

EFFECT OF GENDER ON THE CONSUMER'S CHANNEL SELECTION OF FAST FASHION APPAREL PRODUCTS

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Abstract

This paper takes the consumers of fast fashion clothing products as research subjects, and EMB model as logistic basis to compare and analyze the preference of male and female on three channels including Internet, mail order catalogue (telephone ordering) and entity shops in the whole purchasing process (including need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and after purchase evaluation) with the influential factors by means of questionnaire. Throughout the research, it is concluded that the consumers of fast fashion clothing products of different gender consumers have difference in preference on the channels in different stages of purchasing decision. It has great reference significance that Fast Fashion Costume makes the effective market strategies according to gender difference.

Keywords: Apparel, fast fashion, consumption, gender, channel choosing

Introduction

As the Internet and new interaction technique are constantly applied in the marketing strategy, there are more and more channels for consumers to gain the goods information and purchase goods. In the condition with multiple channels, the purchase behavior of consumers becomes complex. The multiple marketing channels refer to Internet, mail order catalogue (telephone ordering) and entity shop. The study on the effect of gender on the channel selection of fast fashion clothing products can help enterprises understand complex buying behavior of consumers, and provide theoretical basis for the adjustment of management idea as well as marketing strategy. This paper takes EMB model as logistic basis to analyze the effect of gender

on the selection of fast fashion apparel products in different stages. At present, EBM Model is a comparatively complete and clear theory in the study of consumer behavior, and it divides the consumer decision process into five stages: (1) Confirmation of demand. In this stage, the consumer demand is generated and confirmed, forming the consumer motivation. (2) Seeking information. After the formation of demand, the consumers will collect the relevant information, during which process the consumers will deepen the understanding of the market and brands, helping them make evaluations of the products. (3) Comparison and evaluation. Consumers will evaluate the feasibility of each purchase plan according to the collected information. (4) Purchase decision. Consumers make decisions on the purchase of products. (5) Evaluation after purchase. Consumers will be either satisfied with the products they purchased or dissatisfied. EBM model tries to theoretically explain the process of consumers' purchasing decisions, and it is widely applied in the study on different types of consumers' behaviors.

I.

Basic information of the channel preference of different gender consumers

Among the consumers surveyed, there are 153 men, accounting for 31.1% of the total number, and there are 339 women, accounting for 68.9% of the total number. Through comparison, this article finds out the preferences of male and female consumers on the channel selection of fast fashion clothing products and the corresponding influencing factors. Different gender consumers of fast fashion apparel products show different preferences on the three channels, which are the Internet, mail order catalogue (telephone ordering) and entity shops, during the whole purchasing procedures, including confirmation of demand, seeking information, comparison and evaluation, purchase decision and evaluation after purchase. Detailed analysis is as follows:

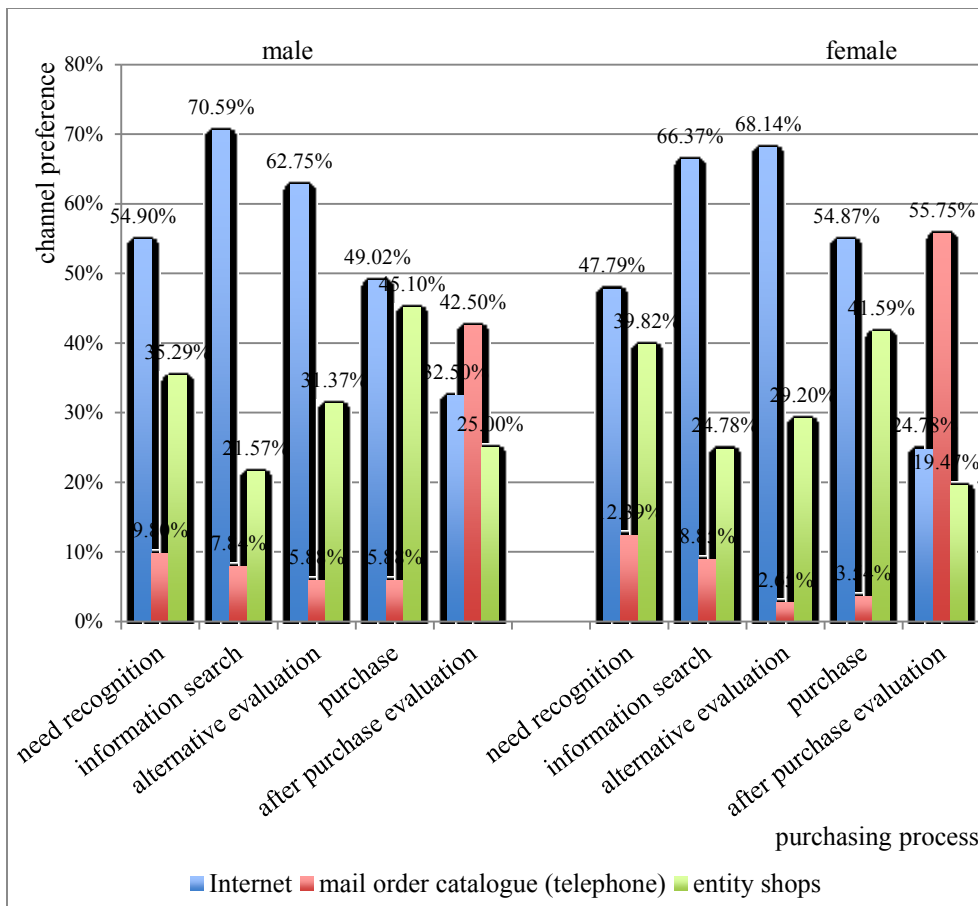


Figure 1 The channel preference of different gender consumers on fast fashion clothing products.

It can be seen from Figure 1 that, during the whole purchase process, male and female consumers showed different channel preferences on fast fashion clothing products(see Figure 1). The behaviors of different gender consumers on fast fashion clothing products in each purchasing stage are analyzed one stage by another, and Figure 1 shows all relative analysis on "channel preferences".

The channel selection of fast fashion apparel products by different gender consumers and the influencing factors

The first stage: Need recognition

In this stage, most of the surveyed male consumers (54.9%) showed more interest in the Internet display, and the other 35.29% and 9.80% male consumers felt more interested in the display in entity shops and the display in mail order catalogue/magazine, respectively; in terms of the surveyed female consumers, 47.79% of them believed the Internet display can attract them more, while the other 39.82% and 12.39% felt they were more attracted

by entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine (see Figure 1). In terms of the Internet display, more surveyed male consumers showed interest than the female consumers; while regarding entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine, the surveyed female consumers who showed interest are more than the male consumers. This means that fast fashion clothing products that are displayed in entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine are more attractive to female consumers.

The second stage: Information search Channel preference

In the seeking information stage, the surveyed male consumers that selected the Internet, entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine accounted for 70.59%, 21.57% and 7.84% of the total number of male consumers; the surveyed female consumers that selected the Internet, entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine accounted for 66.37%, 24.78% and 8.85% of the total number of female consumers; (see Figure 1). It can be seen from this group of data that both male and female consumers tended to select the Internet channel for seeking information, and there were more female consumers who select entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine than male consumers.

Influence factors and comparative analysis

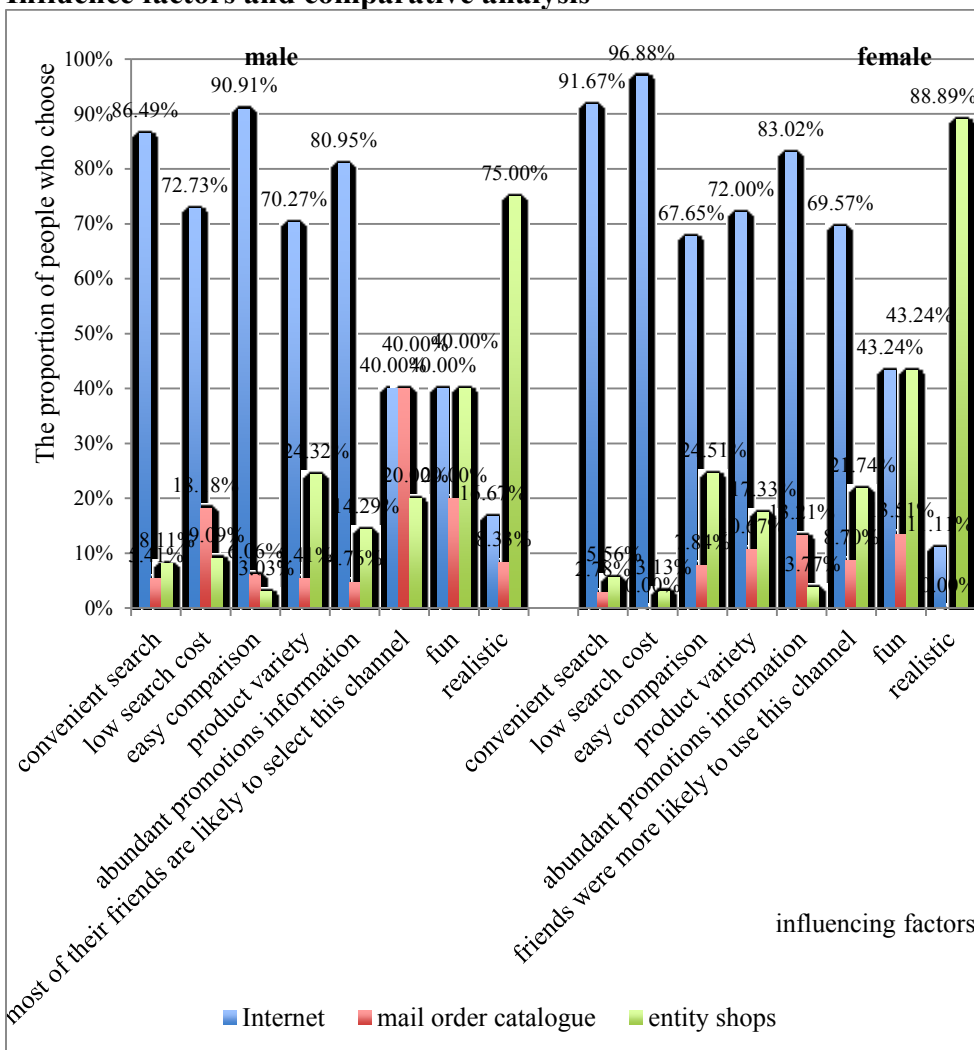


Figure 2 Analysis of the factors influencing the channel selection of male and female consumers of fast fashion clothing products in the seeking information stage

It can be seen from Figure 2 that, in this stage, male consumers mainly felt satisfied with the "easy comparison" (90.91%), "convenient search"(86.49%), "abundant promotions information" (80.95%) and other features of the Internet channel. Most male consumers (75%) hold the opinion that the channel of entity shops were more realistic than the Internet, but there were a certain amount of consumers (40% for both male and female) believed the Internet has as much pleasure as entity shops. Female consumers mainly felt satisfied with the "low search cost" (96.88%), "convenient search" (91.67%) and "abundant promotions information" (83.02%) and other features of the Internet. In respect of "fun", female

consumers also believed the Internet had as much fun as entity shops. And they held the opinion that entity shops were more realistic (88.89%) as well.

It can be seen from the comparison that, in the seeking information stage, both male and female consumers thought the Internet had some incomparable advantages over entity shops and mail order catalogue, such as "easy comparison", "low search cost", "convenient search" and "abundant promotions information", etc. Both male and female consumers believed the Internet had as much fun as entity shops, but entity shops were far more "realistic" than the Internet. There were more female consumers, most of whose friends were more likely to use this channel, meaning that seeking information through the Internet channel was more common in female consumers than male consumers.

The third stage: Alternative evaluation Channel preference

In the comparison and evaluation stage, the surveyed male consumers that selected the Internet, entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine accounted for 62.75%, 31.37% and 5.88% of the total number of male consumers; the surveyed female consumers that selected the Internet, entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine accounted for 68.14%, 29.20% and 3.54% of the total number of female consumers; (see Figure 1). It can be seen that the preferred channel of both male and female consumers was the Internet, but there were more male consumers selecting entity shops than female consumers.

Influence factors and comparative analysis

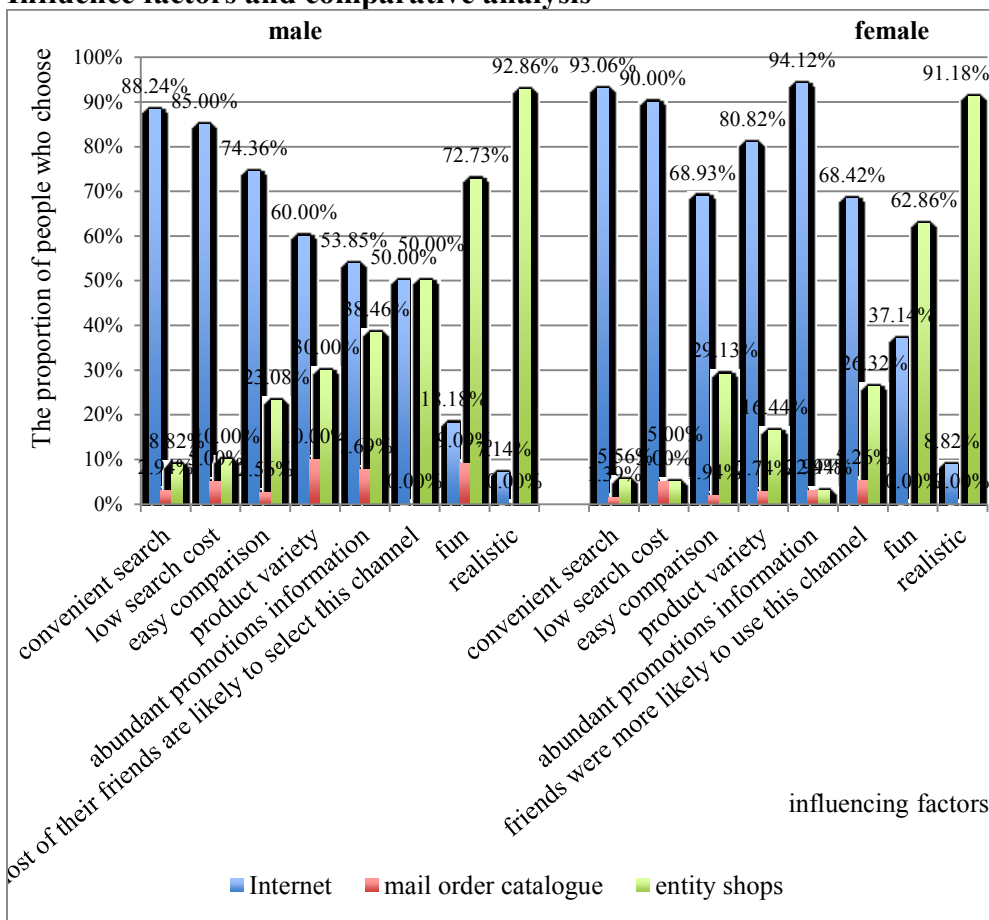


Figure 3 Analysis of the factors influencing the channel selection of male and female consumers of fast fashion clothing products in the comparison and evaluation stage

It can be seen from Figure 3, male consumers believed the main advantages of the Internet are "convenient search", "low search cost" and "easy comparison", etc. and the percentages of their friends selecting the Internet and entity shops accounted for 50% for each, but they all thought entity shops are absolutely more "realistic" and "fun". Female consumers believed the main advantages of the Internet were "convenient search", "low search cost" and "easy comparison", etc. and most of their friends selected the Internet, and they also thought entity shops are more "realistic" and "fun" than the Internet.

In the comparison and evaluation stage, both male and female consumers preferred to select the Internet, but there were more male consumers selecting the Internet than female consumers. The features of the Internet, such as "convenient search", "low search cost" and "easy

comparison", were highly attractive to both male and female consumers. There were more male consumers, who believed entity shops had more types of commodities, than female consumers. And male consumers held the opinion that, although the promotions information of entity shops were less than that of the Internet, it was still very abundant; but most of female consumers believed the promotions information in the Internet was more abundant. There were more male consumers whose friends were more likely to use this channel than female consumers, which means male consumers prefer to compare and evaluate fast fashion products through the channel of entity shops. And there were more male consumers who think entity shops had more "fun" in respect of comparison and evaluation than female consumers.

The Fourth stage: Purchase Channel preference

The surveyed male consumers that selected the Internet, entity shops and mail order catalogue accounted for 49.02%, 45.10% and 5.88%, respectively; and the surveyed female consumers that selected the Internet, entity shops and mail order catalogue accounted for 54.87%, 41.59% and 3.54%, respectively (see Figure 1). Both male and female consumers preferred to select the Internet, but there were more male consumers who selecting entity shops than female consumers; there were more female consumers who are likely to purchase fast fashion clothing products in the Internet than male consumers.

Influence factors and comparative analysis

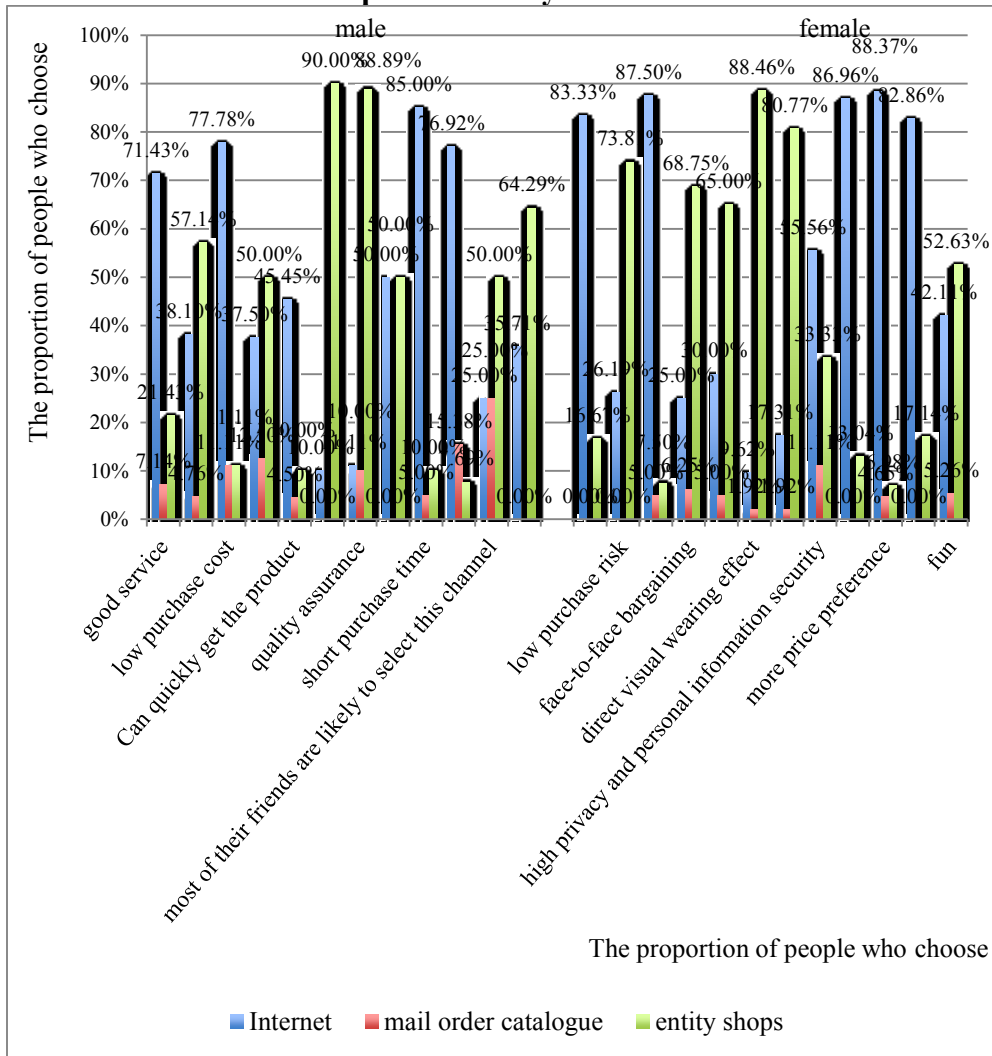


Figure 4 Analysis of the factors influencing the channel selection of male and female consumers of fast fashion clothing products in the purchase decision stage

The surveyed male consumers held the opinion that the Internet had the advantages like "short purchase time", "low purchase cost", "more price preference" and "good service", etc., while entity shops had the advantages like "direct visual wearing effect", "quality assurance", "fun" and "low purchase risk", etc. And they also held the opinion that the Internet had as high privacy and personal information security as entity shops. The surveyed female consumers held the opinion that the Internet had the advantages like "more price preference", "low purchase cost", "short purchase time" and "good service", etc., while entity shops had the advantages like "direct visual

wearing effect", "quality assurance", "low purchase risk" and "face-to-face bargaining", etc (see Figure 4).

In the purchase decision stage, there were more male consumers who selected entity shops than female consumers. Both male and female consumers who selected the Internet were satisfied with the features like "low purchase cost", "short purchase time", "more price preference" and "good service", etc. While the male and female consumers who selected entity shops were content with the features like "direct visual wearing effect", "quality assurance", "low purchase risk" and "face-to-face bargaining", etc. There were more female consumers who believed the Internet has "high privacy and personal information security" than male consumers. Although both surveyed male and female consumers preferred to select the Internet for purchase, there were more male consumers selecting entity shops than female consumers. And in respect of "most of their friends are likely to select this channel", male consumers were likely to purchase fast fashion clothing products in entity shops, while purchasing fast fashion clothing products in the Internet was more common in female consumers.

The fifth stage: After purchase evaluation Channel preference

In the evaluation after purchase stage, the surveyed male consumers that selected the channels of telephone, the Internet and entity shops were 42.50%, 32.50% and 25.00%, respectively; the surveyed female consumers that selected the channels of telephone, the Internet and entity shops were 55.75%, 24.78% and 19.47% (see Figure 1). It can be seen that, telephone was the first choice for both male and female consumers, then the Internet, and directly going to entity shops came the last. But it was obvious that more female consumers were willing to communicate with the sellers on telephone than male consumers, who would prefer directly going to entity shops for expressing their opinions.

Influence factors and comparative analysis

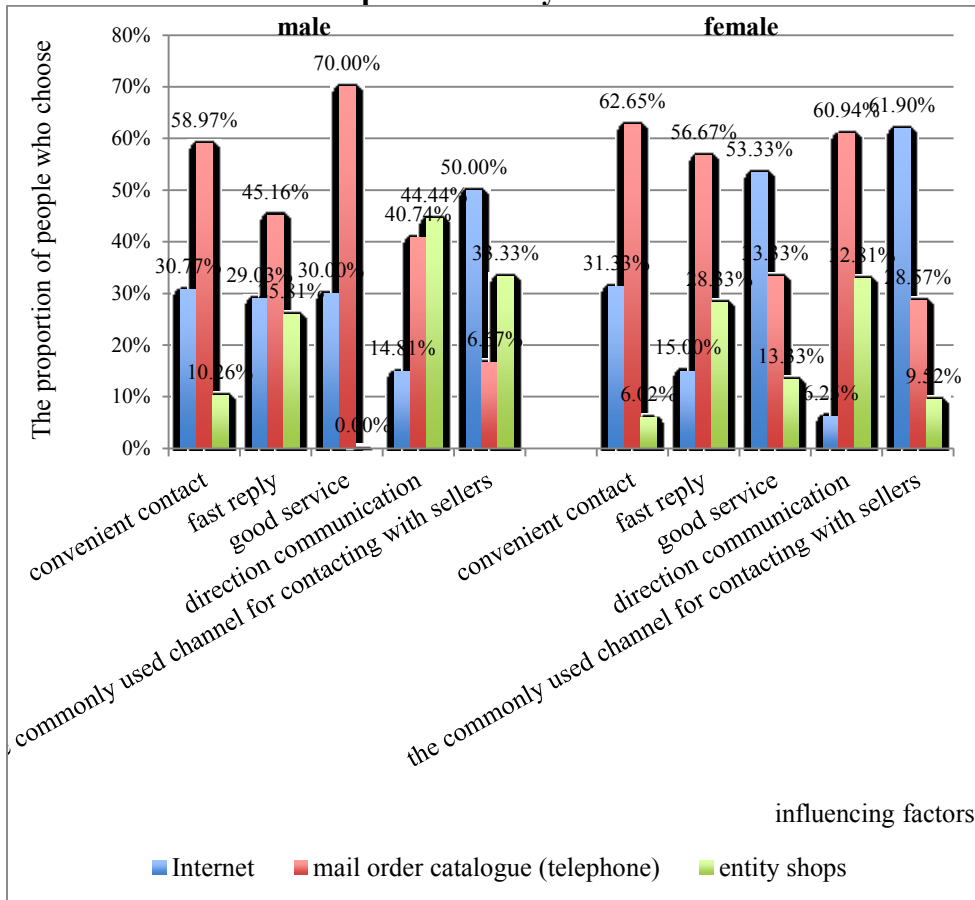


Figure 5 Analysis of the factors influencing the channel selection of male and female consumers of fast fashion clothing products in the evaluation after purchase stage

It can be seen from Figure 5, for "convenient contact", male consumers preferred making phone calls (58.97%); for "fast reply", male consumers preferred making phone calls (45.16%); for "good service", male consumers preferred making phone calls (70.00%); for "direction communication", male consumers preferred going to entity shops (44.44%); for "the commonly used channel for contacting with sellers", male consumers preferred the Internet (50.00%). For "convenient contact", female consumers preferred making phone calls (62.65%); for "fast reply", female consumers preferred making phone calls (56.67%); for "good service", female consumers preferred the Internet (53.33%); for "direction communication", female consumers preferred making phone calls (60.94%); for "the commonly used channel for contacting with sellers", female consumers preferred the Internet (61.90%).

It can be seen that male consumers held the opinion that making phone calls had the advantages like "convenient contact", "fast reply" and "good service"; entity shops had the advantage of "direct communication"; and the Internet has faster reply than going to entity shops. While female consumers held the opinion that making phone calls had the advantages of "convenient contact", "fast reply" and "direct communication"; the Internet had "good service"; and going to entity shops is faster in reply and more direct in communication than the Internet.

Conclusion

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the preferences of male and female consumers on the channel selection of fast fashion clothing products have certain differences in the stages of confirmation of demand, seeking information, comparison and evaluation, and purchase decision.

In the stage of confirmation of demand, it is found that the number of female consumers who think internet display attract more purchase interests is less than that of male consumers; while the number of female consumers who think entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine create more purchase desire is more than that of male consumers. This suggests that fast fashion clothing products that are displayed in entity shops and mail order catalogue/magazine are more attractive to female consumers.

In the stage of seeking information, both male and female consumers prefer the Internet channel. Internet channel has the advantages which entity stores and mail order catalogues are incomparable such as " low search cost ", " convenience in search ", "rich promotion information", "a variety of products" and "easy comparison" etc.. Both male and female consumers believe the Internet channel has as much pleasure as entity shops, while entity shops are far more "authentic" than the Internet. However, more female consumers purchase fast fashion clothing by means of entity stores and mail-order catalogues/magazine than males, but it is much common for female consumers to seek information on Internet.

In the stage of comparison and evaluation, both men and women prefer the internet The features of the Internet, such as "convenience in search", "low search cost", "easy comparison", "a variety of products" and "rich promotion information" are highly attractive to both male and female consumers. But the number of male choosing entity shop is significantly more than that of female. They believe that entity shop had more "fun" in the stage of comparison and evaluation.

In the purchase decision stage, both male and female consumers prefer internet channels, because the online shops have "better service", "lower cost", "less purchase time" and "more preferential price" than entity shops. However, more female prefer online purchasing fast fashion clothing

products online than male consumers; while more male prefer entity shops. They choose entity shops because of their "good service", "low cost", "direct wearing effect", "quality guarantee", "high safety in personal information privacy and security", "more preferential price", "surrounding friends using this channel" and "fun". Female consumers pay more attention on shopping environment; product variety, price and shopping time while male consumers care more about the shopping cost, service and personal information safety of entity shops.

In the stage of evaluation after purchase, both male and female prefer telephone channels, then the Internet, and finally the entity shops. Female prefer contacting with telephone while male consumers prefer directly going to the shops. For male, telephone channel is easy for contact, fast in response and has best service, but in entity shops, people can communicate directly while Internet channel has a faster response than entity shops. For female, telephone channels are convenient to contact, quick in response and the most direct way of communication; the Internet has the best service; entity shops had a faster response and more direct communication than that of Internet shops.

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