

Flipkart's Sales Promotion Tools: A Model Development Study

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Abstract

Online retailers in India have tested various possible means to lure customers with promotional offerings such as discounts, cashback, loyalty programs, contests, electronic word of mouth, customer recommendations, reviews, flash sales, etc. Online customers face the challenge of analyzing, responding, and making their buying decisions accordingly. This empirical study aimed to ascertain the influence of various online sales promotional tools adopted by Flipkart on customers. A quantitative research approach was adopted and deployed for this particular research study. Data was elicited using a Likert Scale and administered on online buyers, and a model was developed and tested for the e-commerce player 'Flipkart' using the PLS-SEM technique. It explains the influence of two constructs, namely psychology, and consciousness, upon respondents' Shopping Experience, and was found that constructs explained customers' shopping experiences in the case of Flipkart.

Keywords: Flipkart, Online Retailers, PLS-SEM, Sales Promotional Tools

Jel Code: M0, M31, M37

1. Introduction

E-tailers and e-commerce platforms, driven by the increasing use of the internet and electronic devices like smartphones, laptops, and computers, have gained significant popularity. Wigand (1997) defines electronic commerce as the seamless application of information and communication technology throughout the business value chain, enabling the achievement of business goals through electronically conducted processes. This encompasses transactions between businesses and consumers, as well as consumer-to-business interactions.

Prominent e-commerce players like Flipkart, Amazon, and Snapdeal have explored the buying behavior of Indian consumers through digital channels over the past decade. This growth is supported by rising internet usage and expanding access to rural areas. These platforms employ various promotional tools to enhance web traffic and establish a widespread presence across geographical regions.

Sales promotion techniques are crucial for boosting sales, leading e-commerce players to allocate substantial budgets for promotions each year. Notably, during festive seasons, these e-tailers heavily invest in print and television media to raise awareness (RedSeer report, as cited in ET Online, 2018, October 8). Research indicates that 15% of respondents became aware of sales through word of mouth, followed by 38% through newspapers, and 40% through social media (ET Online, 2018, October 8).

Lamb *et al.* (2009) enumerate a range of online consumer sales promotion tools, including coupons, refunds, loyalty programs, contests, free shipping, and more. Indian culture, known for its festive season consumption rituals, sees major e-tailers capitalizing on factors such as attractive deals and discounts during occasions like Diwali (Khanna and Sampan, 2015). Effective strategies like offering coupons, free delivery, and discounts have proven successful for online fashion product purchases (Yahya *et al.*, 2019).

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E-commerce players adopt meticulous approaches to designing their promotional offerings to captivate customers and excel in the online marketing landscape. Electronic word of mouth significantly influences consumers' online product information search behavior (Lin *et al.*, 2012). Customer reviews, a crucial promotional tool, impact purchasing decisions. Marketers even incentivize anonymous customer reviews to influence online product evaluations (Mayzlin, 2006). Furthermore, Nan *et al.* (2017) delve into the relationships among multiple customer reviews, extending the understanding beyond individual reviews.

The purpose of this paper is to examine various factors that influence customer shopping experience when shopping online. The study helps to gain a better understanding on the influence of various sales promotional tools utilized by Flipkart on the customer shopping experience. Through various studies, variables like customer reviews, price, discounts, offers, flash sales, word of mouth, reviews, reputation, delivery options, coupons, EMI facility, buyback guarantee, loyalty programs safety and many more have contributed to enriching the customer's shopping experience. Hence this paper tries to study various promotional tools that affect customers' shopping experience through online shopping.

1.1 Objective of the Research Paper

This study aims to identify key factors and propose a comprehensive model that examines how Flipkart's sales promotion tools influence customers' shopping experience. By analyzing various constructs, the research seeks to gain insights into the promotional tools that influence consumer behavior during their shopping experience on the Flipkart platform.

- To study various online sales promotional tools.
- To identify constructs and propose a Model for Flipkart's sales promotion tools that influence customers' shopping experience.

2. Review of Literature

Various research studies have examined the impact of different sales promotion tools and factors on consumer

buying behaviors in the context of e-commerce. Mittal and Sethi (2011) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of sales promotion tools, such as price discounts, coupon schemes, bonus packs, premium offers, and scratch cards, on Indian consumers' buying behaviors. Their findings indicated that these tools influenced brand switching, increased stockpiling of items, and accelerated early purchases. However, they were ineffective in encouraging consumers to spend more, suggesting a zero-sum game effect.

Rakesh and Khare (2012) investigated the impact of promotions and value consciousness on online shopping behavior in India. Their study explored how online deals affect online shoppers and their behavior. The results revealed that purchase activity depended on factors like quality, variety, and safety concerns, and lower-priced deals might not necessarily lead to actual purchase behavior.

Nigam *et al.* (2020) examined the efficacy of "Deal of the Day" (DOD) promotional tactics for electronic items. Their research demonstrated that DOD promotional schemes resulted in more significant savings for buyers purchasing electronic product categories compared to non-electronic ones. Additionally, electronic products received higher discounts during festival seasons than during non-festival periods through DOD promotional schemes.

Khanna and Sampat (2015) investigated factors influencing online shopping during the Diwali festival in 2014, focusing on e-tailers Flipkart and Amazon. Both e-tailers employed aggressive promotional activities. The study concluded that factors like price sensitivity, product specifications, and personalized product recommendations played key roles in consumer selection and loyalty to online retailers.

Le and Vo (2017) explored consumer attitudes toward different website advertising formats, comparing dimensions of information, irritation, and entertainment for traditional banners, pop-up ads, and in-line display advertisements. Their findings revealed positive responses to informative banners, pessimistic reactions to pop-up ads, and a lack of significant impact on entertainment.

Salvi (2013) assessed the effectiveness of three sales promotional activities – discounts, price-offs, and Buy-One-Get-One (BOGO) offer – in the branded apparel retail industry. The study found that these promotions positively impacted store visits and purchase acceleration, but not stockpiling, trial, or brand switching.

Yahya *et al.* (2019) identified significant factors influencing online consumer buying behavior beyond price and quality. These factors included free delivery, discounts, and coupons.

Mofokeng (2021) highlighted the importance of delivery on online shoppers' enjoyment and satisfaction. The study underscored the effect of product diversity on customer satisfaction and the role of perceived security in predicting customer delight in online shopping.

Berter and Blomqvist (2010) conducted a comparison of sales promotion tools used by four American clothing websites, namely GAP Inc., American Eagle Outfitters Inc, Forever 21 Inc, and Bloomingdale's, as part of their thesis report. Insights on promotional strategies used by individual players were discussed

Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent (2000) developed a benefit congruency framework that highlights how monetary and non-monetary sales promotions provide customers with varying levels of hedonic and utilitarian benefits. Narayanaswamy and Heiens (2018) explored consumer responses to online sales promotions in hedonic versus utilitarian product categories. They found that different promotion types favored hedonic marketers more, and limited-hour special offers equally favored both types.

Chen, Wang, Rasool, and Wang (2022) emphasized the "People-Product Place" marketing strategy and discussed the influence of perceived e-commerce anchor qualities, scarcity, immersion, and good marketing on impulsive purchases. Zhao and Wan (2017) examined the perception of Chinese consumers during the "Singles Day" online shopping event and proposed a framework explaining the relationship across four drivers like promotion, word of mouth,

e-store atmosphere, advertising, consumption rituals, and purchase intention.

Yan *et al.* (2016) used the SOR (stimulus-organism-response) model to analyze unplanned consumption and situational variables like promotion, time pressure, and social environment during an online promotional activity 'Double 11' on Taobao.com. Results reveal actual shopping time diminishes while preparation time escalates during unplanned consumption. Liu, Li, Peng, Lv, and Zhang (2015) segmented the buying behavior of Chinese online customers on Taobao.com based on sensitivity to different types of promotions. The study found that economical purchasers were sensitive toward discount; promotion, direct purchasers were sensitive to advertising promotion and active-star purchasers were sensitive toward-of-mouth promotion

Nan, Yang, and Dou (2017) explored the impact of customer reviews on online consumer behavior, finding that reviews significantly influence product information acquisition and purchasing decisions. Ullal *et al.* (2021) studied the impact of emotions on luxury products across different city tiers, focusing on customer reviews with positive and negative emotions

Erkan and Elwalda (2018) developed the Information Adoption Model (IAM) and identified factors influencing purchase intentions through online customer reviews. Cummins *et al.* (2014) categorized online consumer behavior and highlighted the importance of eWOM (Word of Mouth) in the presence of viral campaigns, particularly influenced by opinion leaders.

The literature review helped in identifying the factors influencing consumer buying behavior and consumer perception. The literature summarizes the importance and impact of various promotional tools used by sellers in the past. Companies utilize sales marketing methods to attain specific goals. According to studies, these technologies can induce brand switching, increase stockpiling, and speed up early purchases, but they are unsuccessful in motivating customers to spend more. Researchers then investigated the impact of promotions and value consciousness on online

buying behavior in India, discovering that purchasing activity is influenced by factors such as quality, variety, and safety concerns. Through Deal of the Day promotional programs, electronic product categories were discounted significantly during festival seasons. Researchers investigated the factors that influence online shopping during the Diwali season, concentrating on price sensitivity, product characteristics, and tailored recommendations. However, the literature review reveals that the researchers explored individual elements influencing consumer shopping experiences but did not focus on developing a model, thereby indicating a gap in research. A model development is a crucial element for companies to device their promotional offerings better. As a result, the factors influencing consumer purchasing experience in this article were derived from the literature for the study, which was then tested to generate constructs, leading to model development for Flipkart.

3. Construct Development

Online shopping is influenced by various sales and online promotional strategies designed by e-commerce players. Hence researcher has identified various factors/constructs based on available literature that influence the online shopping experience w.r.t promotion strategies adopted by e-commerce players.

3.1 Psychology Construct

Kotler and Armstrong (2000) emphasized the impact of four psychological factors, namely Motivation, Perception, Learning, and Beliefs and Attitude, on an individual's purchasing decisions. In the realm of online promotion, consumer responses are influenced by the psychological processing of information present in advertisements and website navigation facilitated by the company (Cummins, Peltier, Schibrowsky, & Nill, 2014). Deal proneness, exemplified by coupons, is often subject to psychological constructs that shape coupon responsiveness and value-conscious behavior in the context of online shopping (Lichtenstein *et al.*, 1990). However, the psychological satisfaction derived from a purchase, contributing to the transaction utility, significantly enhances the overall shopping experience (Rakesh & Khare, 2012). Consequently, the initial hypothesis aims to examine the

influence of these constructs on the shopping experience of online customers.

Hypothesis

H₁: 'Psychology' has an influence on the shopping experience of online customers.

3.2 Consciousness Construct

Within the realm of online sales promotion, consciousness pertains to the value awareness that online customers derive from the utility of their acquisitions. This refers to the comparison between the price paid and the perceived utility of the product (Rakesh & Khare, 2012). Moreover, price consciousness is intertwined with deal proneness, affecting various consumer traits such as innovativeness, impulsiveness, and shopping enjoyment, ultimately augmenting the overall shopping experience (Martínez & Montaner, 2006). Online shoppers exhibit a consciousness towards product quality, brand value, and discounts, thereby experiencing the impact of these factors during online shopping. Consequently, the second hypothesis seeks to examine the influence of these constructs on the shopping experience of online customers

Hypothesis

H₂: 'Consciousness' has an influence on the shopping experience of online customers

4. Research Methodology

The research aimed to investigate the diverse promotion tools and strategies employed by online retailers, specifically focusing on Flipkart, in eliciting varying responses from online shoppers and subsequently developing a comprehensive model. Established in October 2007 and headquartered in Bengaluru, Flipkart has evolved into one of India's prominent e-commerce marketplaces. Founded by Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal, Flipkart initially began as an online bookstore before expanding its offerings to encompass products like music, movies, and mobile phones. Presently, the company provides a vast array of over 80 million products spanning more than 80 categories. Notably, in 2018, Flipkart underwent a significant transformation by becoming

Walmart-Flipkart, following Walmart's acquisition of a majority stake in the domestic e-tailer for a substantial \$16 billion (Mint, 2020)

The research methodology employed primary data collection through a structured questionnaire, administered electronically using the collaborative document authoring tool 'Google Docs.' The survey process, spanning from a pilot study to the main survey, took place between December 2021 and April 2022. The respondent pool encompassed individuals from across the country and was gathered through non-probability sampling techniques, specifically convenience and snowball sampling methods. The questionnaire was meticulously designed to encompass various aspects of sales promotional tools utilized by Flipkart. To gather responses, a 5-point Likert Scale was employed, ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree).

Following the guidance of Hair *et al.* (1998), the sample size was determined to be a minimum of 15 times the number of variables incorporated in the study. Consequently, the researcher procured a sample

of 1079 respondents, satisfying the stipulated sample size requirement for the research. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using the SPSS software, and the formulated model was subjected to statistical testing using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach.

5. Data Analysis

1 indicates the majority of the respondents belonged to 16-35 age category (83.1%) with graduates, postgraduate, and above as their level of education (93.1%). Nearly 2/3rd of respondents had experience in online shopping with 3 years or more with major shopping categories of products being electronics goods and fashion and apparel. Table 1 also indicates a fair idea about the medium of awareness about the promotional offerings.

6. Model Development using the PLS-SEM Approach

In this study, a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) has been adopted to test the research model for Flipkart. SEM

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Dimension		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Female	467	43.3	43.3
	Male	612	56.7	100.0
Age	16-25 years	445	41.2	41.2
	25-35 years	452	41.9	83.1
	35-45 years	126	11.7	94.8
	Above 45 years	56	5.2	100.0
Marital Status	Single	707	65.5	65.5
	Married	362	33.5	99.1
	Widow	2	.2	99.3
	Divorced	8	.7	100.0
Qualification	10th Standard/ Matriculation/ SSLC	16	1.5	1.5
	12th Standard/ PUC/ Diploma	58	5.4	6.9
	Graduate	313	29.0	35.9
	Postgraduate and Above	692	64.1	100.0
Occupation	Business	106	9.8	9.8
	Working/Service	439	40.7	50.6
	Homemaker	28	2.6	53.2
	Student	266	24.7	77.8
	Professional	182	16.9	94.7
	Other	57	5.3	100.0

	Dimension	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Monthly Income	Less than Rs.15,000	271	25.1	29.4
	Rs.15,001 to 30,000	263	24.4	57.9
	Rs.30,001 to 45,000	154	14.3	74.6
	More than Rs.45,000	234	21.7	100.0
No of years Shopping Online	Less than 1 year	84	7.8	7.8
	1-3 Years	288	26.7	34.5
	3- 5 years	306	28.4	62.8
	More than 5 years	401	37.2	100.0
Frequency of shopping online	More than once a month	197	18.3	18.3
	Once a month	198	18.4	36.6
	Occasionally	515	47.7	84.3
	Rare	169	15.7	100.0
Category of products bought online	Electronics	645	28.1	28.1
	Clothing and Fashion Apparel	678	29.5	57.6
	Home and Furnishing	243	10.6	68.2
	Baby, Beauty and Personal Care	302	13.1	81.3
	Books	212	9.2	90.6
	All of the above	188	8.2	98.7
	Others	29	1.3	100.0

Source: Online SurveyTable

can be arrived at by two approaches, first Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) and second Variance-based SEM (PLS-SEM). Many researchers argue that, compared to CB-SEM, PLS-SEM is more favored (Hwang *et al.*, 2020; Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019), and used in obtaining the prediction accuracy and is hence considered a better suitability of development of the theory (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Gefen *et al.*, 2011; Shiau *et al.*, 2019; Khan *et al.*, 2019). This study is a preliminary exploration of sales promotion strategies (designed by various e-commerce players) as a stimulus and their response to customers' online shopping experience. Hence, the researcher has chosen a smart PLS-SEM approach than a CB-SEM, for analysis using SmartPLS (v.3.2.8) (Ringle *et al.*, 2015). There are two parts in PLS-SEM analysis i.e., first, the measurement model was analyzed to ensure that the reliability and validity of the constructs were observed and second, the structural model was statistically tested to examine the hypotheses.

In Figure 1 a Model has been developed and tested for the ecommerce player 'Flipkart'. It explains the relationship between two factors namely Psychology (F1) and Consciousness (F2) that have an influence on the Shopping Experience (SE) of respondents. Factor

F1 includes various indicators named from P1 to P13, factor F2 includes indicators named from C1 to C5 and Shopping Experience (SE) includes indicators named from SE1 to SE4 with their respective loadings, fulfilling the threshold of 0.70 respectively. The Model shows a path coefficient of 0.586 between F1 to SE and 0.247 between F2 to SE. It also provides R-Square value which is the most commonly used measure to evaluate the structural model. The R-square value of 0.614 from the Model indicates 61.4% of the variability in the Dependent Variable (Shopping Experience) is accounted by the Independent Variables (Psychological and Consciousness) respectively.

6.1 Test for Normality

To assess whether the data are normal, the researcher checked statistical tests namely the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test and found that the distribution of the data was not normal (Sig. Value=0.000). Hence non-parametric tests were used for the research. PLS-SEM is mainly used in exploratory research to build theories. This is achieved by emphasizing the variance in the variables while the model is tested. Hence in order to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variables PLS-SEM was used for the study that

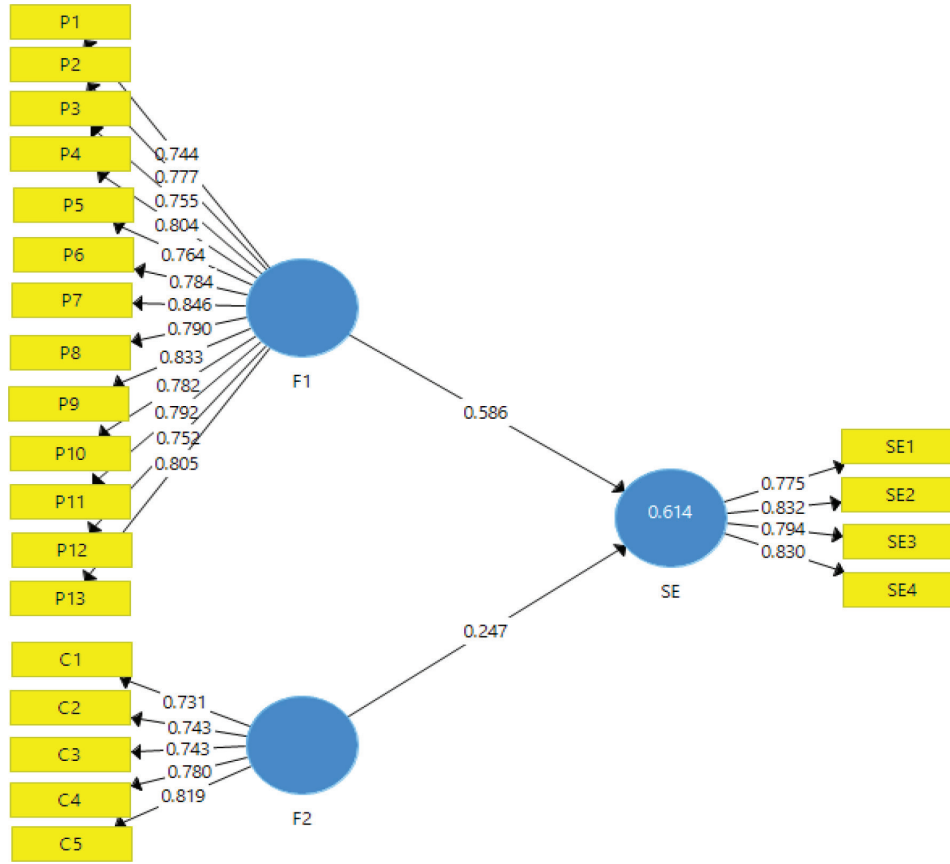


Figure 1. PLS-SEM model for Flipkart.

Source: Model developed by researcher for Flipkart using SmartPLS (v.3.2.8)

Table 2. The code name for statements used as indicators in the model for Flipkart

Code	Statements/Indicators
P1	The website has positive Customer Reviews about the product
P2	The company always provides the best price for purchase
P3	The company is known for giving huge discount offers
P4	Offers given by this company are eye-catching
P5	Company's Flash Sales are very tempting
P6	Positive Word-of-mouth enhances my chances of purchasing this website
P7	The company provides great offers during Mega Sales
P8	Customer Review helps in better purchase
P9	This website has a good reputation
P10	The company provides superior shipping/delivery options
P11	I enjoy looking for discounts on this website
P12	I truly enjoy spending time shopping online on this website
P13	The website provides attractive deals on a range of products
C1	The company provides better Coupon codes at checkout
C2	Online contests help in getting great deals on purchases
C3	Providing 0% EMI option increases my chances of purchasing on this website

Code	Statements/Indicators
C4	The company's Buyback Guarantee safeguards my investment
C5	Loyalty programs enrich my shopping experience
SE1	I always get the same product delivered as shown on the website
SE2	I feel safe in performing online transactions from this website
SE3	I usually compare prices on other websites before my final purchase
SE4	I prefer shopping if there are a lot of special offers on this website

does not take into consideration the normality condition and distribution of data.

6.2 Validity and Reliability

- Validation of the structural model
- For outer loadings to be under the satisfactory level, the loadings should have values greater than 0.5 (Hair *et al.* (2014)). From Table 3, we can see that all the outer factor loadings for psychology and consciousness constructs are > 0.5 and hence found to be satisfactory.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics, factor loading and reliability

Constructs	Indicators	Min	Max	Mean	Variance	Skew-ness	Kurtosis	Outer Loadings	Reflective Indicator Loadings
Psychological (F1)	P1	1	5	3.49	0.97	-0.61	0.28	0.744	0.554
	P2	1	5	3.54	0.90	-0.60	0.38	0.777	0.604
	P3	1	5	3.57	0.93	-0.53	0.09	0.755	0.569
	P4	1	5	3.59	0.96	-0.60	0.25	0.804	0.647
	P5	1	5	3.58	0.97	-0.51	0.03	0.764	0.584
Consciousness (F2)	C1	1	5	3.23	0.99	-0.16	-0.24	0.728	0.529
	C2	1	5	3.22	1.01	-0.24	-0.35	0.734	0.538
	C3	1	5	3.24	1.07	-0.22	-0.47	0.765	0.585
	C4	1	5	3.28	1.19	-0.27	-0.48	0.745	0.555
	C5	1	5	3.42	0.98	-0.46	-0.04	0.799	0.638
Shopping Experience (SE)	SE1	1	5	3.44	1.03	-0.51	-0.08	0.777	0.603
	SE2	1	5	3.62	1.01	-0.57	0.08	0.833	0.694
	SE3	1	5	3.73	1.07	-0.79	0.28	0.794	0.630
	SE4	1	5	3.66	1.05	-0.64	0.11	0.829	0.687

Source: Data compilation and computation by research scholar using SmartPLS (v.3.2.8)

- Reflective indicator loadings of >0.5 show items are a good measurement of the latent construct (Hulland, 1999). Table 3 indicates all the reflective indicator loadings greater than 0.5 and hence considered to be a good measurement.

6.3 Convergent and Discriminant Validity

- Cronbach's alpha (α) evaluates the internal consistency and unidimensionality of a set of scale items employed in a study. It gauges the extent to which the variables within a scale are interrelated. As evidenced by the values presented in Table 4, Cronbach's α exceeding 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978) indicates the reliability of all scale variables employed in the study.
- Composite reliability, as proposed by Joreskog (1971), is commonly used to assess internal consistency. When the value falls between 0.60 and 0.70, it is considered "acceptable in exploratory research"; if it lies between 0.70 and 0.90, it is

deemed "satisfactory to good." The findings in Table 4 indicate that the obtained values reflect a strong representation of internal consistency.

- While Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are conventional metrics, Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) introduced rho_A as a more precise measure of construct reliability, lying between Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. As revealed in Table 4, all values lie between Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, suggesting that rho_A serves as a suitable representative measure for the model.
- The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) assesses the convergence of variables with their respective constructs. An AVE value exceeding 0.5 signifies convergent validation, following Fornell and Larcker's criterion (1981). In this study, all constructs demonstrated $AVE > 0.5$, as indicated in Table 4.
- Discriminant validity underscores the differentiation among constructs within the

Table 4. Convergent and discriminant validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	rho_A	CR	AVE	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Psychology (F1)	0.949	0.950	0.955	0.620	0.787		
(2) Consciousness (F2)	0.822	0.829	0.875	0.584	0.725	0.764	
(3) Shopping Experience (SE)	0.823	0.825	0.883	0.654	0.765	0.672	0.808

Source: Data compilation and computation by research scholar using SmartPLS (v.3.2.8)

Note: Values on the main diagonal (in bold) represent the square root of the AVE, CR- Composite Reliability, AVE - Average Variance Extracted

model and measures the extent to which a construct differs from others (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Fornell-Larcker Criterion (1981) was employed to evaluate discriminant validity, comparing the square root of each construct's AVE with its correlations with other constructs. The results in Table 4 illustrate that the positive square root of AVE for each construct exceeded its correlation with other constructs, establishing discriminant validity. However, Henseler *et al.* (2015) proposed the Heterotrait- Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations as a more suitable metric, suggesting a threshold of 0.85. In the case of Flipkart's PLS-SEM analysis, the HTMT value of 0.842 is significantly below the threshold, validating the distinctiveness of the 'Psychology' and 'Consciousness' constructs.

6.4 Model Assessment Criteria

If it has been established that the constructs formed are reliable and valid, the next step deals with the evaluation of the results of the structural model. This includes exploring the predictive capabilities of the model and the relationships between the constructs. The importance of the path coefficients, the degree of the R^2 values, the f^2 effect size, and the predictive relevance of the Q^2 value are the main parameters for evaluating the structural model in PLS-SEM.

6.5 Significance of the Path Coefficients

A Path coefficient indicates a standardized value that represents the relationship between latent and endogenous constructs in the model. Their value ranges between -1 and + 1. If the estimated path coefficient value is close to + 1, it indicates a strong positive relationship and if the estimated path coefficient value is close to -1, it indicates a strong negative relationship. The closer the estimated coefficients towards zero, the weaker the relationship. Very low values close to 0 are usually non-significant.

The significance of path coefficients can be better understood from the standard error value that is obtained by means of the bootstrapping results table. Table 5 shows a structural model for Flipkart where the path relationship between F1 and SE is 0.586 and the path relationship between F2 and SE is 0.247 indicating a positive relationship.

6.6 Standard Bootstrap Results

Table 5 provides the standard bootstrap results extracted from the structural model for the e-commerce player 'Flipkart'. Path coefficients represent the hypothesized relationships among the constructs that have standardized values between -1 and + 1. Path coefficients for F1-> SE and F2-> SE are 0.586 and 0.247 respectively. It indicates a positive relationship and is statistically significant.

H0: Psychology has no influence on the shopping experience of online customers

H1: Psychology has an influence on the shopping experience of online customers

Table 5 indicates a path relationship from F1 to SE with a value of 0.586 and a standard error of 0.0382. Thus an empirical t-value is calculated as $0.586/0.0382 = 15.340$. According to Fung, Han Ping (2015) the bootstrapping test results show that the t-value = 15.3209 (> 1.96 for 2-tailed at 5% level of significance) and p-value = 0.000 (< 0.05), we can conclude that we fail to accept the null hypothesis and support the alternate hypothesis. It can be inferred that Psychology (F1) has an influence on Shopping Experience (SE) and is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

H0: Consciousness has no influence on the shopping experience of online customers
H2: Consciousness has an influence on the shopping experience of online customers

Table 5. Standard bootstrap results

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	Mean	Standard Error	t-value	p- value	Decision
H1: F1-> SE	0.586	0.5858	0.0382	15.340	0.0000	Supported
H2: F2-> SE	0.247	0.2476	0.0395	6.2531	0.0000	Supported

Source: Data compilation and computation by research scholar using SmartPLS (v.3.2.8)

Table 5 indicates a path relationship from F2 to SE with a value of 0.247 and a standard error of 0.0395. Thus an empirical t-value is calculated as $0.586/0.0382 = 6.2531$. According to Fung, Han Ping. (2015) The bootstrapping test results show that the t-value = 6.2531 is larger than the critical value (> 1.96 for 2-tailed at 5% level of significance) and p-value = 0.000 (< 0.05), we can conclude that we fail to accept the null hypothesis and support the alternate hypothesis. It can be inferred that Consciousness (F2) has an influence on Shopping Experience (SE) and is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

6.7 Coefficient of Determination (R²)

After reliability and validity are established, the most important evaluation criteria for PLS-SEM results are the coefficients of determination (R² value).

Model	Coefficient of determination (R ²)	Adjusted R ²
Flipkart	0.614	0.613

Source: Data compilation and computation by research scholar using SmartPLS (v.3.2.8)

Coefficient of determination (R²) represents the amount of explained variance of the endogenous constructs (Shopping Experience) in the structural model by the predictor constructs (Psychology and Consciousness). Adjusted R² value is a modified measure of the coefficient of determination that takes into account the number of predictor constructs which is found to be 0.614 from Table 6. In scholarly research that focuses on marketing issues, R² values of 0.75, 0.50, or 0.25 for endogenous latent variables can, as a rough rule of thumb, be respectively described as substantial, moderate, or weak (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Henseler *et al.*, 2009). From Table 6, the value of R² = 0.613 indicates the Model test results are above moderate levels and 61.4% variation in the Shopping Experience is explained by 'Psychology' and 'Consciousness' factors respectively.

6.8 Effect Size f²

The f² effect size helps in identifying the change in R² value when an exogenous construct that has an impact on the endogenous construct is excluded from the model. An f² value of 0.02 indicates a small effect; f² value

of 0.15 indicates a medium effect and f² value of 0.35 indicates a large effect (Cohen, 1988). The effect size of the construct 'Psychology (F1) on the endogenous variable namely 'Shopping Experience' (SE) is large as the f² effect size = 0.421 and the effect size of construct 'Consciousness' (F2) on the endogenous variable Shopping Experience (SE) is between low and medium as the f² effect size = 0.075

6.9 Predictive Relevance (Q²)

Stone-Geisser's Q² value (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974) serves as an indicator of the predictive relevance of the model

Table 7. Calculation of Q² by Cross-validated Redundancy

Constructs	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
F1	14027.000	14027.000	-----
F2	5395.000	5395.000	-----
SE	4316.000	2606.330	0.396

Source: Data compilation and computation by research scholar using SmartPLS (v.3.2.8)

Q² accurately predicts the data points of indicators in reflective measurement models of endogenous constructs and endogenous single-item constructs. This procedure does not apply for formative endogenous constructs. In the structural model, if the Q² value is > 0 , it indicates the path model's predictive relevance for a particular construct. If Q² $>$ than 0 it indicates a small predictive relevance, if Q² $>$ than 0.25 it indicates medium predictive relevance and if Q² $>$ than 0.50 it depicts large predictive for an endogenous construct respectively. In contrast, values of 0 and below indicate a lack of predictive relevance. In the case of Flipkart PLS SEM the Q² values = 0.396 in Table 7 indicate a large predictive relevance. Hence it can be concluded that the Model fulfills all the criteria set and presents favorable results for 'Flipkart' Model development.

Several factors that influenced the customer online shopping experience were taken for study. These factors were then classified into two constructs and the impact of these constructs on the consumer shopping experience was measured by developing a model using PLS SEM. The model explains two constructs namely 'psychology' and 'consciousness' that have

an influence on customer 'shopping experience'. A psychological construct like festival discounts, coupons, flash sales, customer reviews, and delivery options, and Consciousness construct like buyback guarantee, and easy payments through EMI have a major influence on customers as the customers have a tendency to spend more when they get lucrative offers and easy installments for payments.

7. Findings

Customer reviews is considered an important indicator that influences the shopping experience. It was observed that respondents favored Flipkart for having positive customer reviews about the product and helping in making better purchase decisions. Respondents are attracted towards the offers provided by e-commerce companies Buyback Guarantee, Loyalty Programs, discounts, flash sales, Attractive Deals, and Eye-Catchy Offers are some of the promotional tools favoured by most of the respondents. Promoting early delivery, 1-day delivery or within- hours delivery has not been considered as an effective promotional strategy. Respondents showed neutral opinion on the company providing better coupon codes at checkout and preferred payment through their debit/credit cards to avail get extra cash back through bank tie-ups.

Numerous studies in the literature have shown a preference for research outcomes that highlight the influence of diverse promotional tools on customers' shopping experiences. Conversely, some researchers deviate from the consensus by emphasizing that promotional factors may not hold paramount importance; instead, they assert that robust instrumental aspects of online shopping websites are more pivotal (Rakesh & Khare, 2012). Goutam, D., Ganguli, S., and Gopalakrishna, B. V. (2022) contribute by indicating that technology readiness exerts a substantial impact on both purchase intention and behavioral loyalty among individuals engaging in online shopping. Thus, there exists an avenue for further in-depth investigation to explore the influence of attributes not directly associated with promotional efforts undertaken by e-commerce firms.

8. Conclusion

Though ecommerce in India may still be a very small percentage in comparison to offline retailmarket, it has huge scope and witnessed potential growth over the years. Since India being a price sensitive market, sales promotion tools like discounts, offers, deals, cashback, coupons, online contests, bank tie ups, etc are here to stay and so shall the ecommerce players continue to carry out aggressive marketing to drive sales volume, gain the market share and keep ticking their GMV numbers year on year.

Flipkart Model development reveals a deeper understanding of which indicators lead to a particular construct that has an influence on the customer shopping experience as it will be of prime importance to a marketing manager of the e-commerce firm. These inputs can trigger the e-commerce player to devise appropriate distinct strategies in the future. This paper will act as a good reference for start-ups and enterprises willing to venture into a marketplace model of businesses like Flipkart, other prominent players like Amazon and Snapdeal, and newbies like Meesho, etc., and know the kind of sales promotional strategies that have favored along their way. Comparison of different mediums like print medium and television advertisements can be thought to obtain a broader perspective of the influence of promotions on the customer's shopping experience. This study can be used as a starting point to analyze the consumer purchasing experiences of various e-commerce businesses like Flipkart, as well as to aid new entrants in designing sales promotion programs based on customer preferences.

9. References

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