



The Trend of Online Shopping amidst COVID 19 Pandemic: Influential Factors in the Students' Online Buying Behavior

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Abstract

Online shopping has become critical in the 21st century as most people are busy with hectic schedules. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people's mobility was limited, so they resorted to online buying, especially for their basic needs. This study aimed to determine the influential factors on the online buying behavior of students of Northern Iloilo Polytechnic State College (now Northern Iloilo State University) – Victorino Salcedo Campus, in the Municipality of Sara, Iloilo, Philippines, amidst the COVID 19 Pandemic. This descriptive-survey research was undertaken, and a researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather the needed data. The respondents of this study were 100 purposively selected students from Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management, Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management, Bachelor of Criminology, and Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology. The data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and means for descriptive statistics, while one-way ANOVA and t-tests set at the 0.05 level of significance were used for inferential statistics. It was interesting to note that the five factors, namely: psychological, social, cultural, economic, and personal, were "moderately to extremely influential" on the online buying behavior of students. Furthermore, it was revealed in the study results that there were no significant differences in the influence of the different factors on the online buying behavior of the students when they were classified as to sex and family income. However, significant differences were noted in the influence of the five factors when the students were classified as age and course. No significant differences were observed regarding the factors classified according to sex and family income. The World Wide Web has propelled changes in people's behavior worldwide to no small extent. Due to this opportunity, online shopping has emerged, influencing ordinary citizens' lives, including students. In times of pandemic, technology improves the lives of everyone through online mechanisms.

Keywords: Students, Northern Iloilo State University, Online Buying Behavior, COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction

The pandemic started in 2019, shutting down the economy and closing borders of almost 80 countries. Coronavirus 2019, or COVID-19, is caused by a novel severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 changed the world's landscape (Harper et al., 2020; Harapan et al., 2020; Verna et al., 2021). The people's lives were adversely affected (Wei et al., 2021). The study on the impact of COVID-19 on the economy showed that lockdowns were associated with a drop in local economic activities compared to areas that were not under

lockdown. A three or four-month lockdown had a similar effect on economic activity than a year in 2009 during the great recession. However, a study suggests that lockdowns have no significant impact on the economy because it remains unchanged by scale (Asahi et al., 2021). The world's top ten economies will collapse - policymakers in all areas should create remedies to help many countries suffer due to COVID-19 (Verna et al., 2021). The impact of the pandemic was huge (We et al., 2021). Thus, every country created alternative solutions to help the community. The government shifted to applying for loans to provide needed health care facilities, vaccines, and basic needs.

Everybody stays at home; no one is allowed to go out. The aftereffect of the COVID-19 pandemic shifted people to the digital world. One of those greatly affected were the students wherein the mode of instruction shifted from face-to-face to modular and virtual/online classes. The students resorted to using their gadgets in their ranks and other activities, such as buying or selling online. With online business shifting, many people easily buy or sell items using their gadgets. This does not exempt the students considered part of the "generation X" and conversant in using new technologies. Shopping with the comfort of a couch on the internet is called online shopping (Aamir et al., 2021).

During the period of the pandemic, online shopping became a trend. E-commerce and digital solutions were the alternatives the consumers had during this pandemic. Many wanted to stay home for safety reasons (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2020). For instance, in Bangladesh, in-store purchases are significantly affected. (Showrav et al., 2021). Families with enough money rely on e-commerce to buy daily basic needs.

After the pandemic, the trend might continue for years (Siani, 2020). The advent of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Business owners and consumers use the platform for interaction for online shopping (Goel, 2020). In 2018, smartphones were already used for online shopping but their use of such doubled during the pandemic (Trokington, 2021). Today, various gadgets have been introduced for online transactions. Life has become much easier now than it was ten to fifteen years ago, without any exaggeration. Everything is now more efficient and convenient; doing things physically is no longer necessary; with just a few clicks of the mouse and strokes on the keyboard, one can get many things done (Arakelyan, 2021). A survey revealed that 9 out of 10 people frequently purchase products, both essentials, and non-essentials, online (Siani, 2020). The internet has become a breath for all characteristics of human life, from education to economic factors; the internet has had a crucial role in finances (Chusminah et al., 2020).

The internet has played an vital role in human today; communicating with family, friend, and colleagues, acquiring information, and playing games are among the factors helped by this innovations. Through internet, life becomes simple such as online transaction with complete details of the products (Kuswannto et al., 2019).

COVID-19 has become one of the defining events during the pandemic; restaurants, bars, movie theatres, and gyms in almost every major city worldwide are shutting down, and office workers are being forced to work remotely from their homes. The demands for services are health and safety products, essential quarantine goods, sporting goods and fitness gear, home office equipment, toys, and digital services (Giosue, 2020). Before the pandemic, people worldwide always wanted imported goods. But the pandemic brought about changes in the mindset of the people; the restriction increased the demand for local products. Then, health is

essential to people's safety and health and hygiene. These critical items have hopped to the top priority list for businesses and individuals (Goel, 2020). The success or failure of a specific brand or item depends on the information generated by such research studies. In other words, the retailer brands' success depends partly on them. For instance, female teens spend on their handbags (Cheng, 2019). A Pippier Jaffray survey in the US revealed that teenagers spend around \$2,600 on food and clothes (Thomas, 2019).

In the Municipality of Sara, people resorted to online business, particularly when buying essential goods and services during the pandemic. Old folks and young people use their smartphones and laptop computers to buy and sell their products. As observed, Northern Iloilo State University students, formerly Northern Iloilo Polytechnic State College, in Victorino Salcedo Campus, are no exception to this new trend of purchasing goods. Thus, this study was conceived. This study aimed to determine the influential factors on the buying behaviors of the students during the COVID – 19 pandemic.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 shows the paradigm of the study

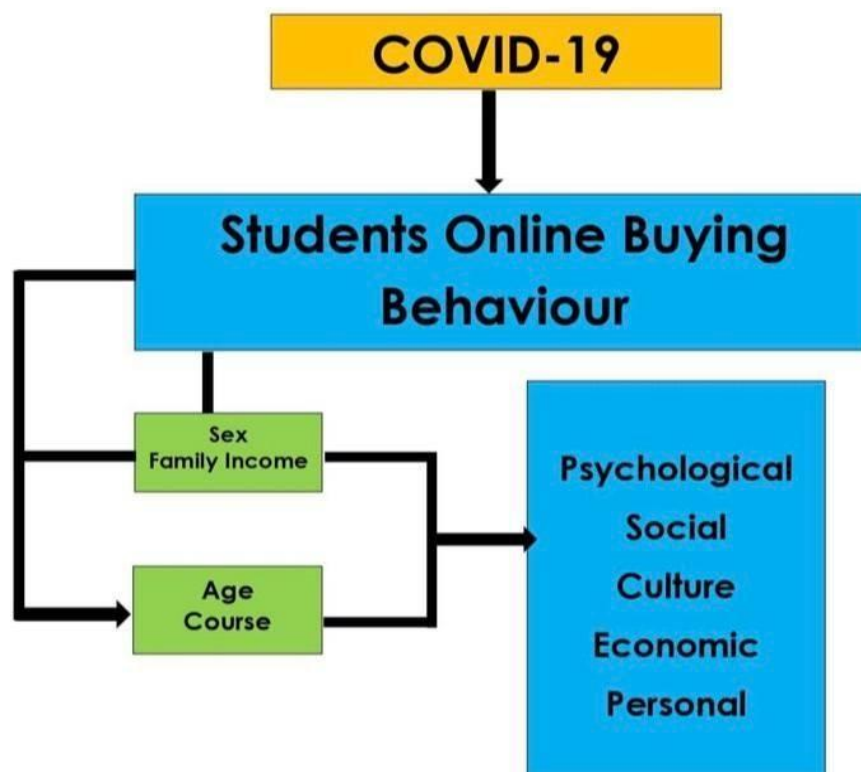


Figure1. A paradigm of the study.

This study was linked to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which relates one's beliefs and behavior. The theory developed by Ajzen in 1985 states that attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape an individual's behavioral intentions and behaviors (Brookes, 2021).

The concepts were proposed to improve on the predictive power of the theory of Reason action by including perceived behavioral control as applied to studies of the relations among beliefs, attitudes, behavioral intentions, and behaviors in various fields such as advertising, public relations, advertising campaigns, healthcare, sport management, and sustainability (LaMorte, 2019).

Another theory is the Theory of Reason Action (TORA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which aims to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviors within human action. It is mainly used to predict individuals' behavior based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioral intentions. An individual's decision to engage in a particular behavior is based on the outcomes the individual expects from performing the behavior. The said theory, often linked with the Theory of Planned Behavior, is a cognitive and mathematical model that helps psychologists understand human behavior, such as habits (Nickerson, 2022).

Fishbein's theories suggested a relationship between attitude and behaviors (the A-B relationship). However, critics estimated that attitude theories were not good indicators of human behavior. The two theorists later revised and expanded the TORA in the following decades to overcome discrepancies in the A-B relationship with the Theory Planned Behavior (TBP) and Reason Action approach (RAA). The theory is also used in communication discourse as a theory of understanding.

The primary purpose of the TRA is to understand an individual's voluntary behavior by examining the underlying essential motivation to act. TORA states that a person's intention to perform that behavior is the main proctor of whether or not they achieve that behavior. The normative component also determines whether the person will perform the behavior. According to the theory, the intention to achieve a specific behavior precedes the actual conduct. This intention is known as behavioral intention and comes from believing that performing the behavior will lead to a particular outcome. Behavioral intention is vital to the theory because attitudes to behaviors and subjective norms determine these intentions". The idea of reasoned action suggests that stronger intentions lead to increased effort to perform the behavior, increasing the likelihood of the behavior being completed (Fisbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive-survey design to ascertain the level of influential factors on the students' online buying behavior in terms of psychological, social, economic, cultural, and personal. The study's respondents were 100 students identified as online shoppers from different courses on campus using the stratified sampling method during the academic year (AY) 2020-2021.

The Municipality of Sara is a second-class municipality composed of 13,256 households from a total population of 52,607. For the age brackets of the people, 9.97% or 5,246 belong to ages 15-19, and ages 20-24 are around 8.96% or 4,717. The total revenue as of 2016 is P122,576,062.95 (PhilAtlas, 2022). NISU – Victorino Salcedo Campus is the sole tertiary institution in the municipality of Sara, Iloilo. The program offerings are Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology (major in Electrical Technology), Bachelor of Science in Criminology, Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management, and Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management. Thus, the study respondents were 100 students, 25 from every program. These respondents were purposively selected and agreed to be part of the research.

They were classified according to age, sex, family income, and course. The factors considered were psychological, social, cultural, economic, and personal. Relevant data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire duly validated and tested for reliability. Data collected were processed, analyzed, and interpreted using means, percentages, t-tests, and OneWay ANOVA. The margin of error was set at a 0.05 level. The data were tabulated, computerprocessed, analyzed, and interpreted

Results and Discussion

After a thorough analysis of the data gathered, it was found that all five factors, namely: psychological, social, cultural, economic, and personal, were "very influential" on the online buying behavior of the students when they were taken as an entire group.

When the students were classified as to age, those aged 18 years old and below, the social factor was "extremely influential," while the other four were "very influential." For those students whose ages ranged from 19 – 20 years old, the cultural and personal factors were "very influential," while the other three factors were "moderately influential," while for those students aged 21 years old and above, the five factors were "very influential" on their online buying behavior

When grouped as to their sex, the factors were "very influential" on the online buying behavior of the students, except for the economic factor, which was "moderately influential" among female students.

When the student was categorized according to their family income, all the factors were "very influential" on the online buying behavior of students except for the psychological factor, which was "moderately influential" among those whose family income was above Php 10,001 and above.

As to their courses, all the factors were "very influential" on the online buying behavior among BSHRM students. For BSTM students, the personal factor was "very influential, while the other four factors were "moderately influential." Among BS Criminology students, all the five factors were "moderately influential" on their online buying behavior; "extremely influential" for BSIT students; and "very influential among BS Computer Technology students.

Table 1 showed the influential factors such as psychological, social, cultural, economic, and personal on the online buying behavior of students when they were taken as an entire group and classified according to age, sex, family income, and course.

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Psychological</i>		<i>Social</i>		<i>Cultural</i>		<i>Economic</i>		<i>Personal</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
A. Entire Group	3.51	Very Influential	3.58	Very Influential	3.65	Very Influential	3.53	Very Influential	3.70	Very Influential
B. Age										
18 years old and below	4.45	Very Influential	4.06	Extremely Influential	3.88	Very Influential	3.61	Very Influential	3.81	Very Influential
19 – 20 years old	3.32	Moderately Influential	3.30	Moderately Influential	3.41	Very Influential	3.26	Moderately Influential	3.52	Very Influential

21 years old and above	3.74	Very Influential	3.96	Very Influential	3.98	Very Influential	3.91	Very Influential	3.95	Very Influential
C. Sex										
Male	3.56	Very Influential	3.70	Very Influential	3.79	Very Influential	3.64	Very Influential	3.78	Very Influential
Female	3.45	Very Influential	3.43	Very Influential	3.48	Very Influential	3.39	Moderately Influential	3.61	Very Influential
D. Family Income										
P10,000.00 and below	3.52	Very Influential	3.57	Very Influential	3.64	Very Influential	3.52	Very Influential	3.69	Very Influential
P10,001.00 and Above	3.0	Moderately Influential	3.73	Very Influential	3.70	Very Influential	3.79	Very Influential	4.04	Very Influential

Table 1. Influential factors on the students' online buying behavior

E. Course										
BSHRM	3.75	Very Influential	3.59	Very Influential	3.68	Very Influential	3.66	Very Influential	3.94	Very Influential
BSTM	3.14	Moderately Influential	3.23	Moderately Influential	3.33	Moderately Influential	3.37	Moderately Influential	3.46	Very Influential
BSCRIM	2.73	Moderately Influential	2.79	Moderately Influential	3.03	Moderately Influential	2.68	Moderately Influential	2.98	Moderately Influential
BSIT	4.19	Extremely Influential	4.40	Extremely Influential	4.35	Extremely Influential	4.29	Extremely Influential	4.37	Extremely Influential
Com. Tech	3.76	Very Influential	3.92	Very Influential	3.90	Very Influential	3.67	Very Influential	3.76	Very Influential

This article focuses on age as a significant factor influencing consumer buying behavior and customer attitude to price, and the findings of the study age is one of the factors connected with the consumer life cycle that affects consumer buying behavior. (Slaba, 2019).

Research about the effect of gender identity on consumers' impulse buying behavior showed feminine was the impulse buyer (Ozdemir and Akcay, 2019). The findings of the research paper on factors affecting female consumers' online buying behaviors were ages 21-25 years, graduates and students, dependents, single, and purchases mostly monthly. *The six factors identified are ease of use & convenience, security, utility, time effectiveness, outbound logistics, and feedback* (Rao et al., 2018).

Consumer buying behavior refers to consumers' attitudes toward certain products available in the market. Many factors influence a consumer's decision-making process, shopping customs, purchasing behavior, and the brand she buys or the retailer, such as culture, subculture, social class, membership groups, family, personality, and psychological factors (Rabi, 2014).

The key influencing factors for online shopping were availability and low price. Also, promotions, comparison, convenience, customer service, perceived ease of use, attitude, time consciousness, trust, and variety seeking were the main factors influencing college students in online shopping (Jadhav and Khanna, 2016).

The study about the effect of customer's psychological factors leading to purchase on online shopping suggests creating policies specifically for underdeveloped countries (Aamir et al., 2018).

Table 2 shows the differences in the influence of the different factors on the buying behavior of students when they were classified in terms of sex and family income

When the differences in the influence of the factors on the online buying behavior of the students were determined, the results showed that there were no significant differences in the influence of all the five factors on the online buying behavior of the students when they were classified as to sex and family income. The obtained *p* – values were greater than the set margin of error of 0.05. This means that the influence of the different factors on the buying behavior of the student was the same regardless of their sex and family income.

The study's outcomes indicated that subjective norms, online reviews, and price revealed significant relationships with Generation Y. Hence, the results also showed that online review was the strongest predictor that affects the online buying behavior of Generation Y (Fauzi et al., 2018)

Table 2. Differences in the influence of the different factors on the buying behavior of students when they were classified in terms of sex and family income

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Psychological</i>		<i>Social</i>		<i>Cultural</i>		<i>Economic</i>		<i>Personal</i>	
	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Sex</i>										
Male	.565	Not Significant	.185	Not Significant	.112	Not Significant	.190	Not Significant	.386	Not Significant
Female	.372	Not Significant	.785	Not Significant	.920	Not Significant	.637	Not Significant	.532	Not Significant
<i>Family Income</i>										
P10,000.00 and below										
P10,001.00 - Above										

Table 3 shows differences in the influence of the factors on the online buying behavior of students when classified in terms of age and course.

When the students were classified as to age and course, the results showed significant differences in the influence of the factors on the buying behavior of the students. The *p* – values were less than the set alpha level of 0.05. This means that the influence of these factors on the buying behavior of the students of NISU-Victorino Salcedo Campus was the same.

An online survey of 3,833 participants ages 18-64 during COVID-19 revealed anxiety and fear of the pandemic on the necessities. Thus, consumers behavior changed during the COVID-19 pandemic (De Crosta et al., 2021).

Table 3. Differences in the influence of the factors on the online buying behavior of students when classified in terms of age and course

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Psychological</i>		<i>Social</i>		<i>Cultural</i>		<i>Economical</i>		<i>Personal</i>	
	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Age</i>	.043	Significant	.005	Significant	.012	Significant	.004	Significant	.008	Significant
<i>Course</i>	.000	Significant	.000	Significant	.000	Significant	.000	Significant	.000	Significant

The advantages that online shopping offers compared to going to traditional stores should be understood by consumers entirely. Thus, knowledge and awareness of e-commerce must be essential in future research (Jukariya and Singhavi, 2018).

The study about influencing online buying behaviors of millennials revealed six out of twenty factors as the most significant. These are available products, promotions, refunds, consumer attitude, demography, and the reputation of online stores. Younger years have different purchasing behaviors compared to other ages (Chusminah et al., 2020).

The study about COVID-19 impact on buying behavior showed that assistance with marketing strategies should be appropriate. But the sense of nationalism is significant in this pandemic (Verna and Naveen, 2021).

Conclusions

The advancement of technology brought about changes in various fields of marketing. Currently, online shopping is in demand, specifically during the COVID - 19 pandemic. The online buying behavior of the students of NISU – VSC was influenced by psychological, social, cultural, economic, and personal factors, despite the degrees of influence of such factors. This connotes that people nowadays find online shopping or buying goods and services as convenient and practical, which may continue even after the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, technology during the pandemic plays a significant role for students

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