Original Article

Influence of Price, Brand Reputation, Usability, and Peer Recommendations on Consumer Buying Motives

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of e-learning products in higher education has created huge competition among e- learning providers, making it essential to understand the factors that influence consumer buying motives. This study examines the influence of price, brand reputation, usability, and peer recommendations on consumers' purchasing decisions for e-learning products in the higher education sector. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected from learners who have prior experience with paid e-learning courses through a structured questionnaire. Statistical techniques such as descriptive analysis, correlation, and inferential tests were employed to assess the relative impact of the selected factors on consumer buying motives. The findings reveal that price affordability and perceived value significantly affect purchase decisions, while brand reputation plays a crucial role in building trust and reducing perceived risk. Usability of the e-learning platform, including ease of navigation and accessibility, emerged as a strong determinant of continued usage and satisfaction. Additionally, peer recommendations and social influence were found to positively impact consumers' confidence in selecting e-learning products. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical insights into consumer behaviour in the e-learning domain and offers practical implications for e-learning providers to design effective pricing strategies, strengthen brand positioning, enhance user experience, and leverage social influence to improve market adoption in higher education.

Keywords: e-Learning, consumer motives, price, Brand Reputation, Usability, and Peer Recommendations

Introduction

E-learning is the receiving of education or any type of training by electronic media, which allows students to learn directly from a remote location over the internet using a web browser. There are several e-education product providers for higher education. Some of them are Coursera, Unacademy, BYJU's, Dexler, Educomp, IGNOU, NIIT, Bombay IIT, Edukart etc. Buying Motives are the reason(s) you buy the goods and services that you choose.

The present study deals with various online learning products which are available on various web portals. Online education or e-learning is growing rapidly. When the industry grows it adds to the competition. Nowadays; online learning portals try to attract users by giving many options such as competitive fees structure, flexi payment options, guarantee job options, certification etc. The students pursuing their higher education, faculty members to upgrade themselves and working professionals are the primary segment to online education. Nowadays; accessibility for the internet has improved which tends to increase in online education. Hence; the researcher is interested in studying consumer buying motives of e-learning products in higher education.

The rapid growth of e-learning platforms has transformed the landscape of higher education and created new patterns in students. Students today have access to a wide range of e- learning products, making it essential to understand what drives their purchase decisions. As e-learning brands increasingly compete on factors such as price, quality, usability, and trust, analysing consumer buying motives becomes crucial.

Research Objectives:
RO1: To examine the influence of factors such as price, brand reputation, usability, and peer recommendations on consumer buying motives for e-learning products in higher education.

Research Questions:
RQ1: How do factors such as price, brand reputation, usability, and peer recommendations influence consumer buying motives for e-learning products in higher education?

Research Hypotheses
H_{01}: Consumer buying motives for e-learning products in higher education are not significantly influenced by factors such as price, brand reputation, usability, and peer recommendations.
H_1: Consumer buying motives for e-learning products in higher education are significantly

Scope of the Study:
The present study focuses on understanding consumer buying motives and brand preferences for e-learning products within the context of higher education. The research covers key behavioural variables such as Price, Brand Reputation, Usability, and Peer Recommendations. The study is limited to respondents who are students, working professionals, and faculty members who actively use e-learning platforms for educational or skill-enhancement purposes. Data is collected from a sample of 117 respondents across different age groups, educational qualifications, and income levels to ensure diversity.

Literature Review
The literature review explores existing research related to e-learning adoption, consumer buying motives, and brand reputation. It provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the behavioural and psychological factors influencing learners' preferences in e-learning. Prior studies highlight the importance of technology usability, perceived value, and brand credibility in shaping consumer decisions. It ultimately identifies gaps that justify the need for further empirical investigation.

Kotler & Keller (2016) Kotler and Keller emphasised that consumer buying motives are shaped by psychological, personal, and Social factors. They highlighted that rational and emotional motives jointly influence purchase decisions. Their work forms the Foundation for understanding consumer behaviour in digital markets.

Rogers (2010) Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory explains how new technologies are adopted based on perceived usefulness and relative advantage. The theory suggests that early adopters influence others through social reinforcement. This framework is relevant for studying e-learning adoption patterns.

Anderson (2017) Anderson found that online learning effectiveness is strongly driven by course design, interactivity, and learner engagement. The study also revealed that student satisfaction increases when digital platforms ensure accessibility and quality content. These factors relate closely to consumer preferences.

Suki (2013) Suki reported that brand reputation significantly impacts students' trust in educational products. The study found that reliability and credibility enhance consumer loyalty. This highlights the importance of branding strategies in digital education.

Chiu & Wang (2014) The authors concluded that peer influence and subjective norms significantly affect e-learning adoption. Learners tend to choose platforms recommended by friends or colleagues. This underscores the role of word-of-mouth in shaping buying motives.

Harrigan et al. (2018) Harrigan observed that social media promotions and personalized digital marketing influence purchase intent. The study emphasized targeted advertising as a powerful tool for brand preference. These findings align with promotional variables in the current study.

Singh & Thurman (2019) The study noted that flexible learning modes, easy access, and digital convenience drive students towards online education. They concluded that usability enhances perceived satisfaction and motivates continued learning. This connects usability with behavioural outcomes.

Research Gap:
Although several studies have explored consumer behaviour and satisfaction in the context of e-learning, there is limited empirical evidence that jointly analyses the influence of price, brand reputation, usability, and peer recommendations on consumer buying motives for paid e-learning products in the higher education context. Additionally, research conducted in the Indian e-learning market remains sparse despite its rapid expansion post-pandemic.The present study aims to address by empirically examining the combined impact of price, brand reputation, usability, and peer recommendations on consumer buying motives for e-learning products in higher education.

Research Methodology
The present study aims to examine consumer buying motives for e-learning products in higher education. With the rapid growth of online education platforms, understanding user behaviour has become crucial for e-learning providers. This research systematically investigates key factors such as price, brand reputation, usability, and peer recommendations. The methodology is designed to collect reliable data from diverse respondents and apply appropriate statistical tools to test the proposed hypotheses.

Type of Research
The study adopts a Descriptive Research Design, as it focuses on describing consumer behaviour patterns and analysing relationships among variables. Descriptive research helps in identifying the characteristics of users, and motives for purchasing e-learning products. It is also aimed at examining associations, correlations, and influences among different independent and

dependent variables.

Types of Data: Primary and Secondary

Primary Data: Primary data was collected directly from respondents using a structured questionnaire consisting of demographic details and variable-specific Likert-scale items.

Secondary Data: Secondary data was sourced from academic journals, government reports, industry publications, e-learning market research reports, and online articles.

Sampling Method

The study uses a combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling.

- **Purposive Sampling** was used to ensure that only individuals who have experience using e-learning products were included in the sample.
- **Convenience Sampling** was adopted due to ease of access to respondents, particularly through online survey distribution.

Sample Size

The final sample size for the study is 117 respondents, comprising students, working professionals, and faculty members. The large sample size enhances the reliability and generalizability of the study findings.

Research Variables Independent Variables (IVs):

Based on the hypotheses, the key independent variables include:

- Price
- Brand Reputation
- Usability
- Peer Recommendations

Dependent Variables (DVs):

- Consumer Buying Motives for e-learning products

Data Analysis Reliability Test

| Case Processing Summary		
	N	%
Valid	117	100.0
Excludedª	0	.0
Total	117	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.835	52

Interpretation:

The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha yielded a value of 0.835 for 52 items, indicating high internal consistency among the questionnaire items. This suggests that the survey instrument is reliable and the items used to measure various constructs (such as customer satisfaction, brand preference, usability, etc.) are consistently measuring the intended variables. Since the value is above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, the instrument can be considered statistically sound for further analysis.
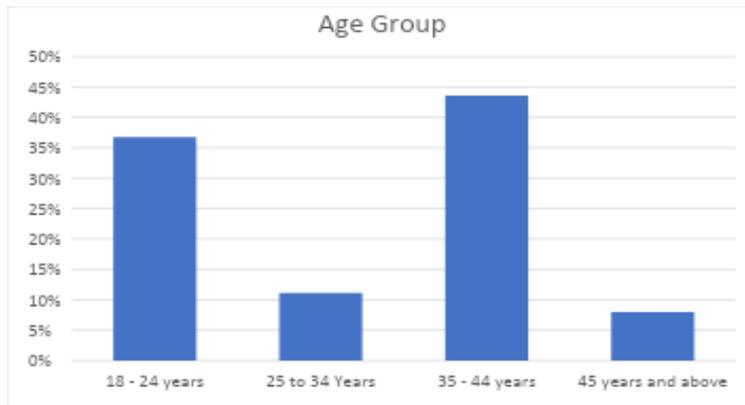
Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	65	56%
Female	52	44%
Total	117	100%
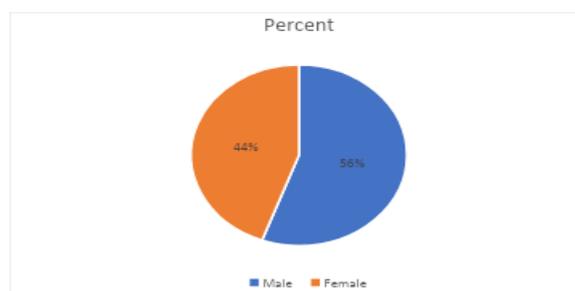
Age Group

	Frequency	Percent
18 – 24 years	43	37%
25 to 34 Years	13	11%
35 – 44 years	51	44%
45 years and above	10	8%
Total	117	100%

Occupation		
	Frequency	Percent
Student	48	41%
Working Professional	64	55%
Faculty Member	5	4%
Total	117	100%
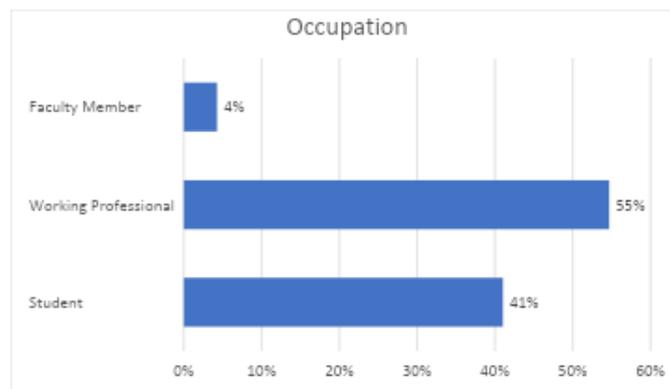
Education		
	Frequency	Percent
Undergraduate	21	18%
Postgraduate	16	14%
Doctorate	46	39%
Other	34	29%
Total	117	100%
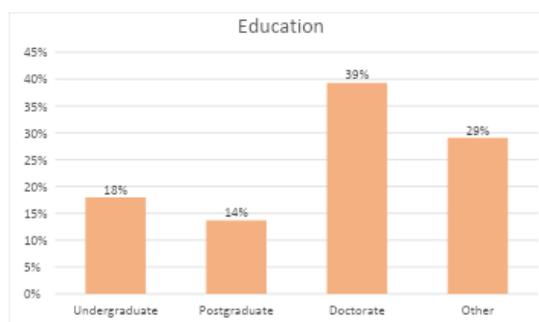
Frequency of Purchasing e learning product		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Once	6	5%
Twice	30	26%
Thrice	35	30%
4 Times	6	5%
More than 4 Times	40	34%
Total	117	100%
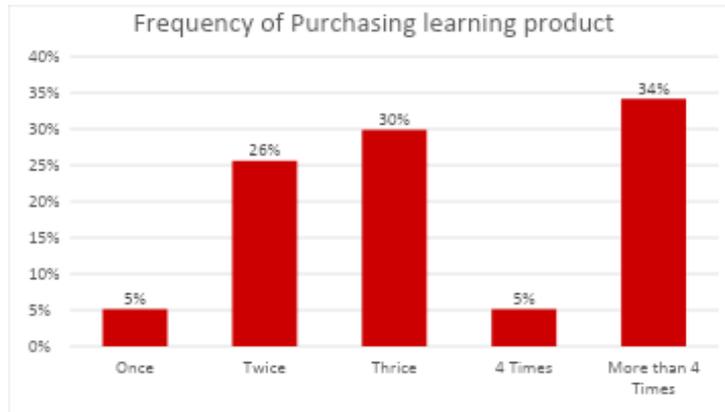
Income		
	Frequency	**Percent**
No Income	11	9%
Up to 3 Lakhs	51	44%
3 to 5 Lakhs	25	21%
5 to 10 Lakhs	15	13%
More than 10 Lakhs	15	13%
Total	117	100%
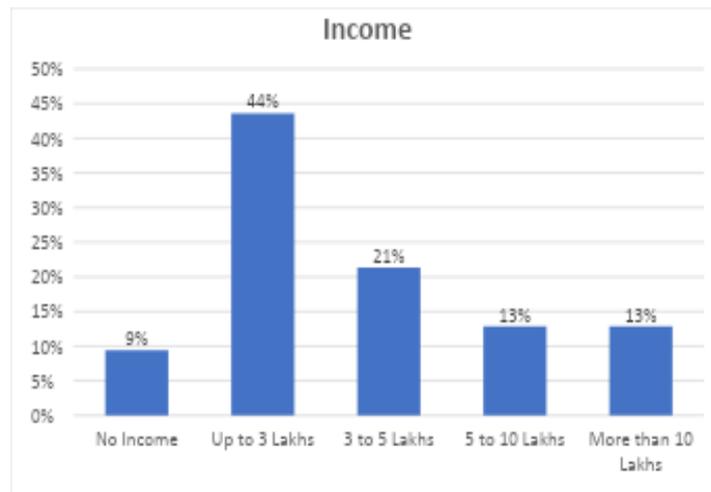
Consumer Buying Motives

Q.1) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following factors influencing your

Factors	1	2	3	4	5
Price of the e-learning product influences my purchase decision.	18	2	16	41	40
Brand reputation affects my choice of e-learning product.	9	13	1	62	32
Usability and ease of access are crucial factors for me.	5	8	19	38	47
Peer recommendations influence my selection of e-	1	8	5	4	4

learning products.	0			9	5
Customer reviews and ratings impact my decision-making.	1 0	1 1	1 1	5 3	3 2
Availability of free trials influences my decision.	6	1 3	3 0	3 9	2 9
Certification & accreditation of the product is important.	1 4	1 9	2 5	3 4	2 5

Interpretation:

The data shows that price is a major buying motive, with 81 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Brand reputation and usability are also highly influential, with 94 and 85 positive responses respectively. Peer recommendations and customer reviews significantly guide purchase decisions, reflected in 94 and 85 supportive responses. Free trials show moderate influence, with a balanced spread across agreement levels. Certification and accreditation are valued, though less strongly, with mixed responses. Overall, the majority of students base their buying decisions on usability, reputation, peer input, and price.

Conclusion:

The study reveals that e-learning products have become a mainstream educational and professional development tool across diverse age, occupation, and income groups. A significant proportion of mid-career professionals and highly educated users demonstrate the increasing reliance on digital learning ecosystems. The demographic diversity strengthens the reliability of insights drawn from the study.

Consumer buying motives are shaped by a combination of economic, psychological, and social factors. Price sensitivity continues to influence decisions, but usability, trust, and peer recommendations also play substantial roles. The descriptive and inferential analysis confirms that consumers prefer platforms that are affordable, easy to use, and endorsed by trusted individuals.

The use of purposive and convenience sampling limits the representativeness of the sample, as respondents are selected based on accessibility and specific criteria rather than random selection.

Limitations of study:

Findings derived from purposive sampling may reflect the perceptions of a targeted group of respondents, not be generalised to the whole population of e-learning consumers in higher education. Convenience sampling increases the possibility of sampling bias, as participants who are readily available or willing to respond may possess characteristics different from those who are not included in the study.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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