Factors Influencing Students' Perception of Online Shopping: Evidence from the Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In light of the swift digital transformation, this study investigates the major variables affecting students' opinions of online shopping at Eastern University's Faculty of Commerce and Management in Sri Lanka. The study examines the effects of convenience, usefulness, ease of use, privacy and security, and saving money, time, and effort on online shopping behavior with a focus on students as active digital consumers. Convenience sampling was used to gather data via a closed-ended structured questionnaire, and SPSS 25.0 was used to analyze 320 valid responses. The hypotheses were tested using regression, correlation, and descriptive analyses. The results show that all of the chosen factors have a significant impact on students' online shopping engagement, with time, money, and effort savings being the most important determinant. Students' need for trust and data protection in online transactions is highlighted by the importance of privacy and security. To improve digital shopping platforms and encourage young consumers in emerging markets to adopt e-commerce, the study provides useful insights for e-commerce developers, marketers, and legislators.

Keywords: *Online Shopping Behaviour, Student Perception, E-commerce Adoption, Convenience and Usability, Privacy and Security Concerns*

Introduction

Sri Lanka's digital economy has expanded significantly with internet and smartphone adaptation. International Trade Administration stated that, in 2022, digital services contributed 4.37% of GDP and about 43% of internet users have done online purchases. With the current wave of digitalization, online stores have become a significant component of global trade. Advancements in technology and access to the internet have seen consumers enjoy the convenience of ordering services and products on the internet as never before. In particular, the online shopping trend was further promoted during the COVID-19 crisis since individuals were eager to find safe and contactless ways to meet their consumption demands (Chelvarayan et al., 2021). Researchers have reveals that 41.86% of Sri Lankan internet users buy online products at least once a month, with clothing and accessories being the highest-frequency purchases (Jayathilaka & Udara , 2024). Online shopping is a form of purchasing goods or services on the internet, often with the use of electronic payment as a means of financial exchange and the use of a medium to execute transactions, such as websites encompassing online stores or mobile applications.

One of the most active users of the digital platform is the students, especially those in higher institutions. The fact that they are comfortable with technology, together with their lifestyle preferences, has made them an important demographic to online retailers (Delafrooz et al., 2010). Nevertheless, with the increasing rate of online shopping in Sri Lanka, there are no empirical studies to help us understand the factors that are affecting perceptions of students towards online shopping, particularly, in Eastern Province. These perceptions pose a critical consideration among e-commerce enterprises, the platform developers and academic investigators who are inclined to improve the online shopping experience, particularly among members of this demographic. In this backdrop of, the paper has its place- the study of perceptions of online shopping among students of the Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

Rationale for the Study

The necessity to conduct this research can be explained by the fact that the concept of e-commerce behaviour among students in Sri Lankan universities is insufficiently understood, especially in areas that are less urbanized. Although several international researchers have pin-pointed such factors as convenience, usability, and usefulness as the core of the online shopping behaviour (Davis, 1989; Ajzen, 1991; Ramayah & Ignatius, 2005), the local setting offers specific conditions imposed by the cultural, economic, and infrastructure peculiarities that require special consideration.

Since the online market is growing very fast in the Sri Lankan market, as is the case with Daraz and Wasi.lk, the behaviour of users in a minority group

such as university students can only be significant. Moreover, the Faculty of Commerce and Management students are likely to have the theoretical knowledge about consumer behaviour, thus when it comes to the research of online retail preferences and obstacles, it is very likely to find the perfect research subjects there. The study will have practical implications for e-commerce developers, marketers, and policymakers, where researchers need to enhance user experience, enhance trust, and encourage digital adoption. Also, students themselves will gain since platforms will become fully adjusted to their unique demands and requirements.

The paper makes a valuable contribution to the literature as well as to business practice. Academically, the study uses and tests the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) within the context of higher education in Sri Lanka. These models have previously been proven in superior form in other parts; however, the local approach gives a concise view of behavioural dynamics within the university students.

In practice, the research contributes to knowing the major drivers and inhibitors of the adoption of online shopping. As an example, the results of other studies revealed that the ability to save time, money, and effort affected the perceptions of students most significantly (Chelvarayan et al., 2021). On the other hand, similar findings were also reported, which indicate that variables such as ease of use and privacy/security were also found to be statistically significant (Ramayah et al., 2003). This knowledge should provide e-commerce companies with an opportunity to customize their systems to offer the best user interface, high quality customer-service, data security and incentive offers to students.

Public policy and education implications are also formed by the study. Learning about the inclination of young people is essential to policymakers who want to spur the growth of the digital economy. Similarly, a university can incorporate or accommodate discoveries into curriculum development or auxiliary services, making the student a more enlightened digital consumer.

Research Aim, Research Objectives and Research Questions

Research Aim

To explore the key factors influencing students' perception of online shopping in the Faculty of Commerce and Management at Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the key factors that influence students' perception of online shopping.

2. To examine the impact of convenience, ease of use, usefulness, privacy & security, and save money, time and effort on students' willingness to engage in online shopping.

Research Questions

1. What factors influence students' perceptions toward online shopping?

2. How does the convenience, ease of use, usefulness, privacy & security, and save money, time and effort impact on students' willingness to engage in online shopping?

Overview of the Research Setting

The research study is located in the faculty of commerce and management at Eastern University in Sri Lanka. The student body in the faculty consists of 1,142 students with varied socio-economic backgrounds and equal exposure to digital content. The research used a structured questionnaire in the form of a Google Form survey to collect data from a sample of 320 students. This location was chosen by taking into consideration the fact that students who undertake programmes in the field of commerce and management are normally exposed to consumer behaviour and digital marketing topics, hence the students are suitable to take part in the study.

There is also the consideration that the region is unique since most students might have issues with infrastructures like poor internet access, missing payment gateways, or restrictions of delivery services; these factors would affect their shopping habits differently from those of urban communities. This research, therefore, not only evaluates perception but also sheds light on the convergence between digital commerce and rural or semi-urban infrastructure.

As compared to the regional counterparts, the e-commerce industry is yet to gain full momentum in Sri Lanka. Although the penetration of mobile phones and the availability of internet facilities have made a lot of improvement, some major concerns like the reliability of digital payment systems, privacy of data and mode of delivering goods have become major challenges to its penetration (Guo et al., 2012; Chellappa, 2002). Markets such as Daraz and Kapruka have increased the extent of their presence, but still, there is a fear of mistrust and adverse experiences by the youth because it is unpredictable.

The operations in the business environment of e-commerce must be flexible to such challenges. Perception of the users is an essential input into business decisions on interface design, customer care, terms of returns and cyber security. To the companies focusing on the Sri Lankan digital market and mostly on students, the findings of this study can facilitate innovation, establish loyalty, and tailor services and products tailored as per user expectations. Moreover, the reliability of its operations is felt when the operational strategies are aligned with that of consumer perception, hence trust and repeat usage.

Literature Review

More popular among customers, online shopping appeared with the start of covid-19 pandemic in 2019. It also curtails the physical accessibility of customers to the stores; thus, online shopping has increased. This prompted

the customers to purchase products on internet shopping malls everywhere and anytime they want without visiting anywhere, and a wide range of products gives the customer a choice (Jusoh & Ling, 2012). And also, customers can be able to receive free information on the product/offering services available on the shopping websites, and they are capable of comparing the features of products and the pricing, save time and cash (Al-Debei & Ashouri, 2015), conveniently (Bashir, Mehboob, & Bhatti, 2015) instead of a normal shopping, easier and faster.

Online shopping is not without complications, notwithstanding its benefits. The negative aspects of privacy and security, uncertainty in the product quality, absence of touch experience and time of delivery are still issues related to the consumer trust and satisfaction. Pavlou (2003) confirms that perceived risk is a significant disincentive to e-commerce adoption, particularly in developing nations where the technological infrastructure and consumer confidence in this medium are still young.

Moreover, online shopping behaviour can also be determined by the demographics, which include age, income, education and digital literacy. In the case of younger people with greater exposure to and comfort with technology, Lim et al., (2016) stated that they are more likely to take to online shopping owing to their familiarity and ease in the use of technological tools.

The literature specifies five important factors impacting shopping on the Internet: convenience, ease of use, usefulness, privacy and security, saving money, time and effort. As perceived value and repurchase intention, convenience, which is described as time savings, effort savings, and relief of mental load in shopping experiences (Jiang et al., 2013; Vu et al., 2018), increases as well. Ease of use is relevant to the ease of using and accessing a platform, and it can positively affect the consumer's attitude to that platform to a considerable degree, which can be justified by the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989; Gefen et al., 2003). Usefulness indicates the practical gains of the online platforms, including the 24/7 access, as well as the comparisons of the products, which will stimulate online transactions (Pavlou, 2003). They are very critical of trust, including privacy and security, and user participation worries about data security. Finally, one of the aspects that plays the biggest role in online shopping is saving money, time and effort, as such advantages as the discounts, convenience of retrieving the desired product quickly, and ease of the process make online shopping an appealing activity.

A research framework has been set up based on the relationships between "Students' Perception on Online Shopping" as the dependent variable and "Convenience", "Ease of use", "Usefulness", "Privacy and security", and "Save money, time and effort" as independent variables. Based on the research objectives, this paper will analyse five different hypotheses derived from the research framework.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between convenience and students' perception of online shopping.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between ease of use and students' perception of online shopping.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between usefulness and students' perception of online shopping

H₄: There is a significant relationship between privacy and security and students' perception of online shopping

H₅: There is a significant relationship between saving money, time and effort, and students' perception of online shopping.

Methods
Research Approach

The research was conducted in the form of quantitative research in a structured web-based questionnaire. The cross-sectional design was borrowed in order to collect information at only one point in time, and the sample used comprised of students attending the Faculty of Commerce and Management at the Eastern University, Sri Lanka. The reason behind this decision is that this approach would be used to measure the relations between some variables and the perceptions of the students towards online shopping.

Sample

With the target population of undergraduate students being 1,142, convenience sampling was adopted. The participants received the questionnaire through the internet using Google forms which received 320 complete responses. This sample contained respondents of different study years, gender, use and non-use of the internet, and extent of e-commerce engagement, so the sample was diverse in terms of selection by demographics. It was appropriate to use the convenience sampling technique given the time factor and availability of the population.

Measures

The questionnaire was organized in two parts. Section 1 covered demographic information like gender, academic year, number of hours spent on the Internet every week, the same number of online purchases per month, as well as the most preferred e-commerce sites. In Section 2, the principal variables in the research were addressed. It consisted of the following independent variables: convenience (Kwon & Noh, 2010), ease of use (Davis, 1989), usefulness (Habib et al., 2024), privacy and security, and save money, time and effort. The quantity of online shopping among students was used as the dependent variable. The use of a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was used with items being measured.

Data Collection

The data were obtained via a Google Form survey that was shared digitally to the entire student body. To gauge the clarification and relevance of the instrument, a pre-test was conducted. Cronbach's Alpha was examined as the test reliability of the instrument, and all the constructs scored between 0.515

and 0.662. Even though the Cronbach's Alpha value is below the recommended threshold of 0.70, it is considered as acceptable for preliminary study. According to Nunnally (1978), reliability alpha value of 0.50 or above are sufficient in the earcly stages of researches. Furthermore, the measurement items were adapted from prior studies and applied within a new contextual setting involving Sri Lankan undergraduates, which may contribute to lower reliability values.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were auto coded in Qualtrics, exported in Microsoft Excel and analyzed through SPSS. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the study participants' demographics as well as the respective distribution of the variables. The reliability of survey items was checked using the reliability analysis. Pearson correlation was used to determine the direction and the extent of the relationship that existed across the study variables. Lastly, the effect of the five independent variables was evaluated on the dependent variable, which is the online shopping behaviour, through multiple regression analysis. The regression model provided a thick R^2 value of 0.886, with which 88.6 per cent of the variance can be attributed to the variety of independent variables in online shopping behaviour. The most important of these was the assertion of Save Money, Time and Effort.

Results

The results collected with the help of a structured questionnaire could be used to investigate the factors which affect the perception of students towards online shopping. In presenting this chapter, the author presents an overview of the demographic profile of respondents, after which reliability and regression outcomes will be presented. The respective importance of factors is considered to show the most powerful factors that define online shopping habits and preferences of students.

Descriptive Analysis
Analysis of the Sample Profile-
Gender Distribution

The gender demographics of the respondents showed that the total number of participants was 320, of which the majority were female, with a proportion of 205 members, which forms 64.1 percent of the total study sample. In contrast, 115 male respondents comprised 35.9 percent of the total. These values can be noted to reveal the extent of more women's involvement in the study, thereby indicating that the female students might have been more interested or willing to answer the questionnaire. The total percentage is 100 percent, meaning that all responses of gender were taken into consideration. This gender disparity can affect the overall trend of perceptions in the analysis, especially in online shopping behaviour.

Study Year

Respondent spread according to the year of current study indicates that the third-year students were the highest,

with 127 respondents or 39.7 percent of the total sample. It is then followed by students in the fourth year, comprising 110 respondents or 34.4 percent. The sample consisted of 18.8 percent of first-year students who took part in the study as sample size (60 participants), and the lowest number of participants, 23 respondents or 7.2 percent, were represented by the second-year students. The overall percentage is 100, which shows the total set of data. This dispersion implies that most of the information collected during the research would be biased by the students in the later years of their studies.

Internet Hours Per Week
Distribution of the internet usage per week of the respondents indicates that most of the students used between 11 and 15 hours per week, either on the internet (n = 123, 38.4 per cent). This is followed by 112 students (35%) who use 6 to 10 hours on the internet. Also, fewer, 59 respondents (18.4 %), expressed that they spend above 15 hours during the week on the internet, and only 26 respondents (8.1 percent) have spent less than 5 hours on the internet every week. The results have indicated that the majority of students are heavy or moderate internet users, and this might affect their level of acquaintance and experience in pursuing online shopping activities.

Online Shopping per Month
The results show that the respondents conducted online shopping at a different frequency per month, which shows different purchasing behaviour.

Some of the students have never bought something online, and the lowest percentage of them, 3.8 percent (122 out of 320), answered that they shopped online less than five times in their entire lives, indicating that they were occasional users of e-commerce sites. This is preceded by 94 students (29.4 %) who purchase between 6 and 10 times a month, and 69 others (21.6 percent) who purchase between 11 and 15 times a month. There is also another smaller category involving high frequency use of 35 students (10.9%) who shop online more than 16 times a month. Although beneficiaries show a considerable rate of people using the internet lightly and medium, there is a discernible group of individuals frequenting the internet as customers to online stores.

Preferred E-Commerce Site
The respondents have a broad choice in the selection of shopping platforms, with preferred e-commerce sites. AliExpress was found to be the most popular location, where 61 students (19.1%) were eager to prefer it, followed by Temu and Amazon, where 58 and 55 students (18.1% and 17.2%, respectively) chose their preference. Out of the total number of students, 52 students (16.3%) use e-Bay, whereas the other 53 students (16.6%) prefer using other platforms that are not specified. Shein was picked by 41 students, and this corresponded to 12.8 percent of the total. These results emphasize the following fact that the students are not attached to one shop but prefer to try various e-commerce

services in detail grounding on the range of goods, the prices, and the convenience of the platform.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The results of descriptive statistics of the six major variables of the present study, which are related to Convenience, Ease of Use, Usefulness, Privacy and Security, Save Money, Time and Effort and Online Shopping Behaviour, give a general idea of how online shopping is perceived by the students. All 320 respondents gave valid answers, and the Likert scale used was 5 points. All the variables have high mean scores, with a range of 3.8269 to 3.9031, pointing to a positive perception according to the students' perception of the students. The mean score of convenience was 3.9031 with a standard deviation of 0.76359, and this implies that students have a great belief in the convenience of time and accessibility of online buying. Equally high and relatively low standard deviation as well were adopted by Privacy and Security (M = 3.8661), Usefulness (M = 3.8641), and Ease of Use (M = 3.8539). Mean of online shopping behaviour was 3.8269, which showed that students are centrally involved in online shopping.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis gives the relationships and the strength in terms of direction of both the independent variables, which are just the individual variables Convenience, Ease of Use, Usefulness, Privacy and Security, and Save Money, Time and Effort and the dependent variable, Online Shopping Behaviour.

All Pearson correlation coefficients are positive and significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), which means that the relationship between variables is high. The most prominent effect is that contained in the item "Save Money, Time and Effort", which shows the highest correlation with Online Shopping Behaviour (r = 0.939), implying that the reality of being affordable and time-saving reasons are paramountly important to students who shop online. A higher level of Privacy and Security is also highly correlated with the Online Shopping Behaviour (r = 0.662), proving that students are heavily concerned with the issue of trust and privacy of their data. The remaining variables, i.e. the Usefulness (r = 0.565), Convenience (r = 0.555) and Ease of Use (r = 0.525), show moderate but marked correlations with Online Shopping Behaviour. These findings indicate that although all five factors have some implications concerning online shopping behaviour among students, functional and safety are the more significant factors that define their preferences. Also, intercorrelations of the independent variables showed that they have high rates, such as those between Privacy and Security and Save Money, Time and Effort (r = 0.745) or between Usefulness and Privacy and Security (r = 0.625), which is an indication that the aspects are closely related in the minds of students. Conclusively, the correlation matrix confirms the existence of a strong mix of ease, usefulness, trust and efficiency

that largely influences the involvement of students in online shopping sites.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis calculates the internal consistency of both the variables by Cronbach's Alpha, where the relatedness of a group of items as a set is measured. All six constructs in this study show Cronbach's Alpha values that are greater than 0.5, and although relatively low, they are somewhat acceptable in exploratory research. The Privacy and Security construct has a Cronbach Alpha of 0.662, which implies that it has a fairly strong degree of internal reliability as each of the 6 items that composed the construct had a strong correlation with each other. It implies that the respondents held fairly stable views concerning the privacy and security functions of online shopping websites.

Another good finding is a sufficiently high reliability coefficient of the Save Money, Time & Effort variable, that equal 0.653 when considering seven items, presenting the reliability of the responses regarding the perceived practical value of online shopping. In the meantime, the scores of Usefulness, Online Shopping Behaviour, Convenience and Ease of Use are 0.579, 0.574, 0.537 and 0.515, respectively, which are classified as acceptable but caution us that they should receive better clarity of items or additional indicators in subsequent studies.

Although this is slightly less than the traditional share of 0.7, because of the contributions that they can bring to the understanding of the online shopping behaviour of the students, they should be included. These values correspond to the exploration data of such a study and the complex nature of users' perceptions, particularly in the environment of fast-developing online shopping technologies. Therefore, it was found that all the variables could be used in further analysis, including correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Regression Analysis

The model summary gives important details as to the effectiveness of the multiple linear regression analysis, which is done to determine the relationship of the effect of the different factors on whether students shop online or not. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between the construct of the independent variables, denoted as Convenience, Ease of Use, Usefulness, Privacy and Security, and Save Money, Time and Effort, and the dependent variable Online Shopping Behavior and the R value of 0.941 implies a very strong positive relationship.

The R-squared value of 0.886 implies that 88.6 of the change in the online shopping behaviour of the students is accounted for or explained by the independent variables chosen. It is a strong degree of explanatory power; hence the selected factors have an overall impact on the determination of perceptions and behaviours of students in relation to online shopping. The Adjusted R Square of 0.884 slightly lowers it to justify the many predictors

in the model and proves the consistency and generalizability of the model.

The standard error of the estimate is 0.73880, and it is an indication of the mean distance between the predictive values and the observed values. Although it is not ideal, it is still acceptable in social science research. On the whole, this model overview reassures the statistical validity of the regression model and the effectiveness of variables, particularly, Save Money, Time and Effort, as predictors of online shopping behaviour among students.

ANOVA Analysis of Variance table is a statistical test of the overall significance of the regression model adopted to test the factors that determine online shopping behaviour among the students. The TSS is 156.929, which means that this was the variation of the dependent variable, Online Shopping Behaviour. This amount of 139.022 is accounted for by the regression model (Regression Sum of Squares), and the unwarranted left is 17.906 and is attributed to residual error (Residual Sum of Squares).

The regression sums of squares calculated is 27.804, which is obtained by dividing the mean square value of regression by the degrees of freedom (df = 5). The residual sum of squares = 19.912. The average squared residual = 0.057, computed by dividing the residual sum of squares by its degrees of freedom = df = 314. The value of 487.567 of the F-statistic is very high, meaning that the regression model has a significant contribution to the improvement of the dependent variable compared to when this variable is not measured using a model.

The corresponding level of significance (Sig.) is 0.000, which is lower than the traditional alpha of 0.05. This indicates that the whole model is statistically significant, which implies that at least one of the independent variables (Convenience, Ease of Use, Usefulness, Privacy and Security, Save Money, Time and Effort) largely determines the behaviour of students in online shopping. Therefore, when the ANOVA results are checked, the ANOVA results confirm the fitness of the regression model.

Coefficients Analysis

The table of coefficients provides the results of multiple linear regression that was applied to measure the effects of five independent variables on the dependent variable that is Online Shopping Behaviour. Constant value (intercept) is 0.535, which implies the estimated value of online shopping behaviour when all the other independent variables are maintained at zero.

Among the predictors, the strongest with the highest unstandardized coefficient (B = 1.071) and a very high standardized-beta coefficient (beta = 0.991) are the predictors having a statistically significant strong positive influence (Sig. = 0.000), i.e., Save Money, Time and Effort. This means that students are greatly affected by the low cost of shopping and saving time when they do their online shopping.

The positive impact of convenience (B = 0.171, Sig. = 0.000) also applies and implies that the convenience of getting

products and services online plays a great role in influencing online shopping. On the same note, the effects of Usefulness (B = 0.090, Sig. = 0.001) and "Ease of Use" (B = 0.063, Sig. = 0.002) are significant, which implies that usefulness characteristics and ease of usage enhance the probability of the students turning to online shopping.

Students' perceptions of online shopping are inversely correlated with privacy and security, as indicated by the regression analysis's negative beta coefficient (B = -0.104, Sig. = 0.002). This implies that, when other factors are taken into account, lower opinions of online shopping are linked to higher levels of privacy and security concerns. This conclusion makes sense because heightened awareness of data security and privacy concerns may deter students from developing favorable opinions of online retailers.

On the whole, the regression model proves that the majority of variables have a significant role in explaining the behaviour of students who prefer online shopping, especially the term of value proposition when it comes to saving money, time, and effort.

According to the correlation analysis, hypothesis results can be state as following,

H1: There is a significant relationship between convenience and students' perception of online shopping.

The results revealed a significant positive relationship between convenience and students' perception of online shopping (r = 0.555, p < 0.05).

Therefore, H1 is supported.

H2: There is a significant relationship between ease of use and students' perception of online shopping.

The findings indicated a significant relationship between ease of use and students' perception of online shopping (r = 0.525, p < 0.05). Thus, H2 is supported.

H3: There is a significant relationship between usefulness and students' perception of online shopping.

The analysis showed a significant positive relationship between usefulness and students' perception of online shopping (r = 0.565, p < 0.05). Hence, H3 is supported.

H4: There is a significant relationship between privacy and security and students' perception of online shopping.

Results demonstrated a significant relationship between privacy and security and students' perception of online shopping (r = 0.38, p < 0.05). Accordingly, H4 is supported.

H5: There is a significant relationship between saving money, time, and effort and students' perception of online shopping.

The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between saving money, time, and effort and students' perception of online shopping (r = 0.939, p < 0.05). Therefore, H5 is supported.

Discussion
The results of the current study have fruitful implication on what exactly matters in terms of the perceptions of students towards online shopping,

namely in the field of the Faculty of Commerce and Management at Eastern University, Sri Lanka. The findings reveal that all five independent variables, convenience, ease of use, usefulness, privacy/security, and the availability to save money, time, and effort, significantly influence online shopping behaviour, yet, their effects are of a different scale. Of these, the factor of saving, time, and effort came out to be the strongest predictor with the largest standardized beta in regression analysis. It holds the idea that students, at least most of them, tend to be both time and money efficient and as such, the usefulness of the online realm is the major factor that will encourage them to buy online. The finding corresponds to the utilitarian element of online shopping identified in literature, insisting on the importance of the cost-trading possibility, ease of getting the products, and the fact that they do not have to spend much physical and cognitive effort.

The correlation test also indicated high positive correlations between independent variables and online shopping behaviour, to the effect that the experiences and expectations of students are influenced by several dimensions. Privacy and security particularly had a close relationship and a regression coefficient of a negative number. This finding represents a multi-varying relationship, and although students are aware of the need to maintain adequate privacy and data security, increased anxiety or unfavourable prior experiences could decrease their comfort in online shopping. This hints at the possibility of neglecting the use of platforms regardless of their seeming safety, since students are often worried about their safety and safety measures might not be communicated clearly, or one might simply have low digital literacy. Hence, backend security of e-commerce platforms aimed at students ought to go beyond enhancing security mechanisms in back-ends, by also supporting open privacy policies.

There was also a statistically significant impact of other variables, including convenience, ease of use and perceived usefulness, although it appears to be weak relative to saving money, time and effort. These results show that the importance attributed to platforms by students lies in their ease of use, usefulness in terms of functionality and their ability to decrease the inconvenience of conventional purchasing. This is in concurrence with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which state that the ease and utility aspects as viewed by the users are poignant when adopting a new technology. Interestingly, the findings also depict that students of later academic years, especially third- and fourth-year students, were more prone to online shopping, implying that the acquaintance or rather knowledge of technology and financial stability continue rising with time and translate to their online behaviour.

In addition, the demographic data showed a greater response rate by female students, which possibly depicts more participation in online retail or

interest, since it has been found in the past, that women tend to be more engaged in online shopping. Regarding internet utilization, the majority of respondents spent 6 to 15 hours on the internet on a weekly basis, which is a moderate to high usage level, and which explains why online shopping is viable and relevant to this group. Altogether, findings support the necessity to consider unique approaches of online retailers, focusing not only on design and functionality of the platform, but also on providing budget-friendliness and trust-enhancing activities to motivate students towards involved participation in online shopping.

Conclusion

In this research, the researcher tried to examine the more recognized variables affecting the online shopping behaviour of students, especially on five independent variables such as convenience, ease of use, usefulness, privacy and security and ability to save money, time and effort. With the responses of 320 students, mostly in their third and final academic years, the findings are adequate to serve as empirical evidence towards the power of these variables, mainly of saving money, saving time, and effort. Correlation and regression tests showed that the connection between this factor and the online shopping behaviour was very significant, and the value of the standardized coefficient was disproportionately high. This implies that the online shopping benefits in terms of practicality and economic gain are very motivating to the students. The

convenience of shopping any time, sitting anywhere, not having to travel and wait in lines, to get a discount and making a comparison in favour promotes their choices of online shopping. The convenience, usefulness and ease of use demonstrated the results as well, but not to a very great extent. These findings correlate well with other studies and models of TAM, whose main concern is that user-friendly and functionality advantageous sites enhance adoption and satisfaction.

The negative relationship between privacy and security and the online shopping behaviour of students came as a surprise. When privacy and security relationships with a shopping behaviour were correlated positively, however, the presence of these values in the regression model had a negative implication, with the implication that shopping behaviours may be unhappy with shopping since they could be put off by the issue of caring too much or being concerned that it is too difficult to understand privacy functions. It may mean that either students do not consider the risks to their privacy enough to bother them, or they do not appreciate the security measures as too cumbersome. Alternatively, a learner can think that the protections already exist in the platforms being used and therefore, he or she does not find them among the key considerations when making decisions. These insights reveal that a balance should be maintained between great security and efficient user experience in e-commerce platforms. Open policies, safe payment gateways, and simple information on

what safety precautions are in place can go a long way towards strengthening trust without compromising usability.

Gender composition results showed that female students participated more than male students, as it was indicated in the previous research that women tend to be more active consumers. Besides, third- and fourth-year students were more concentrated in online shopping, probably as their level of digital knowledge and that of economic dependence or autonomy grew during their learning process. Internet use behaviour also revealed that periodic e-commerce shopping is common among most students, as more of them indicated that they shop online two or more times a month, and that most of them have logged the desired hours each week (6-15 hours) online. It is worth mentioning that students preferred to use services such as AliExpress, Amazon, and Temu, another indicator that proves people heavily depend on international e-commerce vendors instead of local solutions.

The strength of the model was confirmed by a high value of R-squared (0.886), and the reliability of all constructs was also within acceptable limits, which confirms that the measurement tools used are also sufficiently reliable. These findings not only support the theoretical framework but also provide a practical piece of advice. The retailers must target cost-effective advertisements, simple user interfaces, and customized message delivery. Policymakers and education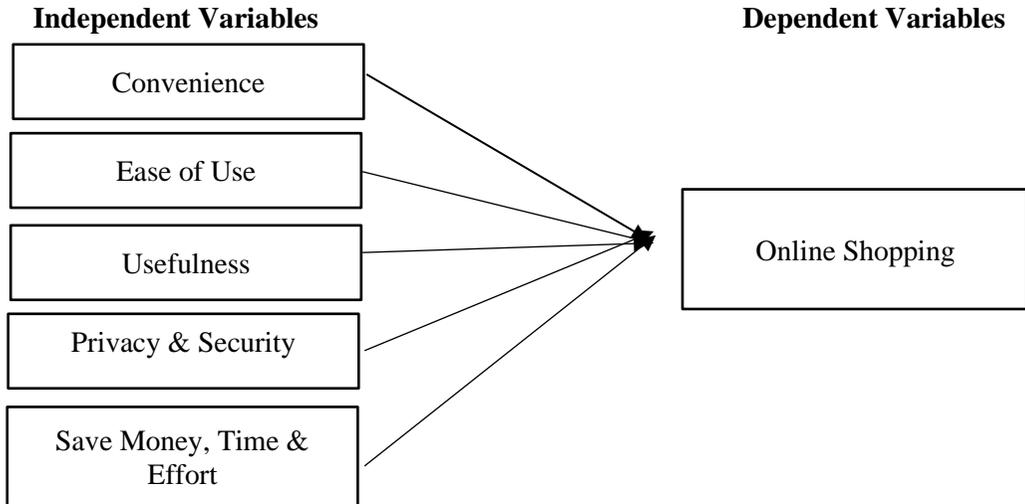al institutions can foster digital literacy to guide students in dealing with privacy issues in a better way. Competing against global platforms, local start-ups can be used to cover the niche requirements of students. Finally, the study helps in ascertaining the evaluation of online shopping by young digital consumers and establishes the direction in which additional studies need to be undertaken to gain further knowledge over the behavioural aspects of these consumers based on less homogeneous as well as longitudinal cohorts.

Limitations of the Study

To collect the data from the students, convenience sampling techniques were used. While this method is cost-effective and practical, it has some limitations. Since Commerce and Management students already have a higher level of digital literacy and also higher level of awareness about e-commerce concepts, the sample may not be representing the whole broader youth population in Sri Lanka. And also, those who are from other academic disciplines and non-student youth perception and attitude towards online shopping may be more favourable. Moreover, this study was conducted within a one faculty, which limits geographical and socio-economic diversity. As a result, the finding should be interpreted with caution, as they may not be generalized to all Sri Lankan youth customers across different geographic locations and educational backgrounds. Since this study adopted a cross-sectional design, the results are limited to a single time period and do

not account for changes in students'
perceptions over time.

Figures and Tables

Independent Variables   **Dependent Variables**

| Convenience |

| Ease of Use |

| Usefulness |

| Privacy & Security |

| Save Money, Time & Effort |

| Online Shopping |

Source: (Chelvarayan, Jie, & Fern, 2021)

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	205	64.1	64.1	64.1
	Male	115	35.9	35.9	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Study Year

Study Year					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	First Year	60	18.8	18.8	18.8
	Fourth Year	110	34.4	34.4	53.1
	Second Year	23	7.2	7.2	60.3
	Third Year	127	39.7	39.7	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Internet Hours Per Week

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Internet Hours per Week					
Valid	<5h	26	8.1	8.1	8.1
	>15h	59	18.4	18.4	26.6
	11-15h	123	38.4	38.4	65.0
	6-10h	112	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Online Shopping per Month

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Online Shopping per Month					
Valid	<5	122	38.1	38.1	38.1
	>16	35	10.9	10.9	49.1
	11-15	69	21.6	21.6	70.6
	6-10	94	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Preferred E-Commerce Site

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Preferred E-commerce Site					
Valid	AliExpress	61	19.1	19.1	19.1
	Amazon	55	17.2	17.2	36.3
	E-Bay	52	16.3	16.3	52.5
	Other	53	16.6	16.6	69.1
	Shein	41	12.8	12.8	81.9
	Temu	58	18.1	18.1	100.0
	Total	320	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Key Variable

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Convenience	320	1.33	5.00	3.9031	.76359
Ease of Use	320	1.75	5.00	3.8539	.71066
Usefulness	320	1.50	5.00	3.8641	.68306
Privacy and Security	320	1.67	5.00	3.8661	.68564
Save Money, Time and Effort	320	1.86	4.86	3.8353	.64918
Online Shopping Behavior	320	1.60	5.00	3.8269	.70138
Valid N (listwise)	320				

Table 7: Correlation Analysis

Correlations		Conven-ience	Ease of Use	Usefu-lness	Privacy and Security	Save Money, Time and Effort	Online Shoppin-g Behavior
Convenience	Pearson Correlation	1	.535**	.539**	.612**	.583**	.555**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	320
Ease of Use	Pearson Correlation	.535**	1	.534**	.617**	.566**	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	320
Usefulness	Pearson Correlation	.539**	.534**	1	.625**	.615**	.565**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	320
Privacy and Security	Pearson Correlation	.612**	.617**	.625**	1	.745**	.662**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	320
Save Money, Time and Effort	Pearson Correlation	.583**	.566**	.615**	.745**	1	.939**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	320
Online Shopping Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.555**	.525**	.565**	.662**	.939**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	320	320	320	320	320	320
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

Table 8: Reliability Analysis Results

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Level
Convenience	3	0.537	Acceptable
Ease of Use	4	0.515	Acceptable
Usefulness	4	0.579	Acceptable
Privacy and Security	6	0.662	Acceptable
Save money, Time & Effort	7	0.653	Acceptable
Online Shopping Behavior	5	0.574	Acceptable

Table 9: Model Summary Results

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.941[a]	.886	.884	.73880
a. Predictors: (Constant), Save Money, Time and Effort, Ease of Use, Convenience, Usefulness, Privacy and Security				

Table 10: ANOVA Results

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	139.022	5	27.804	487.567	.000[b]
	Residual	17.906	314	.057		
	Total	156.929	319			
a. Dependent Variable: Online Shopping Behavior						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Save Money, Time and Effort, Ease of Use, Convenience, Usefulness, Privacy and Security						

Table 11: Coefficient Results

Coefficients[a]					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.535	.140		3.835	.000
Convenience	.171	.043	.181	4.013	.000
Ease of Use	.063	.045	.065	1.390	.002
Usefulness	.090	.043	.099	2.072	.001
Privacy and Security	-.104	-.102	.033	-3.170	.002
Save Money, Time and Effort	1.071	.033	.991	32.459	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Online Shopping Behaviour					

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