

The Effects of Web Aesthetics and Product Quality on the Patronage Intentions of Recreational Shoppers

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ABSTRACT

At this present time, digitalization is one of the most imperative and exigent topics in the modern working world. Researchers in online retailing observe that growing competition is making it increasingly difficult for online retailers to differentiate themselves on the basis of their product or price offerings. The present study inspects the effects of aesthetics of the websites on a consumer's intentions to patronize online shopping. In doing so, the study also investigates how quality of product obtained online affects patronage intentions of the consumers. The analysis was based on 210 responses collected from respondents who have shopped online via questionnaire. The outcome show that a consumer formulate an instant opinion of the website based on aesthetics, which in turn biases the way they evaluate specific website affecting their patronage intentions. The results further show that consumer's hedonic shopping orientation and quality of products affects the patronage intentions of online shoppers.

Keywords: Web Aesthetics, Hedonic Shopping Orientation, Patronage Intentions, Quality of Products and Online Shopping

1. INTRODUCTION

Online shopping is a flourishing market which is forecasted to grow with a compound yearly growth rate, CAGR $\geq 19\%$ globally by 2020 (Columbus, 2017). In the year 2017, approximately 45% of US internet users had shopped online numerous times a month (Clement, 2019) thus patronizing online shopping. The number of digital buyers in Asia Pacific crossed one billion for the first time in the year 2018 (Statista.com,

2019). This indicates that near about 60% of internet users of Asia Pacific region have shopped online and also reflects the huge growth of online shopping in this market. India has also shown promising trends for e-tailing industry. The penetration of active online retail industry has been around 31% which clearly indicates that there is a lot of scope of improvement. Changing demographic patterns of consumers, increased incomes, international exposure, rise in the number of working women, changing lifestyles, the global impact, a developing economy comprising and most importantly changing mindset of consumers are leading to a higher consumerism in India, thus responsible for driving growth of Indian e-tailing industry (Ranganath & Babu, 2011; McKinsey Global Institute, 2007).

The influences of western retail formats have encouraged consumption in India (Sinha, 2011). India's total internet user base is expected to increase to 829 million by 2021 from 604.21 million as of December 2018 owing to the ongoing digital transformation in the country. The internet economy of the country is expected to double from US\$125 billion as of April 2017 to US\$ 250 billion by 2020 primarily through e-commerce. Country's e-commerce revenue is expected to rise from US\$ 39 billion in 2017 to US\$ 120 billion in 2020, with an annual growth rate of 51 per cent which is the maximum in the world (IBEF, 2019).

Electronics has remained the biggest contributor to online retail sales in India with a share of 48 percent in 2018, followed by apparel at 29 per cent (IBEF, 2019). A considerably fast-growing number of Internet users indicate a huge growth potential of e-tailing in the country. The increased penetration of smartphones in the Indian e-commerce market is expected to grow to US\$ 200 billion by 2026 from US\$ 38.5 billion in 2017, with the launch of new 4G and 5G technologies. The encouraging online retail sales in India which touch US\$ 32.70 billion in 2018, led by Flipkart, Amazon India and Paytm Mall (IBEF, 2019) marks the potential of high Internet use in India. With the increase in Internet penetration, the potential of growth of the e-commerce industry will also increase.

In the past two decades, there has been a transformation in the way in which individuals identify, communicate, and make purchase decisions. The consumers search for more options, discounts, competitive prices and reliable deliveries which are now readily available through online shopping. This has lead to an increase in the number of online shoppers and online stores. The main impetus to increased number of online

store is due to the reason that it has relatively low setup cost. Now e-tailing has become an attractive option to both large and small retailers who aims to expand their markets beyond their regional bases. (Schonfeld, 2010)

This huge market growth is not only encouraging increase in the number of e-tailers but it also suggests ever-increasing rivalry among the e-tailers. The customers are now able to shop from an unlimited number of e-stores with much ease and flexibility. The success mantra of online retailing in this competitive landscape is to ensure that consumers spend considerable time investigating and finding the way to e-tailer's virtual marketplace. Towards accomplishing this objective, web designers and design managers have to understand the ways in which customers decide a particular e-tailing site, estimate the site's design and make a purchase from the website.

The design of an e-tail website also determines the success of e-tail website to the degree to which it facilitates consumers to have a constructive understanding and customers accomplish their consumption goals (Campanelli, Bardo, & Heber, 2010). Extant literature indicates that web aesthetics dimensions significantly influence website patronage intentions (Campanelli et al., 2010; Kang, et.al, 2009; Lavie & Tractinsky, 2004; Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002). There is much probability of attaining buyer satisfaction, optimistic purchase intentions, customer trustworthiness, and ongoing patronage by those e-tailing sites which correctly execute web aesthetics (Bauer, Falk, & Hammerschmidt, 2006; Bhattacharjee, 2002; Kim & Lennon, 2008; Lavie & Tractinsky, 2004).

The earlier studies on the subject have emphasized the need of recognition of constituents of consumer acceptance of online shopping by the online practitioners (Zhou et al., 2007; Ha et al., 2009). The need for more study of buyer constant use of e-tailing sites has been stressed by many researches (Che et al., 2015; Hasan, 2016). A superior insight by retail practitioners into the factors of prompt positive and pleasant sentiments among customers along with the factors that incite negative feelings and responses is critical to improve customer online shopping (Azeem & Haq, 2012). The present study is primary to address these research gaps and presents a combined model to elucidate online shopping, based on a strong hypothetical foundation. The paper is structured in such a way that the next section discusses the theoretical framework of

the study. Literature relating to the key constructs of interest in the study is reviewed and proposed hypothesis stated. This is followed by the methodology section which provides details relating to population and sampling, operationalization of constructs as well as data collection and analysis. Following the methodology are results and discussion as well as implications sections. Thereafter is the last section which highlights conclusions drawn from the findings, limitations of the study and provides suggestions for future study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizations have to face the fact that virtual work is on the rise (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002; Hertel et al., 2017; Townsend et al., 1998). Many employees have to handle technical artifacts at work, particularly office workers who communicate, solve problems, or create ideas e.g., on a computer, mobile phone or tablet. Multiple studies have examined website design characteristics including their effectiveness and visual aesthetics (Seckler et al., 2015; Moshagen & Thielsch, 2010; Tuch, et al., 2010). By aesthetics becoming the need of the hour, it is evident that online retailers choose different ways to design their homepages, raising the need for further investigation on what customers consider to be visually appealing to them.

2.1 Web Aesthetics

As an outcome from the rapid increase of technology and new ways of exposing information, designers have tended to become overzealous and carried away in their attempt to be inventive in their web store attributes (Dawson et al., 2012). One such Web-store attribute is the aesthetic design. Aesthetics has gained a lot of focus as it has been shown to have the positive effect of interface aesthetics on subjective impressions and reactions (Bargas-Avila & Hornbæk, 2011; Hassenzahl & Tractinsky, 2006; Thielsch, Blotenberg & Jaron, 2014). The significance of aesthetics in e-tailing is highlighted by the restricted prospect for e-tailers to create a store atmosphere that would positively persuade shopper behavior. An instinctive and suitable means for achieving this job is to make use of visual aesthetics. Aesthetics of website is the first impressions shopping sites (Tractinsky et al 2006; Thielsch, 2019). These impressions are mainly very important in the matter of the Web, for the reason that the buyer might effortlessly switch to another webstore (Vilnai-Yavetz

& Rafaeli 2006). Also, it is relatively easier and cheaper to influence web aesthetics, and this can be completed with more flexibility in online environments than in physical environments.

Aesthetics is an area of study which concerns beauty and how things are sensed, felt and judged. This means that aesthetics is a concept concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty. Coursaris, Swierenga & Watrall (2008) noted that aesthetics is interlinked with the hedonic shopping orientation of online shoppers. The designing of online retailing websites can be aimed at giving customers pleasure through beauty. According to Chang et al (2014) as well as Wang, Minor & Wei (2011) web aesthetics represents how different elements and attributes including colour, graphical illustration of products, page layout including structure of information are combined so as to yield an impression of beauty and appeal to customers. Beronius and Andrén (2017) states visual appearance of website is crucial to users' online experience and evaluation of an online website. Schenkman and Jonsson (2000) argued that users repeated visits to a website can be attributed to it is visually attractiveness. Parboteeah, Valacich, and Wells (2009) have suggested that the visual appeal of an e-tailing website affects consumers' purchase intentions online. Cai and Xu (2011) have established that there is a positive relationship between perceived web aesthetics and online consumers' patronage intentions. All these studies have confirmed that all other factors remaining constant, a visually appealing e-commerce website is generally liked by online consumers more, and thus leads to more sales and patronage in the long run (Karvonen, 2007). Therefore it is quite evident that online shopping sites should now have an constituent of visual appeal and aesthetics in array of being accepted by the a lot buyers as the value of a online sites is no longer controlled by its functionality or information delivery (Lindgaard, et al., 2011). The graphics and colour can impact customer intentions to buy as found by Koo & Ju (2010) in their study. Cai & Xu (2011) also contended that there is a positive influence of web aesthetics on the customers' shopping enjoyment.

Hoffman and Novak (1996) argue that when an e-tailing site is premeditated in an approach to produce an elevated level of stimulation, a focused consideration to the website, and affirmative interactivity, purchase intentions towards online transaction can be induced. The visual attention of consumer is related with the cognitive processing of the information displayed on a website (Hwang & Lee, 2017). The specific elements

of website design can enhance the flow or purchase state as suggested by Ilsever and Parent (2007). Various elements of website design like rate of page loading, excellence and obviousness of response between user input and site reaction, simplicity of navigation, effortlessness, pleasurable, usefulness, and the match amid the virtual environment's difficulty and the user's capability play important role in consumer's cognitive processing of information.

There are different ways in which online consumers, with their different shopping orientations, may respond to web aesthetics because consumers' shopping orientations can considerably moderate their information processing patterns (Babin & Darden, 1995, Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006). Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) argued that purchase occurs at the boundary when the customer is neither bore nor anxious. If there is too much challenge it would cause anxiety, whereas too little challenge leads to boredom. Thus aesthetics have significant influence on patronage intentions. The design of a website should balance the efficient use of design, font, and aesthetically pleasing visual cues.

Jeong, et al. (2009), however, found that there is an increased intention to purchase when there are elements that are rich in sensory design which can enhance amusement and artistic experiences as it increased enjoyment and stimulation for users. Online retailers should endeavor to improve the homepages which forms the first impressions towards a website and also helps in increasing patronage intentions of online consumers (Pappas et al., 2018). It has been stressed by various authors to focus on the quality of products which are available online (Daniel, Reitsperger, & Gregson, 1995; Foster & Sjoblom, 1996). The development of product or service quality has been a matter of main concern to firm as quality is the key constituent of competitive advantage (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980).

2.2 Product Quality

Quality of product is defined as the set of features and distinctiveness of merchandise that add to its capability to meet given requirements. Quality is defined as overall superiority of the products, as stated by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) from the consumer's viewpoint. As stated by Monroe and Krishnan, 1985, a particular product's ability to satisfy the consumers compared to alternative products defines product quality, whereas Parasuraman et al., 1988 stated that it is a consumer's evaluation of a

product's exceptional value and performance. Thus, product quality can be defined as the customer's judgment about the overall excellence or supremacy of the products or service with respect to its relative alternatives (Aaker, 1991; Parasuraman et al., 1988). The product quality is a crucial reason to buy (Aaker, 1991), and variety provides the customers various alternatives to choose the products. The products contributing value for money not only persuade customer's choice behavior at the pre purchase phase but also affect their contentment, intention to recommend and loyal behavior at the after purchase phase (Dodds, Monroe & Grewal 1991; Parasuraman & Grewal 2000).

A number of researchers suggest that the quality of the product and services, offered by companies on their websites, has a major impact on customer-supplier relationships (Geissler, 2001; Korner & Zimmermann, 2000; Selz, 1998). The e-retailers can provide full online description of product quality information and merchandise information through the website, for targeting quality-orientated customers. It is also found by various authors that hedonic shoppers like to shop from those websites which have appealing aesthetics and good quality products (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980, Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993)

2.3 Hedonic Shopping Orientation

Gehrt et al. (2012) discovered that while making online purchase, hedonic shoppers are positively inclined towards recreation, quality, and aesthetics. Anderson et al. 2014 and Dirsehan & Yalçın, 2011 defined hedonic shoppers as those shoppers who seek to maximize emotional pleasure that takes place while shopping for products. Utilitarian shoppers on the other hand focus on the functional side of shopping and make the actual purchase without spending too much time as they are efficiency oriented (Anderson et al., 2014; Haas & Kenning, 2014). Shopping enjoyment has been defined by Beatty and Ferrell (1998) as the pleasure obtained from the shopping process. This concept of shopping enjoyment is associated to the difference between hedonic and utilitarian shoppers. While hedonic shoppers strive for fun and entertainment in shopping, utilitarian shoppers treat shopping as work (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994).

The recreational shoppers tend to buy things they liked, regardless of urgency or needs, and spent less time deliberating before making purchase, unlike economic shoppers. Hedonic consumer tends to spend more time shopping even after making a purchase as compared to the economic shopper. They are more prone to buy something they do not like, irrespective of urgency or need, and spends less time deliberating before

making a purchase (Xiang et al., 2014). Online stores need to improve sensory motivation, generate the emotion of desire and arousal as well as delight and pleasure to promote hedonic shopping (Babin et al., 1994). As such, vivacious atmosphere that develops the gratification of the shopping process, that helps in achieving positive purchasing intentions for hedonic products. One of the most significant factors that can manipulate these feelings in the virtual world is visual design and aesthetic design (Arnold & Reynolds 2003; Seock & Bailey, 2008; Zhang and von Dran 2000).

There is a significant relationship between hedonic shopping orientation and customer online patronage intentions (Seock & Bailey, 2008). With the growing online retail competition it is becoming essential for retailers to look for ways in which they can augment their customers' online experience which will further lead to patronize the e-store. As pointed out by various studies on online retailing, websites aesthetics play a major role in influencing customer shopping behavior in general and patronage in particular (Chang, Chih, Liou & Hwang, 2014; O'Cass & Carlson, 2012; Gregg & Walczak, 2010). This is mainly due to the fact that online shopping is characterized by actual purchasing in virtual world. Website aesthetics is the important factor that leads to purchasing and if the design is faulty then it gives negative impression to consumers and also lowers their willingness to buy (Douglas et al., 2003). The easier it is to navigate a site the more chances that consumers would purchase from that website (Semeijn et al., 2005). The complicated websites makes consumers cancel the traction process (Odekerken-Schroder & Wetzels, 2009). Hedonic customers not only look for security, privacy and vast information but also gives lot of weightage to aesthetically attractive websites as it increases the pleasure of buying online (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Hedonic motivation is based on individual emotional needs which are mainly intended for pleasure and comfort through web aesthetics (Bhatnagar & Ghosh, 2004). To encourage hedonic shopping, online shopping stores need to improve sensory stimulation, create the feeling of desire and arousal as well as enjoyment and pleasure (Babin et al., 1994). As discussed above, aesthetics is one of the most significant factors that can persuade these feelings in the virtual world. Thus, aesthetic design can be influential in creating such environments (Arnold & Reynolds 2003; Lavie & Tractinsky 2004; Zhang & von Dran 2000). Compared to the utilitarian shopper, hedonic consumer tends to spend more time shopping even after making a purchase, is more prone

to buy something he/she does not like, irrespective of urgency or need, and spends less time deliberating before making a purchase.

Online retail customers have to rely on the website for cues that help in making buying related decisions. The engagement of customer with website also provides a prospect for positive experience that can result in building of long term relationships in terms of purchase and patronage (Rose et al., 2011).

2.4 Patronage Intentions

Patronage studies in the past have attempted to identify determinants of store choice in relation to attributes, such as price, quality, variety of merchandise, credit availability, return policies, and well-known labels/brands (Chetthamrongchai & Davies, 2000; Pan & Zinkhan, 2006). According to Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995) aesthetics such as air quality, lighting, layout, carpeting, and aisle width and placement are store attributes that project store image and influence store choice. Similarly commitment to an online site can be confirmed by a number of consumers who have willingness to revisit and willingness to repurchase from a site

Mummalaneni, (2005) found that web aesthetics influence consumers patronage intentions by adding pleasure to consumers' search experience. Moreover, online systematic layout of the products and easy navigation leads to a higher level of online entertainment (Vrechopoulos et al., 2004). Consumers enjoy shopping from stores which are aesthetically appealing (Swinyard, 1993). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between store aesthetics and shopping enjoyment leading to patronage intentions will occur retail settings as well as online shopping environments. In an aesthetically appealing store environment, consumers are less diverted during their shopping activities. Novak et al. (2000) found a positive influence of Web site aesthetics on consumers' patronage intentions and pleasure states of the consumer while shopping online. Verhagen and Van Dolen (2009) identified online store aesthetics as important contributors of online patronage intentions.

Based on literature the following hypotheses can be derived

3. HYPOTHESES

H1: quality of product affects the patronage intentions of online shoppers

H2: there exists a significant relationship between hedonic shopping orientation and patronage intentions of online shoppers.

H3: there exists a significant relationship between web aesthetics and hedonic shopping orientation.

H4: web aesthetics affect the patronage intentions of online shoppers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey on mass scale has been performed with the help of developed instrument. . Respondents for the current research study were online shoppers in Delhi. The rationale behind choosing respondents from Delhi region is that Delhi is a homogeneous mix of people from varied demographics. Therefore in order to access the patronage intentions of online shoppers the study has been performed. The current study also analyzed how the web aesthetics, quality of products available online and hedonic shopping orientation impacted patronage intentions of online shoppers. A complete questionnaire based on items on web aesthetics, quality of products available online and hedonic shopping orientation and patronage intentions has been utilized to gather data.

Further the current research study uses secondary as well as primary data. The secondary data has been collected from several published thesis, dissertations and Journal research papers- both empirical as well as theoretical. Primary data has been gathered with the help of a pretested questionnaire. The primary data provides comprehensive descriptions of various terms of statistical units used in the survey and are further fragmented into improved categorizations. The questionnaire designed was based on the seven point scale and the respondents were asked to choose a point as per their choice regarding each item in the questionnaire.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Since the focus on the paper was on customers who are hedonic in their shopping orientation, these shoppers were identified during data analysis using hedonic shopping orientation scale adapted from Arnold and Reynolds (2003) and Babin and Attaway (2000). A total of 210 respondents were found to fit the profile of being hedonic in their shopping orientation as they had average scores of 5.5 and above on the scale. Score of 5.5 and above meant that the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with hedonic shopping

orientation indicator statements. Of these respondents 47 percent were male while 53 percent were female shoppers. In terms of age 28.86 percent of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 29, 63.09 percent were between the ages of 30 and 49 while 8.05 percent were aged 50 and above.

In order to determine appropriateness of using factor analysis a correlation matrix of all the 27 variable items, as well as Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's measure of sample adequacy were performed. As a rule of thumb, the value of KMO should be more than 0.5 to proceed for factor analysis. For this case, the KMO value is 0.964, which indicates that factor analysis is relevant for our study and there is no multicollinearity in the data

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.964
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	21665.855
	Df	810
	Sig.	0.000

Varimax factor rotation was applied to the 27 components using the minimum eigenvalue of one as the criterion to control the number of factors extracted. As per the Kaiser criterion, only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained. Table 2 below, shows the factor loadings for each item in relation to the various factors and indicate factor loadings are positive and the items are significantly loaded.

Further, results of the factor analysis also indicate that 4 factors (shopping orientation hedonic, product quality, web aesthetics and patronage intentions) emerge, which could explain 77.699 percent of the total variance. These four factors represent the factor loading of various constructs adopted for the study

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been employed to determine the adequacy of the measurement model's goodness-of-fit towards the sample data. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has been used to test CFA models. IBM PASW AMOS 23.0 was used to perform SEM analysis.

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

After EFA which has been performed on 100 questionnaires, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out for the next 110 questionnaires obtained from the respondents on items under various dimensions in the study. CFA was done on the data obtained using IBM-Amos Version-21. The data was checked for validity, reliability as well as for the model fit. All the 27 items were used in the CFA to obtain a model fit. All of the items loaded very well with scores lying between 0.66 and 0.84. Further, a fitness of good was achieved with χ^2/df less than 2 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), RMSEA almost in the range of 0.05 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993), CFI greater than 0.90 (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002)

4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis in Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The constructs measured by multiple items were tested for composite reliability and convergent and discriminant validity. For this purpose, the measurement model of the variables under study was developed and CFA was performed. The table 5.6 shows that composite reliability (CR) of each latent variable was acceptable (i.e. >0.7) in CFA and ranged from 0.929 to 0.969. Also, average variance extracted (AVE) of each latent variable was also acceptable (i.e. >0.5) with a range varying from 0.652 to 0.82 thereby confirming convergent validity of the measurement model and implying that the variables correlate strongly with each other within their parent factor i.e. latent variables are well explained by their observed variables. Furthermore, since average variance extracted (AVE) was greater than maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV) of all latent variables, it was confirmed that the model had adequate discriminant validity thereby implying that variables correlate highly with variables within their parent factor. Thus, there were no reliability or validity concerns for the model.

Table: 2

Constructs	Variables	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	AVE	MSV	ASV	Composite Reliability(CR)
Shopping Orientation	SO1	0.70	0.971	0.759	0.158	0.171	0.969
	SO2	0.79					
	SO3	0.80					
	SO4	0.73					
	SO5	0.77					
	SO6	0.67					
	SO7	0.75					
	SO8	0.80					
	SO9	0.80					
	SO10	0.76					
	SO11	0.70					
Web Aesthetics	WA1	0.63	0.937	0.716	0.125	0.125	0.938
	WA2	0.70					
	WA3	0.75					
	WA4	0.75					
	WA5	0.72					
	WA6	0.73					
Product Quality	SOQ1	0.84	0.932	0.820	0.158	0.179	0.932
	SOQ2	0.83					
	SOQ3	0.79					
Patronage Intentions	PI1	0.66	0.927	0.652	0.069	0.176	0.929
	PI2	0.69					
	PI3	0.71					
	PI4	0.61					
	PI5	0.67					
	PI6	0.68					
	PI7	0.71					

AVE: Average Variance Extracted; MSV: Maximum Shared Variance; ASV: Average Shared Variance

4.3 Structural Equation Modelling SEM

Present study used the two phase-modelling approach suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). In the first phase a measurement modelling (CFA) was done wherein, it was found that all the measures (items) adequately define (measure) their respective constructs. The second phase is to do a structural modelling wherein relationships between various latent variables will be evaluated through structural equation

modelling (SEM). After performing CFA, SEM was performed on the dataset using IBM-Amos Version-21 to attain the following results.

Fig. 1 OVERALL STRUCTURAL MODEL FOR THE STUDY

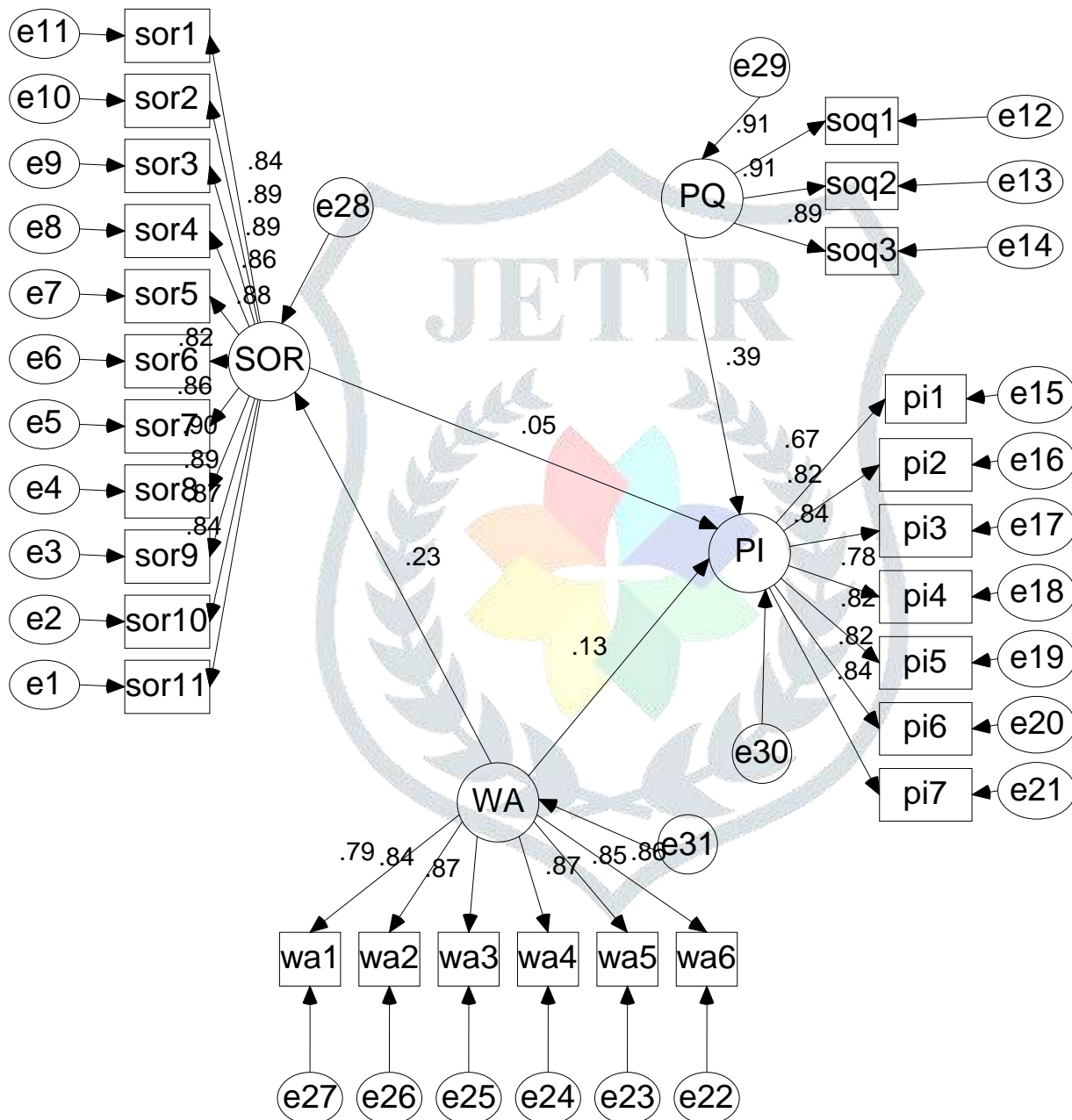


Figure 1

WA: Web Aesthetics, PQ: Product Quality, SOR: Shopping Orientation Recreation, PI: Patronage Intentions

The model fit of the structural model, which determines the degree to which the structural model fits the sample data, suggested evidence of a good fit. The minimum discrepancy divided by Degrees of Freedom ratio (**CMIN/DF**) was **1.77**, the Goodness-of-Fit Index (**GFI**) was **0.839**, the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (**AGFI**) was **0.810**, the Comparative Fit Index (**CFI**) was **0.953**, the Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (**NFI**) was **0.899**, the Tucker-Lewis Index (**TLI**) was **0.948** and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (**RMSEA**) was **0.061**.

Thus, all the values were within the specified range (Anderson & Gerbing 1988; Schumacker & Lomax 1996; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Clearly, the fit statistics indicate evidence of a good model fit. Moreover, out of four, three hypothesized paths/structural relationships are significant (p value < 0.001) and hence empirically support the three hypotheses. Since the value of $p > 0.001$ for the fourth hypothesis, hence it is not supported. This indicates that website aesthetics do not affect the patronage intentions of online shoppers.

Table 3: Model Fit

Indices	Chi square/ df	RMR	GFI	AGFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Threshold values	≤ 3	< 0.1	0.7-1	0.7-1	0.7-1	0.7-1	$\leq .05$, $> .05$ but < 0.8
Model values	1.68	0.299	0.839	0.810	0.948	0.953	0.061

4.4 Hypotheses Testing Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The t-value is calculated from the estimates of the model, where t-value is given as model path estimate divided by standard error. The results for the proposed hypotheses and prepositions are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	Relationship	Estimates	Standard Estimate	t-value	p-value	Significance Yes/ No
H1	SOQ-PI	0.288	0.049	0.691	< 0.001	Yes
H2	SOR-PI	0.033	0.056	5.170	< 0.001	Yes
H3	WA-SOR	0.240	0.076	3.187	< 0.001	Yes
H4	WA-PI	0.095	0.053	1.797	< 0.072	No

WA: Web Aesthetics, PQ: Product Quality, SOR: Shopping Orientation Recreation, PI: Patronage Intentions

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Focusing on customers who are hedonic in their orientation, the findings in this study show the important role that hedonic shopping orientation can play in influencing customers' commitment to an online store. The findings show that perceived levels of good quality products available online has significant influence on hedonic shopping orientation of consumers as well as customers' patronage intentions. The regression coefficient associated with the relationship between hedonic shopping experience and patronage intentions ($\beta = 0.056$) is an indication of the significant influence that hedonic shopping experience has on patronage intentions of online shoppers. Central to the enhancement of hedonic shopping value is the ability of retailers to make it pleasurable for customers to navigate their sites as they search for information.

Apart from pointing the importance of enhanced hedonic shopping experience, the findings in the study show factors that online retailers can focus on their efforts aimed at providing customers with enhanced quality products. Specifically the findings show that quality of product available online and web aesthetic appeals are significant factors affecting hedonic shopping experience. As the place of interface between an online retailer and its customers, the website plays an important part in facilitating customers' shopping experience. Online retailers thus need to ensure that they develop their retail store websites so as to be highly attractive and aesthetically appealing. Though in this study web aesthetics do not significantly affect the patronage intentions of online shoppers yet it increases the pleasure that hedonic shoppers get on the website visited. They need to make sure that different pages of the web site are easy to navigate and not excessively slow to access (Butkiewicz, Madhyastha & Sekar, 2011)

The findings in the study show that online retailers can also positively influence customers' emotions by paying attention to web aesthetic appeal. The findings show that web aesthetic appeal has positive influence on customers' hedonic experience of emotional pleasure while shopping. The findings are in line with those by Koo & Ju (2010) that website graphics and colors have positive influence on feeling of pleasure. Online retailers need to realize that web aesthetics can influence customers' first impression about an online retail store as well as in ensuring that customers are kept positively aroused while shopping. Nwokah and Ngirika (2017) noted that web aesthetics help provide an overall impression of the online shopping environment. Managers of physical retail stores often work with interior designers in creating desired look and feel for their store. Online retailers can take the same approach and use professional designers to help them come up with the desired the look and feel for their online stores.

6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant for several reasons. First, online retailers attempting to determine why consumers shop their e store will find this research important. Empirical studies such as this will provide online retailers with the tools necessary to attract and retain consumers. Second, this research will contribute to a better understanding of how web aesthetics can increase the number of customers to visit and make purchase from the e store. Finally, it will help online retailers to attract hedonic shoppers by creating pleasing environment for e-store consumers. This study can potentially provide several theoretical contributions. First, it is one of the first empirical studies that helped in quantifying the abstract concepts of web aesthetics into concrete metrics, thus providing guidance for researchers and practitioners to apply the findings in practice. Second, this study could extend the literature of web aesthetics by associating web aesthetics with other related factors. Instead of discussing the effects of web aesthetics separately, this study provides in-depth analysis of more thoughtful effects of aesthetics by exploring how web aesthetics influence patronage intentions of hedonic shoppers and also by studying the effects of quality of products available online on patronage intentions of online shoppers. The findings are expected to provide new insights about how to improve patronage intentions for online shopping under different circumstances. We anticipate that this research would be helpful in giving the real effects of web aesthetics in online marketplaces and present a general framework for online retailers to gauge the aesthetic level of their web stores and improve the web aesthetics

effectively. Also by selling good quality products online e-tailers can attract and retain more customers thereby increasing online patronage intentions. Experienced online retailer with good reputation should pay extra consideration to the aesthetics design of their stores by building the appearance of their websites more unified, with more or less complex information, and significant enough to attract buyers' attention. When compared to other promotional approaches which will induce direct cost attached to each transaction (offering discount, giving out free gifts, or providing free shipping), the modification of visual aesthetics design of web store can considerably reduce the expense while bringing into play actual purchase intention of buyers. Also for the new retailers the focus should be on aesthetics as well as good quality products to be delivered, thereby improving their reputation.

7. Managerial Implications

Incorporating aesthetics into online shopping sites does come with a cost, which may not be justified by each and everybody. Hence, to help e-retailers negotiate the benefits and costs of designing aesthetic sites, the proposition will be for the e-retailers to assume a focused approach to this facet of the e-store. Depending on the kind of goods and services they put up for sale and the type of clientele they aim, a number of stores possibly will necessitate heavy investment in aesthetic design. Likewise, a number of other stores may possibly have to put in the more novel aspect of aesthetic design, while other stores' investment should be resolute more towards more old-fashioned aesthetics. Appropriately understanding the point in time and course to highlight upon appropriate aesthetic design would consequence in tempting new customers and retaining existing consumers, improving consumer outlook and increasing potential purchases, as well as in reducing abrasion rate. The implications of this study for the e-retailers are to focus on providing a high-quality shopping experience to their consumers and catalog only good quality products on their e-tailing sites. The main goal of the study was to emphasize the major determinants of online patronage intentions of Indian online consumers. The literature review suggests that e-tailers should configure their Web-store design according to combinations of consumer and product characteristics. This can be achieved by tailoring online shopping sites in such a way that particular types of products are offered to different consumer

groups. Such customization would help e-retailers to acclimatize better to the various constraints of the online shopping context. The study highlights the importance of web aesthetics towards the formation of intentions for online purchase by hedonic shoppers. These findings are vital for the players of e-commerce in the Indian scenario to help them make consumers acquire products from their websites. These results are also valuable for the customers to evaluate their behavior towards the shopping sites and help them better their decisions in future.

8. Recommendations For Further Research

Clearly, this paper does not exhaust the role of aesthetics in online shopping. Future research can improve our knowledge about additional areas in the online shopping environment that can be affected by the aesthetics of online sites, and additional analyses can shed some more light on this phenomenon. More research is required to help better understand factors that influence customers' evaluations of their online experiences that would lead to increase patronage intentions of online shoppers. It is proposed to evaluate the impacts of other factors like shopping orientations, online trust and prior online purchase experience on the customer online patronage intention among the potential customers who have strong intention to engage in online purchasing activities.

Besides, it is recommended to evaluate the relationship between shopping orientations and customer online purchase intention based on gender differences as well as the role of gender in mediating the relationship between shopping orientations and customer online patronage intention. Lastly, it is suggested to utilize probability sampling technique to evaluate customer online patronage intention in the future research.

This study is helpful in the area of e-commerce. However, it has its limitations. The first limitation of the study is the sample size. Since the number of online shoppers is in millions so the present study needs a significant sample size to justify the results. However, due to certain constraints (time and resources), it was not possible to go beyond a certain number for the current study. So researchers may increase the sample size to get varied results for future study. Also, the researchers could use different sampling technique that can improve upon the results. Thus using other probability techniques can take this research to a different

level. The other limitation of the study is its limited scope to explain why web aesthetics showed no significant impact on the intentions to patronize by consumers. This is another area wherein future research can be conducted to see why web aesthetics that has been well thought-out to be one of the vital factors for the patronage intentions has an insignificant effect in the Indian scenario. One more limitation is that the conclusions are based on the spoken opinions of the respondents who are subjected to standard errors inherent in individual nature. Customers can now access information about sellers more effortlessly than ever before. Furthermore, innovative software tools make it easy for consumers to evaluate and access the value, illustration, and worth of products. The crowded field of competitors in B2C e-commerce indicates that achieving long-term success in Web retailing requires e-vendors to adhere to traditional economic and marketing principles and apply traditional marketing strategies. Luo, Ba & Zhang (2012) observed that while online shopping is growing at a fast pace, surveys continue to show that many customers are not highly satisfied with their shopping experiences.

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