

Factors Influencing Consumer Satisfaction in Online Shopping: A Case of College Level Students

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Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this study is to examine the influence and relationship between product quality, information availability, and shipping cost with customer satisfaction among college-level students in Kathmandu Valley.

Design/methodology/approach - This research adopted the explanatory research design. The study targeted college-level students in Kathmandu Valley as a population. A total of 400 respondents were selected from the different colleges by using a convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire survey was applied to collect primary data. The study adopted cross tab, independent t-test, and correlation to analyze the data.

Findings - The study shows that customer satisfaction is influenced and associated with product quality, information availability, and shipping costs in online shopping. The availability of information is a major factor in customer satisfaction with online shopping. Online shopping companies must uphold reliable websites, ensuring accurate and up-to-date information about products and services to attract potential customers. Additionally, they need to maintain the standard of quality for retaining existing customers and meeting their expectations in enhancing the company's reputation.

Research limitation/implications - The study examines only three explanatory variables i.e., product quality, availability of information, and shipping cost so that future researchers can study other factors impacting customer satisfaction among college-level students of Kathmandu Valley in different geographic concentrations with new analytical tools.

Originality/value -The study targeted college-level students of Kathmandu Valley as population. The study is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Fred Davis in 1986 to measure the results.

Keywords: Online shopping, customer satisfaction, product quality, availability of information, and shipping cost.

Introduction

Businesses are striving to obtain a competitive advantage due to the increasing global growth of electronic commerce to communicate with customers (Quinn Malloy 2022). Online shopping is becoming more and more popular among consumers, who use it to make purchases, research products, or even just pass the time. So, the total connection between marketers and their customers is changing as a result of online buying environments (Suharto et al. 2021). Online shopping involves using a computer-based interface to shop from a retailer's digital storefront (Haubl & Trifts, 2000). The Internet has transformed into a global transaction platform, impacting the relationship between marketers and consumers (Koo, Kim, & Lee, 2008). Online shopping has become a significant aspect of the internet, contributing to the idea of a global village. Additionally, it reduces inventory management costs (Dahiya, 2012). Consumer purchases are mainly based on cyberspace appearances such as pictures, images, quality information, and video clips of the product, not on the experience (Brennan et al., 2018; Constantinides, 2023). Shoppers can make purchases without physically visiting physical stores. However, the online experience differs as buyers rely on product images on the retailer's website (Gong, Stump, & Maddox, 2013).

E-commerce is a growing avenue for retailers, propelled by the use of devices like tablets, laptops, and cell phones to access the internet (Kau, Tang, & Ghosh, 2003). The Internet has also enabled the distribution of used products and services on a large scale (Rudolph, Rosenbloom, & Wagner, 2004). Business models in developing countries might not align with modern technology, leading to suboptimal results (Kshetri, 2008). Consumer preferences for online shops are influenced by their shopping experience and finding discounts. Fashion is a popular online purchase due to its convenience and price advantages (Hau, 2013). Both international and local online shopping sites offer a wide range of brands with good prices and customer service. Globally, students' buying behavior has shifted with the acceptance of online shopping (Foucault and Scheufele, 2002). Students seek convenience and time-saving through online purchases. Despite marketing efforts, the primary outcome is attracting young people to these online platforms (Chin, Chang, Cheng, & Fang, 2009). Consumers can order an amazing variety of products via the Internet (Yomnak, 2007).

The rapid growth of the internet has had a significant impact on the global marketing climate. It has now become one of the most common methods for businesses and consumers to conduct business over the Internet. In Nepal, the growth of internet usage has transformed business activities, bringing buyers and sellers together. Online shopping has gained popularity among Nepalese, especially students. The e-commerce industry in Nepal is growing rapidly due to increased internet access via devices like tablets and laptops. Student shopping motives can be utilitarian or entertainment-driven (Batra & Ahtola, 1991), focusing on fulfilling specific needs (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994).

Online shopping behavior has become an important area of research due to the rapid growth of e-commerce and digital technologies. Customer satisfaction has long been recognized as a key factor in ensuring customer engagement and loyalty. It's difficult to create satisfied customers, particularly in an online environment where there's little contact between company staff and customers. Customer satisfaction is the consequence of experiences during various purchasing stages: wanting something, gathering information about it, evaluating purchasing alternatives, actual purchasing decisions, and post-purchasing behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Customer satisfaction is essential for creating and maintaining long-term customer relationships as well as profitability.

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence and relationship between product quality, information availability, and shipping cost with the customer satisfaction of students in Kathmandu Valley.

Literature Review

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), introduced by Fred Davis in 1986, is a pivotal theoretical construct in understanding individuals' adoption of emerging technologies. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an adaptation of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) focused on explaining user acceptance of information systems (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989), and serves as a framework for comprehending individuals' adoption of technology. TAM elucidates that users' perceptions of a technology's ease of use and its perceived usefulness are instrumental in shaping their behavioral intentions and subsequent actual usage. The model asserts that a technology's user-friendly interface and perceived simplicity engender positive attitudes, fostering intentions for adoption. Similarly, the perception of a technology's utility in enhancing productivity and efficacy contributes significantly to the formation of positive attitudes and adoption intentions. However, TAM's limitation of concentrating primarily on individual perceptions has prompted subsequent extensions to incorporate contextual and societal factors. Nevertheless, TAM remains a cornerstone in the realm of technology adoption, informing interdisciplinary research and assisting organizations in crafting user-oriented technological solutions.

Product quality is customers' overall evaluation of the excellence of the performance of the good or service (John, Mowen & Michael 1997). Customer satisfaction is a direct outcome of customers perceiving quality, necessitating ongoing efforts to enhance their experience and contentment in a competitive market. Jahanshahiet al. (2011) found that there is positive correlation between product quality with customer satisfaction. Niroula (2020) showed that there is a positive relationship between perceived service quality and perceived ease of use with customer satisfaction. Momtaz, Islam, Halim, Ariffin, and Karim (2011) also found that product quality has a relationship with customer satisfaction. The study also found that online shopping has a positive impact on customer satisfaction in Kathmandu Valley. Tamrakar (2016) stated that convenience, web design, time-saving, and security have a positive and significant impact on the customers' satisfaction towards online shopping in Kathmandu Valley. Thapa (2016) found that website quality is positively related to customers' satisfaction regarding consumer's perception of online shopping in Kathmandu Valley.

Ali, Sudha Sankaran, and Peter Stevrin (2010), stated that in the long run, customer loyalty can only be attained through customer satisfaction, which can be achieved by providing detailed product information on websites, superior customer service, quality, and timely delivery of goods. Mustafa (2011) revealed that user interface quality, information quality, perceived quality, and perceived privacy, the effects of website design are the major factors influencing customer satisfaction in online shopping. Guo, Ling, and Liu. (2012) identified that factors such as website design, Security, Information quality, payment method, e-service quality, product quality, product variety, and delivery Services are the important determinants of customer satisfaction in online shopping. Muruganantham (2016), revealed that factors such as offers, best prices, good products, and ease of shopping were the major factors influencing customer satisfaction.

Momtaz, Islam, Halim, Ariffin, and Karim (2011) found that online shopping expenses in online and customer satisfaction are positively related. Bama and Ragaprabha (2016), revealed that customer satisfaction with online shopping is associated with the area of residence and cost of recent purchase.

Bama and Ragaprabha (2016), revealed that customer satisfaction with their online shopping is associated with, age, gender, and occupation. Ganapathi S. (2018) reveals that age, gender, and educational qualification has a significant association with customers' level of satisfaction towards electronic shopping.

Conceptual Framework

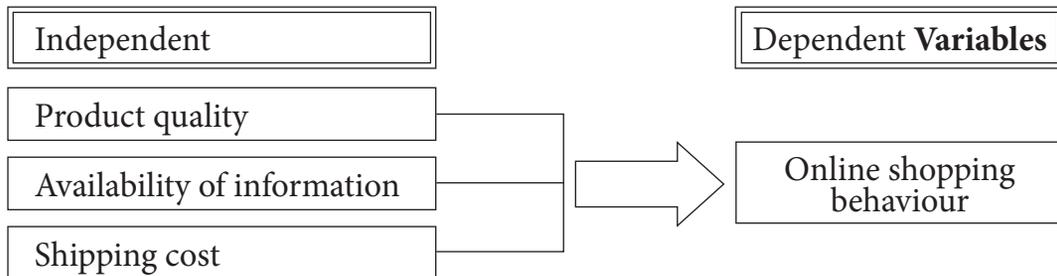


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Research Hypotheses

The following are some alternative hypotheses:

H1: There is a relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction with online shopping.

H2: There is a relationship between the availability of information and customer satisfaction with online shopping.

H3: There is a relationship between shipping cost and customer satisfaction with online shopping.

H4: There is an effect of gender on customer satisfaction with online shopping.

Operational definition of variables

Product quality: Product quality refers to the level of excellence or superiority of a product, encompassing its performance, durability, features, and overall satisfaction it provides to customers. It plays a crucial role in influencing customer perceptions and brand reputation.

Availability of information: Availability of information refers to the extent to which relevant data, facts, or resources are accessible and obtainable to individuals or entities seeking them. It is a critical factor in decision-making and problem-solving processes, enabling informed choices and effective actions.

Shipping: Shipping is the physical moving of goods from one point to another, such as the moving of merchandise from the warehouse to the customer. Shipping involves the transportation of goods or products from one location to another, often involving the movement of items from sellers to buyers. It encompasses various logistics processes, such as packaging, handling, and delivering items, and plays a pivotal role in the supply chain and customer satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is the extent to which customers' expectations and desires regarding a product or service are met or exceeded. It serves as a key indicator of customer loyalty and the overall success of a business. High levels of customer satisfaction often lead to increased customer loyalty and positive recommendations to others.

Research Methodology

The study employs an explanatory research design to address research issues. It targeted college-level students engaged in online shopping within the Kathmandu Valley as a population. 400 respondents have been chosen through convenience sampling. The study collected primary data, by utilizing a survey questionnaire developed in 5 points Likert scale. Data have been analyzed and interpreted by applying

statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, variance, independent sample t-test, and correlation to have outputs of the survey.

Results

Table 1

Respondents' profile

Educational level	Frequency	Percent
Graduate	332	83
Postgraduate	68	17
Total	400	100
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	168	42
Female	232	58
Total	400	100
Campus	Frequency	Percent
Public youth	160	40
Sankhaedev	140	35
Global	30	7.5
Pashupati M.	70	17.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

As exhibited in Table 2, 90 percent of respondents believe that the purchase quality influences customer satisfaction but 1.5 percent of respondents disagree. Likewise, 86 percent of respondents agree that information availability influences Customer satisfaction but 2 percent don't agree. In the case of shipping, the majority of the customer respondents of our study responded "yes" that is 70 percent, whereas 6 percent of respondents disagreed.

Table 2

Opinion on Customer Satisfaction on online shopping

Questions	No.	%
1. Do you think product quality influences customer satisfaction?		
Yes	360	90
No	6	1.5
Maybe	34	8.5
Total	400	100
2. Do you think information availability influences customer satisfaction?		
Yes	344	86
No	8	2
Maybe	48	12
Total	400	100
3. Does shipping of goods influence customer satisfaction?		
Yes	280	70
No	24	6
Maybe	96	24
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

As exhibited in Table 2, 90 percent of respondents believe that the purchase quality influences customer satisfaction but 1.5 percent of respondents disagree. Likewise, 86 percent of respondents agree that information availability influences Customer satisfaction but 2 percent don't agree. In the case of shipping, the majority of the customer respondents of our study responded "yes" that is 70 percent, whereas 6 percent of respondents disagreed.

Table 3
Satisfaction of online shopping

Are you satisfied with online shopping?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	264	66
No	136	34
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

From Table 3, it can be observed that 66% of the candidates were satisfied with their purchases online while 34% of the candidates faced problems and were not satisfied with their purchases from online websites. The majority of the candidates were satisfied with the online purchase.

Table 4
Opinion on the priority of the most important factor influencing customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Total Responses	Weighted Value	Mean Weight	Rank
Product Quality	42	16	6	24	70	188	2.68	2
Information Availability	15	33	16	22	70	217	3.1	1
Shipping cost	7	20	23	7	70	144	2.05	3

Source: Field Survey

As evident from Table 4, the majority of the respondents ranked information availability as their first choice and ranked one, showing a mean weight value of 217 and a mean weight of 3.1. Product quality is ranked two by the respondents of the study with a mean weight value of 2.68. Shipping cost is ranked as the least important factor i.e. ranked fourth among four alternatives of factors influencing Customer satisfaction in online Shopping with a mean weight of 2.05.

Table 5
Websites used by the respondents to online shopping

Websites	Frequency	Percent
Kaymu.com.np	236	59.00
Nepbay.com	28	7.00
Sastodeal.com	92	23.00
Muncha.com	32	8.00
Other	12	3.00
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 shows that out of 400 respondents who have made an online purchase, kaymu.com.np is the most famous and preferred website by respondents which is 59 %, followed by sastodeal.com 23 %. Similarly, the preference of muncha.com , nepbay.com and others are 8%, 7% and 3% respectively.

Descriptive statistics

According to Gliem & Gliem (2003), Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the reliability and validity of each question in the presented dataset. The reliability of the items is shown below.

Table 6
Reliability results of study variables

S.N.	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
1	Product quality	0.742
2	Availability of information	0.853
3	Shipping	0.765
4	Customer satisfaction	0.718

Source: Field Survey, 2023

As evident from Table 6, the product quality variable exhibits a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.742, indicating good internal consistency. The availability of information has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.853, suggesting strong internal consistency. On the other hand, the shipping variable demonstrates a high Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.765, indicating good reliability. Similarly, the customer satisfaction variable shows a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.718, slightly lower than .750. All variables, except for customer satisfaction, exhibit satisfactory levels of internal consistency, ensuring the reliability of the items used in the study.

Table 7
Descriptive statistics for the whole sample

Variables	Mean	St. D	Variance
Product quality	3.19	1.18	1.39
Information availability	2.95	0.98	0.95
Shipping cost	3.06	1.02	1.04
Customer satisfaction	2.91	0.96	0.92

Source: Field Survey, 2023

As exhibited in Table 7, the mean value for the independent variable, product quality is found to be highest among other variables with a mean value of 3.19 followed by shipping cost, information availability, and then customer satisfaction. Likewise, Standard deviation and variance are found to be highest for the independent variable product quality with a value of 1.18 in standard deviation and 1.39 in variance.

Independent sample t-test

Table 8

Gender impact examining on customers satisfaction

Variables	Group	No	Mean	SD	P- value
Customer satisfaction	Male	168	3.69	0.52	0.25
	Female	232	3.52	0.77	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

As exhibited in Table 8, the analysis of the independent sample t-test has been carried out to compare the mean difference of the variables under study across the genders: male and female students. The table reveals that there is no difference in customer satisfaction in online shopping behavior between male and female as the p-value is 0.25, which is greater than 0.05.

Correlation analysis

In this study, the dependent variable is customer satisfaction, while the independent variables are product quality, Availability of information, and Shipping. Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to illustrate the relationship between online shopping behavior for price, convenience, and security.

Table 9

Relation between independent and dependent variables

	PQ	AI	S	CS
PQ	1			
AI	.769*	1		
S	.771*	.778*	1	
CS	.485**	.662**	.573*	1

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 9 demonstrates the correlation coefficient between product quality and customer satisfaction in online shopping behavior is 0.485, reflecting a favorable correlation between the two variables. Similarly, there is a positive association between customer satisfaction and information availability with .662 and shipping with .573, showing that shipping is likewise favorably correlated with customer satisfaction in online shopping behavior. According to the findings, there is a strong correlation between the availability of information and consumer satisfaction.

Table 10
Summary of Hypothesis Testing

	Association	Result
H1	Product quality – Customer satisfaction in Online shopping	Supported
H2	Availability of information – Customer satisfaction in Online shopping	Supported
H3	Shipping cost - Customer satisfaction in Online shopping	Supported
H4	Gender - Customer satisfaction in online shopping	Not supported

From Table 10, the result of H1 shows that there is an association between product quality and customer satisfaction in online shopping behavior. Similarly, H2 also presents an association between availability of information and customer satisfaction in Online shopping behavior. Likewise, H3 demonstrates a link between shipping and customer satisfaction in Online shopping behavior. Finally, H4 demonstrates that gender has no impact on online shopping behavior.

Findings and Discussion

The result found that product quality has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction in the online shopping of students in Kathmandu. The result is congruent with Jahanshahiet al. (2011) found that there are positive correlation between product quality and customer satisfaction. The result is similar to Niroula (2020) showed that there is a positive relationship between service quality with customer satisfaction. The result is almost similar to the findings of Momtaz, Islam, Halim, Ariffin, and Karim (2011) also found that product quality has a relationship with customer satisfaction.

The result found that the availability of information has a significant association with customer satisfaction in online shopping of students in Kathmandu. The study is almost consistent with the findings of Mustafa, et al. (2011), who revealed that information quality and the effects of website design are the major factors influencing customer satisfaction in online shopping. The result is almost in line with the earlier study by Guo X., Ling K.C., and Liu M. (2012), which stated that information quality and website design, e-service quality, and product quality, are the important determinants of customer satisfaction in online shopping.

The result found that shipping costs have a significant association with the online shopping behavior of students in Kathmandu. This result is almost in line with the findings of Momtaz, Islam, Halim, Ariffin, and Karim (2011) found that online shopping expenses in online and customer satisfaction are positively related. Similarly, the findings are congruent with Diao's (2015) conclusion that students care about price

while shopping online. It is almost in line with the earlier study by Sathiya Bama and Ragaprabha (2016), which revealed that customer satisfaction with online shopping is associated with the area of residence and the cost of recent purchases.

The study also found that there is no impact the gender on online shopping behavior. The result is not congruent with the previous study by Sathiya Bama and Ragaprabha (2016), and Ganapathi S. (2018), who revealed that customer satisfaction with their online shopping is associated with gender.

Conclusion and Implication

Product quality, availability of information, and shipping cost are positively associated with customer satisfaction with online shopping. As per the result, the availability of information has a high correlation with customer satisfaction with online shopping. Hence, online shopping companies need to consider maintaining the standard of the website with strong security mechanisms for providing up-to-date information about products and services to attract potential customers. They also need to maintain the standard of quality of the products and services to retain existing customers and meet their expectations. Likewise, they need to consider maintaining the shipping cost of online shopping for the better delivery services of online business to build up the company's image. Additionally, they need to formulate the same planning, strategies, and policies for both the male and female to achieve their goals. The future researcher can study customer satisfaction in online shopping by taking another variable in different geographic concentration.

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