

Investigating The Factors that affect Egyptian Consumer's Online Purchase Intention during The Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract:

During the health crisis, governmental authorities have undertaken a series of safety steps aimed at mitigating the transmission of COVID-19. As a result, there was a shift in consumer behavior pertaining to routine activities, hence creating a new market for internet companies. The objective of this study is to examine the factors that impact the intention of Egyptian customers to engage in online purchases within the COVID-19 pandemic. By acknowledging multiple components and focusing on the measures used to assess the connections. The objective of this study is to evaluate the present condition of online shopping within the Egyptian market, analyze the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses, aid consumers in promoting online shopping, and provide recommendations for its enhancement. The construction of the conceptual framework was based on a comprehensive literature review. The present study employed a quantitative research

methodology to do an empirical examination of Egyptian consumers. The study involved distributing a self-administered questionnaire to Egyptian consumers with the aim of evaluating the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on their inclination to engage in online shopping. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) with the assistance of AMOS software.

The findings of this research demonstrated a statistically significant positive association between individuals' perceptions of ease of use, perceived risk, attitude towards online shopping, subjective norms, fear of the Covid-19 pandemic, and their propensity to engage in online purchasing. Nevertheless, the study found no statistically significant relationship between the perceived usefulness and perceived behavioral control factors and the intention to engage in online purchasing. Additionally, this research contributes to a comprehensive empirical analysis of consumer purchase intentions in developing nations. This analysis aids in the expansion of both the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), while also addressing the existing gap in knowledge by shedding light on the intricate relationship between perceived ease of use, perceived risk, attitude towards online shopping, subjective norms, fear of Covid-19, perceived usefulness, perceived behavioral control, and online purchase intentions during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Egypt, online purchase intention, Covid-19 pandemic, perceived ease of use.

1. Introduction :

Global consumption trends have been heavily influenced by the emergence of COVID-19. Strict lockdowns and social distancing ordinances caused a dramatic rise in online purchases, catalyzing the already robust expansion of e-commerce (Susmitha, 2021). Consumers prioritized staple items like groceries, disinfectants, and medical supplies, leading to a scarcity of inventory and disruption of supply chains. Beyond that, the virus heightened people's health consciousness, which drove an increase in demand for organic foods, gym-at-home equipment, and health supplements. Moreover, since movements were restricted and eating out unsupported, individuals turned to renovations, streaming platforms, and take-home meals. Altogether, COVID-19 has played a huge role in altering spending habits and underlining the significant role of adaption and resilience in consumer behavior (Bhatti et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a tremendous change in online commerce. Customers turned to the internet for their shopping requirements as lockdowns and safety concerns forced conventional establishments to close or have limited hours. Demand surged by unheard-of amounts on e-commerce sites, including the likes of Amazon and smaller specialized stores. With contactless delivery alternatives available, the convenience of purchasing from the privacy of one's own home set a new norm. This adjustment affected how shoppers browse products,

read reviews, and decide what to buy. The pandemic also hastened the development of digital payment systems, highlighting the value of safety and convenience in online purchases (Nanda et al., 2021).

Numerous benefits of online buying have revolutionized the way we buy things. First and foremost, convenience rules supreme. With just a few clicks, consumers can access a wide range of products from the comfort of their homes, forgoing the trouble of going to physical stores and the need to travel. Online platforms offer a wide range of options, enabling customers to compare costs and read reviews in order to make well-informed judgments. Additionally, purchasing can fit into any schedule because to e-commerce's 24/7 accessibility. Online shopping makes it easier to find specialty and one-of-a-kind things, and virtual shops frequently provide special offers and discounts. Additionally, the contactless aspect of online purchases has become even more relevant in the context of health issues, enabling safe pandemic buying (Grunkowski & Martinez, 2022).

In Egypt, the COVID-19 pandemic sparked a notable change in consumer behavior that significantly increased the use of internet shopping. Lockdowns, curfews, and health issues made it difficult for people to attend physical stores to shop, thus they increasingly turned to online marketplaces. According to research done by the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (ECES) in 2020, this transition was particularly noticeable in cities like

Cairo and Alexandria, where internet connection and digital literacy are more prevalent.

According to Karasözen and Cerit (2020), who highlighted the convenience and safety concerns as the two main drivers for adopting e-commerce during the epidemic, the increase of online shopping in Egypt is consistent with global trends. Further supporting the significance of digital marketing channels in this context is the study by Mostafa (2021), which highlights the function of social media platforms and mobile applications in aiding online purchasing in Egypt.

The rapid uptake of online shopping in Egypt during COVID-19 highlights the adaptability and resilience of consumer behavior in the face of outside disruptions and emphasizes the need for ongoing research to comprehend the long-term effects of these changes on the Egyptian retail environment (AbdelAziz et al., 2023).

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence customers' intentions to make purchases online in Egypt. This paper provides some ideas and directions for marketers to target Egyptians during the COVID-19 pandemic via internet purchasing by recognizing these numerous factors and focusing on the metrics of assessing the correlations. These ideas and directions can be found in the following paragraphs. There have

been relatively few studies that have focused on how an intention to shop online affects consumers (Elsafty & Elshahed, 2021).

The study of factors influencing consumers' online purchase intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic in Egypt contributes significantly to our understanding of e-commerce behavior and its consequences for businesses and policymakers. From an academic standpoint, this study adds to the expanding corpus of literature on consumer behavior in crisis scenarios like as the COVID-19 epidemic. It expands our understanding of how socio-cultural, economic, and health-related variables influence consumer decision-making by providing insights into the unique elements that encouraged Egyptian customers to shift to online purchasing during the crisis. By giving insight on the country-specific factors that drove changes in consumer purchasing intentions throughout the pandemic, the study addresses a gap in the current literature, particularly in the context of Egypt.

Furthermore, this research has practical consequences for companies functioning in Egypt's e-commerce sector. Businesses can modify their marketing tactics, website design, and product offers to correspond with the evolving requirements and preferences of Egyptian consumers during crises by recognizing the primary determinants of their buy intents. For example, research findings can be used to produce focused digital marketing campaigns, user-friendly mobile apps, and better customer support services. Furthermore, it can assist firms in

determining the long-term viability of rising online shopping patterns and planning for a digital-centric future.

This research can also help policymakers because it emphasizes the necessity of creating an enabling climate for e-commerce growth in Egypt. Understanding the variables that stimulate online purchasing allows politicians to design legislation and policies that support digital infrastructure development, online payment security, and consumer protection, ensuring the e-commerce sector's resilience in times of crisis and beyond. As a result, this research is a significant resource for stakeholders attempting to negotiate the changing landscape of consumer behavior and e-commerce uptake in Egypt during and after the pandemic.

This study is organized as follows: first, the conceptual model and hypotheses are presented, together with relevant literature and theoretical background. The methodology section follows, which explains the research design and data collection approach. Following that, a section displaying the research findings is offered. The theoretical as well as managerial contributions and consequences are then discussed. Finally, the limits and future research directions are discussed.

2. Literature review:

The following sections discuss the extant literature that examines the important studies that related to the study's constructs. Firstly, it presents two relevant theories to our

research study which are the Theory of Planned Behavior and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Then it presents the proposed conceptual model as well as the literature that provides a base for the proposed hypotheses.

2.1 Theory of planned behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has helped shed light on the elements driving online consumer behavior in the digital age. According to TPB, three key aspects determine persons' intents to engage in a certain action: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of online consumption, attitudes represent consumers' assessments of the ease or difficulty of purchasing products or services online, subjective norms encompass the social influences and normative pressures associated with online shopping, and perceived behavioral control refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of conducting online transactions (Ajzen, 2015). TPB has recently been used in research to explore and analyze online consumption patterns, providing insights into the motivations and variables that drive customers' intents and actions in the digital marketplace (Le, 2023).

TPB has been found in studies to adequately explain online purchasing behavior across a wide range of businesses and items. For example, Lian and Yen (2014) discovered that attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control all had a substantial impact on customers' intents to buy for fashion

products online. Similarly, Cho (2016) investigated TPB in the context of online grocery shopping and discovered that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control were significant predictors of customers' intentions to use online grocery shopping services. TPB has also been used to understand consumers' intents to use online banking services (Shin, 2019) and make mobile payments (Kim & Koo, 2015), emphasizing its digital applicability.

Furthermore, recent advances in online consumer behavior research have broadened the TPB paradigm by including new factors and moderators. Trust and perceived risk, for example, have been incorporated into TPB models to better explain online purchasing behaviors (Ko et al., 2018). These modifications recognize the importance of trust as a critical aspect in online transactions, particularly given the possible hazards connected with online buying. Furthermore, TPB has been utilized in tandem with technology acceptance models to investigate online consumer behavior in the setting of mobile commerce (Liao et al., 2019). This connection allows for a more in-depth analysis of the elements influencing consumers' inclinations to utilize mobile apps for shopping and payments. To summarize, TPB remains an important framework for scholars and practitioners aiming to understand and influence online consumption behavior, particularly in the dynamic context of e-commerce and digital marketing.

2.2 Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a well-known and significant theoretical framework that has been widely used to study users' acceptance and adoption of technology. TAM, which was first stated by Davis in 1989, holds that users' behavioral intentions to utilize a technology are primarily determined by their perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU). TAM has been used in the context of online purchasing to research consumers' attitudes and intentions toward using e-commerce platforms, offering information on the elements that drive online shopping behavior.

The importance of perceived ease of use is one of the primary implications of TAM in the context of online buying. The degree to which individuals believe that using the online purchasing platform is simple and user-friendly is referred to as perceived ease of use. Recent study has shown the importance of PEOU in determining consumers' online shopping intentions. Consumers who perceive online buying as easy to use, for example, are more likely to acquire good attitudes about e-commerce platforms and indicate stronger inclinations to engage in online shopping activities, according to studies by Kim and Forsythe (2008) and AlGhamdi et al. (2017). To improve consumers' impressions of ease of use, businesses and e-commerce providers can prioritize user-friendly interfaces and seamless online buying experiences.

The role of perceived utility is another significant implication of TAM in online commerce. The degree to which people believe that using an online shopping platform would improve their shopping experiences and suit their demands is referred to as perceived utility. Recent research has highlighted the importance of PU in affecting consumers' views and intentions about online shopping. According to Chen et al. (2019) and Suki (2017), consumers who perceive online shopping as useful for finding products, comparing prices, and making informed decisions are more likely to have positive attitudes toward e-commerce platforms and stronger intentions to shop online. This emphasizes the significance of providing consumers with relevant and important information, such as product descriptions, reviews, and pricing comparisons, in order to improve their perceptions of usefulness.

Furthermore, recent advances in TAM research have broadened the model to include additional elements and moderators that can influence online purchasing behavior. Trust and security issues, for example, have emerged as key variables influencing online purchase intentions in recent years (Chen et al., 2019; Kaur & Bansal, 2019). The inclusion of trust as a moderator in TAM models recognizes the significance of consumers' trust in the protection of their personal and financial information when doing online buying activities. As a result, firms should invest in secure and transparent payment

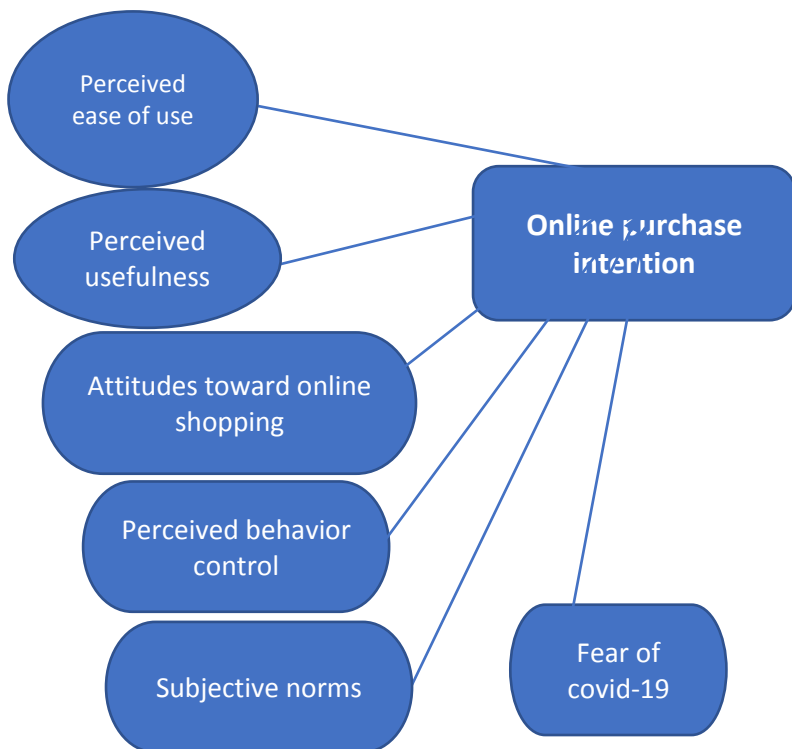
mechanisms, as well as privacy safeguards, to assuage consumers' fears and boost online shopping uptake.

Finally, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a useful framework for evaluating and forecasting consumer acceptance and adoption of online retail platforms. Recent field research has underlined the importance of perceived ease of use and perceived utility in determining consumers' attitudes and intentions toward online buying. Furthermore, the incorporation of trust and security issues into TAM models emphasizes their significance in influencing online purchasing behavior. Businesses and e-commerce providers can benefit from leveraging TAM data to improve user experiences and encourage increased use of online shopping platforms as the e-commerce landscape evolves.

2.3 The Conceptual Model and Proposed Hypotheses

Figure 1 shows the proposed research model that shows the factors that affect consumers' online purchase intention during Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Model



2.3.1 Perceived ease of use and Online Purchase Intention

The association between perceived ease of use and online purchase intention has been a central subject of current e-commerce research. The degree to which consumers view a system or platform as user-friendly and easy to navigate is referred to as perceived ease of use, a core concept in the Technology Acceptance Model

(TAM). It is critical in molding consumers' views and behavioral intentions when making online purchases.

Several recent research has found a favorable association between perceived ease of use and online purchase intent. According to Saeed et al. (2017), when customers perceive online shopping platforms to be easy to use, they are more likely to acquire good attitudes toward online buying and, as a result, exhibit stronger purchase intentions. Furthermore, Chang and Tseng's (2020) study found that consumers' opinions of the ease of use of e-commerce websites significantly influence their buy intentions. These findings imply that designing user-friendly online shopping interfaces and streamlining the purchasing process can improve perceived ease of use, increasing customers' intentions to shop online.

Finally, new academic research highlights the positive association between perceived ease of use and online purchase intention, confirming TAM's lasting importance in understanding online consumer behavior. E-commerce companies should prioritize the development of intuitive and user-friendly online shopping platforms in order to improve perceived ease of use, hence creating a more pleasant atmosphere for online shoppers and improving their purchase intentions. According to these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and online purchase intention

2.3.2 Perceived usefulness and Online Purchase Intention

In the realm of e-commerce, the relationship between perceived usefulness and online purchase intention has garnered significant attention in recent research. Perceived usefulness, a core element of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), reflects the extent to which individuals perceive an online platform or system as beneficial and relevant to their needs. It plays a pivotal role in shaping consumers' attitudes and intentions concerning online purchases.

Contemporary studies have consistently supported the positive relationship between perceived usefulness and online purchase intention. Research by Liu and Liu (2019) found that consumers who perceive online shopping as a valuable and efficient means of acquiring products are more likely to express favorable attitudes toward online purchases and exhibit higher intentions to make transactions. Similarly, the study conducted by Alalwan et al. (2018) emphasized that consumers' perceptions of the usefulness of online shopping platforms significantly influence their purchase intentions. These findings underscore the importance of providing consumers with a seamless and beneficial online shopping experience to enhance perceived usefulness and, subsequently, drive higher online purchase intentions.

In conclusion, recent academic research has reaffirmed the positive relationship between perceived usefulness and online purchase intention, reinforcing the enduring relevance of TAM in elucidating online consumer behavior. Businesses operating in the e-commerce sector should focus on optimizing the functionality and utility of their online platforms to enhance perceived usefulness, ultimately encouraging greater consumer willingness to engage in online shopping. According to these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and online purchase intention.

2.3.3 Attitude toward online shopping and Online Purchase Intention

In recent years, academics have focused on the relationship between customers' opinions toward online shopping and their online purchasing intentions. Understanding this relationship has become increasingly important for businesses and researchers as e-commerce and retail digitalization have grown. Consumers' attitudes toward online shopping include their general views, feelings, and evaluations of the online shopping experience, and these attitudes have a substantial influence on their intentions to make purchases through online channels.

Recent research has continuously underlined that customers' perceptions toward online shopping play a positive and powerful role in affecting their online purchasing intentions.

Chen and Dhillon's (2020) research discovered a substantial association between customers' favorable opinions regarding online buying, including aspects like ease, product variety, and perceived security, and their plans to engage in online purchasing. Similarly, Li and Huang (2019) discovered that consumers who have a more positive attitude toward online buying have higher levels of purchase intent.

Furthermore, recent research has indicated that attitudes play a moderating function in the context of online shopping. Wu and Chang (2017), for example, found that consumer sentiments influence the association between website quality and online purchase intent. When customers perceive a website to be user-friendly and appealing, they are more likely to form favorable attitudes regarding online buying, hence increasing their purchase intentions.

Finally, current academic research consistently demonstrates a large positive association between consumers' opinions toward online shopping and their online purchasing intentions. Businesses that prioritize generating a nice online buying experience that generates favorable consumer sentiments will succeed in the competitive e-commerce landscape. Understanding and developing these mindsets is critical for persuading consumers to make purchases online. According to these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: There is a significant relationship between attitude toward online shopping and online purchase intention.

2.3.4 Subjective norms and Online Purchase Intention

Recent academic study has highlighted the relationship between customers' subjective norms and online purchase intention, showing the effect of social variables on consumers' decisions to engage in online buying. According to the Theory of Planned activity (Ajzen, 1991), subjective norms describe the perceived social pressure and expectations that individuals perceive from important others towards a specific activity. Understanding how subjective norms influence consumers' purchasing intentions is critical in the context of online shopping.

Recent research has consistently demonstrated the importance of subjective standards in affecting customers' online buying intentions. According to Yu et al. (2019), consumers who perceive social support and encouragement for engaging in online buying from friends, family, or online communities are more likely to acquire positive purchase intentions. Similarly, Chen et al. (2018) discovered that customers' views of the influence of others influence their desire to make online purchases significantly.

Furthermore, recent study has looked into the nuanced dynamics of subjective norms in the context of online buying. Wang and Wang (2020), for example, emphasized the moderating role of subjective standards on the connection

between trust and online purchase intention. According to their findings, when customers sense substantial social support and encouragement for online purchasing, trust becomes a more powerful driver of their purchase intentions.

Finally, recent academic research repeatedly confirms the existence of a positive relationship between consumers' subjective norms and their online purchase intentions. Understanding how social influences and norms influence customers' decision-making processes in the context of online buying is critical for firms and marketers attempting to use social networks and communities to increase consumer engagement and online purchase intents. According to these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: There is a significant relationship between subjective norms and online purchase intention.

2.3.5 Perceived behavioral control and Online Purchase Intention

The relationship between consumers' perceived behavioral control and their online purchase intention is a focus of current e-commerce research. Perceived behavioral control, a key component of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), refers to consumers' perceptions of the ease or difficulty of carrying out online shopping actions. Understanding how consumers' perceptions of control influence their intentions to make online purchases is critical to understanding e-commerce dynamics.

Recent research confirms the importance of perceived behavioral control in affecting customers' online purchasing intentions. According to Liu et al. (2018), consumers who regard online buying as convenient and manageable are more likely to have good purchase intentions. Furthermore, their research found that those who have higher degrees of self-efficacy when it comes to online purchasing have stronger online purchase intentions. Similarly, Chang and Tung (2019) found that perceived behavioral control is important in predicting online purchase intentions, especially among less technologically skilled users.

Furthermore, recent research has looked into the complex aspects of perceived behavioral control in the context of online shopping. Zhang et al. (2020), for example, studied the impact of perceived risk as a moderator in the link between perceived behavioral control and online purchase intention. Their findings revealed that consumers who feel more in control are more likely to overcome perceived hazards connected with online purchasing, resulting in increased purchase intentions. Finally, recent academic research consistently demonstrates a large and favorable association between customers' perceived behavioral control and their online purchase intention. Recognizing the elements that influence consumers' perceptions of control when shopping online is critical for businesses and e-commerce providers looking to improve the user experience and increase

purchase intent. According to these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: there is a significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and online purchase intention.

2.7 Fear of Covid-19 and Online Purchase Intention

The dread of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on many parts of people's lives, including their intents to make online purchases. According to recent study, pandemic-induced anxiety has altered consumer behavior, particularly in the setting of e-commerce.

Studies conducted during and after the COVID-19 epidemic revealed that consumers' views and actions toward online buying changed as a result of their fear of getting the virus. According to Eichenberg et al. (2021), people who reported higher levels of COVID-19 concern were more likely to move their shopping preferences to online channels. This shift in consumer behavior was influenced by the perceived safety and convenience of internet buying during lockdowns and social distancing measures.

Furthermore, customers' concerns about virus transmission through physical establishments have increased their perceived risk of offline buying, pushing their online purchase intents (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). Consumers are turning to online retail platforms because they are afraid of crowded places and want contactless transactions.

Finally, customers' online purchasing intentions have been considerably influenced by their fear of COVID-19. Because of the apparent safety and ease of e-commerce during a global health crisis, this anxiety has worked as a stimulus for the adoption of online purchasing. As the pandemic continues to influence consumer behavior, businesses and e-commerce providers must remain adaptable and responsive in order to fulfill consumers' changing demands and expectations in this new digital landscape. According to these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: There is a significant relationship between fear of covid-19 and online purchase intention.

3. Methodology

This study's methodology sought to evaluate the variables influencing online purchasing intention during the COVID-19 pandemic. To accomplish this goal, a quantitative approach was used, with an online survey serving as the primary data collection tool. This section describes the research design, data gathering process, and measuring devices. A cross-sectional research approach was used, which allowed for the examination of online purchase intention and its determinants at a given point of time during the COVID-19 epidemic. This approach is appropriate for obtaining insights on consumer behavior and factors influencing online buying preferences in a rapidly changing environment.

533 questionnaires were given online to individuals from various geographic places. To access a broad and representative sample of possible participants, an online survey approach was adopted due to pandemic-related restrictions and safety concerns. Respondents were recruited via a variety of internet platforms and social media channels, resulting in a broad and demographically representative sample.

The questionnaire used in this study was created using previously validated scales and constructs from the marketing literature. It was divided into several sections, including:

- Demographic Information: Data on participants' age, gender, income, education level, and employment status were collected in this section.
- Online Purchase Intention: During the COVID-19 epidemic, participants' intentions to make online purchases were assessed using previously developed questionnaires.
- Factors Influencing Online purchasing Intention: Items in the questionnaire assessed numerous factors predicted to influence online purchasing intention. Perceived risk, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, subjective norms, and COVID-19 fear were among the characteristics considered. These constructs' items were adapted from validated scales in the literature.

Statistical analysis was performed on quantitative data received from survey replies. To summarize the demographic

features of the sample, descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were generated. Furthermore, regression analysis was used to investigate the correlations between the identified characteristics and online purchase intent.

In summary, the study used a quantitative cross-sectional approach, with data gathered via an online survey. To explore the factors impacting online purchase intention during the COVID-19 epidemic, the questionnaire was constructed using existing components from the marketing literature. To examine the acquired data and derive significant insights from the research, statistical analysis, including regression analysis, was performed.

4. Findings

Following the data analysis, this part will present the empirical study's key findings and results. The first step is to assess the data's validity and reliability. The validity is examined for convergent validity. Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess reliability. The descriptive analysis is presented in the second phase for both the study variables and the respondent profiles. A third step is to use inferential analysis to test the study hypotheses, which is done using correlation and structural equation modeling. Furthermore, the normality testing for the study variables is presented to validate the model's assumptions. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) are used in the analysis. These

tools are used to analyze the data collected via the questionnaire prepared for the current study.

4.1 Testing Research Hypotheses

In this section, the hypotheses under study are tested using the correlation and the path analysis of the structural equation modeling. The Spearman's correlation is used as the data under study are shown to be not normally distributed. Table 4-1 shows the correlation matrix for the relationship between all variables of the study.

- There is a significant direct correlation between the Perceived ease of use and Online shopping intention, as the correlation coefficient is 0.439, and statistically significant at a level of 0.01.
- There is a significant direct correlation between the Perceived usefulness and Online shopping intention, as the correlation coefficient is 0.296, and statistically significant at a level of 0.01.
- There is a significant direct correlation between the Attitudes toward online and Online shopping intention, as the correlation coefficient is 0.386, and statistically significant at a level of 0.01.
- There is a significant direct correlation between the Subjective norms and Online shopping intention, as the correlation coefficient is 0.279, and statistically significant at a level of 0.01.
- There is a significant direct correlation between the Perceived behavior control and Online shopping intention, as the correlation coefficient is 0.483, and statistically significant at a level of 0.01.

– There is a significant direct correlation between the Fear of covid-19 and Online shopping intention, as the correlation coefficient is 0.341, and statistically significant at a level of 0.01.

Table 4- 1: Correlation Matrix for the Research Variables

		PU	PEU	AT	FC19	SN	PBC	BI	
Spearman's rho	Perceived ease of use	Correlation Coefficient	1.000						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.						
		N	533						
	Perceived usefulness	Correlation Coefficient	.417**	.319**					
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000					
		N	533	533					
	Attitudes toward online	Correlation Coefficient	.512**	.250**	1.000				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.				
		N	533	533	533				
	Subjective norms	Correlation Coefficient	.092*	.165**	.232**	1.000			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.000	.000	.			
		N	533	533	533	533			
	Perceived behavior control	Correlation Coefficient	.600**	.182**	.285**	.072	1.000		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.095	.		
		N	533	533	533	533	533		
	Fear of covid-19	Correlation Coefficient	.194**	.149**	.158**	.203**	.235**	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.	
		N	533	533	533	533	533	533	
	Online shopping intention	Correlation Coefficient	.439**	.246**	.386**	.279**	.483**	.341**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	533	533	533	533	533	533	533

The SEM testing is used as it is a neutral test and it does not require the normality distribution of the data under study.

- For the first hypothesis “**there a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and online purchase intention**”, there is a significant effect of Perceived ease of use on Online Purchase Intention, as the P-value is less than 0.05 and the estimate is 0.446. Therefore, the second hypothesis is supported.
- For the second hypothesis “**there is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and online purchase intention**”, there is an insignificant effect of Perceived Usefulness on Online Purchase Intention, as the P-value is more than 0.05. Therefore, the third hypothesis is not supported.
- For the third hypothesis “**there is a significant relationship between attitude toward online shopping and online purchase intention**”, there is a significant effect of Attitude Toward Online Shopping on Online Purchase Intention, as the P-value is less than 0.05 and the estimate is 0.219. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is supported.
- For the fourth hypothesis “**there is a significant relationship between subjective norms and online purchase intention**”, there is a significant effect of Subjective Norms on Online Purchase Intention, as the P-value is less than 0.05 and the estimate is 0.140. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is supported.
- For the fifth hypothesis “**there is a significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and online purchase intention**”, there is an insignificant effect of Perceived Behavioral

Control on Online Purchase Intention, as the P-value is more than 0.05. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis is not supported.

- For the sixth hypothesis **“there is a significant relationship between fear of covid-19 and online purchase intention”**, there is a significant effect of Fear of Covid-19 on Online Purchase Intention, as the P-value is less than 0.05 and the estimate is 0.094. Therefore, the seventh hypothesis is supported. Furthermore, the R square is 0.524, which means 52.4% of the variation in Online Purchase Intention can be explained by the model.

This section presented the empirical study to test the research hypotheses by measuring the variables concluded from the literature review through a descriptive, correlation using SPSS and Amos. Table 4-2 shows a summary for the conducted analysis.

Table 4-2: Summary of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Description	Results
H ₁	There a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and online purchase intention	Fully Supported
H ₂	There is a significant relationship between perceived usefulness and online purchase intention	Not Supported
H ₃	There is a significant relationship between attitude toward online shopping and online purchase intention	Fully Supported
H ₄	There is a significant relationship between subjective norms and online purchase intention	Fully Supported
H ₅	There is a significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and online purchase intention	Not Supported
H ₆	There is a significant relationship between fear of covid-19 and online purchase intention	Fully Supported

5. Research discussion

Understanding the variables influencing online purchase intention has become critical for businesses and marketers in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this research was to shed light on these factors and their impact on consumer decision-making processes. The discussion that follows outlines the research's findings and consequences.

The first hypothesis (H1) proposed a substantial link between perceived ease of use and online purchase intent. This study's findings fully supported H1. This shows that when consumers view online buying to be simple and convenient, they are more likely to make purchases online. Businesses should prioritize enhancing the usability and user-friendliness of their web platforms during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second hypothesis (H2) postulated a link between perceived utility and online purchase intent. Surprisingly, the evidence did not support this prediction. This implies that, during the pandemic, customers may prioritize criteria other than perceived usefulness while making online purchases. Marketers should look into additional tactics for appealing to consumers' reasons other than utility.

H3, H4, and H6, which investigated the links between attitude toward online purchasing, subjective norms, and fear of COVID-19, and online purchase intention, respectively, were all fully supported. These findings highlight the necessity of knowing

customers' attitudes, social influences, and pandemic worries when developing marketing tactics. Marketers may increase online purchase intentions by leveraging positive attitudes, societal norms, and addressing anxieties.

Finally, H5, which looked into the relationship between perceived behavioral control and online purchase intent, was rejected. This shows that during the pandemic, individuals' perceived control over their internet buying activity may not have a major impact on their purchase intentions. To drive online purchase intentions, marketers can focus on other variables such as ease of use and fear reduction.

In conclusion, this study gives important insights into the elements influencing online purchase intention during COVID-19. To effectively engage and influence consumers in the online buying landscape during these hard times, businesses and marketers should examine the impact of perceived ease of use, attitude, subjective norms, and fear of COVID-19 in their marketing tactics.

6. Managerial Implications

Understanding the characteristics that drive online purchase intent during Egypt's COVID-19 outbreak has significant ramifications for businesses and marketers. First and foremost, your research discovered that perceived ease of use had a major impact on online purchase intention. As a result, companies should prioritize improving the usability of their online

platforms. This is possible through user-friendly interfaces, easy navigation, and responsive design, all of which contribute to a great online buying experience.

Furthermore, the study emphasized the importance of consumer views toward online shopping in determining purchase intentions. Marketers should focus their efforts on developing and reinforcing good consumer perceptions. Effective online marketing efforts, customer reviews, and user-generated content that create trust and appeal to potential online buyers can help achieve this.

Furthermore, subjective norms, or the impact of others on individual choices, were discovered to be important in determining purchasing intentions. Companies can capitalize on this by including elements such as client testimonials, ratings, and social sharing buttons on their websites to foster a sense of community and trust among online buyers.

Furthermore, COVID-19 fear was discovered as a key factor influencing online purchase intention. To assuage anxieties and boost consumer confidence, firms should clearly convey the safety safeguards in place throughout their supply chains and offer contactless delivery choices.

Finally, while perceived usefulness had no effect on purchase intention in this study, it is critical for firms to constantly analyze and change their online products to suit changing consumer needs during crises. Updating product or

service information and features on a regular basis can help in this regard.

7. Directions of Future Research:

Several areas for future research can be explored to increase our understanding of consumer behavior during the COVID-19 epidemic and in online buying situations. To begin, researchers might undertake cross-cultural analyses to see if the factors influencing online purchase intention during COVID-19 differ between nations and cultures. Cultural variations can result in unexpected findings and insights. Longitudinal studies that follow online purchasing activity over time could provide useful insights into how consumer behavior changes as the pandemic continues and factors such as vaccination rates and economic recovery come into play. During the pandemic, segmentation analysis could aid in identifying various customer segments in Egypt with distinct preferences and concerns regarding internet buying. This allows organizations to more efficiently adjust their marketing campaigns.

During COVID-19, qualitative research might delve further into consumer attitudes, perceptions, and decision-making processes, providing a greater grasp of the topic. Finally, as technology advances, researchers could look into the impact of future technologies like augmented reality, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence on online buying behavior in the context of COVID-19.

8. Research Limitations:

It is critical to recognize the study's limitations. To begin with, the study relied on an online questionnaire, which may introduce sample bias by omitting some demographics who are less engaged online. As a result, the findings may not fully represent Egypt's whole internet shopping population.

Second, self-reported data, which is widespread in online surveys, can be subject to respondent biases such as social desirability bias, in which individuals submit answers they believe are anticipated rather than their genuine opinions.

Third, the research was carried out during a specific phase of the COVID-19 epidemic. The shifting nature of the crisis may have altered consumer behavior, making it difficult to generalize findings to different stages of the pandemic or post-pandemic times.

Finally, economic conditions, government laws, and the availability of internet purchasing platforms may have influenced the study's findings. Future study should take these contextual aspects into account in order to acquire a more complete picture of consumer behavior in the digital era during times of crises.

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