

# The Role of Hedonic Motivation in Online Clothing Purchase Decisions

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**Abstract.** *This paper explains the influence of hedonic motivation on consumer decisions during online clothing purchasing. As e-commerce continues to expand, shopping behavior has evolved beyond the usual needs, often driven by emotional factors. Hedonic motivation, characterized as pleasure resulted from browsing, discovering appealing new items, and enjoying a seamless shopping experience, plays a crucial role in shaping these decisions. The research highlights aspects of hedonic motivation, including the attractiveness of products, excitement of discovering new styles, and the sense of reward associated with indulging in online shopping. These elements not only explain the overall shopping experience, but also stimulate impulsive tendencies, particularly when consumers encounter personalized recommendations or limited-time offers. Moreover, the study examines how hedonic motivation has an important role in customers behavior, revealing that consumers who feel positive emotions during the process of shopping, are more likely to feel satisfied with their purchases, even if the product has no real utility for them. This emotional connection, usually leads to repeated purchases and increased loyalty. Strategies such as creating visually engaging interfaces and offering organized collections are recommended to enhance the impact of hedonic motivation.*

**Keywords:** hedonic motivation, behavior, emotional factors, e-commerce, engaging

## Introduction

„Online shopping has been a growing phenomenon worldwide since it first started in 1994, especially in countries with well-developed infrastructure for Internet marketing activities” (Dobre-Baron, 2024, p. 123). According to Marcu (2017, p. 37) clothing is one of the most important categories of physical products purchased online worldwide. yStats.com stated that the clothing and footwear share in total online purchases amounted to 39% in 2014. In some countries like UK, Russia, China, India, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Mexico, clothing was the most purchased online physical product.

As Hossein, et al. claim (2012, pp. 81-82), Online shopping behavior refers to the process of purchasing products or services on the internet. In the ordinary online shopping process, when potential consumers recognize a need for some merchandise or service, they go to the Internet and search for need-related information. Then they evaluate alternatives and choose the one that meets their expectation for the

felt need. Finally, a transaction is conducted and post-sales services provided. Online shopping is widely used, as evidenced by the estimate that billion people use the Internet and spend 5% of their time online purchasing . „Online shopping has many benefits and is practical.” (Nor, 2023, p. 156)

## **Literature Review**

### ***Clothing Industry and online shopping***

Clothing is a person's fundamental necessity and people dress differently for various occasions ranging from casual to formal attire. Clothing may reflect a person's personality, taste, and style to society in addition to serving a practical purpose according to Nor (2023, p. 156). The biggest industry in the world is fashion industry, especially when it comes to e-commerce in clothes, accessories, and footwear. Clothing firms have to understand the elements of shopping decisions to improve their market share and „maximize earnings in the e-commerce sector”. (Nor, 2023, p. 156).

Consumers have been using the web for limited entertainment applications, but a greater variety of entertainment opportunities have more recently become available. In the utilitarian view, consumers are concerned with purchasing products in an efficient and timely manner to achieve their goals with a minimum of irritation. In contrast, as one consumer noted, “I enjoy looking around and imagining what one day, I would actually have money to buy. This reflects shopping’s potential entertainment and the enjoyment resulting from the fun and play arising from the experience versus the achievement of any prespecified end goal (Childers, 2001)

### ***What does hedonic mean?***

Hedonic motivation according to To (2007, p. 775) refers to those consumption behaviors in search for happiness, fantasy, awakening, sensuality, and enjoyment. The benefits of hedonic motivation are experiential and emotional. The reason that hedonic consumers love to shop is because they enjoy the shopping process. Chakraborty’s (2019, p. 118) point of view is that hedonism is backed by consumer’s pleasure and the value resulted out of hedonic shopping as entertainment and emotive achieved through purchasing activities. The presence of a typology of hedonism is significantly related to shopping motivations. „Also, hedonic value of motivation is a total valuation of experiential reimbursements and costs” (Chakraborty, 2019, p. 118). „In other words, the study of hedonic motivation is the study of shopping enjoyment. Shopping behavior is no longer just a boring task or a mission to complete”. (To, 2007, p. 775)

To (2007) talks about a research states that hedonic shopping value can influence unplanned shopping behavior. A study has been conducted about the influence of hedonic motivations to the decision-making behavior of consumers, such as the amount of money consumed and satisfaction procured. Products purchased for pleasure have a different level of impact than products purchased for functional purposes. In the situation where a decision must be made to give up certain products, products for pleasure are usually the ones to be given up first.

### ***The impact of hedonic motivations on purchase decision***

When it comes to hedonic motivation, To (2007, p. 776) pointed out that whether for storefront shopping or Internet shopping, sensual stimulation and the freedom to search are the primary shopping motivations for consumers; therefore, hedonic motivation is also very important. Although the “festive and ludic” aspects of shopping have generally been studied infrequently, hedonic aspects of shopping motivation have been uncovered in related phenomenological inquiry.

For example, Christmas shoppers have previously described themselves as a “kid in a candy store” when engaged in holiday shopping, often expressing „excitement, increased arousal, and a deep sense of enjoyment in shopping for others” (Arnold, 2003, p. 78) . A study shows that it was developed a number of shopping motivations, with the basic premise that consumers are motivated by psychosocial needs other than those strictly related to acquiring some product. These motives can be classified into personal (such as

diversion, self-gratification, learning about new trends, and sensory stimulation), and social (social experiences, communication with others, status and authority, and pleasure of bargaining).

Shopping thus occurs when a consumer's need for a particular good is sufficient for spending time and money to travel to a store to go shopping, or as Arnold (2003, p. 78) states, when a consumer "needs attention, wants to be with peers, desires to meet people with similar interests, feels a need to exercise, or simply has leisure time". Shopping behavior meets three fundamental reasons: „to acquire a product, to acquire both a desired product and provide satisfaction with non-product-related needs, or to primarily attain goals not related to product acquisition" (Arnold, 2003, p. 78).

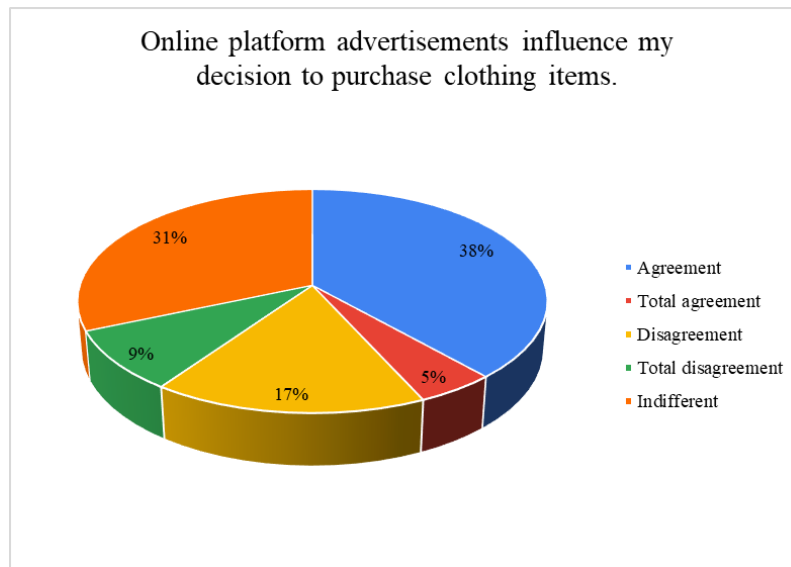
Epuran (2015, p. 164) talks about the hedonic value that is given, by the individual's capacity to produce hedonic responses, like the perceived freedom, fulfillment, fantasy, escape etc. For products based on hedonic consumption motivations, the general impression is that consumers justify their consumption before they actually consume the products itself. Usually, hedonic products are associated with needs related with fantasies, entertainment, fun, pleasure, being opposed to utilitarian ones which are addressing to pragmatic, rational needs.

„The hedonic products are products whose consumption is characterized by an affective and sensorial experience through which the consumer satisfies his aesthetic or sensual pleasure, a fantasy or has fun" (Epuran, 2015, pp. 164-165). Therefore, according to Epuran (2015, p. 164), the hedonic products are desired but not necessarily required, the buyers think they need them, but in reality, they don't. Consumers may have difficulties to find justification for purchasing decisions," the differences between utilitarian and hedonic products being associated with juxtapositions like (vices and virtues, luxury and necessity)" (Epuran, 2015, p. 164).

## Methodology

The information gathering tool used in order to collect the data in this research was an online questionnaire, which has been applied to a number of 385 respondents, using the snowball sampling technique. The survey was conducted between October 5 and December 20, 2024.

## Results and Discussions

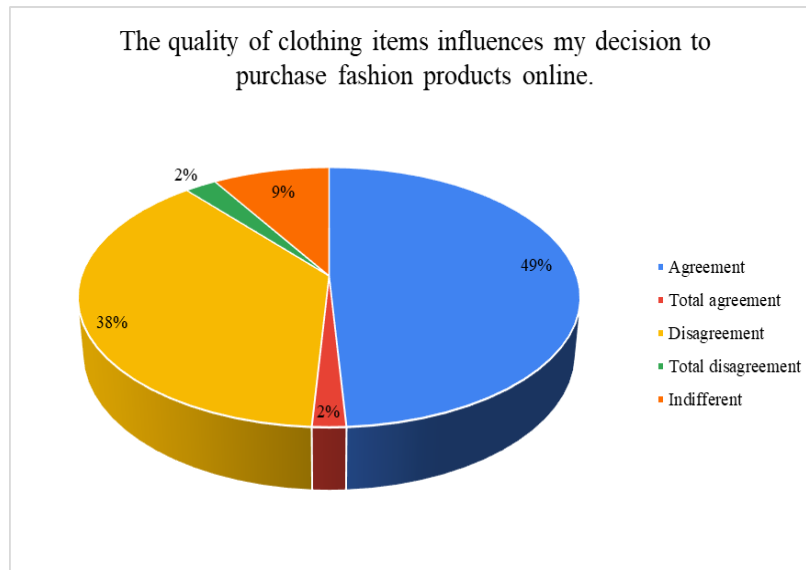


**Figure 1. Online platform advertisements**

Source: Authors' own research.

The survey provides insights into the distribution of professional experience within the current field among respondents. A significant proportion, 38%, of respondents agree that online platform advertisements

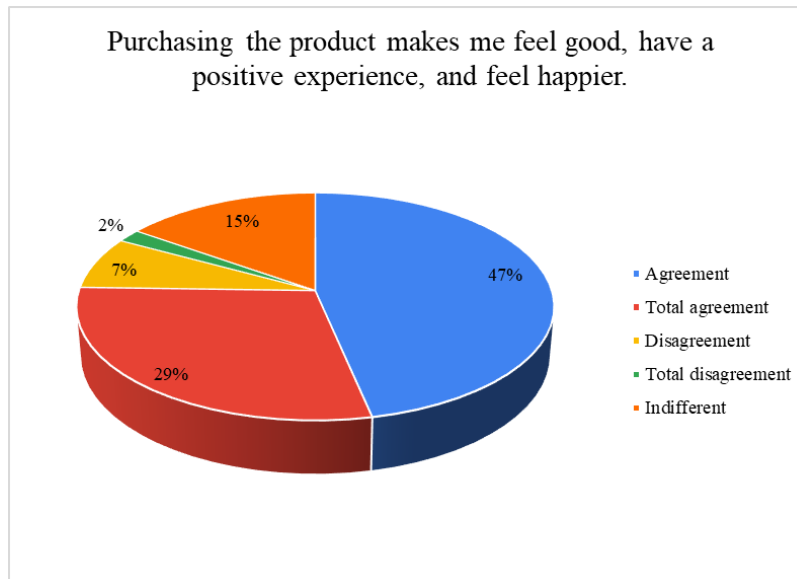
influence their decision to purchase clothing items, whereas those who totally agree with this statement are in a proportion of only 9%. A percentage of 17% of respondents are in disagreement, while those who totally disagree and are indifferent, represent a proportion of 9%, respective 31%.



**Figure 2. Influence of clothing quality**

Source: Authors' own research.

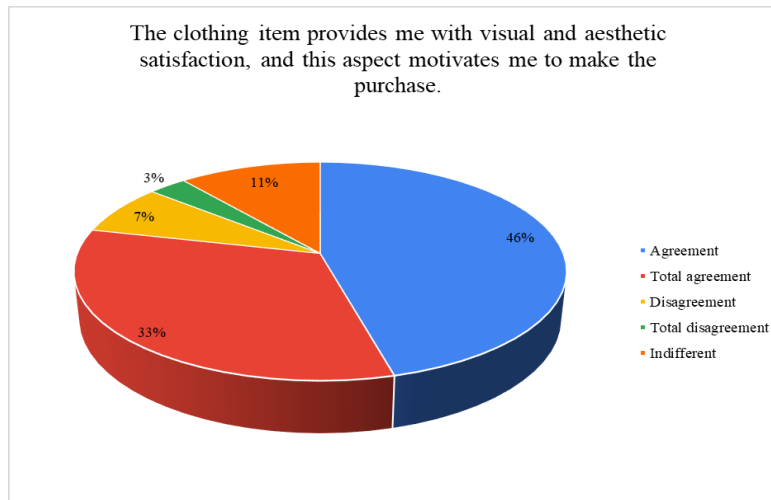
This question explains how respondents think the quality of clothing items influences their decision to purchase fashion products online. The results show a percentage of 49% agreeing with this statement, a 38% percentage disagreeing, and only 2% totally agreeing with the influence of clothing quality on their decision. The rest of 9% and 2% represent the respondents who are indifferent, respective those who totally disagree.



**Figure 3. Positive emotions and experience of purchasing the product**

Source: Authors' own research.

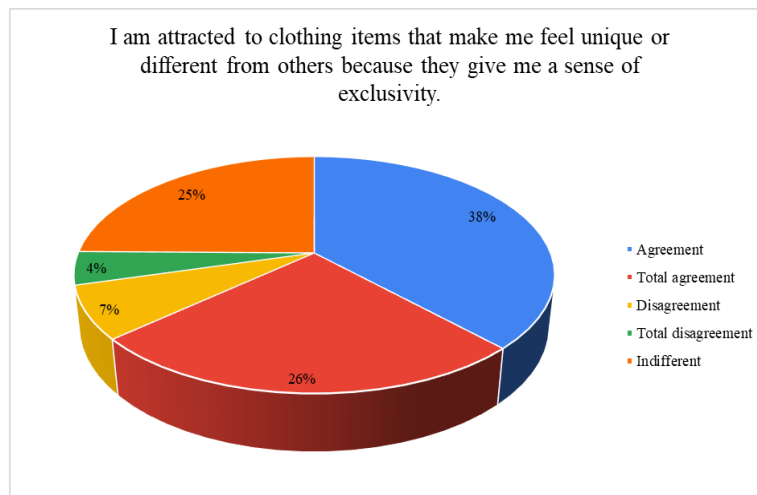
47% of respondents agree that that purchasing the product makes them feel good, have a positive experience, and feel happier, while 29% of them totally agree with this statement, and only 15 percent are indifferent. A percentage of 7% disagree with this positive emotions and a few (2%) that totally disagree.



**Figure 4. Visual and aesthetic satisfaction**

Source: Authors' own research.

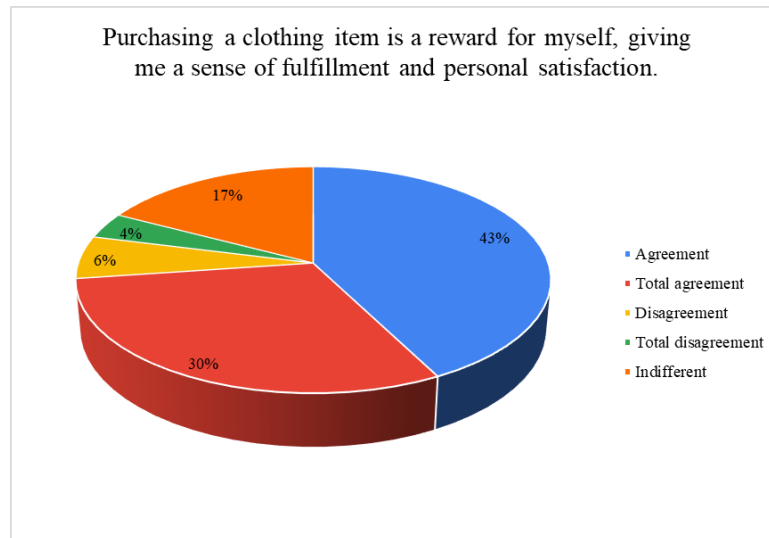
Almost half of the respondents (46%) agree that when the item provides them visual and aesthetic satisfaction, it motivates them to make the purchase, whereas a percentage of 33 totally agree with this aspect, and only 11% are indifferent. The rest of 7% and 3% are in disagreement, respectively in total disagreement.



**Figure 5. Attractiveness of unique clothing items**

Source: Authors' own research.

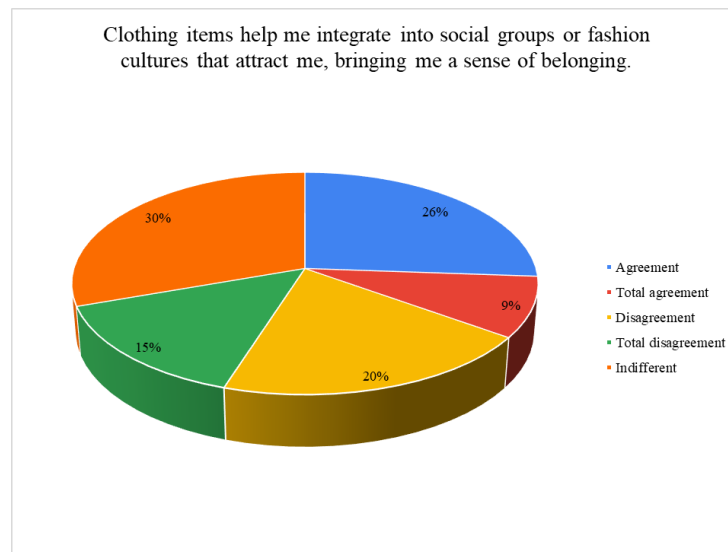
When it comes to being attracted to clothing items that make respondents feel unique or different from others because the products give them a sense of exclusivity, 38% of them agree with this statement, whilst 26% totally agree with this, and a percentage of 25 are purely indifferent. In the disagreement section was found 7% of the respondents, and 4% in the total disagreement one.



**Figure 6. Purchasing a clothing item as a reward**

Source: Authors' own research.

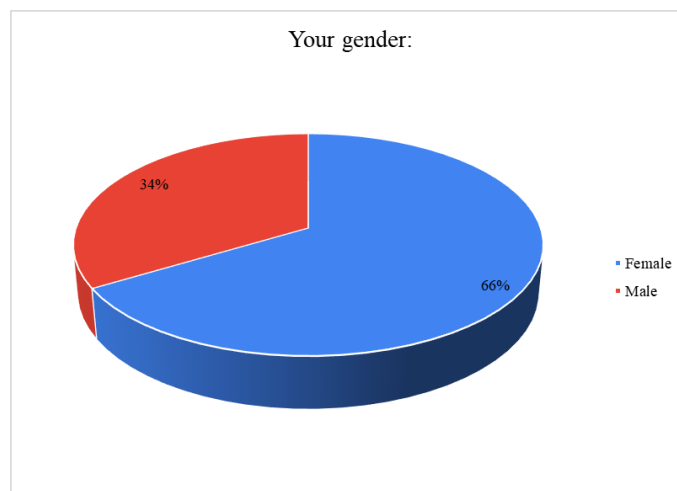
43 percent of respondents agree that purchasing a clothing item is a reward for themselves, giving a sense of fulfillment and personal satisfaction, 30% of them totally agree with the statement, and 17% just being indifferent, followed by a percentage of only 6% that disagree. In the end, a small percentage of respondents (4%) totally disagree with this.



**Figure 7. Clothing items as integration tool**

Source: Authors' own research.

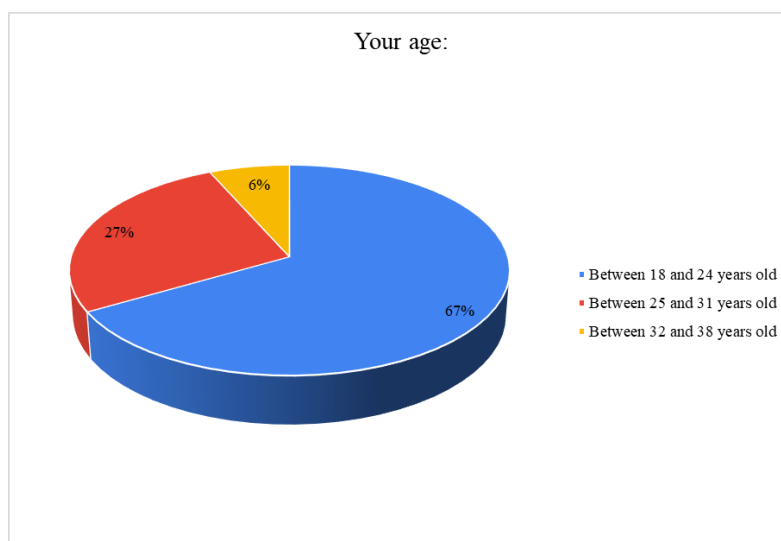
The questions' purpose is to determine if clothing items help the respondents to integrate into social groups or fashion cultures that attract them, bringing them a sense of belonging. The result are these: 30% of the people are indifferent about this statement, 26% agree, and a percentage of 20% disagree. 15% totally disagree, whilst only 9% are totally agree.



**Figure 8. Respondents' gender**

Source: Authors' own research.

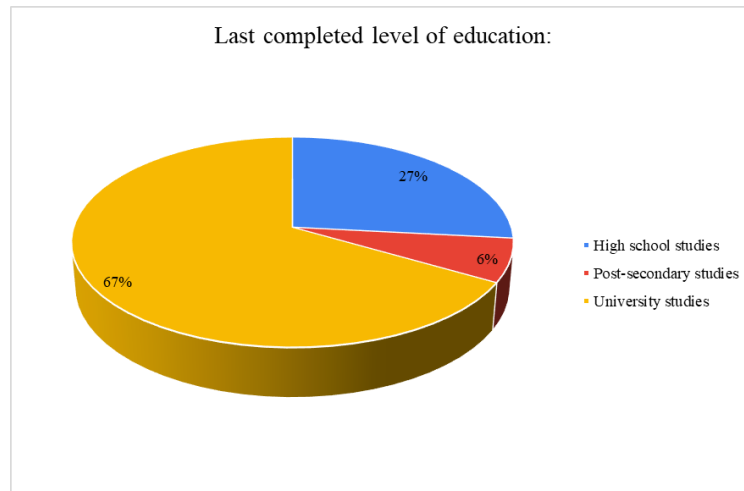
In this survey, 66% of respondents that participated are females, and 34% are male, revealing a significant difference between the amount of womens' and mens' online frequency shopping.



**Figure 9. Respondents' age range**

Source: Authors' own research.

There are three age categories, the largest consists of 67% between 18 and 24 years old, followed by 27% between 25 and 31 years old, and the smallest category of 6% between 32 and 38 years old.



**Figure 10. Last completed level of education of respondents**

Source: Authors' own research.

Last completed level of education consists of 67% of respondents that finished University studies, followed by 27% that completed High school studies, and only 6% that finished Post-secondary studies

## Conclusion

Although online shopping has started not a long time ago, it has been growing rapidly worldwide especially when it comes to purchasing clothing items, those being the most purchased products in numerous countries.

For the most majority of respondents (38%), online platform advertisements play an important role in influencing the decision on clothing items purchase, especially when it comes to their quality, where almost half of the respondents claim that they agree the decision can be influenced significantly when quality of products increases.

Some of the respondents, those who agree (47%) and totally agree (29%), they feel immediate pleasure such as happiness, positive experience, and positive emotions after the decision was made to pursue instant gratification led by hedonic motivation. Also led by this motivation and pleasure for browsing, respondents agree that clothing items that are presented visually and in an aesthetic way, motivate them to make the decision of purchase.

A little over half of the respondents that agree (38%) and totally agree (26%), tend to be more attracted to items that offer them a sense of exclusivity resulting of unique products, looking to be different from others. The need of fulfillment and personal satisfaction decreases as soon as the purchase of an item is made, making the respondents who agree (43%) and totally agree (30%) see the action of purchases as a reward for themselves that was led by hedonic motivation.

Clothing items represents a tool for respondents to be part of social group or fashion cultures, and 26% of them agree that this integration and social validation brings them a sense of belonging, even if they do not need those products in reality, making this a hedonic motivations' characteristic.

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