

## Online Shopping Behavior of Emerging Shopping Websites

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### Abstract

This study explored whether there were correlations among internal and external control personality traits, fashion anxiety, online word of mouth, the Bandwagon effect, and consumer involvement. The online questionnaire was adopted in this study, with online consumers who used new shopping websites as sample sources. After deleting invalid questionnaires, there were 265 valid samples. The analysis results show that: (1) Consumers with the fashion anxiety characteristic care more about others and are subject to external influence. Therefore, internal and external control personality traits have a significant positive impact on fashion anxiety; (2) Consumers with external control personality traits are more likely to believe others or the external environment, leading to greater likelihood for the Bandwagon effect to result. Therefore, the internal and external control personality traits produce a positive impact on the Bandwagon effect; (3) Internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on online word of mouth; (4) Consumer involvement varies with different personality traits. Therefore, internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on consumer involvement; (5) Consumers with fashion anxiety characteristic are likely to follow others. Therefore, fashion anxiety produces a significant positive impact on the Bandwagon effect; (6) The results on the interaction between consumers' Bandwagon effect and online word of mouth show that the Bandwagon effect and online word of mouth have a reciprocal effect; (7) Consumer involvement produces a significant positive impact on the Bandwagon effect; (8) compared to consumers with higher involvement, consumers with lower involvement trust online word of mouth more. Therefore, consumer involvement produces a significant positive impact on online word of mouth.

**Keywords:** Internal and external control personality traits, Epidemic anxiety, Internet word of mouth, Bandwagon effect, Consumer involvement.

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### INTRODUCTION

With technological advancement and the popularization of the Internet, e-commerce has become today's trend of consumption. Internet information is open and searchable. Consumers not only have access to the best prices by the most convenient means and within the shortest time, but also are able to search the Internet for other consumers' product use situations, which will help them determine if the products are suitable for themselves. According to estimates of research institution eMarketer, global retail e-commerce sales will grow from USD 2.29 trillion in 2017 to USD 4.479 trillion by 2021. In addition, according to a survey by the Institute for Information Industry, Taiwan's e-commerce market scale in 2015 reached approximately NTD 1.069 trillion, with the output value of the B2C market accounting for NTD 613.8 billion and the C2C market accounting for NTD 393.1 billion, maintaining a 10-15% growth rate in the next

five years. The global cross-border e-commerce will also reach a market scale of at least USD 250 billion by 2025, with Asia being the most important cross-border e-commerce market. The above industrial data shows that the proportion of e-commerce in the retail industry will continue to increase and will become increasingly important. Hence, future development is worth anticipating. On the other hand, new e-commerce websites are springing up in this vast market. Under the influence of many factors, how consumers' willingness to purchase can be enhanced will be an important research issue. This study examined online word of mouth, Bandwagon effect, consumer involvement, internal and external control personality traits, fashion anxiety, and other variables to explore the interaction between consumers in new e-commerce websites and the aforementioned variables.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Internal and External Control Personality Traits

Internal and external control personality traits refer to individuals' belief in the responsibility of life events or consequences arising from their own behaviors [1]. The internal controller believes that one decides one's own fate; the external controller believes that fate is decided by the environment [2]; internal and external control tendency refers to the individual's perceived control over his or her living environment. If one thinks one can control one's own fate and attributes one's affairs to one's own behavior, it is called internal control; on the other hand, external control refers to one's own fate not within one's control and is attributed to external environmental factors, determined by luck and fate.

### Epidemic Anxiety

Fashion is a dynamic social phenomenon, a cultural awareness, establishing group relations and exchange values through non-verbal communication, it is a unique communication method in a group [3]. Anxiety on the other hand is a state of subjectively determined discomfort. Anxiety is an intertwined emotional state, and includes fear, embarrassment, shyness, worry, etc [4]. Anxiety is an individual's overreaction towards external matters and expected outcomes, leading to resistance between imagination-driven stimulation and fear, the result of inconsistency between actual experience and personal cognition [5]. Fashion anxiety refers to an individual's complex emotional state, including nervousness, restlessness, and depression arising from the unpredictable, fast, and diverse fashion environment while pursuing fashion. Fashion is prone to induce one's anxiety. Consumers with the strong sense of fashion are vulnerable to the influence of fashion and blind followers.

### Internet Word of Mouth

Online word of mouth refers to any positive or negative information on a company or product from actual, potential, or former clients. The information is made available to a large number of institutions and people through the Internet [6]. Online word of mouth refers to online contents of a product or company generated or transmitted by customers, which are provided to many people that use the Internet. Noh [7] defined online word of mouth in research as Interpersonal communication on a product or service between the consumer and the online technology company. Online word of mouth is a word-of-mouth system that exists in the virtual space where product or service related information is delivered and received, as well as users' chats or online experiences.

### Bandwagon Effect

The Bandwagon effect refers to one's behaviors and beliefs being influenced by a group and changes one's own ideas to conform to the group [8]. Wilkie [9] and Macinnis [10] defines the Bandwagon

effect as: Everyone adopts behaviors or ideas similar to those of other members of the group in order to meet the group expectations and gain recognition. Cialdini [11] believes that the Bandwagon effect refers to one's yielding to others and change of one's own behavior in order to meet others' expectations. Mudd [12] believes that Bandwagon effect refers to a certain sense of uncertainty towards one's own values and judgment, thus prompting one to comply with the values and beliefs of most people.

### Consumer Involvement

Blackwell [13] believes that consumer involvement is based on one's own interests, internal needs, and values that give rise to perceived degree of concern toward a matter. For consumers with higher involvement in a specific product, the product may be costly, risky, and important, with higher self-relevance and able to express the consumer's self-perceived value [14]. Hawkins [15] claimed that product involvement refers to the consumer's degree of interest or concern during the purchasing process when considering purchasing an item due to a certain need. Thus, purchase involvement is a household unit or a personal temporary state, which is subject to the influence of products, situational characteristics, and personal interaction. However, consumers' decision-making process can be divided into five stages: problem identification, information search, plan assessment, consumer purchase, and final post-purchase assessment. With the differed purchase involvement standards, the attitude change process leads to different results.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Hypothesis and Conclusion

#### The impact of internal and external control personal traits on fashion anxiety

McFarland [16] proposed that there is an intangible connection between personality traits and anxiety. Personality traits can be used to explain the cause of a personal behavior occurrence. That is, a person's ideas, personality, and preferences are often reflected on character and characteristics, which even indirectly affect the degree of anxiety towards personal purchases of fashion products. Hill [17] employed the psychoanalysis viewpoint to explore the impact of interpersonal anxiety on an individual's decision-making model. Research results point out that in an individual's decision-making environment, the degree of anxiety affecting an individual is determined by the number and importance of others, while anxiety also affects the consumer's decision-making model. Evidently, fashion anxiety produces an impact on the consumer's decision-making model. When the consumer is faced with marketing stimuli (such as advertisements, promotional offers, brands), from the consumer's mental state point of view, internal emotional or emotional responses will be triggered [18, 19]. With the above discussion as the basis, consumers develop fashion anxiety due to their differed internal

and external control personality traits. Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth:

**H1: Internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on fashion anxiety.**

**The impact of internal and external control personal traits on bandwagon effect**

Asch [20] believes that people with low self-esteem are prone to the bandwagon effect due to fear of being denied by others. Snyder [21] also points out that people that need recognition are most likely to display the bandwagon effect. Additionally, the Bandwagon effect is affected by many factors, such as group size [22], gender [23], and culture [24]. With the above discussion as the basis, consumers' personality traits will indeed affect their product purchase decisions. Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth:

**H2: Internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on bandwagon effect.**

**The impact of internal and external control personal traits on internet word of mouth**

Rotter [25] defined people as having internal and external control personality traits as: Internal control tendencies represent self-confidence, initiative, and not easily influenced by others; external control tendencies represent susceptibility to others' influence and lack of confidence. Internal controllers believe they can control the environment and their own behavior and like to challenge the current situation and environment. Hence, internal controllers prefer to share word of mouth information with members outside the group; external controllers think people are dominated by the environment, lack the motivation to challenge and environment, and are confined to their own living circle [26]. With the above discussion as the basis, they prefer to share word of mouth information with members within the group. Under the influence of different internal and external control personality traits, word of mouth often produces different effects. Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth:

**H3: Internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on internet word of mouth.**

**The impact of internal and external control personal traits on consumer involvement**

Taylor [27] defined involvement as "the degree of importance or the significant standard of a product is to the consumer". Different people produce different opinions on the same event due to the interaction of their previous experience and the environment they are in. External controllers easily accept external suggestions and messages and are susceptible to the external environment; internal

controllers are more positive and active in searching information and ways to solve problems when confronted by frustrations or problems [28]. With the above discussion as the basis, consumer involvement produces different results due to internal and external control personality traits. Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth:

**H4: Internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on consumer involvement.**

**The impact of epidemic anxiety on bandwagon effect**

Fashion is a psychological reaction of people and collectively projects the public's mentality. Consumers pursue fashion due to internal psychological factors. These psychological factors include herding, personal creativity, characteristic attractiveness, and pursuit of diversity [29]. Consumers in the pursuit of fashion and public recognition often fear failing to keep up with fashion and having limited money when faced with speedy commodity releases, thus resulting in pressure and emotionally develop fashion anxiety [30]. ByoungHo [31] shows that consumers' purchase behaviors are affected by social pressure, and the psychological factor of "saving face". With the above discussion as the basis, consumers develop the Bandwagon effect due to fashion anxiety. Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth:

**H5: Epidemic anxiety produces a significant positive impact on bandwagon effect.**

**The impact of bandwagon effect on internet word of mouth**

Campbell [32] believes that group size is a factor that increases regulatory pressure, thus the proposition that an increase in group size should produce a greater impact on compliance. In the context of online consumer reviews, consumers regard reviewers as a set of consumers. If positive reviews increase in number, the size of the reference group for the recommended product will also increase, since buyers that previously made purchases usually create online consumer reviews. An increase in the number of reviews may cause consumers to tell themselves that, "Many other people have also purchased the same product. Therefore, it is possibly a popular product" in order to rationalize their buying decisions, while inferring that the product is becoming popular due to increased sales. For example, a consumer may infer that when he/she reads many positive reviews, the product is more popular compared to when he/she is reading some reviews. This argument is supported by past research on online consumer reviews, indicating the number of ratings has a major impact on sales [33, 34]. Many studies have found that the importance level of consumers' choices may come from others' opinions. In other words, negative online consumer reviews are important factor affecting consumers who are

considering to buy a new product. Since consumers can easily observe others' satisfaction toward a product and how many people have purchased the product [35]. With the above discussion as the basis, online word of mouth is therefore an important factor for consumers' online product purchases. Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth:

**H6: The bandwagon effect and internet word of mouth produce interactions.**

**H6-1: Bandwagon effect produces a significant positive impact on internet word of mouth.**

**H6-2: Internet word of mouth produces a significant positive impact on bandwagon effect.**

**The impact of consumer involvement on bandwagon effect**

When exploring the relationship between different degrees of product involvement and attitude, Korgaonkar [36] found that, after consumers read product related information, those with low product involvement easily change their attitude due to the influence of advertisements, while those with high product involvement are less likely to change. With the above discussion as the basis, consumers tend to refer to the choices of others when making decisions. Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth:

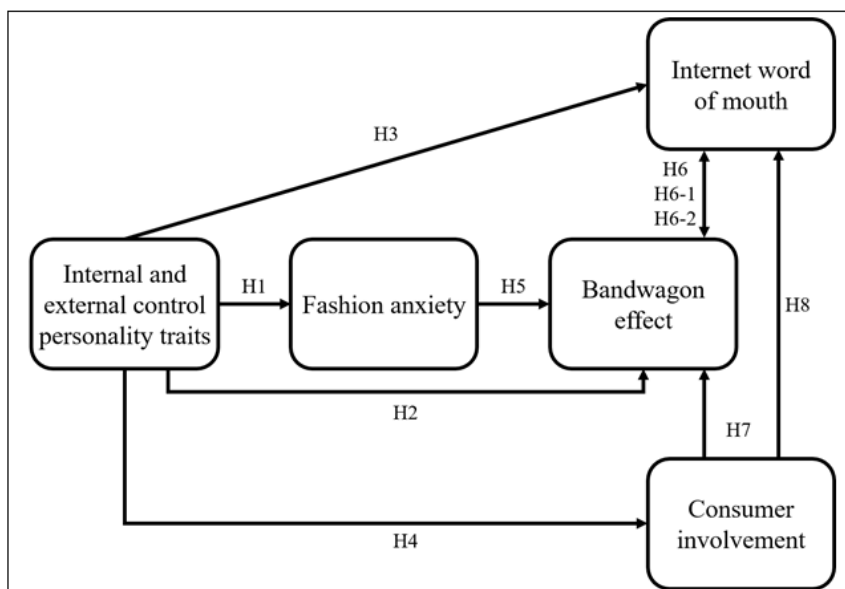
**H7: Consumer involvement produce a significant positive impact on bandwagon effect.**

**The Impact of Consumer Involvement on Internet Word Of Mouth**

During the decision-making process, consumers often use different product features or information clues for making purchase decision judgment [37]. Flynn [38] conducted a survey on apparel consumers and found that consumers with high product involvement often pay attention to new information on fashion in magazines or newspapers, often shopped in clothing stores and exchanged ideas with people that know a lot about clothes and storekeepers. In order to reduce the chance of making wrong purchases, consumers are more positive and active in product information search. When consumers have low involvement in online consumer reviews of products, consumers will choose to pay attention to the surrounding information and clues for non-product function review contents [39], rather than carefully considering the content of the product review itself and evaluate the reliability of the information source, and the opposite holds true for consumers with high product involvement [40]. With the above discussion as the basis, consumer involvement will indeed change the impact of online word of mouth on consumers. Therefore, the following hypotheses are put forth:

**H8: Consumer involvement produces a significant positive impact on internet word of mouth.**

From the above conclusion, the architecture model of this research is created and is as shown in Figure-1.



**Fig-1: Research architecture model here**

**Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire content design in this study is based on the theories and scales developed in past research, and modifications were made. In internal and

external control personality traits, the research questions of Rotter [25] were referred to, a total of 12 questions; for fashion anxiety, the research questions of Flynn [41] were referred to, a total of 4 questions. In

internet word of mouth, the research questions of Wirtz [42] were referred to, a total of 4 questions; for bandwagon effect, the research questions of Lee [43] were referred to, a total of 5 questions; for consumer involvement, the research questions of Zaichkowsky [44] were referred to, a total of 8 questions. The Likert 7-point scale was used for all the questions above.

## RESULTS

### Distribution of Questionnaires

In this study, sampling targets were mainly consumers who shopped on new shopping websites, with the online questionnaire survey method as the research too. A survey was carried out on consumers in Taiwan who had shopped on new shopping websites. From March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018,

questionnaire distribution and recovery were done, with 355 questionnaire copies recovered. After eliminating the invalid questionnaires, there were 265 valid copies, accounting for the effective recovery rate of 75%. The sample structure is as shown in Table-1. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value was used to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The analysis results of the questionnaire reliability show that the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values of internal and external control personality traits (0.785), epidemic anxiety (0.723), Internet word of mouth (0.820), bandwagon effect (0.852), and consumer involvement (0.899) reached above 0.7, falling under the reliable range. Hence, the questionnaire survey in this study is said to possess certain reliability.

**Table-1: Sample structure**

Demographic variables	Item	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	59	22.26
	Female	206	77.74
Age	Less than 17	10	3.77
	18-25	210	79.25
	26-32	25	9.43
	33-41	14	5.28
	More than 42	6	2.26
What kind of device is used for online shopping?	Smartphone	75	28.30
	Personal computer	24	9.06
	Tablet	1	0.38
	Smartphone, Personal computer	134	50.57
	Smartphone, Tablet	1	0.38
	Personal computer, Tablet	2	0.75
	Smartphone, Personal computer, Tablet	28	10.57
Using internet (everyday)	Below 3 h	37	13.96
	3-6	116	43.77
	7-9	69	26.04
	More than 10 h	43	16.23

### Research Hypothesis Verification

If researchers would like to explore the predictive relationship one or multiple independent variables and dependent variables and that the dependent variables are continuous variables, linear regression analysis may be used as the statistical analysis tool. Linear regression analysis predicts the influence independent and dependent variables have a linear relationship, and the purpose of the analysis is to find a regression model (function). Through the model,

the error (or residual difference) caused by the independent variables vs. dependent variables prediction reached the minimum. If the regression model only contains one independent variable, it is called simple regression. In terms of individual regression coefficients, significant standards were all reached. Therefore, the hypotheses in this study were all supported. The analysis results of the variable relationship verification are as shown in Table-2, and the hypothesis testing results are as shown in Table-3.

**Table-2: Analysis results of the variable relationship verification**

Hypothesis	Mode	Adjusted R2	B coefficient	t-value	F-value	p-value
H1	Independent variable: fashion anxiety Dependent variable: internal and external control personality traits	0.134	2.176 0.419	8.843 6.456	41.674	0.000 0.000
H2	Independent variable: bandwagon effect Dependent variable: internal and external control personality traits	0.092	2.908 0.452	8.909 5.255	27.616	0.000 0.000
H3	Independent variable: internet word of mouth Dependent variable: internal and external control personality traits	0.009	5.375 0.119	22.295 1.870	3.496	0.000 0.063
H4	Independent variable: consumer involvement Dependent variable: internal and external control personality traits	0.007	5.371 0.097	24.978 1.718	2.951	0.000 1.718
H5	Independent variable: bandwagon effect Dependent variable: fashion anxiety	0.026	3.751 0.222	12.379 2.820	7.951	0.000 0.005
H6-1	Independent variable: internet word of mouth Dependent variable: bandwagon effect	0.048	5.078 0.161	25.160 3.784	14.317	0.000 0.000
H6-2	Independent variable: bandwagon effect Dependent variable: internet word of mouth	0.048	2.710 0.321	5.425 3.784	14.317	0.000 0.000
H7	Independent variable: bandwagon effect Dependent variable: consumer involvement	1.854 0.094	2.951 0.284	5.297 2.948	4.048 0.473	0.000 0.003
H8	Independent variable: internet word of mouth Dependent variable: consumer involvement	0.154	3.264 0.445	8.877 7.005	49.067	0.000 0.000

**Table-3: Hypothesis testing results**

Hypothesis testing	results
H1: Internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on fashion anxiety.	Supported
H2: Internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on bandwagon effect.	Supported
H3: Internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on internet word of mouth.	Supported
H4: Internal and external control personality traits produce a significant positive impact on consumer involvement.	Supported
H5: Epidemic anxiety produce a significant positive impact on bandwagon effect.	Supported
H6: The bandwagon effect and internet word of mouth produce interactions. H6-1: Bandwagon effect produce a significant positive impact on internet word of mouth. H6-2: Internet word of mouth produce a significant positive impact on bandwagon effect.	Supported
H7: Consumer involvement produce a significant positive impact on bandwagon effect.	Supported
H8: Consumer involvement produce a significant positive impact on internet word of mouth.	Supported

**CONCLUSIONS**

The research results confirm that personality traits will affect consumers’ preferences and personality. Consumers with external control personality traits are likely to develop anxiety when purchasing a product, since they are more concerned with others’ opinions and fear they might not like the product. Hence, internal and external control personality traits produce differed effects on fashion anxiety. Moreover, consumers with external control personality traits are prone to external influence and others, giving rise to the Bandwagon effect. That is, consumers who are internal controllers believe they have things in control. Therefore, internal and external control personality traits produce differential impacts on the Bandwagon effect. Consumers with internal control personalities prefer to share use results and

experience online after purchasing a product; the opposite holds true for external controllers who only like to share word of mouth with people they are familiar with. Thus, internal and external control personality traits produce different impacts on online word of mouth. Before consumers purchase a product, those with internal control personality traits with first search relevant information before buying the product; those with external control personality traits rather believe the advice of others. Thus, internal and external control personality traits produce different impacts on consumer involvement.

Before consumers purchase a product, their purchase behaviors are affected by others’ opinions, especially for consumers who purchase fashion commodities that purchase products to gain public

recognition. Hence, fashion anxiety has a positive impact on the Bandwagon effect. Prior to buying a product, consumers will first search related word of mouth on the Internet. Since they can more easily learn about product satisfaction online and that they use reviews as a consideration for whether to buy a product, the Bandwagon effect and online word of mouth mutually affect each other. Consumers' Bandwagon effect is affected by personal preferences and involvement degree. Consumers with high product involvement have lower Bandwagon effect; on the contrary, the higher the consumer's Bandwagon effect, the lower the product involvement. Therefore, consumer involvement is influenced by the Bandwagon effect. Consumers with higher involvement will carefully evaluate the reliability of a rating source and pertinent information before purchasing a product, and the opposite holds true for consumers with lower involvement. Hence, consumer involvement has a positive impact on online word of mouth.

### Managerial Implications

Manufacturers should gain insight into decision-making related to consumers' purchases of competitive products before selling them and analyze whether a product has high or low consumer involvement before making a decision, so as to enable consumer to make the best choice. In view of consumers with internal control personality traits, manufacturers may enhance consumers' trust for the manufacturer by establishing a sound brand image and implementing brand marketing. Marketing staff serving consumers with external control personality traits may use the media to increase product exposure, thereby attracting consumers with low involvement to purchase products. Therefore, in response to consumers with different personality traits, in order to elicit their desire to make purchases, it is recommended that manufacturers use marketing strategies such as product revision and new releases. Targeting consumers' mentality of "pursuing fashion", it is suggested that "limited editions" and "bragging mentality" be employed. For both online or physical stores, by increasing the waiting value, consumers' willingness to wait will be enhanced, thus increasing product value.

Marketing staff may take advantage of the herd mentality of external control consumers by first creating the phenomenon of a product boom, which will prompt consumers with herd mentality to purchase the product. A topical strategy may also be adopted to elicit consumer interest in a product, induce the Bandwagon effect, and establish discussion forums and social networks that allow consumers to exchange and share use experience. Furthermore, through online messages, free trial products may be requested and distributed. After the trial product user receives the trial product, he or she will release a review after use in public social network Apps. Relevant professionals may also be asked to be product spokespersons, while opportunities

to experience the product may also be provided in order for consumers with different involvement levels to increase the degree of product purchases.

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