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Online Shopping Practices of College Students in the University of Eastern Philippines

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Abstract

This study examined the psychological factors associated with the online shopping practices of college students at the University of Eastern Philippines. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was employed among 390 undergraduate online shoppers selected through stratified and purposive sampling during 2022. A researcher-developed questionnaire measured the respondents' socioeconomic profile, subjective norms, perceived attitude, perceived behavioral control, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and online shopping practices. The instrument obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95. Frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, ranks, Spearman's rank correlation, and point-biserial correlation were used at the 0.05 level of significance. Respondents generally perceived online shopping as useful ($M = 4.05$) and easy to use ($M = 4.02$), while perceived behavioral control was rated capable ($M = 3.81$), perceived attitude was encouraged ($M = 3.56$), and subjective norms were influential ($M = 3.50$). E-commerce applications were the most used platforms ($M = 3.92$), apparel and footwear were the most frequently purchased product category ($M = 2.62$), and 58% spent below PHP 1,217 monthly. This study reported significant relationships between sex and the four shopping-practice indicators and between perceived ease of use and shopping frequency; most other relationships were reported as nonsignificant. The findings underscore the importance of convenience, platform usability, discounts, peer influence, and spending control in students' online purchasing. Correlation outputs should be rechecked against the original dataset before journal submission because several reported coefficient-p-value pairs appear internally inconsistent.

Keywords: Online shopping practices; college students; psychological factors; perceived usefulness; perceived ease of use; e-commerce; Northern Samar

Introduction

Online shopping has become a routine consumer activity because digital platforms allow buyers to search, compare, order, and pay for products with less time and physical effort. The rapid adoption of e-commerce has also made purchasing behavior more complex: students are exposed to platform promotions, peer recommendations, influencers, product reviews, and multiple payment arrangements while operating under

limited personal or household budgets.

In the Philippine setting, e-commerce applications and social-media marketplaces expanded rapidly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Their accessibility is particularly relevant in geographically dispersed provinces such as Northern Samar, where students may use online stores to obtain products that are not readily available near the university. At the same time, online shoppers encounter risks involving incomplete product information, weak search functions, inflexible return policies, unmet quality expectations, payment security, and delivery delays.

Online purchasing may be understood through the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior, which connect behavior with attitudes, subjective norms, behavioral intentions, and perceived control (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991). The Technology Acceptance Model further proposes that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use shape a person's acceptance of technology (Davis et al., 1989). Applied to student consumers, these perspectives suggest that platform usability, practical benefits, personal control, and social influence may help explain shopping practices.

Studies indicated that online buyers value convenience, website functionality, customer service, security, time savings, and social influence. Local evidence from Northern Samar also suggested that online shoppers were commonly young adults and that convenience and purchase intention were related. However, contextual evidence on the combined role of subjective norms, attitude, behavioral control, usefulness, and ease of use among University of Eastern Philippines students remained limited.

The study therefore determined the respondents' socioeconomic profile; assessed five psychological factors; described their platform use, purchase frequency, monthly spending, and post-purchase decisions; and tested the relationships of socioeconomic and psychological factors with online shopping practices.

Review of Literature and Studies

Psychological Factors in Online Shopping

Subjective norms refer to perceived social pressure from friends, classmates, parents, online influencers, and other reference groups. In online retail settings, recommendations and shared purchasing arrangements may reduce uncertainty or costs, including shipping fees. Attitude reflects favorable or unfavorable evaluations of buying online and may be strengthened by discounts, vouchers, sales, convenience, and positive emotions. Perceived behavioral control concerns the shopper's confidence and ability to regulate product choice, spending, search, and payment behavior.

Perceived usefulness describes the extent to which online shopping improves the purchasing task by expanding product choice, saving time, providing information, and avoiding crowded stores. Perceived ease of use concerns whether platforms are understandable, user-friendly, and manageable across ordering, comparison, and payment. These constructs are especially pertinent among students, whose purchasing choices are shaped by both technological familiarity and financial limitations.

Online Shopping Practices

Online shopping practice in this study covered the platforms used, frequency of buying product categories, monthly expenditure, and post-purchase evaluation. Platform choice may include dedicated e-commerce applications, social media, and live-selling marketplaces. Purchase frequency reflects which types of goods students regularly obtain online, while expenditure captures the financial intensity of participation. Post-purchase evaluation includes repurchase, recommendation, switching sites, and discontinuing a purchase

relationship.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The framework integrated the Theory of Planned Behavior and Technology Acceptance Model. Socioeconomic characteristics and the five psychological factors served as independent variables, while platform use, purchase frequency, monthly expenditure, and post-purchase evaluation served as dependent indicators. The study tested whether these characteristics and perceptions were significantly associated with online shopping practices.

Methodology

Research Design and Locale

The research used a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. It was conducted at the main campus of the University of Eastern Philippines in University Town, Northern Samar in 2023. The population consisted of 16,372 undergraduate students from eight colleges.

Respondents and Sampling

The sample consisted of 390 students, determined using Slovin's formula and allocated proportionately across the eight colleges: College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources (62); College of Arts and Communication (104); College of Business Administration (47); College of Engineering (39); College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (23); College of Education (43); College of Science (52); and College of Veterinary Medicine (20). Stratified sampling supported proportional college representation, while purposive screening required respondents to be online shoppers. The study states an eligibility age range of 17–30 years and at least one to two years of online-shopping experience, although the final profile includes a small 29–31 category; this criterion should be clarified before submission.

Research Instrument and Validation

A researcher-developed questionnaire had three parts. Part I obtained sex, age, monthly household income, campus residence, and years of online-shopping experience. Part II contained 25 statements, with five items each for subjective norms, perceived attitude, perceived behavioral control, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use. Part III measured platform use, product-purchase frequency, monthly spending, and post-purchase evaluation. Content validation led to the reconstruction of one subjective-norm item. A 30-student pilot test at Northern Samar Colleges yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Permission was obtained from the appropriate university and college authorities before questionnaires were distributed. Responses were tallied and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and rank. Spearman's rank correlation was used for ranked or ordinal variables, while point-biserial correlation was used for dichotomous variables. Tests were evaluated at the 0.05 significance level. Because the source tables contain coefficient-p-value combinations that may not correspond mathematically, all inferential results in this article are presented as reported and require verification using the original dataset.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Selected socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents (N = 390)

Characteristic	Largest category	f	%
Sex	Female	250	64
Age	20–22 years	195	50
Monthly household income	Below PHP 9,520	191	49
Campus residence	Permanent residence	195	50
Online-shopping experience	1–2 years	147	38

Most respondents were female and between 20 and 22 years old. Nearly half came from households earning below PHP 9,520 monthly, half lived in permanent residences near the university, and the largest experience group had shopped online for one to two years. The prominence of relatively new online shoppers is consistent with the timing of accelerated digital purchasing during the pandemic. The profile also indicates that participation in online shopping was not limited to students from higher-income households.

Psychological Factors

Table 2. Summary of psychological factors

Psychological factor	Weighted mean	Interpretation
Subjective norms	3.50	Influential
Perceived attitude	3.56	Encouraged
Perceived behavioral control	3.81	Capable
Perceived usefulness	4.05	Useful
Perceived ease of use	4.02	Easy
Grand mean	3.79	—

Perceived usefulness obtained the highest mean, followed closely by perceived ease of use. Students particularly valued avoiding crowded stores, accessing a variety of products, ordering anytime and anywhere, and using user-friendly applications with flexible payment methods. Perceived behavioral control also received a favorable assessment, indicating that respondents generally believed they could regulate their spending and product search behavior. Subjective norms and attitude were positive but lower, suggesting that social influence and promotional encouragement mattered without fully determining purchase decisions.

Online Shopping Practices

Table 3. Online shopping platforms used

Platform	Weighted mean	Interpretation	Rank
E-commerce apps (Shopee, Lazada, Shein, Zalora)	3.92	Moderately used	1
Social media platforms	3.85	Moderately used	2
Marketplace/live selling	2.31	Fairly used	3
Overall	3.36	Moderately used	—

Dedicated e-commerce applications ranked first, closely followed by social-media platforms. Their dominance likely reflects broad product selection, mobile accessibility, promotional tools, and integrated ordering and payment functions. Marketplace or live-selling channels were less frequently used.

Table 4. Frequency of purchasing selected product categories

Product category	Weighted mean	Interpretation	Rank
Apparel and footwear	2.62	Practiced	1
Household care	2.51	Fairly practiced	2
Healthcare products	2.49	Fairly practiced	3
School supplies	2.44	Fairly practiced	4
Grocery	2.34	Fairly practiced	5
Beauty products and accessories	2.16	Fairly practiced	6
Consumer electronics/accessories	2.16	Fairly practiced	7
Tickets and hotel bookings	1.34	No participation	8
Overall	2.26	Fairly practiced	—

Apparel and footwear were the most frequently purchased items, while tickets and hotel bookings were rarely or never purchased. This pattern is plausible for a predominantly young, budget-conscious student population: clothing and footwear are broadly available at low price points, whereas travel products require higher expenditure and less frequent need.

Table 5. Monthly online-shopping expenditure

Monthly expenditure	f	%
Below PHP 1,217	226	58
PHP 1,217	3	1
Above PHP 1,217	161	41
Total	390	100

The source manuscript reports an overall weighted mean of 2.17, interpreted as moderately practiced.

A majority spent below PHP 1,217 per month, although 41% reported spending above that amount. The distribution supports the finding that students participated in online shopping while generally limiting expenditure. Nevertheless, the sizable above-threshold group suggests that consumer education should address budgeting and deliberate purchase decisions.

Table 6. Post-purchase evaluation decisions

Decision item	Weighted mean	Interpretation	Rank
Buy again depending on available money and recommend to others	2.62	Practiced	1
Will not buy again	2.49	Fairly practiced	2
Will definitely buy again	2.34	Fairly practiced	3
Buy again depending on available money	2.16	Fairly practiced	4
Buy again but search other sites	2.16	Fairly practiced	5
Overall	2.35	Fairly practiced	—

Post-purchase behavior was generally cautious and conditional. The highest-rated statement linked repeat purchasing with the availability of money and willingness to recommend, showing that satisfaction alone did not remove financial constraints. The overlapping wording among the source items, however, limits precise interpretation and should be improved in future applications of the questionnaire.

Relationships Between Socioeconomic Profile and Shopping Practices

Table 7. Reported relationships between profile variables and online shopping practices

Profile variable	Practice	r	p	Reported result
Sex	Platform use	.04	.04	Significant
Sex	Frequency	.08	.04	Significant
Sex	Expenditure	.22	.04	Significant
Sex	Post-purchase	.13	.04	Significant
Age	Platform use	.03	.75	Not significant
Age	Frequency	.04	.80	Not significant
Age	Expenditure	.16	.99	Not significant
Age	Post-purchase	.10	.97	Not significant
Household income	Platform use	.10	.98	Not significant
Household income	Frequency	.01	.61	Not significant
Household income	Expenditure	.23	1.00	Not significant
Household income	Post-purchase	.04	.81	Not significant

Campus residence	Platform use	.02	.51	Not significant
Campus residence	Frequency	.06	.52	Not significant
Campus residence	Expenditure	.03	.51	Not significant
Campus residence	Post-purchase	.05	.52	Not significant
Shopping experience	Platform use	.15	.99	Not significant
Shopping experience	Frequency	.07	.92	Not significant
Shopping experience	Expenditure	.25	.99	Not significant
Shopping experience	Post-purchase	.17	.99	Not significant

Note: Sex and campus residence used point-biserial correlation; other profile variables used Spearman correlation.

As reported in the study, sex was significantly related to all four online-shopping indicators, although coefficients were described as negligible or very weak. Age, household income, campus residence, and years of shopping experience were reported as nonsignificant. These findings imply that most demographic characteristics did not meaningfully differentiate how respondents used platforms, purchased products, spent monthly, or evaluated purchases. Because several p-values are not congruent with the displayed coefficients and sample size, inferential conclusions should be treated as provisional until recalculated.

Relationships Between Psychological Factors and Shopping Practices

Table 8. Reported relationships between psychological factors and online shopping practices

Psychological factor	Practice	r_s	p	Result
Subjective norms	Platform use	.22	1.00	NS
Subjective norms	Frequency	.17	1.00	NS
Subjective norms	Expenditure	.19	1.00	NS
Subjective norms	Post-purchase	.33	1.00	NS
Perceived attitude	Platform use	.25	1.00	NS
Perceived attitude	Frequency	.10	.97	NS
Perceived attitude	Expenditure	.25	1.00	NS
Perceived attitude	Post-purchase	.38	1.00	NS
Behavioral control	Platform use	.25	1.00	NS
Behavioral control	Frequency	.10	.97	NS
Behavioral control	Expenditure	.14	.99	NS
Behavioral control	Post-purchase	.09	1.00	NS
Perceived usefulness	Platform use	.16	1.00	NS
Perceived usefulness	Frequency	.05	.04	S

Perceived usefulness	Expenditure	.16	.99	NS
Perceived usefulness	Post-purchase	.35	1.00	NS
Perceived ease of use	Platform use	.09	.95	NS
Perceived ease of use	Frequency	.02	.03	S
Perceived ease of use	Expenditure	.17	1.00	NS
Perceived ease of use	Post-purchase	.30	1.00	NS

Note: S = significant; NS = not significant. Values are transcribed from Tables 5.1–5.5 and require recalculation from the original dataset.

Most psychological factors were reported as unrelated to the four shopping-practice indicators. The source tables report significant associations of both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use with shopping frequency, whereas the narrative conclusion emphasizes perceived ease of use. This discrepancy must be resolved during statistical verification. Descriptively, usefulness and ease of use were the strongest perceptions, so their practical importance remains evident even if the inferential effects change after recalculation.

Summary

The study profiled 390 college online shoppers and assessed five psychological factors and four areas of online-shopping practice. Respondents were predominantly female, young adults, and from lower-income households. Online shopping was perceived as useful, easy, and controllable. E-commerce applications were the leading platforms; apparel and footwear were the most frequently purchased goods; most respondents spent below PHP 1,217 monthly; and post-purchase decisions were generally conditional on available money. Most profile and psychological variables were reported as having no significant relationship with shopping practices, with exceptions involving sex and shopping frequency in relation to usefulness or ease of use.

Conclusions

College students at the University of Eastern Philippines had integrated online shopping into their consumer routines, mainly through e-commerce applications. Their engagement was driven more strongly at the descriptive level by practical utility, platform usability, convenience, promotions, and perceived spending control than by social influence alone. Their purchasing remained budget-sensitive and concentrated on accessible consumer goods. The correlational evidence does not yet support firm causal or predictive claims and should be recalculated before publication.

Recommendations

Online sellers serving student markets may strengthen word-of-mouth strategies, maintain active social-media and e-commerce channels, offer affordable products and transparent discounts, provide flexible payment options, and ensure accurate descriptions, timely delivery, and products in good condition. Business owners may expand online delivery coverage to remote areas. Students should verify seller legitimacy, inspect reviews and product information, and manage purchases within a defined budget. The Department of Trade and Industry may continue consumer education and monitoring of online sellers under applicable consumer-

protection and intellectual-property rules. Future researchers should refine overlapping questionnaire items, apply probability-based respondent selection where feasible, include additional psychological and platform-quality factors, and retain the raw dataset and analysis output for reproducibility.

Limitations and Pre-Submission Statistical Note

The study was limited to undergraduate students at the university's main campus and used self-reported cross-sectional data. Purposive eligibility screening limits generalizability. The source manuscript does not provide a complete reference list, current corresponding-author information, ethics-review details, or the original statistical output. Before submission, the authors should (1) recalculate all correlations and two-tailed p-values from the raw dataset; (2) reconcile Tables 5.4 and 5.5 with the narrative conclusion; (3) clarify the age and experience inclusion criteria; (4) confirm the interpretation scales; (5) supply the ethics/consent statement required by the target journal; and (6) complete and verify all bibliographic entries.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors should insert their formal conflict-of-interest declaration before submission. No declaration was provided in the source manuscript.

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