

"BRAND REPUTATION AND ITS EFFECT ON CONSUMER TRUST AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN E-COMMERCE"

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The abstract explores the profound impact of brand reputation on consumer trust and purchase intentions in e-commerce.

Methodology: The study delves into the intricate interplay between brand reputation, consumer trust, and loyalty, utilizing comprehensive data analysis techniques including word cloud analysis, TF-IDF analysis, and topic modeling.

Findings: Through the analysis, the research uncovers rich insights into the nuanced dynamics of brand reputation and its influence on consumer behavior. Key themes and factors associated with brand reputation in online shopping are identified, shedding light on the underlying drivers of consumer perceptions and decision-making processes.

Conclusions: The findings have significant implications for marketers and e-commerce businesses, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing brand reputation as a strategic asset to drive sales, foster long-term loyalty, and enhance competitive advantage in the digital landscape.

Keywords: brand reputation, consumer trust, purchase intentions, e-commerce, digital cues.

1) INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of e-commerce has significantly transformed the landscape of consumer behavior, emphasizing the critical role of brand reputation in shaping consumer trust and purchase intentions. Brand reputation, defined as the collective perception of a brand's reliability, quality, and overall standing in the market, has emerged as a pivotal factor in the competitive online marketplace (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004). As consumers are often unable to physically interact with products before purchase, their reliance on brand reputation as a proxy for quality and reliability has increased (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, & Vitale, 2000). Consumer trust in e-commerce is essential for the success of online businesses. Trust reduces perceived risk and uncertainty, which are often higher in online transactions compared to traditional retail environments (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). A positive brand reputation can enhance consumer trust by signaling that the brand is dependable and likely to deliver on its promises (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Consequently, trust in a brand leads to greater consumer loyalty and an increased likelihood of repeat purchases, which are crucial for long-term business success (Reichheld & Scheffer, 2000). Purchase intentions, or the likelihood that a consumer will buy a product, are heavily influenced by both brand reputation and consumer trust. Studies have shown that a strong brand reputation not only attracts new customers but also reinforces the purchasing decisions of existing ones (Erdem & Swait, 1998). In the context of e-commerce, where direct product experience is limited,

the credibility of the brand becomes a key determinant of purchase intentions (Pavlou, Liang, & Xue, 2007). Moreover, the impact of brand reputation on consumer trust and purchase intentions is amplified by the presence of user-generated content, such as reviews and ratings, on e-commerce platforms. Positive reviews can enhance a brand's reputation, thereby increasing consumer trust and encouraging purchase behavior (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). Conversely, negative reviews can damage a brand's reputation and deter potential buyers, highlighting the dual-edged nature of online feedback.

II)LITERATURE REVIEW:

1)Role of brand reputation:

The Role of Brand Reputation in Consumer Decision-Making for Online Purchases Brand reputation significantly influences consumer decision-making in the online shopping environment. In the absence of physical product interaction, consumers rely heavily on brand reputation to assess the potential quality and reliability of a product or service. A strong brand reputation can reduce perceived risks associated with online purchases, thereby increasing consumer confidence and likelihood to purchase. Research shows that positive brand reputation acts as a signal of product quality and service reliability, which is crucial in the high-risk context of e-commerce (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, & Vitale, 2000). A well-regarded brand not only attracts new customers but also retains existing ones by fostering trust and loyalty. Trust, built on a solid brand reputation, mitigates consumer concerns about privacy, security, and product authenticity (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). Consequently, consumers are more inclined to make repeat purchases from brands they trust, leading to sustained business growth and competitive advantage.

2)Customer perception and Brand Reputation

In the context of online shopping, consumers perceive brand reputation through various digital cues and signals, including online reviews and ratings, website quality and usability, social media presence, customer service, and brand transparency and authenticity. Positive user-generated content, such as reviews and ratings, enhances a brand's reputation, while negative reviews can cause significant damage (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). A well-designed, user-friendly website that provides clear information and easy navigation can positively influence consumer perceptions (Flavián, Guinalíu, & Gurrea, 2006). Active engagement on social media platforms helps bolster a brand's reputation by showcasing its authenticity and reliability (Bruhn, Schoen Mueller, & Schäfer, 2012). Effective customer service that addresses inquiries and complaints promptly is crucial for maintaining a favorable view of the brand (Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2008). Transparency in business practices, such as clear return policies and accurate product information, builds consumer trust (Schlosser, White, & Lloyd, 2006). Key elements that significantly influence brand reputation include trustworthiness, reliability, quality, customer satisfaction, and corporate social responsibility. Trustworthiness, built through consistent positive experiences and transparent practices, is essential for e-commerce success (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). Reliability, which involves consistently meeting consumer expectations, leads to fewer complaints and higher repeat purchases (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). High-quality products that meet or exceed expectations contribute to a strong brand image (Erdem & Swait, 1998). Customer satisfaction drives positive reviews and recommendations, further enhancing reputation (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). Finally, a commitment to social and environmental responsibility can boost consumer trust and loyalty (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001).

3)Trust and brand reputation:

Brand reputation plays a crucial role in affecting consumer trust in online shopping platforms by acting as a signal of reliability, quality, and overall trustworthiness. Trust is particularly vital in e-commerce,

where consumers cannot physically inspect products before purchase and must rely on digital cues to make purchasing decisions. A strong brand reputation reduces the perceived risk associated with online transactions, as consumers are more likely to trust and engage with a well-regarded brand, believing that their personal and financial information will be secure (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). Brands with solid reputations are perceived as consistent and predictable, which fosters trust and gives consumers confidence that their expectations will be met and that any issues will be resolved promptly and fairly (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Positive experiences and favorable reviews contribute to a trustworthy image, with user-generated content such as reviews and ratings significantly influencing consumer trust by providing social proof (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). A strong brand reputation enhances consumer trust in the security and reliability of an online store by displaying trust signals such as security certifications, return policies, and customer service guarantees prominently on their websites, assuring consumers of high standards of security and customer care (Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2008). Reputable brands also invest in robust security measures, such as encryption technologies and secure payment gateways, reinforcing consumer trust in the safety of their transactions (Pavlou, Liang, & Xue, 2007). Excellent customer service, including clear communication channels and responsive support, ensures that any problems will be addressed quickly and effectively, enhancing trust in the brand's reliability (Flavián, Guinalú, & Gurrea, 2006). Brand reputation mitigates concerns about product authenticity and quality by serving as a reliable indicator that products will meet or exceed consumer expectations. Established brands are associated with high standards of quality assurance, and consumers trust these brands to deliver genuine and high-quality products based on their consistent track record (Erdem & Swait, 1998). Generous warranty and return policies offered by reputable brands reduce perceived risks regarding product authenticity and quality, providing a safety net that allows consumers to feel secure in their purchase decisions (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003).

4) Brand reputation and customer loyalty:

Brand reputation and consumer loyalty are intricately linked in the realm of online shopping, with a robust brand reputation serving as the cornerstone for cultivating and maintaining consumer loyalty. Positively perceived brands tend to evoke preferences from consumers, fostering heightened loyalty and sustained engagement over time. This symbiotic relationship hinges on various factors, prominently including trust, satisfaction, and perceived value (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Trust forms a fundamental aspect of consumer loyalty, with reputable brands inspiring greater confidence among consumers, thereby diminishing the perceived risks associated with online transactions and nurturing loyalty (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). Moreover, a favorable brand reputation bolsters customer satisfaction by aligning expectations with actual experiences, thus incentivizing repeat patronage and fortifying loyalty (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). Perceived value further underscores this relationship, as consumers attribute greater value to brands with strong reputations, perceiving them as more dependable and offering superior quality, thereby fostering repeat purchases and deepening consumer loyalty (Erdem & Swait, 1998). The influence of a positive brand reputation on repeat purchases and customer retention is palpable through several avenues: Firstly, it instills confidence in product quality, assuring consumers of consistent excellence, thus prompting repeat purchases based on positive past encounters (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Additionally, a positive brand reputation nurtures an emotional connection with consumers, fostering a sense of attachment and affinity that fuels brand loyalty (Fournier, 1998). Lastly, satisfied customers of reputable brands often morph into advocates, disseminating positive word-of-mouth endorsements that attract new customers while fortifying the loyalty of existing ones, thus perpetuating a cycle of loyalty and advocacy (Reichheld & Scheffer, 2000). Brand reputation serves as a cornerstone in shaping enduring consumer relationships with online retailers, cultivating trust, satisfaction, and emotional engagement that underpin sustainable competitive

advantage and long-term success in the e-commerce landscape. Building trust and credibility is paramount, with reputable brands establishing a foundation of trust that fosters enduring loyalty and repeat business among consumers (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). Superior customer service and consistently positive shopping experiences associated with strong brand reputations contribute to enhanced customer satisfaction, nurturing enduring bonds with consumers (Flavián, Guinalíu, & Gurrea, 2006). Moreover, reputable brands are perceived as adaptable and responsive to evolving consumer needs, ensuring continued relevance and fortifying long-term relationships (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). Emotional engagement, facilitated by a positive brand reputation, emerges as a pivotal factor driving sustained loyalty over time, as consumers who develop emotional connections with brands are more inclined to maintain their allegiance despite competitive pressures (Fournier, 1998). In sum, brand reputation serves as a linchpin in cultivating enduring consumer relationships in the online retail sphere, anchoring trust, satisfaction, and emotional engagement that underlie sustained success and competitiveness.

5) Brand reputation and online review

Both the quality and quantity of online reviews significantly impact brand reputation, with high-quality reviews offering detailed feedback being more influential than generic ones, and a higher volume of reviews enhancing credibility and perceived popularity (Luca, 2011). Consumers heavily rely on online reviews when making purchase decisions, often using them to gauge product quality and user satisfaction, as highlighted by Filieri and McLeay (2014). While online reviews are highly influential, consumers also consider the established reputation of a brand, using reviews to either confirm or question their existing perceptions (Park & Lee, 2009). The credibility of the platform hosting the reviews further affects consumer trust and decision-making, with reviews on reputable sites being given more weight (Dellarocas, 2003). Thus, online reviews and ratings play a critical role in shaping brand reputation and influencing consumer purchase decisions, enhancing trust and loyalty when positive, and potentially damaging it when negative.

6) Brand reputation and price sensitivity.

Brand reputation significantly impacts consumers' willingness to pay premium prices, as evidenced by research indicating that consumers associate reputable brands with higher quality and reliability (Özhan et al., 2023). The trust and loyalty engendered by a strong brand reputation enhance consumers' readiness to pay more, with brand loyalty particularly driving this willingness (Anselmsson et al., 2014). Perceived quality and emotional attachment to well-reputed brands also justify higher prices, as consumers feel a stronger connection and perceive greater value (Fu & Chen, 2023). Additionally, a robust brand reputation decreases consumer price sensitivity, making them less likely to be deterred by higher prices due to the perceived trustworthiness and globalness of the brand (Davvetas et al., 2015). Brand pride further mediates the effect of brand reputation on willingness to pay premium prices, enhancing consumers' willingness to invest in reputable brands (Tesalonika & Susilowati, 2023). Social and emotional factors, such as brand jealousy and materialism, also play crucial roles in this dynamic, driving consumers to pay higher prices for strong brands (Bıçakcıoğlu et al., 2017). Overall, the influence of brand reputation on premium pricing underscores the critical role of consumer trust, perceived quality, and emotional engagement in shaping purchasing behaviors (Aminu & Ahmad, 2018).

7) Brand reputation and brand familiarity.

Consumer behavior towards well-known versus emerging brands is significantly influenced by perceived risk, trust, and brand loyalty. Consumers perceive less risk when purchasing from well-known

brands, which is crucial in online shopping where physical assessment of products is not possible; brand familiarity plays a key role in reducing this perceived risk (Huang et al., 2004). Well-known brands benefit from higher brand loyalty, leading to positive purchase behavior, as familiarity and loyalty enhance brand attitudes and increase online purchase intentions (Yu et al., 2017). However, emerging brands can leverage positive online reviews to mitigate the disadvantage of lower brand familiarity; positive reviews can significantly enhance perceived quality and increase purchase intentions for these less familiar brands (Wen et al., 2020). Brand familiarity and reputation often complement each other in enhancing consumer trust and reducing perceived risk, with familiarity positively influencing purchase behavior through the mediation of online brand experience (Rahman & Mannan, 2018). Nevertheless, in online environments, familiar brands have a competitive edge over emerging ones, as brand familiarity can outweigh reputation (Saini & Lynch, 2015). Additionally, brand reputation is a crucial antecedent of trust and perceived ease of use, which are essential for creating positive online brand experiences and fostering brand loyalty (Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013).

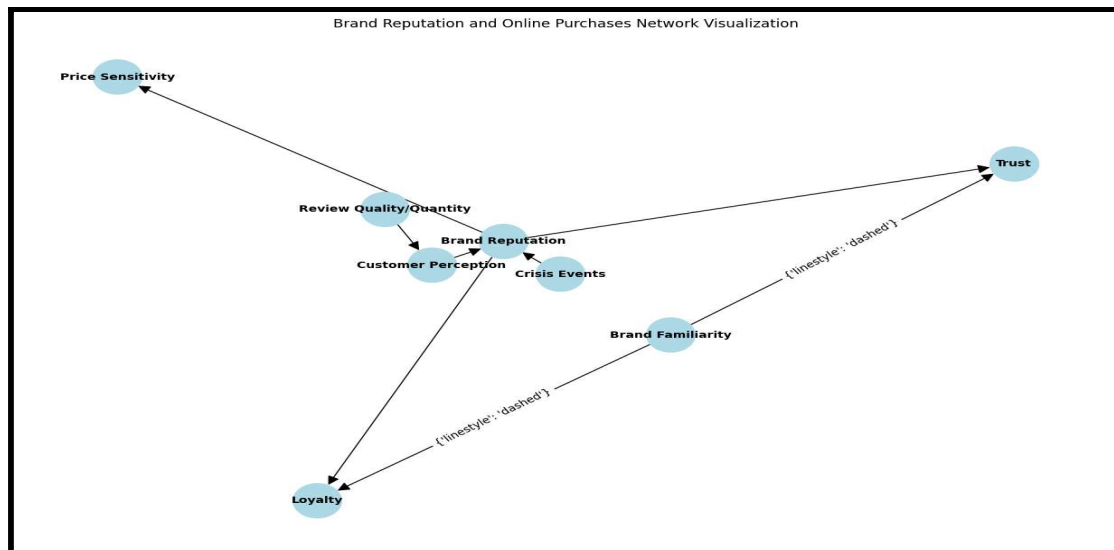
8) Brand reputation and crisis events:

The interplay between crisis events, such as product recalls or negative publicity, and brand reputation within digital marketplaces has been extensively researched due to their immediate and widespread impact on consumer perceptions and behaviors. Şahver OMERAKI ÇEKİRDEKÇİ (2023) discusses how crisis events, particularly those stemming from front-line employees' misbehavior, can elicit multi-valenced online comments from consumers, highlighting the pivotal role of employees and prompt brand responses in mitigating potential negative repercussions on brand reputation within digital spaces (OMERAKI ÇEKİRDEKÇİ, 2023). Bixia Luo, Chong Gong, and L. Cao (2016) underscore the significance of trust in this context, revealing that performance-related crises exert a more pronounced negative effect on brand attitude compared to values-related crises, with trust acting as a positive mediator in this relationship (Luo et al., 2016). Moreover, Micael Dahlen and Fredrik Lange (2006) explore the broader impacts of a brand crisis, demonstrating its potential to affect not only the immediate brand but also the entire product category and even competing brands, highlighting the concept of crisis contagion effect and the interconnectedness between brands within the same market (Dahlen & Lange, 2006). Jie Wu (2011) differentiates between initiative and passive brand crises, revealing that consumer negative evaluations are more pronounced in the former, with self-image congruence playing a moderating role, indicating a nuanced landscape where crisis type and consumers' self-perception relative to the brand significantly influence their responses (Wu, 2011). Furthermore, Buffy Mosley, David A. Schweidel, and Kunpeng Zhang (2023) illuminate how consumers' prior online interactions with a brand shape their reactions to a crisis, influencing the expressive language of anger in their social media posts following a crisis (Mosley et al., 2023). Additionally, studies assessing brand personality and communication strategies during crises, such as those by J. Nadeau et al. (2020), highlight how the nature of the brand crisis – whether involving product harm or moral harm – impacts consumers' use of social media to express their frustrations or support (Nadeau et al., 2020). Lastly, Yan Liu & Venkatesh Shankar (2015) reveal how the type and magnitude of a crisis, such as product-harm events, can significantly diminish brand preference and undermine advertising effectiveness, particularly exacerbated by media attention and the perceived severity of the crisis (Liu & Shankar, 2015). In sum, the literature paints a complex picture emphasizing the profound and multifaceted impacts of crisis events on brand reputation and consumer behaviors in online marketplaces, underscoring the critical need for effective crisis management and response strategies to preserve brand reputation and consumer trust.

Variable	Nature	Author Name	Journal Name
Loyalty	Dependent	Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B.	Journal of Marketing
		Reichheld, F. F., & Schefter, P.	Harvard Business Review
		Flavián, C., Guinalíu, M., & Gurrea, R.	Information & Management
		Anderson, R. E., & Srinivasan, S. S.	Psychology & Marketing
		Gefen, D., Karahanna, E., & Straub, D. W.	MIS Quarterly
		Erdem, T., & Swait, J.	Journal of Consumer Psychology
Reputation	Independent	Chevalier, J. A., & Mayzlin, D.	Journal of Marketing Research
		Davvetas, V., Sichtmann, C., & Diamantopoulos, A.	International Journal of Research in Marketing
		Dellarocas, C.	Management Science
		Jarvenpaa, S. L., Tractinsky, N., & Vitale, M.	Information Technology and Management
		Kim, D. J., Ferrin, D. L., & Rao, H. R.	Decision Support Systems
Crisis Event	Independent	Mosley, B., Schweidel, D. A., & Zhang, K.	Journal of Consumer Research
		OMERAKI ÇEKİRDEKÇİ, Ş. Wu, J.	Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management
		Liu, Y., & Shankar, V.	Management Science
Price	Independent	Yan Liu & Venkatesh Shankar	International Journal of Management Research and Innovation
		Tesalonika, I., & Susilowati, M.	Journal Penelitian Ekonomi dan Bisnis
		Aminu, S., & Ahmad, N.	International Journal of Management Research and Innovation
		Bıçakcıoğlu, N., Ögel, İ., & İlter, B.	Journal of Brand Management

Brand Familiarity	Independent	Sun, Y., & Khan, Y.	Current Psychology
		Saini, Y., & Lynch, J. G.	Behavioral Marketing e-Journal
		Huang, W., Schrank, H., & Dubinsky, A. J.	Journal of Consumer Behaviour
		Wen, J., Lin, Z., Liu, X., Xiao, S., & Li, Y.	Journal of Travel Research
		Yu et al.	Journal of Travel Research
		Wen et al.	Journal of Travel Research
Online Reviews	Independent	Filieri, R., & McLeay, F.	Journal of Travel Research
		Wen, J., Lin, Z., Liu, X., Xiao, S., & Li, Y.	Journal of Travel Research

III) THEORETICAL MODEL:



IV) RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

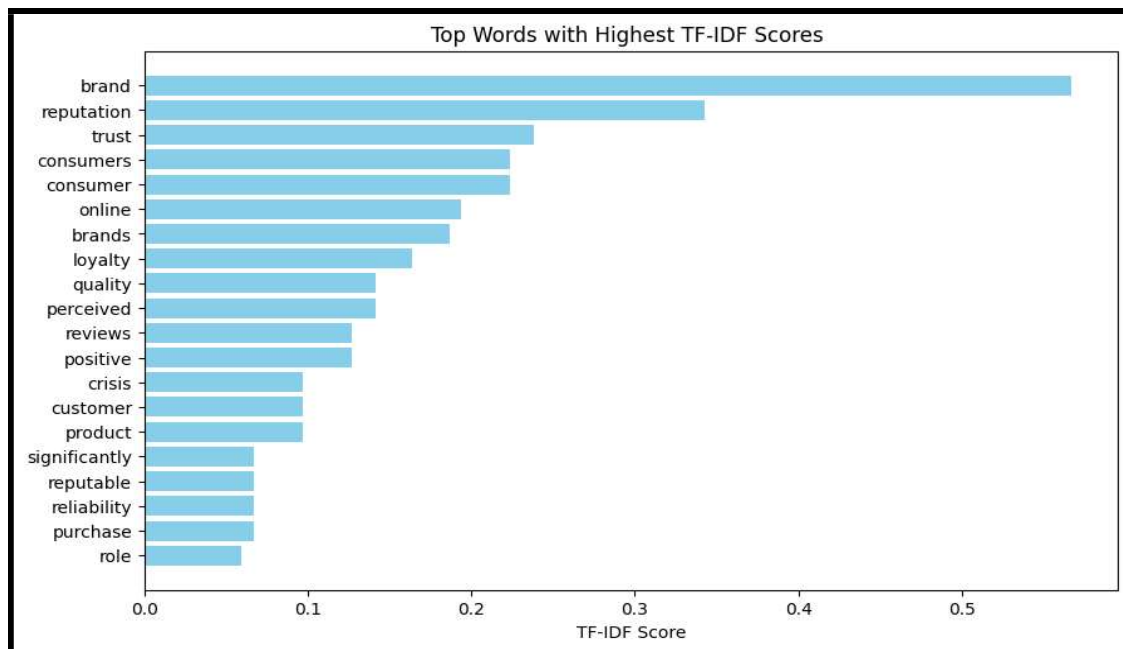
1. Identify the key themes and factors associated with brand reputation in online shopping through a literature review and corpus analysis.
2. Analyze the language used to discuss brand reputation and its influence on consumer trust and satisfaction using word cloud, TF-IDF, and topic modeling techniques.

V) METHODOLOGY

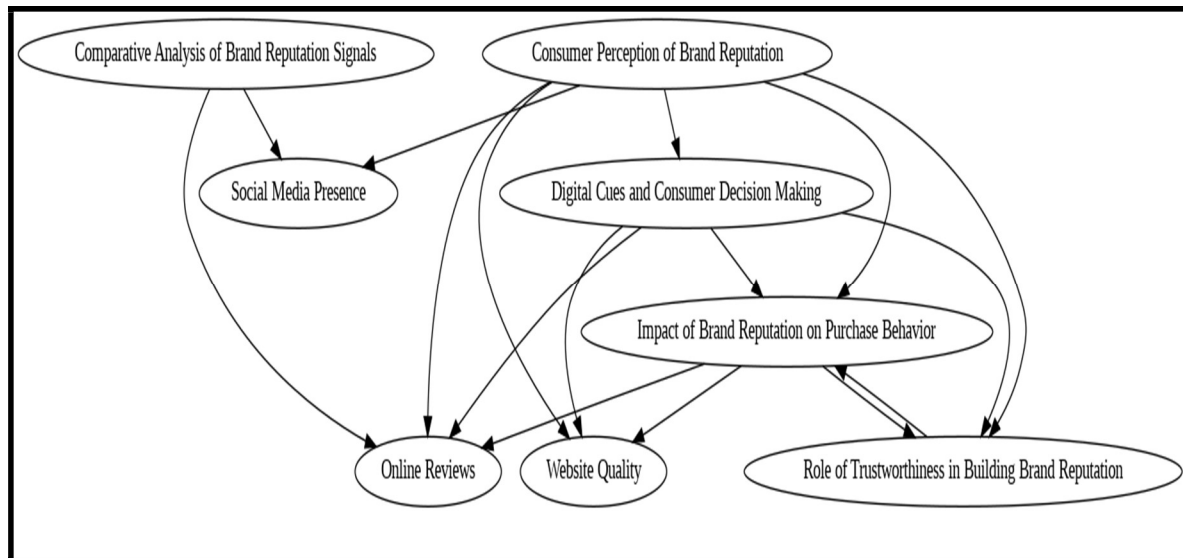
This study delved into the intricate relationship between brand reputation and consumer behavior within the realm of online shopping. Employing a qualitative research approach, it aimed to unravel the complexities of consumer perceptions and decision-making processes through textual analysis. By focusing on qualitative methods, the study sought to capture the nuanced understanding of how consumers interpret and interact with brand reputation in the digital landscape.

In terms of data collection, the study undertook a rigorous process that encompassed both academic

2)TF-IDF analysis:



Consumers heavily rely on brand reputation when evaluating product quality and reliability, particularly in the context of online shopping where physical interaction with products is absent. In such scenarios, online shoppers lean on a brand's reputation to assess its trustworthiness and to make well-informed purchasing decisions. A positive brand reputation serves to diminish perceived risks associated with a purchase. When a brand enjoys a strong reputation, consumers feel more confident that their purchases are reliable and of high quality. Consequently, their confidence in the product increases, leading to a greater willingness to buy. Brand reputation serves as a signal of both product quality and service reliability. A brand that maintains a strong reputation is often associated with consistent quality and dependable service, which in turn fosters a sense of satisfaction and loyalty among customers. Trustworthiness is a crucial component of building a positive brand reputation. This trust is cultivated through positive consumer experiences and a commitment to transparency. Brands that consistently deliver positive experiences and operate transparently earn the trust of consumers, resulting in repeat purchases and long-term loyalty. Various digital cues play a significant role in shaping consumer perception of a brand's reputation. Factors such as online reviews, website quality, social media presence, customer service, and brand transparency all contribute to how consumers perceive the reputation of a brand in the digital sphere. These cues collectively influence consumer decision-making processes and shape their overall perception of a brand's trustworthiness and reliability in the online marketplace.

3)Topic modeling:

The left side of the diagram focuses on various digital cues that significantly influence consumer perceptions of brand reputation. It highlights topics such as social media presence, referring to a brand's engagement and content on platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Online reviews, another crucial factor, showcase customer opinions on platforms like Yelp, impacting brand credibility. Website quality is also emphasized, underscoring the importance of a well-designed, user-friendly website in creating positive impressions.

On the right side, the diagram shifts focus to elements crucial for building and maintaining a positive brand reputation. Trustworthiness, encompassing a brand's reliability and adherence to ethical practices, plays a central role. Customer satisfaction is highlighted as a key metric, reflecting the impact of positive experiences on brand loyalty and advocacy. Brand reputation, the culmination of these factors, signifies the overall consumer perception of a brand and its products or services.

At the center or bottom, the diagram connects the left and right sides by highlighting the role of digital cues in consumer decision-making processes and the impact of brand reputation on purchase behavior. It underscores how factors such as social media presence and online reviews directly influence consumer perceptions, ultimately affecting their purchasing decisions. Overall, the visualization underscores the interconnectedness of these elements and their collective influence on brand perception and consumer behavior, emphasizing the significance of cultivating a positive brand image in the digital landscape.

VII)CONCLUSIONS**1)Research Implications:**

The study offers valuable insights into the intricate relationship between brand reputation, consumer trust, and purchase intentions in the context of e-commerce. By delving into the textual analysis of consumer perceptions and decision-making processes, the research sheds light on the underlying factors that drive consumer behavior in the online shopping environment. These findings have significant implications for marketers and e-commerce businesses seeking to enhance brand reputation and cultivate consumer trust to drive sales and foster long-term loyalty.

2)Managerial Implications:

For marketers and e-commerce businesses, the study underscores the importance of prioritizing brand reputation as a strategic asset in the digital marketplace. Understanding the key themes and factors associated with brand reputation, as revealed through word cloud analysis, TF-IDF analysis, and topic modeling, can inform targeted marketing strategies aimed at enhancing consumer perceptions and driving purchase intentions. By leveraging digital cues such as social media presence, online reviews, website quality, and customer service, businesses can actively shape brand reputation and build trust with consumers, ultimately driving sales and fostering brand loyalty.

3)Future Scope:

The research opens avenues for future studies to explore the dynamic nature of brand reputation and its impact on consumer behavior in the evolving landscape of e-commerce. Further research could delve into the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality, in shaping consumer perceptions of brand reputation and influencing purchase decisions. Additionally, longitudinal studies could track changes in consumer perceptions over time, providing insights into the effectiveness of brand reputation management strategies in maintaining competitive advantage in the digital marketplace. Moreover, cross-cultural studies could explore variations in consumer perceptions of brand reputation across different geographical regions and cultural contexts, offering valuable insights for global marketers seeking to navigate diverse consumer markets. Overall, the study paves the way for future research endeavors aimed at deepening our understanding of the complex interplay between brand reputation, consumer trust, and purchase intentions in e-commerce.

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