

Predicting Consumer Acceptance of the Proposed Open Network for Digital Commerce

DR. ANITA WALIA¹, DR. VARALAKSHMI², DR. KIRAN LOKESH MANEY³

^{1, 2, 3} Associate professor, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Bangalore

Abstract- Purpose – Recently the Indian government has proposed ONDC (open network for digital commerce) open sourcing for e-commerce players with an aim to democratize e-commerce. This paper explores motivation and hindering factors that affect the intention of consumer to choose ONDC platform.

Design/methodology/approach –

Findings – An exploratory study was conducted wherein an attempt to understand purchase intention concerning the different features like Price, Discovery Time, Privacy Concern, Security Concern, and, Trust to buy products on ONDC. The results suggest that the security is the foremost perceived risk a consumer will feel in online environments created by ONDC and price is considered as most preferred perceived usefulness when purchasing on ONDC platform.

Research limitations/implications – More empirical research efforts need to be directed to study consumer behavior on ONDC platform. This study is have been fragmented in nature and are still in their infancy.

Practical implications –ONDC platform need to create a robust open source digital framework to ensure security, data privacy and confidentiality.

Originality/value – The study is significant for two reasons. First, it combines literature based on platform centric model to understand the factors influencing online purchase intention and, second, it presents perceived factors affecting from consumer perspective the success or failure of ONDC platform.

Indexed Terms- Trust, platform-centric model, ONDC, Privacy, security, trust, perceived risk

I. INTRODUCTION

E-commerce is the use of electronic communications and digital information technology in business

transactions to create, transform, and refine relationships for value creation between or among organizations, and between organizations and individuals.”(Chinana& Goele, 2012). As noted by Numberger & Renhank (2005) in “The Future of B2C E-Commerce”, absence of accurate and evident definition of e-commerce has led to a lack of consent on the quantitative extent of e-commerce.

1.1 Platform centric model of E-commerce

E-commerce companies build a Platform (not just technology infrastructure) that focuses on facilitating transactions like connecting buyers and sellers. Majority of e-commerce companies like Amazon and Flipkart use a marketplace model which creates an e-marketplace for the sellers of different products to come together and sell their product to the consumers through their platform.

1.2 Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

India is the first country to initiate a globally first-of-its-kind open source e-commerce ecosystem which will bring a shift from a platform-centric model to an open-network. It will enable buyers and sellers to use an open source platform and transact through an open network, no matter what platform they use.

When a buyer searches in an open network for a product it will list the sellers based on their location, along with the product details and price and buyers need not move from one marketplace to another to choose.

1.3 How will open networks work?

The proposed ONDC will enable payment processing and in some cases will also provide the delivery and logistic services.

Government has appointed an advisory group, Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani and National Health Authority CEO R S Sharma, among others,

are being consulted to fast track the project. At the initial phase auto-rickshaws and taxis operators have been asked to register. In the next rolled out phase Kiran stores, delivery service providers and FMCG companies will be asked to register. The pilot project will cover only a few cities like Delhi, Bengaluru, Jaipur, Kochi and Varanasi in the first six month. (TOI, 2021). The main advantage of ONDC will be to ensure security, data privacy and confidentiality. It will not be compulsory for the participant to share transaction level data with the network. ONDC is an open network, which uses the same protocol of open-source methodology which means anybody can use it for free, modify and distribute it for digital commerce purposes through an open source license.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Due to uncertain and unregularised e-commerce structure, the Indian government wants to change the fundamental structure from the present platform-centric model to an open-network model using Unified Payment Interface (UPI) project. The Government of India just like UPI allows individuals to transact buyers and sellers of goods in any e-commerce market to send or receive money in any platforms on which anyone has registered. Under ONDC, the buyer can sell or buy directly from the seller.

The Government of India is deciding on the alternatives for operating the open network market seamlessly by promptly listing products that creates an impulse in customers to order more and more products eventually satisfying all strata's of buyers and sellers, thus Breaking monopoly power and regularizing the law (Perumal, 2021).

In the context of this study, perceived usefulness is considered as motivation to purchase in the open market which saves cost and time for both sellers and buyers. Based on the Technology Accepted Model (Compeau et al., 1999) perceived usefulness would have a direct impact on purchase intention on the open network market. The concept of perceived usefulness is based on individuals' rational and economic assessment with emotional values associated with social dimensions (Dodds et al., 1991). These cues make an open market platform a

network for numerous buyers and sellers to transact. According to a study by Stern (1962) which has pointed out that motivational factors influencing purchasing in an online market which is usually a self-serviced environment is influenced by low price, wider choice availability, mass advertising and prominent store display. (Baumeister, 2002).

When a customer intends to shop, consumer motivation is affected by various shopping goals. For instance price is a major motivational factor ,if a buyer experiences a price as too high, and thus his/her ability to pay for an item as unrealistic, they will very likely not buy. Relatedly, if a consumer is motivated to browse but not to buy, buying is unlikely (Kruglanski et al., 2002).

Consumer behavior implies certain risks whose actions cannot be predicted with certainty or accuracy. Perceived risk is defined as subjective expectation of loss which is central to consumers' evaluation and purchase behavioral patterns (Peter & Ryan, 1976; Conchar et al., 2004)

According to Bauer (1960) consumers develop strategies to alleviate the risk factor by purchasing known brands or patronizing known stores or by extensive information collections about the product and hence evaluating through product examination or free samples available (Garretson et al., 1996; Johnson & Bruwer, 2004). Perceived risk is usually applied to potential customers who have strong willingness to buy the product and also to the consumers who are desirous of continuing the product. Based on the previous research, it is posited that perceived risk is one of the major factors in the process of consumers' decision making for online purchase behaviour (Liebermann & Stahevsky, 2001). Donthu & Garcia (1999) revealed that non-online shoppers are more likely to avert risk than the online shoppers, indicating that non-online shoppers perceive higher degree of subjective risk with online shopping.

According to Liebermann & Stahevskuy (2001) and Miyazaki (2001), perceived risk is divided into many larger components and among them online privacy and security are presumed to be the major concern in online shopping. Thus consumers are hesitant to

make online purchases due to concerns like that of security, privacy and integrity in business (Kim et al., 2008; Gefen, 2008)

In this study, consumers' online purchases are examined based on three constructs - security , privacy and trust.

One of the major concerns for online shopping is Privacy and security especially for online shoppers when they are required to provide personal and financial information (Sørebo, 2018). And also perceived risk was found to be a significant predictor of transaction abandonment by a customer (Rajamma et al., 2009; El Haddad et al., 2018). The consumers are always suspicious those companies might misuse their information or that their confidential details like credit card information may be stolen due to insufficient site security. Infact, these concerns were found to surpass concerns over products and services quality and price advantage when considered together (Mousavizadeh et al., 2016). However, Mousavizadeh et al. (2016) also showed that assurance statements (statements of policy and procedure relating to privacy and security issued by the vendor) and third party assurance seals (awarded for good business practice by independent bodies) were found to significantly allay many of these consumer fears, as indicated by an increase in purchase intention (see also Özkan et al., 2010).

Online privacy has become a prominent challenge in terms of public policy making like that of ONDC(Moore, 2005;Hoy & Phelps, 2003). This is because every online transaction records consumers' personal and financial information which should be treated with utmost care and confidentiality. One of the key factors which influence online trust include consumers' perceptions of privacy and security , and outcomes result in satisfaction, loyalty, and consumer loyalty (Kim and Peterson, 2017). Indeed, Kniberg (2002; in Özkan et al., 2010) stated that consumers will never use any insecure payment system if they trusted the company, and conversely, were less likely to use a secure payment system if the company was not trusted.

III. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Purchase Intention in the ONDC : Motivation Factors

According to research on motivation , motivation can be understood as the cognitive ,affective and behavioral process to achieve a desired end state (Fishbach and Touré-Tillery, 2013). Motivation factors that have high importance and success probability (i.e., seem achievable) to the individual will be prioritized and pursued in each situation (Fishbach and Ferguson, 2007; Huang et al., 2018). The other factors like if the price is too high, and thus his/her ability to pay for an item is unrealistic, they will very likely not buy. In the context of this study, perceived benefits referring to motivating factors that influence purchasing intention from an ONDC are considered to save costs and discovery time.

In addition, this study identified extrinsic motivation factors as economic and time values as a purchase intention on ONDC platform. Consumers prioritize economic values when they purchase a product or service at a lower price than alternatives are purchased (Sheth, J.N.; Newman,1991).

Platform centric e-commerce sites generally use merchant-defined categorization and list only a few product attributes (such as color and size) to narrow down the search for their consumers. Site navigation of e-commerce are more advanced now which have well-optimized landing pages featuring latest offers, personalized product listings (“Recently viewed” or “You might also like”, based on one’s browsing history),recent collections, or any informational content that can encourage purchases to stay on a homepage. But the increased product search time leads to frustration and may result in an unacceptable level of bounce rate : to the tune of 68%, according to Forrester. Based on this inference following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Price has a significant influence on purchase decision through online network markets

H2: Discovery time influences the intention to purchase through ONDC

3.2. Concerns for ONDC: Hindering Factors

Privacy is considered as one of the major concerns in electronic commerce, no matter what source one examines. Fisher [2001] reported "Forty-one percent of Web buyers surveyed last year by Forrester Research of Cambridge, Mass., said they have contacted a site to be taken off their databases because they felt that the organization used their information unwisely. (pp. 20-21)." E-commerce users were very concerned about the access of their personal information by third parties, and how personal information is collected and used. A study by Culnan [2000] stated that privacy issues were one of the hindering factors why people do not go online and provide false information online.

Based on this inference following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Privacy concern has an influence on purchase decision through online network markets

Perceived risk over online shopping will always remain a cause of concern from customer perspectives. The potential risk perceived by the buyers can be loss or theft of their financial data. With the increased number of online fraud consumers are becoming concerned about sharing sensitive data in fear of identity theft or data misuse. E-commerce business integrity is becoming more important than ever. The study tries to explore the consumer perspective and concerns over security in an ONDC platform.

Based on these inferences, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Security concern has an influence on purchase decision through online network markets

One of the major reasons for consumers not shopping online is lack of trust. E-commerce businesses should provide strong security and privacy to build trust among consumers since they can't control the trust their customers feel. "Online transaction and exchange relationships are not characterized by uncertainty, but also by anonymity, lack of control, potential opportunism, managing risk and trust, a crucial element of e-commerce" (Petrovic, Ksela, Fallenbock and Kittel, 2003, p.55). With the increased incidence of internet fraud like phishing, consumers

cannot feel totally protected from fake sellers with an agenda to cheat them and steal confidential data (Loshin & Murphy, 1997). Salam et al. (2005) claim that consumer trust based on their prior experience in online shopping sites, disposition to trust is also influenced by brand image. This experience can affect their feelings of trust on the perceived usefulness and the perceived ease of use. The study tries to explore the consumer perspective and concerns over trust in an ONDC platform.

Based on these inferences, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Trust has an influence on purchase decision through online network markets

IV. DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

An exploratory study was conducted wherein an attempt to understand purchase intention concerning the different features like Price, Discovery Time, Privacy Concern, Security Concern, and, Trust to buy products on ONDC. This research examines the influence of the five independent variables on dependent variable. The research is unique and first of its kind attempt made by the researcher trying to derive new inferences with the data collected.

4.1 Data Collection:

For an empirical verification of the research hypotheses, this study surveyed Indian consumers who have shopped online. A survey was conducted adopting google form and over 300 randomly selected subjects, and the survey lasted for a month in August 2021. A total of 300 responses were retained for analysis. The data collected was tabulated and the researcher has applied the tools like reliability, regression to understand the most influencing factor among the all the independent factors. For the statistical analysis Statistical Package for The Social Sciences (SPSS 25) was adopted.

A structured questionnaire with closed ended questions was adopted to collect the data from 300 respondents. The complete questionnaire was developed based on 21 statements relating to the five independent variables – Price, Discovery Time,

Privacy Concern, Security Concern, and, Trust. This study aimed to know the influence of the five independent variables on the purchase intention on ONDC. The primary objective of the analysis is to check the reliability of internal-consistency of the structured questionnaire. The reliability analysis the percentage of the respondents understood the meaning of the statements. With the application of the Cronbach’s alpha tool the evaluation on the internal consistency was calculated. The Table 4.1 representing the reliability indicates the Cronbach’s alpha value as 0.830 which is considered as desirable. The Cronbach’s alpha value confirms the reliability if the study.

KMO and Bartlett's Test (Table 4.2) about here

The multiple regression analysis was adopted for evaluating the influence of ONDC features on the purchase intention. The tables below represents the model summary indicating the R value.

Model Summary (Table 4.3) about here
 $Y = a + V_1x_1 + V_2x_2 + V_3x_3 + V_4x_4 + V_5x_5 + \epsilon$

Here Y represents overall Purchase intention, an indicates the constant, V1, V2, V3, V4 indicate the respective regression coefficient on the overall intention, x 1, x 2, x 3, x 4, x 5 indicate the independent factors – Price,

Reliability Analysis (Table 4.1) about here

Particulars		Frequency	%age	Particulars		Frequency	%age
Age Group	21 – 25 yrs	115	66.86	Frequency of purchases on online network markets	Daily	18	6.00
	26 – 30 yrs	56	18.67		Once week	114	38.00
	31 – 35 yrs	63	21		Once month	115	38.33
	35 yrs and above	66	22		As and when required	53	17.67
Gender	Male	172	57.33	Average amount spent on online shopping p.a	<10000	70	23.33
	Female	128	42.67		10,001 – 20,000	115	38.33
Highest Education attained	Undergraduate	98	32.67		20,001 – 30,000	46	15.33
	Graduate	102	34.00		Above 30,001	69	23.00
	Post Graduate	43	14.33				
	Others	57	19.00				

Discovery Time, Privacy Concern, Security

Particulars	Frequency	%age	Particulars	Frequency	%age		
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	Post Graduate	43	14.33		Others	57	19.00

Concern, Trust respectively and € indicates the error term.

The Table 1 shows the model summary indicating the R and R Square value with the significance value being 0.000 which is below the value 0.05, the values indicate that the independent variables sufficiently explain the variance on dependent variable. Table 1 shows the R value as .785 and the value of coefficient of determining R² is 0.616. This indicates that 61.6 percent of changes in consumer purchase is due to the five independent variables Price, Discovery Time, Privacy Concern, Security Concern, Trust. And the remaining 38.5 percent is due to all the other remaining factors. The value of coefficient of determination indicate that variance explained by the five independent variables contribute more than the unexplained variance.

ANOVAa (Table 4.4) here

The Table 4.3 show the individual impact of each of the independent variable influencing the dependent variable, with the prominence of unstandardized coefficient. The coefficient Table represented below. Coefficientsa (Table 4.5)

The Table 4.5 show the significance value for each of the independent variables to be .000, .000, .000, .000 and .001 respectively, these values are all below the value .05 which confirms that the independent variables – Price, Discovery Time, Privacy Concern, Security Concern, Trust have a significant impact on the consumer purchase decision,

From the above values it can be analyzed that security is the most influential independent variable affecting the dependent variable followed by price, discovery time, Trust, Privacy concern, and price. The regression equation is represented below:

$$Y = 2.458 + .583(\text{Price}) + .451(\text{Discovery Time}) + .342(\text{Privacy Concern}) + .623(\text{Security Concern}) + .354(\text{Trust}) + \epsilon$$

The analysis concludes that the highest number of the respondents have strongly agreed that the Security Concern and Price play an important role during the purchase on the ONDC.

Demographic profile of respondent

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ONDC is a technology driven protocol to support and serve MSME's like the traders, small retailers to align their billing software and move towards smarter digital commerce. Essentially the present e-commerce format will be an open digital infrastructure to connect the sellers and the customers with each other without any barriers of switching between two or more market places for a product to shop. The departure from platform-centric to open source framework approach is of prime focus here. According to our study, it is identified that, among price, discovery time, privacy concern, security concern and trust, security concern is seen as the most important factor of purchase intention on ONDC, as security can make hackers to steal data of sellers and the customers. It is evident in recent times that online transactions is of greatest concern and the major reason for customers for not trusting on ONDC. Price affects the purchase intention on ONDC of customer-centric platforms. As price is sensitive to customers as they could compare the pricing of the products available in the other markets. Hence they spend more time in various available markets for comparing the prices. ONDC gives this edge over the other platforms in terms of discovery time, because ONDC eliminates the intermediaries and hence the prices of products and services are less compared to other e-commerce platforms. According to the empirical results, trust determines the ONDC online sellers' quality and security on the purchase intentions of the customers.

However, customers who are familiar with the internet still buy and sell their products and services online knowing the security and privacy issues. But

many customers with rich knowledge about the internet may know to avoid the security issues online and consider trust as not serious problem with ONDC. As the empirical study results indicated, the more users awareness about ONDC, the more they trust in ONDC, the more they shop and therefore, Government of India should create the awareness of the perceived benefits, and hence massive awareness campaign is needed to draw more traffic on in this platform.

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TABLES

Reliability Analysis

Table 4.1

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.830	20

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Table 4.2

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.680
Bartlett's Test of Approx. Chi-Sphericity	180.244
df	66
Sig.	.000

Model Summary

Table 4.3

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			Sig. Change	F
					R Square Change	F Change	df1		
1	0.785	0.616	0.615	0.751	0.616	474.9201	1	93	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Price, Discovery Time, Privacy Concern, Security Concern, Trust

ANOVAa

Table 4.4

Model (R ² = 0.616)	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	267.81	1	267.81	474.9201	.000 b***
Residual	166.92	299	0.56		
Total	434.73	300			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Price, Discovery Time, Privacy Concern, Security Concern, Trust

Table 4.5

Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
B	Std. Error	Beta
2.458	.170	
.583	.034	.682
.451	.013	.676
.342	.013	.530
.623	.033	.729
.354	.026	.548

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention