

An Investigation into Antecedents of Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty with Reference to Online Purchasing Behavior

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Abstract

Customer satisfaction and loyalty in the context of online purchasing behavior are influenced by various antecedents, which encompass a wide array of factors ranging from website usability to post-purchase services. Understanding these antecedents is crucial for businesses aiming to thrive in the competitive landscape of e-commerce. The primary antecedents of customer satisfaction in online shopping are website usability. Factors such as intuitive interface design, clear navigation menus, and efficient search functionalities contribute to a positive user experience, leading to higher levels of satisfaction. The study concluded that action and loyalty in online purchasing behavior are influenced by a myriad of antecedents, including website usability, product information, security, and customer service quality, delivery services, perceived value, trust, personalized experiences, and loyalty programs. By understanding and addressing these antecedents effectively, businesses can enhance the overall shopping experience, cultivate loyalty, and drive sustainable growth in the dynamic landscape of e-commerce.

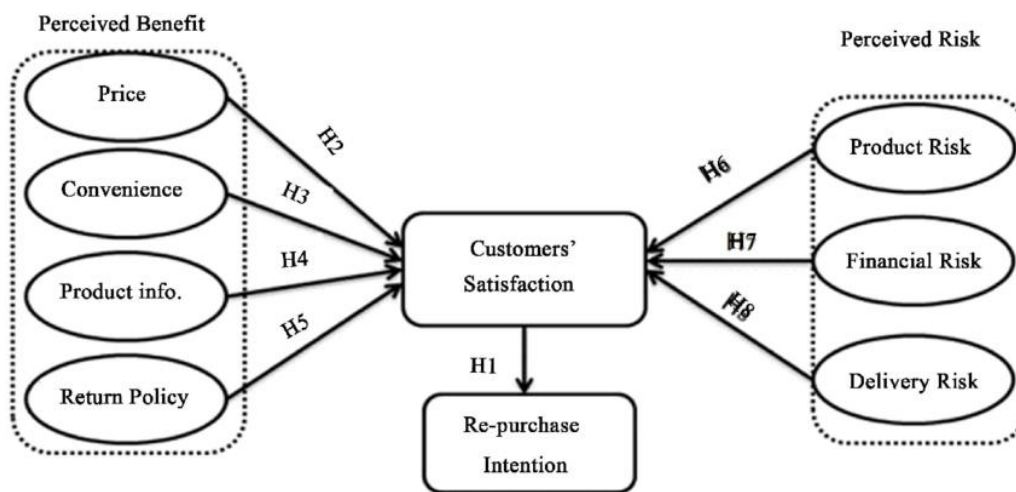
Keywords: Website usability, product information, security, and customer service quality, delivery services, perceived value, trust, personalized experiences, and loyalty programs.

Introduction

Increasing numbers of marketers are experimenting with online product marketing at present. By utilizing online platforms, consumers will have the ability to engage in transactions and communicate with marketers without being limited by geographical barriers or time constraints. The website is presently operating as a round-the-clock retail platform [11]. To enable customers to search, view, and select products in accordance with their desires and necessities. The convenience brought about by these technological advancements would alter consumers' purchasing patterns. It is unnecessary for marketers to engage in in-person meetings with consumers. Consumers have the capability to utilize the site's features for their own benefit. The online system is regarded as more convenient for customers because they can select their own products, payment methods, and delivery method, among other options. Online merchants would retain devoted consumers who are content [8]. Therefore, further research is required into the factors that influence the satisfaction of online consumers. Satisfaction is the degree of emotion one experiences subsequent to assessing the experience of utilizing or ingesting a specific product. Customer contentment can be attained in the digital realm through the enhancement of website performance [1]. Numerous facets of an online website necessitate enhancement in order to satisfy customers, whose choices are directly impacted by their purchasing decisions. Customer contentment will result in intentions to repurchase, reluctance to transfer brands, and willingness to engage in WOM.

Figure: 01

Conceptual model for customers' satisfaction to re-purchase intention



Source: <https://www.google.com/url>

Review Literature

Chen and Chang (2003), [4] discussed that online consumers exhibit a low threshold. Customers who make purchases via the internet dislike waiting. An online retailer may implement strategies to optimize site navigation for customers, such as increasing the visitor quota to accommodate a certain volume of visitors once the store has been thoroughly explored. A website's ability to promptly address consumer inquiries and concerns will increase its appeal to potential visitors. Lim and Dubinsky (2004), [10] stated that a critical aspect to bear in mind when engaging in online purchasing is the payment system. Consumers select the most efficient payment method at the time of the transaction. When a prospective customer is financially capable of purchasing a product from an online store but is unable to locate an appropriate payment system, that customer will not make the purchase. For instance, in the case where an online retailer exclusively accepts credit card payments, individuals lacking credit cards will be unable to make purchases from the store, despite their desire to do so and

possessing sufficient currency to do so. An increased number of payment systems offered by e-commerce platforms grants customers a greater selection of options from which to select the one that best meets their specific circumstances. Providing consumers with the option to select their preferred mode of payment will increase their satisfaction. The utilization of convenience payment mechanisms positively impacts customer satisfaction. Shankar et al. (2003) [15] proposed that the level of consumer contentment with a particular website is influenced by the quality of its customer service. In direct proportion to the caliber of service provided, customer satisfaction will increase. On occasion, customers require supplementary services and/or information from the online retailer. Therefore, in order to address inquiries or lodge complaints regarding the products or the online store, retailers typically furnish contact information for customers. Customer satisfaction will be positively impacted by excellent customer service.

Theoretical framework

E-service quality pertains to the evaluation of a company's online services in terms of their perceived excellence. This evaluation includes various aspects, including the usability of the website, its reliability, its responsiveness, and its security. The perception of superior quality in electronic services by consumers serves to bolster their confidence in the online platform. Trust is an essential element of every business relationship, particularly in the digital domain where in-person exchanges are not possible. The establishment of trust in an online business is predicated on its dependability, honesty, and protection against security breaches; this instills consumers with confidence and mitigates the perception of potential danger. The degree of customer satisfaction is critical in ascertaining the longevity and success of online enterprises. It signifies the degree to which the products or services provided meet or surpass the expectations of the consumers [12]. Ultimately, customer loyalty is the result of positive word-of-mouth recommendations, recurrent business, and high levels of customer satisfaction. Customer loyalty, conversely, signifies the dedication of patrons to maintain their purchases from a specific enterprise in the face of rival offerings or viable substitutes. These factors are interconnected in a cyclical and self-reinforcing fashion [3]. A high level of e-service quality fosters confidence, which subsequently impacts customer satisfaction in a positive way [7]. Customer loyalty is significantly influenced by the likelihood that they will make additional purchases and recommend the company to others; thus, their contentment with the service contributes to its sustained prosperity [1]. On the contrary, deficiencies in the quality of electronic services, customer confidence, or contentment may result in discontentment, a decline in trust, and ultimately, a severance of customer allegiance. In the competitive landscape of e-commerce, businesses must therefore prioritize investments in e-service quality, establish customer confidence through trustworthy and transparent operations, and endeavour ceaselessly to surpass customer expectations in order to cultivate loyalty and gratification [4].

The Antecedents of loyalty and customer satisfaction

The antecedents of online customer satisfaction and purchasing behavior are multifaceted and crucial for understanding and predicting consumer actions in the digital marketplace. Firstly, website usability and functionality play a significant role [6]. A website that is easy to navigate, offers clear product information, and facilitates smooth transactions enhances the overall shopping experience, thereby positively influencing customer satisfaction and purchase intention. Secondly, product quality and variety are key determinants of online customer satisfaction. Consumers expect to find high-quality products that meet their needs and preferences when shopping online [8]. Moreover, a diverse range of offerings increases the likelihood of satisfying different customer segments, catering to varying tastes and preferences. Thirdly, service quality, including factors such as prompt customer support, reliable shipping, and hassle-free returns, greatly impacts online customer satisfaction. Effective post-purchase services contribute to building trust and loyalty among customers, encouraging repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth recommendations [11]. Additionally, price competitiveness and perceived value also influence online customer satisfaction and purchasing behavior. Consumers assess whether the price of a product justifies its perceived value, considering factors such as quality, brand reputation, and the overall shopping experience. Discounts, promotions, and incentives can further enhance satisfaction and stimulate purchasing behavior [14]. Trust and security in online transactions are critical antecedents of customer satisfaction and purchasing behavior. Establishing trust through secure payment gateways, encryption technologies, and transparent privacy policies fosters confidence and encourages continued patronage.

Social influences, such as online reviews, recommendations from friends or influencers, and social media engagement, can significantly impact online customer satisfaction and purchasing behavior. Positive reviews and endorsements can reinforce trust and credibility, while negative feedback can deter potential customers and undermine satisfaction. Overall, understanding the various antecedents of online customer satisfaction and purchasing behavior is essential for businesses to tailor their strategies effectively, enhance the customer experience.

Research problem

In the realm of online purchasing behavior, achieving and maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty are paramount goals for businesses [6]. However, the dynamic nature of the digital marketplace presents several challenges and complexities. Businesses must identify these elements and their interrelationships in order to formulate strategies that effectively connect with their intended audience and cultivate enduring relationships [1]. Moreover, businesses are consistently confronted with the ongoing challenge of adapting and innovating in order to satisfy the shifting demands of online consumers, whose preferences and expectations further evolve. To confront these obstacles, a thorough comprehension of the fundamental factors that influence consumer loyalty and contentment in the context of online purchasing is necessary. By elucidating these interrelationships, the study seeks to provide insights into the complex dynamics of online purchasing behavior and offer practical recommendations for businesses to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty effectively.

Research objectives

To identify the key factors that influences customer satisfaction and loyalty in the context of online purchasing behavior. This entails conducting a thorough analysis of various dimensions, including website usability, product information, security, and customer service quality, delivery services, perceived value, trust, personalized experiences, and loyalty programs and to explore the interrelationships between these factors and their impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. This involves analyzing how different factors interact and influence each other, as well as their collective effect on overall customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Design/methodology/approach

Previous research that posits that devoted consumers represent a competitive advantage for companies was cited. The variation in customer loyalty behaviors and attitudes has been observed by multiple authors, who have also emphasized that discrepancies regarding customer loyalty levels have an impact on the profitability outcomes of a business.

Predicated on hypotheses

A platform for the marketing process online, the Internet will decrease the expenses associated with seeking for information was used for the study. The quality of the website's information is determined by the content available on the site, the functionality of the website, the variety of products offered, and the pricing structure. Consumers can utilize the information to inform their purchasing decisions. The greater the amount of information accessible, the more informed consumers will be which will result in increased levels of online satisfaction.

Analysis and Presentation

Age plays a significant role in shaping the level of satisfaction with online purchasing behavior, with distinct impacts observed across different age demographics. Younger consumers, such as Millennials and Generation Z, who have grown up in the digital age, often exhibit higher levels of comfort and familiarity with online shopping platforms. They tend to value convenience, variety, and customization, and as a result, are generally more satisfied with their online purchasing experiences. On the other hand, older generations, such as Baby Boomers and Generation X, may have varying levels of comfort and experience with online shopping. While some older consumers have embraced e-commerce and enjoy the convenience it offers, others may express apprehension or skepticism due to concerns about security, trust, or technological complexity. Consequently, their satisfaction levels with online purchasing behavior may be more nuanced and influenced by

factors such as user-friendly interfaces, clear product information, and reliable customer support. Moreover, age-related preferences and priorities can impact satisfaction with specific aspects of online shopping. For instance, younger consumers may prioritize fast shipping, seamless mobile experiences, and social media integration, while older consumers may value personalized assistance, transparent pricing, and trustworthy reviews.

Table 1
Age and level of satisfaction about online purchasing behavior

Age group	Level of satisfaction			Total
	Less	Moderate	High	
Young	24	23	16	63
	38.1%	36.5%	25.4%	100.0%
Middle	12	24	11	47
	25.5%	51.1%	23.4%	100.0%
Old	10	21	9	40
	25.0%	52.5%	22.5%	100.0%
Total	46	68	36	150
	30.7%	45.3%	24.0%	100.0%

The above table indicates that the most of the respondents from Young age group are less satisfied about the online purchasing. 38.1% of the young age group, 51.1% of the middle age group and 52.5 % of the old age group are moderately satisfied. Overall, businesses aiming to optimize online customer satisfaction should recognize the diverse needs and preferences of different age groups and tailor their e-commerce strategies accordingly. By understanding the unique challenges and preferences of each demographic segment, businesses can enhance the overall online shopping experience, cultivate loyalty, and drive sustainable growth in the digital marketplace.

Table 2
Chi-square test

Test	Chi-Square	df	CC	Sig.
Result	8.112	4	0.128	0.063

The satisfaction towards the online purchasing behavior of the respondents by their annual income shows that there is no significant relationship. The Chi-Square value (8.112) and CC value (0.128) are insignificant. Hence, the framed null hypothesis is accepted. Businesses seeking to optimize online customer satisfaction should recognize the nuanced ways in which gender influences shopping behaviors and preferences. By understanding and addressing the distinct needs and expectations of male and female shoppers, businesses can enhance the overall shopping experience, foster loyalty, and drive sustainable growth in the competitive landscape of e-commerce. Customer loyalty in online purchasing behavior is profound and multifaceted. Service quality encompasses various dimensions, including website functionality, ease of navigation, responsiveness of customer support, reliability of delivery, and post-purchase assistance. When online businesses prioritize and maintain high service quality standards across these dimensions, it fosters trust, satisfaction, and loyalty among customers.

Gender

Gender can have a notable impact on the level of satisfaction regarding online purchasing behavior, influencing preferences, perceptions, and priorities in the digital shopping experience. Research suggests that men and women often exhibit distinct patterns in their online shopping behaviors and satisfaction levels. Studies have shown that men tend to prioritize efficiency,

functionality, and product specifications when making online purchases. They may value clear product descriptions, streamlined checkout processes, and convenient delivery options. As a result, their satisfaction with online purchasing behavior may be influenced by factors such as website usability, speed of transaction, and the availability of technical features.

Table 3
Difference in the opinion based on the Gender

Factors	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Test	Result
Product variety	Male	86	78.99	Mann-Whitney U	6793.000
	Female	64	70.10	Z	-2.754
	Total	150		Sig.	0.003**
Visual appeal	Male	86	77.48	Mann-Whitney U	8971.000
	Female	64	72.84	Z	-0.731
	Total	150		Sig.	0.525
Personalized recommendations	Male	86	78.64	Mann-Whitney U	7895.000
	Female	64	71.28	Z	-3.069
	Total	150		Sig.	0.002**
User-generated reviews	Male	86	79.24	Mann-Whitney U	9254.000
	Female	64	70.47	Z	-0.261
	Total	150		Sig.	0.781
Trust and security	Male	86	74.98	Mann-Whitney U	7895.000
	Female	64	76.20	Z	-3.110
	Total	150		Sig.	0.001**
Customer service quality	Male	86	71.56	Mann-Whitney U	8973.000
	Female	64	80.80	Z	-0.850
	Total	150		Sig.	0.342
Responsive customer support channels	Male	86	80.11	Mann-Whitney U	9941.000
	Female	64	79.21	Z	-3.176
	Total	150		Sig.	0.001**

Women may prioritize aspects such as product variety, visual appeal, and customer service quality when shopping online. They may seek out personalized recommendations, user-generated reviews, and responsive customer support channels to guide their purchasing decisions. Consequently, their satisfaction with online shopping experiences may be more closely tied to factors such as product selection, aesthetic presentation, and the overall shopping atmosphere. The result from the Mann-Whitney U test shows that the Z score for Product variety (-2.745), Personalized recommendations (-3.069), Trust and security (-3.110) and Responsive customer support channels (-3.176) are less than the critical value of -1.96. Hence the framed null hypothesis for these factors is rejected. Gender differences in shopping motivations and preferences can impact satisfaction with specific product categories or shopping contexts. Women may express higher satisfaction with online fashion retailers that offer extensive size ranges, styling tips, and inclusive representation, while men may prioritize convenience and efficiency when purchasing electronics or gadgets online.

Discussion

The availability and presentation of product information are essential antecedents of customer satisfaction in online purchasing behavior. Customers rely on detailed product descriptions, images, and reviews to make informed purchase decisions. Online retailers that provide comprehensive and accurate product information empower customers to evaluate their options effectively, resulting in higher satisfaction levels. Additionally, the reliability and security of online transactions significantly impact customer satisfaction and trust. Customers expect secure payment gateways, encrypted connections, and transparent privacy policies to safeguard their personal and financial information [1]. Ensuring the security of online transactions instills confidence in customers and mitigates concerns about potential risks, thereby enhancing satisfaction and loyalty. Another critical antecedent of customer satisfaction in online shopping is customer service quality. Prompt and responsive customer support channels, such as live chat, email, or phone assistance, play a vital role in addressing customer inquiries, resolving issues, and providing assistance throughout the purchasing process [7]. Positive interactions with customer support representatives contribute to overall satisfaction and build trust in the brand. Furthermore, the efficiency and reliability of delivery services influence customer satisfaction in online purchasing behavior. Timely delivery, accurate order fulfillment, and proactive communication regarding shipping status contribute to a positive post-purchase experience. Customers value reliable delivery services that meet their expectations and provide a seamless end-to-end shopping journey. In addition to customer satisfaction, the antecedents of customer loyalty in online shopping are equally important for businesses. Building customer loyalty requires fostering long-term relationships and encouraging repeat purchases. One key antecedent of customer loyalty is perceived value. Customers evaluate the overall value proposition offered by an online retailer, considering factors such as product quality, pricing, and service excellence. Online retailers that consistently deliver high value to customers are more likely to earn their loyalty over time [12]. Moreover, trust and credibility are essential antecedents of customer loyalty in online shopping. Customers are more likely to remain loyal to online retailers that demonstrate reliability, integrity, and transparency in their business practices. Establishing trust through consistent service quality, secure transactions, and ethical conduct fosters loyalty and encourages repeat business. Furthermore, personalized shopping experiences can significantly impact customer loyalty in online purchasing behavior. Tailoring recommendations, promotions, and offers based on customer preferences and past purchase history enhances engagement and loyalty [14]. Online retailers that leverage data-driven personalization strategies can create deeper connections with customers and cultivate loyalty over time. Additionally, loyalty programs and incentives play a crucial role in driving repeat purchases and fostering customer loyalty in online shopping. Rewarding customers for their continued patronage, such as offering discounts, points, or exclusive perks, incentivizes repeat business and strengthens the bond between the customer and the brand.

Conclusion

Service quality plays a pivotal role in shaping customer loyalty in online purchasing behavior. By delivering exceptional service across all touch points of the customer journey, online businesses can cultivate trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, driving long-term success and competitive advantage in the digital marketplace [15]. A seamless and user-friendly online shopping experience, characterized by intuitive website design and easy navigation, enhances customer satisfaction and encourages repeat purchases. Customers are more likely to return to a website where they can quickly find what they need, complete transactions efficiently, and enjoy a hassle-free shopping journey [6]. Positive experiences with customer support contribute to a sense of reliability and care, strengthening the bond between the customer and the brand. Moreover, the reliability and efficiency of delivery services are paramount in online purchasing behavior [2]. Timely delivery, accurate order fulfillment, and effective communication regarding shipping status contribute to customer satisfaction and trust in the brand. Customers are more likely to remain loyal to online retailers that consistently deliver on their promises and provide a positive end-to-end shopping experience. Furthermore, post-purchase services, such as easy returns and exchanges, order tracking, and follow-up communication, also influence customer loyalty [10]. Businesses that prioritize post-purchase support and demonstrate commitment to customer satisfaction even after the sale are more likely to retain customers and earn their loyalty over time.

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