions decreased, while sales of comfortable clothing for home use increased (Ashokkumar & Nagarajan, 2021).

Consumer Attitudes Towards Electronic Shopping:

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted various sectors, including the clothing industry, as highlighted in a study by Dabla (2021). With the disruption in physical markets, customers have turned to online shopping, relying on purchasing products without physically seeing them. This shift raised concerns about product quality.

The need for continuity in electronic shopping has become apparent due to the prolonged effects of the pandemic, as highlighted by studies conducted by Dabla (2020) and Yasher Al-Hanafawy (2020). The sustained impact of the pandemic necessitates continuous rebalancing and the utilization of new knowledge bases and models.

Factors influencing the Saudi consumer's inclination towards e-shopping were identified in a study by Bashayer Al-Ossimi and Atiyat (2022). These factors include ease of use, transaction safety, a wide range of prices and products, quick response times, and the ability to fulfil individual interests. These factors contribute to shaping the consumer's positive attitude towards electronic shopping in Saudi Arabia.

Challenge Of Examining Clothes

Examining clothes poses a challenge, particularly when shopping online. Despite this difficulty, clothing is one of the most frequently purchased online items. The closure of physical retail markets due to the pandemic has compelled many individuals to explore online shopping to satisfy their needs and desires. Consequently, there has been a decrease in sales of occasion-specific clothing, while sales of comfortable attire for home use have witnessed an increase. This shift signifies a change in consumer behaviour regarding clothing purchases amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (Taghreed & Tahani, 2023).

Clothing requires a consumer's visual inspection, tactile evaluation of its material, and measurement to make an informed purchase decision. However, when buying clothing from the Internet, consumers encounter the challenge of being unable to assess the item's quality physically. The inability to inspect clothing items before purchasing online is one of the predicaments consumers face (Al-Masoudi, 2020).

Shopping addiction, also known as compulsive buying, is a behavioural disorder characterized by excessive and uncontrollable urges to shop and make purchases, often leading to negative consequences. While the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted purchasing behaviour among Saudi consumers, resulting in increased clothing purchases through online shopping websites, it is important to note that shopping addiction is a distinct issue beyond typical buying behaviours.

The Saudi Statistics Authority has confirmed an increase in clothing sales volume through the Internet in 2022, indicating the growing popularity of online shopping. However, it is crucial to differentiate between regular online shopping and compulsive buying associated with a shopping addiction.

A study by Shabash et al. (2022) highlighted various buying behaviours, including unplanned purchases. Unplanned purchases can occur when a consumer lacks a specific purchase plan, is under time pressure, or remembers a need while browsing in a store. Impulsive buying may arise from a momentary urge to purchase something the consumer cannot resist. Additionally, frequent store visits driven by boredom or distress can contribute to impulsive buying tendencies.

Indeed, shopping addiction goes beyond normal purchasing habits and involves an obsession with buying. Individuals with a shopping addiction may utilize shopping to escape their problems or cope with negative emotions. This behaviour can lead to impaired decision-making skills, making it difficult to assess the actual need for a purchase based on the current situation. As a result, individuals with shopping addiction may experience negative consequences in terms of their financial well-being and social relationships.

Research conducted by Al-Hakami (2012) supports the notion that shopping addiction is characterized by using shopping to overcome negative feelings and escape personal problems. The compulsive behaviour associated with a shopping addiction can lead to a lack of control over spending and an inability to make rational purchasing decisions.

12. Study procedures:

First: Designing the research tool

An electronic questionnaire was developed to investigate the factors influencing the change in consumer behaviour regarding clothing purchases in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia after the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part included general questions related to demographic information such as age group, gender, and educational level. The second part focused on the study's axes and comprised 15 closed-ended questions. These questions were designed on a five-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to indicate their preferences using options such as "yes a lot," "yes, to some extent," "no," or "not a lot." This scale enabled respondents to agree or disagree with the given statements or options.

Second: Validation and Reliability of the Research Tools

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research tools, the initial version of the questionnaire was submitted to an expert committee of faculty members specializing in clothing and textiles from various faculties at King Abdulaziz University. These experts reviewed the questionnaire to assess its validity and reliability.

Logical validity

Logical validity refers to the ability of the questionnaire to measure what it was designed to assess. It ensures that the questionnaire's items and scales align with the research objectives and accurately capture the intended constructs or factors.

To evaluate the logical validity of the questionnaire, it was submitted to a committee of 3 experts in the field. These experts reviewed the questionnaire and provided their opinions on the extent to which the questionnaire's axes achieved the research objectives.

Table (1) The criteria for assessing the questionnaire

Item	Appropriate			Inappropriate	
	T	T	%	T	%
Drafting And Clarity of Phrases C	3	0	–	0	–
Sequence And Organization M	3	0	–	0	–
Number of items	3	0	–	0	–
The comprehensiveness of the Study Objectives	3	0	–	0	–

Prepared by the researcher

The results indicate that all four experts agreed that the questionnaire items were appropriate for the study objectives, as they gave a score of 3 (the highest possible score) to each item. The mean score for each item was also 3, which suggests a high level of agreement and validity among the experts. Therefore, the questionnaire can be considered as well-designed and suitable for the research purpose.

Table (2) shows the results of the alpha coefficient

Item	Alpha coefficient
Drafting And Clarity of Phrases	1,000
Sequence And Organization	1,000
Number of Phrases	1,000
The comprehensiveness of the Study Objectives	1,000

Prepared by the researcher

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated using the statistical program SPSS for each axis of the questionnaire. The previous table indicates that all the stability coefficients (alpha coefficients) had values of 0.01 or below, indicating a high stability level for the tool and its applicability.

A Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.01 or lower indicates a high level of internal consistency among the items within each axis of the questionnaire. This suggests that the items in each axis are measuring the same construct sequentially, enhancing the reliability of the questionnaire.

Following the reliability assessment, the research tool was constructed using the Google Drive platform and published on social networking sites. After presenting the questionnaire to the community, 125 responses were collected from individuals residing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The aim of collecting this number of responses was to ensure an adequate sample size for the research study.

First: demographics (age group, gender, educational level).

Table (3) The age group

Age group	%
15-25	26.6%
26-35	33.6%
36-45	21.6%
46 and above	18.4%

Prepared by the researcher

Table No. (4) The educational level

Educational level	%
Elementary	2.4%
Secondary	8.9%
University	66.1%
Postgraduate	22.6%

Prepared by the researcher

Table (5) Gender %

Gender	%
Males	11%
Female	89%

Prepared by the researcher

Based on the provided demographic data from Tables No. (3), (4), and (5), the following analysis can be made:

Age Group: The survey respondents were distributed across different age groups. The largest age group represented was 26-35 years old, accounting for 33.6% of the respondents. The next significant group was the 15-25 age group, comprising 26.6% of the respondents. The 36-45 age group accounted for 21.6% of the respondents, while those aged 46 and above represented 18.4% of the respondents. This indicates a relatively balanced distribution across the age groups, with a slightly higher representation of respondents in their late twenties and early thirties.

Gender: The survey respondents were predominantly female, with women comprising 89% of the participants. Male respondents, on the other hand, accounted for only 11% of the total. This indicates a significant gender imbalance in the survey sample, with a much higher representation of females.

Educational Level: The educational background of the respondents varied as well. The majority of respondents (66.1%) had a university education, indicating a well-educated sample. Postgraduate education was the next most common level, accounting for 22.6% of the respondents. Secondary education was reported by 8.9% of the participants, while only a small proportion (2.4%) had an elementary level of education. This suggests a relatively high level of education among the survey participants, with a significant number having attained at least a university degree.

In summary, the survey sample consisted of respondents primarily in the 26-35 age group, with a balanced distribution across other age groups. The majority of respondents were female, indicating a gender imbalance in the sample. Furthermore, a significant proportion of respondents had a university education, with postgraduate education also being prevalent. These demographic characteristics provide insights into the profile of the survey participants and should be considered when interpreting the survey results.

Second: Descriptive results

The type of statistical analysis used in this table is descriptive statistical analysis. This type of analysis describes the quality of the data by summarizing large data sets into single measures, such as percentages¹²³. The table shows the distribution of responses for each questionnaire item, as well as the measures of central tendency, such as the mode (the most frequent response).

Table (6) descriptive results

	Questionnaire items	Significantly	Yes	To Some	No	Significantly
		Yes	Yes	Extent	No	No
1	Has the Covid 19 pandemic affected your purchase of clothes?	36%	28%	23%	8%	5%
2	Do you prefer to buy clothes online after the Covid-19 pandemic?	39.5%	29.8%	17.7%	10.5%	2.4%
3	Did you prefer to buy clothes online before the Covid- 19 pandemic?	8.8%	21.6%	26.4%	27.2%	16%

	Questionnaire items	Significantly Yes	Yes	To Some Extent	No	Significantly No
4	Did you prefer to buy ready-made clothes from the markets before the Covid- 19 pandemic?	61.6%	20.8%	10.4%	4.8%	2.4%
5	Do you generally find it difficult to buy clothes online?	12%	16%	31.2%	24%	16.8%
6	Do you find it difficult to match sizes when you buy clothes online?	19.2%	32.8%	24.8%	19.2%	9.6%
7	Do you find it difficult to determine the texture of materials when you buy clothes online?	42.4%	32.8%	19.2%	3.2%	2.4%
8	Have you had problems with the quality of the pieces after purchasing clothes online?	27.2%	42.4%	19.2%	9.6%	1.6%
9	Do you find it difficult to return after buying clothes online?	24.8%	19.2%	29.6%	16%	10.4%
10	Did your purchase of clothes increase after the emergence of Internet sites?	39.5%	19.4%	25%	13.7%	2.4%
11	Do you have pieces of clothing that you bought without needing them?	16.9%	38.7%	16.9%	19.4%	8.1%
12	Is advertising on social networking sites increased?	25.6%	25.6%	25.6%	12.4%	10.8%
13	Do you want to buy ready-made clothes online?	46.3%	29.3%	14.6%	6.5%	3.3%
14	Do you prefer to take advantage of online offers to buy clothes?	55.2%	16%	16%	8.8%	4%
15	Do you think the home quarantine during the Covid 19 pandemic was a reason for buying clothes via the Internet?	66.4%	19.2%	8%	4%	2.4%

Prepared by the researcher

Table No. (6) descriptive results shows that majority of respondents (87%) indicated that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected their purchase of clothes, with 36% stating that it had a significant impact. A significant portion of respondents (69.3%) preferred to buy clothes online after the Covid-19 pandemic, with 39.5% indicating a significant preference for online shopping. The majority of respondents showed a preference for buying clothes online before the Covid-19 pandemic, with 48% indicating some level of preference. The majority of respondents (82.4%) preferred to buy ready-made clothes from markets before the Covid-19 pandemic, with a significant proportion (61.6%) expressing a strong preference. A significant proportion (40%) of respondents found it challenging to buy clothes online, with 16% indicating a significant difficulty. Many respondents (77.6%) found it challenging to match sizes when buying clothes online, with 42.4% indicating a significant difficulty. A significant proportion (75.2%) of respondents found it difficult to determine the texture of materials when buying clothes online, with 42.4% indicating a significant difficulty. A significant number of respondents (63.2%) experienced problems with the quality of clothes purchased online, with 42.4% indicating a significant issue. Many respondents (44.8%) found it difficult to return clothes after buying them online, with 16% indicating a significant difficulty. A significant proportion of respondents (64.5%) experienced an increase in their clothes purchases after the emergence of internet sites, with 39.5% indicating a significant increase. A considerable proportion (51.2%) of respondents admitted to buying clothing without needing them, with 12.4% indicating a significant occurrence. The majority of respondents (75.6%) perceived an increase in advertising on social networking sites, with 46.3% indicating a significant increase. A significant majority of respondents (85.8%) expressed a desire to buy ready-made clothes online, with 66.4% indicating a significant preference. Many respondents (71.2%) preferred to take advantage of online offers when purchasing clothes, with 55.2% indicating a significant preference. A significant majority of respondents (91.4%) believed that home quarantine during the Covid-19 pandemic was a reason for buying clothes via the internet, with 66.4% indicating a significant influence.

Based on the analysis of Table No. (6), the following findings can be summarized:

1. **Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on clothes purchase:** A large majority of respondents (87%) indicated that the pandemic has affected their purchase of clothes. Among them, 36% stated that the impact was significant, suggesting that the pandemic has significantly influenced consumer behavior in this regard.
2. **Preference for online clothes shopping:** A significant proportion of respondents (69.3%) preferred to buy clothes online after the Covid-19 pandemic. Among them, 39.5% expressed a significant preference for online shopping. This indicates a shift in consumer behavior towards online platforms for purchasing clothes.
3. **Preference for online shopping before the pandemic:** The majority of respondents (48%) already had a preference for buying clothes online before the Covid-19 pandemic, indicating that online shopping was already popular prior to the outbreak.
4. **Preference for ready-made clothes from markets:** Before the pandemic, the majority of respondents (82.4%) preferred to buy ready-made clothes from markets. A significant proportion (61.6%) expressed a strong preference for this option, indicating a preference for in-person shopping experiences.
5. **Challenges faced when buying clothes online:** A considerable proportion of respondents found it challenging to buy clothes online. Difficulties included matching sizes (77.6%), determining the texture of materials (75.2%), facing quality issues (63.2%), and returning clothes (44.8%). These challenges highlight areas where online retailers can focus on improving the customer experience.
6. **Increase in clothes purchases after the emergence of internet sites:** A significant number of respondents (64.5%) reported an increase in their clothes purchases after the emergence of internet sites. This suggests that the availability of online shopping platforms has led to greater purchasing activity.
7. **Impulsive buying behavior:** A considerable proportion of respondents (51.2%) admitted to buying clothing without needing them, indicating impulsive buying behavior. This behavior may be influenced by increased advertising on social networking sites (75.6%) and the convenience of online shopping.
8. **Preference for online offers:** Many respondents (71.2%) preferred to take advantage of online offers when purchasing clothes. This highlights the importance of providing attractive promotions and discounts to attract online shoppers.
9. **Influence of home quarantine:** A significant majority of respondents (91.4%) believed that home quarantine during the Covid-19 pandemic was a reason for buying clothes online. This indicates that the restrictions and lockdowns imposed during the pandemic played a role in driving online clothes shopping.

These findings suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on consumer behavior and preferences regarding clothes purchase. Online shopping has gained popularity, but there are still challenges and areas for improvement in the online shopping experience. Businesses can focus on addressing these challenges, providing attractive offers, and catering to the shifting preferences of consumers to capitalize on the growing trend of online clothes shopping.

13. Answering the research hypothesis:

H1/ consumer behavior, such as the shift towards online shopping, impulsive buying behavior, preference for online offers, and the influence of external factors, can significantly impact price competition in the clothing industry

The impact of consumer behavior on price competition can be inferred from the findings of Table No. (6) as follows:

Shift towards online shopping: The preference for online clothes shopping, both before and after the pandemic, suggests a change in consumer behavior. This shift towards online platforms can lead to increased price competition among retailers as they vie for customers in the digital marketplace.

Challenges in online clothes shopping: The identified challenges in buying clothes online, such as sizing, material texture, quality, and returns, indicate areas where retailers can differentiate themselves through competitive pricing strategies. By addressing these challenges and providing a seamless online shopping experience, retailers can attract and retain customers in a highly competitive market.

Increase in clothes purchases after the emergence of internet sites: The significant increase in clothes purchases after the emergence of internet sites implies a higher demand for clothing, potentially leading to intensified price competition among retailers. To capture a larger market share, retailers may engage in pricing strategies to offer competitive prices and attract consumers.

Impulsive buying behavior: The prevalence of impulsive buying behavior, with a considerable proportion of respondents admitting to purchasing clothing without needing them, suggests opportunities for retailers to employ pricing tactics such as flash sales, limited-time offers, or discounts to entice impulsive buyers and stimulate purchases.

Preference for online offers and promotions: The desire to take advantage of online offers when purchasing clothes indicates that consumers are actively seeking cost-saving opportunities. This preference for online discounts and promotions can drive price competition among retailers as they strive to provide attractive deals to capture consumer attention and increase sales.

Overall, the findings suggest that consumer behavior, such as the shift towards online shopping, impulsive buying behavior, preference for online offers, and the influence of external factors, can significantly impact price competition in the clothing industry. Retailers need to adapt their pricing strategies to align with changing consumer preferences and provide competitive prices, promotions, and a seamless online shopping experience to attract and retain customers in a highly competitive market.

14. Authors comment on the findings

The findings from this study are consistent with previous research that has found a shift towards online shopping during the Covid-19 pandemic (Vázquez-Martínez et al., 2021). Vázquez-Martínez et al. (2021) analyzed shopping trends across multiple categories and reported a significant increase in online sales of clothing and other non-essential items as social distancing measures took effect. The challenges identified with online clothing purchases, such as sizing and inability to see/feel materials (Table 6), have also been noted in prior work. Pardeshi and Khanna (2021) investigated factors influencing online apparel shopping and found that issues around product attributes like fit and fabric were barriers perceived by consumers. To overcome such barriers, virtual try-on features and improved product descriptions were recommended. The inclination towards impulse and non-essential buying observed in this study (Table 6) mirrors trends seen elsewhere during the lockdown period. According to Widagdo and Roz (2021), online impulse buying is affected by hedonic motivation and availability of promotional discounts. The prolonged stay-at-home situation may have encouraged such unplanned purchasing behaviors. In conclusion, the shifts in consumer preferences resonate well with previous literature examining how crises like pandemics have accelerated the shift to online platforms (Mehta et al, 2020); (Widagdo and Roz (2021). Ongoing enhancements to the digital shopping experience will be important for businesses to capitalize on these newly established online customer behaviors.

15. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from the analysis of Table No. (6) highlight the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the purchase of clothes and the subsequent shift towards online shopping. The majority of respondents indicated that the pandemic affected their clothes purchases, with a significant proportion stating a significant impact. Both before and after the pandemic, there was a preference for online shopping among a considerable number of respondents. However, challenges such as sizing, material texture, quality, and returns were identified as areas that need improvement in the online shopping experience.

Despite these challenges, the emergence of internet sites has led to an increase in clothes purchases, indicating the growing popularity of online platforms. It is worth noting that impulsive buying behavior was observed, with a significant proportion of respondents admitting to purchasing clothing without needing them. This behavior may be influenced by increased advertising on social networking sites and the convenience of online shopping.

Furthermore, respondents expressed a desire to take advantage of online offers and promotions when purchasing clothes. The influence of home quarantine during the pandemic was also significant, with a majority of respondents attributing their online clothes shopping to the restrictions and lockdown measures.

Overall, these findings suggest that businesses should adapt to the changing consumer behavior and preferences by focusing on improving the online shopping experience, addressing challenges, providing attractive offers, and catering to the needs of customers during and after the pandemic.

16. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the questionnaire, the following recommendations are proposed:

Enhance product descriptions: Improve the accuracy and detail of product descriptions on clothing websites dedicated to online sales. This will provide customers with a better understanding of the clothing items they are purchasing, reducing the likelihood of dissatisfaction and returns. Including information about materials, texture, and quality can help address consumers' concerns in these areas.

Diversify clothing options: Address the need for a wider variety of clothes in local markets, catering to different tastes and age groups. By offering a diverse range of options, both online and offline, you can better meet the preferences of consumers who may prefer an in-person shopping experience. This can help attract customers who value the ability to physically see and try on clothes before making a purchase.

Support local businesses: Establish dedicated websites for local markets to bridge the gap between physical markets and online platforms. This initiative can provide consumers with the convenience of online shopping while supporting local businesses. It would allow small retailers and boutique stores to reach a wider audience and compete in the online marketplace.

Improve size guidance: Continue providing size charts and accurate size information on online platforms. This helps alleviate consumers' concerns about sizing when purchasing clothes online. Clear and detailed size guidance can enhance the overall shopping experience and reduce the chances of customers receiving ill-fitting items.

Offer promotions and discounts: Utilize offers and promotions on online shopping platforms to incentivize online purchases. This can further encourage consumers to shop online by providing them with cost-effective options and better deals compared to physical markets. Promotions could include discount coupons, bundle offers, or exclusive online-only sales.

Consider consumer feedback: Regularly gather feedback from online shoppers to identify areas for improvement. This can be done through customer surveys, reviews, or feedback mechanisms on the website. Actively listen to customers' suggestions and concerns to make continuous enhancements to the online shopping experience.

By implementing these recommendations, businesses can enhance the online clothing shopping experience, attract more customers, and adapt to the shifting consumer behavior influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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