Understanding the Link between Consumer Decision-making Style and Online Apparel Purchasing

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Abstract——**Online apparel consumption is becoming an indispensable consumer apparel buying patterns. Based on consumer purchase decision style theory and the technology acceptance model theory, using cluster analysis, structural equation model and other quantitative analysis tools, this paper try to find out how different decision-making styles making consumers behave different when they are shopping apparel online. The results show that there are three major purchasing decision style consumers, each type behave obviously different from the other two type of consumers. Finally, marketing strategies for online apparel are suggested.**

Index Terms——**Purchase decision-making style, technology acceptance model, cluster analysis, structural equation model**

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, online apparel retail in China has been growing rapidly. China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) released the "26th China Internet Development Statistics Report" on July15, 2010. According to the report, the rate of consumer to work with online shopping in China was 33.8%, to reach 142 million people, increased by 31.4% in six months, user scale growth rate in various types of network applications ranked first. Clothing sales online in China has always been the largest category. According to the "Q1 2010 quarterly monitoring online retail market in China" released by Analysys Enfodesk, the first quarter of 2010 online retail market deal size in China reached 95.97 billion yuan, increased by 101.7% comparing with last year. Clothing and accessories category in which reached 21.5 billion of goods, accounting for 22.4% of market size.

However, Chinese online clothing market has not yet been fully released, the sales of clothing category is about 300 billion, so online clothing sales is a small number, less than one-tenth of that.On the other hand Internet users in China, one people in four is online shopping user, while in Europe, America and Korea, which countries with high Internet penetration, online shopping in the proportion of Internet users has reached   more than 2 / 3.

According to consumer purchasing decision-making style theory and technology acceptance model, we made our questionnaire. Then, firstly, cluster analysis is used to classify consumers by different clothing purchasing style. Secondly the consumer purchase decision-making style is linked with the technology acceptance model using SEM to find out which factor affect consumer behavior when they buying apparel online. Finally, we discuss the result of our study and make recommendations on online apparel marketing strategies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Decision-making style

Consumer decision-making style of shopping is a consumer buying decision process, characterized the way consumers make purchasing decisions. Similar to the research method of cognitive, consumer decision-making style researchers try to study this subject from a cognitive and emotional point of view. When consumers buy goods, a lot of factors may influencing their decision, such as the pursuit of quality, price sensitivity, brand awareness and so on[1]. Summarizes the past in the market and consumer decision-making on the basis of relevant research, Sproles in 1986 established a consumer purchasing decision-making style model, which has eight factors, which can be tested by the sophisticated consumer style inventory (consumer-decision-making styles, CSI). The eight factors include the pursuit of perfection, fashion, entertainment, brand awareness, impulse shopping, dazzling, price sensitive and customary. Consumer Styles Inventory has an important assumption: every consumer under the influence of different factors in their judgments to make a comprehensive decision. In other words, every type of consumers consider not only one factor, while the eight factors affecting every consumer, but consumers pay more attention to one or a few factors that make their shopping decision-making styles differently. Sproles'

method were widely accepted. After Sproles many scholars have studied decision-making styles in cross-cultural, multi-angle way. [2] [3] [4]

B.   Technology Acceptance Model

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) [5] provides a conceptual framework to study the consumer acceptance of new technologies. Based on the theory of social psychology, including the theory of reasoned action (TRA) [6] and the theory of planned behavior [7], TAM recommend using beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behavior as main factors to explain and predict user acceptance level of new technologies. TAM proposed to use two new technology-related beliefs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use to judge a person's attitude toward new technologies and their intention to use the new technique. Perceived usefulness is the extent to which users believe that the use of the technology will improve his / her performance. Perceived ease of use is the extent to which users believe that the use of the technology is easy to learn. TAM further suggests that perceived ease of use will influence perceived usefulness in certain degree.

TAM has been used to explain the intention of the user adoption of new technologies in a number of areas, including the Bank of technology [8] [9] [10], mobile commerce [11], E-mail [12], online games, [13], desktop video conferencing [14], remote medical technology [15] and so on. Online shopping is a retail format innovation, how to use innovative technology systems, and effective shopping online (eg, browsing, transaction, etc.)are the technology that consumers need to learn, TAM model provide a theoretical basis for research consumer acceptance of online shopping.
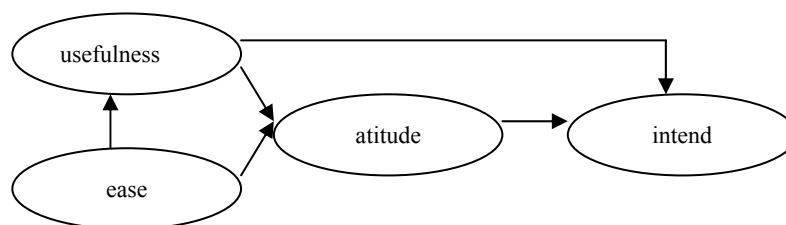

Figure 1.   Technology Acceptance Model

III.   MEHTOD

A. Research design and process

Design books of the research lines are as follows: (1) According to CSI scales, we design consumer apparel purchase decision-making style questionnaire. According to TAM model and the consumer perception of risk related research we design consumer online apparel purchase intention questionnaire. (2) 400 questionnaires were send to the university students and working people then reliability and validity of the questionnaire were tested.(3) According to data collected, we use cluster analysis to classify consumers by clothing consumer style. (4) According to data collected, we use structural equation modeling to analyze the factors' influence on the   online apparel purchase intention (5) Comes to the conclusion.

B. Design of questionnaire

This paper try to find out consumer decision-making style on apparel and their influence on intention to buy apparel online ,so the questionnaire is divided into two parts, namely, questionnaire for style of buying apparel, and questionnaire for intention to purchase clothing online. Two questionnaires were used 5-point Likert scoring method, that is 1 means strongly disagree, 2   not agree, 3 said they did not know or does not matter, 4 would like to agree, 5 strongly agreed.

In this paper, the questionnaire for clothing buying style is designed similar to the consumer purchase decision-making Inventory (CSI), with little changes according to clothing purchases its own features. In this questionnaire 8 factors with 25 questions were designed. For the pursuit of quality, innovative fashion, entertainment, brand awareness, impulse shopping, dazzling and the price-sensitive three questions were designed, customary with four questions. In addition, price-sensitive is reverse variable, that means higher the score, the less the consumer cares about price.

Questionnaire for Intention to purchase apparel online in this study is based on the original TAM model and join the perceived risk factor. The perceived risk factors in the design study was designed according to Guo Jianen [16]5 questions, namely economic risks, social and psychological risks, health risks, time risk and privacy risk. Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitudes and purchase intention were tested by three questions.

IV.   RESULLT

A. Description of sample

400 paper and e-mail questionnaire were send, 300 copies were returned. Removing the obvious chaos and uncompleted questionnaires, 245 valid questionnaires were finally obtained, in which 99 were male (40.4%), female 168 (59.6%); students 208 (84.9%), working people 37 (15.1%); have online shopping experience is 168 (68.6%), no online shopping experience is 77 (31.4%); 211 regular Internet users (86.1%), 34 not regular Internet users (13.9%).

B.Analysis of reliability and validity

In this paper, we use SPSS 17 to analyze the reliability of the initial questionnaire. As the results shown in Table I, alpha of Decision-making style and online purchase intention survey questionnaire were 0.830 and 0.823, overall α was 0.871, which indicating that the initial questionnaire as a whole has a high internal consistency. However, the price-sensitive factor only has the reliability coefficients 0.376. Therefore, price-sensitive factors need to be considered separately, the result of the price-sensitive factor analysis is shown in Table II. As Table II shows if remove the question 23, that is the problem "I usually buy discount clothing as possible," the reliability will be increased to 0.533, it is a huge improvement ,so we consider to removing 23.However the final questionnaire must consider validity as well.

We use AMOS17 to test the validity of the questionnaire, the results of second-order confirmatory factor analysis is shown in Table3. In the model fit index, the chi-square / degrees of freedom 1.275 <2; GFI = 0.92, AGFI = 0.881 and CFI = 0.952, close to or above the optimal level of 0.9; PGFI = 0.620, the acceptance level of more than 0.5 RMSEA = 0.034, far more below 0.08 the desirable level, which fully shows that the second-order confirmatory factor model has a high degree of fitting. Although most of the alternative factor load factor are close to or greater than 0.5 the minimum acceptable standard, the only problem (or variable) 23 does not meet the criteria, in the final questionnaire we removed this variable.

TABLE I.
RESULT OF RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

factors	α	α	factors	α	α
fashion	0.643		usefulness	0.635	
dazzle	0.623		ease of use	0.649	
quality	0.464		risk	0.677	0.823
brand	0.653	0.830	attitude	0.692	
entertainment	0.570		intention	0.742	
customary	0.708				
impulse	0.673				
price	0.376				
α of the whole questionnaire is 0.871					

TABLE II.
RESULT OF RELIABILITY ANALYSIS OF PRICE SENSITIVE

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
V23	7.01	2.967	.107	.533
V24	7.03	2.233	.306	.165
V25	6.86	2.333	.313	.159

TABLE III
RESULT OF CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

	csi8	csi7	csi6	csi5	csi4	csi3	csi2	csi1
V23	-.329	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V16	.000	.000	.638	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V24	.773	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V25	.405	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V20	.000	.506	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V21	.000	.723	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V22	.000	.682	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V17	.000	.000	.578	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V18	.000	.000	.541	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V19	.000	.000	.688	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
V13	.000	.000	.000	.475	.000	.000	.000	.000
V14	.000	.000	.000	.636	.000	.000	.000	.000
V15	.000	.000	.000	.532	.000	.000	.000	.000
V10	.000	.000	.000	.000	.710	.000	.000	.000
V11	.000	.000	.000	.000	.427	.000	.000	.000
V12	.000	.000	.000	.000	.716	.000	.000	.000
V7	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.463	.000	.000
V8	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.540	.000	.000
V9	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.438	.000	.000
V4	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.586	.000
V5	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.740	.000

	csi8	csi7	csi6	csi5	csi4	csi3	csi2	csi1
V6	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.450	.000
V1	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.659
V2	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.666
V3	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.631

After reliability and validity analysis of the questionnaire, we remove two questions to form the final questionnaire, detailed questionnaire see Appendix. The final questionnaire reliability and validity are good, showing that the questionnaire can be a good measure of consumers clothing buying style and intent to purchase apparel online.

C.Result of cluster analysis

Using SPSS17 software, first we use the results of survey in the exploratory factor analysis to extracted eight factors. Combination of questionnaire design structure and consumer purchase decisions theory, exploratory analysis proposed eight principal components, by decreasing order of variance contribution rate they are : brand awareness, entertainment, impulsivity, dazzling, innovative fashion , price sensitive, the pursuit of high quality and customary.

Then the result of exploratory factor analysis is used as data in K-Means clustering analysis. The results of K-Means clustering analysis are shown in Table IV and Table V.

TABLE IV
NUMBER OF CASES IN EACH CLUSTER

Cluster	1	62.000
	2	77.000
	3	106.000
Valid		245.000

TABLEIV
Final Cluster Centers

		Cluster		
		1	2	3
REGR factor score	1 for analysis 1	.14948	-.47813	.25988
REGR factor score	2 for analysis 1	-.33745	.08985	.13211
REGR factor score	3 for analysis 1	-.69112	.30853	.18012
REGR factor score	4 for analysis 1	-.68646	.21388	.24615
REGR factor score	5 for analysis 1	-.18801	-.40542	.40447
REGR factor score	6 for analysis 1	-.09709	-.55068	.45681
REGR factor score	7 for analysis 1	.61451	-.57793	.06039
REGR factor score	8 for analysis 1	.59735	.15427	-.46146

The first cluster has 62 consumers. This type of consumer cares quality most when they shopping, then they are more likely to buying goods from familiar brand or store, and the brand's reputation is also a concern of these consumers. Such consumers will be defined as "quality-seeking."

The second class has 77 consumers, such consumers exhibit dazzling shopping and impulsive. They will choose the store or brand they are familiar with, which is likely to be the way they avoid confused. Such consumers will be defined as "dazzling and impulsive."

The third class has 106 consumers, these consumers are most concerned about the fashionable clothes and their price, they are also concerned about the clothing brand. Such consumers will be defined as "fashion-seeking."

D. Result of SEM

In this paper, structural equation model is used to find out consumer decision-making styles' influence on online apparel purchase intentions.

Based on previous research results, the following assumptions was made to the model.

H1 ~ H3 fashionable factors had significant effects on perception of usefulness, ease of use and perceived risk

H4 ~ H6 dazzling factors had significant effects on consumer perception of usefulness, ease of use and perceived risk

H7 ~ H9 pursuit of high quality factor had significant effects on perceived usefulness, ease of use and perceived risk

H10 ~ 12 brand awareness factor had significant effects on perceived usefulness, ease of use and perceived risk

H13 ~ 15 entertainment factor had significant effects on consumer perception of usefulness, ease of use and

H16 ~ 18 customary factor had significant effects on the perceived usefulness, ease of use and perceived risk

H19 ~ H21 impulsivity factor had significant effects on perception of usefulness, ease of use and perceived risk

H22 ~ H24 price-sensitive factors had significant effects on perceived usefulness, ease of use and perceived risk

H25 perceived risk have significant impact on consumer perceived usefulness

H26 perceived risk have significant impact on consumer perception of ease of use

H27 perceived risk have significant impact on consumer attitudes

H28 perceived usefulness have significant impact on perceived ease of use

H29 perceived risk has significant impact on attitude of consumers to buy clothing online.

H30 perceived usefulness on the attitude of consumers to buy clothing online has significant impact.

H31 perceived ease of use for consumers to buy clothing online significant effect on attitude.

H32 Consumer attitudes to buy clothing online have significant impact on the intention to buy clothing online.

Model checking using AMOS17, the results of model fitting is not high, the model failed the test. According to the regression coefficient of the output table, we removed the path who's coefficient is small (<0.1) and the path was not significant (p> 0.1).Then the path of the modified model shown in Figure 2. Model chi-square / degrees of freedom is 1.448 less than 2, GFI and AGFI were 0.869 and 0.834, basically reached the standard, PGFI is 0.685, more than 0.5 requirements, CFI is 0.913. These indicators show that the modified model a good description of reality.
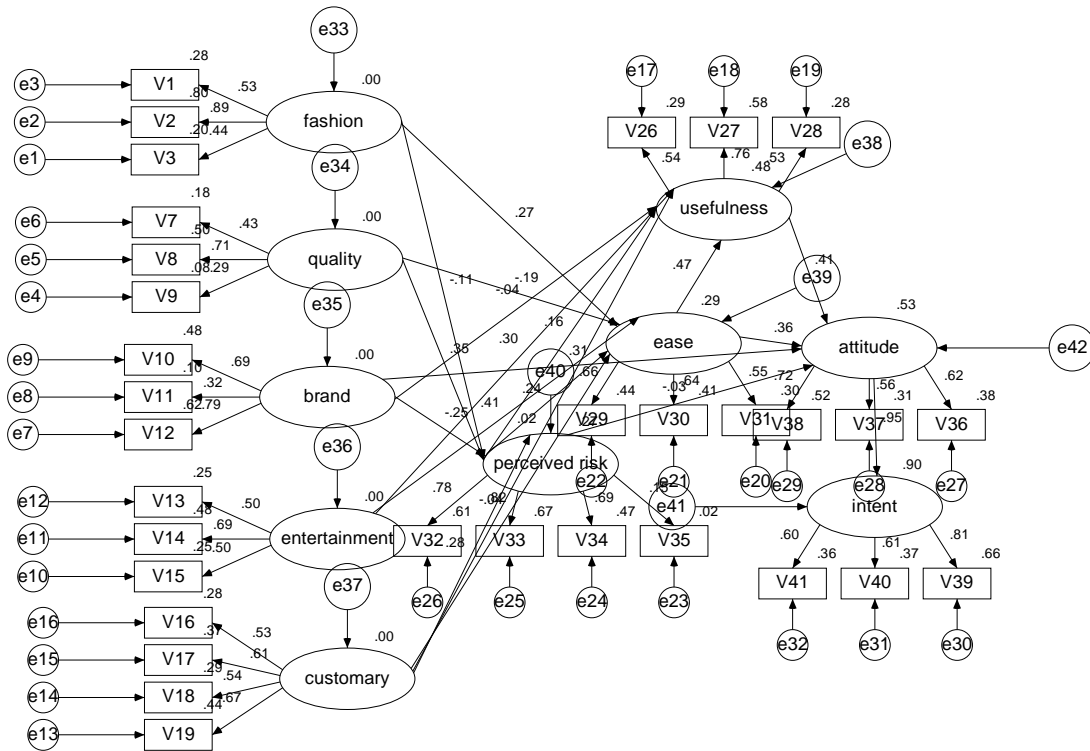

Figure2   Path road of model

Fashion factor can reduce consumer's perceived risks on internet shopping, this is possible because the innovative character of this kind of customers, their preference for new things more, so they would try the new product or technique. At the same time, the increase of the new fashion will add to the consumers' perceptions on internet shopping. This perception may decided by the consumers' own innovation awareness. New fashion-catcher consumers have strong skills on accepting new technology. All in all , new fashion to the consumer has a positive impact on internet shopping.

Consumers of pursuit high quality have a greater suspicion of internet shopping. This kind of consumers

firstly focus on the quality of costumes, and for the internet shopping's natural features, they cannot have full detailed information of the costumes, which decrease the possibility of internet shopping, and increase the risk of perception. In short, the customers of high quality pursuit have a negative impact on the Internet shopping.

Brand awareness have a very complex impact on customers' internet shopping., for one hand, brand and shop in life really decrease the perception risk of internet shopping, on the other hand, the loyalty of some brand or shop in life decrease the purchase perception of internet shopping. So the analysis is classified into two categories: Brand catcher consumers have strong pulse of

internet shopping, on the contrary ,brand loyal consumers do not.

Entertainment factors will result in increase of perception usefulness and perception usability of Internet shopping. The conclusion is different of the view that "reality shopping is opposite to internet shopping." for the holders view that "consumers' preferences in real life shopping will decrease the acceptance of internet shopping " . We still found that the consumer who pays attention to the pleasures element in real life shopping, is very easy to accept the internet environment. Enjoying real shopping is not opposite to internet shopping, but still have a close relationship. Online shopping have not developed to the opposite face of real shopping, people do not have to only chose one kind of shopping between these two ways, but emphasis on enjoying the new way of online shopping. In short, entertainment factor has a positive impact on online shopping

Customary shoppers have a bigger perceived risk of online shopping because they like familiar commodities, shops, but Internet shopping is often purchase on different retailers. At the same, habitual shoppers are accustomed to the traditional way of shopping; this leads to the low perceived usefulness of online shopping .In short, Customary have a negative impact on online shopping.

Other three factors ：dazzling, impulse and the price sensitivity, have no direct impacts on the intention of the online shopping. However, eight factors make a whole of shopping, and have close relationship each other, such as consumers who pursuit of high quality do have lower impulse, so all will influence the act of online shopping. In addition, the cheapness of online shopping is a strong advantage, at the beginning of the studying, our assumption that the price sensitivity of the consumers would conduct more shopping online, but the last experiment proved that the consumer price sensitive to their online purchases and clothing will not directly affected. This is probably because the price sensitivity of consumers is always the pursuit of high quality consumers. And the reasons for this to be verified in the future research.

V. CONCLUSION

A. Online shopping behavior analysis of various of consumers

The first kind is "quality assurance type", accounting for about 25% of the total number of subjects. This kind of consumers' first concern is the quality of commodities in shopping , and then they pay more attention to their familiar brand or store, and brand reputation is also such concerned matters of this kind of consumers. That is, for this kind of consumer, the pursuit of high quality, habitution and brand awareness plays a leading role in their decision making process.

According to the experimental results: improving the factor of pursue high quality could increase the perception risk of consumers, and reduce consumers' perception ease-of-use of apparel online purchase; habitual shoppers' purchase perception usability to apparel online is lower; but, the brand awareness reduces consumers' online shopping perception usefulness. Although habitual factor's improvement can increase perception usefulness slightly, brand awareness will reduce perceived risk faintly, their effect is obviously weak. So such customers are called "defenders" of apparel online purchase. Their pursuit of apparel quality leads to the their relying on traditional shopping style, choosing familiar store and brand. Their intention of apparel online purchase is significantly lower, can even regard as l the major obstacle and crucial attack object to the development of community of our online clothing retail.

The second "confusion", accounting for about 31% of the total number. This kind of consumers show dazzling and compulsive when shopping. They may somewhat pay attention to familiar brand and stores, which may be their way to avoid confusion and simplify shopping process.

According to the experimental result, dazzling and compulsivity are no direct impact on apparel online purchase intention, so this part of customers have no obvious preferences to realistic and virtual shopping environment. This kind of people regard as "neutral" of online purchase, main potential customers of future online clothing retail industry probably.

The 3rd kind is "vogue pursuing type ", accounting for about 44% of the total subjects. The most attention of this kind of consumers are garment price and novel style, secondly they also concern clothing brand. This kind of consumers is likely actively type consumer. Their concern famous fashionable dress, and pay attention to their price, in order to purchase target clothing in cheap price.

According to the experimental result, the improvement of new fashion factor can reduce customers' perceived risk and improve perception accessibility. This may be because, the novel vogue style of consumers' innovation spirit is stronger. Being online can get their concern couture information at anytime, and improve their online shopping perception of usability. The conclusions suggest that, this kind of consumers are the main "advocates" of online clothing retail industry, and most have now see apparel online purchase as an important clothing purchase way

TABLE VI
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DMS AND INTENT TO ONLINE SHOPPING

Consumers purchase clothing decision-making styles.	Quality assurance type	Confusion of reflective	Vogue pursuing type
The attitude of apparel online purchase	**RESISTANCE**	● NEUTRAL	● support
Purchasing power analysis	Attack client	Main potential purchasing power	Main existing purchasing power

B. Marketing strategies for online apparel

All the starting point of marketing strategy is the demand of customer, so on the basis of customers subdivision and their demand analysis we can better fix and adjust marketing strategy, focus human, material and financial resources on target market to achieve sales goals.

For vogue pursuing consumers, novel vogue and famous brand of clothing is their perpetual pursuit, and pricing strategy upon them can obtain the maximum effect. Therefore for brand clothing and fashionable clothing sales online, the most effective means is the price strategy, and its focus should be the lowest cost of strategy, do well discount and sale ads.

Confused and impulsive consumers behavior can easily impacted to by he external influence, for this kind of consumer it should do good advertisement work basically and face-to-face or online communication work. In addition, some commodity intelligent recommend systems of foreign website can give consumers good advice, simplifing consumer goods shopping process.It just can meet this kind of consumer demand very well.

Quality pursue type consumer is the natural insulator of online clothing sales. Due to the characteristics of online clothing sales (distance and difficult supervision), this kind of consumers cannot exactly know the quality of clothes they want to buy. This cut down their enthusiasm of online shopping greatly. However, this kind of consumer shows certain habituation for brands and store . So although this kind of consumer boycott online purchase activity, once the online shopping experience makes them satisfied, they will show a stronger loyalty. As for this kind of consumer, advertising or discount cannot impress them, but using a good after-sales service to ensure shopping satisfaction of this kind of consumer can receive more loyal customers than new fashion type shoppers.

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APPENDIX

CLOTHING BUYING STYLE SURVEY

The following question is for you daily clothing buying style survey of the situation based on your own score for each 1-5, 1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree,3 that does not matter or do not understand , 4 agree ,5 can't agree more

I usually have some fashionable clothing 12345

I often buy fashionable and stylish clothes 12345

Stylish and attractive that is very important to me,12345

Sometimes, I can not decide to patronize which clothing store 12345

Many products and brands often make I hard to choose 12345

Sometimes, I find it difficult to compare the garment quality 12345

I need a clear understanding of the quality of clothing before making a purchase decision 12345

I usually buy the relatively good quality clothes 12345

If I buy a low-quality clothing that I will return or exchange 12345

I prefer to buy clothes in famous brand 12345

General speaking brand better quality better 12345

Brand is very important to me, 12345

Purchasing clothes can enhance me and my friends relationship 12345

I'm shopping for a lot of fun 12345

Shopping is a good physical exercise 12345

If I like a store I will often go there to buy clothes 12345

When I find a favorite brand, I would choose this brand first 12345

I will choose familiar clothing store for shopping 12345

Usually I would buy a familiar brand 12345

When shopping I often without thinking, I am impulse a shopper 12345

I often accidentally purchase, then feel very sorry afterwards 12345

I often buy some goods that I did not mean to 12345

I usually buy as much as possible discount clothes 12345

I think the clothes are reasonably of high price 12,345

I usually think high price means high quality 12345

INTENTION TO BUY CLOTHING ONLINE

The following are the advantages of the Internet to buy clothing, Do you agree with these advantages? 1-5, 1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree

Convenient access to a wealth of useful information about clothing 12345

A more reasonable price buy clothes that fit 12345

Save my shopping time 12345

Following is the ease of online purchasing clothing 1-5, 1 is very difficult for me, 5 on my part is very simple

Buy clothing online 12345

From the Internet to choose appropriate goods 12345

A convenient time and facilities for shopping 12,345

The following is what you need to worry about considering online shopping 1-5, 1 indicating that they are not worried, 5very worried that

Waiting for delivery for several days, the results are not satisfied 12345

Buy inappropriate clothing, there will be obstacles to return, waste of money, 12345

Clothing quality problems, and introduce online does not match the real good12345

Shopping results are unsatisfactory, impression fromthe eyes of my friends 12,345

The following is your view on the Internet to buy clothing 1-5, 1 means strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree

I think that buying clothes online is a good idea 12345

I think that buying clothes online is a wise idea12345

I like to buy clothing from the Internet 12345

Following your intention to buy clothing online surveys 1-5, 1 means strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree

I am willing to buy clothing online 12345

I will recently purchased clothing from online 12345

I would recommend to others to go online to purchase clothing 12345