Selected Filipino Faculty Members' Online Shopping Experience in Manila's Online Market Place

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A B S T R A C T

This study is current and applicable to the new norm of comprehending the experiences of online consumers on online marketplace pages. This study concentrated on the online shopping experiences and reactions of selected faculty members by identifying key observations, and consumer experiences on the web that emphasize browsing, purchasing, and online flow. The researchers used a case study as a qualitative research method to collect responses from twenty buyers who varied in consumer experience, gender, and age. The interview was tailored to each participant based on online information and a guide question. Results of the interviews revealed that some faculty members at a local university in Manila find online businesses to be both popular and convenient, while they can readily access online marketplaces. In addition, they purchase frequently using this platform due to the low prices, which is advantageous for them as consumers, although they are wary of con artists and fake buyers/sellers. Meanwhile, the challenges encountered by buyers include product complexities and meet-up changes, as well as the central issues of online trust and social connection. Even though some product acquisitions are difficult, the study found that appropriateness, price setting, and seller connections kept customers purchasing on the online market. Despite offering valuable insights into the faculty members' online purchasing experience, this research has several limitations. The study is predicated on a twenty-participant qualitative investigation that was conducted primarily in Manila. Consequently, future research should involve populations from different regions. Numerous opportunities exist for future research to build on these findings. The development of a typology of online encounters and circumstances is one of the suggested areas for future study.

RESUMO

Este estudo é atual e aplicável à nova norma de compreensão das experiências dos consumidores online nas páginas do marketplace online. Este estudo concentrou-se nas experiências e reações de compras online de membros do corpo docente selecionados, identificando observações importantes e experiências de consumo na web que enfatizam a navegação, a compra e o fluxo online. Os pesquisadores usaram um estudo de caso como método de pesquisa qualitativa para coletar respostas de vinte compradores que variavam em experiência de consumo, sexo e idade. A entrevista foi adaptada para cada participante com base em informações on-line e uma pergunta norteadora. Os resultados das entrevistas revelaram que alguns membros do corpo docente de uma universidade local em Manila consideram os negócios online populares e convenientes, ao mesmo tempo que podem aceder facilmente aos mercados online. Além disso, compram frequentemente através desta plataforma devido aos preços baixos, o que é vantajoso para eles como consumidores, embora sejam cautelosos com vigaristas e falsos compradores/vendedores. Entretanto, os desafios encontrados pelos compradores incluem complexidades de produtos e mudanças no encontro, bem como as questões centrais da confiança online e da ligação social. Embora algumas aquisições de produtos sejam difíceis, o estudo descobriu que a adequação, a definição de preços e as conexões com os vendedores mantiveram os clientes comprando no mercado online. Apesar de oferecer informações valiosas sobre a experiência de compra online dos docentes, esta pesquisa tem várias limitações. O estudo baseia-se numa investigação qualitativa com vinte participantes que foi conduzida principalmente em Manila. Consequentemente, pesquisas futuras deverão envolver populações de diferentes regiões. Existem inúmeras oportunidades para pesquisas futuras desenvolverem essas descobertas. O desenvolvimento de uma tipologia de encontros e circunstâncias online é uma das áreas sugeridas para estudos futuros.

Introduction

The emergence of online shopping in the Philippines can be traced back to the early 2000s when e-commerce websites like eBay and Amazon began to acquire worldwide popularity. However, it wasn't until the middle of the 2010s that online purchasing in the Philippines took off. The increasing prevalence of smartphones and the internet is a significant factor in the growth of online purchasing in the Philippines. In 2021, there ought to be over 73 million internet consumers in the Philippines, with over 66 million of them using smartphones to connect. The proliferation of mobile internet has made online shopping more accessible and convenient for Filipinos, who can now purchase online whenever and wherever they choose.

The emergence of local e-commerce platforms has also contributed to the development of online purchasing in the Philippines. Lazada, Shopee, and Zalora are well-known e-commerce platforms in the Philippines that offer a diverse selection of products at reasonable prices. These platforms have made substantial investments in logistics and payment infrastructure, making it simpler for Filipinos to shop online and receive their orders in a timely and secure manner. As a safer alternative to physical shopping, the COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated the development of online shopping in the Philippines, where consumers have increasingly turned to online shopping. According to a survey conducted by Rakuten Insight, sixty percent of Filipinos now prefer shopping online, while forty percent prefer shopping in physical locations.

Filipinos have become more discerning and demanding with regard to the online purchasing experience itself. They expect e-commerce platforms to provide a seamless and user-friendly shopping experience, with features such as simple navigation, detailed product information, multiple payment options, and quick and dependable delivery. E-commerce platforms have responded to these demands by investing in customer service and after-sales support, as well as by continuously enhancing their websites and mobile applications. Furthermore, social media has played such a significant role in this affect that people can search for information at any time, upload their daily photos, play games from a distance, and, most importantly, purchase items online. It has become another buy and sell platform for Filipinos who are fond of buying food, goods, and other things or necessities due to its accessibility.

Overall, technological advancements, the emergence of local e-commerce platforms, and a shift in consumer behavior have all contributed to the growth of online purchasing in the Philippines. As the popularity of online purchasing in the Philippines continues to rise, we can anticipate additional innovations and enhancements to the online shopping experience.

Prior research has focused on customer satisfaction in business-to-consumer e-commerce (Liu & Kao, 2022), shopping motivations, loyalty, satisfaction, and trust (Widagdo et al., 2021; Melovic et al., 2021), and online shopping during the Covid-19 pandemic (Koch et al., 2020; Aryani et al., 2021; Jensen et al, 2021). Some local studies have also been conducted

on the online shopping behaviors of Filipinos (Pasetyo & Dela Fuente, 2020; Reyes et al., 2022; Keng et al., 2022). Although their contributions are numerous, these studies have focused on individual behaviors or experiences. None of these studies, however, have focused on faculty members or the experiences of individuals working in education.

This study aimed to examine online shopping experiences as a whole, not just purchase experiences, taking into account online and offline shopping practices as well as the appropriation of commercial websites among faculty members.

Materials and Methods

The study "Selected Filipino Faculty Members' Online Shopping Experience in Manila's Online Marketplace" employed a case study research methodology, emphasizing the collection and analysis of non-numerical data. By delving into qualitative research, the study sought to comprehensively investigate the subjective experiences, attitudes, and beliefs of Filipino faculty members, providing valuable insights into the intricacies of their online shopping behaviors in Manila's online marketplace. The purpose of a case study is to conduct an in-depth and contextualized examination of a particular phenomenon, individual, group, or situation. Case studies are designed to explore, describe, and analyze complex real-life scenarios, providing a detailed understanding of the subject under investigation In this instance, focus interviews were conducted with twenty faculty members of a local university in Manila. The study employed a qualitative research approach, which is suitable for investigating subjective experiences and attitudes. Participants in the interviews were selected using purposive sampling, which entails selecting participants with knowledge of the topic being studied. In this instance, the sample consists of twenty university faculty members who were chosen based on their knowledge and experience of shopping through online marketplaces. Participants must currently be faculty members of a local university, be a member of any Buy and Sell Facebook Page, and have made at least three (3) purchases via the Buy and Sell Facebook Page. Important Informants must have made at least three purchases through the Buy and Sell Facebook Page. The researchers communicated with their prospective participants via social media platforms like Facebook and Messenger.

The principal method of data collection is focused interviews, which were conducted via video conferencing. The interviews are semi-structured, meaning that the interviewer has a list of questions but can also ask additional questions based on the respondent's answers. The interview data were transcribed and then subjected to thematic analysis. This required identifying patterns and themes within the data and categorizing them. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity are incorporated into the study. Participants are informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. The collected data are kept confidential, and the identities of the participants are safeguarded. To

ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher employs techniques such as member checking, in which participants review the transcripts of their interviews, and peer debriefing, in which colleagues review the study's design, data analysis, and findings. A content analysis was conducted to reveal, on the one hand, the use and appropriation of websites and the shopping environment, and, on the other hand, to identify the adaptable strategies employed during online shopping experiences.

Results and Discussions
Dimensions of online shopping experience

Respondents were first asked to describe their online shopping experience, especially during the pandemic. Their responses were analyzed in detail, summarizing the key aspects in Table 1, highlighting the various dimensions of the digital shopping environment, and providing a closer look at the intricacies of the online shopping landscape.

Table 1.

Three-dimensional online shopping experience

Dimensions of the online experience and components		
Physical dimension Time pressure	-	*"Time passes quickly at the computer. (Participant 1). "We have to think it over because it [the computer he wants to buy online] costs a lot, so we must spend a lot of time on it." (Participant 2). "*

Companions
Visual
   variables: web
   design, colours,
   website
   ergonomics
   and ease-of-
   use.
	-
	
	-
		«Looking through will take time. [every website]. (Participant 4). The person who does not struggle with this issue will say things like, "I am not a compulsive consumer: I wait and wait until the product is sold at a discount," or something similar. (Participant 5). I would probably spend half as much money as I do each month if I had just a little more time to go downtown shopping. . " (Participant 3)
		"I looked at the website because a coworker had advised me to. (Participant 6). My standard response to inquiries about my social life is, "I have a lot of friends who shop on Manila Marketplace," " (Participant 4). "We talk to our friends to see if there is a way to get something for less money when it has a high price tag. We also ask them for feedback on the product, and based on what they have to say, we decide whether it is worthwhile to buy." (Participant 1). I never buy clothes online because it isn't worth the time because the style and even the color won't be the same when I receive the item, and for me, it's important that something feels good in my hands. . (Participant 7). The front page's ergonomics...many websites show the clothing from every conceivable angle (Participant 8). They need to grab my attention first, and then the content needs to make sense. (Participant 4). "[On mobile devices] the vision is limited, and it is not as appealing as it is [online]" "Vision [on mobile phones] is diminished" (Participant 9).

Ideological dimension	-	*« In contrast to my husband, who is a computer technician and purchases items for fun on tipidPC, I try to purchase useful items. Third participant. "I make a lot of purchases online, but unlike my husband, I never make pointless purchases. I*

Utilitarian and/or hedonic value of shopping	*purchase a lot of useful things. I only purchase things that are useful. It's (Participant 1). "There are some specific items we must have but cannot find in other markets, so [...] occasionally we need specific items for our pub," Participants 2 and 3. If you are not too stupid, you want the best deal for a product of equal quality. Therefore, I purchase a lot of furniture in search of the best quality-price ratio; I begin with a benchmark of prices, and if I need something, I browse websites. You get the idea. Participants 2 and 3. « There are times when you desire to read a book as much as you desire food. It is now! and right away! Participants 2 and 3. "The internet makes me want things," I say. Third participant. « I object to online shopping... I have to buy a TV set, but even though I'm not particularly in favor of it, I'll do it because some people I know have already done so, like Manu [one of his friends], who is obsessed with the internet and has used it. 4th participant. I have long used online retailers! I don't like to shop, so... Although I do some online shopping, I really dislike going to stores.) 4th participant.*
Pragmatic dimension - Web surfing & shopping - Surfing & browsing tools	*- « When I find a very intriguing product or item on a website that I'm not familiar with, I search for it to see what reviews the seller has received from other customers. It's (Participant 1). "I hardly ever browse the web for anything" (Participant 7). While I'm chatting with my friends, I'll occasionally go online to find something to say like, "Hey, look at this gorgeous t-shirt!" and then send the person a link to the store's website where she can buy it. 8th participant. You stated, "I saved the website and made a note of the sale dress." 9th participant. Because I am already familiar with the websites, I rarely even bother to bookmark them. (Participant 1).*
(browsing history, bookmarks) - Shopping tools (shopping cart, online comparison)	*You can put something off for a short period of time, like twenty or thirty minutes. 4th participant. Simply click it once more, she said, and it will be activated again in the following 20 minutes. This gives me time to consider it, after which I reactivate. Third participant. "I put [products] in the cart, but I take them out again! I've had it. 8th participant. "I also add [items] to the shopping cart, and when I'm ready to move on to something else, I do so. But when I feel like treating myself, I exclaim, "Let's go!" and we go shopping. Let's place a web order (Participant 3). "I never use the shopping cart because by the time I have enough money saved to buy it, it will no longer be for sale!" 4th participant. The shopping cart will not be accessible when I return to the website in three months, so there is no point in using it. (Participant 5).*

The first dimension is physical and relates to the fact that the pandemic of 2020 drove the increase in online shopping on Facebook's marketplace. Respondents identified the following physical aspects of the shopping experience: the design influence and visual aspects of the websites, the use of customer reviews and opinions expressed by customers, and the time pressure.

Moreover, respondents indicate that they may interact with peers while shopping online. Indeed, they emphasized their reliance on family and acquaintances for shopping assistance. They require feedback on the products that they find appealing. For example, one of the faculty members explains that when she browses websites for fashion labels or accessories, she sends a link to a friend with whom she is chatting (on Facebook) at the same

time. By participating in these social interactions online, the shopper positions his or her decision-making within the context of a collective process and a social consumption framework. This Facebook-based group process is limited to a select group of close acquaintances. The analysis also elucidates a gender distinction in shopping behavior: female respondents emphasize the social ties facilitated by shopping, the presence of shopping companions, and the character of shopping trips.

The ideological aspect of an online purchasing experience can be evaluated using the value of shopping. According to the research, the consumers interviewed may place a hedonistic or utilitarian value on purchasing. The shoppers claim that they purchase online because they want to indulge themselves, because it is convenient, or because they are searching for the best price-to-quality ratio.

Regarding the practical aspect of the online purchasing experience, numerous browsing tool applications have been emphasized. Some are quite intriguing, such as the virtual purchasing cart that is integral to certain online processes. Even if they do not intend to purchase the item, shoppers may place it in their virtual purchasing cart to take advantage of online price promotions, to save items they like, or for fun. This practice transcends purchase intent and is intrinsic to the online purchasing experience.

Trust, privacy, and the generation

Consumers have indicated that site design and recommendation are variables that can influence online trust. The respondents have faith in the websites based on word-of-mouth, the number of customers, and customer ratings and reviews. However, they argue that they do not need more specific information about the sellers; the public information is sufficient.

Table 2.

Online trust: selection of marketplace account

Online trust	*Marketplace accounts*
Site design and post	*"Because of the design of the website, as a consequence, we either trust it or don't trust it. As for me, whenever I visit the website, I think to myself [...]. After examining the various sections, the website design, and the tab providing information about the services, as well as the number of customers and the location of the site, I make my decision. (Participant 5). "The presentation of the website might play a role in the manner in which I [experience increased self-assurance]." (Participant 6)*

	"Accessibility is another really important factor to consider! When we go to a website for the first time, the ease with which we can sign up for an account can make or break our decision to continue using the site. I appreciate how uncomplicated and welcoming everything is! (Participant 5). " The web page looks great, it's very appealing" (Participant 4). My shopping habits have been altered as a result of the flashiness of this website. There is something about the layout of the site that causes me to behave in a different way. (Participant 2). "The website needs to be appealing to the eye, and then it needs to be simple to navigate." (Participant 4). "it is required that a bag be displayed on the girl's hand." [...] If there wasn't a model of it, I wouldn't be able to purchase it. (Participant 3). "It is of the utmost significance that the product be brought to the forefront." (Participant 8).
Customer ratings and Social interactions	- *"I order and buy on major sites, like Lazada Malls, and I don't even give it a second thought [...] I have purchased cosmetics from a website because a friend of mine had recommended it, and I have also purchased clothes from a small Marketplace shops managed by a couple who travel and sell original products, because it had been recommended to me by a friend, so I did not question whether or not it was a legitimate business. (Participant 6). "If something is very expensive, we will ask our friends if they can get it for a lower price or if they have any thoughts on whether or not it is something that is worth purchasing," (Participant 1). "I have viewed this website through the YouTube platform." (Participant 6 - faculty) "A rating is assigned to each internet profile based on the reviews and comments made by customers. There are ratings for that. (Participant 3). « There are testimonies, and there are stars. (Participant 5). "For sellers, for instance, there is the total number of sales; you are free to check both the total number of sales and the satisfaction rate... (Participant 3)...*
Age / generation of web users	*"Once you log onto a social networking site, your safety is no longer guaranteed. (Participant 2). "I would rather not shop online because you never know what you're going to get!" (Participant 3). "I do not have faith in the online platform. I prefer to shop in more conventional establishments" (Jessica). "I've never made a purchase through the internet before" (Fiona). " I am not accustomed to shopping online and most importantly purchasing things (Participant 5). "Cash is better [than electronic payment] because we are more aware of how much money we are spending. Perhaps this is because I used to play the game "Monopoly" when I was a kid (Participant 2). "I never visit websites hosted in other countries or that are unknown to me." « Most of the time, I do my shopping on Shopee websites or I watch live selling. »* *(Participant 1)*

Participants shop online less frequently, and above all, they are much more followers: they only browse extremely popular products and live sales. This skepticism is revealed by their shopping experiences, specifically their use of personal information. They are all hesitant to provide personal information online, with the youngest respondents being the most reticent to do so. In addition to faculty members who are hesitant to provide their credit card number online (only one female faculty considers the risk-perceived do not check her e-commerce utilization).

Discussion

This study demonstrates that the theoretical framework of consumption can be applied to the online context: the dimensions of the online shopping experience enable us to analyze the global online shopping experience of consumers and their companions. From the quest for information to the final purchase, the physical aspect of online shopping is a social and shared experience. In fact, respondents report shopping online with friends and differentially with family and peers. First, consumers should be aware that online purchasing is not typically a solitary activity: they may or may not be with a companion. They may converse with their companions or with a bystander. The experience may be enhanced by peers, as opposed to family members (parents for a faculty member or spouse for a woman). Consistent with the findings of Borges, Chebat, and Babin's (2010) study on offline companions, they exhibit more positive affect and hedonic shopping value when shopping with a friend than when shopping alone or with a family member. It is interesting to observe that gender influences online shopping behavior from a social perspective. Literature (e.g. Gefen, 2003) demonstrates that men and women have distinct online social presences. Female respondents indicated a greater need to share their experience than male respondents.

Concerning the pragmatic aspect of the online experience, our research reveals that, similar to traditional store purchasing, consumers declare context- and situation-specific online patronage behaviors. Customers may utilize the websites in a variety of ways, including opening multiple windows at the start of their session, using their bookmarks and browsing history, and visiting specific websites. Concerning the use and rituals of other Internet tools, such as the shopping cart, this study demonstrates that shoppers may place items in an online shopping cart with or without the intent to purchase them, in order to secure online price promotions, to set aside items they particularly like, or for fun. These findings correspond to those of Close and Kukar-Neely (2010).

These distinct internet activities and applications define distinct online purchasing experiences, not shoppers. A single online shopper may have varying experiences depending on the time of day, the location (at home with a cup of tea or at school during lunch), and the company (friends, parents, etc.). While extensive literature has emphasized that the online shopping context is unique and may require a new focus on purchasing behaviors, Rohm and Swaminathan (2004) state that "there is a dearth of research investigating typologies in the online shopping context." They categorized online customers of a unique online retailer within a single industry. Therefore, the clusters may vary in a different online context. This research indicates that it would be worthwhile to establish a typology for online shopping.

On the other hand, product complexities impact faculty members' online shopping experiences in various ways, as evidenced by their responses. The time pressure experienced by participants, especially when contemplating significant purchases, highlights the influence of product complexities on decision-making. Certain product categories, such as computers,

involve more deliberation due to their cost implications. Additionally, the visual aspects, including web design, play a crucial role in the online shopping landscape, indicating that certain product types, particularly those requiring a detailed examination of how aesthetics affect product design (Shi et al., 2021), may pose more challenges than others.

Moreover, the study underscores trust issues as a significant concern for online shoppers, with factors like site design, customer ratings, and social interactions influencing online trust. Respondents place trust in websites based on word-of-mouth and customer reviews rather than seeking specific information about sellers similar to results of other studies that showed positive reviews lead to perceptions of greater benevolence, ability, and integrity (Dong et al., 2018). To mitigate trust issues, potential strategies may include enhancing site design for increased user confidence, ensuring accessibility, and incorporating features that facilitate social interactions. Emphasizing transparency and encouraging customer reviews could further contribute to building trust in online marketplaces.

Likewise, results revealed that faculty members navigate trade-offs between convenience and low prices, and various factors influence their decisions. The study suggests that respondents may prioritize convenience, especially when browsing popular products and live sales. Similar studies have confirmed that convenience positively influences downstream consumer behavior (Cho et al., 2021; Roy et al., 2020). There is a nuanced approach to balancing price and product quality, considering the best price-to-quality ratio for certain purchases, such as furniture. The findings are consistent with prior research (Pessoa et al., 2020) that indicated price to be the primary determinant of purchasing decisions. The influence of social interactions, word-of-mouth recommendations, and the perceived value of online shopping contributes to the intricate decision-making process where convenience and low prices are weighed against each other.

Regarding the nature and function of trust in online shopping behavior, it is intriguing to note that respondents trust pure players and brick-and-mortar businesses not because of the guarantees or trustworthy relationships the vendors may offer; consumers report not even seeking out this information. They reduce their risk perceptions by relying on peers and acquaintances, as well as by observing the number of customers on the websites. This result is consistent with the findings of Bart et al. (2005), who identified a number of site variables (in addition to brand and fulfillment variables) that influence consumers' trust. They affirmed that when designing a website, privacy and security are important, but not as important as navigation and presentation.

Conclusions

Results of the study demonstrate the complexity of online purchasing experiences using online marketplaces. While prior research has highlighted the significance of vendor-provided insurance in mitigating customers' risk perceptions, the current study suggests that social networks may also play a significant role. Specifically, the study indicates that offline and online social networks (such as friends, blogs, etc.) can affect the online purchasing experience.

This is an intriguing discovery because it suggests that the traditional emphasis on vendor-provided insurance to reduce risk perceptions may not be adequate. Instead, online retailers may need to take into account the broader social context of online purchasing. In order to establish trust and credibility among prospective customers, for instance, they may need to engage with social influencers or other reputable individuals.

However, it is important to note that the study does not provide a definitive answer to the question of how Filipino online sellers can best leverage social networks to enhance the online purchasing experience since this study focused on the online marketplace experiences of the faculty members. There may be a need for additional research to investigate this question in greater depth and to identify specific strategies that online vendors can employ to interact meaningfully with social networks.

Overall, this study highlights the need for online sellers to consider the broader social context of online purchasing in addition to traditional risk reduction strategies. By doing so, they may be better able to establish trust and credibility among potential customers, thereby enhancing the online purchasing experience as a whole of faculty members and all online customers, as a whole. Future researchers should also identify potential differences in online shopping behaviors and experiences among faculty members in urban versus rural areas, and how might these differences inform e-commerce strategies and policies to pave the way for relevant policies and programs to support e-commerce in the local areas.

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