STANDARDIZING SIZE AND FIT: ANALYSING VARIATIONS ACROSS E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON ONLINE RETURNS

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ABSTRACT

Customers now have access to a vast array of clothing options because to the advent of e-commerce, which has completely changed the fashion retail sector. The inconsistency in sizing across various platforms, which results in high return rates and substantial customer discontent, is still one of the most urgent issues. Through an analysis of four significant Indian e-commerce platforms- Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, and Myntra, this study investigates how differences in size charts and fit information impact online returns. The research identifies the lack of established measurement techniques, disparities in size availability, and insufficient fit assistance as the main variables impacting consumer behaviour through comparison analysis and customer questionnaires. Customers are frequently forced to assume their best fit due to the lack of trustworthy sizing suggestions, which leads to numerous exchanges or refunds. In order to improve online shopping and lower returns, the study's conclusion suggests using uniform sizing guidelines and incorporating AI-based virtual fit tools.

KEYWORDS: *Virtual Try-On, Fashion Technology, Customer Fit, e-Commerce, Online Returns, Size Chart, and Standardization*

INTRODUCTION

The fashion retail industry has seen a tremendous transformation due to the quick rise of online shopping, which has made shopping more accessible, simple, and time-saving for customers worldwide. Customers may peruse thousands of products, evaluate costs, and have stuff delivered right to their door with a few clicks. Nevertheless, variable size across platforms and companies remains a chronic and unresolved issue that impacts the online shopping experience despite these benefits. Online buyers rely on digital sizing charts, product descriptions, and model photos instead of trying on clothing at actual retail establishments to determine fit and comfort. Unfortunately, these tools are not standardized and can differ greatly between systems, which causes confusion and annoyance. A large number of customers obtain products that do not fit as intended, which lowers customer satisfaction and increases return rates. Industry data indicates that size problems account for over 40% of returns in fashion e-commerce. In order to reduce these issues, improve customer satisfaction, and increase the general effectiveness and sustainability of online fashion shopping, this study examines the pressing need to adopt uniform sizing guidelines across e-commerce platforms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The development of sizing procedures in fashion retail has been emphasized by earlier studies. Singh (2020) and Tuncer (2019) talked on regional variations in size norms. Inaccurate size labels and inadequate size recommendations are frequent problems for online shoppers. These deficiencies are being filled in part by emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR). Nevertheless, there is still uneven usage of these tools, which results in high return rates and persistent customer unhappiness.

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the disparities in sizing among the main Indian e-commerce platforms—Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and Meesho, this study used a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative research. Size charts and product listings for a few chosen clothing and footwear categories were thoroughly compared in the first phase. The variety of sizes offered, the format and legibility of the size charts, the inclusion of fit descriptions, model measurements, and the availability of larger sizes like 3XL to 6XL were among the important variables that were examined. The systems' ability to incorporate virtual try-on technology and AI-based fit help solutions was also evaluated.35 participants, all of whom were frequent online buyers for apparel completed an online survey as part of the second phase's primary data collection. Their platform preferences, prior experiences with fit problems, return habits, and expectations for sizing information were all gathered through the questionnaire. The obtained data was evaluated to determine customer expectations for size uniformity and fit correctness, as well as the relationship between sizing irregularities and return rates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Significant differences in the presentation of sizing information across various e-commerce platforms were found by the investigation. With size choices that reach up to 6XL and 5XL, respectively, Amazon and Myntra have become more inclusive of all body sizes. In order to assist clients in making better judgments, these platforms also offer quite comprehensive sizing charts in addition to other fit-related data like model measurements and garment dimensions.

Flipkart, on the other hand, primarily concentrates on standard sizes between S and XXL. Although it offers quite accurate mid-range measurements, it is lacking in technology support, such as fit prediction tools based on artificial intelligence. The least reliable platform was Meesho, which is seller-driven. The sizing information differs greatly from seller to seller, and many postings are completely devoid of appropriate measurement charts. Customers become confused and lose faith in the platform's product listings as a result of this discrepancy.

These results were confirmed by survey replies from 35 regular internet shoppers. Due to inconsistent or ambiguous information, almost 82% of respondents said they were confused or had trouble choosing the appropriate size. Additionally, 74% of respondents acknowledged returning at least one fashion item because of fit or size concerns. Customer confidence and usability scores were higher for platforms that use AI-based fit aids, such Amazon's "Fit Assistant" and Myntra's "What's My Size." In addition to improving the shopping experience, these technologies lessen the possibility of erroneous size. All things considered, the findings clearly point to the necessity of centralized, cross-platform sizing systems. In the fashion e-commerce industry, a consistent size strategy backed by technology and open communication will probably lower return rates, improve consumer pleasure, and foster enduring loyalty.

CONCLUSION

One of the biggest problems in the fashion e-commerce industry is still inconsistent size, which has a direct impact on high return rates, rising customer discontent, and a decline in confidence in online marketplaces. E-commerce platforms must give precise and uniform size standards top priority as consumer behaviour continues to move toward digital channels. In addition to confusing customers, inconsistent sizing charts between platforms and brands lead to operational inefficiencies and environmental damage from excessive returns and repackaging.Platforms must make investments in and implement universal sizing standards that work for both sellers and products in order to overcome these obstacles.

Additionally, by providing more accurate recommendations based on body measurements and preferences, the incorporation of AI-driven fit recommendation tools, like as virtual try-ons and tailored size predictors, can greatly enhance the user experience.

Collaboration between fashion businesses, e-commerce platforms, and technology suppliers is essential to creating long-term, sustainable solutions, even beyond platform enhancements on their own. The industry can give customers a more reliable and consistent purchasing experience by cooperating to develop standardized processes and exchange best practices.

In the end, fixing sizing concerns will not only lower the number of product returns but also boost customer confidence, promote recurring business, and support more effective and sustainable fashion retail operations in the digital era.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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