

# Exploring the Effect of Marketing Factors on Customers' Online Purchase Intention Using the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Framework

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## Abstract

Using the stimulus organism response (SOR) framework, we developed an experimental study and tested the impact of marketing factors such as website appearance, celebrity endorsement, and privacy/security (S) on customer satisfaction trust (O), and online purchase intention (R). The data were collected from online shoppers from India. This study utilized a purposive sampling technique. The Descriptive statistical analysis analysis through SPSS. The hypothesis testing through SMART PLS 3.0. The results revealed that all hypotheses were significant, except, for the variables customer satisfaction and celebrity endorsement. According to the findings of this investigation, customer satisfaction and trust mediate the relationship between marketing elements and online intention to buy. This study is an attempt to analyze the effect of marketing elements on online purchase intention within the Indian environment, presenting numerous conclusions and recommending future research prospects. Furthermore, the study provides insight into how individual traits influence the online consumer decision-making process, leading to more tailored knowledge. This research aims to enhance the existing comprehension of the dynamic correlation between marketing aspects and customers' inclinations to make online purchases. The findings obtained from this study hold significant value for marketers aiming to navigate the intricate realm of e-commerce and enhance their tactics to align with the changing demands and expectations of online consumers.

**Keywords:** Celebrity Endorsement, Online Purchase, Privacy, Satisfaction, Trust, Website Appearance.

## Introduction

In recent years, the prevalence of smartphones and affordable internet access has led to a surge in the popularity and convenience of online shopping for consumers. This trend has not only provided a boon for online industries but has also created a competitive landscape within the online shopping industry. Companies heavily invest in promotional activities to attract visitors to their websites. However, this intense competition has the unintended consequence of motivating consumers to seek alternative channels that better cater to their preferences and needs (1). Consequently, buyers are empowered to acquire branded products at reasonable prices and enjoy the added benefit of choosing from a variety of brands from their doorstep (2).

The online shopping market plays a crucial role in fostering a nation's economic development and

holds significant importance within the Indian Online Industry. Despite its substantial growth, online businesses encounter unprecedented challenges, particularly changing consumer needs and perceptions. Drawing their target customers poses numerous difficulties for these firms, stemming from a lack of awareness regarding the determinants that drive online purchases. Furthermore, there is a limited understanding of shoppers' behavioral responses including purchase intention and behavior. The motivations behind customers choosing online shopping remain unclear (3). The available study on shopping through online purchasing behaviour in India is quite limited. As a result, the purpose of this study is to look at the important elements that influence Indian customers' online buying intentions.

The proposed Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR)

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framework is essential to comprehending customer behaviour in the online industry. The framework offers an organized framework for evaluating where the various marketing stimuli (S) influence customers' mental states (O), such as emotions and cognitive evaluations, and how these, in turn, drive their responses (R), including online purchase intentions. This approach is especially relevant in today's technological landscape, where the impact of marketing efforts can be varied and complex, allowing researchers and practitioners to examine how different variables, including website design and promotional strategies, influence consumer decision-making processes along with customer's buying decision and their stimulation on buying intentions.

Internet-based retail commonly known as online shopping, constitutes a branch of electronic commerce facilitating consumers to acquire goods and services directly from the retailers through the internet (4), perceived behavioral control, customer attitude, and subjective norms are the three important factors that influence customer intention on online shopping (5). Additionally, researchers have extensively examined the determinants of purchase intention using different theoretical frameworks, assisting in enhancing the awareness of consumers' online buying preferences. For instance (6), integrated the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and technology acceptance model (TAM) and found that perceived usefulness and subjective norm positively influenced online purchase intention. It is found that trust, convenience, enjoyment, company reputation, tactility, privacy, and security influenced consumers' intention to purchase online (7). A theory applied of reasoned action (TRA) found the experience of online shopping, internet usage level, and self-efficacy significantly influenced online shopping attitude towards the intention for purchase. Also, it is specifically mentioned that shopping websites have a strong influence on online shopping intentions (8).

Based on the literature study, the following gaps have been observed. First, most of the studies have examined various factors to explain online

purchase intention. They failed to examine the role of marketing factors in predicting online purchase intention. Second, many studies examined the mediation effect of attitude, leaving other important psychographic variables namely satisfaction and trust that can influence consumers' online purchase intention. Third, few research studies were available in developed countries rather than in developing countries like India. To fulfill the above research gaps, The present investigation seeks to accomplish,

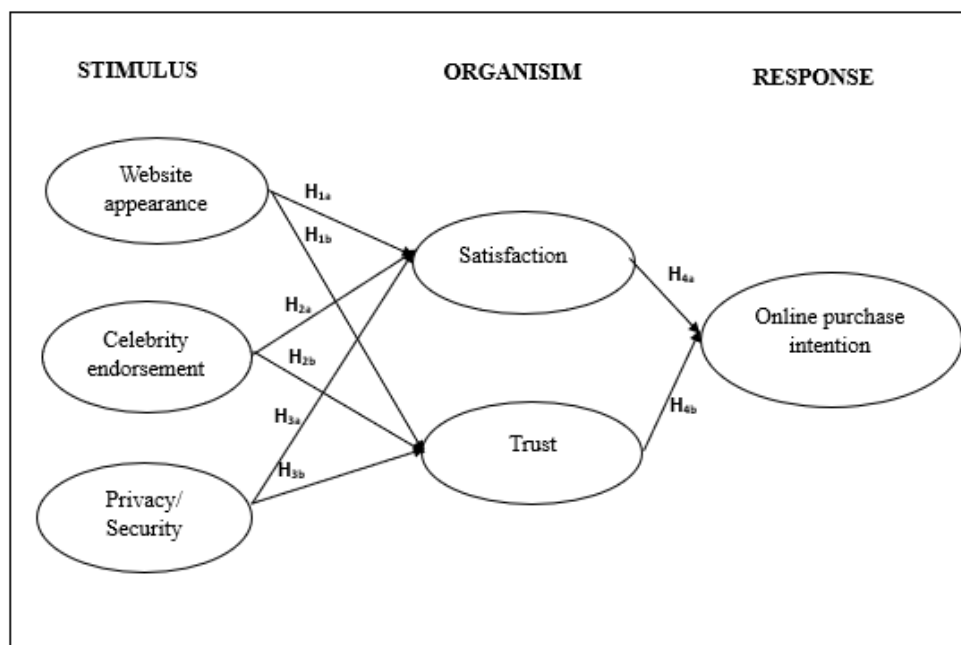
1. Set up a complete SOR model to assess the effects of marketing factors on psychographic variables and online purchase intention.
2. Examine the mediation impact of trust and customer satisfaction on the link between marketing elements and online purchase intention.

### **Theoretical Framework Model and Hypotheses Development**

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework. A conceptualized SOR framework (9), expounds on the effect of external stimuli (S), which affect the psychological process (O), This may result in approach or retreat behavior (R). This framework has been widely utilized to study customers' motives for online buying and how these reasons have a substantial influence on their satisfaction (10). Thus, the study develops a conceptual-based model on the SOR model (refer to Figure 1) and considers website appearance, celebrity endorsement, and privacy/security as marketing stimuli (S), customer satisfaction and trust as organism (O), and online purchase behavior as response (R).

### **Website Appearance**

The appearance of a website is considered a vital marketing strategy aimed at attracting consumers. The visual elements of a website are vital in defining how users view the overall appearance of the website. According to (11), a well-designed and visually appealing website can significantly enhance the reputation of an online retailer and positively influence consumers' online purchase behavior.



**Figure 1:** Research Model

The key components of website appearance include colors, images, graphics, and animations. The impact of website appearance extends to the emotional experience of users during browsing, as it not only improves the perception of the products but also makes them more memorable (12). Few scholars have examined the website appearance and its effect on satisfaction and trust. For instance, (13) and (14) highlighted that an appealing website appearance not only leads to a higher satisfaction level but also increases attractiveness towards the products which results in online shopping behavior. A Study (15) conducted an in-depth investigation of the effect of website design attributes and found a greater influence in developing trust among customers. Thus, we hypothesize that,

H1a: Website appearance has a significant effect on customer satisfaction.

H1b: Website appearance has a significant effect on trust.

### Celebrity Endorsement

According to (16), a celebrity endorser can be characterized as an individual with public recognition who leverages this fame to promote A consumer product by featuring in commercials advertising. Celebrity endorsement is a widely

employed marketing strategy, where most firms use well-known personalities to capture the public interest and elicit favorable reactions (17). This advertising approach has been extensively explored in literature, with recent research indicating a noteworthy result of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention (18), purchase behavior (19), consumers' attitude (20), brand love (21), and brand attachment (22). Thus, we hypothesize that.

H2a: Celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on customer satisfaction.

H2b: Celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on trust.

### Privacy/Security

Securing the confidentiality of information that is shared is of utmost importance. When individuals engage in online transactions, they are obligated to provide sensitive details like name, address, contact number, and payment details (23). The primary concern for customers consistently revolves around whether the website can effectively protect them from potential fraud after the transaction is completed. Consequently, the assessment of website security and privacy becomes an integral factor in gauging the quality of overall service received by online stores (24). There has been limited research exploring the relationship between privacy/security

and e-shopping behavior. For instance, it was discovered (25), that Qatari consumers placed a considerable emphasis on privacy and security when deciding to engage in online shopping. Another study determined that both privacy and security perform an important part in shaping customers' degree of confidence in internet platforms (26). Thus, we hypothesize that.

H3a: Privacy/Security has a significant effect on customer satisfaction.

H3b: Privacy/Security has a significant effect on trust.

### **The Effect of Mediation on Customer Satisfaction**

Satisfaction is defined as “the psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with a consumer’s prior feelings about the consumer experience” (27). To evaluate a condition that comes from an emotional response to a certain product or service encounter. Multiple studies on buying online have sought to uncover the essential elements of consumer satisfaction. such as website design, quality, and security (28), (29). However, past studies examined the role of mediation on satisfaction. For instance, it is examined the mediation sequel of customer satisfaction (30), a strong relationship between website attributes, perceived playfulness, perceived flow, and purchase intention. It examines the mediation effect (31), site quality and repurchase intention are associated with customer satisfaction. Thus, we hypothesize that,

H4a: Customer satisfaction has a significant effect on online purchase intention.

### **Mediation Effect of Trust**

The term Trust is elucidated as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectations that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor.” (32). In the context of online shopping, many researchers established positive significant predictors of intention and behavior. However, few works of literature have only examined the mediation of the trust effect. For instance, it is found (33), trust has a complete mediation implication for the link between celebrity endorsers and brand equity among Indian

consumers. It is confirmed in (34), that trust has a significant mediation effect among relative advantage, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), and attitudes towards e-shopping.

H4b: Trust has a significant effect on online purchase intention.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Measures**

The researcher used random sampling technique for data collection, as, the random sampling technique is used in consumer-based research to guarantee that every respondent of the target population has a fair chance of being selected. This strategy improves sample genuineness, reducing selection bias and enabling findings to be generalized to the larger consumer community, hence strengthening research reliability and validity. questionnaires were distributed among the shoppers who had online purchase experience and were instructed to answer all the questions. Among the returned questionnaires, 420 respondents were collected to be useful for data analysis. In "Multivariate Data Analysis" (7th Edition), Joseph F. Hair Jr. et al. give guidelines on sample size determination, which is particularly important for research employing complex models like Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). A fundamental thumb rule was mentioned in their representation as there should be at least 5 to 10 observations per estimated parameter in the model. This guideline is used as a minimal threshold to provide acceptable power for statistical testing. While certain suggestions may differ, Hair et al. frequently specify a minimum sample size of 200 for SEM analysis as a conservative threshold to fulfill fundamental assumptions and guarantee a good possibility of convergence of models. Also, the online shoppers scattered largely in all over India. This study aims to collect all kind consumers responses without any bias. So, the sample unit was chosen as Indian context consumers.

Due to the large growth in technology development and the simplified way of shopping through mobile phones, online shoppers are everywhere. But at the point of research, with the long questionnaire and the amount of time allotted to data collection, it is a little difficult to find a respondent who is ready to

give their full pledged support to fill the questionnaire fully. Though it is an infinite population, researchers adopted the Cochran (1977) formula for calculation of sample unit.

Many marketing researchers used the SmartPLS 4 software tool to examine complicated associations via mediation and moderation, also known as latent variables, which were evaluated using sets of observable variables.

SmartPLS 4 is a significant step forward in development, with a completely revamped graphical user interface, faster processing speed for data estimation, and new model assessment features.

From the two sections, the first section captures the demographic profile of the respondents such as age, gender, education, and income. The second section was based on the research framework. The framework includes website appearance, celebrity endorsement, online reviews, satisfaction, and online purchase behavior. All the items were adapted from the prior studies, adapted from Constantinides et al., (35); Rita et al., (23); Bai et al., (28); Kim and

Stoel., (6); Kim et al., (36); and rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Data were analysed using Smart-PLS software.

## Results

### Reliability and Validity

First, we assessed reliability with factor loading, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). The outcomes revealed that the values used for loading surpassed the limit of 0.7, while alpha and CR were larger than 0.6, and AVE also exceeded the limit of 0.5 (37). Second, discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criteria, which revealed that the square root of AVE should be larger than inter-construct correlations. Hence, this study confirmed adequate reliability and validity were achieved (refer to Tables 1 and 2). Figure 2 presents the factor loading values using smart-PLS software.

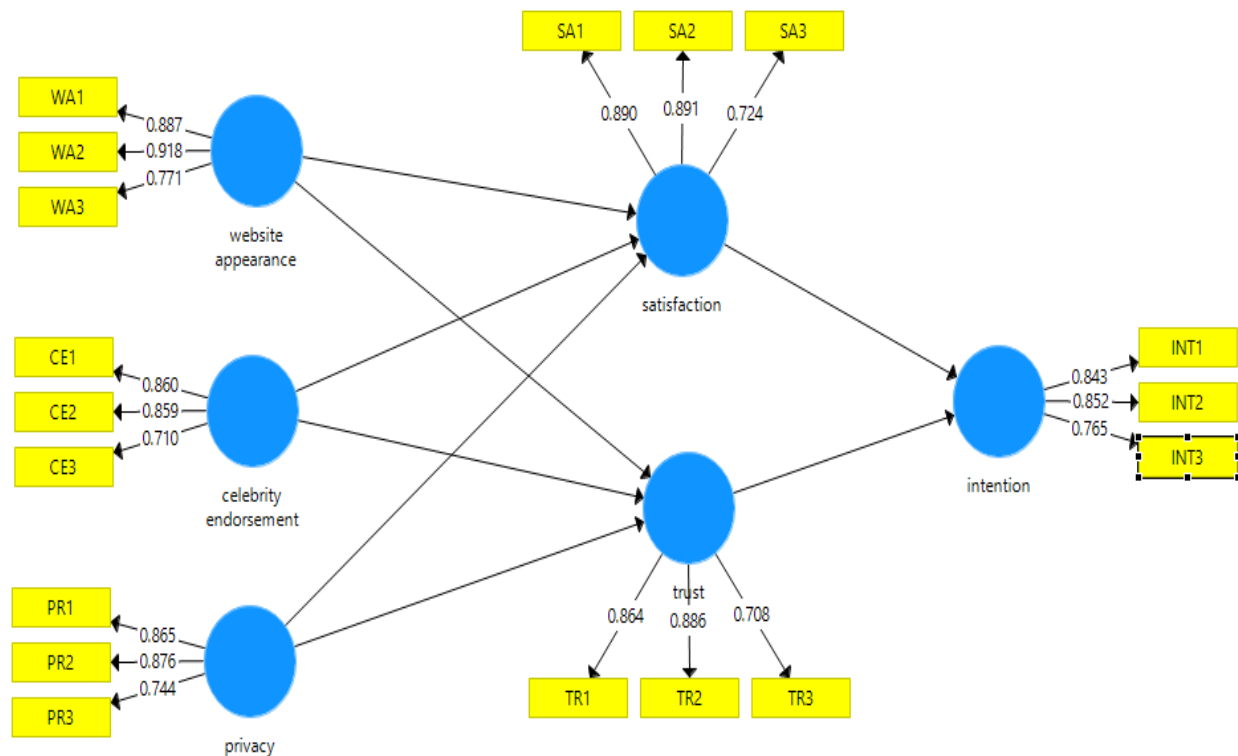


Figure 2: Factor Loading Values

**Table 1:** Reliability and validity results

Constructs	Items	Alpha	CR	AVE
Website Appearance	"The website is visually pleasing." "The display pages within the website are easy to read."	0.824	0.895	0.741
Celebrity endorsement	"The website is visually appealing." "The celebrity endorser is honest." "The celebrity endorser is knowledgeable." "The celebrity endorser is an expert."	0.739	0.853	0.661
Privacy/Security	"The online shop has adequate security features." "It protects information about my web-shopping behavior." "I feel safe in my transactions with the online shop."	0.771	0.869	0.689
Satisfaction	"I am very satisfied with the information I receive from the agency's website." "The dealer takes care of product exchanges and returns promptly." "My interaction with the agency's website is very satisfying."	0.785	0.876	0.703
Trust	"It is safe to pay money and perform a financial transaction on online shopping websites." "Online retailers will protect my financial-related information from being leaked (hacked)." "Online retailers will not sell my personal information such as e-mail, phone number, etc to others for commercial use."	0.757	0.862	0.678
Online purchase intention	"I like to shop online." "I intend to buy online in the near future." "I have a strong intention to purchase online in the future."	0.758	0.861	0.674

### Path Relationship

We tested the hypothetical relationship using the bootstrapping procedure of 2000 sub-samples and evaluated based t value (greater than 1.9) and p-value (less than 0.05). The results found that website appearance with a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction ( $t= 8.24$ ;  $p= 0.000$ ) and trust ( $t= 4.21$ ;  $p= 0.000$ ). Celebrity endorsement has not a significant effect on satisfaction ( $t=1.78$ ;  $p= 0.07$ ) but a significant effect on trust ( $t=4.98$ ;  $p= 0.000$ ) as significant. Privacy/security has a positive effect on

both satisfaction ( $t=5.20$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) and trust ( $t=2.5$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) thus the hypotheses H1a, H1b, H2b, H3a, and H3b were supported except H2a.

This suggests that the study's objective of assessing the effect of marketing factors on psychological factors and online purchase intention using the SOR model was achieved.

The results also showed that satisfaction ( $t= 5.6$ ;  $p= 0.000$ ) and trust ( $t= 14.05$ ;  $p= 0.000$ ) have a significantly positive impact on online buying intention thus hypotheses H4a and H4b are

supported. The mediation showed that the effect of website appearance and privacy on satisfaction was significant and satisfaction (mediator) also significant effect on intention. Therefore, satisfaction has a partly mediatory impact. The influence of celebrity endorsement on satisfaction was insignificant and satisfaction (mediator) has a

significant effect on intention thus satisfaction has a fully mediating effect. The influence values of website appearance, celebrity endorsement, and privacy on trust and trust have a significant influence on intention So, trust has a partial mediation effect. Here the objective 2 of the study was proved. Table 3 presents the results of the path model.

**Table 2:** Discriminant Validity Results

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6
Website appearance (1)	<b>0.861</b>					
Celebrity endorsement (2)	0.667	<b>0.813</b>				
Privacy/Security (3)	0.630	0.629	<b>0.830</b>			
Satisfaction (4)	0.727	0.608	0.671	<b>0.838</b>		
Trust (5)	0.629	0.637	0.581	0.543	<b>0.823</b>	
Online purchase intention (6)	0.675	0.690	0.605	0.611	0.750	<b>0.821</b>

## Discussions and Conclusion

In the context of shopping behavior, the present investigation is an initial attempt to analyse the influence of marketing factors on online purchasing

behaviour using the SOR framework in the Indian context. Second, the investigation additionally looks at the mediation role of satisfaction and trust in the association between aspects of marketing and online purchasing behaviour.

**Table 3:** The Result of the Path Model

	Hypothesized Paths	t-value	p-value	Results
H1a	Website appearance ▼ Satisfaction	8.243	0.000	Significant
H1b	Website appearance ▼ Trust	4.218	0.000	Significant
H2a	Celebrity endorsement ▼ Satisfaction	1.780	0.075	Not significant
H2b	Celebrity endorsement ▼Trust	4.968	0.000	Significant
H3a	Privacy ▼ Satisfaction	5.205	0.000	Significant
H3b	Privacy ▼ Trust	2.579	0.000	Significant
H4a	Customer satisfaction ▼Intention	5.698	0.000	Significant
H4b	Trust ▼ Intention	14.059	0.000	Significant

*Note: Statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$*

The conclusions of this study illustrate that the website's appearance has significant impacts on both buyer satisfaction and trust. This suggests that a well-designed website not only enhances user satisfaction but also fosters a sense of trust. The appearance of an online shopping website is particularly crucial in shaping customer perceptions. These results align with previous research of (38) and (39), which affirmed that website appearance plays an important role in attracting users to visit websites frequently and enjoy their shopping. The visual appeal of a website also exerts a substantial influence on customer trust. This study's insights could assist advertisers in creating more attractive websites, offering a diverse range of products, and accurately portraying feedback and ratings. Ultimately, these efforts may contribute to heightened satisfaction and trust among website users.

In various marketing literature, the influence of celebrity endorsement on customer satisfaction and trust has been widely acknowledged. However, the current research hypothesized that celebrity endorsement has a major influence on trust but not on consumer satisfaction. These results contradicted the earlier studies of (40) and (41), which suggested that celebrity endorsement had an insignificant effect on trust. These studies proposed that the simultaneous promotion of multiple brands by the same celebrity could lead to consumer confusion and a reduction in product trust. It is shown that celebrity endorsement has an insignificant effect on trustworthiness because multiple brands are being promoted by the same celebrity at the same time might not only confuse the consumers but also reduce the product trust. The researcher contends that celebrity endorsement sets high expectations among customers, portraying the endorsed product as something extraordinary through the association with a genuine star. This fulfillment of promises contributes to heightened customer happiness. Consequently, it becomes imperative for marketers to navigate this intricate process by ensuring that celebrities possess attractiveness, credibility, and expertise, as these qualities have a vital role in enhancing satisfaction and trust among consumers

Privacy/security has a substantial impact on customer satisfaction and trust, demonstrating that customers are more content and more likely to trust a platform when they are certain that their personal and financial information is secure. The result aligns with previous studies (42), affirming that internet service security has a considerable impact on customer satisfaction and trust. Therefore, manufacturers must allocate resources toward establishing a secure infrastructure, implementing transparent privacy policies, and ensuring clear communication practices. These efforts collectively contribute to the protection of customer data, fostering a positive and secure environment.

Finally, customer satisfaction and trust have a significant positive effect on online purchase intention. This implies that when customers are satisfied and trust a business, it generates positive emotions, leading them to share their favorable experiences through online reviews. These reviews play a vital role in influencing the decisions of potential customers. The findings are aligned with earlier research (43), which emphasized the significance of customer satisfaction and trust as pivotal elements for establishing successful relationships with customers. Therefore, businesses are advised to allocate resources to practices that prioritize the satisfaction and trust of customers, as this investment is likely to result in positive outcomes.

The current research significantly complements the established content of knowledge on online shopping behavior. This research stands out by applying the SOR framework to elucidate the connections among marketing stimuli, psychological processes like satisfaction and trust, and the resulting behavioral responses namely online purchase intention. It is observed that a huge response (69%) is received to the question, "I have a strong intention to purchase online in the future" under the construct named 'Online purchase intention'. It shows that people are influenced by social media ads and friend reviews; even when their needs are limited, they start to buy a lot through online shopping. It will be a great drawback for small businesses and traditional vendors.



This framework serves as a valuable lens through which to analyze the dynamics of consumer buying behavior in online shopping. Furthermore, the distinctive feature of this study is its empirical investigation into certain identified marketing stimuli such as website appearance, celebrity endorsement, and privacy/security that have received relatively little attention thus this research sheds light on the existing literature on shopping behavior. Additionally, this study is pioneering in its attempt to explore the impact of marketing factors on online buying intention in the Indian setting. To the best of our knowledge, this research has tried to investigate these dynamics, making a significant involvement in the understanding of online buying intention, particularly in the diverse markets of India.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

The study has restricted negative aspects. First, As a result of selective focus on marketing factors as the key influencers of online purchase intention. therefore, to enhance and broaden the insights gained from this study, future researchers are encouraged to explore the other elements including personal and social factors. Second, this study observed primarily the mediating function of customer satisfaction and trust. However, for a more comprehensive understanding, it is recommended for researchers to also explore the mediating influence of other variables such as perceived usefulness, and perceived self-efficacy. This approach would contribute to the existing literature on online shopping behavior. Lastly, this study focused on the mediation effect. To provide Researchers may choose to investigate serial mediation or parallel mediation effects to have a better understanding of the complex interaction of factors. This study also uses SmartPLS 4 for analysis, R Studio for analysis, and JMP, which are the most recent research tools. Future studies with various variables could produce numerous kinds of results for analysis.

The fundamental idea is to promote equality, unity, and integrity, ensuring that all citizens are treated

equally under the law, thus fulfilling the mandate of the Indian Constitution.

### **Abbreviation**

Stimulus Organism Response (SOR); Smart Partial Least Squares (Smart PLS); Composite Reliability (CR); Average Variance Extracted (AVE); Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM); Technology Acceptance Model (TAM); Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB); Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA).

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### **Author Contributions**

Dr. Geetha R: guided to conceptualise the study; Dheepalakshmi S: collected primary and secondary data, analysed, and prepared the finalised draft.

### **Conflict of Interest**

We have no potential conflict of interest to be disclosed concerning the preparation and submission of the manuscript.

### **Ethics Approval**

All the procedures performed in this study involving human participants followed the ethical standards of our institution. The study is not intended to affect the emotions of the participants.

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