

## Factors Influencing Customer's Purchasing Intentions of Fashion Bags in Offline Stores in China

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### Abstract

This research aims to (1) to understand the changing attitudes and behaviors of customers that may impact seller strategies in China and (2) to identify potential factors influencing customers' intention to purchase fashion bags in offline stores. The population of interest comprises individuals residing in China, and the sample consists of internet-enabled Chinese residents who voluntarily participated in the study. The study used convenience sampling to recruit 366 participants, and an online survey was conducted to collect data. The statistical analyses involved descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. The findings indicated that the store's location, shop atmosphere, social identity, price, and product availability all positively affected customer purchase intentions. Based on these results, this study suggests implementing marketing strategies, particularly pricing, social identity, and location, to effectively penetrate the fashion bag market in China.

**Keywords:** Offline shopping; Fashion bags; Purchase intention

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## 1. Introduction

With the rise of the Internet and the Internet economy, online shopping has become a ubiquitous part of our daily lives. In 2021, China's retail e-commerce sales value amounted to around 2.64 trillion U.S. dollars, representing a 14 percent year-on-year growth (Ma, 2022). Although online shopping has gained popularity in recent years, many individuals still favor offline shopping. In China, the offline retail industry continues to flourish, resulting in the closure of some brick-and-mortar stores due to intense market competition and the need to satisfy customer preferences. Meyvis and Janiszewski (2002) found that the advantages of offline shopping include the ability to try on, taste, and guarantee product quality, as well as the opportunity to socialize and relax. Flaviá et al., (2017) noted that offline shopping provides a three-dimensional experience that cannot be replicated by mobile phones and computers. They argue that the offline economy cannot simply be limited to welcoming customers through open doors, but rather should actively engage with them. Consumers seek not only products, but also human connection when they shop offline. This entails having shopping guides who understand their needs and can provide personalized recommendations, as well as stores that enhance their service models and minimize the stress of waiting in line. Successful offline retail requires a focus on customer needs, such as personalized service and reducing wait times (Gogoi, 2013).

Despite the growth of e-commerce, physical retail remains popular in China, with 84% of sales occurring in brick-and-mortar stores (Marian, 2021). This is due to the desire for live experiences and immediacy, which are lacking in online shopping (Raydiant, 2021). Additionally, physical stores in China have adapted to meet consumer demands for contactless payment and maintain product quality, delivery, and brand values (Daxue Consulting, 2021); Wang et al., 2022). This has led to a recovery and revitalization of traditional retail, offering an authentic and enjoyable customer experience. Wang et al. (2022) found that consumers in China prefer to shop in physical stores for the personalized shopping experience and expert advice from sales associates.

Given the competitiveness of the offline retail market, it is important for store owners to understand consumer needs and tailor their strategies accordingly. This study aims to provide insights into consumer behavior and purchasing intentions in order to help physical store owners improve their business strategies. By understanding the factors that affect consumer behavior, store owners can make effective strategies to attract customers and improve their business.

## 2. Objective

This study has two main objectives:

- 1) to understand their changing attitudes and behaviors that may influence seller strategies.
- 2) to identify potential factors that influence consumers' intention to purchase bags in offline stores.

## 3. Related concepts or tasks

### 1) Literature review

#### a. Fashion luggage products

In this monograph, fashion luggage products are defined as bags that are used by people, can hold items, facilitate travel, and allow users to express their own aesthetics. Going to work, shopping, going to banquets, traveling, outings, mountain climbing, and other activities all require bags of different nature and styles. Luggage is one of the items that people carry with them. It reflects a person's taste, identity and status. In 2020, the luggage market was valued at approximately 16 billion U.S. dollars worldwide decreasing from 22 billion dollars in the previous year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (P, 2022). Gogoi (2013) believe that a good luggage can show a unique charm. Fashion luggage products can be classified as follows:

- (1) Classified by function: can be divided into wallets, cosmetic bags, evening makeup bags, hand bags, shoulder bags, backpacks, messenger bags, travel bags, etc.
- (2) Classified by material: leather bags, PUbags, PVCbags, canvas oxford bags, hand-woven bags, etc.
- (3) Classified by style: street fashion, European and American fashion, business commuting, retro, leisure, simple, versatile, etc.
- (4) Classified by style: can be divided into small square bag, small round bag, shell bag, glue bag, saddle bag, pillow bag, platinum bag, armpit bag, bucket bag, Tote bag etc.
- (5) Classification by category: can be divided into key bags, wallets, waist bags, chest bags, envelope bags, handbags, wrist bags, shoulder bags, backpacks, messenger bags, travel bag etc.

### **b. Location**

Store location is strategically important in retail operations and attracts customers. Previous research has shown that store location has a significant impact on consumers' choice decisions (Solgaard & Hansen, 2003) For store locations, convenience is considered an important factor, and consumers tend to buy at the store closest to them.

The location of a retail store is now as important to the target customer as it is to the business itself. Because it involves a large amount of capital investment of the enterprise, once the wrong location is chosen, it can hardly be corrected in the short term. Unlike other defects, such as commodity pricing, product inventory, etc., can be easily remedied and changed. Therefore, it becomes an important link in the store's development strategy. If chosen well, it can bring a long-term competitive advantage to the store. If you don't choose well, you'll put a heavy burden on the store. For example, if there is a supermarket or a convenience store downstairs, people in this location will buy products of supermarket and convenience store online less. Of course, it's possible that you still shop online because the brand or category you want isn't available offline. But in any case, online shopping is much less than it would have been without supermarkets and convenience stores.

### **c. Store Atmosphere**

In terms of specific environmental factors, Kunkel & Berry (1968) pointed out that all the factors perceived by customers in the store, such as color, sound, smell, temperature, and the behavior and interaction of on-site personnel, can be defined as store atmosphere. Milliman & Fugate (1993) believe that atmosphere refers to the controllable set of items related to internal and external environment in a service facility that exerts emotional and physiological influences on customers. Robson (1999) found that certain elements in restaurant design, such as lighting, color and smell, enhance guests' satisfaction with dining experience. Berman & Evans (1995) divided atmospheric stimuli into four categories: Store appearance variable, comprehensive interior variable, display and design variable, POP and decoration variable. Turley & Milliman (2000) reviewed and analyzed 60 published empirical literatures on store atmosphere so far, and found that the influence of atmosphere is often different in different research perspectives. This showed that the study of store atmosphere still needed to be further developed. A good store atmosphere is an important factor in the success of a store. A good store atmosphere can also lead to greater competitiveness.

#### **d. Social Identity**

The concept of social identity originates from psychology (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). This theory indicates that individuals identify with certain groups or groups they belong to through social classification, and thus generate in-group preference and out-group prejudice. Tajfel (1978) proposed the definition of social identity, that is, an individual perceives that he belongs to a certain social group, as well as the feelings and value realization brought to him by being a member of this group.

Social identity enables consumers to make behaviors that are more likely to be recognized by the group. That is, consumers' judgment on the value of the commodity after purchasing the commodity will be based on the group's recognition of the value of the commodity, and then affect consumers' satisfaction with the commodity. The social identity of consumers comes from their psychological cognition of society, and the psychological cognition presented by consumers with different personalities is also different. The brand of consumer goods, the characteristics of the social relationship between consumers and groups, and the specific situational clues in the environment where consumers live also change the degree of consumers' feeling of social identity to a certain extent. After purchasing a commodity, consumers will judge the value of the commodity based on the recognition degree of the group to which they belong (Molnár, & Lamont, 2002). Consumers will conduct behaviors in line with the norms of reference groups or seek consistency with reference groups to obtain social identity, which will lead to the influence of consumers' post-purchase behaviors on the groups they belong to.

#### **e. Price**

Price is one of the most important variables influencing consumer consumption (María Rosa-Díaz, 2004) and can shape consumer attitudes during the decision-making process (Aboah & Lees, 2020), which will affect willingness to buy and willingness to pay. It is considered an indicator of product cost (Erdil, 2015) and is defined as the consumer's sacrifice worth of the product or service they see (Zeithaml, 1988).

Referring to Kotler and Keller (2016), product prices are divided into three dimensions: fair price, fixed price and relative price. A fair price is a reasonable price that comes with a quality product or appropriate service. A fixed price is a set of prices that is non-negotiable to all buyers. Relative prices are a set of prices that match the quality or service offered by the seller.

Since price affects consumers' decisions and purchase intentions (Munnukka, 2008), it is often used as a marketing strategy to attract more people, especially consumers with low purchasing power who are more price-sensitive. However, perceptions of price, whether reasonable, cheap or expensive, are subjective. It depends on the purchasing power of consumers and the value they place on that product or service. Although most consumers were price sensitive, they also considered other factors such as brand image, quality, location, and value when making decisions (Ferrell, Hartline & Hochstein, 2021). Furthermore, customers are often willing to pay a premium for products that meet their needs (Broekhuizen & Alsem, 2002).

#### **f. Product Availability**

Product availability is one type of supply chain performance, usually determined by customer demand. The description is the ability of the company to maintain the product. When the demand for a product increases, it is important to keep the product available in the business, as poor usability can lead to dissatisfied customers, which can lead to bad opinions in the long run. On the one hand, product unavailability means loss of opportunities and sales; on the other hand, product availability is considered to be an important factor in increasing sales (Hausman & Siekpe, 2009). Availability of a product doesn't mean that the store needs to keep ample stock at all times, but that the item is available when the customer wants to buy it. Therefore, it depends on the accuracy of demand forecasting and planning. That's why many marketers spend time and energy maintaining adequate inventory.

According to research of Bian (2011), product availability can enhance consumers' willingness to purchase. Steinhart, Mazursky & Kamins (2013) studied the impact of two types of purchase intention on product availability and found that under normal circumstances, purchase intention decreases when the product was not available for purchase. However, in this case, the product was rare and the unavailability of the product increased the willingness to purchase.

#### **g. Purchase Intention.**

Purchase intention is defined as a customer's willingness to purchase a commodity, a product or a specific service under specific conditions (Abas, Azis., & Yusuf, 2021). It has to do with consumers' perceptions, attitudes and behaviors when making purchasing decisions. Research by Kotler and Armstrong (2010) pointed out that consumers go through six stages to make a decision to purchase a product, and these stages are awareness, knowledge,

interest, preference, persuasion, and purchase. In addition, purchase intentions are also based on individual attitudes and beliefs, which may be influenced by external factors, such as advertising (Belić & Jönsson, 2012).

## 2) Conceptual framework

The framework focused on identifying the factors that influenced the purchase intention of fashion luggage products in offline stores. From this framework, there were 5 independent variables, which were location, store atmosphere, social identity, price, and product availability. All 5 variables were expected to influence customers' purchase intention:

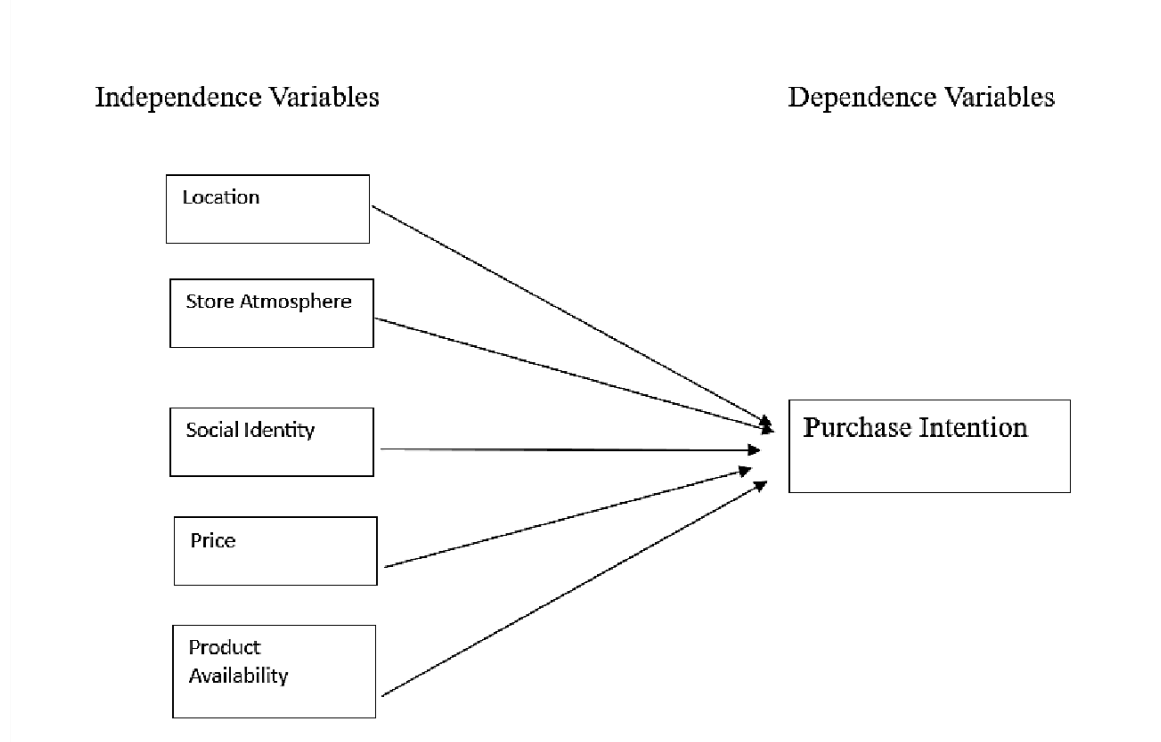


Figure 1 Research framework

#### 4. Research Methodology

In this study, consumers in China who were interested in buying fashion bags from offline platforms were the target group. To sample these consumers, a convenience sampling approach was adopted. A closed-ended questionnaire format was employed in the survey to collect demographic data and information about the variables, utilizing Likert five-point scales. The questionnaire comprised of 31 questions, of which 5 were general questions, and 26 questions were related to the variables of Location (place), shop atmosphere, social identity, price, product availability, and customer purchase intention.

The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient were utilized to examine content validity and reliability, respectively. The IOC value of each item was higher than 0.5.

The data was collected by an online survey conducted through the questionnaire star (wjx.cn) online survey form. The survey link was distributed across social media platforms such as WeChat, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Survey respondents who did not pass the screening questions were automatically disqualified. The analysis was carried out using data from only 366 valid respondents who completed all questions in the questionnaire.

The study employed a quantitative survey as the major research approach, and computerized software was used for data analysis, including descriptive statistics and linear regression.

#### 5. Analysis and Findings

This section investigates the correlation between the independent variables, namely location (place), shop atmosphere, social identity, price, and product availability, and the dependent variable of customer purchase intention. To analyze these relationships, multiple linear regression was employed. The findings of the analysis are presented below:

**Table 1: Model Summary**

Model	R	R square	Adjust R square
one	0.860	0.859	0.85

a. Predictors: (Constant), Location (place), shop atmosphere, social identity, price, product availability

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Purchase Intention



Table 1 shows that R square value is 0.859, this indicates that 85.9% of variation of dependent variable can be given an explanation by all three independent variables.

The result of the ANNOVA test,  $F=441.425$  and significant amount is 0.000 which means that ( $P<0.05$ ). Meanwhile, it shows that the independent variables and dependent variable are statistically associated.

**Table 2 The Construct Correlations and Fit Indices**

		Location	Store atmosphere	Social identity	In terms of price	Product Availability	Customer's purchase intention
Location	Pearson correlation	1	.879**	.918**	.914**	.909**	.891**
	Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Store atmosphere	Pearson correlation	.879**	1	.904**	.903**	.890**	.874**
	Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
Social identity	Pearson correlation	.918**	.904**	1	.937**	.918**	.904**
	Sig.	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
In terms of price	Pearson correlation	.914**	.903**	.937**	1	.925**	.910**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
Product Availability	Pearson correlation	.909**	.890**	.918**	.925**	1	.888**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
Customer's purchase intention	Pearson correlation	.891**	.874**	.904**	.910**	.888**	1
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

From table 2, the correlation coefficient between purchase intention and price is 0.910, social identity is 0.904, location (place) is 0.891, product availability is 0.888 and shop atmosphere is 0.874 respectively and shows that they are in the positive moderate relationship with purchase intention. All factors are also significant at 0.000 less than 0.05.

**Table 3: Model's Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Std Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	0.215	0.078	-	2.753	0.00
Location (Place)	0.193	0.020	0.186	9.843	0.00
Store atmosphere	0.156	0.019	0.160	8.198	0.00
Social identity	0.199	0.018	0.195	11.002	0.00
Price	0.222	0.018	0.216	12.275	0.00
Product availability	0.165	0.019	0.165	9.843	0.00

Table 3 shows the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables, where the standardized coefficients beta of location (Place) is 0.186, Store atmosphere is 0.160, Social identity is 0.195, Price is 0.216 and Product availability is 0.165. Based on the above coefficient result, it can make a regression equation as follows:

- x1 = Location (Place)
- x2 = Store atmosphere
- x3 = Social identity
- x4 = Price
- x5 = Product Availability

Purchase intention = 0.215 + .193 location (place) + .156 shop atmosphere+ 0.199 social identity + 0.222 price + 0.165 product availability

The analysis of the model shows that location (place), shop atmosphere, social identity, price, and product availability all positively affect customer purchase intention. The correlation coefficient reveals that price has the strongest influence on customer purchase intention, followed by social identity and location. Product availability and store atmosphere also have some impact on customer purchase intention. Therefore, businesses should strive to continuously enhance these factors and offer more value for money products and services.

## 6. Conclusion and Discussion

This study investigated the impact of location, shop atmosphere, social identity, price, and product availability on purchase intention for fashion bags on offline platforms. The data was collected from 366 respondents in China, and after analysis, the results indicated that female customers aged between 19-29 years old with a monthly income between 3000-6000 yuan were significantly more sensitive to the price factor. This suggests that this customer segment places more importance on affordable pricing. Moreover, customers with higher education backgrounds and monthly income were found to care more about product availability than customers with lower education levels.

Furthermore, the analysis of the model shows that location (place), shop atmosphere, social identity, price, and product availability all positively affect customer purchase intention. According to statistical analysis, the correlation coefficient between purchase intention and price is 0.910, indicating that reasonable price has a positive impact on purchase intention, which is similar to Munnukka's (2008) conclusion that price affects consumers' decision making and purchase intention, and Guan et al. (2020) study found that the factor that influence most of customer intend to purchase is price of the product.

Additionally, statistical analysis shows that the correlation coefficient between purchase intention and social identity is 0.904, indicating that good social identity has a positive impact on purchase intention. This finding is consistent with Escalas and Bettman's (2003) research that consumers were willing to pay more for a product when it was marketed as being associated with their social identity. Moreover, social identity predicts cognition-based attitude (i.e. attitude toward celebrity endorsement) were found to be antecedents that enhanced brand attractiveness, which in turn positively affected purchase intention. (Lau et al., 2023)

Furthermore, the correlation coefficient between purchase intention and location is 0.891, indicating that good location has a positive impact on purchase intention, which is consistent with Solgaard and Hansen (2003) study that store location is of strategic importance in retail business and attracts customers. Consumers tend to buy products in the store nearest to them due to the convenience of buying products. A finding consistent with Brata et al. (2017) study is that the correlation between location variables and purchase decisions is strongest. The rate of the relationship between the environment dimension and the purchase decision dimension is also indicated.

In addition, statistical analysis shows that the correlation coefficient between purchase intention and product availability is 0.888, indicating that sufficient inventory has a positive impact on purchase intention, Weissmann and Hock (2022) concluded that product availability has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention, which aligns with Bian's (2011) finding that consumers are more likely to intend to purchase products that are readily available and in good stock, rather than waiting for their arrival.

Lastly, the correlation coefficient between purchase intention and store atmosphere is 0.874, indicating that a good store atmosphere has a positive impact on purchase intention. The findings are in line with Hussain and Ali's (2015) study, which suggests that atmospheric factors such as cleanliness, scent, lighting, and display/layout positively affect consumers' purchase intention. Moreover, Siddhibphongsa and Kim's (2016) study revealed that factors such as color, lighting, traffic flow, product display, and window display have a significant impact on purchase intention, whereas music and space allocation do not exhibit a statistical influence.

## 7. Suggestion

### 1) Recommendations for Offline Sellers

To enhance customer purchase intention, offline sellers can implement the following suggestions:

Firstly, sellers can leverage pricing strategies as it is the most significant factor influencing customer purchase intention. They can offer discounts, special promotions, or free shipping on select items to attract new and repeat customers. However, promotions should not

be offered too frequently, as customers may become accustomed to them, leading to reduced effectiveness. Occasional and targeted promotions should be used, such as quarterly discounts, or holiday sales lasting for a few days to a week.

Secondly, inventory management is crucial to ensure the availability of products at all times. In a competitive offline market, customers may move on to another store if they are unable to find the product they want. To mitigate this risk, sellers should monitor inventory levels regularly and order or produce new products to keep stock levels high. Additionally, sellers should forecast demand to ensure they are adequately prepared for seasonal changes and holidays.

Thirdly, sellers can encourage customers to provide positive feedback through incentivization. Stores can offer special promotions or gifts to customers who provide positive reviews. Positive reviews help new customers gain trust in the store's products and services, leading to higher customer purchase intention. Moreover, positive reviews can help stores build social proof, leading to increased sales and better prices.

By implementing these strategies, offline sellers can increase their customers' purchase intention and ultimately, their profitability.

## **2) To start a business, individuals should consider the following recommendations.**

Firstly, it is crucial to select strategies that cater to the target customers. Through analyzing customer demographics, such as gender, age, education level, and income, one can identify the factors that influence their purchase intentions. Therefore, appropriate strategies should be adopted based on the target customers' preferences. For instance, women are inclined towards lower delivery fees. Hence, if the business targets women, offering special delivery discounts can be an effective strategy. On the other hand, customers with higher education and income are more concerned with product availability rather than price. Thus, for this customer group, the business should ensure that their inventory is always stocked, albeit at a higher price.

Secondly, branding and marketing are essential to establish a business's reputation and reliability. Content marketing, shared through official pages to customers' social media, can generate interest and attract more customers. Influencer marketing is also an effective way to create social proof and build trust, as people tend to trust influencers' opinions.

Thirdly, it is recommended to estimate all business expenses, including storage costs, marketing costs, and operating costs. Failing to accurately estimate these costs can lead to problems later, which can ultimately affect customers' willingness to buy. For example, marketing costs associated with creating social proof and storage costs related to inventory can impact product availability, and ultimately, sales.

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