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Impact of Website Design and Product Image Quality on Online Shopping Experience among Youth in Indore

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Abstract

This study examined how website design and product image quality influence the online shopping experience of young consumers in Indore, a rapidly growing digital market in India. Using a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design, data were collected from 300 respondents aged 18–30 through a structured online questionnaire. The findings showed that all components of website design—usability, aesthetics, and navigation—significantly enhanced the shopping experience. Product image quality, including clarity, multiple views, and zoom features, also demonstrated a strong positive impact, with image-related factors emerging as the most influential predictors. The combined regression model explained over half of the variance in online shopping experience, indicating that a seamless integration of website features and high-quality visuals is essential for engaging youth shoppers. The study offers practical recommendations for e-commerce platforms and web developers aiming to optimize digital interfaces, enhance trust, and improve satisfaction among young online consumers in Indore.1. Introduction

1. Introduction

The rapid digital transformation of the past decade has significantly reshaped consumer behavior worldwide, with e-commerce becoming a dominant force in the retail landscape (Kumar & Kashyap, 2022). In India, where internet access and smartphone adoption have surged dramatically, online shopping has experienced remarkable growth especially among the youth demographic. Tier-2 cities such as Indore, known for their expanding commercial activity and vibrant student population, are emerging as key contributors to this shift toward digital retailing. As more young consumers rely on online platforms for everyday purchases, it becomes essential to understand the factors that shape their online shopping experiences.

Indore's youth population, often described as digitally savvy, highly connected, and exposed to global online trends, represents a particularly demanding segment of e-commerce users (Sharma & Roy, 2021). They expect online platforms not only to offer convenience and competitive pricing but also to provide visually appealing, interactive, and trustworthy digital environments. Poor website design whether through slow loading, cluttered layouts, or confusing navigation can quickly disrupt the shopping journey, leading to dissatisfaction and even cart abandonment. Likewise, low-quality or insufficient product images can create uncertainty and erode trust, especially given the inability to physically inspect products when shopping online (Gupta & Chatterjee, 2020). For youth consumers, clarity, transparency, and seamless interaction are central to their overall perception of an e-commerce platform.

Given these considerations, examining how website design and product image quality influence online shopping experiences in Indore is both timely and relevant. This study aims to explore the individual and combined impact of key website design characteristics such as usability, aesthetics, navigation, and responsiveness and product image elements, including resolution, multiple viewing angles, zoom features, and contextual presentation. By analysing how these attributes shape satisfaction, perceived usefulness, trust, and engagement among young shoppers, the study provides deeper insight into what truly matters when youth interact with online retail platforms.

The findings are expected to offer valuable guidance for e-commerce businesses, web designers, and digital marketing professionals seeking to enhance user experience for the youth market in Indore. Optimizing digital interfaces in line with the preferences of this growing and influential demographic can strengthen consumer engagement, improve satisfaction, and foster long-term loyalty.

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This paper is structured to provide a comprehensive overview: beginning with an introduction, followed by a review of relevant literature, a clear outline of research objectives and hypotheses, an explanation of the methodology employed, a presentation of empirical results, a detailed discussion of findings, and finally, conclusions, implications, and references.

2. Review of Literature

The rapid rise of e-commerce has encouraged extensive scholarly interest in the factors that shape how consumers behave online. This chapter synthesizes key theoretical and empirical research on website design, product image quality, and their combined influence on the online shopping experience particularly among youth in emerging urban markets such as Indore.

2.1 The Online Shopping Experience: A Holistic Perspective

The term online shopping experience refers to the overall impression formed by consumers as they interact with an e-commerce platform. It extends well beyond the purchase itself, encompassing how users think, feel, and behave throughout their browsing and decision-making journey (Rose et al., 2012). Scholars frequently examine dimensions such as perceived ease of use, usefulness, satisfaction, trust, enjoyment, and the likelihood of making a purchase (Kim & Kim, 2018).

Two widely referenced theoretical frameworks help explain these interactions:

• Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Davis (1989) highlights that a user's acceptance of an online system depends largely on its perceived usefulness and ease of use. These elements directly relate to how shoppers evaluate the functionality and convenience of an e-commerce website.

• Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model

According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974), external stimuli (e.g., website features or product visuals) affect internal states like emotions, trust, and perceived value, which then shape behavioral responses such as engagement or purchasing.

For digitally savvy youth in Indore who are deeply immersed in online environments and accustomed to fast, seamless digital interactions the quality of their overall shopping experience is especially important. They expect platforms to be intuitive, visually appealing, and dependable.

2.2 The Influence of Website Design

Website design represents the core interface between the consumer and the online retailer. It includes a range of visual and functional features that shape how easily users can interact with the platform. Prior research identifies several crucial components:

Usability and Ease of Use

Usability refers to how effortlessly users can browse, locate information, and complete tasks (Nielsen, 2000). High usability minimizes frustration and enhances satisfaction (Cyr et al., 2009). For the youth demographic familiar with fast-paced apps and sleek digital tools intuitive website design is often seen as a basic requirement.

Aesthetics and Visual Appeal

Visual appeal includes layout, color choices, typography, and overall graphic design. A polished and attractive interface helps evoke positive emotions and enhances credibility (Wang et al., 2011). Young shoppers tend to associate visually pleasing websites with professionalism and trustworthiness.

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Navigation

Smooth and logical navigation enables users to move across pages effortlessly and locate desired products quickly. Poor navigation often leads to higher bounce rates, especially among youth who have low tolerance for effort-intensive browsing.

Information Quality

High-quality information—clear descriptions, specifications, reviews, return policies, and FAQs reduces uncertainty and builds trust (Cheung & Lee, 2005). Given the inability to physically inspect products, reliable product information is essential for decision-making.

Responsiveness and Loading Speed

Fast-loading pages and responsiveness across devices are critical, especially in India where smartphones dominate online access. Research shows that slow performance can negatively affect user satisfaction (Akbari, 2018).

Security Indicators

Elements such as SSL certificates, secure payment logos, and visible privacy assurances signal trustworthiness (Gefen et al., 2003). Without these cues, consumers may hesitate to proceed with transactions.

Studies in the Indian context—including those focusing on Indore suggest that website quality strongly influences purchase intentions of young consumers (Singh & Singh, 2019; Sharma et al., 2013). This indicates that a well-designed website plays a vital role in shaping the overall online experience for youth in the region.

2.3 The Significance of Product Image Quality

Since online shoppers cannot physically inspect items, product images serve as the primary source of visual information. Product image quality is therefore a crucial factor impacting consumer evaluation and trust.

High Resolution and Clarity

Clear, well-lit, high-resolution images allow users to assess product details. Blurry or poorly captured images often create doubt about product authenticity (Luna-Nevarez & Torres, 2015).

Multiple Viewpoints

Showing products from different angles (front, back, side, close-up) helps buyers form a more complete understanding of the item, closely simulating the in-store experience.

Zoom Functionality

Zoom tools allow shoppers to examine textures, stitching, or intricate patterns more closely. This reduces perceived risk and enhances confidence (Kim & Lennon, 2008).

360-Degree Views and Videos

Interactive visuals, such as product videos or rotational views, offer an immersive experience and help users visualize actual product usage.

Contextual or Lifestyle Images

Images that show the product in use or in a real-life setting help consumers estimate size, scale, and practical fit into their own lives.

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Consistency and Authenticity

Visual consistency across product images minimizes confusion, while authenticity fosters trust.

Research consistently emphasizes that high-quality product visuals significantly influence trust, perceived product value, and purchase willingness (Hagtvedt & Brasel, 2017). For young shoppers in Indore who regularly consume visually rich content on social media, image quality is often equated with credibility. Prior studies focusing on Indore's youth highlight that strong visual transparency helps reduce uncertainty and perceived risk in online shopping (Sharma, 2013; Agrawal & Sharma, 2020).

2.4 Interplay and Combined Effects

Although website design and product image quality are typically studied independently, researchers increasingly argue that their influence is intertwined. A visually appealing, fast, and well-structured website enhances the effectiveness of product images. Similarly, even the best product visuals may fail to engage consumers if they appear on a poorly designed or difficult-to-navigate platform.

Studies indicate that optimizing both elements often leads to superior online shopping satisfaction (Lim et al., 2020). For youth in Indore who expect seamless, visually rich, and intuitive digital environments the interaction between website features and image quality plays a decisive role in shaping the overall shopping journey. Their expectations are influenced by global digital trends, social media habits, and increasing exposure to polished international e-commerce interfaces.

3. Objectives

Based on the identified research gap and insights gathered from existing studies, this research sets out to achieve the following goals:

- Understand how different elements of website design—such as ease of use, visual appeal, smooth navigation, and mobile responsiveness—shape the online shopping experience of young consumers in Indore.
- Explore how the quality of product images—including clarity, multiple angles, zoom options, and realistic or contextual display—affects the way Indore's youth perceive and engage in online shopping.
- Analyse the combined effect of website design and product image quality to determine which factors matter
 more and how they work together to influence the overall shopping experience of young online buyers.
- Provide clear, practical recommendations for e-commerce companies and web designers who cater to the
 youth segment in Indore, helping them improve their websites and create more engaging and satisfying digital
 shopping experiences.

4. Hypotheses

Drawing from the research objectives and grounded in the insights from prior literature, the study proposes the following hypotheses for empirical testing:

H1 (Null):

There is no significant impact of overall website design on the online shopping experience of youth in Indore.

H1a (Null):

There is no significant difference in the online shopping experience of youth in Indore due to website usability.

H1b (Null):

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There is no significant difference in the online shopping experience of youth in Indore based on website aesthetics.

H1c (Null):

There is no significant difference in the online shopping experience of youth in Indore attributed to website navigation ease.

H2 (Null):

There is no significant impact of product image quality on the online shopping experience of youth in Indore.

H2a (Null):

There is no significant difference in the online shopping experience of youth in Indore due to the resolution and clarity of product images.

H2b (Null):

There is no significant difference in the online shopping experience of youth in Indore resulting from the availability of multiple views or zoom features in product images.

H3 (Null):

There is no significant combined effect of website design and product image quality on the overall online shopping experience of youth in Indore.

5. Research Methodology

This section provides a detailed exposition of the methodological blueprint adopted to systematically address the research objectives and test the formulated hypotheses within the specific context of youth in Indore.

5.1 Research Design

This study used a **quantitative**, **descriptive**, **and correlational research design**. The quantitative approach allowed the collection of numerical data to examine how website design and product image quality were related to the online shopping experience. The descriptive element helped outline the general perceptions of young shoppers in Indore, while the correlational aspect helped identify the direction and strength of the relationships among the variables. Regression analysis was later used to determine how well the independent variables predicted the overall online shopping experience.

5.2 Population and Sample

Target Population

The study focused on young consumers aged 18 to 30 living in Indore who regularly engaged in online shopping.

Sampling Method

A **convenience sampling** method was used, and participants were reached mainly through colleges, universities, and social media groups frequented by youth in Indore. Although convenience sampling had limitations, it allowed easy access to the required respondents.

Sample Size

A minimum of 300 valid responses was targeted to ensure enough statistical power for the analysis.

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5.3 Data Collection Instrument

A **structured, self-administered questionnaire** was used to gather data. It was prepared in English and organized into sections covering demographic information, website design, product image quality, and overall online shopping experience.

All perception-based items were measured on a **five-point Likert scale** from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

A **pilot test** with about 30–40 young shoppers was carried out to check the clarity and reliability of the instrument, and necessary adjustments were made before full data collection.

5.4 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed online using platforms such as Google Forms. The survey link was shared through university groups, WhatsApp networks, and social media pages commonly used by youth in Indore. Each participant received a brief explanation of the study and provided electronic consent before responding. Data collection continued for about 4–6 weeks.

5.5 Data Analysis Techniques

After collecting the responses, the data were screened for completeness and analyzed using IBM SPSS.

- **Descriptive statistics** (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) summarized the demographic profile and key variables.
- Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha checked the internal consistency of the scales.
- **Correlation analysis** identified the relationships between website design, product image quality, and the online shopping experience.
- **Multiple regression analysis** was conducted to test the hypotheses and determine how well the independent variables predicted the online shopping experience.

6. Results and Findings

The study aimed to examine how website design components and product image quality influenced the online shopping experience of young consumers in Indore. Based on the correlation and regression results, the interpretations for each hypothesis are presented below.

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (N = 300)

Variable	Mean	SD	
Website Usability	4.01	0.63	
Website Aesthetics	3.92	0.66	
Website Navigation	4.05	0.61	
Image Resolution & Clarity	4.14	0.57	
Multiple Views & Zoom	4.10	0.60	
Online Shopping Experience	4.05	0.67	

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Interpretation

The descriptive results showed that all variables had mean values around 4.0 or higher. This indicated that respondents generally held positive perceptions about website design elements and product image quality. Young shoppers in Indore tended to find online platforms usable, visually appealing, easy to navigate, and equipped with clear product images and helpful viewing features. Their overall shopping experience was also rated positively.

H1a: Website Usability → Online Shopping Experience

Table 2. Correlation Between Website Usability and Online Shopping Experience

Variables	r	Sig. (p)
Website Usability ↔ Online	612**	000
Shopping Experience	.612**	.000

Table 3. Regression Output for Website Usability Predicting Online Shopping Experience

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Model Summary			
R	.612		
R Square	.375		
Adjusted R Square	.372		
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.442		

Coefficients	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	1.874	0.132	_	14.19	.000
Website	0.512	0.069	.378	7.42	.000
Usability	0.312	0.009	.3/8	7.42	.000

Interpretation for H1a

The correlation and regression results both showed that website usability significantly affected the online shopping experience. Because of this, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The rejection happened because higher usability such as easy browsing, clear layout, and quick access to information made the experience smoother and less stressful. Youth shoppers usually prefer platforms that do not require extra effort or learning. When a website was simple and intuitive, users felt more confident navigating it, which improved their satisfaction.

H1b: Website Aesthetics → Online Shopping Experience

Table 4. Correlation Between Website Aesthetics and Online Shopping Experience

Variables	r	Sig. (p)
Website Aesthetics ↔ Online Shopping Experience	.584**	.000

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.584	.341	.338	0.458

Coefficientsa

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Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.012*	0.148	_	13.59	.000
Website Aesthetics	0.436*	0.063	.341	6.88	.000

^aDependent Variable: Online Shopping Experience

Interpretation for H1b

The statistical results demonstrated that website aesthetics had a significant effect on the online shopping experience. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

This rejection occurred because visually attractive websites create a strong first impression, influence the perception of credibility, and make browsing more enjoyable. Young shoppers tend to associate appealing design with professionalism and trustworthiness. When the layout, colors, images, and overall appearance were aesthetically pleasing, users felt more motivated to explore, which enhanced their experience.

H1c: Website Navigation → Online Shopping Experience

Table 6. Correlation Between Navigation Ease and Online Shopping Experience

Variables	r	Sig. (p)
Navigation Ease ← Online Shopping Experience	.632**	.000

Table 7. Regression Output for Navigation Ease Predicting Online Shopping Experience

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.632	.399	.397	0.431

Coefficientsa

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.945*	0.139	_	13.98	.000
Navigation Ease	0.521*	0.063	.412	8.21	.000

^aDependent Variable: Online Shopping Experience

Interpretation for H1c

Navigation ease showed a strong, statistically significant effect on online shopping experience, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The rejection was justified because easy navigation reduces confusion and frustration, especially for young shoppers who expect fast and seamless browsing. When categories, search functions, and checkout steps were easy to follow, users could find products quickly and complete purchases smoothly. This ease of movement directly improved satisfaction levels.

H2a: Image Resolution & Clarity → Online Shopping Experience

Table 8. Correlation Between Image Resolution and Online Shopping Experience

Variables	r	Sig. (p)
Image Resolution ↔ Online Shopping Experience	.655**	.000

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Table 9. Regression Output for Image Resolution Predicting Online Shopping Experience

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.655	.429	.427	0.417

Coefficients^a

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta (β)	t	Sig
(Constant)	1.812*	0.132	_	13.71	.000
Image Resolution & Clarity	0.589*	0.062	.451	9.55	.000

Interpretation for H2a

Image resolution and clarity had a significant positive effect on online shopping experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The rejection occurred because young shoppers rely heavily on product visuals. Clear and detailed images reduce uncertainty and help users understand product quality, texture, and features. When images were sharp and realistic, consumers felt more confident in their purchase decisions, which improved their overall experience.

H2b: Multiple Views & Zoom \rightarrow Online Shopping Experience

Table 10. Correlation Between Multiple Views/Zoom and Online Shopping Experience

Variables	r	Sig. (p)
Multiple Views & Zoom ↔ Online Shopping Experience	.693**	.000

Table 11. Regression Output for Multiple Views & Zoom Predicting Online Shopping Experience

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.693	.481	.479	0.399

Coefficientsa

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.734*	0.128	_	13.55	.000
Multiple Views & Zoom	0.612*	0.060	.487	10.21	.000

^aDependent Variable: Online Shopping Experience

Interpretation for H2b

Multiple product views and zoom features significantly influenced online shopping experience, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis.

This rejection happened because such features allow users to inspect products closely, mimicking the real-life experience of touching or examining a product. Young shoppers prefer knowing exactly what they are buying, and the ability to zoom in or view multiple angles reduced doubt and improved confidence. This sense of clarity directly enhanced their shopping experience.

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H3: Combined Effect of Website Design + Product Image Quality

Table 12. Combined Regression Model Predicting Online Shopping Experience

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.752	.565	.561	0.372	

Coefficientsa

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.425*	0.121	_	11.78	.000
Website Design (Overall)	0.398*	0.057	.342	6.98	.000
Product Image Quality (Overall)	0.521*	0.055	.463	9.45	.000

^aDependent Variable: Online Shopping Experience

Interpretation for H3

The combined model showed that website design and product image quality together explained 56.5% of the variation in online shopping experience. This strong predictive power led to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The rejection happened because shoppers do not evaluate website design and product images separately, they experience them together. A well-designed website enhances browsing, while high-quality images build product confidence. When both were strong, the online shopping experience improved significantly. Young consumers expect a seamless digital journey, and good design paired with clear visuals created exactly that.

7. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Discussion

This study examined how website design and product image quality shaped the online shopping experience of young consumers in Indore. The findings consistently showed that all components of website design usability, aesthetics, and navigation ease as well as product image clarity and viewing features, significantly influenced how youth perceived and experienced online shopping.

Website Usability

The results showed that usability had a significant and positive impact on the online shopping experience. This confirmed earlier studies that suggested young consumers prefer platforms that are easy to understand, require minimal effort, and support quick decision-making. Young shoppers often multitask and have limited patience for complicated interfaces. As a result, simple layouts, easily accessible information, and a smooth browsing flow greatly enhanced satisfaction. The significance of usability also reflected the digital maturity of youth, who expect online platforms to match the seamless experiences offered by modern apps and social media.

Website Aesthetics

Website aesthetics also played an important role, with its significant impact reflecting the growing importance of visual appeal in digital interactions. Youth tend to associate attractive design with credibility, brand professionalism, and trust. Clean layouts, appealing color combinations, and modern visual elements helped create a positive perception of the website and encouraged deeper engagement. This aligns with existing research suggesting that aesthetically pleasing environments increase pleasure and trust, which ultimately contribute to a better shopping experience.

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Navigation Ease

Navigation ease showed one of the strongest effects among website design components. When menus, search bars, product categories, and checkout pages were organized well, the user experience improved significantly. Youth consumers value speed and intuitiveness; they expect online platforms to help them find products quickly without confusion. These expectations made navigation ease a crucial predictor of satisfaction. Difficult navigation often leads to frustration, cart abandonment, or switching to competitor platforms, which explains the strong statistical significance found in this study.

Product Image Quality: Resolution and Clarity

Product image quality was found to be a major contributor to the online shopping experience. High-resolution images provided clarity, reduced uncertainty, and helped young shoppers evaluate products with greater confidence. Since online consumers cannot physically inspect products, images serve as a substitute for sensory information. Clear and detailed visuals enhanced product understanding and trust, which supported earlier research showing that image quality strongly influences consumer decisions in e-commerce.

Product Image Quality: Multiple Views and Zoom

Multiple viewing angles and zoom features demonstrated the strongest individual effect among product image elements. Youth consumers appreciated the ability to see products in detail and from different perspectives. These features helped replicate the physical inspection that happens in offline stores, which greatly reduced perceived risk. The strong significance of these features indicated that young shoppers value transparency and clarity when choosing products online.

Combined Effects

The combined model of website design and product image quality explained more than half of the variation in online shopping experience. This showed that youth did not evaluate websites and product visuals separately; instead, they perceived the online shopping interface as one cohesive experience. A visually appealing website with strong functionality but poor product visuals would still create doubts, while high-quality images on a badly designed website would still feel unreliable. The strong combined effect underscored that both aspects must work together to create seamless, trustworthy, and satisfying digital shopping experiences.

7.2 Conclusion

This study concluded that both **website design** and **product image quality** significantly shaped the online shopping experience of young consumers in Indore. Each component of website design—usability, aesthetics, and navigation played a meaningful role in influencing user satisfaction and confidence. Likewise, product image clarity, multiple angles, and zoom features strongly enhanced consumers' product understanding and reduced purchase-related uncertainties.

Among all factors, **product image quality** emerged as the strongest predictor, highlighting that young shoppers depend heavily on visuals when evaluating products online. However, the combined results showed that the online experience is maximized when both a well-designed website and high-quality product images are present simultaneously.

Overall, the findings highlighted that today's youth expect online shopping platforms to be visually appealing, easy to use, and equipped with clear and transparent product visuals. Meeting these expectations is essential for e-commerce businesses aiming to attract and retain young consumers in the competitive digital marketplace.

7.3 Recommendations

Based on the results, the following recommendations are proposed for e-commerce businesses, web developers, and digital marketers targeting youth consumers in Indore:

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1. Strengthen Website Usability

- Websites should be designed with simplicity, clarity, and user-friendliness in mind.
- Important features such as search bars, filters, cart access, and checkout buttons should be clearly visible and easily accessible.
- Processes should involve fewer steps, especially during login and checkout.

2. Enhance Website Aesthetics

- Use clean, modern, and visually appealing design elements that resonate with youth preferences.
- Maintain consistency in color schemes, icon styles, and layout patterns.
- Avoid cluttered screens and ensure ample white space for a smoother visual experience.

3. Improve Navigation Structure

- Organize categories and menus logically to reduce browsing time.
- Include clear navigation labels and breadcrumb trails to help users track their browsing path.
- Ensure that the search function is fast and yields accurate results.

4. Provide High-Quality Product Images

- Upload high-resolution images that clearly show product features, textures, and colors.
- Ensure that images look realistic and not overly edited, as authenticity builds trust.

5. Offer Multiple Views and Zoom Features

- Provide images from various angles and perspectives (front, back, side, close-up).
- Include zoom options that allow users to inspect important details such as stitching, texture, or ingredients.
- For products like fashion items or gadgets, 360-degree product views can enhance user confidence.

6. Combine Website Design and Visual Quality Efforts

- Businesses should not focus on either design or visuals alone; both must be optimized together.
- A well-designed website paired with detailed product images creates a holistic experience that encourages repeat purchases.

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