



Unraveling Millennial Online Shopping Preferences: A Comprehensive Analysis of Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour in the Digital Marketplace

Kush Kalariya, Rahul Chauhan*, Parth Soni, Mohit Patel, Himalay Patel

Unitedworld Institute of Management, Karnavati University, Gandhinagar, India

Correspondence: Rahul Chauhan
Email: rj88chauhan@gmail.com

Received: 09 Mar 2024
Accepted: 29 May 2024
Published: 29 May 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract: The study explores millennial preferences in online shopping by examining the influence of various factors on consumer behaviour in the digital marketplace. Through a comprehensive statistical analysis, significant relationships between constructs such as cultural influence, marketing strategies, social factors, and online purchasing behaviour were identified. The findings highlight the importance of understanding consumer motivations and preferences in shaping effective marketing strategies targeted at millennial consumers. While factors like cultural and social influences were found to significantly affect consumer behaviour, the direct influence of marketing strategies and personal characteristics on online purchasing decisions was less pronounced. The study underscores the complexity of millennial shopping behaviour and emphasizes the need for businesses to consider a holistic approach when designing marketing campaigns and interventions. By understanding the interplay of factors influencing millennial preferences in online shopping, marketers can develop

more targeted and effective strategies to engage this key demographic in the digital marketplace.

Keywords: Millennial Preferences, Online Shopping, Consumer Behaviour, Marketing Strategies.

Introduction

The landscape of consumer behaviour has undergone a dramatic transformation with the advent of digital technology, particularly fuelled by the rise of the millennial generation. Millennials, born between the early 1980s and mid-1990s, represent a demographic cohort characterized by their digital fluency, social media engagement, and preference for convenience in purchasing decisions. Their influence on the retail industry, particularly in the realm of online shopping, has sparked significant interest and scrutiny among businesses striving to succeed in the digital marketplace.

Online shopping platforms have become increasingly popular among millennials, who gravitate towards the convenience, accessibility, and variety offered by e-commerce websites and mobile shopping apps. This shift in consumer behaviour has reshaped traditional shopping paradigms, challenging businesses to understand and adapt to the preferences and behaviours of this influential demographic. Understanding the intricacies

of millennial online shopping preferences is paramount for businesses seeking to thrive in the digital economy.

This study aims to delve into the intricate tapestry of millennial online shopping preferences, unravelling the underlying motivations, trends, and influences that shape their purchasing decisions. By examining factors such as product variety, pricing strategies, user experience, social media engagement, and brand loyalty, we endeavour to provide a comprehensive analysis of what drives millennials to embrace online shopping platforms.

The significance of this research lies not only in its potential to inform marketing strategies tailored to the millennial demographic but also in its broader implications for the future of e-commerce. By elucidating the intricacies of millennial consumer behaviour, businesses can adapt and innovate, fostering more meaningful and sustainable relationships with this influential cohort of consumers.

Through a combination of quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and data analysis, this study seeks to shed light on the nuances of millennials' online shopping habits, offering valuable insights for businesses, marketers, and researchers alike. By uncovering the preferences and tendencies of this pivotal demographic, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving dynamics of online commerce in the digital age.

In recent years, the global retail landscape has undergone a profound transformation, with the advent of digital technology revolutionizing the way consumers shop. At the forefront of this revolution are millennials, individuals born between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s, who have grown up alongside the rapid advancement of the internet and mobile technology. Unlike previous generations, millennials are characterized by their digital fluency, penchant for social media, and preference for convenience and efficiency in their purchasing decisions.

As a result, online shopping has emerged as a dominant force in the retail industry, offering millennials a plethora of options to browse, compare, and purchase products and services from the comfort of their own homes or on the go. From e-commerce giants like Amazon and Alibaba to niche boutique websites and mobile shopping apps, the digital marketplace has become a vibrant ecosystem teeming with opportunities for both consumers and businesses alike.

Understanding the nuances of millennials' online shopping behaviour is essential for businesses seeking to capture their share of this lucrative market. While convenience and accessibility are often cited as primary drivers of online shopping among millennials, the factors influencing their purchasing decisions are multifaceted and nuanced. From the quality and variety of products available to the ease of navigation and checkout processes, every aspect of the online shopping experience plays a role in shaping millennials' preferences and behaviours.

One of the key factors influencing millennials' online shopping behaviour is the perceived value proposition offered by e-commerce platforms. Millennials are known to be price-conscious consumers who value transparency and affordability in their purchasing decisions. As such, they are often drawn to online retailers that offer competitive pricing, discounts, and promotions. Additionally, the ability to compare prices and read reviews

from other customers enables millennials to make more informed choices, leading to greater satisfaction with their purchases.

Moreover, millennials place a high premium on convenience and flexibility in their shopping experience. With busy lifestyles and hectic schedules, the ability to shop anytime, anywhere, and on any device is a major selling point for online retailers. Mobile shopping, in particular, has gained popularity among millennials, allowing them to browse and make purchases on their Smartphone or tablets while on the move. The seamless integration of online and offline channels, such as click-and-collect services and same-day delivery options, further enhances the convenience factor, catering to millennials' desire for instant gratification.

In addition to convenience and value, the social and experiential aspects of online shopping also influence millennials. Social media platforms play a significant role in shaping millennials' purchasing decisions, with many turning to influencers, peer recommendations, and user-generated content for inspiration and validation. Brands that leverage social media effectively to engage with millennials and create authentic, relatable content are more likely to resonate with this demographic and drive loyalty and advocacy.

Literature Review

In the contemporary digital landscape, understanding the nuances of millennial online shopping behaviour is paramount for businesses seeking to thrive in the e-commerce sector. Millennials, often characterized as digital natives, have grown up amidst rapid technological advancements and ubiquitous internet access. Their fluency with digital technology, particularly smartphones and social media platforms, significantly influences their preferences and behaviours in the online shopping realm (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Digital Fluency and Mobile Adoption:

Millennials exhibit a strong affinity for mobile devices, using them as primary tools for browsing and purchasing products online (Garcia et al., 2020). Their preference for seamless and mobile-friendly shopping experiences underscores the importance of optimizing e-commerce platforms for mobile accessibility. The convenience of 24/7 accessibility and doorstep delivery further solidifies the appeal of online shopping among millennials (GlobalWebIndex, 2021).

Personalization and Customization:

Millennials prioritize personalized shopping experiences tailored to their individual preferences and tastes (Kumar et al., 2019). E-commerce platforms leveraging data-driven personalization strategies can enhance engagement and conversion rates among millennial consumers. The value placed on curated content and targeted promotions highlights the importance of brands understanding and catering to the specific needs of their millennial audience (Accenture, 2020).

Influence of Social Media:

Social media plays a significant role in shaping millennial shopping behaviours, with peer recommendations and influencer endorsements exerting considerable influence on purchase decisions (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Platforms like Instagram and Facebook serve as hubs for product discovery, recommendations, and social commerce interactions. Brands effectively leveraging social commerce and influencer marketing strategies can authentically engage with millennial consumers and drive sales (Forbes, 2020).

Ethical and Sustainable Consumption:

Millennials prioritize ethical and sustainable consumption practices, favouring brands that demonstrate a commitment to social responsibility and environmental sustainability (Bhatti & Sharma, 2020). E-commerce platforms emphasizing transparency and sustainability initiatives can appeal to socially conscious millennials, who are willing to pay more for products aligning with their values (Nielsen, 2019).

Building Brand Loyalty:

Building brand loyalty among millennials requires more than just offering quality products; it necessitates authentic brand experiences and meaningful connections. Brands engaging millennials on social media platforms, fostering two-way communication, and offering loyalty programs tailored to millennial preferences can cultivate stronger brand relationships (Deloitte, 2020).

The literature review underscores the multifaceted nature of millennial online shopping behaviour, influenced by factors such as digital fluency, personalization, social media, ethical considerations, and brand loyalty. Understanding these dynamics is essential for businesses aiming to resonate with millennial consumers and thrive in the competitive e-commerce landscape. By aligning strategies with the preferences and values of millennials, brands can establish meaningful connections, drive engagement, and foster long-term loyalty among this influential demographic.

Research Method

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach and strategies employed by researchers to conduct a study or inquiry effectively. It encompasses all the methods, techniques, and tools utilized to collect, process, evaluate, and present data in a structured and reliable manner. In the context of this study on exploring millennial preferences in online shopping, a robust research methodology is crucial for ensuring the validity and credibility of the findings.

The primary objective of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing millennials' shopping behaviours in the digital marketplace. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Investigate the cultural influences, social factors, personal characteristics, and marketing strategies that affect millennial consumers.
- Explore the online purchasing behaviour of millennial consumers, including their preferences, motivations, and decision-making processes.

The research design employed in this study is descriptive in nature. It seeks to describe and analyse the current state of millennial preferences in online shopping, focusing on facts and findings. Convenient sampling technique was utilized to select participants for the study, allowing the researcher to identify and examine the preferences and opinions of online shoppers.

The scope of the study is limited to millennial consumers, defined as individuals aged between 25 to 40 years old. The research specifically investigates how this demographic cohort engages with online shopping platforms, their motivations, preferences, and decision-making processes. Additionally, the study explores millennial consumers' engagement in cross-border e-commerce and the factors influencing their preferences for international products.

Primary data for the study were collected through a systematically prepared questionnaire administered to online purchasers in Ahmedabad and Baroda cities. 230 samples were collected, allowing for statistical analysis of the collected data. Secondary data were also gathered from various sources such as books, journals, theses, and websites related to millennial preferences towards online shopping.

The questionnaire used in the study consists of three parts. The first part includes demographic questions to gather information about the respondents and classify them into different categories. Part 2 contains general questions about millennial preferences in online shopping to provide a broad understanding of the topic. The third part comprises 5-point Likert scale questions, which facilitate efficient analysis and insights, particularly when the sample size is relatively small. Likert scale questions are ideal for comparative analysis and can be easily analysed using parametric or non-parametric statistical tools.

Projected model

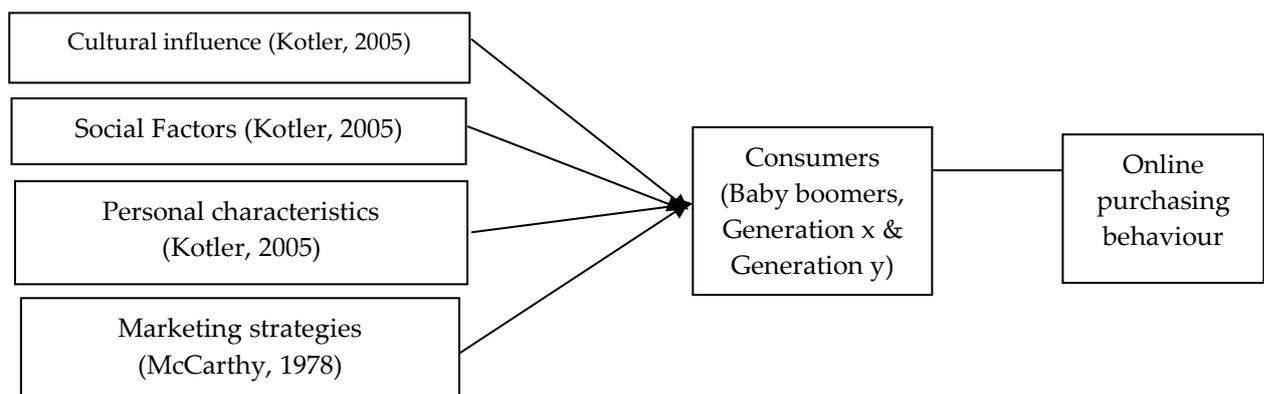


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework (adapted from Kotler, 2005 and Mc Carthy, 1978)

H₀₁: Cultural influence, social factors, personal characteristics and marketing strategy have significant impact on consumers.

H₀₂: Online buying behaviour is dependent on consumers mind set.

Result and Discussion

The analysis of the demographic distribution of respondents in the study on millennial preferences in online shopping reveals several significant trends. Firstly, there is a notable gender disparity, with male participants constituting a much larger proportion (73.3%) compared to females (26.7%). This gender gap suggests potential bias in the sample, which could affect the generalizability of findings, highlighting the need for cautious interpretation and consideration of gender diversity in future research.

The age distribution indicates a predominant representation of younger millennials, particularly those aged 27-32 years (66.7%). This skew towards younger age groups suggests that the study's findings may primarily reflect the preferences and behaviours of this demographic cohort, potentially overlooking the perspectives of older millennials. Researchers should aim for a more balanced representation of age groups to ensure broader applicability of results.

The educational background demonstrates a diverse profile, with a significant proportion holding Bachelor's and Master's degrees. This suggests a well-educated sample population, which may influence their online shopping preferences and behaviours. Understanding the educational attainment of respondents provides valuable insights into decision-making processes and attitudes towards online shopping, emphasizing the importance of considering educational diversity in research analysis.

The marital status distribution reveals a predominant representation of single individuals (56.7%), followed by married individuals (36.7%). This distribution suggests that relationship status could influence online shopping preferences and behaviours, with implications for marketing strategies targeting different marital status groups. Overall, the demographic analysis underscores the importance of considering various demographic factors in understanding millennial preferences in online shopping and emphasizes the need for inclusive sampling strategies in future research endeavours.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha and AVE Values

		Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CI1	0.859	0.807	0.812	0.886	0.721
CI2	0.866				
CI3	0.820				
CO1	0.854	0.836	0.837	0.902	0.753
CO2	0.886				

		Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CO3	0.863				
MS1	0.872	0.835	0.835	0.901	0.751
MS2	0.868				
MS3	0.860				
OPB1	0.851	0.807	0.813	0.886	0.721
OPB2	0.866				
OPB3	0.830				
PC1	0.771	0.697	0.705	0.832	0.623
PC2	0.829				
PC3	0.765				
SF1	0.832	0.788	0.789	0.876	0.703
SF2	0.831				
SF3	0.852				

Note: CI – Cultural Influence, CO- Consumers, MS – Marketing Strategies, OPB – Online Purchasing Behavior, PC – Personal Characteristics, SF – Social Factors

Table 1 provides the Cronbach's alpha values, composite reliability (rho_a and rho_c) values, and average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct in the study. These reliability and validity measures are essential for assessing the consistency and accuracy of the measurement instruments used to operationalize the constructs.

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency reliability, indicating the extent to which items within each construct are correlated with one another. Higher Cronbach's alpha values (ideally above 0.7) indicate greater internal consistency among items. In this study, all constructs demonstrate good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.765 to 0.886.

Composite reliability (rho_a and rho_c) measures the reliability of a composite construct formed by multiple indicators. Rho_a represents the reliability of the construct under unidimensional measurement, while rho_c accounts for measurement error and is more appropriate for constructs with multidimensional measurement. Similar to Cronbach's alpha, higher values of composite reliability (ideally above 0.7) indicate greater reliability. The values presented in Table 1 range from 0.697 to 0.836, indicating satisfactory reliability for all constructs.

Average variance extracted (AVE) assesses the convergent validity of the constructs, indicating the degree to which the variance captured by the construct's indicators exceeds measurement error. AVE values should ideally be above 0.5 to demonstrate adequate convergent validity. In this study, all constructs exhibit acceptable AVE values, ranging from 0.623 to 0.753, indicating that each construct adequately captures the variance of its indicators. Overall, Table 1 demonstrates that the measurement instruments used to assess

the constructs in the study exhibit satisfactory reliability and validity, providing confidence in the accuracy of the data collected for analyzing millennial preferences in online shopping.

Table 2: Fornell-Larcker criterion

	CI	CO	MS	OPB	PC	SF
CI	0.849					
CO	0.715	0.868				
MS	0.579	0.603	0.867			
OPB	0.707	0.751	0.672	0.849		
PC	0.709	0.667	0.655	0.663	0.789	
SF	0.752	0.713	0.657	0.712	0.759	0.838

Note: CI – Cultural Influence, CO- Consumers, MS – Marketing Strategies, OPB – Online Purchasing Behavior, PC – Personal Characteristics, SF – Social Factors

Table 2 presents the correlation matrix based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion, a widely used method for assessing the discriminant validity of constructs in a study. Discriminant validity is crucial in research as it ensures that each construct measures a distinct aspect of the phenomenon under investigation without significant overlap with other constructs. In essence, it confirms that the constructs are unique and independent entities, contributing uniquely to the overall understanding of the research topic.

The diagonal elements of the correlation matrix represent the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. The AVE reflects the amount of variance captured by the construct's indicators relative to measurement error. Therefore, a higher AVE indicates that the construct adequately represents its underlying concept. In Table 2, the diagonal elements serve as benchmarks against which the off-diagonal elements (correlation coefficients between constructs) are compared.

According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of the AVE for each construct should be greater than the correlation coefficients between that construct and all other constructs in the study. This criterion ensures that the construct is more strongly correlated with its own indicators than with indicators of other constructs, thereby demonstrating discriminant validity.

Analyzing Table 2, we observe that the diagonal elements (representing the square root of the AVE) are consistently higher than the correlation coefficients between each construct and all other constructs. For example, the square root of the AVE for Cultural Influence (CI) is 0.849, which is greater than its correlation coefficient with Consumers (CO) at 0.715. Similarly, the square root of the AVE for Marketing Strategies (MS) is 0.867, higher than its correlation coefficient with Online Purchasing Behavior (OPB) at 0.672.

This pattern indicates that each construct in the study exhibits discriminant validity, as it is more strongly related to its own indicators than to indicators of other constructs. In practical terms, this means that researchers can confidently interpret the relationships between constructs in the study, knowing that each construct represents a unique aspect of millennial preferences in online shopping.

Table 3: Mean, STDEV, T values, p values

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O /STDEV)	P values	Decisions
CI -> CO	0.341	0.335	0.084	4.043	0.000	Accepted
CO -> OPB	0.751	0.754	0.035	21.191	0.000	Accepted
MS -> CO	0.150	0.153	0.081	1.851	0.064	Not Accepted
PC -> CO	0.131	0.135	0.085	1.540	0.124	Accepted
SF -> CO	0.259	0.261	0.093	2.786	0.005	Accepted

Note: CI – Cultural Influence, CO- Consumers, MS – Marketing Strategies, OPB – Online Purchasing Behaviour, PC – Personal Characteristics, SF – Social Factors

Table 3 provides a summary of the mean, standard deviation, T statistics, p-values, and decisions for the relationships between different constructs in the study. These statistical measures are used to assess the significance and strength of the relationships between constructs, helping researchers draw conclusions about the hypotheses tested in the study.

The "Original sample (O)" column presents the correlation coefficients between pairs of constructs in the original dataset. These coefficients quantify the strength and direction of the relationships between constructs.

The "Sample mean (M)" column displays the mean values for each pair of constructs in the study. These values represent the average scores obtained from the sample data for each construct. The "Standard deviation (STDEV)" column shows the variability or dispersion of scores around the mean for each pair of constructs. A higher standard deviation indicates greater variability in responses, suggesting that the data points are spread out over a wider range.

The "T statistics (|O|/STDEV)" column presents the T statistics, calculated by dividing the correlation coefficient (|O|) by the standard deviation (STDEV). This calculation assesses the magnitude of the relationship between constructs relative to the variability in the data. The "P values" column indicates the significance level associated with each pair of constructs. A p-value less than the predetermined significance level (e.g., 0.05) suggests that the relationship between constructs is statistically significant.

The "Decisions" column provides the researchers' decisions based on the calculated statistics. If the p-value is less than the significance level, the null hypothesis (no relationship between constructs) is rejected, and the relationship is considered significant (accepted). Conversely, if the p-value exceeds the significance level, the null hypothesis is retained, indicating a no significant relationship (not accepted).

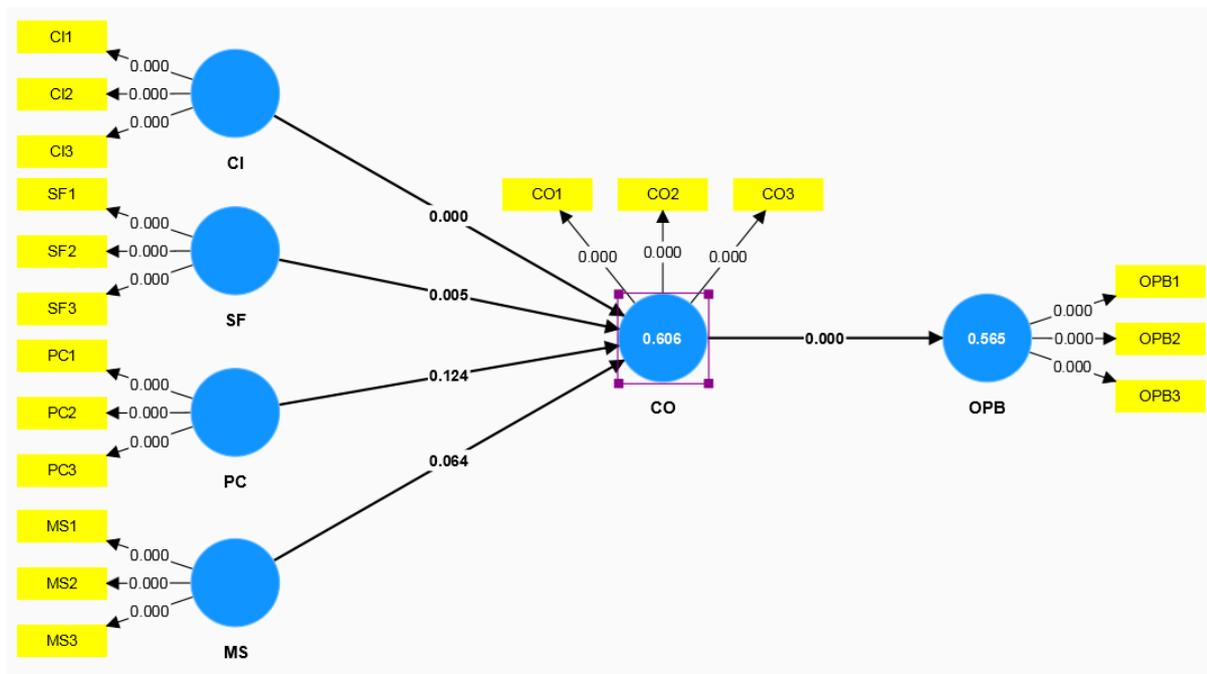


Figure 2: Smart PLS Analysis

Conclusion

In conclusion, the statistical analysis presented in Table 3 offers valuable insights into the relationships between different constructs examined in the study on millennial preferences in online shopping. The findings provide researchers with important information to understand the dynamics of consumer behaviour in the digital marketplace and make informed decisions regarding marketing strategies and interventions.

The analysis revealed several significant relationships between constructs, indicating the presence of meaningful associations that influence millennial online shopping preferences. For instance, the strong positive correlation between consumers (CO) and online purchasing behaviour (OPB), supported by a low p-value and high T statistics, suggests that consumer attitudes and behaviours play a crucial role in shaping their online purchasing decisions. This finding underscores the importance of understanding consumer motivations and preferences to develop effective marketing strategies that resonate with millennial shoppers.

Similarly, the significant relationship between cultural influence (CI) and consumers (CO), as well as social factors (SF) and consumers (CO), highlights the impact of cultural and social influences on consumer behaviour in the online shopping context. These findings emphasize the need for brands to consider cultural and social factors when designing marketing campaigns and product offerings targeted at millennial consumers.

However, not all relationships examined in the study were found to be statistically significant. For instance, the relationship between marketing strategies (MS) and consumers (CO) was not accepted based on the calculated p-value, indicating that marketing strategies may not have a direct impact on consumer behaviour in the online shopping environment.

Similarly, the relationship between personal characteristics (PC) and consumers (CO) was not accepted, suggesting that individual traits may have limited influence on online purchasing decisions among millennials.

Overall, the findings from the statistical analysis provide valuable insights into the complex interplay of factors influencing millennial preferences in online shopping. By understanding the relationships between different constructs, marketers and businesses can develop more targeted and effective strategies to attract and retain millennial consumers in the competitive digital marketplace. Additionally, the findings underscore the importance of considering cultural, social, and individual factors when designing marketing campaigns and interventions aimed at engaging millennial shoppers.

Moving forward, future research could explore additional factors that may influence millennial online shopping preferences, such as technological innovations, environmental sustainability concerns, and socio-economic factors. By continuing to investigate and understand the evolving dynamics of consumer behaviour in the digital age, researchers can contribute to the development of more effective marketing strategies and interventions that meet the needs and preferences of millennial consumers.

References

- Ali, M., Kim, J., & Hussain, K. (2021). Understanding Millennials' Online Shopping Behavior: Role of Technology Readiness and Trust in Developing Countries. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 7(1), 25.
- Bhatti, S., & Sharma, S. (2020). Understanding the Millennials' Shopping Behavior in India. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*.
- Deloitte. (2020). Navigating the New Digital Divide: A Global Snapshot of Device Ownership. Deloitte Insights.
- Forbes. (2020). How Millennials are Shopping and What They Want from Brands Today.
- García, J. J. R., Pérez, E. S., & Ibañez, A. L. (2020). Analysis of the impact of the use of technology on online shopping behavior: A study of Generation Z and Millennials. *Information Processing & Management*, 57(6), 102360.
- GlobalWebIndex. (2021). eCommerce Trends 2021.
- Hsu, C. L., Lin, J. C. C., & Chiang, H. S. (2018). The Effects of Online Community Participation on Consumer Attitude toward Brand Community Website and Purchase Intention. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 22(3), 355-386.
- Huang, Z., & Benyoucef, M. (2020). Understanding Consumers' Purchase Intentions in Social Commerce: A Social Capital Perspective. *Information & Management*, 57(1), 103311.
- Kim, M. J., Nam, Y., & Kim, M. (2021). A Comparative Study of Factors Affecting the Adoption of Crypto currency Payment Services: Millennials vs. Non-Millennials. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 20(1), 26-47.
- Kumar, A., Bezawada, R., Rishika, R., Janakiraman, R., & Kannan, P. K. (2019). From Social

- to Sale: The Effects of Firm-Generated Content in Social Media on Customer Behavior. *Journal of Marketing*, 80(1), 7-25.
- Lee, J. E., Lee, J. W., & Moon, H. (2020). The Influence of Green Consumption Values on Online Shopping Behavior: The Moderating Role of Environmental Concerns and Green Perceptions. *Sustainability*, 12(9), 3845.
- Liang, T. P., & Su, C. T. (2019). Effects of Shopping Experience on Customer Satisfaction: A Study of Interactive and Visual Technologies. *Information & Management*, 56(1), 103-113.
- Maity, S., & Dass, M. (2019). Emotional Branding and Its Impact on Millennials' Purchase Intention: Moderating Role of Gender. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 25(6), 790-815.
- Nielsen. (2019). How Sustainability is Changing the FMCG Landscape.
- Pew Research Center. (2019). Mobile Fact Sheet.
- Rahman, M. M., Alam, M. M., & Hasan, M. (2020). Conversational AI: The Future of AI-Powered Customer Service and Business Operations. *Information Systems Management*, 37(2), 97-110.
- Schivinski, B., & Dabrowski, D. (2016). The Effect of Social Media Communication on Consumer Perceptions of Brands. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 22(2), 189-214.
- Statista. (2021). Cross-Border E-Commerce - Statistics & Facts.
- Tsekouras, D., Moorman, C., & Gultinan, J. P. (2021). The Subscription Economy: A Review and Research Agenda. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49(1), 81-99.
- Xu, X., Liu, J., & Bai, L. (2020). Effects of Personalized Recommendation on User Purchase Behavior in E-commerce Platforms. *Electronic Commerce Research*, 20(2), 337-358.