

Factors influencing consumers' participation in E-Commerce in the New Normal

Jessamee G. Banay, Jeny-Lyn S. Ong, Dexter U. Ong, Rasheen Kate T. Malubag, John Aldwin H. Olivar, Felipe E. Balaria

Master in Business Administration, Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Philippines

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Abstract— *This study aimed at describing the factors influencing consumers' participation in the new normal. 100 respondents came from different cities and municipalities in the province of Nueva Ecija, Philippines participated in this research. The descriptive research design was utilized to explore the common factors that influence consumers' participation in various e-commerce sites. Results revealed consumers' participation is influenced by the information quality, ease of use, product delivery, price affordability, and data privacy. Further results revealed consumers' participation in e-commerce requires trust and confidence in online shops. Lastly, this paper has significant associations with the business and commerce industries. and recommendations for further research along this vein.*

Keywords— *Consumers' participation, e-commerce, influence, new normal, online shops.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of technology in the last two decades particularly the World Wide Web (www) became the catalyst for e-Commerce to rise to popularity a few years ago due to the ease of use and accessibility especially to areas that are more technologically developed and advanced [1]. "The growth of the Internet and the evolution of technology over the last several decades have led to the emergence of new ways of communicating, which are increasingly used as new forms of business transactions" [2]. The internet has changed the way people live, think, and do business. With the emergence of e-commerce, international trade became possible on an individual level. The definition of a free market has found itself in its truest form, with sellers at liberty to position their own products and pricing, and consumers at free reign to choose what they buy. According to the website of BBVA Openmind website, "How the Internet has Changed Everyday Life" [3] offers an immense wealth of possibilities for buying content, news, and leisure products, and all sorts of advantages arise from e-commerce, which has become a major distribution channel for goods and services. "E-commerce is electronic transactions, which can be expressed as the

buying and selling of products and services and also the transfer of funds, money, data, and information related to the commercial transactions through the internet which also refers to any form of business transaction conducted online" [4]. The most popular example of e-commerce is online shopping, which is defined as buying and selling goods via the internet on any device. "Basically, e-commerce permits buying and selling physical products and services through an online platform which makes the commercial transaction of all categories of businesses and consumers convenient" [4].

However, in December 2019, a virus that is suspected to originate in Wuhan, China which is known as the COVID-19 Virus spread out rapidly worldwide and the global economy suffered tremendous losses. According to [5], "the indication of a pandemic doesn't mean that the virus has become disastrous, but it's an indication of the disease has been globally spreading". This current global dilemma changed how people buy and acquire products and services. However, consumers are still hesitant to divulge financial information online or misgivings over the reliability of e-merchants, Filipinos have been skeptical about spending money on the internet[6]. According to

previous researches[7],online shopping is not only influenced by the demographic characteristics of customers such as age, gender, and occupation, also [8]merchant integrity still plays a major positive role in consumer internet shopping. Absence of conviction is one of the main reasons consumers not participating in e-commerce. According to the Global Web Index survey "e-commerce Growth in Philippines Accelerates, which showed more Filipinos plan to do more online shopping after the outbreak"[9].“Home confinement left Filipinos no choice but to purchase food and other essentials on the internet. This triggered an explosion of e-commerce transactions. All this means that most global marketplaces had to seriously alter their operations and online strategies. Surely all this increased demand brings increased revenue for marketplaces, but it is not without certain challenges”[10].

Generally, this explored the factors influencing consumers’ participation in e-Commerce in times of pandemic. Specifically, the factors influencing the extent of participation of the customersto e-commerce during a pandemic.

II. METHODOLOGY

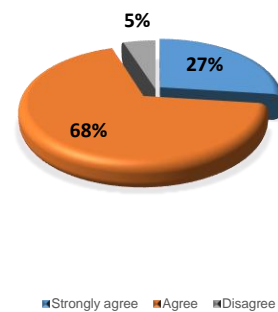
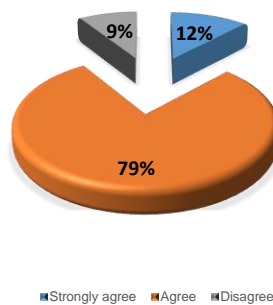
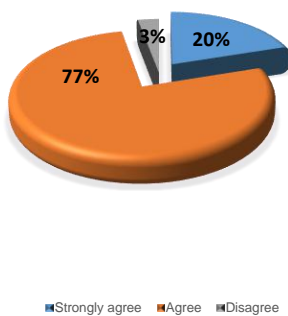
Quantitative research is an approach utilized by the researchers in conducting this study. According to Aggarwal (2008) as cited by [11] & [12] “descriptive research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation and this design is not simply amassing and tabulating facts but includes proper analyses, interpretation, comparisons, identification of trends and relationships” (p.87).This study was conducted in the province of Nueva Ecija, Philippines. The researchers want to assess the factors influencing consumers' involvement in social commerce in the context of an area where agriculture is one of the major industries to see how social commerce can be of a possible potential innovation that can be implemented and contribute to the growth of the economy of the province.

100 working-class individuals in Nueva Ecija were purposively chosen as respondents of this study [13] as cited in [14]. A fully Digitized Online Survey was used in this study which provided us real-time response information and charts

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Information Quality

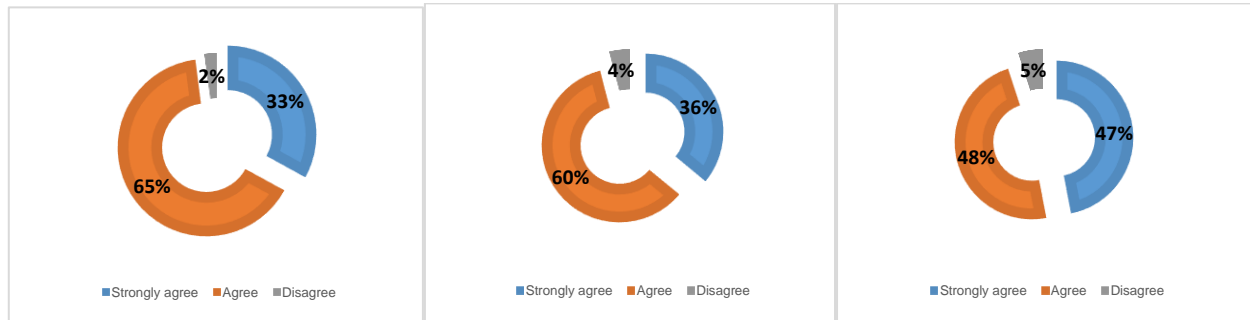
1.The e-Commerce site is renowned and reliable.	2. Provides accurate information about the products/items that you want to purchase.	3. The product advertisement on the e-Commerce site is very informative and helpful to online shoppers.
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The e-commerce business must provide substantial information on their website in order for the online shoppers to determine and verify the accuracy of all the data posted. It is critical to understand what leads to consumer satisfaction with online information quality. E-commerce systems such as information quality can be leveraged to enhance business benefits, as evidenced by consumer commitment and retention.

B. Ease of Use (user-friendly e-commerce platform)

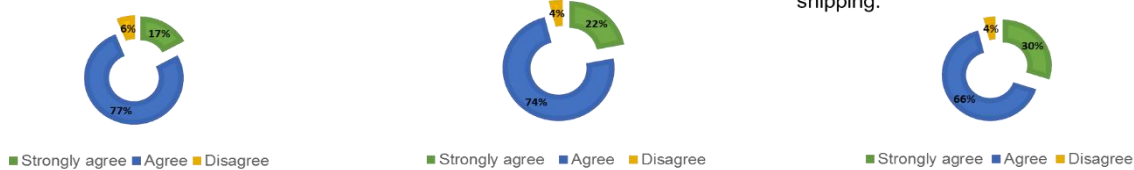
1. The use and operation of a website on the internet are easy.	2. Searching and shopping on this website are useful.	3. Checking the customers' ratings and review about the product on the site is very beneficial.
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It is very helpful that the e-commerce platform is easy to use by the online users, it created a friendly environment and positive perception between online shoppers and the e-commerce site.

C. Product Delivery (on-time delivery of the product)

- 1. The medium of delivery of the product is satisfying.
- 2. The delivery time defined by the site is attractive.
- 3. Enables online shoppers' to track or trace the product location from the time of shipping.



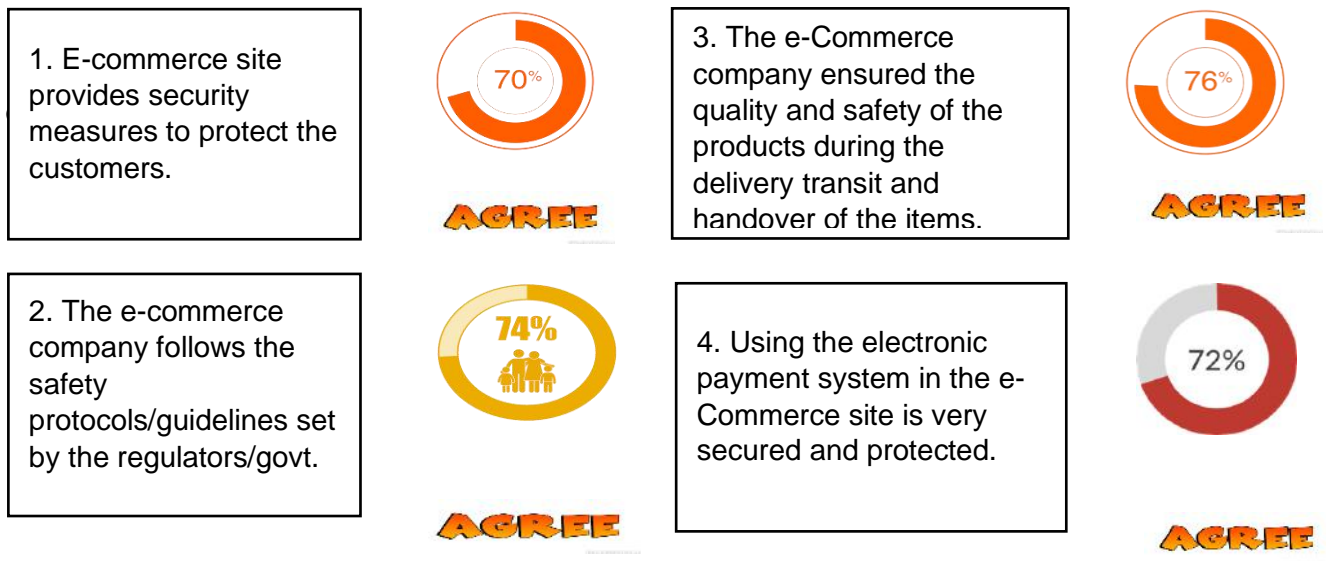
It is very evident that the manner of delivery is very important to online shoppers. An E-commerce site that provides on-time delivery services has a big impact on the customer and it creates good impressions to the e-commerce businesses.

D. Price Affordability (Competitive pricing in the market)

Price Affordability	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
1. Competitive Pricing	32%	63%	5%
2. Fair delivery (Shipping Charge)	19%	66%	15%
3. No Hidden Charges	16%	70%	14%


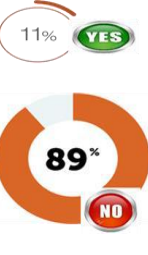
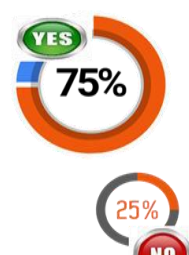

When purchasing things online, it is obvious that the price of the product is the most significant factor to consider. When making such a purchase, discounts, pricing comparisons with brick-and-mortar businesses, payment method, delivery time, and product evaluations, product descriptions, and photographs can all be counted among the most relevant evaluation criteria. In addition, the pricing of goods or products must be competitive in the market, with no hidden costs.

E. Transaction safety (Following the safety guidelines and procedures)



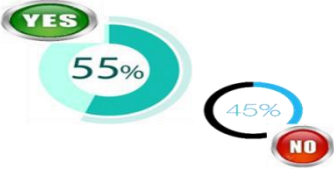

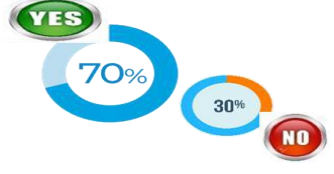
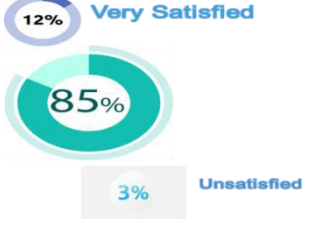
One of the most important structures in e-commerce is online security. Without these, both the online store owner and the online shopper put themselves at risk, especially when it comes to online payment fraud. Aside from financial consequences, data breaches can jeopardize the credibility of an online store.

F. Data Privacy ((Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as Data Privacy Act)

<p>1. Is there a data privacy policy on the website of the e-commerce site/platform?</p>	<p>2. Did you experience a security breach that resulted in unauthorized access to your accounts?</p>	<p>3. Does the e-Commerce site use a strong password or another advanced identification method to protect the customer's personal information or identity?</p>	<p>4. Does privacy concerns influence your online shopping decision on an e-Commerce site?</p>
 <p>82% YES</p> <p>18% NO</p>	 <p>11% YES</p> <p>89% NO</p>	 <p>75% YES</p> <p>25% NO</p>	 <p>79% YES</p> <p>21% NO</p>

The growth and trust in e-commerce business are entirely dependent on the site's security and privacy policies, and the most important factor in the development of an e-commerce business is to build trust among users. A comprehensive and secure system is required to maintain privacy in the e-commerce business. When a client's data is not secure and is at risk, users create skepticism in e-commerce.

G. Consumers’ Participation in e-commerce

<p>1. Have you ever received or purchased a faulty or defective product from an e-commerce site?</p>	
<p>2. Have you ever experienced buying from a fraudulent merchant?</p>	
<p>3. Is there a HIGH DEGREE of confidentiality and protection on the e-commerce platform or store?</p>	
<p>4. What was your overall impression in the e-commerce platform or store?</p>	

Consumers’ participation in e-commerce requires trust and confidence in the e-commerce sites. As a result, a high level of confidentiality and protection that customers receive in e-commerce stores is extremely important.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results revealed that in terms of factors influencing consumers’ participation, among all the e-commerce components, data privacy contributes to higher consumers’ participation. It was found out that consumers’ privacy concern influenced their decision to participate more when there is strict data privacy and policy that protect their personal identity and transactions on e-commerce platforms. The following are the recommendations of the study: E-commerce businesses may use the results of this study to review, develop and strengthen their client information system, data privacy guidelines, and transaction safety; Online businesses may look into the outcome of this study to innovate new products that can be useful to people from different walks of life, and The government may study the results of this research to draw insights on how they can further develop their programs and laws to pass intended for the e-commerce industry to help revive and sustain economic growth.

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