

## Mobile App versus Website: A Comparative Eye-Tracking Case Study of Topshop

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**Abstract :** The UK is leading in online retail and mobile adoption. However, there is a dearth of information relating to mobile apparel retail, and developing an understanding about consumer browsing and purchase behavior in m-retail channel would provide apparel marketers, mobile website and app developers with the necessary understanding of consumers' needs. Despite the rapid growth of mobile retail businesses, no published study has examined shopping behaviour on fashion mobile websites and apps. A mixed method approach helped to understand why fashion consumers prefer websites on mobile devices, when mobile apps are also available. The following research methods were employed: survey, eye-tracking experiments, observation, and interview with retrospective think aloud. The mobile gaze tracking device by SensoMotoric Instruments was used to understand frustrations in navigation and other issues facing consumers in mobile channel. This method helped to validate and compliment other traditional user-testing approaches in order to optimize user experience and enhance the development of mobile retail channel. The study involved eight participants - females aged 18 to 35 years old, who are existing mobile shoppers. The participants used the Topshop mobile app and website on a smart phone to complete a task according to a specified scenario leading to a purchase. The comparative study was based on: duration and time spent at different stages of the shopping journey, number of steps involved and product pages visited, search approaches used, layout and visual clues, as well as consumer perceptions and expectations. The results from the data analysis show significant differences in consumer behaviour when using a mobile app or website on a smart phone. Moreover, two types of problems were identified, namely technical issues and human errors. Having a mobile app does not guarantee success in satisfying mobile fashion consumers. The differences in the layout and visual clues seem to influence the overall shopping experience on a smart phone. The layout of search results on the website was different from the mobile app. Therefore, participants, in most cases, behaved differently on different platforms. The number of product pages visited on the mobile app was triple the number visited on the website due to a limited visibility of products in the search results. Although, the data on traffic trends held by retailers to date, including retail sector breakdowns for visits and views, data on device splits and duration, might seem a valuable source of information, it cannot explain why consumers visit many product pages, stay longer on the website or mobile app, or abandon the basket. A comprehensive list of pros and cons was developed by highlighting issues for website and mobile app, and recommendations provided. The findings suggest that fashion retailers need to be aware of actual consumers' behaviour on the mobile channel and their expectations in order to offer a seamless shopping experience. Added to which is the challenge of retaining existing and acquiring new customers. There seem to be differences in the way fashion consumers search and shop on mobile, which need to be explored in further studies.

**Keywords :** consumer behavior, eye-tracking technology, fashion retail, mobile app, m-retail, smart phones, topshop, user experience, website

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