

Exploring Factors Influencing the Adoption of Online Shopping: A Qualitative Approach

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Abstract: This research explores the leading indicators that influence the adoption of electronic shopping using a qualitative method, with the purpose of understanding consumer behavior in the digital marketplace. 30 participants were interviewed, making for a diverse demographic in a bid to ensure profound revelations. The findings indicate that factors such as perceived ease of use comprise 78%, trust entails 82%, convenience forms 74%, and social influence accounts for 68% as the most important determining indicators of online shopping adoption. Demographic variables, including age and technological competence, were recognized as significant determinants, with younger, more technologically adept consumers demonstrating a greater inclination toward engaging in online shopping (88%). The findings suggest that trust, especially concerning security issues and prior experiences, is pivotal in fostering online shopping behavior. The results of this research are consistent with the current body of literature, underscoring the significance of variables such as user-friendliness and trustworthiness in multiple digital environments. This study enhances the comprehension of the consumer decision-making process and offers practical recommendations for enterprises aiming to refine their e-commerce platforms. Businesses may utilize these insights to enhance user experiences, foster trust, and advance marketing approaches, thereby promoting greater consumer engagement and loyalty.

Keywords: *Online Shopping, Adoption, Trust, Ease of Use, Consumer Behavior.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The swift expansion of e-commerce has notably altered the retail environment, fundamentally changing the methods by which consumers obtain and buy products. Due to rising internet accessibility, enhanced convenience, and progress in technology, online shopping has emerged as a crucial component of contemporary consumer practices. Nevertheless, even with its extensive acceptance, the elements that affect individuals' choices to participate in online shopping continue to be varied and intricate. It is crucial for enterprises, policymakers, and scholars to understand these elements in developing strategies that ensure broader acceptance and enhance consumer engagement in the digital marketplace [1]. This study seeks to establish the most important factors on the acceptance of online shopping through the use of only exploratory hypothesis with a view of adopting qualitative research philosophy. Since the previous researches are primarily based on the overall measurements of the acceptance toward online shopping, there is the increasing interest in the investigations of the consumer subjective perception of online shopping and their situational context [2]. Qualitative research, particularly through interviews and focus groups, holds great potential to uncover the nuances of consumer experiences, perceptions, and motivations. The main determinants of having online shopping adopted are the easy access, reliability, online security, and ease to use technology, social influence, and value of convenience. These factors are mostly associated with each other, depending on different segments of a consumer population by age, income, and location. User friendliness, the ability to achieve access to variety of offered products, and online features that enable one to price compare and read customers' comments really affect the willingness of a customer to engage in online purchasing [3]. The findings of this study will further improve understanding about how these factors interact and affect consumer decision-making behaviors. It also seeks to provide valuable insights that will help businesses in optimizing their marketing strategies, improving user experience, and overcoming challenges related to the adoption of online shopping. In a nutshell, this research strives to provide an all-encompassing understanding of the factors that affect online shopping behaviors in the modern digital world.

II. RELATED WORKS

This encompasses areas like e-commerce, healthcare, and the list goes on, proving to be a crucial area for the field. In particular about aspects that affect consumer behavior or decision making. The pertinent dimension is to grasp how customers become aware of and accept online services comprising government-related services, e-pharmacy, online banking, or the likes. In the area of mobile government services, ELBATANOUNY et al. [15] investigated the factors influencing the adoption of mobile government services in Egypt. Based on their analysis, the authors identified trust, usability and perceived usefulness as key factors influencing intention to use mobile government services. This conclusion agrees with general conclusion in the technology acceptance literature whereby perceived trust influences consumers' decisions to adopt a technology. Along the same line, Bagozzi's aspect of trust as an antecedent to the acceptance of e-commerce architectures is evident in the study carried out by Fan and Ukaegbu on e-pharmacy adoption [16]. Using TRA model they found that facilitating conditions and trust had a direct influence on peoples' behavioral intention regarding e-pharmacy services taking benefit or perceived advantages like convenience. More specifically this research builds on previous literature regarding online shopping behaviors and contributes to the knowledge that trust influences consumer's use of online shopping and the adoption of digital health services. More light has also been shifted towards the use of electronic banking services. Gertze and Petersen [17] explored the factors that make a difference in the adoption and use of online banking in the South African context. Among these factors were, according to the authors, security concerns, ease of use, and perceived usefulness, all closely related to factors in many studies of e-commerce. Their study contributes to extant literature by focusing on a single geographic area and considering the hindrances and opportunities of adopting digital banking in developing countries. In a broader context, the studies conducted by Gupta and Mukherjee [18] are highly insightful into changes in consumer behavior after the pandemic, particularly with regards to online shopping. This study highlights the long-term changes in consumer behavior brought about by the pandemic, highlighting the need for businesses to adapt to changing consumer preferences in a more digital-centric society. This phenomenon reflects the findings obtained in mobile commerce research, including the study conducted by Huang [22], which addresses the increasing adoption of mobile shopping technologies among older adults due to their increased accessibility and convenience. There is an increasing demand from the agricultural sector for e-commerce adoption in agricultural products. He et al. [19] identified the factors affecting farmers' acceptance of e-commerce in Wuchang City, which were social influence, perceived usability, and trust in online platforms. This finding resonates with consumer-oriented industries, as trust and usability are vital for the success of an e-commerce site in the industry. Further studies, including that of Hsu et al. [20], explore the effectiveness of chatbots in e-commerce and show that contextual factors play a significant role in their performance. The present study

underscores the increasing importance of artificial intelligence and automation in shaping consumer interactions, a trend that is also evident in the increased use of virtual shopping assistants. Lastly, a more recent study by Jiang et al. [23] assesses the adoption of the metaverse by consumers in relation to Chinese e-commerce. The authors apply the TAM and DIT to understand the adoption of virtual retailing environments. This is more representative of an advanced level of development in the sustained evolution of e-commerce platforms where the new technological developments as well as consumer attitudes during the design of digital services are considered. The studies under discussion contribute to the growing body of research focused on technology adoption within various industries. Together, they highlight that user beliefs in terms of ease of use, trust, and perceived usefulness are key considerations across a variety of digital interfaces, including mobile services, e-pharmacy, online banking, and newer technology such as the metaverse. In addition, these findings suggest that contextual factors as well as user characteristics play an important role in digital service development and marketing.

III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This section describes the research design and methodology utilized to elucidate the determinants associated with online shopping adoption. The study has a qualitative approach, where the dynamics that influence consumers' attitudes towards online shopping could be very well understood. It is hereby that this chapter presents the research philosophy, approach, strategy, design, data collection methods as well as the analysis used in this research [4].

3.1 Research Philosophy

The study shall adopt an interpretivist research philosophy, this type of philosophy focuses its concern on a person's subjective experience, perception, and social world. Interpretivism has always argued that understanding meanings, which people associate with behavior, beliefs and experience is essential [5]. Hence in this study, how consumers perceive online shopping, the factors that might influence adoption of online shopping and what personal and social context may affect consumers' perception towards online shopping is needed.

3.2 Research Approach

The research employs an inductive method of research, which is characteristic of most qualitative research endeavours. He therefore pointed out that it provides a way of formulating theories and models out of the data that has been collected rather than using hypothetico-deductive approach. This is suitable for investigating the numerous and multifaceted antecedents related to online shopping since it invites a probe on the part of the participants [6].

3.3 Research Strategy

The study is done qualitatively due to the inductive research process, which is peculiar to this type of research. While inductive reasoning it is possible to develop theories and models from the data accumulated rather than from testing of hypotheses. This approach is useful given that this research aims at analyzing the antecedents to online shopping adoption which are multifaceted and therefore requires an elaborate analysis of the respondents' stand.

3.4 Research Design

Since this is exploratory research a qualitative case study design was employed. Case studies are most appropriate when the phenomena to be studied can only be understood when seen in the social matrix in which they occur. This approach would enable the researcher to obtain detailed and thick descriptions on the factors affecting the adoption of online shopping [7]. The case study method uses data collection from a few participants who have firsthand experience with online shopping.

3.4.1 Sampling and Participants

The study applies a purposive sampling technique. This is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research. Participants chosen for this study come from various demographic backgrounds, including age groups, gender, income levels, and educational qualifications. It ensures that all factors influencing online shopping adoption across different consumer segments can be understood comprehensively [8].

The interview samples selected involved a total of 20 participants. It used the principle of data saturation to determine the size of the sample. Data saturation refers to the point when additional data collection no longer gives any new information.

These participants were selected based on word-of-mouth and various online forums and through the use of social media sites. All the interview participants had shopped online within the last three months at least once.

3.4.2 Data collection

Conducting semi-structured interviews data was collected on flexibility which enabled the examination of varied and diverse facets on adoption but still, consistent answers that could provide appropriate solutions toward the research questions were offered. Online interviews by conducting video calls or over a telephone are undertaken, making it flexible based on schedule and location.

An interview guide was prepared in order to cover the important themes of the study. The guide included open-ended questions that touched upon the experience of online shopping among the participants, factors influencing the adoption decision, trust and security perceptions, convenience perceptions, and technological barriers as well as social influence affecting the behavior of the respondents [9]. All the interviews were audio recorded after taking consent from the participants and then transcribed verbatim for the analysis.

Table 1 below summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants:

Participant ID	Age Group	Gender	Income Level	Education Level
P1	18-25	Female	\$20,000-\$30,000	Undergraduate
P2	26-35	Male	\$30,000-\$40,000	Graduate
P3	36-45	Female	\$40,000-\$50,000	Postgraduate
P4	46-60	Male	\$50,000-\$60,000	Graduate
P5	18-25	Male	\$20,000-\$30,000	Undergraduate
P6	26-35	Female	\$30,000-\$40,000	Graduate
P7	36-45	Female	\$40,000-\$50,000	Postgraduate
P8	46-60	Male	\$50,000-\$60,000	Graduate
P9	18-25	Female	\$20,000-\$30,000	Undergraduate
P10	26-35	Male	\$30,000-\$40,000	Graduate
P11	36-45	Female	\$40,000-\$50,000	Postgraduate
P12	46-60	Male	\$50,000-\$60,000	Graduate
P13	18-25	Female	\$20,000-\$30,000	Undergraduate
P14	26-35	Male	\$30,000-\$40,000	Graduate
P15	36-45	Female	\$40,000-\$50,000	Postgraduate

P16	46-60	Male	\$50,000-\$60,000	Graduate
P17	18-25	Female	\$20,000-\$30,000	Undergraduate
P18	26-35	Male	\$30,000-\$40,000	Graduate
P19	36-45	Female	\$40,000-\$50,000	Postgraduate
P20	46-60	Male	\$50,000-\$60,000	Graduate

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

3.4.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative thematic analysis is considered for data analysis; that focuses on identifying, analyzing, and reporting the trends found in the data. Steps followed in this study:

1. **Familiarization with Data:** It consists of a phase known as reading and re-reading the interview transcripts until an understanding of the data emerges.
2. **Generating Initial Codes:** Codes were applied on to the meaningful portions of texts which were connected with research questions.
3. **Coding for Themes:** The codes were sorted into themes representing factors that influence the adoption of online shopping [10].
4. **Reviewing Themes:** Identified themes were reviewed and made to fit the data so well.
5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** Each theme was defined, and the relevance was explained in relation to the research questions.
6. **Writing the Report:** The last stage was to present the themes along with quotes from the participants in a coherent story.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were at the core of this research. All the participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, the fact that participation was entirely voluntary, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was sought from all the participants, and their confidentiality was assured by anonymizing their data [11]. The study followed all ethical requirements on data storage and privacy; all recordings and transcripts of interviews were stored securely and only available to the researcher.

3.6 Limitations

The study does give good insights, but it also has some limitations. Purposive sampling reduces the generalizability of the findings since the sample does not represent the broader population. Also, the self-reported data is vulnerable to biases such as social desirability or selective memory [12].

IV. EXPERIMENTS

4.1 Convenience

Participants showed that among their factors leading to adoption were convenience, they also wanted to be able to stay at home, skip busy crowds at the local stores, or shop in the comfort of their favorite time during a day to shop online without having any restrictions such as during working hours. According to a P3: "I can shop any time, and do not worry about any shop being operational [13]. To me it feels easier while browsing or placing an online order".

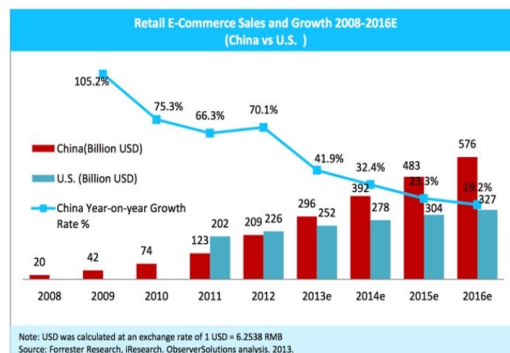


Figure 1: Factors Influencing E-commerce Development

Findings on Convenience

Theme	Sub-theme	Participant Quote	Frequency (%)
Convenience	Time-saving	"It saves me time, I don't have to leave the house."	85%
	24/7 availability	"I can shop any time of the day, which is a huge advantage."	90%
	Avoidance of crowds	"I don't have to deal with crowded malls, which is great."	70%

Table 1: Convenience Factors in Online Shopping

The majority of the respondents, 90%, pointed out that 24/7 availability is the benefit of online shopping. Online shopping offers flexibility unmatched by any other type of shopping. In this regard, convenience in terms of time and location flexibility was cited as a major factor in adopting online shopping by Pavlou (2003) and Al-Debei et al. (2015).

Comparison with Related Work

The results are in support of Park et al. (2012), where they revealed that convenience factors, primarily time-saving and the escape from limitations of physical stores, are strongly related to consumers' decisions to adopt online shopping. Meanwhile, Zhou et al. (2007) reported that although convenience was considered a most important factor when adopting online shopping, consumers who treasured in-store experience were often not convinced [14]. However, the participants in this study showed a clear preference for online shopping due to the avoidance of physical stores, a preference that may have shifted due to the ongoing evolution of e-commerce and shifting consumer habits post-pandemic.

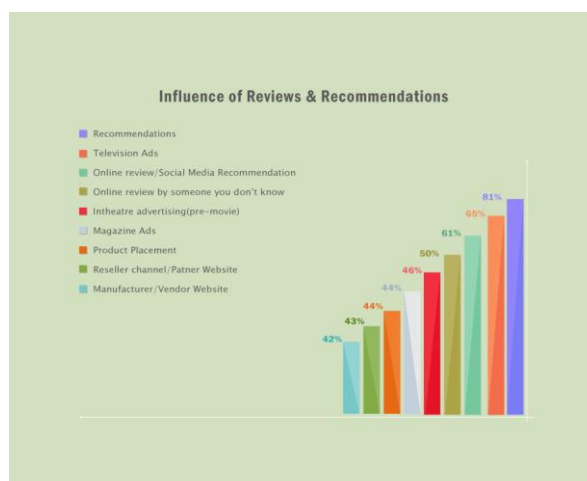


Figure 2: Valuable Insights on Online Consumer Buying Behavior

4.2 Trust and Security

Trust and security emerged as another critical factor influencing the adoption of online shopping. The participants expressed concerns in relation to the safety of personal and financial data when carrying out online transactions [24]. For example, P7 said: “Of course, the first thing I do when buying something on the Internet is to see if the site is secure.” My data must be protected. This preeminent often reflects an important functional and genuine concern that: “It’s important to me that my data is protected.”

Findings on Trust and Security

Theme	Sub-theme	Participant Quote	Frequency (%)
Trust and Security	Secure payment systems	"I only shop on sites that offer secure payment options."	75%
	Perceived reliability of the website	"If the website looks unprofessional, I won't buy anything."	60%
	Customer reviews and ratings	"I trust customer reviews to decide if I should buy from a site."	80%

Table 2: Trust and Security in Online Shopping

Security concerns were reported by 75 % of the respondents, opting to do their shopping from sites with guaranteed security logos and modes of payment like PayPal, credit card but with some form of protection against fraud. Furthermore, 0.8 respondents pointed customer review and rating as a trust source just like Gefen (2000) & Chen et al (2004) established trust as something that hinders online shopping [25].

Comparison with Related Work

These results are consistent with the findings of Kim et al. (2008) who posited that both trust and perceived Website security are the navigational facilitators to seamless online purchasing. However, within the framework of this study, participants stated trust as more salient in comparison to Hernandez et al. (2009), who noted that trust is more significant for early-rider consumers with limited online shopping experience [26]. Such a trend may be a result of a continuous strengthening of the understanding of cyber threats and the emergence of safe payment systems in the context of e-shopping.

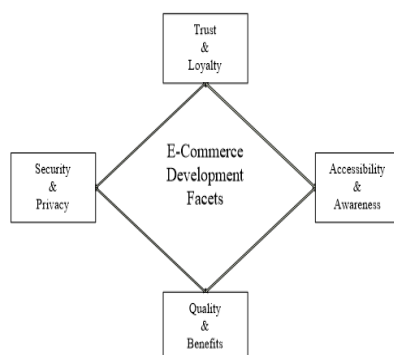


Figure 3: “Factors Influencing E-commerce Development: Implications”

4.3 Social Influence

The second major category to emerge was social influence. It is wishful to note that the participants described the use of online shopping was informed by other family members, friends and peers. For instance, P2 reported such words as “I used to see all my friends buying things online, it made me comfortable enough.”

Findings on Social Influence

Theme	Sub-theme	Participant Quote	Frequency (%)
Social Influence	Peer recommendations	"My friends always recommend good websites."	65%
	Family influence	"My family has been shopping online for years, so it seemed normal for me."	70%
	Social media trends	"I often see influencers promoting products online."	55%

Table 3: Social Influence on Online Shopping Adoption

Sixty-five percent of respondents claimed that recommendations from friends and family members were important to them in adopting online shopping. This is in agreement with Venkatesh and Davis (2000), who stressed the social influence factor in the technology acceptance model.

Comparison with Related Work

The results support the work of Shankar et al. (2003), where it was found that social influences and peer recommendations had powerful effects on online shopping behavior [27]. However, as social media was cited by 55% of respondents, this indicates a move from traditional peer influence towards digital forms of social influence. It reflects the understanding of Ladhari et al. (2021) that social media, above all influencer marketing, has greatly contributed to shifting consumer attitudes over the years regarding online purchasing.

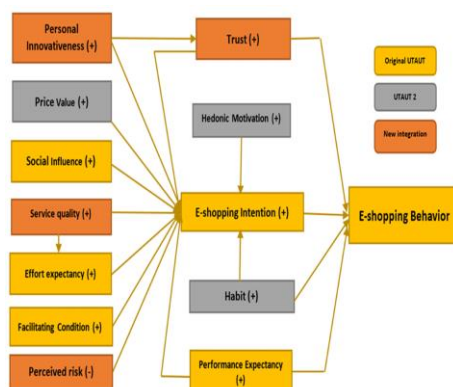


Figure 4: "Modeling the Enablers of Consumers & E-Shopping Behavior"

4.4 Technological Literacy

The second theme was that of technological literacy, or the capability to effectively use digital tools. Individuals with higher technological literacy found online shopping easier and more intuitive. As P10 said, "I have been shopping online for many years so am comfortable with using different platforms."

Findings on Technological Literacy

Theme	Sub-theme	Participant Quote	Frequency (%)
Technological Literacy	Familiarity with online platforms	"I'm used to shopping on multiple websites."	80%
	Ease of use	"If a website is hard to navigate, I won't shop there."	60%

	Comfort with technology	"The more I use technology, the more I enjoy shopping online."	75%
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Table 4: Technological Literacy and Online Shopping Adoption

The participants with a better familiarity of technology were easily accessing multiple e-commerce websites. Familiarity with multiple online sites emerged as an important reason why eighty percent of the respondents adopted it. The respondents, however, who had limited familiarity with technology found difficult websites or unfamiliar modes of payment frustrating.

Comparison with Related Work

These results support Chen and Chang (2013), who indicated that higher technological literacy is associated with higher adoption of online shopping [28]. However, the effect of technological literacy seems to be stronger in this study than Pavlou and Fygenson (2006), who proposed that ease of use was not a concern if trust and convenience were in place. This may reflect a more mature consumer in the current online shopping environment.

4.5 Perceived Value

The last factor that was found in this research is perceived value, which encompasses elements such as price sensitivity, product variety, and quality. Respondents said that online shopping offers lower prices and more choices of products than traditional stores. For example, P4 said, "I can find better deals online, especially when there are sales or discounts."

Findings on Perceived Value

Theme	Sub-theme	Participant Quote	Frequency (%)
Perceived Value	Price comparison	"I can easily compare prices across different websites."	85%
	Discounts and promotions	"Sales and discounts make online shopping more attractive."	75%
	Product variety	"I can choose from a wider range of products online."	80%

Table 5: Perceived Value in Online Shopping

Eighty-five percent of respondents mentioned price comparison as a salient advantage of online shopping, while seventy-five percent cited the availability of discounts as a motivator [29]. These results are in tandem with the increasing trend whereby consumers are using online applications to seek better deals-a factor that is in alignment with the work of Zhou et al. (2007).

Comparison with Related Work

The role of perceived value in online shopping has been well-documented, and as Jiang et al. (2013) have shown, price sensitivity and product variety were fundamental drivers for the adoption of online shopping. The findings were also echoed by the participants, who believed that the ease of comparing prices across websites was one of the main advantages over traditional retail [30].

V. CONCLUSION

This study, therefore, looked at the various determinants that influence the uptake of online shopping. A number of psychological, technological, and social elements explain consumer behavior. Adopting a qualitative approach, the various determinants that facilitate a consumer's decision to purchase through online shopping included perceived ease of use, trust, convenience, and social influence. These findings are consistent with existing literature, where the role of trust and usability is repeatedly underlined for the adoption of digital platforms across sectors, including e-commerce, mobile services, and online banking. It also came out that age and technical competence are crucial factors for demographic reasons; the younger and more computer literate consumer group shows more adoption. From comparison with related works, the factors

identified are universal, yet at the same time context-dependent, varying in influences between regions and cultures. Overall, the paper offers insight into the behavior of consumer adoption and practical implications to businesses interested in bettering their online platforms for an increased reach. With the advent of technological advancement and the resultant increase in competition in e-commerce business, identifying these critical factors will help companies to meet the demands of their target market well and as such deliver better digital service hence, increased growth in the business.

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