

From Words to Touch: The Power of Tactile Product Descriptions on Haptic Imagery, Psychological Ownership and Purchase Intention

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Abstract

Despite the growing prevalence of online fashion retailing, this sector faces the challenge of compensating for the lack of touch in the pre-purchase phase. To advance existing literature, the current research examines how tactile product descriptions impact purchase intention, with this relationship being mediated by haptic imagery and psychological ownership. Additionally, we consider purchase purpose (i.e., self-purchasing vs. gift-purchasing) as a moderator. Findings from three online experiments confirm the mediating role of haptic imagery and psychological ownership in the relationship between tactile product descriptions and purchase intention, with this effect being more pronounced for gift-purchasing. This research highlights the importance of both cognitive (haptic imagery) and emotional (psychological ownership) factors in explaining how verbal product descriptions stimulate the sense of touch and, consequently, purchase intention in an online retail environment.

Keywords: Sensory Information, Psychological Ownership, Online Retailing

Track: Retailing & Omni-Channel Management