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Meta-Analysis of Affecting Factors on Sales of Online Stores in Iran

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to conduct a comprehensive meta-analysis of studies conducted on factors affecting sales in online stores in Iran. This study is applicable in terms of purpose, and documentary and quantitative-review in terms of method. A coding form was used to collect data, which is equivalent to a questionnaire or interview in other research methods. The data were analyzed using CMA2 software, which focuses on calculating the effect size. The statistical population included articles published between 2015 and 2025 on factors affecting sales in Iranian online stores. Out of the initial 84 studies, 36 studies met the inclusion criteria for the meta-analysis and were selected. Data analysis included calculating the effect size, assessing publication bias, and testing the significance of the effect size. The findings showed that the variables under study were free of publication bias or had low bias. Finally, 9 key variables that were studied more than 3 times were identified, which are: perceived usefulness, innovation, trust, security, ease of use, website quality, e-marketing, customer experience and satisfaction. These variables were identified as the main factors affecting sales in Iranian online stores. It is suggested that stores increase perceived usefulness by providing accurate product information and using new technologies such as artificial intelligence; policymakers strengthen trust in online shopping by establishing transparent regulations and developing security infrastructures.

Keywords:
Online store,
Meta-analysis,
Shopping behavior,
Purchase intention,
Repurchase

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

With the expansion of digital technologies and changing consumption patterns, e-commerce has grown significantly. Also, the emergence of business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce has enabled customers to directly access goods and services through the vast expanse of the Internet and easily purchase from online retailers (Johnson et al., 2024). These developments and the growth and development of the Internet have led to an increasing number of online consumers, and sellers are trying to expand online shopping. Therefore, the trend of e-commerce is guiding the future of retail and online stores, and online stores must meet the needs and preferences of their customers by creating innovation and changing the way consumers shop by using things such as social commerce and personalized shopping experiences, and by using emerging technologies and adopting customer-centric strategies, create unique, attractive and personalized shopping experiences that create loyalty, satisfaction and growth in the digital age. In Iran, with the expansion of Internet access and the development of digital technologies, online stores have become an important part of the country's economy. This research was conducted with the aim of identifying and prioritizing the factors affecting sales in Iranian online stores.

Theoretical foundations

Customer service has traditionally been associated with face-to-face interaction between service personnel and customers; technological advances have led to the emergence of e-services in this field and have changed the nature of this interaction. Researchers define e-services as actions, efforts, or functions provided by information technology, including the web, information kiosks, and mobile devices (Golalizadeh et al., 2023). In this regard, important concepts such as customer satisfaction, perceived purchase benefits, and perceived benefits have received much attention. Customer satisfaction is an internal state that results from the satisfaction of customers' needs from products. In general, customer satisfaction is a judgmental evaluation process that customers generally have from their recent purchases (Golmakani et al., 2021). Perceived benefits are defined as the needs or desires of consumers, which are said to be the amount of benefit or satisfaction from online shopping. Perceived shopping benefits are always applied to shopping behavior and specifically to an individual's perception of the outcomes and benefits that can be provided in the act of shopping (Akhavan Kharazian, & Dadbeh, 2023). The results of the surveys indicate that today e-commerce has entered large segments of retail and many people in their twenties and thirties of the current century feel comfortable with online shopping. Most people prefer to shop online because they may receive their purchases at their doorstep. In this regard, e-commerce applications try to bring together all suppliers and customers on various platforms in order to expand the market (Vyas et al., 2023).

In traditional businesses, marketing programs such as price and quality of products and services are important factors in ensuring customer satisfaction, while in small businesses, in addition to customer satisfaction, other important factors such as the convenience of customers shopping on the Internet are also important, and customer participation is another new and important factor in the success of e-commerce (Sharifi & Mardani, 2022). Various researchers (Chawla & Kumar, 2022; Wang et al., 2024; Putri, 2025; Zaini et al., 2024; Soren & Chakraborty, 2024; Vaz et al,2021; Nodirovna & Sharif og'li, 2024; …) have conducted important studies on e-commerce, which have raised important variables in the field of e-commerce and affecting the performance of online stores. A review of the research background shows that there are scattered studies in this field, but the lack of a comprehensive study that can integrate the results of these studies is noticeable. This study seeks to answer the question: which factors have the greatest impact on online sales in Iran and what is the effect size of each of these factors?

Research Methodology

The present study is an applicable and documentary research in terms of its purpose. This study is meta-analysis conducted with a quantitative approach. The statistical population includes all scientific-research articles published between 2015 and 2017 in reputable domestic databases. After a systematic search, 36 articles that met the inclusion criteria were selected from 84 initial articles. The data were analyzed using CMA2 software. The r and d indices were used to calculate the effect size, and publication bias was examined using the funnel plot method. Q and I^2 tests were also used to examine the heterogeneity of studies. In this study, the selection of keywords was based on the research question, words related to the main research topic, related concepts and synonyms, research background, and terms available in databases. After reviewing the articles, and according to the preliminary meta-analysis processes, studies were identified whose independent or mediating variables were purchase intention, purchase behavior, repurchase intention, impulse purchase behavior, repurchase, e-commerce success, customer attitude, and customer willingness. Qualitative articles that did not have quantitative indicators, as well as articles whose indicators were insufficient to obtain an effect size, were also excluded.

Research findings

Data analysis led to the identification of 9 key factors that were examined and replicated in at least 3 different studies. These factors, in order of effect size, are: Perceived usefulness with effect size (0.587); this variable, which had the strongest effect, refers to the customer's perception of the usefulness of online shopping; Customer satisfaction (0.502), the customer's positive feeling after the shopping experience, which has a significant effect on repeat purchases; Trust (0.420), which refers to the customer's confidence in the online store in terms of product authenticity and information security; Security (0.413); feeling of security in financial transactions and protection of personal data; Innovation (0.452); providing new solutions and services in the online shopping process; Website quality (0.331) including user-friendly design, loading speed and ease of navigation; Ease of use (0.412); the ease of using the online store platform; E-marketing (0.298); digital marketing strategies to attract customers; Customer experience (0.282); all customer interactions and experiences with the brand.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that psychological factors such as perceived usefulness and trust have a greater impact than technical factors such as website quality. These results are also consistent with the technology acceptance theory, which emphasizes the importance of perceived usefulness and ease of use. In line with the results obtained from this study, it is recommended for online stores to: increase perceived usefulness by providing accurate product information and the ability to compare products; use new technologies such as smart chatbots to improve customer experience; and gain customer trust by clarifying return and payment policies. It is also recommended for policymakers: provide legal frameworks to increase the security of financial transactions, and define quality standards for e-commerce websites.