

## ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOR UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED USEFULNESS AND PERCEIVED EASE OF USE: AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN THAI NGUYEN CITY, VIET NAM

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### ABSTRACT

Based on the Technology Acceptance Model, the study aims to determine factors affecting online shopping behavior of consumers in Thai Nguyen city, Viet Nam. By convenient sampling method, the author has collected 304 valid answer sheets. Respondents are 18 years of age or older, live in Thai Nguyen city and have ever shopped online. The research determined that there are two factors (perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness) affecting the online shopping behavior of Thai Nguyen city consumers. The study findings are the basis for recommendations for online businesses, customers, and state management agencies to improve the efficiency of online business operations and best meet the needs of customers.

**Keywords:** Online shopping, behavior, consumer.

### INTRODUCTION

In Thai Nguyen, e-commerce has also attracted many businesses to help businesses promote images, introduce products, seek investment cooperation opportunities and contribute to promoting people's online shopping. In the context of the current complicated epidemic situation, promoting e-commerce is the best solution to help businesses turn the tide, promote the digital economy, and open up many opportunities to join the global supply chain.

Thai Nguyen government determines that digital transformation must go first, go quickly to pave the way for future breakthroughs and development, promote the application of digital technology in connecting, promoting, and consuming products. Thai Nguyen Provincial Party Committee issued Resolution No. 01-NQ/TU on the Thai Nguyen Provincial Digital Transformation Program from 2021 to 2025, with a vision to 2030. Thai Nguyen Province has activities to support enterprises putting their products on the e-commerce floor and at the same time supporting the e-commerce floors to choose reputable suppliers to participate in transactions on the e-commerce floor.

In addition to the government's support for businesses, the number of consumers participating in the e-commerce market is also increasing. According to data from Thai Nguyen Province's Statistical Yearbook, the growth rate of internet subscribers and the percentage of people using mobile phones has increased rapidly in recent years, presented by the rate of mobile phone users

increased from 73.61% in 2018 to 84.5% in 2020, and the percentage of households with internet connection increased rapidly from 25.5% in 2018 to 78.86% in 2020 (Office T. N., 2020).

According to a report by the Vietnam E-commerce Association, in 2021, the e-commerce index of Thai Nguyen province ranks 23th nationwide, up 4 places compared to 2020. This index shows the constant efforts of State management agencies, businesses and also shows the shift of a large number of consumers to the online business sector.

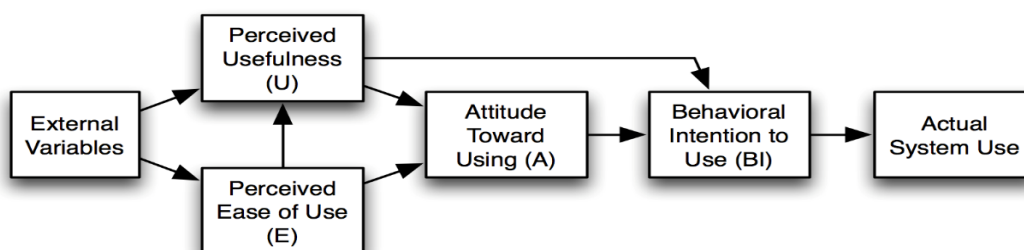
Online business is becoming a global trend. Vietnamese businesses cannot be out of that trend. The covid 19 pandemic makes online business even more necessary for every business. Online consumer behavior research is becoming more and more important and necessary for businesses. Thai Nguyen is a city that reflects the average living standard of Vietnamese residents, so understanding the online consumption behavior of customers in Thai Nguyen will help businesses better understand the behavior of Vietnamese consumers. determine

From the above reasons, the study on the factors affecting the online purchase behavior of consumers in Thai Nguyen city is important. So, the author chooses the title “Factors affecting online shopping behavior of consumers in Thai Nguyen city” as the thesis study. This study aims to determine the factors affecting online purchase behavior, thereby suggesting policies for managers and businesses so that the online market can grow stronger and serve consumers better.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology Acceptance Model - TAM (Davis, 1985) has become the original theoretical foundation used in information systems development successfully (Taylor & Todd, 1995). Therefore, it has attracted much notice from many researchers. The TAM model is shown in Figure 1.2.

TAM and TRA are different. Firstly, while TRA describes behavior in general, TAM forecasts behavior of information technology use (Davis, 1985). Thus, TAM is just a unique case of TRA (Davis, 1989) (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990). Secondly, In the TAM model, attitudes, and perceived usefulness influence behavioral intentions, while in the TRA model, attitudes and subjective norms influence behavioral intentions. The mathematical formula to represent the TAM model is as follows:  $B = BI = A + U$  (4)



*Figure 1.2 Technology Acceptance Model - TAM*

*Source:* (Davis, 1985)

TAM splits TRA from the perspective of belief (bi) into two different prefixes that affect attitude (A). It is the feeling of usefulness (U) and the feeling of ease of use (EOU). Perceived usefulness

(U) is defined as "users' subjective feelings about using an application system that will increase their work efficiency" (Davis, 1989). Perceived ease of use is defined as "the degree to which the user perceives the system as being easy to use" (Davis, 1989). Information systems programmers can use these two characteristics to predictively measure user adoption of technology. Theoretically, the more useful and easy-to-use characteristics an information system has, the easier it is to be used by users. TAM is one of the fundamental theoretical models put into use for research on information systems. (IS). In the TAM model, the more useful (U) and easy to use (EOU) a technology application are, the more positive the user's attitude (A). They are represented mathematically as follows:  $A = U + EOU$  (5).

In addition, behavioral intention to use (BI) is affected directly by perceived usefulness (U). This impact is not via attitude (A) as in the TRA theory model. According to TAM, the intention to use a technology application is formed when the application is effective for the user, then attitudes in a short time play a main part in the model (Davis, 1989). The user still intends to use a certain technology application because he believes it is effective even though he does not like the application.

Another difference between TRA and TAM is the rating (ei) for perceived usefulness (U) and perceived ease of use (EOU). Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) analyzed the importance of evaluation based on individual differences. That is, a group of people in the same sample may have different evaluations of an issue (negative, or positive). However, Davis (1989) argued that most users have a positive feeling due to the perceived usefulness and ease of use. In this situation, the rank degree is not important in the TAM model.

It should be noted that in the TAM model, there is no subjective norm factor (SN). Davis (1989) states that users mostly want to use technology applications by themselves without consulting. Therefore, the relationship between subjective norm (SN) and (BI) does not appear in the TAM model. This result is proved through several experimental studies by authors such as Hartwich & Barki (1994), Mathieson (1991). These research show that in the case of online purchases, the relationships don't matter anymore. Therefore, ambient references do not affect many people who shop online using technology applications.

The correlation between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness is shown in the TAM model. This correlation is based on the theory of self-use (Bandura, 1982) and self-control theory (Lepper, 1985). An easy-to-use technology application (EOU) that makes it easy for users to use and control themselves, reducing time learning to use technology and improving productivity of the user (U).

External factors such as system design characteristics, training, user characteristics, support activities... play a role in regulating the behavior of using technology in this model (Davis, 1989). The behavior of technology use is influenced by external factors via perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Scales**

The scales used in this study are inherited from previous studies. The online shopping behavior scales are inherited from the studies of Chen, Gillenson, & Sherrell (2004), Bucko & Ferencová,

(2018). It included eight dimensions. To measure factors, the study inherited and modified the scales of Davis F. D. (1989), Gong, Stump, & Maddox (2013), Giao & Tra, (2018). The scales of Perceived of Use include six items; six items measure scales of Perceived Usefulness. The responses were given on a five-level Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

### Sample size

Using convenient sample collection, the author has collected 341 answer sheets. Of which, 37 questionnaires did not fill in the answers, so they are not suitable for use in the research. Thus, 304 observations were included in the analysis, accounting for 89.15% of the number of answer sheets collected. Table 1 shows the results of Demographic variable statistics.

**Table 1. Distribution of Respondents As to Their Profile**

Profile	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Female	156	51.32
Male	148	48.68
Age		
Under 25 years old	154	50.66
25 to 35	60	19.74
35 to 45	53	17.43
45 and up	37	12.17
Education		
High School	85	27.96
Bachelor	99	32.57
Master or more	61	20.07
Others	59	19.40
Income monthly		
Under 5M VND	84	27.63
5M to under 10M VND	96	31.58
10M to under 15M VND	71	23.36
15M to under 20M VND	36	11.84
Upper 20M VND	17	5.59
Occupation		
Student	104	34.21
Business Staff	129	42.43
State Staff	42	13.82
Self-employed	29	9.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Author's calculation from survey data*

## RESULTS

### Descriptive statistics of perceived ease of use

The perceived ease of use variable was assessed through 6 items. The statistical results are as follows:

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics of perceived ease of use**

Perceived Ease of Use	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
EU1. Easy-to-use online shopping apps/websites	3.74	1.003	Good
EU2. I need no effort to use online shopping apps/websites.	3.53	1.050	Good
EU3. Online shopping apps/websites are quite flexible to use.	3.68	.991	Good
EU4. Complete transactions on the internet quickly and easily.	3.68	1.002	Good
EU5. Website/app is easy to navigate.	3.62	.995	Good
EU6. User-friendly website/application interface.	3.66	.982	Good
<b>Mean total Score</b>	<b>3.6513</b>	<b>.93477</b>	<b>Good</b>

*Source: Author's calculation from survey data*

Perceived ease of use variables was rated higher by consumers than perceived risk on average scores. The lowest is EU2 with 3.53 points, and the highest is EU1 with 3.74 points. Customers all agree with the perception that shopping online nowadays is extremely easy. "Easy-to-use online shopping apps/websites" scored the highest by the most consumers with an average value of 3.74. Similarly, "Online shopping apps/websites are quite flexible to use" and "Complete transactions on the internet quickly and easily" are both rated at 3.68. However "I need no effort to use online shopping apps/websites" is 3.53. The reason is that online shopping can be very easy for young people, but for many older people, internet skills will be less.

Thus, most consumers have the perception that buying and selling on the internet is very easy. The development of e-commerce has influenced consumers' perception of online purchasing behavior. The standard deviation of the EU variables is also smaller than the standard deviation of the PR variables. As such, survey respondents are relatively unanimous in assessing the ease of use of online shopping.

### Descriptive statistics of Perceived Usefulness

**Table 3. Descriptive statistics of Perceived Usefulness**

Perceived Usefulness	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
PU1. Online shopping helps to find product information faster.	3.69	1.057	Good
PU2. Online shopping makes it easier for me to find product information.	3.74	1.051	Good
PU3. I can get useful product information when I shop online.	3.67	.980	Good
PU4. Online shopping saves time and effort.	3.72	1.046	Good
PU5. Easily compare different products when shopping online.	3.64	1.046	Good
PU6. The online store offers a wide variety of products.	3.72	1.030	Good
<b>Mean total Score</b>	<b>3.6985</b>	<b>.97470</b>	<b>Good</b>

*Source: Author's calculation from survey data*

The perceived usefulness variable is described through 6 items. The descriptive statistical results of the variable PU are presented in Table 3. Like the EU variable, the respondents highly appreciate the PU variable, with the smallest mean value of 3.64 and the largest being 3.74. However, the standard deviation of this variable is wider than that of the EU variable, with min standard deviation of 0.98 and max of 1.057. In which, the item of "Online shopping makes it easier for me to find product information" is highly appreciated by customers with 3.74 points. When the customers access the internet, product information is available from vendors. With just one click, customers can find the information they need. It is very different from when customers go to buy at physical stores. The item of "Online shopping saves time and effort" and "The online store

offers a wide variety of products” were both highly rated by customers at 3.72 points. Online shopping can be anywhere and anytime, so it will reduce the effort spent on shopping activities of customers. Moreover, the unlimited online space will help online stores to offer a much more. Thus, in general, consumers perceive the usefulness of online shopping compared to traditional shopping.

### Descriptive statistics of the online shopping behavior

**Table 4. The mean value of the dependent variables**

Online shopping behavior	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
SB1. I often buy products from the internet.	3.44	1.000	Good
SB2. I spend my time online shopping.	3.12	1.080	Fair
SB3. I have been shopping online for a long time.	3.33	1.088	Fair
SB4. I will buy online if the store has a special discount policy.	3.51	1.015	Good
SB5. I only buy from online stores with real proof of seller and product reviews.	3.63	1.019	Good
SB6. I have the behavior of buying online at stores with reasonable return policies.	3.62	1.027	Good
SB7. I have an online purchase behavior if I see a detailed product image.	3.59	.981	Good
SB8. I have the act of buying online if the shipping conditions are reasonable.	3.59	.974	Good
<b>Mean total Score</b>	<b>3.479</b>	<b>.889</b>	<b>Good</b>

*Source: Author's calculation from survey data*

The online purchase behavior is generally rated as Good by consumers. In which, two items are "I spend my time online shopping" rated at 3.12 and "I have been shopping online for a long time" rated at 3.33, which means they are all Fair. This means that the majority of survey respondents are not online shopaholic. However, many items are rated as Good by consumers. Consumers agree with the opinion "I often buy products from the internet", they rate it at 3.44. Statistics show that, if online stores have clear proofs and good reviews, consumers will choose more, as shown in the item "I only buy from online stores with real proof of seller and product reviews" is highly rated (3.63 points). In addition, a reasonable return policy will build customers' trust with the item "I have the behavior of buying online at stores with reasonable return policies" which is rated at 3.62 (good). Detailed product images, discount policies and reasonable shipping policies are also factors that promote online purchases behavior with the item "I have an online purchase behavior if I see a detailed product image" and item "I have the act of buying online if the shipping conditions are reasonable" are rated at 3.59 (good).

### CONCLUSIONS

Research based on TAM model is to analyze the factors affecting online shopping behavior of consumers in Thai Nguyen city. The collected data were put into descriptive statistical analysis and the following results were obtained:

Perceived ease of use has a positive relationship with online purchasing behavior. Thus, perceived ease of use plays a very important role in online purchasing behavior. When an application or website or an e-commerce exchange is easier to use, the easier it is for consumers to find product



information. To easily take steps in the buying decision process, it should have more online shopping behavior. Therefore, online retailers need technical solutions to increase the ease of use and friendliness of the sales website/app while also improving the ordering and payment processes so that consumers can purchase the simplest and most conveniently. In a dimension, usefulness is part of ease of use. One of the great advantages of buying online over traditional shopping is the reduced cost and time spent searching for products.

Online shopping behavior of Thai Nguyen city consumers is increasing for reasons such as "easy to find information" and "time saving". Online shopping can be anywhere and anytime, so it will reduce the effort spent on shopping activities of customers.

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