Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality in Apparel Retailing: Examining Retail Strategies to Enhance the Customer Experience

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Introduction

- According to the McKinsey Global Fashion Index, the Apparel Industry is now worth and estimated $2.4 trillion and has grown at 5.5 percent annually (Amed, 2017).
- Recently introduced to the industry was Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR).
- Augmented Reality is formally defined as “an enhanced version of reality created by the use of technology to add digital information on an image of something” (Mohr, 2017).
- Virtual Reality is defined as “the use of computer technology to create a simulated environment” (Mohr, 2017).
- These technologies have the capability to create a simulated world and makes these simulations feel real to the user.
- These concepts are still regarded as developing technologies, which leaves much room for research to be done to analyze the effects of AR and VR on Consumer Experience and behavior.
- Global Luxury Apparel Brands like Dior, Gucci and Prada are integrating the use of AR and VR technologies to fully immerse consumers in the new retail experience (Hendriksz, 2018).

Objective

- The objective of this research is to determine the effects of Augmented and Virtual Reality technology on the consumer experience and how buying behavior might be altered by the integration of AR or VR on a platform which is not the typical brick-and-mortar store.
- Augmented and Virtual Reality have been used in stores for experience based use, like taking users wearing a VR headset to designer fashion shows in Paris.
- The technologies are not commonly used for allowing customers to virtually try-on clothing from their homes using their computer cameras. This research records the responses of users after using the technology and how it has impacted their opinion on shopping with Augmented and Virtual Reality.

Method

- Participants were asked what they liked most regarding the Virtual Try-On
- 98% of participants enjoyed using technology and noted they were excited for the potential it has
- Specifically, participants enjoyed the ability to use this technology from the safety of their home since some have negative experiences with in-store shopping

Results

- Participants were asked what they liked least regarding the Virtual Try-On
- 36% of participants noted the unrealistic appearance of clothing
- Most “dislikes” can be fixed, like the aesthetics of store and website.
- Main concerns from participants include system bugs, navigating the technology, and user-friendliness of the programs.

References/Acknowledgements