

# Online Footwear Sales: Drivers and Challenges With a Perspective of Emerging Markets

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate factors that determine consumers' online purchase intention of buying footwear. Footwear, being a high involvement product, is difficult to sell online as people try size to fit before buying, which is more than any other product category. As per the previous studies, the need for touch is the most prominent factor inhibiting customers to buy footwear online. However, with the increasing need for convenience, superior quality digital catalogs, increasing internet density, attractive offers, and interactive features of websites, the mindset of the people is changing, and they are ready to experiment. The structural equation model technique is used to test the hypothesis. As per the results, consumers perceive website attributes and convenience as driving factors in online shopping. Online consumers interact with e-commerce sites through interactive features provided on the websites. The study can help marketers understand consumer online buying behavior, particularly towards footwear.

## KEYWORDS

Convenience, Footwear Industry, India, Need for Touch, Product Attribute, Purchase Intention, Website Attributes

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The number of internet users in India is increasing at a phenomenal rate both in urban as well as rural cities. India had more than 470 million internet users across the country and it is predicted to increase to more than 660 million by 2023 (Statista Report, 2020). India is positioned second in the world concerning dynamic and active internet users. The e-commerce industry in India is predicted to be worth around 200 billion U.S. dollars in 2027. In 2022, around 72.9 percent of internet users were estimated to be digital buyers (Statista Report, 2020). As a result, various physical retailers are going digital utilizing an e-commerce store (Chatterjee, 2010). The growth of the e-commerce industry business has resulted in significant changes in customer purchasing and the shift of business from the physical store to the online store (Kwak, Fox, & Zinkhan, 2002). This has also led to the interest of various researchers trying to know what drives shoppers to shop on the internet. This change is at the same time challenging the conventional business processes and reshaping customers' shopping propensities (Chiang & Dholakia, 2003).

The textile and footwear industry are a very powerful sector for the Indian economy. The footwear industry has got an eminence place in both local and global markets. India is the second biggest worldwide manufacturer of footwear after China, representing 14% of worldwide footwear manufacture of 16 billion sets (Report, 2020). India manufactures 2067 million types and categories of footwear

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pairs. India exports around 115 million sets. About 95% of footwear products are consumed in the local market (Goel, 2014). The key footwear production places in India are Chennai, Panipat, Ambur, Mumbai, Kanpur, Jalandhar, Agra, Delhi, Ludhiana, Kolkata, Sonipat, etc. The workers engaged in the footwear producing industry are approximately 1 million. The footwear includes school uniform shoes, casuals, moccasins, sports shoes, sandals, ballerinas, boots, sandals, and chappals made of elastic, plastic, P.V.C. (Infoline, 2011). The Footwear market is presently de-licensed and de-reserved, preparing for the development of capacities on current modern lines with best in class and advanced machines. The primary export markets for Indian footwear were the USA from 2016 through 2017. The U.S.A and few European countries are the major buyers and comprise 80.53% share of Indian footwear export (Infoline, 2011). E-market will open an additional avenue for the industry. With the development of the e-commerce facility, the small local sellers will have the opportunity to sell their products globally. The footwear segment is expected to increase its profit due to its omnichannel existence.

Consumers get many benefits from online shopping as they can buy products anywhere and at any time (Chiang & Dholakia, 2003) The communicating features of the website increases consumer engagement. Online shopping has its limitations when compared with physical stores, as shoppers can't see, feel, taste, or smell the products they are purchasing (Joann & Childers, 2003). Similar to brick and mortar store the customer needs to be informed about product attributes (design, style, size, color, quality, durability, brand name, and warranty) through a well-designed web/app interface. E-retailers need to create a setting similar to brick-and-mortar footwear shopping for a satisfying shopping experience. Footwear presentation and aesthetics on the website should promote quality.

Previous empirical studies have reflected on various variables to explain online purchase intention: like time-saving (Beauchamp & Ponder, 2010), electronic innovativeness (Yang et al. 2012), perceived security (Kim et al. 2004b; McCole et al. 2010), Website attributes (Li, 2015), Convenience (Yang, Zhao, & Wan, 2010), information quality (Kim et al. 2004b; Kuan et al. 2008; McCole et al. 2010), trust (McCole et al. 2010), cost-saving (Sun et al. 2014; Wu et al. 2014) and perceived value (Wu et al. 2014).

The present study is an attempt to understand and investigate the factors that engage and inhibits customer's online purchasing of footwear. The footwear industry is a promising sector for the Indian economy; with an annual growth of 9.6% CAGR. As per Statista, 2020 in the footwear market, 13% of total revenue will be generated through online sales 2020., so companies and professionals in this sector must understand the increasing online dynamics and the online purchase behavior of existing and potential consumers. The present study associates the existing technological acceptance model with the constructs namely, convenience, product attributes, website designing, and need for touch.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Individuals' acceptance of technological acceptance, such as e-commerce websites, were studied using different theoretical approaches. The most important is the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Schifter and Ajzen 1985), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis 1989), and the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al. 2003). The UTAUT became a widespread theoretical choice as it was applied in a consumer context in many empirical studies, and further, it was extended to UTAUT2(Venkatesh et al. 2012) in explaining the acceptance and use of technology particularly with the user perspective.

Consumers feel comfortable shopping online as they can order their product without leaving their office or home and the product gets delivered at their doorsteps (Yang, Zhao, & Wan, 2010). Consumers own more control as they can easily access the entire information regarding the products (Moshrefjavadi, Poursaeedi, Rezaie, & Asadollahi, 2012). The interactive features of the website enhance consumer interest and they get more engaged in performing various shopping activities (Alba, et al., 1997), (Bilgihan, Kandampully, & Zhang, 2016). The inhibiting factor includes a lack

of face-to-face interaction, which often results in low trust and risk while purchasing online (Lee & Turban, 2001; Durmus, Ulusu, & Akgun, 2017). As per Chen & Chang, 2003, internet shopping includes three basic elements that are interaction, transaction, and satisfaction. Website attributes are regarded as a critical attribute of the online shopping environment. A well-designed website having features like ease to load and navigate (Chen & Chang, 2003) leads to a positive customer experience. Well-designed websites also improve the hedonic pleasure of online shopping. Similar to physical shopping product attributes are equally important for shoppers while purchasing footwear online. The design, style, size, color, quality, durability, brand name, and warranty are equally important while purchasing footwear online. As suggested by (Li, 2015), (Ganguly, Dash, Cyr, & Head, 2010) convenience and website features are the most important factors that positively relate to online shopping preference of experience products, like, apparel or shoes.

The footwear market is growing as footwear is increasingly becoming a fashion accessory. With the availability of footwear through various retail channels, online retailers are promoting the impulse buying behavior of consumers (indianretailer.com). People are perceiving footwear as a symbol of fashion, power, and social status. The need for comfort depends on individual preferences (Lahori & Samanta, 2010). Thereby, we can consider that the product attributes and NFT are intrinsic to experience goods and impact online customer shopping intention. So, the online retailers need to understand the factors and improve different attributes of the online setting, to minimize the constraint of feel and touch.

## 2.1 Product Attributes

Product attributes explain the characteristics of the product and allow a customer to uniquely differentiate one product from others. Product attributes can be defined in terms of options, properties, or additional features (Liesionis & Pileliene, 2007). The attributes of a product comprised of descriptions about the product including design, size, shape, style, and color, etc. (Zhang, Li, Gong, & Wu, 2002). Product attributes help in creating proper positioning of the products and make them different from other competitive products (Quelch, 1979). [REMOVED CITATION FIELD]. From a customer point of view, these qualities influence the thought process and affect the purchase intention. Consumers regularly measure the quality of experience products based on their characteristics. The product characteristics can be categorized into intrinsic characteristics (fit, color, style, size, and comfort) and extrinsic characteristics (price, brand name, durability, material, quality, country of origin) (Szybillo & Jacoby, 1974). Intrinsic characteristics are directly associated with the physical product. While extrinsic are those intangible attributes that are indirectly connected with the physical product. Mainly intrinsic attribute gives higher diagnostic values than extrinsic stimuli. In the study of (Xu & Chen, 2017) college students of China gave more importance to intrinsic attributes than to extrinsic features. Although the association of brand name reduces customer's shopping efforts, fit and style are equally important in accomplishing their physical and psychological needs. In the study of (Newcomb, 2010) product evaluation as an intrinsic attribute played a more important role than extrinsic cues. Other studies also iterated the importance of intrinsic attributes like proper details of the footwear color, size, fit design style on their websites (Bloch, Brunel, & Arnold, 2003), (Citrin, Stem, Spangenberg, & Clark, 2003). Visual presentation of product images and videos are the most required cues that purchasers use for product identification, categorization, evaluation, and selection (Burns, Brown, Cameron, Chandler, & Kaiser, 1995). The study conducted in the United Kingdom (Apegyei, 2008) based on online retailing revealed that female respondents reflected more interest in online purchasing of garments and they decide based on visuals images of the product. The design of the product, fit and style are the most important intrinsic attribute for product evaluation (Workman & Caldwell, 2007). Style can be characterized as the integration of design attributes in the footwear segment. The relationship between footwear items, the shape of the legs, and well-fitted footwear is critical to the wearer's mental satisfaction and comfort (Rahman, Yan, & Liu, 2010). Hence the following hypothesis is proposed

H1: Product attribute has a significant and positive impact on customer intention to purchase footwear online.

## 2.2 Website Attributes

In spite of the usage of online platforms has increased as a sales channel, online retailers are still facing low purchase conversion rates (Moe and Fader, 2004). One of the reasons for the low conversion rate is poor website design (Venkatesh and Agarwal, 2006). Some of the important elements of website attributes are website interactivity and usability, the content and visual elements including aesthetics aspects for better online presentation of entire marketing-mix elements, and finally the credibility of online retailers (Demangeot & Broderick, 2010). Previous researches in online retailing have shown that website design impacts consumer perception and intention to purchase from e-retailers (Chiu & Yang, 2016). Studies also pointed out that customers perceive and evaluate the website attributes of online stores based on the type of product and services offered by retailers. The study of (Wang & Tang, 2003) depicted that customer perception of website designing, its qualities and attribute is a strong predictor of the trust further increase their intention to purchase (Gao & Wu, 2010). As per (Huang, 2003) customers value the visual appeal of a retailer's website as the most important attribute and relate it with the credibility of the retailers. They further added that the right selection of products depends on website design and attributes (Huang, 2003). (Belanger & Crossler, 2011) characterized security, privacy, and hedonic features (aesthetics, convenience, and ease of use) as website attributes. According to (Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002) the website design is characterized based on the four elements: information content, aesthetics, privacy, and security. As per Celsi & Gilly, 2001, a shopper's inclination for a product depends on the information provided by the retailers, ease, and pleasure of navigation experienced while online shopping. The product variety available on the retailer's site also creates a positive impact on customer satisfaction (Szymanski & Hise, 2000). Ahn, Ryu, & Han, 2004 have concluded that the quality of websites like system quality, service quality, and data quality increases the usefulness, hedonic pleasure, and ease of use of the website. As per Ahn, Ryu, & Han, 2004 website attributes are defined in terms of website sufficiency, navigation, and readability. Website sufficiency can be characterized as the completeness of the relevant information about any product and service offered via the website. The ease of movement within the pages is defined as navigation, it enhances the performance of the website (Garrett, Chiu, Zhang, & Young, 2016). Website readability means how easy is to read and understand the entire content available on site. So, all the mentioned above constitutes website attributes. Based on the discussion, we propose the following hypothesis.

H2: Website attribute has a significant impact on customer intention to purchase.

## 2.3 Convenience

Online shopping provides the benefit of time and costs saving opportunities for customers (Bellman, Lohse, & Johnson, 1999). Online shopping reduces travel as well as time spent waiting in queues (Donthu & Garcia, 1999). Online shoppers can evade difficulties associated with the traditional shopping process, like, traffic, searching for parking spots, etc (Childers, Christopher, Peck, & Carson, 2001). Convenience is defined in terms of reducing the psychological, physical, and emotional stress that shoppers experience while buying products and services (Berry, Seiders, & Grewal, 2002). Convenience is a driving factor in online shopping (Li, 2015). As per Beauchamp & Ponder, 2010, online shopping saves the shoppers valuable time and enables them to shop at the comfort of their home as well as their preferable time, hence making shopping more enjoyable (Moeller, Fassnacht, & Ettinger, 2009). Berry, Seiders, & Grewal, 2002, suggested some approaches to provide a convenient environment to customers for shopping like increasing the speed and ease of the entire process and provision for more interaction in an online platform. Some other studies described the key elements

of the convenience of online shopping and customer satisfaction as search convenience, visual appeal/images, information availability, etc. (Jiang, Yang, & Jun 2013). Beauchamp & Ponder, 2010, defined differences between online and in-store shopping based on convenience; interaction, search, selection, transaction, and delivery convenience. They also suggested that as compared to traditional brick and mortar, customers perceive online shopping as more convenient due to search advantage. Based on the discussion we propose the following hypothesis

H3: Convenience has a significant and positive impact on customer intention to purchase footwear online

## 2.4 Need-for-Touch

Even though online retailing is growing (Citrin A., Stem, Spangenberg, & Clark, 2003), it has certain limitations, like the smell, or touch, which has an impact on customer's purchase behavior. Consumer behavior for the products in the fashion category is influenced by the multisensory experience including various senses which empower purchase to collect entire information for assessing the products (Grewal, Iyer, & Levy, 2004), (Dholakia & Zhao, 2010). In an online context, the product preferences and choices are based on the customer's haptic perception through the sense of touch (Workman J. E., 2009). The need to feel the item is more dominant in fashion product categories such as clothes, perfumes footwear, etc. The major inhibition of online fashion business is to try and touch the product (Citrin A., Stem, Spangenberg, & Clark, 2003). For customers, the intangibility of the products on e-retailers' websites is similar to security and privacy concerns (Eggert, 2006). The absence of sensory touch inhibits customers from making the informed purchase decision (Yu, Lee, & Damhorst, 2012), (Eggert, 2006). (Schifferstein & Cleiren, 2005). So, it is expected that NFT is a factor that negatively influences customer purchase intention of footwear online. Thus, the following hypothesis is designed

H4: The need for touch has a significant and negative impact on customer intention to purchase footwear online.

## 2.5 Relationship Between Product Attributes and Website Design Attributes

Every online retailer needs to design websites that are appealing and engaging. It depends on various components like colors, fonts, layout, amount of text, product image display, spacing, etc. (Davis, 1989). (Well, Valacich, & Hess, 2011) Retailers have to consider these components to design an interface that attracts customer's attention to their site. The look and feel of the website are the essential drivers of first-time interaction (Huang, 2003). Visual images of the products offered on websites and easy navigation indicated the highest impact on an individual's perception of the site (Huang, 2003). On the other hand, a poorly designed interface results in quick dismissal and trust issues with the website (Lee & Turban, 2001). If the home page is not attractive and engaging, there is a low probability of exploring the site further by the user. The study (Oh, Fioritob, Cho, & Hofackerd, 2008) suggested that the credibility of websites depends on the visual appeals of a site, including design, color scheme, font size, and ease of navigation. Visual presentations and text depictions of products increase customer's interest in online shopping. Previous studies (Kim & Forsythe, 2007), (Klein, 2003) validated that the e-retailers should concentrate equally on the textual information as well as the visual presentation of product images. It has been mentioned that visual components of product information influences both customers emotional and mental state (Mano & Oliver, 1993). Some studies on online apparel (Eckman, Damhorst, & Kadolph, 1990), (Rahman, Yan, & Liu, 2010) suggested that the aesthetic appearance of a product on the website influence buyer's intention. As per the studies, images can communicate product information better than textual details (Scott, 1994), (Rahman & Petroff, 2014). In other words, online visual presentation of product information and

attributes create customer interest towards the online purchase from the website (Well, Valacich, & Hess, 2011) (Chen-Yu & Kincade, 2001). With such viewpoints, it is important to understand how online customers perceive a product in the digital space. So, the following hypothesis is proposed

H5: The product attribute information of footwear has a significant relation with website design attributes.

## **2.6 Website Design Attribute and Convenience**

Due to website designing mistakes, many users leave the site, resulting in a low conversion rate. To be successful in the e-market and to create a positive experience website design is an important determinant. A poorly designed and unstructured website leads to negative customer experiences, difficulty in navigation, and performing transactions. Convenience includes features like ease of navigation and self-explanatory menu and self-service technology (Considine & Cormican, 2016). The customers feel empower when they have a greater sense of control to perform various online transactions. The online platform provides a convenient medium for shopping, and it depends on the designing of the website, comfortable/friendly environment, and ease of use (Davis, 1989). Website convenience reduces customer time, efforts, and energy in the online purchasing process. Srinivasan, Anderson, & Ponnnavolu, 2002, has defined convenience in internet business as the consumer perception of e-tailor site as simple, easy to use and user- friendly. The website's convenience is in the form of minimizing search time, ease of comparison between products, wide payment choice, graphical interface reduces the efforts and increases customer intention to purchase (Jiang, Yang, & Jun, 2013). The website can provide convenience through search convenience, accessibility of information available on websites, easy and faster transactions, resulting in time, and cost convenience. Based on the discussion the following hypothesis is proposed

H6: The website design attributes have a significant relation with customer convenience in online shopping of footwear.

Based on the literature review Figure 1 explains the conceptual theoretical model of the study that shows the factors affecting consumers for online shopping of footwear. This model also defines the relationship between the various factors affecting the online shopping of footwear.

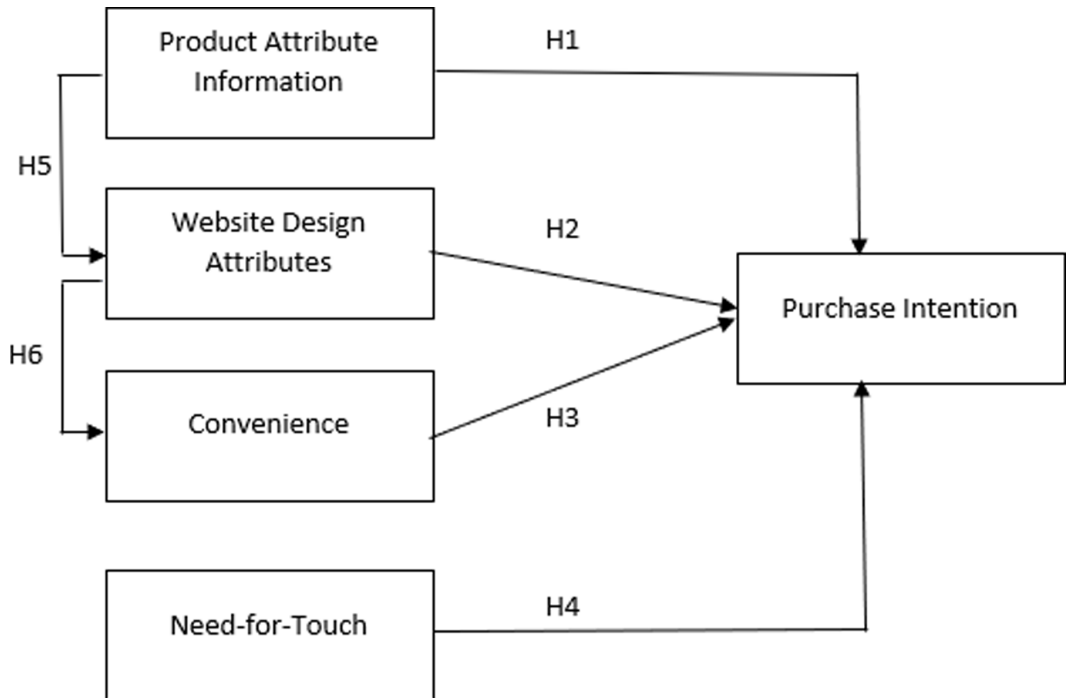
## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Sample and Data Collection**

This study aims to find consumer behavior for the purchase of footwear online and measures the factors impacting their intention to purchase. As per a recent survey conducted by Statistica, 2020 online sales of footwear are growing at a steady rate and is an important part of a consumer's lifestyle. The online footwear revenue is contributing 14% of the total revenue. There is a limited no of empirical studies in the online footwear segment to understand the perception and preference of consumer (Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018), (Costa e Silva, Duarte, & Moneiro, 2018)

The sample consists of online shoppers in India specifically in the Delhi-NCR region. The reason for choosing Delhi-NCR because the Delhi is capital of India and comes in a Metropolitan city. These are also called high-tech cities and the internet shopping usage behavior of the Delhi-NCR region is highly promising (Verma & Ravindran, 2016). Out of a total of 280 responses received 56 were eliminated as they were incomplete and hence not a part of the analysis. 224 complete questionnaires were used for further analysis. Malhotra (2014) states that the pre-test sample size should vary between 15 and 30. The convenience sampling method was used for data collection as the sampling

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



frame is not available for online users. All respondents were explained about the objective of the study and they were assured about the confidentiality of responses. For the pilot testing, the link was sent through e-mail, social media, and WhatsApp to friends, family, and friends of friends, and text messaging. The online survey method was used due to the low cost and widespread internet access to the population. The online survey was sent to consumers who had experience of buying footwear online. The screening questions were like: Have you ever purchased footwear online? Do you enjoy shopping for footwear online? Do you feel shop footwear online is convenient? Only those who answered yes are eligible for the survey. The main objective of sampling is to get a group of respondents who are aware of the basic constructs and provide specific needed information. This will ensure the homogeneity of the sample.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section consists of questions related to the demographic details of the respondents. The second section contains the questions related to consumer behavior and online footwear buying pattern. The third section consists of questions measuring the consumer perception towards online shopping of footwear. All the items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5- strongly agree. We made slight changes in the sequence and wording of questions based on the feedback of the respondents. The construct used in the study was based on a previously tested scale, however, the scale was slightly modified based on the local audience and current study context. The reliability of questions was checked based on Cronbach's alpha value.

### 3.2 Scale Description

All the scales used in the study were validated scales from previous studies. The scale for product attributes was adapted from Mbambonduna, 2018, and Rahman, Yan, & Liu, 2010. The Scale for website attributes was adapted from Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002; Ahn, Ryu, & Han, 2004 and Garrett, Chiu, Zhang, & Young, 2016. The convenience scale is adapted from Chiang & Dholakia,

2003; Raman, 2014 and Chen & Hung, 2015. Need for touch is adapted from Workman J. E., 2009, Peck & Wiggins, 2006). The scale to measure purchase intention for online shopping is adapted by Yu, Lee, & Damhorst, 2012.

### **3.3 Sample Demographic Characteristics**

The sample characteristics for this research are shown in Table 1. According to the gender distribution of the sample the data shown that female respondents do more online shopping of footwear than male respondents. Most of the respondents are quite young, either employed or students.

### **3.4 Sample Online Shopping Characteristics**

The online shopping behavior of customers for the purchasing of footwear is shown in Table 2.

### **3.5 Construct, Factor Loading, and Reliability**

In the present research total, 5 variables were identified, here some items were dropped because of cross loading between the factors. The identified factors with their respective factor loadings were shown in Table 3, all the factors have loading greater than 0.6 within threshold limits (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The value of variance inflated factor (VIF) for all the four independent variables ranges from (1.412 to 2.081) which is less than five indicating that there is no multicollinearity present between the all four independent variables (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The relationship proposed in the conceptual model between various factors was tested through structural equation modeling. It is a more relevant multivariate research technique to measure the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Therefore, structure equation modeling was selected in this research to measure the theoretical model. The conceptual model was tested in two steps. The first step is to test the measurement model and then the structure model was tested.

### **3.6 Measurement Model**

The measurement model was tested by measuring the three important criteria for the constructs used in the research these are construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Chin & Newsted, 1999). The reliability of the construct measured through the coefficient of Cronbach alpha value should be greater than 0.7. The findings revealed that the value of Cronbach's alpha within threshold limits, so the construct used in this research is reliable for study. The convergent validity measure through the composite reliability (CR) with an expected value greater than 0.7 and average value explain (AVE) with expected value should be greater than 0.5 and also the value of  $CR > AVE$ . Results showed in Table 3 that all the values of CR and AVE are satisfactory within cut-off limits. So, the requirement of convergent validity was completed (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

The discriminant validity was measured through the Maximum shared squared variance (MSV) and average shared square variance (ASV). It compares the average value explained (AVE) of one construct to the squared correlation of other constructs used in the model. For discriminant validity, the value of AVE should be greater than both square correlation ASV and MSV (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Here results confirmed that these conditions were met, so the requirement of discriminant validity was fulfilled. The results of the discriminant validity shown in Table 4.

The goodness of fit was used to evaluate the fitness of the measurement model were measured through the values of root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the normal fit index (NFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and goodness-of-fit index (GFI). All the values of fit measure indices were shown in Table 5 are within the Threshold limits. This indicates that the model is a good fit.

### **3.7 Structural Model**

The testing of the structure model was conducted as a second step after checked the proper conditions of reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity met with the criteria and the measurement



Table 1. Demographic profile of the Sample

Elements	Demographic profile	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	101	45.1%
	Female	123	54.9%
Age	16-25	81	36.3%
	26-35	69	30.8%
	36-45	46	20.5%
	46-55	24	10.7%
	56 and above	4	1.7%
	Employment status	Employed	90
Students		51	22.8%
Self-employed		33	14.7%
Unemployed		46	20.5%
Retired		4	1.8%
Annual Income	0-2 Lac	7	3.20%
	2-4 lac	18	8%
	4-8 Lac	78	34.8%
	8-12 Lac	73	32.6%
	More than 12 Lac	48	21.4%
Preferred medium to buy footwear	Physical store	81	36.1%
	online store	64	28.6%
	Both	79	35.3%
Frequency to buy footwear	Monthly	47	21%
	Quarterly	62	27.7%
	Occasionally	49	21.9%
	Yearly	29	12.9%
	Half Yearly	37	16.5%
Prefer website to buy footwear online	Ajio	55	24.6%
	Myntra	45	20.1%
	Flipkart	40	17.9%
	Amazon	48	21.4%
	Fashos	8	3.6%
	Tata Cliq	5	2.2%
	Jabong	18	8%
	Others	5	2.20%

model was validated. The structure model tests all the relationships between the factors were proposed in the conceptual model. The R square value of all the factors indicates that the relationship between the factors is very strong. The path coefficient was measured by evaluating a structural model. These estimations and their significance level were used to test the hypothesis proposed in the research.

Table 2. Online shopping characteristics

Factors	Determinants	Frequency	%
Time spend on purchasing online	less than 30 minutes	23	10.2
	30 to 60 minutes	99	44.2
	1-2 hours	72	32.2
	More than 2 hours	30	13.4
Amount spend to purchase footwear online	below 500 Rs	26	11.6
	500-1000 Rs	76	33.9
	1000-2500 Rs	59	26.3
	2500-5000 Rs	42	18.8
Type of footwear purchase online	Above 5000 Rs	21	9.4
	Formal	56	25
	Informal/Casual	92	41.1
	Both	76	33.9
Category of Footwear purchase online	Formal Shoes	62	27.7
	Sandals	26	11.6
	Sleepers	32	14.3
	Sport Shoes	64	28.6
	Other Casuals	40	17.8
The attribute of footwear considers while purchasing online	Fit	62	27.7
	Style	45	20.1
	Design	36	16.1
	Comfort	50	23.3
	Color	6	2.6
	Brand	25	11.2
Reason to buy footwear online	Convenience	34	15.2
	More Variety	30	13.4
	Better price and discounts	27	12.1
	compare product and offers	22	9.8
	Information Access	19	8.5
	Avoid crowds	24	10.7
	save time	26	11.6
	free shipping offers	15	6.7
	24*7 shopping experience	27	12
Medium of shopping if price is same in both medium	Online	92	41.1
	Physical Store	54	24.1
	Both	78	34.8
Risk of online shopping	Wrong product delivery	54	24.1
	Wrong color/size delivery	43	19.2
	Inability to touch and try	33	14.7
	Privacy/Security	39	17.4
	Can't check the Authenticity of brand	26	11.6
	No Immediate ownership of product	29	12.9
Buying pattern	Always shop for clothes to match my footwear	24	10.7
	Always shop for footwear to match my clothes	98	43.8
	Only need basis	102	45.5

Findings indicate that all the hypotheses were supported except the hypothesis H1 and H4. The results of the testing hypothesis shown in Table 6.

As per Table 6, convenience ( $\beta=0.41, p < 0.001$ ), and website attributes ( $\beta=0.30, p < 0.001$ ) has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention of footwear online. Product attribute ( $\beta=0.10, p$

Table 3. Constructs, Factor Loading and Reliability

Constructs	Factor Loading	Alpha	CR	AVE
<b>Product Attribute</b>		0.954	0.936	0.787
I select the footwear based on style	0.900			
I select the footwear based on the color	0.864			
Good fit/size Footwear provide me comfort to wear	0.815			
Footwear price matters at the moment of buying	0.799			
<b>Website Attribute</b>		0.878	0.8921	0.674
Ease of navigation on website	0.849			
Clarity in display of product images	0.836			
Website design and visual appeal	0.812			
Information accessibility and readability from website	0.783			
<b>Convenience</b>		0.889	0.902	0.701
More assortment and variety of product available online	0.804			
Online shopping Save time and cost	0.752			
I can easily do comparison between products and available offers	0.738			
I can shop at any time and from any location	0.732			
<b>Need for Touch</b>		0.891	0.88	0.649
I am not sure about size of product by seeing an image	0.927			
I feel more comfortable buying the product after physically examining it	0.918			
I need to try the product for fit and comfort.	0.868			
I place more trust in products that can be touched before purchase.	0.802			
<b>Purchase Intention</b>		0.935	0.938	0.836
I am happy with shopping online	0.894			
I recommend others to purchase online	0.868			
I have a positive Intent to buy a product online	0.784			

Note: \*items removed due to low loading 1) \* Visual information of the footwear attract my attention, \*Footwear images on the website trigger purchase\*

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

	ASV	MSV	P. ATTRIB	CONV	NFT	WEB.ATTR	PI
P. ATTRIB	0.151	0.4238	0.887				
CONV	0.1933	0.4238	0.507	0.82			
NFT	0.003	0.0104	0.069	0.024	0.837		
WEB.ATT	0.109	0.258	0.276	0.229	0.003	0.806	
PI	0.1736	0.366	0.429	0.381	0.063	0.321	0.914

**Table 5. Measurement Model Fit Indices**

Fit Measure Indices	CMIN/DF	CFI	AGFI	TLI	RMSEA
Values	1.877	0.966	0.855	0.959	0.063
Threshold Values	Less than 3	$\geq 0.95$	$\geq 0.80$	$\geq 0.90$	$\leq 0.10$

Note: CFI = Comparative fit index; CMIN = Chi-square; df= Degree of freedom; RMSEA= Root mean square error of approximation; TLI= Tucker-Lewis index; AGFI = Adjusted goodness of fit

**Table 6. Testing of Hypothesis**

	Estimate	S. E	C.R.	P	Hypothesis
Product Attributes ->Purchase Intention	0.10	0.046	1.685	.092	H1: Not Supported
Website Attributes->Purchase Intention	0.295	0.092	3.943	***	H2: Supported
Convenience->Purchase Intention	0.406	0.086	5.681	***	H3: Supported
Need-For-Touch-> Purchase Intention	0.07	0.067	1.390	0.165	H4: Not Supported
Product Attributes->Website Attributes	0.394	0.045	5.710	***	H5: Supported
Website Attributes-> Convenience	0.486	0.077	6.449	***	H6: Supported

$\geq 0.001$ ) does not have a significant impact on customer intention to purchase (significant at 10%). The need for touch is also not a significant determinant of customer purchase intention ( $\beta=0.08$ ,  $p \geq 0.05$ ). The product attribute information ( $\beta=0.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) had a significant impact on the design of a website. Lastly the website designing ( $\beta=0.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) attribute had a significant impact on customer convenience from navigating the website. Furthermore, the structural model has a good level of fit indices all the values are within threshold limits as shown in Table 7. Therefore, the results concluded that the goodness of fit for the structural model was accepted.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The outcomes of the study indicate convenience and website attributes (easy navigation, visual appeal, information availability) as the most important determinant for online shopping of footwear (Figure 2).

The first hypothesis tests the relationship between the product attribute information and customer intention to purchase the product. The finding shows product attributes have a significant effect at a ten percent level of significance. As per Wang,2014 female consumers who have higher purchase intentions of shoes have a significantly higher appraisal of shoe attributes like material, color, and brand parallel to those who have lower purchase intentions of shoes. This confirms the present study findings.

Product attributes help in creating proper positioning of the products (Zhang, Li, Gong, & Wu, 2002). The product attribute indirectly affects customer intention to purchase online footwear through website attributes (Rahman, Yan, & Liu, 2010), (Well, Valacich, & Hess, 2011) (Figure 3).

The second hypothesis indicates a positive relationship between the website design attributes and customer intention to purchase the footwear. Ease of navigation, website sufficiency in terms of sufficient details about the product, and website readability increases the performance of the websites. A well-designed website has the advantage to attracts and retain customers (Chiu & Yang, 2016). Previous researches in online retailing have shown that website design impacts consumer perception and subsequently intention to purchase from e-retailers (Chiu & Yang, 2016). As per Gao & Wu, 2010, customer perception of website designing, its qualities, and the attribute is a strong predictor

Table 7. Structural Model Fit Indices

FIT Measure Indices	CMIN/DF	CFI	AGFI	TLI	RMSEA
Values	2.465	0.938	0.822	0.927	0.077
Threshold Values	Less than 3	>=0.95	>=0.80	>=0.90	<=0.10

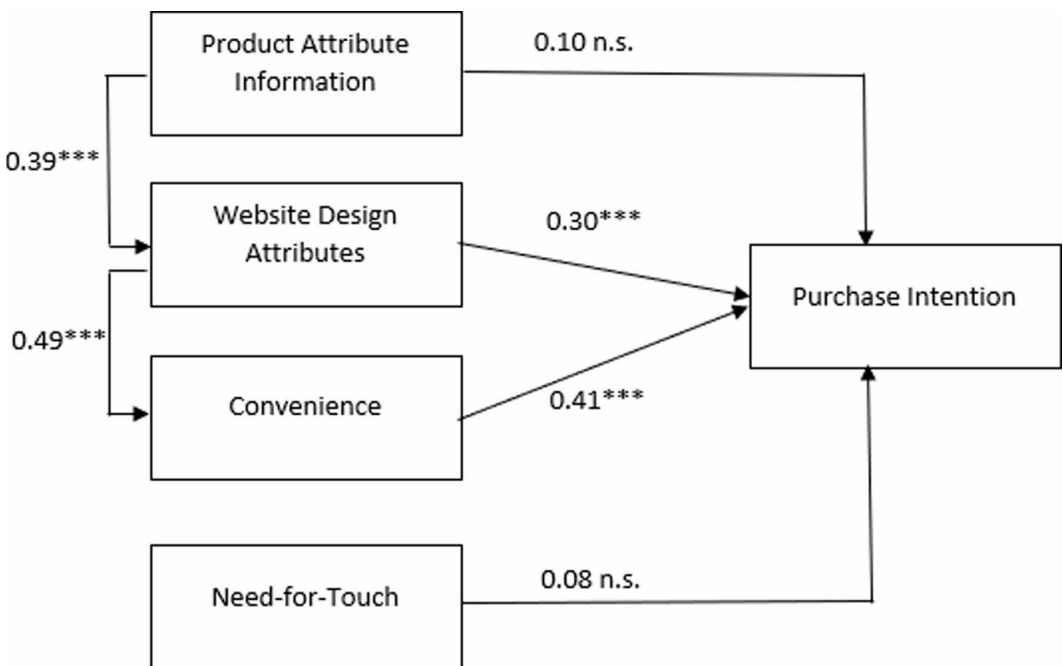
Note: CFI = Comparative fit index; CMIN = Chi-square; df= Degree of freedom; RMSEA= Root mean square error of approximation; TLI= Tucker-Lewis index; AGFI = Adjusted goodness of fit

of the trust and their intention to purchase. The result of our study is aligned with previous studies (Yoon et al., 2013)

The third hypothesis tests the relationship between convenience and purchase intention. As per the results of our study, there is a significant and positive relationship between convenience and online purchase intention. The online environment facilitates the customers such that they need to exert fewer efforts, enormous variety is available for selection, and product comparison is possible on the same website or across different websites (Alba et al., 1997). Consumers value the ease of shopping, the time-saving aspect as well as the variety of products offered (Jiang, Yang, & Jun 2013). In this way, e-shopping reduces mental, physical, and emotional stress and enhances shoppers' experiences (Berry, Seiders, & Grewal, 2002). Our findings also support convenience as one of the most important factors for online shopping (Bhatnagar and Ghose, 2004, Robinson, Riley, Rettie, and Wilsonz (2007).

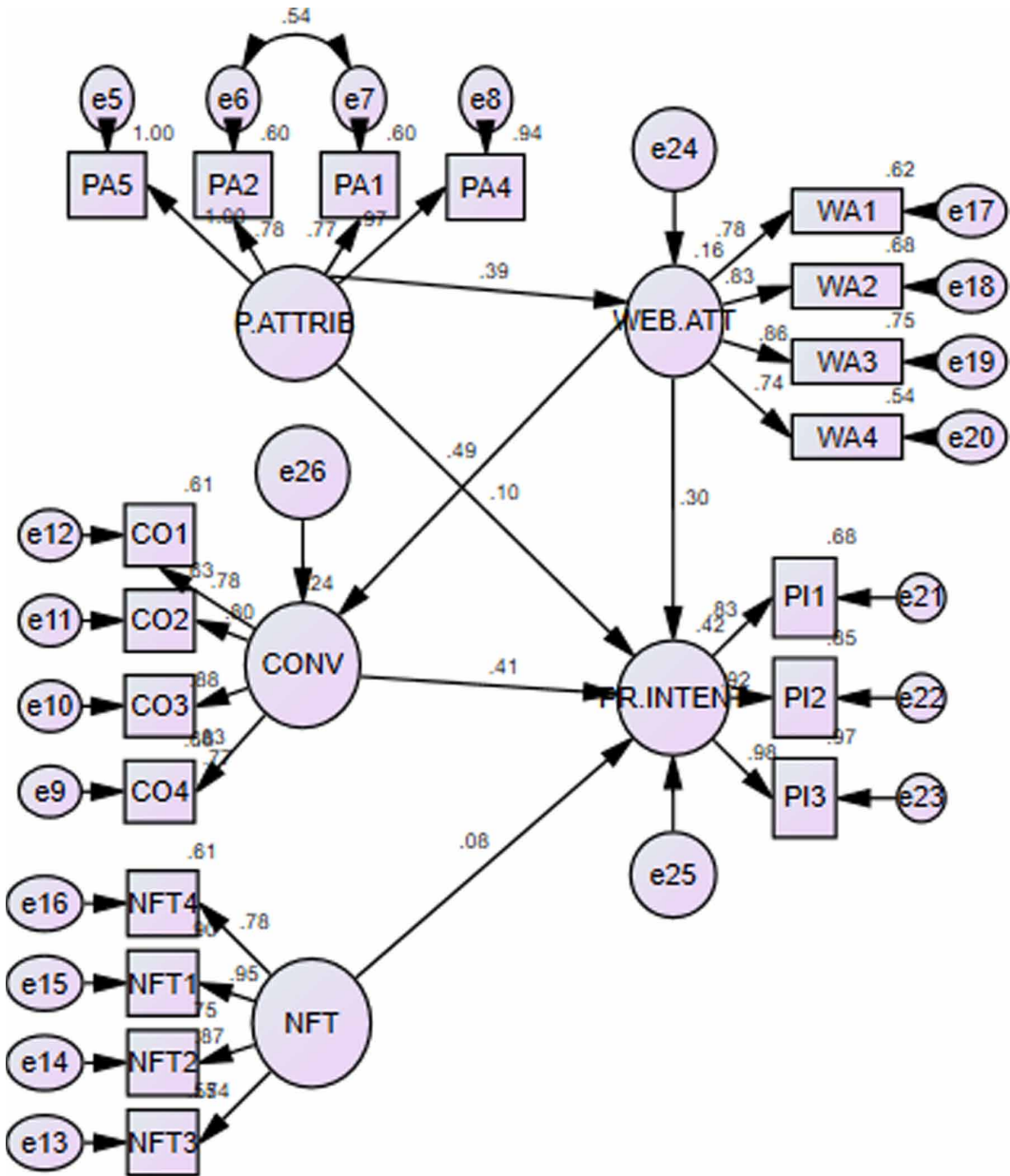
The fourth hypothesis tested the relationship between the need for touch (NFT) and customer intention to purchase footwear. Our study does not support the hypothesis. NFT is believed to be more important in high-involvement product categories like apparel or shoes, in which consumers need to see, try, and touch the product. However, the recent trends are indicating that the people now

Figure 2. Structural Model



Note: \* -> sig ≤0.5, \*\* ->sig ≤01, \*\*\*-> sig ≤.001, n.s.-> not significant

Figure 3. Structural Path Model Note: P. ATTRIE: Product attribute, WEB.ATT: website attribute, CONV: Convenience, NFT: Need for Touch, P. INTEN: Purchase Intention.



do impulsive shopping for shoes also. As per Coley and Burges, 2003 impulsive buying behavior is more expected when the affective state develops above cognition. This implies that the purchase decisions are influenced more by short-term emotional concerns as compared to long term sensible concerns. Some study has also proven that impulsive buying as more prominent in women particularly in footwear (Falahat et al., 2017). The interactive features of the website including the chatting facility have reduced the inhibition of the need for touch. The easy return policy provided by the e- retailer has also reduced the constraint of need for touch (Verhagen, Vonkeman & Van Dolen,2016), (Kamuro

et al., 2012), (Kim, & Forsythe 2009). With the increasing e-commerce growth, people now see things in picture form and use product specs and customer reviews to fill in the gaps. The detailed information of product features with good visuals of product images and videos on websites reduces the customer's requirement of need for touch.

The fifth hypothesis tests the relationship between the product attribute information and web design attributes. The product information displayed on the website led to an increase in customer interest to shop. The features like colors, fonts, layout, text, product image display, spacing, etc. (Well, Valacich, & Hess, 2011) makes a website more appealing and engaging. The 3d images and informative videos about the product enhances customer experience with websites. The product details like category, size, a material used, price, brand name, influences customer behavior intentions (Kim & Forsythe, 2007; Rahman & Petroff, 2014). It is important for the online retailer to understand how customers see, perceive, navigate, access, and evaluate products and website in an online environment.

The sixth hypothesis supports the relationship between website design features and convenience. The online platform provides a convenient medium for shopping, and it depends on the designing of the website, user-friendly environment, and ease of use (Davis, 1989). A well-designed website provides a convenient atmosphere for shoppers for performing various shopping activities. The ease of navigation, user-friendliness, and interactive environment helps the customer to save time and effort for searching, evaluating, and purchasing the product. Present study findings are aligned with Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa (2002), as their research supported the relationship between perceived usefulness, perceived control, and perceived ease of use of a web site. So, online purchase intention increases if they find the company's website easy and safe to use.

## 5. THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

This research contributes to the understanding of the main factors that drive customers to purchase shoes online. The present study contemplates the core assumptions of UTUAT given by Venkatesh et al. (2003). Having studied the important factors predicting customers' intentions towards online purchase of footwear, the current study signifies a considerable contribution to the existing knowledge concerning online footwear in particular and the technology acceptance area in general. The main findings indicate that people highly appreciate the convenience feature that shopping for shoes online provides them. Convenience was found to be the key factor in driving consumers to shop online. Consumers value the easiness and time-saving aspect as well as the variety of products offered (Product attribute). Consumer appreciates (Website designing) the interactive features available online, such as the attractive website design, images, and videos, reviews, and feedback from other customers.

The addition to the existing literature is a relationship between product attributes and website design attributes. The product attributes play important role in shopping but it has no relevance if it is not communicated properly. The study found online visual of product information enhances customer interest in online purchase. The attribute information of footwear has a significant relation with website design attributes. The proper display of product with price and size information, images, online chat support to communicate the product information to the customer. Especially in an online medium, the presentation of product information should be highly focused because the customer can't touch and try the product on this medium, they only believe in the information displayed on the sites. The need for touch is important however advance website design helps in reducing the inhibition. Due to advancements in web technologies, the website designing has improved and facilitates users with advanced details of the product through multidimensional images and 3-D videos of the products (Rodrigues, Silva, & Durate, 2017). The web has become a mainstream communication tool used by businesses. The paper contributes to the exploration of this issue by investigating the degree to which users' perception of a brand is affected by different design aspects of a website. The paper also validates the indirect relation between website attributes and convenience. A well-designed website

having features like ease of navigation, user-friendliness, and an interactive environment helps the customer to save time and effort.

The study offers important implications for online footwear retailers. In online shopping, visual cues like product images and display give sufficient information about the footwear product attributes like its size, fit, color, and style. Footwear studies (Rahman, Yan, & Liu, 2010), (Xu & Chen, 2017) suggested that shoppers are competent to evaluate the footwear attribute (like fit and quality) based on visual presentation. As shopping for footwear is different from other consumer products, hence proper presentation information related to footwear attributes (fit, size color, brand, price) on retailer's websites increases customer interest in online shopping of footwear.

To improve the internet shopping experience, the e-retailers should concentrate on the website's attributes (like visual appeals, fast navigation, availability and readability of information, clarity in product display). To enhance the experience, the retailer should provide a detailed sizing map to outline the width and height of footwear and realistic 3D images of footwear (with rotating, zooming, and flipping). Many consumers do not want to shop online because they want to try and touch the footwear before making a final purchase decision. The main reason behind the customer's requirement of need for touch is footwear size and fit, which may vary from brand to brand. NFT is determinant in all experience goods. However, this problem can be reduced with an easy and good return policy. The review of other customers, easy return, and direct Q & A with customer service reduces customer doubts about the product quality and helps them to take an effective purchase decision.

## **6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE**

This study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration for future research. The factors that have been selected to better understand the consumer behavior of online shopping of footwear in the present study can further be explored to provide a more widened framework of the factors influencing consumer intention to purchase. These factors could be price, product assortment, perceived risk, product quality, etc. Additionally, to understand the difference in purchase intention between shopper high in NFT and low in NFT, the need for touch be tested as a moderator wherein sample data consist both of online shoppers and brick and mortar shoppers. Secondly, the sample size selected for the study was considerably small. Due to the limited sample size, the same data set has been used for EFA and CFA as we cannot randomly split the data set between a "fit" set and a "test" set.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

We wish to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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