

The Effect of Fashion e-Blogs on Women's Intention to Use

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify (i) the key elements and consequences of fashion e-blogs and (ii) what effects fashion e-blogs have on women's intention to use them. There is a large body of research in domains ranging from e-blogs, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and intention to use. The significance of this research is that even though the social media, e-WOM and e-blogs are becoming normal ways to communicate, the effects and influence of them on businesses are limited. Data were gathered from women who interacted in five e-e-blogs. This article contributes to the growing literature on e-blog brands. This study samples a significant segment of fashion blogging consumers. Key implications for managers and researchers are highlighted.

Keywords: Fashion e-Blog; Technology Availability; Perceived Usefulness; Perceived Ease of Use; Intention of Use

Introduction

As communication and information through digital platforms travel faster and faster, sharing experiences becomes easier and easier. As a result, this influences how the world communicates, especially in view of the current obsession with social media platforms.

Exposure in social media has a profound effect on the reputation of a business. Therefore, with its growing importance, it should not be seen as a fad but instead implemented as a new marketing strategy. The number of blogs that are currently written and read worldwide is hard to estimate but fashion related blogs have increased by 2 million over recent years (Rickman and Cosenza, 2007).

Formerly, consumers used to rely on the word of mouth opinions of others before purchasing a product. Now through social media and blogging it encourages “consumers’ options for gathering unbiased product information from other consumers and provides the opportunity for consumers to offer their consumption-related advice by engaging in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 39). Not only through this platform can you share personal experiences and recommendations in which currently, “approximately nine to ten million product or company-related comments from consumers are available to Internet” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 40), but you are also able to express your opinions to a large audience rather than an estimated maximum group of ten people. This reach is important, as the fashion industry relies on mass acceptance. Thus, the term ‘in fashion’ was created (Jackson and Shaw, 2009). Nowadays, individuals are “using social networking platforms to communicate, but women are sharing their style through blogs at an ever-increasing rate” (Boyd, 2015, p. 18).

What are the key elements and consequences of fashion e-blogs and what effects do fashion blogs have on women's intention to use them? There is a large body of research, in domains ranging from e-blogs, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and intention to use. The significance of this research is that even though social media, eWOM, and blogs are becoming a normal way to communicate, the knowledge of the effects and influence of them on businesses are limited. While the use of blogs has already been widely investigated, the study of fashion e-blogs means that there is a gap in the research and makes the research valuable.

This article contributes to the research on blog brands. This study samples a significant segment of fashion blogging consumers. Overall, the investigation of the role of fashion blogs in determining women's intention to purchase is important, especially with the growing importance and influence of digital platforms today.

In the following sections, first we draw on existing research on fashion blogs. We identify (i) the key elements and consequences of fashion blogs and (ii) how fashion blogs influence women’s intention to purchase. Then, our conceptual model will be described. Finally, we conclude with a discussion and implications.

Blogs

In all industries, the concept of branding is valuable, but in a global, sprawling fashion market saturated with embryonic talents, good branding is indispensable (Gay, 2014). This makes it crucial for businesses to explore every channel of communication for reaching the intended target market, in this case through the new approach of fashion blogging. Amir (2015) states that the word *blog* is the contraction from the word ‘weblog’. This form of

personal, user-generated content rather than edited information through a company is more attractive to consumers as it was more personable and relatable. According to Boyd (2015), the blogging platform can reach a much larger audience in much less time and, therefore, grabbing attention has become easier, affecting both businesses and readers, overall transforming the media dynamics.

Bloggers who, over a period of time grow a following, are popularly considered to be 'opinion leaders', as they have a powerful voice in society and affect businesses. "Opinion leaders influence because they generally have no personal stake in whether their opinions are heeded, so their opinions are perceived as unbiased and credible" (Hoyer et al., 2013, p. 304). This is especially important for the fashion industry as it is these people that can set the new fashion trends, essentially deciding what is 'in' or 'out' of fashion, affecting whether consumers purchase particular items or not.

Fashion blogs are critical players in the industry. Being fashionable requires individuals to keep up-to-date with the latest brands, collections and getting accurate information from influential people used to often end up being extremely costly. However, user-generated content through the platform of blogs has allowed for fashion to be more accessible to people. Even though, through the creation of fashion blogs, it is possible for anybody to share their opinions and either create or diminish a fashion concept "studies on the active blogging movement illustrate how rapidly a fashion cycle transpires online. Ideas circulated on blogs are generated, discussed, embellished, and forgotten on a quotidian cycle" (Liu and Donath, 2006, p. 2). Since the spread of information online is rapid and not costly, investment should be made in quality information. Fashion bloggers, therefore, spend time and effort in researching and creating posts. As mentioned by Sedeke and Arora (2013), blog coverage of fashion online is easily accessible and interactive with its readers. They suggest that the interactive environment of blogs can be considered as a good marketing strategy for the fashion industry as the raw reviews and their growing social influence can guide readers on their purchasing intentions. It is understood that "more brands are shifting their focus toward integrated marketing campaigns that allow them to generate buzz around new products and strut their stuff" (Quin, 2015) through the collaboration with blogs. For example, Burberry launched a 'Burberry Kiss' campaign through the use of a blog and saw an increase in activity both online and offline (Quin, 2015).

The area of blogs and fashion is fairly new and therefore, it is first important to establish what essentially are the elements that can help create the blog and the consequences to it that can affect consumer decisions. It is important to understand as blogs are a part of the new digital era and people's acceptance of this is similar to what has already been investigated through new technology and innovations.

Research framework *Technology Availability, Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use*

Rupanjali et al. (2013), defined technology availability as to how much individuals can believe in their systems. Dutot (2015) discovered that the more the technological infrastructures become easily and readily available, the more accessible and usable will be (p. 48) online applications, for example, fashion blogs as a focus for this study.

Renko and Druzijanic (2014) argue that companies' ability to use blogs effectively and their influence on readers need to be factors that should be understood to be beneficial and perceived to be useful to them. This suggests that through the correct use of the technology,

the reader's perceived ease of use and usefulness would be impacted since it becomes more convenient for information finding and comparing becomes easier, thus the fashion blogs become more useful for users through the use of search bars, simple navigation and user-friendly interfaces (Zeithaml et al., 2002). Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

H1: The technology availability on fashion e-blogs impacts on (H1a) perceived usefulness and (H1b) perceived ease of use.

Content/Reviews, Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

In this research, content and reviews are considered to be essential elements of fashion blogs as well as their effects on perceived usefulness on blog readers. As explained by Cho and Sagynov (2015), content and reviews on fashion blogs can be described as the updated version of the traditional word of mouth (WOM) but online, which provides content to customers as they cannot physically see or feel the brand or products. The content and reviews posted on the blogs "describe product attributes in terms of usage situations and measure the product performance from a user's perspective" (Lee et al., 2008, p. 342). The offline method of determining if a product or brand is good or not is done through sensory methods and interacting with sales teams who try to influence decisions. However, with information available online and the introduction of fashion blogs, figuring out the usefulness of a product is decided through the content and reviews posted online. These are demonstrated visually through images, pictures, or videos or in a textual form through words, numbers or symbols (Li et al., 2015).

Content and reviews on fashion brands and products as provided through the online blogging platform has been perceived to be useful by readers since the availability of product information for comparisons has influenced their decisions offline, and increased their intentions to use the blogs again, also suggesting that personal reviews and recommendations posted on the blogs can be perceived to be useful to the readers (Tsao, 2013). The ease of using the fashion blogs to find out reviews and general content has transformed consumers' offline habits and has been more useful to businesses as compared to the traditional media methods of advertising brands and products (Li and Hitt, 2008). This is significant because fashion is an industry based on personal taste and opinions. Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

H2: Content/Reviews on fashion e-blogs impacts on (H2a) perceived usefulness and (H2b) perceived ease of use.

Social Influence, Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

Social influence is "another important situational factor influencing purchase behavior, refers to the interactive social influence of other people on impulse buying" (Tian and Lin, 2015, p. 779) and for this particular study fashion blogs. Generally, "people often prefer to hear others' opinions before casting their vote" (Hertz et al., 2016, p. 164) on whether a product or brand is worthy of buying or not, especially in the case of fashion blogs in which consumers mainly rely on social approval to discover what is in and out of fashion. It can be understood that now individuals consider online communities, such as blogs, to have more of an influence on them compared to the traditional reference groups with whom they share mutual interests (De Valck et al., 2009).

Therefore, one blogs opinions on fashion could change the views of its reader instantly through social influence. Since fashion is a fast-moving industry, it is often the case that there

is a great deal of discussion that takes place around trends and new styles (Kang and Park-Poaps, 2011) and, for that reason, fashion blogs have influence that can be perceived as useful since readers would want to come back to the communities to see what the blogs are discussing in order to stay fashionable and this substantially increases their use of the blogs. For businesses especially, the usefulness of social influence from fashion blogs can be a make or break situation, since the blogs with large followings and high interactions could potentially lead to "viral marketing campaigns, i.e., using online consumer-to-consumer referrals as a means of multiplying the popularity of a brand, product, or company" (De Valck et al., 2009, p. 187) and generating sales merely through the level of social influence from blogs. The perceived ease of using, therefore, is also impacted by social influence on a fashion blog, as it would help users to find relevant information on the blogs easily. Consequently, it was hypothesized that:

H3: Social Influence on fashion e-blogs impacts on (H3a) perceived usefulness and (H3b) perceived ease of use.

Security, Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

Safety and security are the two main factors which usually concern people online. Security can be described, "as a two dimensions concept including perceived security and privacy" (Dutot, 2015, p. 47). As mentioned by Radomir and Nistor (2013), these two factors are essential when considering fashion blogs as a platform to influence their readers, since there is no physical contact involved and therefore the involvement of the consumers online through making comments on the blog plays a major role. Youn (2009) suggested that security on online platforms, such as fashion blogs, is a pivotal factor as there is usually uncertainty as to how the personal information will be used and who will be able to access it.

For businesses that are promoted by fashion blogs, security and the gathering of reader's information for future research and products can be seen as a complication as the interception of brands of products most of the time is unwanted. For that reason, if readers feel that their information is confidential and secure, then the blogs are perceived safe to use and readers using the blogs will not be monitored by businesses or any other unwanted attention. However, according to Rapp et al. (2009), most of the time readers are unaware on how their information inputted to the blogs would be used, so the knowledge that the blogs are secure is perceived as useful and as it would encourage further participation. Therefore, it was hypothesized that security on blogs has an impact on their perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Therefore, we propose that:

H4: Security on fashion e-blogs impacts on (H4a) perceived usefulness and (H4b) perceived ease of use.

Trust, Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

The element of trust is crucial when it comes to considering fashion blogs. It is often considered that blogs that are seen as useful or easy to use by the reader if they meet their level of expectations of level of trustworthiness (Hudson et al., 2016) and consequently they are a way of building stronger relationships with the blog readers. According to Bleier and Elisenbeiss (2015), trust is a key component for consumers or, in this case, readers of fashion blogs in order to help them make decisions. So, if you trust what a fashion blog recommends is good to buy, the perceived usefulness of the information provided will influence the readers' intentions to use it again for decision making.

Trust can be defined as “a psychological state that comprises the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another party” (Bleier and Eisenbeiss, 2015, p. 396). According to Relling et al. (2016), trusting fashion blogs on new staples, for example, can result in a positive response from readers to increasing brand loyalty and overall enhancement of the relationship between the readers of the blog. Thus, trust and relationship building are the key when interacting online.

Fashion blogs that have high levels of interaction with their readers by encouraging participation build better quality relationships founded on trust (Hudson et al., 2016) Sandu and Abālāesei (2015) have shown that individuals have begun to have more trust in bloggers than marketers using traditional forms of communication. Consequently, trusting blogs can have "beneficial outcomes such as consumer loyalty, higher willingness-to-pay, repurchase intentions" (Saboo et al., 2015, p. 5), perceived ease of use and usefulness of information mentioned on the fashion blogs. Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

H5: Trust on fashion e-blogs impacts on (H5a) perceived usefulness and (H5b) perceived ease of use.

Effects of e-Blogs

Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness and Intention of Use

As one of the key factors for the technology acceptance model (TAM), Davis (1989) describes that perceived ease of use is "the degree to which a person believes that use of a particular system would be free of effort" (p. 320). As understood when developing the research framework, TAM uses both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as dimensions to discover changes in behavioral intentions and how they influence intentions to use and acceptance of the new technology. For the context of this particular study "perceived ease of use refers to their perceptions regarding the process leading to the final" (Cho and Sagynov, 2015, p. 26) result, thus, suggesting that if readers of fashion blogs, find it easy to use the blogs the intention to use will be affected too. Chen and Barnes (2007) also suggest that perceived ease of use is influential to the readers' intentions when attempting to adapt to new technology, such as blogs.

Blogs' primary focus is to provide a platform for interaction and information. Often the information provided can be seen as influential and useful to the reader, many times leading to impacting offline decisions and intention of use. The readers of fashion blogs demonstrate behaviour that shows their intention to use is in direct relationship with the individual's perceived ability to use (Qu et al., 2013). This suggests that the easier it is to use and understand blogs the more there is an increase in blog usage, whether it is to impact consumers' purchasing decisions or just the readers' overall interaction with the online community. Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

H6: Perceived ease of use on fashion e-blogs impacts on (H6a) perceived usefulness and (H6b) intention to use.

Perceived Usefulness and Intention to Use

Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are both significant components for the TAM framework. Davis (1989) defined perceived usefulness as "the degree to which a person believes that use of a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" (p. 320). This is a definition of the blogs online being investigated by readers and the relationship to their intention to use for the future. It highlights that "usefulness refers to the degree to which

consumers believe using the Internet as a medium will improve their performance or productivity, thus enhancing the outcome" (Cho and Sagynov, 2015, p. 24) of their overall experience.

Using fashion blogs assists in reinforcing the ideas suggested by the blog writers about what is being discussed, such as, for this particular study fashion reviews or discussions. Bataineh et al. (2015) suggested the information provided on blogs can be expected to help in the perceived usefulness since if blogs seemed to be useful readers would intend to use them again to aid with making decisions. It is clear that the new eWOM platforms, such as fashion blogs and other social media, have transformed how consumers interact with brands and industries (Campbell et al., 2014). This is especially true of the information shared whether it is negative or positive which is perceived to be useful and affects the reader's intention to use (Saboo et al., 2015). Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

H7: Perceived usefulness of fashion e-blogs impacts on an intention to use.

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Methods

Data collection

To carry out this research, quantitative data was collected to test and analyze the hypotheses. A self-completion online questionnaire was created, with short, specific questions related to the hypotheses and the data were analysed in order to attain the best possible results for this investigation. The questionnaire link was put online and shared across different social media platforms to maximize the reach and outcomes of the study, such as through personal Facebook pages.

The reason for focusing the study only on women was to make the research more specific, especially since women are now seen to be surpassing men in online consumption (Fallows, 2005), so it was easy to decide that the sample focus for the research was to be women. However, for the study it is important to remember that there was no location, age or salary limitation placed on the participants, as it allowed a better overview of blogger influence on all types of women readers, since the phenomenon is still very new and little investigation has been carried out on it.

The online survey was best suited for data collection as opposed to any other form of collection, such as the traditional pen and paper questionnaires. The online version has many different advantages, such as time efficiency and cost-efficiency, as the website used for the survey, 'Typeform', was free of charge. The low cost, simpler coding methods and privacy guarantee (Kang and Park-Poaps, 2011) were also benefits to the data collection process as opposed to any of the traditional routes.

Five blogs were selected according to the criteria of relevance in information on fashion and having a large amount of interaction with the readers (Kulmala et al., 2013). These blogs were selected from an article that was published that indicates the top 20 UK fashion blogs, which have a lot of interaction with readers. The fashion blogs 'Raindrops of Sapphire', 'The Fashion Police', 'The Frugality', '5 Inch and Up' and 'Retro Chick' were used in the current study. Since blogs are a platform with global reach and consumers, there was no specific geographical boundaries specified for the research except that the majority of survey responses were to be from the UK.

To evaluate our conceptual model, 52 responses were collected in a pilot study to test the validity, suitability, and freedom from error of the measurements. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to recognize any patterns in the data (De Vaus, 2002). In the main study, we obtained 150 usable questionnaires from women who interacted with the five fashion blogs included in the survey over a span of two weeks.

Of the usable responses, the majority of the participants, 38%, were aged 18 to 24, 26.7% were 25 to 34, 15.3% were 35 to 44, 10% were under 18 and, finally, the last 10% were 45 or older. According to the survey, 63% of the women were not heavy blog users which tends to confirm the suggestion of Rickman and Cosenza (2016) that blog reader/users are predominantly male. However, 36.7% of the participants were heavy blog users, before taking the test, and were browsing around the five case study blogs. This also confirms Rickman and Cosenza's (2016) opinion that blogging is continuing to grow. A crosstabs descriptive test was also undertaken to help to understand at what age women become heavy blog users. The results in Table 6 show that 18 to 24-year-olds (20 out of 150 participants) were already heavy blog users, as compared to the other ages of women participating.

Measures

The measures of the survey were obtained from previous research. We used items recommended by Park (2009) and Wang and Lin (2011) to measure technology availability; from Dutot (2015), Park (2009) and Wang and Lin (2011) to measure content including reviews; from Dutot (2015), Hsu and Tsou (2011), Huang, Chou and Lin (2010) and Wang and Lin (2011) to measure social influences; from Dutot (2015), Ho (2014), Hsu and Tsou (2011) and Huang, Chou and Lin (2010) from Hsu and Tsou (2011), Hsu, Lin and Chiang (2013), Huang, Chou and Lin (2010) to measure trust; from Dutot (2015), Hsu, Lin and Chiang (2013) and Huang, Chou and Lin (2010) to measure perceived usefulness; from Dutot (2015), Huang, Chou and Lin (2010) and Park (2009) to measure perceived ease of use and from Hsu and Tsou (2011), Hsu, Lin and Chiang (2013) and Wang and Lin (2011) to measure intention of use. The items used in the current research were measured using a seven-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) (see Table 1).

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Analysis and model testing

Measuring the reliability of any type of data is essential as it helps to recognize the internal consistency of the variables being measured. For this study, the internal consistency reliability was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha technique to check the level of reliability for the total constructs being measured. The results for this show a score of 0.934, showing that the data is highly reliable and not manipulated as it exceeds the expected level of 0.7 (Andrew et al., 2011).

The different constructs were explored through correlation analysis. The Pearson's correlation coefficient, r , was conducted as can be seen from Table 1, in order to analyze the relationships between the different constructs (Jackson, 2012) were measured with the r value to determine if they were significantly positive or negative. From Table 1, we can see technology availability (TA) and perceived usefulness (PU) are in a significant positive relationship ($r=0.522$, $p<0.05$). TA and perceived ease of use (PEU) showed a significant positive correlation ($r=0.551$, $p<0.05$). Content/reviews (CR) had a strong significant positive relationship with PU ($r=0.742$, $p<0.05$) and also had a significant positive association with

PEU ($r=0.673$, $p<0.05$). Social influence (SI) had a significant positive correlation with PU ($r=0.729$, $p<0.05$) and PEU ($r=0.593$, $p<0.05$). Security (SE) also showed a significant positive relationship between both PU ($r=0.553$, $p<0.05$) and PEU ($r=0.550$, $p<0.05$). Trust (TR) had similar results showing a significant positive relationship with both PU ($r=0.666$, $p<0.05$) and PEU ($r=0.552$, $p<0.05$). PEU had a strong positive relationship with PU ($r=0.728$, $p<0.05$) and intention of use (IU) ($r=0.624$, $p<0.05$). Finally, PU also showed a strong positive significant correlation with IU ($r=0.757$, $p<0.05$) (Table 2).

<<<Insert table 2>>>

To further enhance the results and understand each variable better, a multiple linear regression was conducted to assess the relationship between the different independent and dependent variables (Hinton et al., 2014). These were tested with 3 different models. Model one was valid ($R^2=0.710$, $p<0.05$), and showed that this model addressed 71% of the variations, wherein TA, CR, SI, SE, TR, and PEU were independent variables, and PU was the dependent variable. Model two was also valid ($R^2=0.504$, $p<0.05$), showing that the model addressed 50.4% of the variations, in which TA, CR, SE, SI and TR were independent variables and PEU was the dependent variable. The final model three, was also valid ($R^2=0.584$, $p<0.05$), as it proposed that the model addressed 58.4% of the variations, in which PU and PEU were independent variables and IU was the dependent variable (Tables 3 and 4).

Hypothesis testing

All the hypotheses were tested and the results from the multiple regression analysis can be seen in Table 5, which highlights the standardized path coefficients (β), the standard error value and the p-value and the overall hypotheses result. The impact of technology availability (TA) on perceived usefulness (PU) is statistically insignificant ($\beta=1.595$, $p=0.428$). Thus, H1a is rejected. Similarly, TA had an insignificant impact on perceived ease of use (PEU) ($\beta=0.086$, $p=0.068$), so H1b is also rejected. Content/reviews (CR) had a significant impact on both PU ($\beta=0.082$, $p=0.007$) and PEU ($\beta=0.106$, $p=0.0001$). This means that both H2a and H2b are supported. For social influence (SI), there had a statistically significant impact on PU ($\beta=0.068$, $p=0.0001$) but not on PEU ($\beta=0.092$, $p=0.238$). For that reason, H3a was supported but H3b was rejected. The impact of security (SE) on PU ($\beta=0.060$, $p=0.231$) and PEU ($\beta=0.081$, $p=0.214$) was shown to be insignificant; thus, H4a and H4b were both rejected. Similar to SI, trust (TR) had a significant impact on PU ($\beta=0.064$, $p=0.008$) and an insignificant impact on PEU ($\beta=0.087$, $p=0.544$). Therefore, H5a was supported and H5b was rejected. The impact of PEU on PU ($\beta=0.061$, $p=0.0001$) and intention of use (IU) ($\beta=0.088$, $p=0.048$) were both significant, so H6a and H6b are supported. Finally, the impact of PU on IU ($\beta=0.092$, $p=0.0001$) was also shown to be statistically significant and so was also supported. From the hypothesis testing, it was possible to determine the relationships between the different constructs; this can be seen in Figure 2.

<<<Insert table 5>>>

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Discussion of results

Technology Availability – The results illustrated that the positive relationship between the element of technology availability on fashion e-blogs and its impact on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Interestingly, the results around technology availability suggested that there was no significant relationship between the constructs (TA on PU and PEU), which

is inconsistent with the previous literature about the construct. Previous researchers had suggested that if the correct technology is available to the consumer, then it will be easier to use and will eventually become more useful to them, especially with more visual aids or a friendlier user interface (Dutot, 2015; Renko and Druzijanic, 2014; Zeithaml et al., 2002). A possible justification for the difference in results from previous research could be that 36.7% were already heavy blog users before participation in the survey. This could imply that they previously had experience with blog interfaces and were already used to using the blogs that were suggested as a case study to them. Hence, the element of technology availability did not directly affect the readers' use or was seen as less critical in comparison to the rest of the elements and its impacts on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

Content/Reviews – The results confirmed a positive relationship between content/reviews on fashion blogs and its significant impact on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The results support the research of Tsao (2013) which highlights that content/reviews on fashion blogs help readers with their future decisions when considering certain brands or products as they are influenced by the recommendations and reviews provided by the blogs. Similarly, Li et al. (2015) had similar results from their research as they agreed that information provided online is easier to understand and for that reason becomes more useful to users. It confirms that content/reviews are the electronic version of word of mouth spread of communication (Cho and Sagynov, 2015). It also highlights that those readers can find relevant content more easily and it seems to be a better method compared with traditional advertising (Li and Hitt, 2008). The results surrounding content/reviews provide further evidence to the research already related to this construct.

Social Influence – From the findings, unexpectedly social influence showed a split on its impacts, since it showed a significant relationship to perceived usefulness but not to perceived ease of use. Our study supports the research of Hertz et al. (2016) which shows that individuals rely on others' approval and opinions before investing in something. This is mainly since fashion trends are primarily based upon society's influence. Therefore, social influence of blogs is highly supported and shown to be significant for its impact on perceived usefulness (Kang and Park-Poaps, 2011). In contrast to the claims of previous studies of the effects of social influences on perceived usefulness, the findings showed an insignificant impact with perceived ease of use, contradicting the views of De Valck et al. (2009). Again, this could be linked to the fact that participants were already familiar with blogs and their social influence before, so its importance was undermined.

Security – Contrary to previous studies, the results highlighted that security was shown to have no impact on perceived usefulness or ease of use. Most of the time, when considering technology or fashion online, security is seen as a crucial component especially with knowing where your personal information will be used (Youn, 2009; Rapp et al., 2009) becomes useful, and people are more comfortable and are more willing to use the blogs too. Involvement in the blogs especially with an industry like fashion in which individuals like to test or try the products, zero interference is essential when considering the privacy and security of the reader (Radomir and Nistor, 2013). A possible explanation for this could be that the participants were only asked to browse the blogs since they had no reason to comment, participate or input any personal information. For that reason, the element of security could have been considered as an irrelevant factor for them when considering fashion blogs and their impact on perceived ease of use and usefulness, therefore, explaining the inconsistent results to those from previous studies.

Trust – The findings from the results reaffirm the impact of trust on perceived usefulness. It supports recent research around trust, in that, if you can build a trustworthy relationship with your readers, you will find the blogs to be useful (Hudson et al., 2016; Bleier and Elisenbeiss, 2015; Relling et al., 2016). As suggested by Sandu and Abālāesei (2015), blogs are increasingly becoming a more trusted source compared to traditional marketers; this is supported in the results from the survey, as there was a very strong relationship with perceived usefulness. However, as predicted from the previous studies, the findings contradicted the theory that trust has impact on perceived ease of use of the fashion blog, as more trust means the readers are more willing to use the blogs and mostly find them easier to use (Saboo et al., 2015). This could again be explained with the fact that since the participants had no purpose when browsing the blogs, such as no intention to buy any fashion products, trusting the blog or bloggers did not impact their ease of use. Also, the fact that some women had already had experience with blogs, the perceived ease of use was a minor factor to consider since from the results the participants already found the blogs easy to navigate through from before being introduced to the survey.

Perceived ease of use – Consistent with the TAM approach suggested by Davis (1989), the results confirm that perceived ease of use impacts both perceived usefulness and intention of use. The questions that were asked to assess this construct assisted in supporting the concept that if you find adapting to new technology easy, you will probably intend to use it again, meaning that there is a clear direct relationship between intention of use and perceived ease of use (Chen and Barnes, 2007; Que et al., 2013). The results highlight the fact that even though there is a relationship between those two constructs, there is a stronger relationship with perceived usefulness, because if the user finds a blog easy to use it will be more beneficial to them and therefore lead them to making a better and more informed decision, as found by Cho and Sagynov (2015).

Perceived usefulness – Similar to perceived ease of use, Davis (1989) also introduced the concept of perceived usefulness. The results reiterated the previous studies that there is a strong direct relationship between perceived usefulness and intention of use (Cho and Sagynov, 2015). As evident from the results, women who found the blogs useful intended to use them again, supporting the claims of Bataineh et al. (2015). Our findings are also supported by previous literature which suggests that whether blogs provide positive or negative eWOM, they are still useful in aiding users' decision process or affects their intentions to use the fashion blogs (Campbell et al., 2014; Saboo et al., 2015). Thus, they confirm our result that there is a strong positive correlation between perceived usefulness and intention of use; also, a blog's impact on an intention of use plays a more significant role than perceived ease of use.

Conclusion and Implications

From the results of the study, there has been valuable information that has been spotlighted, which is significant for both others researching fashion blogs and businesses in the fashion industry. Insights into which elements and consequences of fashion blogs are more effective in impacting women's intentions of use have been clearly identified. Women's blogging habits and behaviors have provided significant insights into this particular demographic for both future researchers and for managers and businesses in the fashion industry. Overall, this study helps in providing valuable information on the role fashion blogs play on women's intention of use.

This research aimed to add valuable contributions to the prior literature on the role of fashion blogs and the intention of use. As identified from the literature review, the gap in the study addressed blogs and fashion, especially concerning women, needed to be investigated. Another meaningful contribution of our study is our conceptual framework which highlights the different elements and consequences for fashion blogs in order to fully analyze the effects on women's intention of blog usage.

Theoretical implications

This research provides significant contributions to the literature of fashion blogs and women's intention to use them. From the framework that was modified from the previous study based on the TAM approach, it is clear that not all elements that were initially included were found to be important to fashion blogs and women's intention of use. The study highlights the fact that even though each element had a positive impact, not all of them were significant to the research problem and to women's intention of use. From what has been discovered, it is clear that only the content/reviews, social influence, and trust are the key elements of fashion blogs, as compared to technology availability and security as was initially proposed. However, prior research and theories did support the importance of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and intention of use and the relationships between them. From the results, the adopted TAM model for fashion blogs suggests that perceived usefulness has more impact than intention of use as opposed to perceived ease of use. From our study, it can be assumed that the external variables for the TAM model created for this particular research, should be reassessed when considering fashion blogs, as only some of the elements were relevant or had impact in the study as a whole.

Managerial implications

Following the discussion of results and the theoretical implications identified, our study has several implications for marketers when considering fashion blogs in the future. Since this research determined that technology availability was considered to be a critical component of blogs, managers of brands could take this result on board and help develop better blog or website, as the more engaging and interactive site could eventually lead to more business.

This study can help managers and future fashion brands for target marketing. They can use the findings as a reason to build more relationships with bloggers, to generate more sponsorship, and to utilize the fashion blogs as a more efficient and convenient platform to engage with the modern digital consumers online, as highlighted from the results that women prefer and trust blogs versus the traditional marketing methods of advertising.

Fashion blogs are a useful tool for managers to adopt as they could potentially build brand loyalty because the social influence of the bloggers could sway women's final purchase decisions. Not only could they build brand loyalty but access to blogs is universal and they are easily accessible. Thus, they are a new way to attract a mass market at practically no cost. As mentioned earlier, we can see that managers and fashion brands have already started to accept the fact that fashion blogs are significant in this industry (Schaer, 2011); so, the quicker the adoption, the more beneficial it will be to a business.

Limitations and future research

This research analyzed the role of fashion blogs on women's intention to use. It assessed each element of fashion blogs as well as their consequences while examining the relationships between each factor in our conceptual framework.

Our study had two main limitations. The first limitation was that the sample was not filtered for the location of the users. For that reason, in the future, it is recommended that the research is conducted on one specified location, for example, the UK, so that the data collected would be a more accurate reflection for the sample of women participants. Also, the fashion blogs that were selected for the research were all from the UK. If different fashion blogs had been chosen, for example from the USA, the results may have differed. Therefore, future research could study fashion blogs that are successful in different location so that the results could be compared with the UK fashion blogs. The research design selected for the study could also be considered as another limitation. All the research measurements tools and instruments were created through previous research models and research conducted around the topic with similar measuring scales. Even though this research measurement technique was successful; the result may have varied if other measuring tools had been used. Considering that the research dealt with feelings and reactions of women on fashion e-blogs, in the future, it would be recommended to conduct a qualitative research approach through face-to-face interviews, to obtain subjective reactions of women to help support the data collected from the quantitative approach of online questionnaires. The research aimed to fill the gap in the subject about the role of fashion e-blogs on women's intention of use. For this reason, for future studies, men's perspective could also be explored, in which this research on women could be used as a starting point for future investigations.

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Table 1: Initial pool of items and key references

Items	References
Technology Availability	
I am a heavy user of blogs. I had no difficulty accessing and using the blogs.	(Park, 2009)
The blogs systems are user friendly. The blogs provide rich multimedia playback functions. The blogs provide good searching functions.	(Wang and Lin, 2011)
Content/Reviews	
I feel confident finding information on the blogs.	(Park, 2009)
The blogs' content/reviews help me shop.	(Dutot, 2015)
The blogs provide correct information. The blogs provide up-to-date information. The information provided on the blogs is useful to me.	(Wang and Lin, 2011)
Social Influences	
The blogs influence my behaviour when buying products.	(Dutot, 2015)
Many people around me read blogs.	(Wang and Lin, 2011)
I can relate to other people through the blogs.	(Hsu and Tsou, 2011)
When reading information on the blogs, I feel the products are wanted. When reading information on the blogs, I feel the products are relevant to my life.	(Huang, Chou and Lin, 2010)
Security	
I feel other people will not intercept my information transferred to blogs.	(Dutot, 2015)
I think the information receiving process on the blogs is free from being interfered by sales persons or friends.	(Huang, Chou, and Lin, 2010)
Participation in the blogs is perceptually interesting.	(Hsu and Tsou, 2011)
If I actively participated in the blogs, I would feel my details are safe. I frequently interacted with other members from the blogs and feel my details are safe.	(Ho, 2014)
Trust	
I believe the blogs recommendations to be true. I trust information on the blogs to be true. The blogs are trustworthy.	(Hsu, Lin and Chiang, 2013)
I think the content/reviews on the blogs are reliable and trustworthy.	(Huang, Chou and Lin, 2010)
I think that product information from the blogs is trustworthy.	(Hsu and Tsou, 2011)
Perceived usefulness	
Using the blogs can make things easier when considering brand and products.	(Dutot, 2015)
The blogs' recommendations will improve my shopping experience. The blogs' recommendations will enhance my shopping effectiveness. The blogs' recommendations can increase my productivity when shopping.	(Hsu, Lin, and Chiang, 2013)

I like to purchase credible and worthwhile products posted on the blogs.	(Huang, Chou and Lin, 2010)
Perceived ease of use	
Overall, the blogs are easy to use. It is easy to become skillful at using the blogs.	(Dutot, 2015)
I think information on the blogs could be easily understood. I think the blogs provide good efficiency in information searching.	(Huang, Chou and Lin, 2010)
Learning how to use the blogs is easy for me.	(Park, 2009)
Intention of use	
I will frequently shop after reading the blogs. I will strongly recommend others to read the blogs before purchasing.	(Hsu, Lin and Chiang, 2013)
It is worth reading the blogs. I will continue to use the blogs.	(Wang and Lin, 2011)
Given the opportunity, I intend to buy products that are posted (or discussed) on the blogs.	(Hsu and Tsou, 2011)

Table 2: Pearson's correlation coefficients

	Technology availability	Content/reviews	Social influence	Security	Trust	Perceived usefulness	Perceived ease of use	Intention of use
Technology availability	1							
Content/reviews	.619**	1						
Social influence	.599**	.726**	1					
Security	.583**	.623**	.647**	1				
Trust	.510**	.702**	.648**	.665**	1			
Perceived usefulness	.522**	.742**	.729**	.553**	.666**	1		
Perceived ease of use	.551**	.673**	.593**	.550**	.552**	.728**	1	
Intention of use	.533**	.712**	.698**	.707**	.714**	.757**	.624**	1

Table 3: Multiple Regression Summaries

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.843 ^a	.710	.698	.393
2	.710 ^a	.504	.486	.534
3	.764 ^a	.584	.579	.550

1. Predictors: (Constant), perceived ease of use; security; technology availability; trust; social influence; content/reviews
2. Predictors: (Constant), trust; technology availability; social influence; security; content/reviews
3. Predictors: (Constant), perceived ease of use; perceived usefulness

4.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.324	.199		1.623	.107		
	TA (technology availability)	-.051	.064	-.049	-.794	.428	.523	1.914
	CR (content/reviews)	.224	.082	.219	2.729	.007	.315	3.176
	SI (social influence)	.298	.068	.317	4.362	.000	.383	2.610
	SE (security)	-.075	.060	-.085	-1.251	.213	.438	2.285
	TR (trust)	.172	.064	.189	2.695	.008	.411	2.431
	PEU (perceived ease of use)	.348	.061	.362	5.669	.000	.496	2.015
2	(Constant)	.750	.263		2.848	.005		
	TA (technology availability)	.158	.086	.148	1.838	.068	.535	1.870
	CR (content/reviews)	.419	.106	.393	3.956	.000	.349	2.865
	SI (social influence)	.109	.092	.112	1.184	.238	.387	2.585
	SE (security)	.101	.081	.110	1.247	.214	.442	2.261
	TR (trust)	.053	.087	.056	.609	.544	.412	2.424
3	(Constant)	.030	.253		.119	.905		
	PU (perceived usefulness)	.763	.092	.645	8.310	.000	.470	2.128
	PEU (perceived ease of use)	.176	.088	.154	1.991	.048	.470	2.128

(1) Dependent Variable: PU; (2) Dependent Variable: PEU; (3) Dependent Variable: IU

Table 5: Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship			β	S.E	P-Value (p<0.05)	Result
H1a	Technology availability	→	Perceived usefulness	-0.049	0.064	0.428	Rejected
H1b	Technology availability	→	Perceived ease of use	0.148	0.086	0.068	Rejected
H2a	Content/reviews	→	Perceived usefulness	0.219	0.082	0.007	Supported
H2b	Content/reviews	→	Perceived ease of use	0.393	0.106	0.0001	Supported
H3a	Social influence	→	Perceived usefulness	0.317	0.068	0.0001	Supported
H3b	Social influence	→	Perceived ease of use	0.112	0.092	0.238	Rejected
H4a	Security	→	Perceived usefulness	-0.085	0.060	0.231	Rejected
H4b	Security	→	Perceived ease of use	0.110	0.081	0.214	Rejected
H5a	Trust	→	Perceived usefulness	0.189	0.064	0.008	Supported
H5b	Trust	→	Perceived ease of use	0.056	0.087	0.544	Rejected
H6a	Perceived ease of use	→	Perceived usefulness	0.362	0.061	0.0001	Supported
H6b	Perceived ease of use	→	Intention of use	0.154	0.088	0.048	Supported
H7	Perceived usefulness	→	Intention of use	0.645	0.092	0.0001	Supported

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

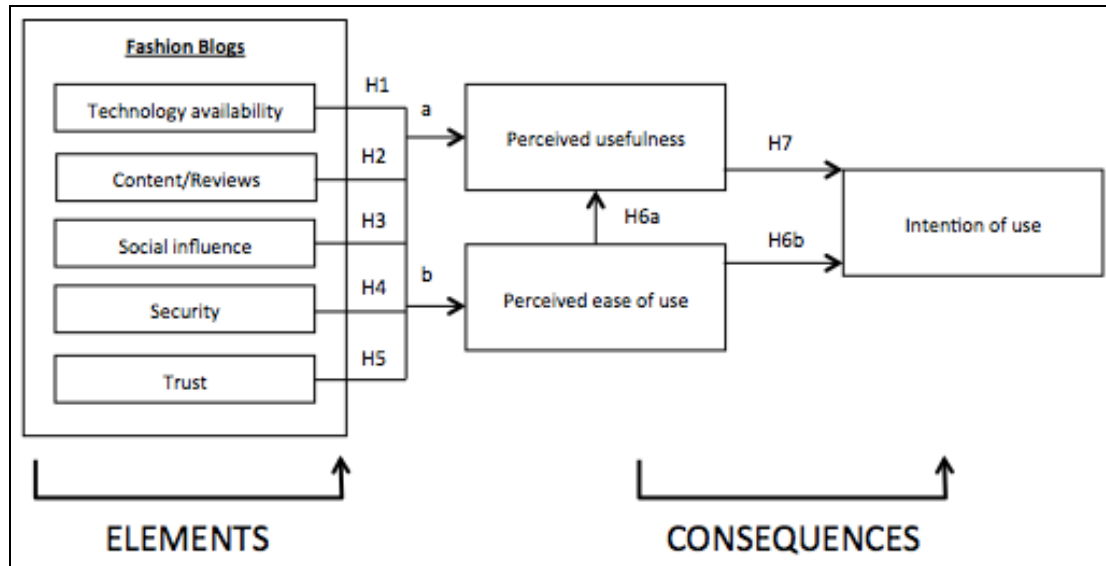


Figure 2: Validated Conceptual Model

