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Perception and Preference of Consumers for E- Commerce Platforms

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ABSTRACT

The fast expansion of e-commerce industry has transformed how consumers shop among young adults in India. Extensive studies on individual components such as usability and trust and price sensitivity have not been adequately investigated for their combined impact on consumer preference across a unified analytical framework. A study seeks to address this research gap through investigation of five key constructs: Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Trust and Security, Price and Promotions, and Delivery and Customer Service to explain ecommerce platform consumer preference.

The research study employed a structured questionnaire which obtained responses from 330 participants belonging to the age group of 18–25 through convenience sampling techniques. The results from Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) established the measurement model validity while Perceived Ease of Use emerged as the most influential factor on consumer preference alongside Delivery and Customer Service and Perceived Usefulness. The data indicates that participants had weak negative opinions regarding Trust and Security and Price and Promotions connections in their perceptions of e-commerce.

The predictive model adapted from regression analysis succeeded in explaining 62.8% of all consumer preference behaviors. User loyalty and satisfaction depend heavily on creating smooth interfaces combined with efficient services alongside effective platform functionality according to the research results.

The research establishes crucial findings that help e-commerce industry companies boost user satisfaction as well as their post-transaction services and promotional marketing tactics. Future academic studies in digital retail environments will depend on the integrated consumer behavior model this study presents while advancing academic dialogue about this topic.

Keywords: E-commerce, Consumer Preference, Ease of Use, Usefulness, Trust and Security, Promotions, Customer Service, Regression Analysis, Factor Analysis, India

Introduction

Online shopping has experienced remarkable expansion in the last decade thus revolutionizing the way people shop all around the world. Young Indian consumers have made online shopping an essential practice because it provides comfort and different options and reasonable costs. The continuous growth of the digital marketplace demands complete understanding of the elements shaping customer preferences because it helps e-commerce platforms enhance their customer acquisition and retention strategies.

This research delves into understanding the essential deciding factors for e-commerce platform choice through the evaluation of five key elements which include Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Trust and Security, Price and Promotions, and Delivery and Customer Service. Consumer decision-making for online shopping depends on these variables which show both functional needs and emotional requirements to present a full understanding of shopping preferences.

The existing gap in literature research makes this study necessary because these parameters are typically studied independently. The goal of this research is to create an integrated framework which will enable assessment of consumer preference when factors are combined together. The surveyed young adults are recognized as the principal target market by online retailers since they represent the dominant consumer group and demonstrate strong technological fluency and cost-sensitive buying habits and demand immediate convenience from their shopping experiences.

The research uses structured questionnaires answered by 330 respondents while implementing Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) joined with multiple regression statistical methods for construct verification and hypothesis testing. Consumer choice evaluation results will showcase which variables impact purchasing behavior most powerfully while delivering concrete recommendations for e-commerce companies to increase user contentment and devotion.

The study enhances digital customer research knowledge while providing tangible methods that help e-commerce platforms enhance their business operations in today's competitive customer-centered online marketplace.

Literature Review

In recent years, the adoption of e-commerce platforms has been significantly influenced by various factors related to consumer behavior and system characteristics. This literature review examines key dimensions that affect consumer preferences, including perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust and security, pricing strategies, delivery quality, and customer service. Research findings highlight the importance of system usability and shopping efficiency, as well as the pivotal role of trust and reliable service delivery in fostering customer satisfaction and loyalty. Studies such as Chong et al. (2023), Yong et al. (2023), and Saikrishnan (2023) explore these dimensions within diverse geographic and demographic contexts, emphasizing how market-specific factors shape consumer preferences. This review aims to synthesize existing research to better understand the interplay between these determinants and their implications for e-commerce platform development.

Perceived Ease of Use: Consumers apply perceived ease of use as a main factor that determines their adoption of e-commerce platforms. Perceived ease of use indicates how much a user believes system usage will lack any significant effort. The usability of online platforms that features effortless navigation along with effortless checkout procedures combined with effective search tools increases customer satisfaction as Chong et al. (2023) explain. Users from Shopee Malaysia complete purchases more often when their shopping paths and transactions encounter limited obstacles. According to Yong et al. (2023) usability has a major impact on behavioral intent because young consumers value system simplicity together with speed. The user experience of digital natives in India depends on platform speed due to their preference for flawless operations according to Saikrishnan (2023).

Perceived Usefulness: Consumers determine perceived usefulness by assessing how well an ecommerce platform improves their shopping efficiency as well as their effectiveness in buying products. According to Chong et al. (2023) time-saving features which include relevant product suggestions and well-organized categories drive customers toward understanding their system benefits. E-commerce platforms which present comprehensive product information together with review systems and price comparison features earn better customer satisfaction and trust levels. According to Yong et al. (2023) usefulness leads to both preferential choices and frequent use behaviors. Platforms which offered diverse product selection together with custom recommendation services received more positive ratings per analysis. Saikrishnan (2023) explains that Indian consumers who participate in competitive marketplaces prefer platforms which cut down the mental workload involved in product exploration since these solutions boost shopping efficiency.

Trust and Security: Online shopping behavior primarily depends on trust and security standards. First-time digital shoppers are hesitant to participate in online shopping because they remain concerned about both data confidentiality and payment protection according to Rathore et al. (2019). All platforms require strong security protocols because the absence of well-established protection protocols will cause both trust issues and loss of customer base. The SERVQUAL model allows Sharma and Bahl (2019) to show that both service quality and security guarantees serve as fundamental elements for developing customer trust. The researchers prove that platforms gain more trust when consumers receive understandable privacy terms alongside safe payment options and reliable shipments. According to Saikrishnan (2023) and Malau and Sitanggang (2024) trust creates initial purchase effects which strongly influence customer loyalty throughout the relationship duration. The delivery of reliable promises from platforms strengthens both emotional connection with customers and their relational investment.

Price and Promotions: Companies use price benefits alongside promotional methods as strong strategies for changing customer purchasing choices. The research by Demir (2024) demonstrated that restricted time discounts and coupon programs along with customer reward systems push customers to make spontaneous purchases in economic markets especially Northern Cyprus. Strategic promotional techniques create both feelings of limited time along with feelings of selectiveness which motivates customers to finalize their purchases. According to Malau and Sitanggang (2024) promotional strategies effectively draw new customers yet lasting customer satisfaction relies upon providing steady value to customers. Customer trust in promotion-based deals that also showcase the actual quality of products leads to increased customer loyalty. The research by Chong et al. (2023) demonstrates how promotional strategies generate significant results within markets characterized by multiple platform availability of equivalent products. A warning comes from Rathore et al. (2019) about intensive discounting since customers might switch away from one offer into the next.

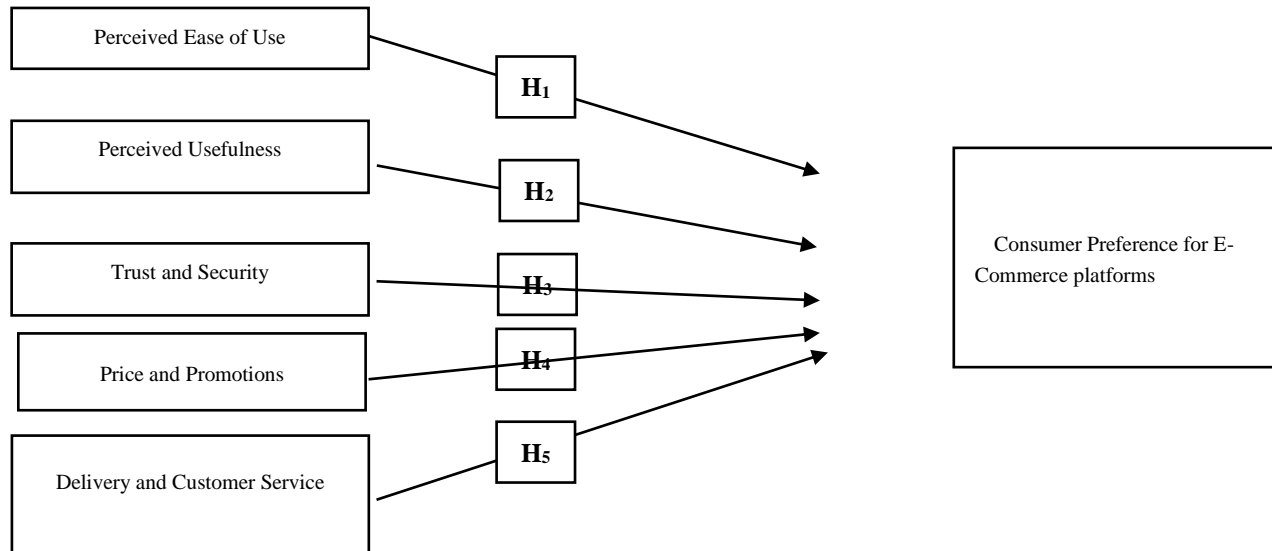
Delivery and Customer Service: The quality of delivery together with customer service functions as the key determinant for customer satisfaction after purchase and retention of consumers. Keklikçi along with Seyfi (2024) demonstrate that final delivery stages directly affect shopping satisfaction. Timely precise delivery delivers superior customer satisfaction according to research findings nonetheless delay-based delivery leads customers to lose satisfaction together with potential business in the future. Zhang et al. (2024) examine how effective delivery protocols increase both customers' purchasing tendencies and favorable customer recommendations. Research data indicates that delivery condition alongside delivery timing affects customer satisfaction as does tracking system transparency and service response in case of delivery issues. The research by Chong et al. (2023) confirms that unsatisfactory delivery experiences eliminate any benefits gained from superior shopping interfaces and better pricing. According to Malau and Sitanggang (2024) post-purchase satisfaction depends heavily on how promptly customers obtain service for their refunds and make product exchanges together with resolving complaints.

Consumer Preference: The multiple elements of consumer preference work together as they link usability and usefulness to trust along with quality services and pricing factors. According to research by Chong et al. (2023) consumers demonstrate stronger preference for e-commerce platforms when they feel satisfied with usability functionality and useful features as well as trust and service quality and pricing. Yong et al. (2023) establish that preference results from the growth of brand attachment that builds through successive favorable connections between customers and brands. According to Malau and Sitanggang (2024) preference becomes a foundation for loyalty when consumers find consistent service quality combined with value delivery. Saikrishnan (2023) explains that younger consumers rapidly form preferences yet easily change them if their expectations are not met in e-

commerce. According to Rathore et al. (2019) consumer preference depends on market-specific cultural norms and service expectations as well as trust levels and market-specific factors. Diverse regional factors determine which stimulus causes consumers' preference.

Research Hypotheses

- **H1:** There is a relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and Consumer Preference.
- **H2:** There is a relationship between Perceived Usefulness and Consumer Preference.
- **H3:** There is a relationship between Trust and Security and Consumer Preference.
- **H4:** There is a relationship between Price and Promotions and Consumer Preference.
- **H5:** There is a relationship between Delivery and Customer Service and Consumer Preference.



Research Methodology

Research Design: The research design is predominantly quantitative and descriptive along with having causal elements. The research seeks to uncover and validate relationships between Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Trust and Security, Price and Promotions, Delivery and Customer Service and Consumer Preference for e-commerce platforms. The research generates quantitative data through its structured questionnaire before using statistical methods to validate its hypotheses while measuring customer preferences.

Sampling Location: The research tested an urban academic and consumer environment among young adult consumers who act as regular e-commerce platform users. Most participants included Indian undergraduate students and beginning professionals because India shows increasing adoption of digital retail.

Sampling Method: The non-probability convenience sampling technique served as the data collection method because it proved efficient for obtaining responses from easily reachable respondents with experience in online shopping.

Sample Unit: The research selects e-commerce buyers who completed their first purchase within three months as their single sampling point. The individuals chosen for the study can assess different aspects of online shopping due to their previous experience.

Sample Size: This research includes 330 respondents according to the demographic analysis. Most survey participants within the 18–25 age group numbered 309 thus establishing a defined research group representing numerous young adult online shoppers.

Research Technique: A structured questionnaire-based survey acts as the main method for data acquisition in this study. The questionnaire contains different areas for demographics and perception assessments which focus on six important constructs: Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Trust and Security, Price and Promotions, Delivery and Customer Service and Consumer Preference. Several validated Likert-scale items serve as measurements for each construct which underwent Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and received positive reliability results based on Cronbach's Alpha. Consumer preference data underwent advanced statistical analysis through multiple regression tools to determine independent variable impacts. SPSS software served to process the gathered data. Statistical tests including Kaiser-MeyerOlkin (KMO) with value 0.864 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Sig. = 0.000) proved that factor analysis is appropriate for the data. The R^2 value from regression analysis reached 0.628 which shows that 62.8% of consumer preference variation could be explained through significant predictors.

Results and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Demography	Category	Number	Total
Age	Below 18	3	330
	18-25	309	
	25-40	18	
Income	Below 10000	222	
	10000-40000	54	
	40000-70000	18	
	70000-100000	6	
	Above 100000	30	
Gender	Male	192	
	Female	138	

Descriptive Analysis: The demographic profile of the study's respondents reveals a predominantly young participant base, with the majority (309 out of 330) falling within the 18–25 age group. This highlights the relevance of the research to the digital-native population, who are typically more engaged with e-commerce platforms. A small proportion of respondents were aged 25–40 (18 participants), while only 3 individuals were under the age of 18. In terms of income distribution, a significant portion of the sample (222 respondents) reported earnings below ₹10,000 per month, indicating that many participants are likely students or early-career professionals. Additional income brackets include ₹10,000–₹40,000 (54 respondents), ₹40,000–₹70,000 (18 respondents), ₹70,000–₹100,000 (6 respondents), and above ₹100,000 (30 respondents), providing a moderate range of economic backgrounds. Regarding gender, the sample consisted of 192 male and 138 female respondents, suggesting a slightly higher representation of male consumers in this study.

Table 2: Principal Components Analysis, Reliability and Consistency

Constructs	Item's main point	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Consumer Preference for Ecommerce Platforms	Preference	0.819	0.867	0.912	0.722
	Satisfaction	0.904			
	Reference	0.843			
	Loyalty	0.832			
Perceived Ease of Use	Usability	0.816	0.819	0.881	0.649
	Search Ease	0.842			
	Checkout Ease	0.770			
	Comfort	0.794			
	Time Saving	0.790	0.876	0.915	0.729
Perceived Usefulness	Product	0.867			
	Suggestions				
	Price Comparison	0.898			

	Product Variety	0.858			
Trust and Security	Trust on Security	0.849	0.829	0.886	0.661
	Policy Clarity	0.847			
	Product Accuracy	0.780			
	Review Impact	0.773			
Price and Promotions	Price Advantage	0.749	0.810	0.876	0.641
	Deals Satisfaction	0.863			
	Valuable Rewards	0.805			
	Price Insight	0.780			
Delivery and Customer Service	Delivery Satisfaction	0.810	0.807	0.875	0.638
	Tracking Reliability	0.786			
	Refund Ease	0.811			
	Service Efficiency	0.788			

Descriptive Analysis: The analysis identifies several constructs contributing to consumer behavior regarding e-commerce platforms. Consumer preference for e-commerce platforms demonstrates strong reliability, with items such as preference, satisfaction, reference, and loyalty showing high factor loadings and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.867. Perceived ease of use emphasizes usability, search ease, checkout ease, and comfort, with high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.819) and adequate convergent validity (AVE = 0.649). Perceived usefulness focuses on product suggestions, price comparison, and product variety, displaying strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.876) and convergent validity (AVE = 0.729). Trust and security highlight trust on security, policy clarity, and product accuracy, reflecting good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.829) and AVE of 0.661. Price and promotions emphasize items like price advantage, deals satisfaction, and valuable rewards, showing reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.810) and AVE of 0.641. Delivery and customer service include delivery satisfaction, tracking reliability, refund ease, and service efficiency, also exhibiting reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.807) and AVE of 0.638. These constructs collectively validate the study framework and underline key dimensions influencing consumer interactions with e-commerce platforms.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.864
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1760.101
	df	15
	Sig.	0.000

Descriptive Analysis: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy yielded a value of 0.864, indicating that the sample data is highly suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity produced a Chi-Square value of 1760.101 with 15 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.000, confirming that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. These results validate the appropriateness of conducting factor analysis on the given dataset.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix

R	otated Component Matrix					
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Preference	0.651					
Satisfaction	0.762					
Reference	0.756					
Loyalty	0.643					
Usability		0.584				
Search Ease		0.619				
Checkout Ease		0.741				
Comfort		0.545				
Time Saving			0.777			
Product Suggestions			0.676			
Price Comparison			0.771			
Product Variety			0.610			
Trust on Security				0.732		
Policy Clarity				0.742		
Product Accuracy				0.602		
Review Impact				0.527		
Price Advantage					0.522	
Deals Satisfaction					0.583	
Valuable Rewards					0.570	
Price Insight					0.506	
Delivery Satisfaction						0.680
Tracking Reliability						0.522
Refund Ease						0.842
Service Efficiency						0.611

Descriptive Analysis: The rotated component matrix identifies six key components influencing consumer preferences. Component 1 emphasizes overall user satisfaction and brand loyalty, grouping variables such as preference, satisfaction, reference, and loyalty. Component 2 focuses on platform functionality, including usability, search ease, checkout ease, and comfort. Component 3 highlights time efficiency and variety through factors like time saving, product suggestions, price comparison, and product variety. Component 4 reflects consumer trust and transparency with trust on security, policy clarity, product accuracy, and review impact. Component 5 captures pricing incentives with attributes like price advantage, deals satisfaction, valuable rewards, and price insight. Component 6 underscores post-purchase experiences, combining delivery satisfaction, tracking reliability, refund ease, and service efficiency. These components provide a comprehensive view of consumer dimensions shaping their preferences.

Table 5: Regression Analysis: Consumer Preference for E- Commerce platforms

Regression										
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	ANOVA	
	B	Std. Error		Tolerance	VIF				F	Sig
(Constant)	-0.285	0.186	0.000			.793 ^a	0.628	0.623	109.614	.000 b
Perceived Ease of Use	0.626	0.071	0.000	0.327	3.056					
Perceived Usefulness	0.204	0.069	0.000	0.271	3.688					
Trust and Security	-0.039	0.074	0.000	0.235	4.261					
Price and Promotions	-0.017	0.083	0.000	0.240	4.174					
Delivery and Customer Service	0.235	0.079	0.000	0.244	4.099					

Descriptive Analysis: The regression analysis indicates that 62.8% of consumer preference variation is explained by the model, with Perceived Ease of Use being the most significant driver. Perceived Usefulness and Delivery & Customer Service also have positive impacts. Trust and Security and Price Promotions show negative coefficients, likely due to baseline expectations or suppressor effects. The model is statistically significant, with no severe multicollinearity among variables.

Hypothesis Testing Analysis

Hypothesis Testing Analysis: Using the regression results from Table 5, we evaluate the hypotheses formulated to understand the impact of various independent variables on the Consumer Preference for E- Commerce platforms.

Model Summary: The regression model reveals an $R = 0.793$, $R^2 = 0.628$, and Adjusted $R^2 = 0.623$, with an F-value of 109.614 and $p < 0.001$, indicating that the model is statistically significant and explains 62.8% of the variance in consumer preferences.

Hypothesis Outcomes: The hypothesis testing results are as follows: H1, there is a significant relationship between Perceived Ease of Use and consumer preference. This hypothesis is supported ($\beta = 0.626$, $p < 0.001$). H2, trust & security significantly affects consumer preference. This hypothesis is not supported due to a negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.039$, $p < 0.001$). H3, price and promotions are significant predictors of consumer preference. This hypothesis is not supported as the coefficient is negative ($\beta = -0.017$, $p < 0.001$). H4, delivery and customer service significantly influence consumer preference. This hypothesis is supported ($\beta = 0.235$, $p < 0.001$). H5, perceived usefulness significantly affects consumer preference. This hypothesis is supported ($\beta = 0.204$, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: Among the hypotheses tested, H1, H4, and H5 are statistically significant, highlighting the importance of Ease of Use, Delivery & Customer Service, and Usefulness in driving consumer preferences. While Trust & Security and Price Promotions hold conventional importance, their negative coefficients suggest complex variable relationships or diminished significance in this model.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed important light on the factors influencing consumer preference for e-commerce platforms among young adults in India. Perceived Ease of Use emerged as the most significant determinant, suggesting that platforms offering simple navigation, fast checkout, and intuitive interfaces are more likely to attract and retain customers. Delivery and Customer Service followed closely, emphasizing that post-purchase experiences—such as timely delivery, efficient tracking, easy refunds, and prompt customer support—play a crucial role in maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Perceived Usefulness also significantly influenced consumer preference, as users valued platforms that enhanced their shopping efficiency through personalized recommendations, broad product variety, and price comparison features. This finding supports the idea that functional benefits are critical in shaping young consumers' online shopping behaviors.

Interestingly, Trust and Security and Price and Promotions displayed weak negative associations with consumer preference. This could imply that young consumers now expect basic security and competitive pricing as standard features, and their absence could disproportionately harm platform reputation. Alternatively, multicollinearity among constructs might have masked their true positive influence. Young consumers' high expectations regarding security and value might result in dissatisfaction when even minor issues arise.

Overall, the study highlights that in the highly competitive e-commerce market, platforms must focus beyond basic functionalities. Enhancing user experience, maintaining post-purchase satisfaction, and consistently delivering personalized, convenient, and secure shopping experiences are essential strategies. The results also stress the need for e-commerce companies to recognize evolving consumer expectations and adapt rapidly, particularly when targeting the technology-savvy, cost-sensitive youth segment. The integrated approach presented here offers a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences and provides actionable insights for both academic research and business strategy development.

Implications of the Study

This study will provide valuable insights to e-commerce platforms, retailers, and marketers on the key factors that drive consumer preferences. By understanding how elements like ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust, security, pricing, promotions, and delivery quality affect consumer decisions, businesses can tailor their strategies to improve customer experience and satisfaction. For example, platforms can optimize their user interfaces, enhance security measures, or refine their promotional campaigns to align with consumer expectations. The findings could also guide decision-makers in prioritizing investments in specific areas such as delivery logistics or customer service enhancements to foster customer loyalty and retention.

In the domain of consumer behavior and e-commerce, this research will contribute to expanding our understanding of how multifaceted factors influence online shopping preferences. By integrating aspects such as trust, security, delivery quality, and promotional strategies, the study will offer a comprehensive view of the drivers behind consumer choice in the digital marketplace. This work will bridge gaps in existing literature by examining the relationships between these variables in a unified model, allowing scholars and practitioners to better understand the dynamics of consumer behavior in the e-commerce space.

This research will add to the growing body of knowledge on online consumer behavior, especially in the context of e-commerce. It will provide a basis for future studies to explore deeper into specific factors that were found to have significant impacts on consumer preferences. Additionally, it could serve as a reference for researchers developing new models of consumer behavior or applying advanced methodologies (such as machine learning or big data analytics) to predict consumer preferences. The study's findings may also prompt further exploration into under researched areas like the interplay between trust and security in e-commerce or the influence of customer service quality on post-purchase behavior.

Conclusion

The research concludes that Perceived Ease of Use plays a vital role in influencing consumer satisfaction and platform preference among young digital consumers, particularly those aged 18–25. This demographic prioritizes platforms with seamless interfaces, simple navigation, and quick checkout processes, often avoiding those that fail to meet these standards, despite other competitive features. The study emphasizes the importance of effortless digital interactions for technologically skilled users.

The delivery process and customer support systems significantly affect consumer preferences as well. Customers value prompt delivery, effective tracking tools, straightforward refund mechanisms, and immediate assistance, as these features foster trust and loyalty while enhancing post-purchase satisfaction. Positive post-purchase experiences help retain customers in the competitive e-commerce space.

Interestingly, constructs like Trust and Security and Price Promotions displayed negative regression coefficients. This does not imply they are unimportant but suggests complex relationships with other factors or high consumer expectations in these areas. Young consumers, who are sensitive to minor errors in such aspects, expect them to be standard features on e-commerce platforms.

The majority of respondents, aged 19–25, belonged to families earning less than ₹10,000 annually, highlighting a preference for value-driven platforms offering convenience and affordability. Factor analysis confirmed the reliability and validity of the study's constructs, and the regression model demonstrated strong explanatory power with an R^2 value of 0.628, offering valuable insights for academic research and industry strategy development.

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