Perceived Trust and Information Seeking Behaviour as Antecedents of Online Shopping Behaviour

Dr. Devadutta Indoria[1], Dr. Swapna R[2], Bhasura Valsan. K[3], Dr. I. Shanmugapriya[4], Dr. Abhinna Srivastava[5], Dr P Sundharesalingam[6]

[1]Department of Commerce, Vikram Dev University, Jeypore, Odisha, India, mailmedevdutt@gmail.com

[2]Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, Maharaja's College (Govt. Autonomous), Ernakulam, Kerala swapnabhinav@gmail.com

[3]Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, Kerala, valsankbhasura@gmail.com

[4]Associate professor, Department of PGDM, Rajalakshmi School of Business, Poonamalle shanmugapriya.i@rsb.edu.in

[5]Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, K.S. College, Darbhanga, (A Constituent Unit of L.N. Mithila University, Darbhanga) Bihar, abhi.ggv@gmail.com

[6]Associate Professor, Department of MBA, Kongu Engineering College, Perundurai - 638060 sundharesalingam@gmail.com

Abstract

E-commerce expansion has revolutionized consumer purchasing patterns leading to online shopping's necessity in current retail operations. Online shopping choices of consumers heavily depend on how much they trust internet platforms combined with their data collection methods. This study investigates the role of perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour as primary precursors of online buying behaviour. Trust perceptions flip between customers' security assurances about online transaction safety along with their privacy and dependability doubts including their purchase incidence. Customers who seek essential data about products and vendors develop information-seeking behavior before they finalize their purchasing decision. The way these elements work together directly shapes customer odds of taking part in online buying activities. The research depends on quantitative methods to gather information through surveys which were distributed across different types of internet consumers. Increased perceived trust by customers leads to online purchase intentions although the effect of trust becomes weaker when customers show extensive information-seeking behavior. The research explores population characteristics together with mental factors which shape internet buying patterns. The results supply critical knowledge to online stores and marketing teams about building trust relationships and providing clear accessible reliable information. This research improves existing understanding about e-commerce behavior by showing how trust and seeking information affect digital purchasing choices. The online shopping behavior requires the establishment of trust perceptions as well as information-seeking behavior as fundamental precursors. Organisations should deliberately implement trust-enhancing elements and provide easy access to credible information because this approach will boost customer loyalty as digital commerce develops. The resolution of these factors leads to superior consumer experiences along with sustained growth of the e-commerce market.

Keywords: *Perceived trust, information-seeking behavior, online shopping behavior, e-commerce, consumer behavior, purchase decision and trust in online transactions.*

Introduction

The expansion of digital technology has profoundly altered the retail environment, resulting in a substantial transition from conventional in-store shopping to online buying. Consumers already possess access to an extensive selection of items and services, along with the convenience of price comparison, review assessment, and purchasing from the comfort of their residences. Notwithstanding the benefits of e-commerce, apprehensions about trust and the dependability of online transactions persistently affect customer behaviour. Trust, an essential factor influencing online purchase decisions, is influenced by elements such as website security, privacy policies, brand

reputation, and prior shopping experiences. In the absence of trust, customers may be reluctant to disclose personal and financial information, eventually discouraging them from finalising deals. Perceived trust in online buying encompasses several elements, including the honesty, competency, and compassion of online sellers. Integrity belongs to the honesty and transparency of sellers, competence refers to the capability of e-commerce platforms to fulfil product commitments, and kindness relates to the guarantee that merchants prioritise client interests. Trust is especially vital in a context where customers lack direct physical engagement with items or vendors. The ambiguity and perceived danger linked to online purchasing require a robust foundation of trust to guarantee a favourable shopping experience. In addition to trust, information-seeking behaviour is crucial in online purchasing decisions. In contrast to conventional shopping, where customers may physically examine things and obtain in-person assistance, online buyers depend on digital information sources, including product descriptions, reviews, ratings, and suggestions from other users. Information-seeking behaviour allows customers to reduce perceived risks by acquiring knowledge about product quality, vendor reliability, and competitive price. It

functions as a tool to bolster confidence in purchasing decisions, mitigating ambiguity and potential post-purchase remorse. Comprehending these characteristics is crucial for online merchants, as it offers insights into customer decision-making processes and enables firms to adopt methods that bolster trust and promote informed purchases. Digital platforms may cultivate trust by providing secure payment systems, clear return policies, genuine client testimonials, and tailored customer assistance. Moreover, enhancing the accessibility and reliability of information, including comprehensive product descriptions, third-party validations, and user-generated material, may empower customers and mitigate ambiguity in their purchase choices.In conclusion, perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour are two interconnected elements that profoundly impact online purchase behaviour. As digital commerce evolves, analysing these characteristics becomes more pertinent in creating consumer-focused online buying experiences. This study seeks to address the deficiency in current research by examining the influence of trust and information-seeking behaviour on e-commerce engagement, therefore providing actionable insights for firms to bolster customer confidence and increase online sales.

Chart: 1
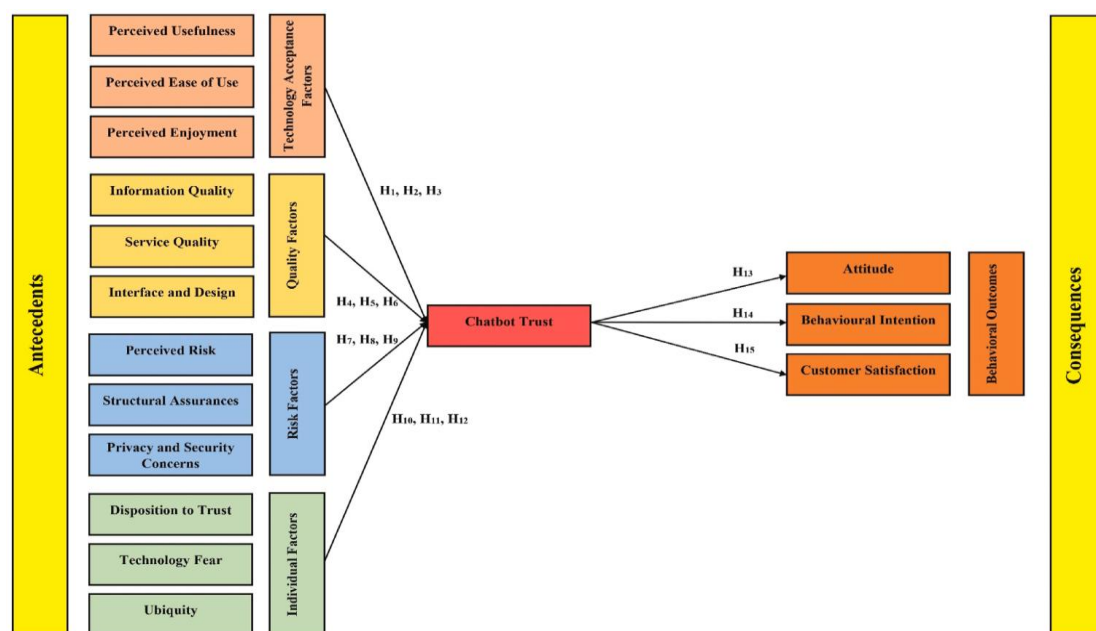
Research Background

The swift expansion of e-commerce has revolutionised customer interactions with firms and influenced purchase decisions. Online shopping has become a fundamental aspect of contemporary consumer culture, propelled by technology progress, enhanced internet accessibility, and changing customer tastes. Consumers increasingly depend on digital channels to investigate, assess, and acquire items, establishing online shopping as a predominant influence in the retail sector. Nonetheless, despite its prevalence, internet buying is affected by several factors, including perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour. Trust is essential in online purchases, since customers must provide sensitive personal and financial information. The lack of physical connection, product testing, and direct communication requires the establishment of perceived trust to guarantee a safe and satisfying buying experience. Trust affects consumers' readiness to interact with online retailers, hence influencing their purchasing intents and enduring connections with e-commerce platforms. Information-seeking behaviour is a vital precursor to online buying, since customers conduct thorough study prior to making purchasing decisions. Given the plethora of online information sources, including reviews, ratings, product descriptions, and social media endorsements, customers diligently pursue trustworthy and pertinent information to mitigate ambiguity and risk. The capacity to get and assess information bolsters clients' assurance in their purchasing choices and cultivates trust in online merchants. Prior research has emphasised the significance of perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour in shaping customer attitudes and purchase intentions. Nonetheless, differences in personal trust judgements, information-processing approaches, and levels of technology competence introduce challenges in comprehending their precise influence on online purchase behaviour. As the e-commerce environment evolves, further study is necessary to examine how these antecedents interact and affect customer behaviour across various market situations.

Chart :2
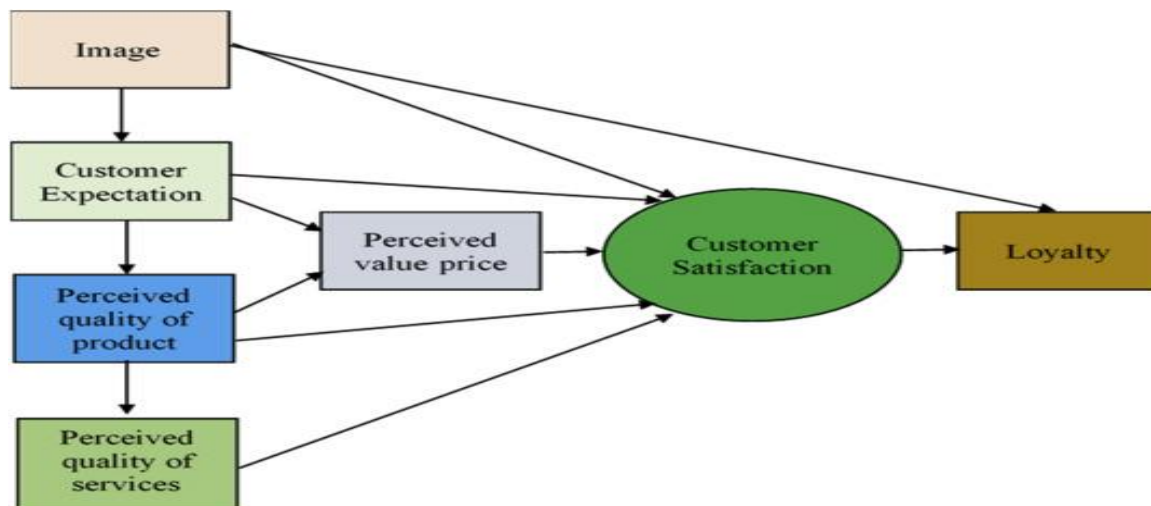
Role of Information-Seeking Behavior in Shaping Online Purchase Decisions

Consumers make their online buying decisions through information-seeking behavior because it helps remove uncertainty and improves the trust in their choices. People who purchase online have no access to inspect products in person which forces them to depend on digital information platforms. They collect comprehensive details about products including customer feedback as well as professional evaluations together with brand reputation before they buy. The procedure holds special importance when consumers buy high-involvement products

such as electronics, luxury items or healthcare products because these products face heightened risks. Products and vendors gain evaluations for quality while customers establish reliability and pricing by obtaining information until they decide on their purchases. Various informational sources shape the way customers gather information during their purchase process. Users reach purchasing decisions by relying primarily on search engines as well as e-commerce platforms and social media series of forums and personal verbal recommendations. Customer ratings along with evaluations hold great importance for decision making since they provide trustworthy feedback from previous consumers. Users prefer peer reviews above brand marketing information because they believe user-generated evaluations are naturally genuine. Social media has transformed the purchasing process through its brand advocate network which enables them to guide consumer choices using promotional content. Before buying consumers use professional assessments and platform comparison tools and blogs to check product merit and quality. Consumer information acquisition drives directly from personal profiles and noticeable characteristics of perceived risk and experience along with product intricacy levels. Experienced online consumers primarily consult minimal sources because of their site familiarity yet new internet shoppers need extensive information discovery before buying. Customers will dedicate additional time to information retrieval when they realize significant risks such as product dissatisfaction or fraud. The adoption of accurate product information combined with easily available customer service and genuine user testimonials helps build confidence in consumers. Online purchase decisions heavily depend on information-seeking behavior because it directly impacts both brand loyalty and purchase intent.

Moderating Effect of Information-Seeking Behavior on the Relationship between Trust and Online Shopping Behavior

Information-seeking behaviour significantly moderates the link between trust and online shopping behaviour, either enhancing or diminishing the influence of trust on purchasing decisions. Trust is a crucial element in online purchasing, as consumers must depend on digital channels without direct interaction with items or vendors. When customers possess substantial confidence in an e-commerce platform, they may necessitate less information prior to completing a buy. If trust is little, people undertake comprehensive information-seeking to diminish ambiguity and authenticate the seller's legitimacy. As a moderator, information-seeking behaviour might affect the conversion of trust into real purchase choices. For customers with a high aversion to risk, trust alone may be inadequate, prompting them to pursue further product information, customer testimonials, and third-party endorsements prior to making a purchase decision. In this instance, information-seeking acts as a reinforcement, assisting customers in affirming their trust and proceeding with a purchase. However, when confronted with inaccurate or bad information, trust may be undermined, resulting in increased customer hesitance to purchase. The degree of customer experience influences the moderating effect of information-seeking. Seasoned consumers acquainted with companies or platforms tend to depend more on trust and need less information, whereas novice purchasers do extensive information searches to mitigate uncertainty. Businesses may utilise this intelligence by providing accessible, trustworthy, and transparent information, including verified reviews, security certifications, and influencer endorsements. Information-seeking behaviour alters the intensity and trajectory of the trust-purchase connection, serving as a protective measure against ambiguity while affecting customer confidence and decision-making in online purchasing.

Research Gap

On-line purchasing research has produced extensive findings yet numerous essential aspects remain unexplained when studying how trust perceptions affect information-seeking choices leading to purchasing decisions. Various studies analyze trust as an essential factor for online purchasing yet fail to provide comprehensive understanding of factors that develop and sustain trust. Research on trust determinants should address the influence of social

influence along with online reviews and interactive user involvement in addition to website security and company reputation and privacy policies. Modern research approaches trust in broad terms without sufficient investigation of trust variations based on demographic factors or cultural settings and e-commerce platforms. Acceptance of online purchasing relies on information-seeking patterns but this relationship remains underresearched even though consumer decisions rely on such patterns extensively. Some users rely exclusively on content produced by other customers while other consumers place higher value on evaluations made by experts as well as brand-provided information. Identifying these distinctions proves fundamental because it enhances our ability to understand how information-seeking actions affect customer trust and purchasing decisions. Studies concerning online buying behavior primarily examined mature markets while leaving crucial gaps about how perceived trust and information-seeking actions work within emerging markets that maintain unique digital systems and consumer trust structures. People should study how technological advancements like e-commerce chatbots and recommendation systems impact trust development and information acquisition approaches because of their fast development. The complete comprehension of digital market customer behavior requires the correction of these limitations.

Significance of the Study

This study is important as it aims to further the comprehension of how perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour serve as precursors to online purchase behaviour. This research will offer significant insights for e-commerce enterprises, marketers, and politicians seeking to improve customer trust and decision-making processes by examining these elements in depth. Trust is a crucial component of online buying; by recognising essential trust-enhancing mechanisms, firms may adopt tactics to bolster consumer confidence, mitigate perceived dangers, and cultivate client loyalty. This study will enhance the current literature by identifying the factors influencing perceived trust beyond conventional security measures, highlighting the significance of

social impact, personalised communication, and interactive technology in the development of trust.

Comprehending information-seeking behaviour is essential, as it affects customers' capacity to make educated purchase choices. This study's findings will assist e-commerce platforms in refining their information distribution techniques, guaranteeing that consumers receive credible, transparent, and readily available information. This research will have practical consequences for the advancement of AI-driven recommendation systems, user-generated content methods, and credibility evaluation frameworks to improve online purchasing experiences. This study will analyse the moderating impacts of demographic and cultural characteristics to elucidate how trust and information-seeking behaviour change among various customer categories, enabling organisations to customise their strategies accordingly. This research will have practical applications for policymakers and consumer protection organisations, in addition to its scholarly contributions. Comprehending the mechanics of trust establishment and information processing can guide regulatory measures designed to safeguard online customers from fraudulent activities and disinformation. This study will provide pertinent and timely insights on the evolving dynamics of online buying behaviour, enabling both firms and consumers to navigate the e-commerce ecosystem successfully and safely.

Articulation of the Issue

The swift proliferation of e-commerce has altered consumer purchasing patterns, establishing online shopping as a predominant retail avenue globally. Nonetheless, despite the ease and accessibility provided by online platforms, customer trust continues to be a pivotal component affecting purchase decisions. Perceived trust, encompassing views regarding the trustworthiness, security, and legitimacy of online providers, significantly influences customers' decisions to engage in online transactions. Concerns over trust, including apprehensions about fraud, data privacy violations, and untrustworthy vendors, sometimes dissuade customers from engaging in online transactions. Trust is a vital element in mitigating risk in online

buying; hence, comprehending its influence on consumer behaviour is important for e-commerce enterprises seeking to establish enduring client connections. Concurrently, information-seeking behaviour is a crucial factor influencing online purchase behaviour. Consumers often seek information on items, brands, and sellers prior to making purchasing decisions. This behaviour is shaped by factors like product complexity, customer engagement, and perceived hazards related to online shopping. The presence of online reviews, ratings, and social media endorsements profoundly influences consumers' trust and purchasing intent. Nonetheless, disparities in consumers' capacity to evaluate and comprehend information, together with the possibility of disinformation or fraudulent reviews, further complicate the online buying decision-making process. The relationship between perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour in influencing online purchase behaviour necessitates more investigation. Although current studies have analysed these elements in isolation, there is a paucity of study about their interactions and impact on customer decision-making in the e-commerce context. Moreover, variations in consumer demographics, digital literacy, and cultural settings may influence these correlations, requiring additional empirical research. Considering the evolving landscape of online purchasing and the growing dependence on digital transactions, comprehending the precursors of consumer behaviour is essential for both scholarly inquiry and practical implementation. This study intends to address this gap by investigating the influence of perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour as primary precursors of online shopping behaviour, providing essential insights for e-commerce platforms, marketers, and policymakers aiming to bolster consumer confidence in digital transactions.

Objectives:
1. To analyze the impact of perceived trust on online shopping behavior.
2. To examine the role of information-seeking behavior in shaping online purchase decisions.
3. To explore the moderating effect of information-seeking behavior on the relationship between trust and online shopping behavior.
4. To provide managerial implications for e-commerce platforms to enhance consumer trust and facilitate informed decision-making.

Methodology

This study utilizes a quantitative research methodology to investigate the impact of perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour on online purchase behaviour. The target group will consist of persons who have engaged in online purchases during the last six months, since they are more likely to offer pertinent insights about their buying behaviour. The research will utilise a stratified random sample method to guarantee variety for age, gender, educational attainment, and frequency of internet buying. The study instrument will be a meticulously designed questionnaire that includes validated measures to assess perceived trust, information-seeking behaviour, and online buying behaviour. Trust perception will be evaluated by metrics concerning security, privacy, and vendor reliability. The assessment of information-seeking behaviour will be based on the frequency and sources of information utilized by customers prior to making a purchase. Online buying behaviour will be analysed using factors like purchase frequency, average expenditure, and product categories. The data analysis will encompass both descriptive and inferential statistics. Ethical issues, such as informed permission and data confidentiality, will be rigorously maintained throughout the study procedure. This study's findings will offer significant insights into how perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour influence online purchase behaviour, assisting firms in formulating successful strategies to bolster customer confidence and involvement in e-commerce.

Analysis, findings and Results

Consumers exhibit both passive and active information-seeking behaviours prior to making online purchases. Passive information-seeking entails perusing product suggestions and advertising, whereas active searching encompasses performing thorough research, examining reviews, and validating vendor credentials. The degree of

information-seeking is influenced by product type, customer personality, previous online purchasing experiences, and perceived risk. High-involvement products, such electronics or luxury goods, generally need comprehensive study, whereas low-involvement products, such as groceries, sometimes entail minimum information-gathering. The relationship between perceived trust and information-seeking behaviour influences the probability of engaging in online buying. A customer who regards an e-commerce platform as highly trustworthy may necessitate less information-seeking prior to making a purchase, whereas

individuals with diminished trust levels may allocate more time to acquiring product and seller-related information. This interaction indicates that information-seeking behaviour may influence the connection between trust and online purchase behaviour. Conversely, when confidence is robust, limited information-seeking may enough to complete a transaction. 200 sample respondents are taken using simple random sampling technique. It is analyzed by comparing the means of factors of satisfaction (ANOVA and Z Test).The result is given below.

Table 1: Difference in factors of satisfaction according to the age- ONE WAY ANOVA

Factors	F	Sig.
Website Security & Privacy	9.346	0.000*
Brand Reputation & Vendor Credibility	9.231	0.000*
Customer Reviews & Ratings	10.592	0.000*
Transparency & Return Policies	2.357	0.079
Social Proof & Influencer Endorsements	4.269	0.009*
Consumer Knowledge & Experience	2.951	0.061
Social Media & Word of Mouth	8.902	0.000*
Source Credibility	11.041	0.000*
Perceived trust	5.933	0.002*

* Significant at 1%; ** Significant at 5%

One-Way ANOVA tests whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of different groups for each factor influencing online shopping behavior. Below is an interpretation of the results:

1. *Website Security & Privacy (F = 9.346, Sig. = 0.000)**
- Since the significance value (p-value) is less than 0.05, website security and privacy have a significant influence on online shopping behavior. Consumers strongly consider security measures when making purchases.
2. *Brand Reputation & Vendor Credibility (F = 9.231, Sig. = 0.000)**
- The low p-value (0.000) indicates a significant effect of brand reputation and vendor credibility on consumer trust and purchase decisions. Consumers prefer well-established and credible vendors.
3. *Customer Reviews & Ratings (F = 10.592, Sig. = 0.000)**

a. A high F-value and a significant p-value suggest that customer reviews and ratings strongly impact online shopping behavior. Positive reviews enhance trust, while negative reviews deter purchases.
4. Transparency & Return Policies (F = 2.357, Sig. = 0.079)
a. The p-value (0.079) is greater than 0.05, indicating that transparency and return policies do not significantly influence online shopping behavior in this analysis. While important, they may not be the primary deciding factor.
5. *Social Proof & Influencer Endorsements (F = 4.269, Sig. = 0.009)**
a. Since the p-value (0.009) is less than 0.05, social proof and influencer endorsements significantly impact online shopping behavior. Consumers rely on peer influence and endorsements when making purchasing decisions.
6. Consumer Knowledge & Experience (F = 2.951, Sig. = 0.061)

a. The p-value (0.061) is slightly above 0.05, suggesting that consumer knowledge and experience do not have a statistically significant effect on online shopping behavior in this case. Experienced shoppers may rely on other factors.

7. *Social Media & Word of Mouth (F = 8.902, Sig. = 0.000)**

a. With a low p-value (0.000), social media and word-of-mouth recommendations have a strong significant influence on online shopping behavior. Consumers trust peer recommendations on social platforms.

8. *Source Credibility (F = 11.041, Sig. = 0.000)**

a. This factor has the highest F-value (11.041), indicating a very strong and significant effect on consumer behavior. Reliable sources (official websites, expert reviews) greatly influence purchasing decisions.

9. *Perceived Trust (F = 5.933, Sig. = 0.002)**

a. The significant p-value (0.002) confirms that perceived trust plays a crucial role in online shopping. Higher trust leads to higher purchase intention.

Conclusion:

- Factors with significant influence ($p < 0.05$) include Website Security & Privacy, Brand Reputation & Vendor Credibility, Customer Reviews & Ratings, Social Proof & Influencer Endorsements, Social Media & Word of Mouth, Source Credibility, and Perceived Trust.

- Transparency & Return Policies and Consumer Knowledge & Experience do not show a statistically significant impact in this analysis.

- Source Credibility has the strongest effect, followed by Customer Reviews & Ratings and Website Security & Privacy.

Table 2: Difference in factors of satisfaction according to the gender

Factors	t	Sig.
Website Security & Privacy	-0.182	0.789
Brand Reputation & Vendor Credibility	0.731	0.368
Customer Reviews & Ratings	0.864	0.361
Transparency & Return Policies	1.810	0.031
Social Proof & Influencer Endorsements	1.597	0.119
Consumer Knowledge & Experience	0.921	0.321
Social Media & Word of Mouth	1.176	0.254
Source Credibility	-2.054	0.133
Perceived trust	-1.064	0.138

** Significant at 5%

The only statistically significant factor ($p < 0.05$) is Transparency & Return Policies (p = 0.031). Other factors, including Website Security, Brand Reputation, Customer Reviews, Social Proof, Social Media Influence, Source Credibility, and Perceived Trust, do not show a significant difference. This suggests that clear return policies and transparency in product information are the most distinguishing factors for consumer decisions in this analysis.

Discussion

Website Security & Privacy

The security and privacy of websites are essential in establishing customer confidence in online buying. Secure websites employ encryption technology such as SSL certificates to safeguard user data. Privacy rules delineating data gathering and utilisation procedures instill confidence in customers regarding the security of their personal information. Reliable payment channels, such PayPal or authenticated credit card transactions, augment confidence. Consumers generally eschew platforms with inadequate security measures owing to concerns around fraud or identity theft. Websites exhibiting security badges and trust seals indicate reliability. An effective security framework safeguards customers and enhances their confidence in online transactions.

Brand Reputation & Vendor Credibility

The reputation of a brand and the integrity of a seller profoundly affect customer trust in online buying. Brands with a proven track record of favourable client experiences are more likely to garner confidence. Vendor reputation is established by consistent product quality, dependable customer service, and ethical business practices. Consumers depend on brand recognition and prior experiences to evaluate trustworthiness. Adverse publicity, product withdrawals, or deceptive practices can undermine credibility and dissuade prospective purchasers. Organisations that prioritise reputation management, interact honestly with customers, and resolve complaints efficiently are likely to sustain more consumer loyalty and elevated buy intentions in the competitive e-commerce sector.

Customer Reviews & Ratings

Customer reviews and ratings significantly influence online purchase behaviour. Prospective purchasers frequently depend on consumer-generated evaluations to evaluate product quality, dependability, and efficacy. Elevated ratings and favorable reviews enhance buyer trust, whilst adverse reviews may dissuade purchases. Verified purchase reviews are deemed more credible than anonymous evaluations. Consumers assess the credibility of reviews by examining comprehensive feedback and vendor answers. Platforms such as Amazon and eBay emphasize user ratings to improve transparency. Companies that proactively solicit consumer feedback and resolve issues can enhance their brand reputation and increase conversion rates.

Transparency & Return Policies

Transparency and explicit return procedures foster consumer trust and happiness in online retail. Comprehensive product descriptions, superior visuals, and precise pricing diminish doubt and bolster purchasing trust. Return rules that provide seamless swaps or refunds motivate indecisive consumers to finalise transactions. Ambiguous terminology, concealed charges, or stringent return policies engender scepticism and diminish confidence. A significant number of buyers examine return policies prior to making purchases, particularly for high-value items. Companies providing complimentary returns or prolonged warranties exhibit assurance in their products and cultivate enduring customer connections. A transparent strategy enhances credibility, client retention, and brand loyalty in e-commerce.

Social Proof & Influencer Endorsements

Social proof and influencer endorsements profoundly affect customer decision-making in online retail. Individuals regard products endorsed by others as more credible. Testimonials, celebrity endorsements, and user-generated material augment legitimacy. Influencers possessing substantial followings and specialized knowledge influence customer choices through their suggestions and evaluations. Authenticity is paramount—authentic influencer endorsements are more compelling than contrived advertisements. Brands utilising social proof via viral campaigns, client testimonials, and influencer collaborations may enhance engagement and conversions. Consumers often place faith in peer evaluations and influencer endorsements, rendering them crucial elements for e-commerce success.

Consumer Knowledge & Experience

Consumer knowledge and previous online purchasing experiences influence decision-making behaviour. Seasoned customers depend on their knowledge of e-commerce platforms, product categories, and reputable brands to expedite purchase decisions. Inexperienced consumers do thorough information searches and comparisons to mitigate uncertainty. Informed customers can discern deceptive marketing, assess product features, and recognize trustworthy providers. Favourable prior experiences enhance confidence and elevate the probability of repeat purchases, whilst adverse events engender distrust. Retailers who inform consumers via comprehensive product descriptions, tutorials, and attentive customer assistance effectively address knowledge gaps, enhancing satisfaction and buy intent.

Social Media & Word of Mouth

Social media and peer recommendations significantly impact internet purchasing behaviour. Consumers frequently solicit recommendations

from acquaintances, relatives, and digital forums prior to making a purchase. Viral trends, unboxing videos, and real-time testimonies enhance customer confidence. Genuine client experiences disseminated on social media serve as digital word-of-mouth, bolstering product trustworthiness. Negative feedback disseminates rapidly, affecting brand reputation. Companies that proactively oversee their social media engagement and address consumer issues efficiently might utilise word-of-mouth marketing for expansion.

Source Credibility

The trustworthiness of a source influences the level of confidence people assign to online information prior to making purchase decisions. Consumers evaluate the credibility of e-commerce websites, review platforms, and third-party sources while searching for product information. Elements such as proficiency, impartiality, and clarity affect perceived credibility. Official brand websites, esteemed e-commerce platforms, and expert evaluations hold greater significance than anonymous or biassed sources. Consumers are wary of deceptive marketing, fraudulent reviews, and inauthentic sponsored material. Reputable sources offer genuine, impartial, and validated information, diminishing ambiguity and enhancing confidence in online transactions. Reliable sources profoundly influence customer perceptions and purchasing behaviours.

Perceived Trust

Perceived trust is a crucial determinant affecting online purchasing behaviour. It pertains to consumers' trust in a brand, website, or vendor to provide excellent products and services as guaranteed. Trust is established by favourable client experiences, secure transactions, transparent policies, and dependable customer assistance. Elements such as website security, social validation, and vendor reliability facilitate the establishment of trust. A deficiency in trust results in cart abandonment and hesitance to disclose personal information. Organisations that cultivate robust trust indicators—such as authenticated reviews, accreditations, and prompt communication—bolster consumer allegiance. A heightened sense of trust

diminishes perceived risk and enhances purchasing intention.

Conclusion

In a progressively digitized environment, comprehending the determinants of customer participation in online buying is essential. This study examined the impact of perceived trust and information-seeking conduct on online buying behaviour, elucidating essential psychological and behavioural determinants of e-commerce engagement. The results highlight that trust is essential in influencing customer confidence, mitigating perceived risks, and enhancing purchasing intentions. When customers consider an online platform as secure, dependable, and transparent, they are more inclined to do transactions, underscoring the importance of trust-building methods such as secure payment gateways, customer reviews, and brand reputation. Moreover, information-seeking behaviour surfaced as a pivotal element affecting online purchase choices. Consumers diligently seek information to reduce uncertainty, compare items, and affirm their decisions before to making a purchase. This underscores the significance of user-generated information, comprehensive product descriptions, and social validation in shaping buyer confidence. The relationship between trust and information-seeking indicates that trust diminishes the necessity for comprehensive knowledge acquisition, but well-informed consumers are more inclined to cultivate confidence in online sellers. This study's consequences pertain to e-commerce enterprises, governments, and digital marketers. By promoting transparency, augmenting security protocols, and improving information accessibility, enterprises may establish a more trust-centric online buying atmosphere. Future study may investigate more moderating variables, including cultural impacts, generational disparities, and the impact of artificial intelligence in determining outcomes.

Reference

10. Almousa, M. (2011), Perceived risk in apparel online shopping: A multi dimensional perspective, Canadian Social Science, 7(2), 23-31.

11. Aren, S., Güzel, M., Kabadayi, E., Alpkan, L. (2013), Factors affecting repurchase intention to shop at the same website. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 99(6), 536-544.

12. Beldad, A., de Jong, M., Steehouder, M. (2010), How shall I trust the faceless and the intangible? A literature review on the antecedents of online trust. Computers in Human Behavior, 26, 857-869.

13. Bilgihan, A. (2016), Gen Y customer loyalty in online shopping: An integrated model of trust, user experience and branding. Computers in Human Behavior, 61, 103-113.

14. Cetinã, I., Munthiu, M.C., Rãdulescu, V. (2012), Psychological and social factors that influence online consumer behaviour. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 62, 184-188.

15. Chang, H.H., Wang, H.W. (2011), The moderating effect of customer perceived value on online shopping behavior. Online Information Review, 35, 333-359.

16. Chaturvedi, S., Gupta, S., & Hada, D. S. (2016). Perceived Risk, Trust and Information Seeking Behavior as Antecedents of Online Apparel Buying Behavior in India: An Exploratory Study in Context of Rajasthan. International Review of Management and Marketing, 6(4), 935–943

17. Dai, B., Forsythe, S., Kwon, W.S. (2014), The impact of online shopping on risk perceptions and online purchase intentions: Does product category matters? Journal of Electronic Commerce Research, 15(1), 13-24.

18. Deshmukh, G.K., Joseph, S. (2016), Online shopping in India: An enquiry of consumers world. IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 18(1), 28-33.

19. El-Ansary, O. (2013), Factors affecting Egyptian consumers' intentions for accepting online shopping. The Journal of American Academy of Business, 19(1), 191-201.

20. Ellison, N.B., Steinfield, C., Lampe, C. (2007), The benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, 12, 1143-1168.

21. Fathima, F.F. (2015), A study on the growing popularity and purchase of fashion product from online stores in India. International Journal of Research in Engineering and Technology, 4(8), 362-368.

22. Gupta, A. S., & Mukherjee, J. (2025). Framework for adoption of generative AI for information search of retail products and services. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *53*(2), 165-181.

23. Hassan, A.M., Kunz, M.B., Pearson, A.W., Mohamed, F.A. (2006), Conceptualization and measurement of perceived risk in online shopping. The Marketing Management Journal, 16(1), 138-147.

24. Hennig-Thurau, T., Malthouse, E.C., Friege, C., Gensler, S., Lobschat, L. (2010), The impact of new media on customer relationships. Journal of Service Research, 13, 311-330.

25. Ipshita, B., Reetika, G. (2015), Importance of website's attributes in apparel online shopping. International Journal of Commerce, Business and Management, 4(4), 1257-1260.

26. Jihyun, K., Park, J. (2005), A consumer shopping channel extension model: Attitude shift toward the online store. Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, 9(1), 106-121.

27. Jones, C., Kim, S. (2010), Influences of retail brand trust, off-line patronage, clothing involvement and website quality on online apparel shopping intention. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 34(6), 627-637.

28. Ju-Young, M.K., Kim, K.P.J. (2015), F-commerce platform for apparel online social shopping: Testing a women's 3M model. International Journal of Information Management, 35(6), 691-701.

29. Kala, S., Sharma, R.K. (2015), Behavior of customers towards online shopping in India. International Journal of Core Engineering and Management, 2(4), 127-131.

30. Kietzmann, J.H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I.P., Silvestre, B.S. (2011), Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. Business Horizons, 54, 241-251.

31. Kim, H.W., Xu, Y., Gupta, S. (2012), Which is more important in Internet shopping, perceived price or trust? Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, 11(3), 241-252.

32. Malik, A., Islam, T., Mahmood, K., & Arshad, A. (2024). Seeking information about Covid-19 vaccine on social media: a moderated mediated model of antecedents and behavioral outcomes. *Library Hi Tech*.