

Working Paper 2022.2.2.08
- Vol 2, No 2

PHÂN TÍCH CÁC YẾU TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG TỚI HÀNH VI MUA SẮM TRỰC TUYẾN CỦA SINH VIÊN CHƯƠNG TRÌNH TIÊN TIẾN QUẢN TRỊ KINH DOANH TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC NGOẠI THƯƠNG

**Lê Nguyệt Hằng¹, Lãnh Đức Duy, Phạm Đăng Dương, Tống Lê Ngọc Linh, Bùi Yến Nhi,
Nguyễn Quang Tùng**

Sinh viên K60 CTTT Quản trị kinh doanh – Khoa Quản trị kinh doanh
Trường Đại học Ngoại thương, Hà Nội, Việt Nam

Phạm Thị Mỹ Dung

Giảng viên Khoa Quản trị Kinh doanh
Trường Đại học Ngoại thương, Hà Nội, Việt Nam

Tóm tắt

Mục đích của nghiên cứu là xác định các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến hành vi mua hàng trực tuyến của sinh viên ngành Quản trị kinh doanh chương trình Tiên tiến Trường Đại học Ngoại thương. Nghiên cứu vận dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu định lượng được thực hiện qua phân tích dữ liệu từ 40 câu trả lời thu thập ngẫu nhiên. Kết quả phân tích dữ liệu cho thấy có 7 yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến hành vi mua hàng trực tuyến của sinh viên ngành Quản trị kinh doanh Chương trình tiên tiến trường Đại học Ngoại thương: (1) Sự lựa chọn về sản phẩm và nhãn hàng; (2) Giá cả; (3) Phương thức thanh toán; (4) Các yếu tố ngoại cảnh; (5) Tính dễ sử dụng; (6) Tiếp thị từ người có ảnh hưởng; (7) Thời gian vận chuyển. Từ kết quả đó, nghiên cứu đã đưa ra những yếu tố giúp doanh nghiệp thu hút người tiêu dùng, trong đó chủ yếu là sinh viên. Tuy nhiên, kết quả nghiên cứu không thể được mở rộng cho tất cả người dùng mua sắm trực tuyến vì quy mô khảo sát và phạm vi thu thập dữ liệu không đủ rộng. Các phương pháp thống kê khác có thể được áp dụng trong các nghiên cứu tương lai để nâng cao độ tin cậy cho kết quả nghiên cứu.

Từ khóa: hành vi người tiêu dùng, mua sắm trực tuyến, hành vi mua sắm trực tuyến, thương mại điện tử.

ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIORS OF STUDENTS IN ADVANCED PROGRAM IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AT FOREIGN TRADE UNIVERSITY

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify factors affecting consumers' online purchasing behavior of students in Business Administration Advanced program at Foreign Trade University. The

¹ Tác giả liên hệ, Email: k60.2112280030@ftu.edu.vn

research uses quantitative research methods. The quantitative research method is conducted through descriptive analysis with data taken from 40 questionnaires collected by a simple random method. The result of data analysis showed that there are 7 factors affecting the online purchasing behavior of students in Business Administration Advanced program at Foreign Trade University: (1) Choice of products and brands; (2) Pricing; (3) Payment methods; (4) External factors; (5) Ease of use; (6) Influencer marketing; (7) Shipping time. From this result, the study has proposed some implications to help businesses to attract student consumers. However, the study results cannot be generalized to all online shopping users because of the small sample size and geographical location from where data is collected. Some more statistical techniques may be applied in future studies to improve the credibility of the findings reported in this study.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, online shopping, online shopping behavior, e-commerce.

1. Introduction

1.1. Reasons to choose the topic

In the era of globalization and digitization, along with the advancement of science and technology, shopping behaviors are also undergoing unprecedented comprehensive innovation. E-commerce is gradually becoming a popular business method, becoming more and more known by businesses and people. The diversity of operating models, participants as well as the supply chain of goods and services with the support of internet infrastructure and modern technology applications has made e-commerce an indispensable pillar in the process of national digital transformation. With the emergence and growth of many websites and platforms that allow consumers to buy goods online, e-commerce is now more popular than ever.

Despite the difficulties caused by the heavy impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, Vietnam's e-commerce market is still becoming more and more developed with a growth rate of about 15% in 2021 compared to the previous year and the size of the e-commerce market reached about 13.7 billion USD. It is forecasted that in the years to come, e-commerce will continue to grow, possibly reaching 39 billion USD by 2025, making Vietnam the economy with the third largest e-commerce market in the ASEAN region. (Bain&Company et al., 2021)

Therefore, it is imperative to study the factors affecting the buying behavior of consumers when shopping online, so that the businesses providing online shopping platforms or services can focus on improving the shopping experience of the customers and get a higher customer retention rate.

1.2. Objectives

This study used a quantitative design to answer the following questions:

- What are the factors influencing online shopping behavior?
- How can online shopping platforms increase sales for their e-commerce business?

The survey is designed to address the following objectives: (i) Collecting data to assess online shopping behavior, (ii) Collecting information to identify factors affecting online shopping decisions.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Consumers' behavior

Kotler and Keller (2011) state that consumer buying behaviour is the study of the ways of buying and disposing of goods, services, ideas or experiences by individuals, groups and organizations in order to satisfy their needs and wants. Kotler (1994) also defined consumer behaviour as the study of how people buy, what they buy, when they buy and why they buy.

Moreover, the following popular definitions have been proposed for the term consumer buying behavior.

The definition formed by Solomon et al (1995) describes consumer buying behaviour as a process of choosing, purchasing, using and disposing of products or services by individuals and groups in order to satisfy their needs and wants.

A similar definition of consumer buying behaviour is offered by Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) in which they describe it as behaviour that consumers express when they select and purchase the products or services using their available resources in order to satisfy their needs and desires.

Although the definitions given above are various, they all lead to the common view that consumer buying behaviour is a process of selecting, purchasing and disposing of goods and services according to the needs and wants of the consumers. However, there is a consensus among researchers and academics that this process is subject to continual change over time as the purchase characteristics of the customers change due to their physical and psychological needs.

2.2. Customer buying process

In Marketing Management, 2012, Philip Kotler suggested a model of the buyer's journey. According to this approach, people purchase a product in a series of five steps.

1. Problem recognition

The necessity is the driving force behind the purchasing behavior. Only when an unsatisfied requirement or problem is identified does the purchasing problem occur. An individual is motivated to act or purchase a thing by a need or problem.

2. Information search

At this stage, the consumer is conscious of his need or want. He is also aware that he wishes to purchase a solution that alleviates his issue. Therefore, he wants more information regarding the product that can relieve his agony. The consumer will seek alternatives and the optimal answer to his situation. The buyer will investigate internal and external business environments for information.

3. Evaluation of alternatives

There is a fact that numerous goods on the market can answer a consumer's problem. Therefore, the consumer must evaluate the multiple accessible options before making a decision. Finally, the consumer will rate his options and select the product that best meets his needs and desires.

4. Purchase decision

Here, buyers decide whether to purchase the product, as they can still cancel the transaction at this step. The consumer selects the product he intends to purchase, but for a variety of reasons, he may not actually make the purchase.

5. Post-purchase decision

After purchasing a product, customers evaluate it against their expectations. There are two possible outcomes: satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Customers can take action to spread their experience in the form of customer reviews, whether they are satisfied or disappointed. This can be accomplished via evaluations on many e-platforms or just word of mouth.

2.3. Three major factors influencing consumer behavior

There are many models used to describe consumer behavior. However, the authors decided to choose the stimulus-response model (or the black box model), as it is a well-developed and tested model of buyer behaviour.

The black box model demonstrates the relationships between stimuli, consumer characteristics, decision processes and consumer responses. It includes the buyer's characteristics and the decision process, which then determines the buyer's response.

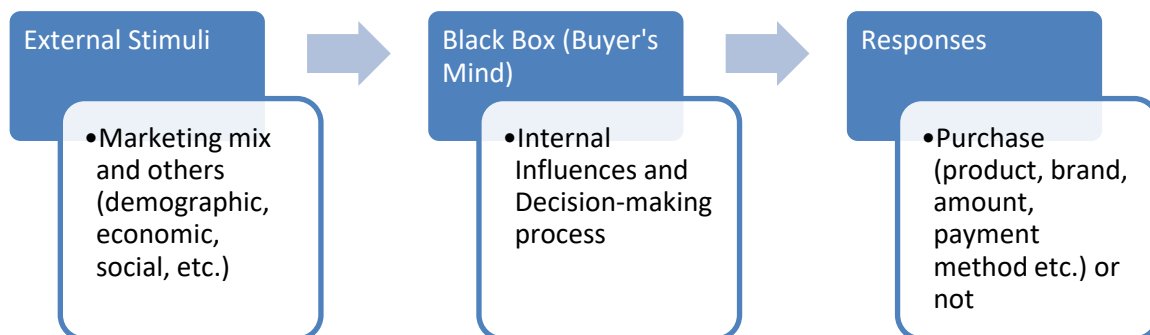


Figure 1. The Black Box Model of Consumer Behavior

Source: Adapted from “Marketing” by W. Keegan, S. Moriarty, T. Duncan, 1992, p. 193. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall

In the above model, marketing and other stimuli enter the customer's “black box” and induce certain responses. The buyer's characteristics affect how s/he perceives the stimuli, while the decision-making process determines what buying behavior is responsible.

To understand buyer behavior, the authors focused on the factors that determine the buyer's characteristics in the black box model. Many factors influence a consumer's purchasing decisions and buying behaviour. The literature classifies these factors in various ways. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), 4 factors that have influence include physical factors, social factors, cultural

factors, personal factors. Keegan (1992) cited social factors, cultural factors, economic and geographical ones as the main factors affecting consumer behavior.

Despite these differences, the authors discussed and decided that consumer behaviour is generally influenced by factors that can be classified into 4 groups: cultural factors, social factors, psychological factors, personal factors.

1. Cultural factors: including culture, sub-culture, social class
2. Social factors: groups, family, roles & status
3. Personal factor: interests, opinions, age, gender, background
4. Psychological factors: beliefs, motivation, perception, attitude, and learning

2.4. The definition of online shopping and online shopping behavior

Online shopping refers to the action or activity of purchasing goods and/or services from business without an intermediary service over the Internet. Online shopping is a form of electronic commerce (e-commerce).

Online shopping behavior (also called online buying behavior and Internet shopping/buying behavior) refers to the process of purchasing products or services via the Internet. (Liang and Lai 2000).

3. Literature review

In general, at home and abroad, there have been papers on the impact of different factors on consumers' shopping behavior, specifically:

Paper "Online Shopping Trends and Its Effects on Consumer Buying Behavior: A Case Study of Young Generation of Pakistan." (2015). The focus of the study is based on the influence of five key variables, namely trust, time, product variety, convenience, and privacy, on consumer buying behavior (dependent variable). Ultimately, the most relevant factor that seems to be influencing consumer buying behavior towards online purchases when it comes to the younger generation was the trust factor.

Convenience is another important factor when it comes to online purchases as people prefer to stay at home and make purchases like going out and browsing through stores. Based on the above research, the authors adopted the convenience factor of the article. This can be considered as one of the factors that have the strongest impact on customers' willingness to buy online.

According to Toñita, Benedict and Ko de Ruyter, (2004) attitudes toward online shopping and intention to shop online are not only affected by ease of use, usefulness, and enjoyment, but also by exogenous factors like consumer traits, situational factors, product characteristics, previous online shopping experiences, and trust in online shopping. However, because of the limit of time, the authors decided not to research these exogenous factors.

Moreover, in Vietnam, there were also research papers, including "Online commerce and buying behavior of Vietnamese consumers" by Bui Thanh Trang and Ho Xuan Tien (2020).

This study focused on factors affecting the online purchasing behavior of Vietnamese consumers. The objective of this study is to analyze the factors affecting the online purchasing behavior of consumers in order to exploit the advantages of e-commerce. In order to achieve the research objective, the thesis has relied on the theory of previous studies to conduct qualitative

research through interviews with experts and based on that result to adjust and supplement observed variables that fit in with the conditions of Vietnam, then combined with building a questionnaire and conducting quantitative research.

The topic "Studying the factors affecting online purchasing decisions of Vietnamese customers" by Nguyen Le Phuong Thanh (2013) has also shown a research model but based on domestic and international studies to build a model and offer solutions to attract consumers to use the internet to purchase online, improve and develop the form of purchasing. Online shopping enhances e-commerce activities.

However, up to now, in Vietnam, there are still very few studies analyzing the influence of hypothetical factors on the online shopping behavior of young people, especially students from 18 to 22. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship, if exists, between factors and the online shopping frequency of Foreign Trade University's students in Hanoi, helping businesses have more ways to attract these customers through online shopping channels.

4. Methodology

4.1. Quantitative method

4.1.1 Instruments

The authors, by discussing in groups, have decided to form hypotheses about factors affecting the online purchasing behavior of the subjects surveyed, which is illustrated in the figure below.

The research uses the quantitative analysis method. Quantitative data consists of questionnaires designed into 2 main parts: questions related to customers' personal information and factors' influence on their online shopping behavior. The set of questions used to conduct the survey consists of 17 questions drawn from previous studies on the same topic. The survey was sent to respondents via Google Form, posted on social networking sites, and by texting survey invitations through private messages. The survey was conducted from June 30th to July 8th in the form of online and there are 40 responses in total.

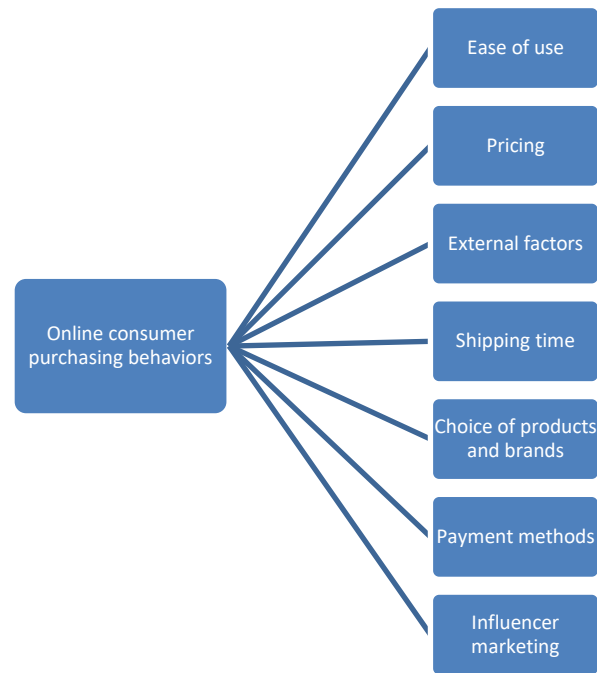


Figure 2. Model of hypothesized factors affecting online shopping behavior

Source: Authors

The authors use 1 dependent variable, which is Online Shopping Behavior and 7 independent variables, including: (1) Choice of products and brands; (2) Pricing; (3) Payment methods; (4) External factors; (5) Ease of use; (6) Influencer marketing; (7) Shipping time surveyed through a five point-Likert scale from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. Because of the limit of time and knowledge foundation, as well as the willingness of the authors to focus on the analysis phase, each factor is expressed in only one question to ensure the focus of the research paper.

Table 1. Survey question

Factors	Content	Source
Identify online shopping behavior	<p>The average amount you spend on online shopping per month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 200,000 VND • From 200,000 to 500,000 VND • From 500,000 to 1,000,000 VND • Over 1,000,000 VND 	Loan (2021)
	<p>How often do you shop online per month?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 2 times • From 2 to 3 times • From 4 to 5 times • More than 5 times 	

Factors	Content	Source
<i>You prefer to shop online when...</i>		
Convenience in payment	Payment transactions is made easy and quick.	Teena, Manas (2013)
		Jiang et al. (2013)
	The platform features a user-friendly interface, as well as a fast search speed.	Beauchamp and Ponder (2010)
Platforms' ability	You can check the store's credibility through product feedback from previous customers.	Beauchamp and Ponder (2010)
	You can easily contact the store's customer service.	Jun et al. (2004)
Time	The delivery time is short.	Jiang et al. (2013)
External factors	You don't want to go to a physical shop because of external factors (weather, geographical location, ..).	Teena, Manas (2013)
Product	You have more options for a certain product.	Teena, Manas (2013)
	You have more options for brands.	
Price	The prices of the items are lower than those found in physical shops.	Teena, Manas (2013)
Influence	Influencers endorse products on e-commerce platforms.	Teena, Manas (2013)

Source: Authors

4.1.2. Data collection

Participants

The authors surveyed students from Foreign Trade University's Business Administration Program who participated in e-commerce consumption. The students were between the ages of 18-22 and included mostly freshmen, a few sophomores, juniors and seniors. The surveys were sent to the research subjects in an online form. Accordingly, the result was 43 responses, of which

3 invalid votes were deleted before data analysis started. The characteristics of the study sample are as follows:

Table 2. Sample Characteristics

Sample Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Cohort	freshman	25	62,50%
	sophomore	1	12,50%
	junior	5	12,50%
	senior	4	10%
	graduated	1	2,50%
Gender	male	29	72,50%
	female	10	25%
	other	1	2,50%
The average amount you spend on online shopping per month	Less than 200.000VND	11	27,5%
	From 200.000 to 500.000VND	12	30%
	From 500.000 to 1 million VND	11	27,5%
	More than 1 million VND	6	15%
Your frequency of online purchases per month	Less than 2 times	12	30,8%
	2 to 3 times	11	25,6%
	4 to 5 times	10	15,4%
	More than 5 times	6	28,2%

Source: Authors

Data analysis

Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. The Likert scale is used to measure the degree to which consumers believe the factor will affect their decision to purchase online. The authors decided to choose the Likert scale because this scale was used in related previous studies and it is suitable for the survey subjects.

For the primary analysis, we calculated descriptive statistics (means and frequencies). The means were interpreted as follows: Strongly disagree in the point range of 1.00 - 1.80, Disagree 1.81 - 2.60, Neutral 2.61 – 3.40, Agree 3.41 - 4.20, and Strongly agree 4.21 - 5.00 (see Table 3) (Pimentel, 2010).

Table 3. Qualitative Interpretation of 5-Point Likert Scale Measurements

Likert-Scale Description	Likert-Scale	Likert Scale interval
Strongly disagree	1	1.00 - 1.80

Likert-Scale Description	Likert-Scale	Likert Scale interval
Disagree	2	1.81 - 2.60
Neutral	3	2.61 – 3.40
Agree	4	3.41 - 4.20
Strongly Agree	5	4.21 - 5.00

Source: Pimentel (2010)

4. Results

The obtained results show that the average monthly amount spent on online shopping by students majoring in Business Administration mainly ranges from 200,000 to 500,000 VND. Up to 30% of students spend from 200,000 - 500,000 VND per month on online shopping. However, the frequency spent on online shopping each month was polarized into two different groups: frequent and infrequent shopping. Survey data shows that 30.8% of students answered the frequency is less than 2 times, but also 28.2% of students choose more than 5 times/month.

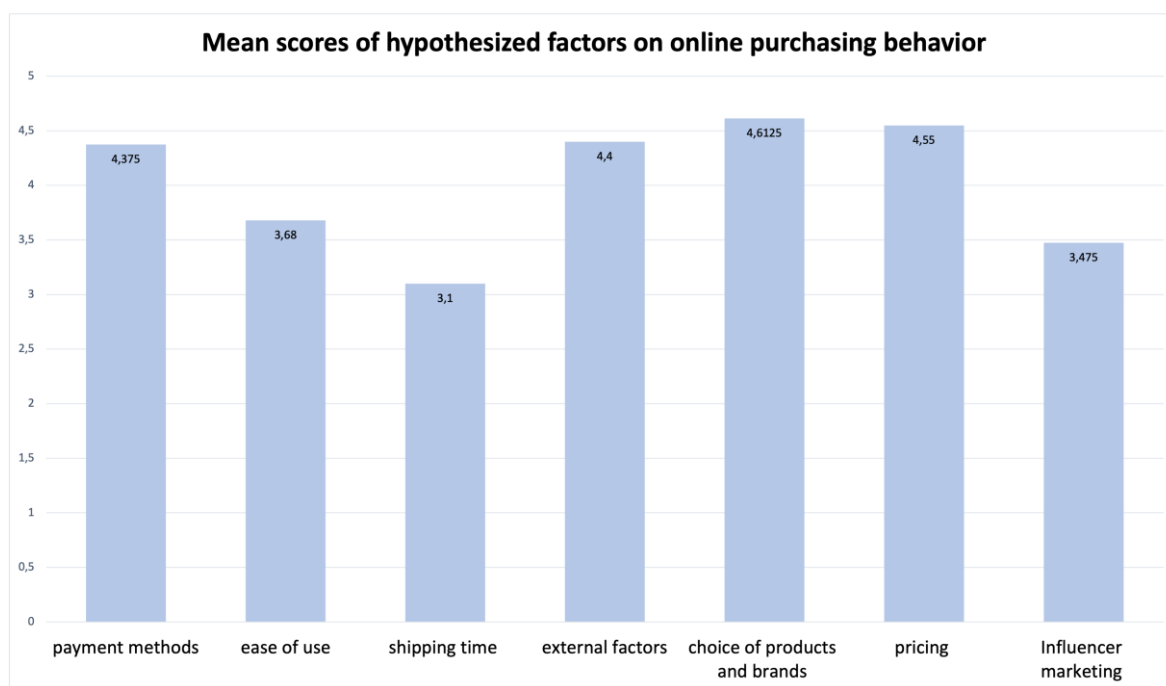


Figure 2. Mean scores of hypothesized factors on online purchasing behavior

Source: Authors

The analysis results showed that 7 factors affect online shopping behavior in decreasing order of their influence: (1) Choice of products and brands; (2) Pricing; (3) Payment methods; (4) External factors; (5) Ease of use; (6) Influencer marketing; (7) Shipping time

More specifically, with the factor of choice of products and brands, more than 72% of students strongly agree with this factor making them prefer online shopping. In contrast, none of the students strongly disagreed with this assertion, and similarly, only 2.5% of the respondents disagree, which is a rating of 2 on the Linkert scale. With such statistics, the mean score of choice

of products and brands is 4.61, which means strongly agree, whereas the choice of more products has a slightly higher mean score than brands with 4.625.

Following is the price factor. As far as the authors expected, 95% of students rated it on a scale of 4 or higher when given that products on the e-commerce floor had a more favorable price than buying at physical stores. The same figures were shown for the second statement of the price variable: “you have discount codes”, as 35 out of 40 students chose the scale from agree or more. The price factor also has a high mean score, which is quite similar to the choice factor, at 4.55.

In terms of the payment factor, 55% of survey participants strongly agree that simple and fast payment methods are the reason they prefer to shop online. Meanwhile, none of the students objected to the positive impact of this factor on their online shopping behavior. The mean score of this variable is still in the group strongly agree with 4.375.

When it comes to the next two factors - ease of use and influencer marketing, both are in the ‘agree’ level, with mean scores of 3.68 and 3.47 respectively. In particular, the survey results for the ease-of-use factor show that the majority of students only choose a scale of 4 for this factor (40%). For influencer marketing, 42.5% of people surveyed chose scale 3, which is neutral.

Finally, with the lowest influence on students' online shopping behavior, the shipping time factor with a mean score of 3.1 falls into the neutral level. Only 3 students participating in the survey chose level 5 for the affirmation of fast delivery speed, compared with 40% of the answers choosing the neutral level.

Thus, with the survey results of the influence of 7 factors, it can be confirmed that FTU students prioritize online shopping mainly due to 3 factors, which are a varied choice of products and brands, competitive pricing and convenient payment methods.

5. Discussion

From a managerial perspective, the findings provide managers with deeper insights into what dimensions of convenience they should focus on to enhance the overall level of online convenience in the case of student-oriented strategies.

Consumers today, especially university students who belong to Generation Z, are more aware and informed and can easily tell the difference between an endorsement and a genuine recommendation. Brands that use influencers without studying the fitment between the influencer and the brand story are more likely to be deemed inauthentic. Thus, the marketers are going under a challenging task, which is to find relevant influencers for the select target audience, in this case, students majoring in Business Administration advanced program at Foreign Trade University. When the focus is on getting maximum conversions, influencers should be judiciously used to target a niche market.

The current findings also direct companies providing online shopping platforms to the need to assure consistency between expectations and the actual delivery, so that they can fulfill the expectations of adequate shipping time for student customers. Providing detailed information about the product and providing efficient customer assistance during and after the online purchase are other recommendations that stand for Vietnamese online shopping companies that target students in general and in the focus of Foreign Trade University’s Business Administration advanced program.

Businesses must constantly improve their e-commerce website, especially improve the site experience. First, simplify the purchasing process. Second, make sure that the speed of accessing the Web site and the service is not too long. Third, optimize websites and applications to fit mobile devices. The user-friendly, professional, convenient design will attract and drive students' online consumption behavior in the digital industrial age. Most importantly, providing detailed information about the product and providing efficient customer assistance during and after the online purchase are other recommendations that stand for Vietnamese online shopping companies that target students in general and in the focus of Foreign Trade University's Business Administration advanced program.

To conclude, frequent monitoring of consumers' perceptions and expectations about online convenience is a prerequisite for achieving continuous improvement in rendering highly convenient online services.

6. Conclusion and limitation

It is illustrated that the consumers' behavior when purchasing online can be affected by 7 factors, either negatively or positively, including (1) Choice of products and brands; (2) Pricing; (3) Payment methods; (4) External factors; (5) Ease of use; (6) Influencer marketing; (7) Shipping time. Overall, by falling into the category of "strongly agree", the 3 factors that matter the most when it comes to online purchasing are a varied choice of products and brands, competitive pricing and convenient payment methods.

In the context of exploding growth of e-commerce, businesses that provide online shopping online platforms should study more deeply the specific impact of hypothesized factors and strive for improvement in those areas to gain customer retention.

A limitation of this study lies in the sample size and the age distribution of the sample used in this study. Despite the efforts of the authors to attain a large sample, the number of respondents was disappointing and unsatisfactorily diversified since a significant part are first-year students, which may have influenced the findings. Sample size 40 is extremely small and roughly 60 percent of the sample was in the category of freshmen majoring in Business Administration at Foreign Trade University. Thus, a larger and more diversified sample could produce different conclusions. Moreover, the geographical area for this study was the Hanoi region only. Future studies may also apply some more statistical techniques to improve the conclusiveness of the findings reported in this study.

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