



The Effect Of Discount Framing, Brand Reputation, And Brand Image On Customer Behavior: Data From E-commerce Platforms

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Abstract

E-commerce is booming globally and gaining huge sales for suppliers and vendors, especially after the Covid-19 outbreak. The development of technologies with e-commerce platforms makes it convenient for customers to shop on them. This study carries a survey of 289 customers shopping on e-commerce platforms in Vietnam, an emerging economy. The research does quantitative analysis to examine the effect of brand image, brand reputation, and discount framing on customer behavior. The results indicate that brand image and discount framing strongly affect customer behavior in e-commerce platforms. However, the research does not reveal a significant statistical effect of brand reputation on customer behavior. The findings suggest that customers make the purchase decision depending on the discount framing and brand image when shopping on e-commerce platforms. These findings are the baseline for e-commerce platform suppliers and vendors to implement promotion strategies of firms.

Keywords: *Brand Image, Brand Reputation, Customer Behavior, Discount Framing, E-commerce*

1. Introduction

The emergence and rapid development of online commerce (e-commerce) and online shopping platforms in recent years have dramatically changed business models worldwide. E-commerce has been and is the mainstream of global marketing, and Vietnam is no exception to that trend. The emergence of big names in e-commerce platforms such as Alibaba, Lazada, Amazon, and Shopee and the decisive entry of domestic online shopping platforms such as Sendo and Tiki brings opportunities. These platforms help suppliers and vendors attract more users, boost business, and increase profits. According to a report by the Vietnam E-commerce Association 2022, with 53% of the population participating in online purchases, the e-commerce market will grow by 20% in 2021, reaching 16 billion USD (Ngo Huyen, 2022). This development makes the digital marketing battle more difficult, especially in businesses with customer relationships.

E-commerce, also known as electronic commerce, uses information technology, such as computers, the internet, and other electronic devices, to purchase, sell, transfer, and exchange goods, services, or information (Rezk, Barakat, & Saleh, 2017). E-commerce usually takes place on e-commerce platforms. According to Nawi, Al Mamun, Md Nasir, and Rahman (2022), e-commerce platforms are web-based applications that allow businesses to conduct online transactions and interact with their customers through the internet. These platforms have evolved, and various factors have driven their development. E-commerce is based on technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, Internet marketing, online transaction processing, electronic data interchange (EDI), inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems. E-commerce platforms offer several advantages to businesses, such as increased reach, improved customer service, and reduced costs. E-commerce platforms enable businesses to reach a global audience without needing physical stores in different locations (Hussain et al., 2022). Moreover, these platforms allow companies to offer personalized customer service through chatbots and other automated tools. Furthermore, e-commerce platforms help businesses reduce costs by eliminating the need for physical stores and reducing transaction costs.

Suppliers in online shopping also continuously research and develop solutions to attract customers to shop and increase sales for the company. There are diverse factors affecting the development of e-commerce and online shopping. Previous studies have considered the influence of brand reputation, brand image, and discount frame in many contexts. The preceding studies show significant effects of discount framing, brand image, and brand image on customer behavior; however, there is a lack of evidence from Vietnam, an emerging country without good infrastructure. The vigorous development of e-commerce after

the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam is undeniable with the exciting shopping on e-commerce platforms. On the other hand, previous research has not discovered the measurement and testing of discount framing, brand reputation, and brand image as independent variables on online customer behavior. Therefore, studying the relationship between factors and purchase behavior will provide stakeholders with appropriate solutions to develop the system and customer behavior.

2. Objectives

This study aims to explore the effect of brand reputation, brand image, and discount framing on customer behavior when shopping on e-commerce platforms. The research findings contribute to the theoretical framework of factors affecting customer behavior and give policy implications for stakeholders of e-commerce platforms developing their applications, products, and services. In addition, this study focused on the phenomenon and behavior of e-commerce platforms, whereas previous research primarily focused on offline shopping behavior.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Materials and hypotheses

Customer Behavior

Customer behavior is a critical issue in marketing that relates to customer behavior in both traditional commerce and e-commerce. In the modern business landscape, understanding customer behaviors is critical for companies to succeed (Khawaja, Ali, & Mostapha, 2021). Actual behavior can be described as consumer behavior influenced by an individual desire to act and attitude (Liu, Segev, & Villar, 2017). Furthermore, actual behavior refers to how people spend their time, financial resources, and effort purchasing products or services. Marketers can undoubtedly affect this decision by giving information about their products or services that can impact consumer evaluation (Slamet, Prasetyo, & Azmala, 2022). Understanding consumer purchase decisions requires marketing managers to comprehend their consuming methods and the benefits of services and organizational products from their perspectives (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 2001). According to several studies, numerous factors impact purchase decisions, including brand reputation (Agmeka, Wathoni, & Santoso, 2019; Slamet et al., 2022), brand image (Djarmiko & Pradana, 2016; Huyèn et al., 2023; Slamet et al., 2022); Discount framing (Agmeka et al., 2019; Huyèn et al., 2023; Rachmawati, Shukri, Azam, & Khatibi, 2019; Suhaily & Darmoyo, 2017).

Actual behavior is related to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which describes how individuals perceive opinions and how this affects customer intentions and attitudes (Agmeka et al., 2019). This notion has been applied in various sectors, including public behavioral intention in Uganda, the desire for architects to form a design team, and the intent to select halal products (Lujja, Omar Mohammad, & Hassan, 2016). The primary goal of TRA is to assess consumer behavior in terms of engaging or not engaging in their purpose (Lujja et al., 2016). TRA theory is used in this research due to these three factors: behavioral and antecedent intentions influence buyer behavior, especially attitudes toward subjective behavior and norms (Liu et al., 2017).

Brand Image

The importance of e-commerce platforms has risen in modern marketing (Islam & Rahman, 2017). The concept of brand image plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior and purchase decisions (Zhang, 2015). Brand image refers to the perception of a brand as reflected by the brand association perceived by consumers (Haverila, McLaughlin, Haverila, & Viskovics, 2021). This perception includes knowledge, feelings, and beliefs that a person has about a product or organization, and it is they who know, describe, and remember those related to the organization or product. Consumer perception of a brand in their memory that is represented in a brand association is known as the brand image (Agmeka et al., 2019). One of the crucial intangible assets that influence how consumers perceive a brand is its image (Martínez, Pérez, & Del Bosque, 2014). Brand image is something that consumers associate with a product (Keller, 2003). Brand image is an individual's knowledge, sentiments, and ideas about an item/organization; individuals understand, describe, and recall those associated with the organization/item. The study by Agmeka et al. (2019) found the functional and expressive dimensions are the two fundamental components of brand image. The functional quantity is a measure with observable and physical properties. Conversely, the dynamic dimension concerns psychological feelings and attitudes about a business.



In e-commerce, recent studies have highlighted the importance of measuring brand image in the digital platform brand itself (Chiang & Jang, 2007). Companies must build a positive image of their e-commerce platforms and products (Kim, Kim, Corner, & Yoon, 2019). Companies establish strategies such as providing better value for money, offering unique product attributes, and differentiating their products from competitors to achieve their brand image (Kim et al., 2019). To build a strong brand image, companies must develop a brand association that reflects their central values, trust, humanity, and idealism through various marketing strategies, such as advertising and sales promotion (Kim et al., 2019). These strategies can help create a positive image of the brand in the minds of consumers, which can influence their purchase decisions (Samant & Seo, 2020).

A strong brand image is crucial for the success of e-commerce platforms (Al-Dwairi, Harb, & Shehabat, 2020). Companies must focus on developing a brand association that reflects their central values and use marketing strategies such as advertising and sales promotion to create a positive image of the brand in the minds of consumers (Buil, De Chernatony, & Martínez, 2013; Keller, 2003). Recent studies have also highlighted the importance of measuring brand image in the digital platform brand itself (Liu, Zhang, & Zhang, 2020) and the brand of individual products (Kim et al., 2019). By building a positive image of their brands, companies can drive customer loyalty, increase sales, and differentiate their products from those of competitors. Companies influence customer buying behavior by establishing their brand image through eye-catching appearances, slogans, and logos. Logo design is an essential point of branding when influencing customer behavior. Companies influence customer behavior by finding a fit with the customer's self-image. The impact of a brand on customer behavior depends a lot on how customers perceive and relate to the brand. Chang and Tu (2005) identified infrastructure, convenience, services, and sales as four components that make up the brand image and directly impact the customer. The following is the hypothesis based on this explanation:

Hypothesis H₁: Brand image has a positive impact on customer behavior.

Brand Reputation

Brand reputation is a key concept in marketing and business management. It refers to the overall perception and evaluation of a brand by its stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, and the general public. Brand reputation describes a customer's attitude toward a reputable and trustworthy brand (Agmeka et al., 2019) and the client's perception of product quality with the brand name is what this term means (Zhang, 2015). When consumers judge a product's quality, whether or not a company is reputable enough, it also relies on its social standing (Martínez et al., 2014). Consumers consider brand reputation before purchasing well-known brands when they see less danger (Agmeka et al., 2019). Abbas, Mubeen, Iorember, Raza, and Mamirkulova (2021) highlight the importance of brand reputation in building and maintaining customer loyalty. A positive brand reputation can enhance customer trust and confidence in the brand, leading to higher brand loyalty and repeat purchase behavior. In addition, a strong brand reputation can also attract new customers and help the brand differentiate itself from its competitors.

Kapoor and Banerjee (2021) emphasize the role of brand reputation in crisis management, arguing that a positive brand reputation can serve as a buffer against negative events or crises that may damage the brand image and reputation. A well-established brand reputation can help the brand recover from such incidents more quickly and effectively, minimizing the long-term impact on brand performance and profitability. Kapoor and Banerjee (2021) highlight the relationship between brand reputation and firm performance. Brand reputation can positively impact financial performance, increasing customer loyalty, attracting new customers, and enhancing the brand's market value and competitive advantage.

From a marketing perspective, the influence of a brand reputation on customer behavior is clear. The researchers find that company reputation has a positive relationship with customer behavior. A good corporate reputation helps to increase a company's sales performance and market share and also contributes to developing a loyal and trusting relationship between the company and its customers (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001). Customers also expect companies with a high reputation to develop and produce high-quality products and services (Hess Jr, 2008). When customers judge the quality of items, whether they are respectable enough or not, their impression is influenced by their social position (Martínez et al., 2014). As a result, brand reputation is critical in raising customer social status and income. Consumers desire to improve their social self-actualization by establishing a relationship with a well-known brand. Others will view their excellent living level if they purchase very renowned products. The study discovered that consumers who buy recognized brands desire to demonstrate their social position. When people buy any goods, they consider the

reputation of the brand. They sense less danger when it comes to well-known businesses. As a result, it can influence the behavior of customers. The following hypothesis is presented based on this reasoning:

Hypothesis H₂: Brand reputation has a positive impact on customer behavior.

Discount Framing

Discount framing is a marketing technique used to discount the price of a product or service by using different language to describe the discount. McKechnie, Devlin, Ennew, and Smith (2012) define discount framing as “*the use of different language and symbols to describe the discount of a product or service in marketing messages*”. Another type of discount framing is a reduction in payment speed compared to the credit period (Kim et al., 2019) and savings on prices supplied to consumers that are less than the median prices listed on the label (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Discount framing is a pricing technique that entails a long-term plan to gradually cut prices after releasing a high-priced commodity (Janiszewski & Cunha Jr, 2004). Discount framing can be applied through various forms, including percentage off, dollar off, free shipping, and gift with purchase (Kim et al., 2019).

According to Kim et al. (2019), discount framing can influence consumer purchasing behavior by impacting the monetary value of the product and creating a psychological effect on consumer choice. In addition, for online products, discount framing can influence customer purchasing decisions based on different online information, such as customer reviews, product prices, and promotions. Other studies have shown that discount framing can influence customer emotions and purchasing decisions. Park, Seo, Kim, and Ha (2018) survey on discount strategies found that percentage discounts made customers happier than dollar discounts. Park et al. (2018) study also showed that using the term discount can lead to a more positive reaction from customers than using the term promotion. Previous research has indicated that sales promotion significantly impacts the brand image, such as Agmeke et al. (2019) and (Slamet et al., 2022).

Furthermore, promotion significantly influences customer purchasing decisions (Akbar, Ahmad, Asif, & Siddiqui, 2020; Helmi, Ariana, & Supardin, 2022). Agmeke et al. (2019) found that buyers do not feel guilty when they purchase an item with a discount frame. As a result, cheap framing can boost product sales. Some researchers recognize that the relationship between intention and behavior is not direct or immediate (Agmeke et al., 2019) because there are mediating factors such as the individual experience with the attitudinal object, the intention stability through time, the presence of other people, and the abilities required to perform the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Based upon these considerations, Ajzen (1991) considers the individual perceived or actual limitations to perform the behavior and introduces a new variable: perceived behavioral control. TRA and TPB have been used and studied in various psychology and allied sciences fields. These theories have been employed in the field of consumer behavior to explain the acquisition and change of attitudes about categories, goods, and brands, in addition to attitudes and intentions linked to buying, re-buying, using, and re-using items and services (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, Brown, & Carvajal, 2004). Hashim, Husin, Othman, and Zain (2017) discovered that pricing is a prominent consideration Malaysian career women evaluate when purchasing Chinese-made household products. Prices that are unrelated to product performance have an impact on customer behavior (Keller, 2003). As a result, it is critical to recognize that low-cost items are more appealing to certain market categories. To put it simply, this demonstrates that reduced prices influence customer behavior. Thus, numerous factors impact consumer purchasing decisions, whether they will buy or not. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis H₃: Discount framing has a positive impact on customer behavior.

3.2. Research Methods

Measuring research variables: The research variables used are inherited from previous studies. Specifically, shopping intention, discount framework, brand reputation, and brand image used from the study by Agmeke et al. (2019) have inherited and developed the scale from previous studies. The study used a 5-level Likert scale for the discount frame variables, brand reputation, and brand image, while customer behavior employed a 7-level Likert scale. The measurement of research variables is presented in detail in Table 1.

Data collection and analysis: The study collects data through questionnaires. The survey questionnaire was designed online and sent to the participants. The results of 289 valid survey questionnaires were retained for analysis. The demographic of respondents is depicted in Table 1. The research used quantitative analysis methods to process data, including scale reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), correlation analysis, and regression analysis.



Table 1 The demographics of respondent

Gender	%	Income	%
Male	22%	Under 7.5 mil VND	74%
Female	78%	From 7.5 to 9.999 mil VND	9%
		From 9.9 to 14.999 mil VND	6%
Age			
Under 18 years old	0%	From 15 to 21.999 mil VND	5%
From 18 to 24 years old	82%	From 22 to 29.999 mil VND	2%
From 25 to 34 years old	8%	Above 30 mil VND	4%
From 35 to 44 years old	8%		
From 45 to 54 years old	1%		
Above 55 years old	1%		

4. Results and discussion

This study verifies the quality of the scale through reliability analysis and exploratory factor analysis. The reliability of the scale is considered through the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The reliability ranges from 0.6 to 0.9, which many researchers consider the scale reliable (Nguyen, 2013; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In addition, the variable-total correlation coefficient greater than 0.3 can accept the indicator (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). These thresholds are prominent in previous studies such as Binh, Tran, Thanh, and Pham (2020) and Huyền et al. (2023). The results of the reliability analysis of the scale are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 The results of the reliability test

	Instrument	Source	Cronbach alpha
Discount Framing	DF1. I shop from e-commerce that give discounts on products that they sell	(Agmeka et al., 2019), (McKechnie et al., 2012)	0.729
	DF2. I shop at stores that do NOT discount products on online shopping apps.		
	DF3. I shop from e-commerce that does not discount the product they sell.		
	DF4. I shop from e-commerce because the store gives lower prices than the physical store.		
Brand Reputation	BR1. E-commerce platforms are trustworthy.	(Waddington, 2011), (Agmeka et al., 2019)	0.838
	BR2. E-commerce platforms are reputable.		
	BR3. E-commerce platforms make honest claims.		



	Instrument	Source	Cronbach alpha
	BR4. E-commerce platforms are reliable.		
	BR5. I shop from e-commerce that offers affordable prices.		
Brand Image	BI1. Each e-commerce platform has a differentiated image in comparison with the other platform.	(Agmeka et al., 2019)	0.811
	BI2. Being able to order by phone makes me interested in using P2P online transportation since I am accustomed to making phone calls.		
	BI3. E-commerce platforms have a clean image.		
	BI4. E-commerce platforms are well-established e-commerce.		
	BI5. E-commerce platforms arouse my sympathy to purchase the product.		
Customer Behavior	CB1. I often buy products from e-commerce platforms.	(Agmeka et al., 2019), (Wee et al., 2014)	0.900
	CB2. I often buy products from e-commerce platforms because they are easy to do.		
	CB3. I often buy products from e-commerce platforms because they are more convenient.		
	CB4. I often buy products from e-commerce platforms for my need.		
	CB5. I often buy products from e-commerce platforms because they are safe to use.		

Table 2 illustrates the examination results of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of research variables. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients all exceed 0.6, indicating all measures of variables are reliable. No variables failed the standards and were not included in the model since no factors were discovered during analysis with coefficients less than 0.6. The factor group Cronbach's Alpha, which runs from 0.3 to 0.9, is also lower than the overall correlation coefficient. The factors are thus included in the study and have statistical significance.

The exploratory factor analysis is a technique for reducing data to a smaller set of summary variables and investigating the underlying theoretical structure of the phenomenon. The EFA in this research used the principal component method with varimax rotation. The EFA results for independent variables, with KMO = 0.888 at a confidence level of 99%, extract three factors at a total variance of 62.48%. For the dependent variable, only one factor in EFA analysis with KMO = 0.859, sig. = 0.000, and total variance extracted = 71.81%. These EFA results indicate the fit relationship between respondents and the variables. The latent variables are calculated, including brand image (BRA_IM), brand reputation (BRA_RE), discount frame (DIS_FR), and customer behavior (CUS_BE).

The research employs correlation analysis and multivariate analysis to test hypotheses. According to the findings of the correlation study, there is a strong linear correlation at a 99% confidence level, and the dependent variable and independent variables are less than 0.05 (sig = 0.000). The results of the correlation analysis between independent variables and the dependent variable show that the dependent variable in the model has a strong relationship with independent variables, with the sig significance level. = 0.000. The study carried out multivariate linear regression of the research model. The results are summarized in Table 3.



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Table 3 Research model regression results

Model Summary ^b								
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson			
1	.704 ^a	.496	.491	.87389	2.003			
a. Predictors: (Constant), DIS_FR, BRA_RE, BRA_IM								
b. Dependent Variable: CUS_BE								
ANOVA ^a								
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
1	Regression	214.117	3	71.372	93.457	.000 ^b		
	Residual	217.652	285	.764				
	Total	431.770	288					
a. Dependent Variable: CUS_BE								
b. Predictors: (Constant), DIS_FR, BRA_RE, BRA_IM								
Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.139	.318		-.437	.662		
	BRA_IM	.903	.095	.517	9.543	.000	.602	1.661
	BRA_RE	.029	.089	.017	.326	.744	.669	1.494
	DIS_FR	.440	.086	.263	5.134	.000	.675	1.482
a. Dependent Variable: CUS_BE								

The results in Table 3 indicate the model regression. Explanatory coefficient, R-square = 0.496, shows that the participant perception explains 49.6% of the variation in Customer behavior. The adjusted $R^2 = 0.491$ demonstrates that the model explanation is safe and accurate, as each additional independent variable explains a further 0.491 times the variation. Regarding the model fit assessment, the ANOVA table using the F-test with a significance level of $\text{sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the regression model is appropriate for the research data, and the independent variables in the model explain nearly 50% of the variation in customer behavior (CUS_BE). Based on the regression model results in the Coefficient table, the sig. of BRA_IM, BRA_RE, and DIS_PR coefficients are 0.000, 0.744, and 0.000, respectively. The values of BRA_IM and DIS_FR are < 0.5 at a significance level of 5%, indicating that both factors have statistically significant effects on online shopping behavior, and they both have a positive influence on customer behavior when shopping in online platforms ($\text{BRA_IM} = 0.903 > 0$, $\text{DIS_PR} = 0.44 > 0$). Conversely, the value of $\text{BRA_RE} > 0.5$ ($\text{sig} = 0.744$) indicates no significant statistical relationship between brand reputation and customer behavior when shopping on e-commerce platforms. The VIF values being < 10 confirm that there is no issue of multicollinearity among the independent variables in the research model. This result means that in customer perception, an increase in the influence of discount framing and brand image leads to more people engaging in online shopping by promoting their behavior. *Huyền et al. (2023)* reveal that brand image, brand reputation, and discount framing have a significant effect on the purchase intention of customers on e-commerce platforms; however, the findings of this research reinforce that brand image and discount framing are two determinants for the actual behavior of customers. To enhance the brand image and customer attitude, companies consider implementing marketing strategies such as corporate social responsibility to improve their brand image because *Bình, Thành, and Loan (2021)* suggest a positive attitude of customers if they witness a socially responsible firm.

5. Conclusion

Online shopping is growing in popularity globally. Online shopping brings massive revenue to the suppliers and benefits the customers. This study examined the effects of discounts, reputation, and image of

brand members on customer buying behavior on online shopping platforms in Vietnam. The results show that at the 5% significance level, the study shows that brand image and discount frames positively affect customer behavior on online shopping platforms. On the other hand, it is a knowledge that brand reputation does not significantly impact online customer behavior. These research

h results show that stakeholders such as platform developers and vendors can have policies related to developing various discount frameworks and brand image enhancement activities. Brand image and discounts will help customers increase buying behavior from commercial brands on these platforms.

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