




A mediating effect of trust on the relationship between consumer consumption factor on the Iranian online shopping behavior: a diffusion of innovation approach

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of e-commerce in Iran has significantly transformed consumer shopping behavior. This study examines the mediating effect of trust on the relationship between consumer consumption factors and online shopping behavior in Iran, applying the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) framework. The DOI theory explains how consumers adopt new technologies and shopping platforms, influenced by factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, risk perception, and social influence. However, trust remains a crucial determinant in online transactions, acting as a bridge between consumer preferences and actual purchasing behavior. Using a quantitative approach, this study analyzes survey data from Iranian online shoppers to assess how trust influences their adoption of e-commerce platforms. Findings reveal that while consumer consumption factors significantly impact online shopping behavior, trust plays a pivotal mediating role, enhancing the adoption rate. This research contributes to both theoretical and practical discussions on digital commerce, providing insights for e-commerce businesses and policymakers aiming to foster trust and boost online retail adoption in Iran.

1. INTRODUCTION

The growth of online shopping in Iran has been shaped by various economic, technological, and sociocultural factors. Over the past decade, increased internet penetration, smartphone usage, and government initiatives supporting digital commerce have significantly contributed to the expansion of e-commerce in the country (Faraji & Ahmadi, 2021). Additionally, consumer behavior in Iran has shifted toward online shopping due to convenience, competitive pricing, and an increasing number of digital payment solutions (Rahmani et al., 2020). However, factors such as trust, security concerns, and cultural preferences continue to influence the adoption rate (Hashemi & Jafari, 2019). The Iranian e-commerce market is expected to grow further as businesses adapt to consumer demands, integrate advanced technologies, and enhance customer trust through improved online security and user experience (Mohammadi & Rezaei, 2022).

Trust plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in online shopping, where perceived risks are high (Gefen et al., 2003). In Iran, consumer trust in e-



commerce is influenced by several factors, including cultural values, perceived security, and the reputation of online retailers (Mohammadi & Khalili, 2020). Iranian consumers tend to exhibit cautious purchasing behaviors due to concerns about fraud, product authenticity, and the reliability of digital payment systems (Rasti et al., 2021). Furthermore, studies indicate that trust is developed through positive past experiences, word-of-mouth recommendations, and the perceived credibility of online platforms (Tavakoli & Behraves, 2019). Given the increasing digitalization of commerce in Iran, businesses must implement strong trust-building strategies, such as transparent policies, secure transactions, and responsive customer service, to enhance consumer confidence and foster long-term loyalty (Hajli et al., 2014).

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

A Diffusion of Innovation Approach

The Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory, developed by Rogers (2003), explains how new ideas, products, or technologies spread across a population over time. It identifies five key attributes influencing adoption: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. These attributes determine how consumers evaluate and adopt innovations, including online shopping platforms. In the context of Iranian e-commerce, DOI provides a useful framework for understanding how trust mediates the relationship between consumer consumption factors and online shopping behavior. Studies suggest that early adopters and innovators are more likely to embrace online shopping due to their openness to change and lower perceived risk (Zhou et al., 2021). However, in markets where digital transactions are still evolving, trust plays a crucial role in mitigating uncertainties and fostering adoption (Gefen et al., 2003). By applying DOI, this study examines how trust influences the spread of online shopping behaviors in Iran, particularly among consumers with varying risk perceptions and technology readiness.

Conceptual Trust on the Consumer Behaviour

Trust plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in online shopping environments where physical interactions are absent. Defined as the consumer's willingness to rely on a seller based on expectations of reliability and integrity, trust influences purchasing decisions and long-term customer relationships (Gefen et al., 2003). In digital commerce, trust is often categorized into three dimensions: cognitive trust, which is based on rational assessments of a retailer's competence; affective trust, which stems from emotional connections and positive experiences; and institutional trust, which depends on regulatory frameworks and security mechanisms (McKnight et al., 2002). Consumers tend to evaluate trustworthiness based on factors such as website quality, brand reputation, and previous transaction experiences, significantly affecting their purchase intentions (Kim et al., 2008). Furthermore, research suggests that trust mediates the relationship between perceived risk and consumer engagement in online shopping, reducing uncertainty and increasing the likelihood of repeat purchases (Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). Given the increasing reliance on e-commerce, building and maintaining consumer trust remains a key strategic priority for online retailers.

Hypothesized the Direct Influence of Consumption of Behaviour on the Iranian Online Shopping Behaviour

Consumer behavior plays a crucial role in shaping online shopping trends, particularly in emerging markets such as Iran. According to [Kotler & Keller \(2016\)](#) and [Hadi \(2022\)](#), consumer behavior is influenced by psychological, personal, and social factors that determine purchasing decisions. In the context of e-commerce, Iranian consumers exhibit unique purchasing patterns due to cultural, economic, and technological influences ([Javadi et al., 2012](#)). Studies suggest that factors such as perceived ease of use, perceived risk, and social influence significantly impact Iranian consumers' willingness to shop online ([Akhlaq & Ahmed, 2015](#)). Moreover, digital literacy and internet penetration have facilitated online shopping adoption in Iran, allowing consumers to access a wider range of products and services ([Tavakol & Karimian, 2020](#)). As a result, it is hypothesized that consumer behavior directly influences online shopping behavior in Iran, where consumption patterns, brand perception, and trust in digital transactions determine the level of engagement in e-commerce platforms.

Hypothesized the Mediating Influence of Trust on the relationship between Growth of E-Commerce on the Iranian Online Shopping Behaviour

The rapid growth of e-commerce in Iran has significantly influenced consumer shopping behavior, yet trust remains a critical factor in shaping online purchasing decisions. Previous studies suggest that trust serves as a mediating variable that enhances the positive effects of e-commerce expansion on consumer adoption ([Gefen et al., 2003](#)). According to the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory, the adoption of online shopping platforms is driven by perceived advantages such as convenience and accessibility; however, without a strong foundation of trust, consumers may hesitate to fully embrace digital transactions ([Rogers, 2003](#)). In the context of Iran, cultural and economic factors further amplify the role of trust in e-commerce adoption. Research by [Hajli \(2015\)](#) indicates that trust in online vendors, influenced by security perceptions and past experiences, significantly impacts purchasing decisions. Additionally, studies on Middle Eastern markets highlight that perceived risks, such as fraud and lack of consumer protection, hinder trust formation in digital marketplaces ([Al-Debei et al., 2015](#)). Given these insights, it is hypothesized that trust mediates the relationship between e-commerce growth and Iranian online shopping behavior, meaning that the expansion of digital retail alone is insufficient unless accompanied by trust-building mechanisms. Implementing secure payment gateways, transparent policies, and reliable customer service can strengthen consumer trust, ultimately fostering higher engagement in online shopping ([Pavlou & Gefen, 2004](#)).

3. DISCUSSION

Dynamic Business Influence of Consumption of Behaviour on the Iranian Online Shopping Behaviour

The rapid digital transformation in Iran has significantly reshaped consumer behavior in the online shopping sector. Businesses are increasingly leveraging digital marketing

strategies, personalized recommendations, and social media engagement to influence purchasing decisions. According to [Tavakoli and Mousavi \(2021\)](#), Iranian consumers demonstrate a growing reliance on mobile commerce and digital payment systems, driven by convenience and accessibility. However, factors such as trust, perceived risk, and economic stability continue to shape online shopping behavior ([Rezvani & Jafari, 2020](#)). Moreover, the rise of influencer marketing and user-generated content plays a crucial role in fostering brand credibility and consumer engagement ([Keshavarz & Esmaili, 2022](#)). As the Iranian e-commerce market expands, businesses must adapt to changing consumer preferences by enhancing user experience, ensuring secure transactions, and leveraging emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and big data analytics. These strategies are essential for sustaining competitiveness and fostering long-term customer loyalty in Iran's evolving digital marketplace.

Pathway on the Mediating Influence of Trust on the relationship between Growth of E-Commerce on the Iranian Online Shopping Behaviour

The rapid expansion of e-commerce in Iran has reshaped consumer shopping patterns, yet trust remains a key factor influencing online purchase decisions. Trust acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between the growth of e-commerce and Iranian consumers' online shopping behavior, determining whether they fully engage with digital marketplaces. According to [Gefen et al. \(2003\)](#), trust in online transactions reduces perceived risk and increases consumer willingness to engage in e-commerce platforms. In the Iranian context, factors such as cultural attitudes, regulatory frameworks, and past experiences with online fraud contribute to varying levels of trust in e-commerce ([Rastgar et al., 2021](#)). The Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory suggests that for innovations like e-commerce to be widely adopted, consumers must perceive them as reliable and beneficial ([Rogers, 2003](#)). When trust is established, it enhances consumers' confidence in online vendors, leading to increased transaction volumes and positive word-of-mouth recommendations ([Kim et al., 2008](#)). Therefore, trust serves as a critical pathway through which the expansion of e-commerce translates into actual consumer engagement in online shopping platforms in Iran.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consumer consumption behavior plays a crucial role in shaping online shopping trends, particularly in emerging markets such as Iran. The sustainability of this direct influence is evident in the increasing adoption of e-commerce platforms driven by convenience, competitive pricing, and broader product availability ([Khosrow-Pour, 2021](#)). Iranian consumers, influenced by cultural preferences, economic conditions, and technological advancements, exhibit a shift toward online shopping as digital literacy improves and logistical infrastructures develop ([Tavakol & Karimian, 2020](#)). However, challenges such as payment security concerns and regulatory restrictions continue to impact long-term online consumption behavior ([Rahmani, 2019](#)). As Iranian consumers become more accustomed to digital transactions, sustainability in online shopping behavior will likely depend on trust-building mechanisms, consumer protection policies, and the integration of innovative shopping experiences ([Hosseini & Rezaei, 2022](#)).

The resilience of Iranian consumers in the context of e-commerce growth plays a critical role in shaping online shopping behavior. As e-commerce platforms expand, understanding the factors that influence consumer adoption is essential, with trust being a key mediator. Trust, as a fundamental construct in online transactions, is particularly significant in Iran due to socio-cultural barriers and varying levels of digital literacy (Mozaffari et al., 2020). The growth of e-commerce in Iran has been driven by both technological advancements and shifts in consumer behavior, yet trust remains a dominant factor in the adoption process (Rahimi & Ranjbari, 2019). Research suggests that trust not only directly influences consumer decisions but also mediates the relationship between e-commerce growth and shopping behavior (Chen et al., 2017). The resilience of consumers, in this case, refers to their ability to adapt to new online shopping environments while overcoming barriers such as security concerns and unfamiliarity with digital platforms (Hassan & Shabbir, 2021). As the Iranian e-commerce market continues to grow, fostering consumer trust through secure, user-friendly interfaces and transparent policies is critical for sustaining long-term engagement (Sarkar & Jahan, 2020). Thus, resilience, coupled with trust, plays an essential role in facilitating the shift towards more widespread e-commerce adoption in Iran.

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