Salesperson Interaction Quality and Consumer Decisions in Online Transactions

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This research examines the effect of the quality of interaction with a salesperson on a consumer's decision to conduct an online transaction. In e-commerce, the quality of interaction with a salesperson plays an important role in building consumer trust, which in turn can influence purchasing decisions. The main focus of this research is to understand the factors that influence consumer perceptions of a salesperson and how good interaction can strengthen a consumer's decision to conduct an online transaction. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study analysis to explore various aspects of interaction, such as effective communication, product knowledge, responsiveness, and positive salesperson attitudes. The results show that quality interaction, demonstrated through communication skills, product mastery, and a friendly attitude, has a significant positive impact on consumer trust. Other factors such as the ease of use of the e-commerce platform and the quality of after-sales service also influence consumer decisions. This research provides insights for companies to design strategies to improve the quality of interaction between salesperson and consumer, which in turn will increase trust and purchasing decisions in online transactions.

INTRODUCTION

Along with the rapid development of technology and the internet, online transactions have become an integral part of everyday life. People are now increasingly switching from conventional methods to digital platforms to meet various needs, be it products or services. However, even though the convenience offered by online transactions is very tempting, the level of consumer trust in these transactions is still a significant issue. One factor that influences the level of public trust is the role of the salesperson involved in the process (Gardi & Darmawan, 2022). A salesperson, who usually interacts directly with consumers, plays a key role in building or damaging that trust (Sun et al., 2021).

Public perception of a salesperson in an online transaction tends to be influenced by a number of factors, such as product knowledge, communication skills, and information transparency (Bharadwaj & Shipley, 2020). The salesperson who can provide clear, accurate, and convincing information tends to strengthen the consumer's trust in the company or platform concerned. Conversely, incompetent or unprofessional salespeople may raise doubts and even discourage consumers from proceeding with the transaction.

Fared et al. (2021) explain that as e-commerce develops, the role of a salesperson becomes more important because they sell products and influence consumer purchasing decisions through interactions that occur on digital platforms.

This phenomenon is attracting more and more attention as the adoption of online transactions increases among the wider community, including those who previously had doubts or lacked trust in e-commerce. This increase presents a challenge for service providers to create an adequate shopping experience and provide a sense of security for consumers. In this case, the influence of perception of a salesperson becomes increasingly relevant. Although online transactions do not involve physical interaction like in conventional stores, various digital elements such as live chat, chatbot, customer service, to influencers and product reviews act as a representation of "salesperson". Research on the relationship between perceptions of a salesperson and trust in online transactions is very important for understanding the dynamics that influence consumer decisions. It is important to explore how this factor plays a role in building consumer trust in the online shopping ecosystem.

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One of the main problems faced in online transactions is the low level of consumer confidence in the salesperson involved in the process. In many cases, a salesperson does not meet the consumer directly, which makes the purchasing process more impersonal and increases consumer doubts about the quality of the product or service being sold (López & García, 2016). Although e-commerce platforms strive to provide convenience and transparency of information, negative perceptions of the quality of service or product knowledge of a salesperson can have a direct impact on a consumer's purchasing decision (Cheng, 2019). This is even more relevant given that consumers cannot directly verify the product or speak directly to a salesperson in person (Sun et al., 2021). This need for trust is increasingly urgent to be considered in order to maintain consumer comfort and satisfaction.

Salesperson act as information providers and representations of the credibility and professionalism of the e-commerce platform. A salesperson who plays a role in an online transaction often does not have adequate training to handle complaints or explain products in detail, which can reduce the quality of interaction with consumers. Research by Nguyen and Simkin (2017) shows that poor interaction with a salesperson can worsen the consumer experience and reduce their level of satisfaction with the service provided. The difference in communication quality between a competent salesperson and an under-trained one can affect the level of consumer trust in the e-commerce platform as a whole (Bharadwaj & Shipley, 2020). When a salesperson cannot provide adequate answers or cannot manage consumer expectations, it can create uncertainty and reduce trust in online transactions. Communication quality is an important indicator in creating a positive shopping experience.

It is important to note that consumer perceptions of a salesperson are influenced by direct interaction, and by the image and reputation of the e-commerce platform used. Consumers often have strong views about a particular company or platform based on their experience or information available online (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). In many cases, even with the best efforts of a salesperson, consumer distrust of the e-commerce platform as a whole will hinder the success of a transaction. This phenomenon highlights the importance of building deeper relationships of trust between a salesperson and a consumer in the digital world, as well as how perceptions of a salesperson can directly relate to a consumer's decision to transact (Sun et al., 2021). The success of e-commerce transactions is influenced by the synergy between platform reputation and salesperson.

It is important to observe people's perceptions of salespeople and trust in online transactions because this phenomenon has a significant impact on the growth and sustainability of e-commerce worldwide. As the digital world continues to grow, online transactions have become the main choice for consumers when shopping (Infante & Mardikaningsih, 2022). However, without a high level of trust in a salesperson, consumers may feel hesitant to make a purchase. This can hamper the development of the e-commerce market, because uncertainty and distrust can lead to a decrease in the purchase conversion rate, even if the products sold are of good quality. It is important to understand how this perception is formed and what factors influence it to optimize the consumer experience in online transactions (Kemarauwana & Darmawan, 2020).

Understanding perceptions of a salesperson can also provide insights into ways to increase consumer trust and strengthen the relationship between the e-commerce platform and the customer. With a higher level of trust, consumers will be more likely to return to the platform to make transactions and even recommend it to others. Given that the e-commerce market is highly competitive, companies must be able to understand the dynamics of this perception to be able to increase their competitiveness (Darmawan & Grenier, 2021). This research is relevant for business development, and for creating a more transparent and safe shopping environment for consumers in the digital world.

The purpose of this research is to analyze how people's perceptions of a salesperson can influence the level of consumer trust in conducting online transactions. This research aims to identify the factors that influence consumer perceptions of a salesperson in e-commerce. This research also aims to explore how the quality of interaction with a salesperson can influence consumer decisions to conduct online transactions.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this research is a literature study approach that aims to collect, analyze, and synthesize relevant information related to people's perceptions of a salesperson and trust in online transactions. This literature study will rely on various trusted sources, such as scientific articles, books, and journals that discuss the influence of a salesperson in e-commerce and online transactions. This approach allows researchers to identify trends, factors that influence perceptions, and the impact of these perceptions on consumer decisions in online shopping (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

This literature study provides a comprehensive overview of the topic and connects findings from various existing studies.

As part of the literature review, this research will refer to theories related to consumer behavior and marketing. One relevant theory is the theory of trust in online transactions, which underlines the importance of interpersonal factors, including interactions with a salesperson, to build consumer trust (Gefen, 2000). This research will also utilize concepts from marketing communication theory that observes how the delivery of information by a salesperson can influence consumer perceptions and decisions. Communication theory and social psychology approach by Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) will be used to examine the influence of communication by a salesperson on the level of trust built by consumers.

The importance of using literature studies is to understand the patterns that have been found in various previous studies that are in line with this topic, as well as to gain insights into the best practices that have been implemented by e-commerce companies to increase consumer trust through a salesperson. Analysis of these sources can provide insight into how organizations can optimize the role of their salesperson to improve the online shopping experience and consumer trust. Based on existing references, this research will explore further the relationship between a salesperson and transaction decisions made by consumers (Chaffey, 2015).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
The Influence of Public Perception of Salesperson on Trust in Online Transactions

Public perception of a salesperson has a significant impact on building consumer trust levels for online transactions. A salesperson functions as a liaison between the company and the consumer, who in e-commerce often interact directly with the consumer through a digital communication platform. Perceptions of salesperson affect how much trust consumers give to a transaction. A positive perception of a salesperson's ability and professionalism can strengthen consumer confidence, while a negative perception can lower confidence levels and adversely affect purchasing decisions (Zhang et al., 2014). In the world of e-commerce, consumers cannot interact directly with products before buying, so a responsive and professional salesperson is important. Trust is one of the key factors in consumers' decisions to buy products or services online, due to the nature of transactions involving non-face-to-face payments and the delivery of goods that may take time.

Good salesperson interaction, such as providing clear and accurate information, can reduce consumer hesitation in transactions. The quality of this communication plays an important role in creating a sense of security on the part of consumers, which ultimately influences purchasing decisions (Bharadwaj & Shipley, 2020). This is in line with consumer behavior theory which reveals that consumers tend to prefer to buy products from companies that can provide a sense of trust and reduce uncertainty (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). In e-commerce, where consumers cannot see the purchased product directly, effective communication from a salesperson is crucial to maintain consumer trust (Sun et al., 2021).

Public perception of a salesperson is also influenced by how the company presents its a salesperson. Professional and responsive a salesperson will create a positive image that influences consumer trust (Gardi & Darmawan, 2022). A salesperson who is incompetent or unable to answer consumer questions well can cause insecurity which ultimately lowers the level of trust to conduct online transactions. Research by Singh et al. (2008) shows that trust built through a good relationship between a salesperson and a consumer will increase consumer satisfaction and influence their decision to transact.

Public perception of a salesperson can be shaped by various factors, including previous customer experience, recommendations from fellow consumers, and the credibility of the company that employs the salesperson. In e-commerce, consumer testimonials and reviews play a role in shaping other people's views of the products and services offered. If a salesperson actively responds to negative reviews and provides solutions, this can strengthen consumer confidence in the company and the salesperson (Chen & Xie, 2008). Positive perceptions formed through direct and indirect interactions are important assets in creating loyalty and expanding consumer networks on e-commerce platforms.

The knowledge and skills of a salesperson to answer questions and resolve consumer complaints are also important factors in building a positive perception. A salesperson who is well trained in both the product being sold and service ethics tends to be more trusted by consumers. According to research by Boulding et al. (2005), good customer service can increase customer loyalty, which in turn influences long-term consumer purchasing decisions. Salesperson must be able to be reliable and customer-oriented representatives of the company. Knowledge of products and strong interpersonal skills are essential in the world of e-commerce.

Consumer trust is also strongly influenced by the transparency shown by a salesperson in explaining products and services. Openness to provide information regarding prices, product quality, and product return policies are elements that can increase the level of consumer trust (Hong & Cho, 2011). This creates transparency that minimizes consumer hesitation to make transactions. Conversely, a lack of transparency can lead to mistrust that influences consumers' decisions not to proceed with transactions (Gefen, 2000). Consumers who feel unsure about their purchase decision may end up canceling the transaction. The competitive e-commerce climate requires salesperson to be good communicators with transparency as part of the service strategy.

The trust formed through a salesperson can have a long-term impact for the company to build relationships with consumers. Salesperson who are able to provide services honestly, informatively, and responsively create a positive impression that stays in the minds of consumers. Satisfied and trusting consumers are more likely to make repeat purchases and give positive recommendations to others. This supports long-term success in the world of e-commerce, which relies heavily on customer retention and word-of-mouth marketing (Yoo et al., 2015). According to research by Morgan and Hunt (1994), a good relationship between a salesperson and a consumer will strengthen the bond of trust that underlies a long-term relationship.

However, it is important to note that public perception of a salesperson is limited to the quality of direct interaction and is influenced by the organizational culture and company policies regarding customer service. Companies that have clear and firm policies regarding ethics and customer service tend to find it easier to build trusting relationships with consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Policies that support continuous training for a salesperson will also contribute to improving the skills and knowledge needed to deal with various situations with consumers.

In conclusion, the public's perception of a salesperson greatly influences the level of consumer confidence in conducting online transactions. The limited physical interaction between seller and buyer makes a salesperson play an important role in creating a comfortable and safe shopping experience. Factors such as professionalism, responsiveness, transparency, and communication skills possessed by a salesperson are key elements in building trust. Good product knowledge and responsive service can strengthen the relationship between consumers and companies.

Factors that Influence Consumer Perception of Salesperson in E-commerce

The factors that influence consumer perceptions of a salesperson in commerce are very diverse and can influence purchasing decisions and the level of consumer trust in the company. One of the most important factors is effective communication between a salesperson and the consumer (Bharadwaj & Shipley, 2020). A salesperson who can provide clear, precise, and relevant information about a product or service will increase consumer trust. Conversely, if a salesperson cannot explain a product well or provide ambiguous information, this can reduce positive perceptions of the company (Dellarocas, 2003). Effective communication includes verbal skills and responsiveness to consumer questions and complaints, which are essential for building long-term relationships.

Product knowledge possessed by a salesperson is also a key factor in shaping consumer perception. Consumers tend to trust a salesperson who has a good understanding of the features, benefits, and advantages of the product being sold. This in-depth understanding demonstrates professionalism and credibility, and helps reduce consumer uncertainty when making a purchase. Knowledge about the product can convince consumers that they are making the right decision to make a purchase (Djaelani & Darmawan, 2021). Research by Pappas et al. (2017) shows that a salesperson who is trained and has good product knowledge is more effective in increasing customer satisfaction and increasing the chances of sales conversion. Knowledge that is conveyed clearly and convincingly can also reduce the likelihood of purchase errors or post-transaction disappointment. Technical skills and understanding of the product are important elements for building a positive perception in the eyes of consumers.

Trust also plays a big role in shaping consumer perceptions of a salesperson. In e-commerce, consumers often feel they have no direct control over transactions, which can create a sense of uncertainty (Sun et al., 2021). A salesperson who can provide guarantees, such as accurate information about return policies or product warranties, can reduce this uncertainty and increase consumer comfort. Research by Gefen (2000) shows that consumers tend to trust companies that provide clear and transparent information, increasing their sense of security when making transactions. Trust in the ability of a salesperson and greater company policy tend to result in more transactions and increased customer loyalty, which ultimately provides long-term benefits for the company.

Another factor that influences consumer perception of a salesperson is the attitude and behavior of the salesperson themselves (Fergurson et al., 2021). A salesperson who has a positive, professional, and friendly attitude can make a good impression on consumers, which in turn improves the positive perception of the company. Conversely, an unfriendly or even aggressive attitude towards offering products can reduce consumer interest and create a negative experience. Research by Singh and Sirdeshmukh (2008) revealed that a polite and responsive attitude from a salesperson is essential to improve the quality of interaction and consumer perception of a company.

One of the external factors that also influences consumer perceptions of a salesperson is the overall reputation of the company. A good reputation for product quality and service can strengthen consumers' positive perceptions of a salesperson. If the company is known to have a good track record in terms of service and quality products, consumers will be more likely to trust its salesperson. Research by Zeithaml et al. (1996) shows that company reputation directly influences consumer trust and their purchasing behavior. Company reputation is often formed from the consistency of the service provided, which involves salesperson interaction.

Skills in using e-commerce platforms also influence consumer perceptions of salesperson. In e-commerce, consumers tend to trust a salesperson who is skilled in using online technology and platforms (Ahearne & Rapp, 2010). Consumers often feel more comfortable interacting with a salesperson who has the technical skills to help them navigate the online purchasing process, from choosing a product to completing payment. A salesperson's mastery of technology can strengthen consumer confidence in the company they represent. Research by McKinsey & Company (2020) shows that a salesperson who can make good use of technology is more effective at managing the customer experience.

Finally, the previous customer experience factor also greatly influences the perception of a salesperson in e-commerce. Consumers who have interacted with responsive and professional salespeople tend to have a better perception of a salesperson from that company. Negative experiences with a salesperson who is unresponsive or unable to provide solutions to problems can reduce consumer confidence in making online purchases. According to research by Boulding et al. (2005), a good customer experience strengthens relationships and increases customer loyalty, while a bad experience can damage those relationships.

Customer experience is one of the foundations that shape consumer perceptions of a salesperson and the company as a whole.

Overall, consumer perceptions of a salesperson in e-commerce are influenced by various factors, including communication skills, product knowledge, attitude, company reputation, technological skills, and customer experience. All of these factors play an important role in building a high level of trust, which in turn can increase sales conversions and customer loyalty. Companies need to focus on training their salesperson to be able to meet consumer expectations and build strong relationships with them. Competent and professional salesperson are able to increase sales conversions and build long-term relationships based on trust and loyalty.

The Impact of Salesperson Interaction Quality on Consumer Decisions in Online Transactions

The quality of interaction with a salesperson plays an important role in consumers' decisions to conduct online transactions. In e-commerce, quality interaction between a salesperson and a consumer can affect the level of consumer trust and satisfaction. Good and responsive interaction from a salesperson provides a more positive image of the company and its products, increasing the likelihood that the consumer will make a purchase. Research by Parasuraman et al. (1988) shows that high-quality interactions, such as the ability of a salesperson to provide clear and accurate information, can increase customer satisfaction, which in turn increases the intention to buy. Consumers tend to seek certainty about the products they buy, so a salesperson's role is to reduce consumer doubts, which will increase consumer satisfaction.

Effective communication between a salesperson and a consumer facilitates the delivery of important information that the consumer needs before making a transaction (Bharadwaj & Shipley, 2020). Communication serves not only to convey basic information about products, but also to understand and customize offerings based on consumers' specific needs. A salesperson who can listen to consumer needs, provide the right solutions, and answer questions quickly will create a pleasant shopping experience and build relationships of trust (Peppers & Rogers, 2016). For example, transparent interactions regarding product return or warranty policies can make consumers feel more secure in their transactions. Research by Crosby et al. (1990) shows that the quality of communication and responsiveness of a salesperson directly influences the perception of consumer trust in a company.

The quality of interaction is also closely related to the attitude and behavior of a salesperson. Consumers who feel a friendly and professional interaction are more likely to develop a positive perception of the company. A polite and helpful attitude increases consumer comfort in making purchasing decisions. Research by Gremler and Gwinner (2000) states that a salesperson's positive attitude increases customer satisfaction levels, which leads to an increased desire to buy. Interactions that appear rushed or lacking in empathy can reduce consumer interest in continuing the transaction.

Technology also plays an important role in the quality of interaction. In e-commerce, many interactions are conducted through digital platforms, and the ability of a salesperson to manage online communication well can affect the consumer experience (Ahearne & Rapp, 2010). Technology is not only a communication tool, but also a strategic means to create effective and efficient relationships between sellers and consumer. A salesperson who is skilled in using chat, video call, or even social media features can create more personal and relevant interactions. This is very important considering the limitations of physical interaction in online transactions. Smart use of technology also allows salespeople to tailor communications to consumer preferences, such as quick response times or a more engaging and interactive style of information delivery. According to Bellman et al. (1999), interactions that optimize the use of technology can accelerate consumer decision making and increase sales conversion rates.

The quality of interaction is also influenced by the level of product mastery by a salesperson. The more skilled and knowledgeable a salesperson is in understanding the product being sold, the higher the quality of interaction that can be provided. A salesperson who is able to explain the features, advantages, and benefits of the product in detail will be more trusted by consumers. According to research by Jones et al. (2003), a salesperson's high level of product knowledge contributes to customer satisfaction and, ultimately, their decision to transact.

Trust built through quality interactions is also influenced by the level of consistency in service. Consumers tend to feel more comfortable transacting if they receive consistent service from a salesperson. Inconsistency in information or service can create doubts that ultimately influence purchasing decisions. Research by Fombrun (1996) shows that reputation and credibility built through consistent interaction can strengthen customer loyalty and encourage repeat purchases.

The quality of interaction also has a significant relationship with the overall customer experience. A positive shopping experience, which includes pleasant interactions with a salesperson, contributes to purchasing decisions and customer loyalty. Research by Bitner et al. (1990) confirms that a better service experience, especially direct interactions with a salesperson, increases positive perceptions of the company, which encourages consumers to choose the company again for their next purchase.

The quality of interaction between a salesperson and a consumer plays a crucial role in influencing the consumer's decision to make an online transaction. In e-commerce, where physical interaction between seller and buyer is often absent, elements such as clear communication, a positive attitude, and product mastery become increasingly important. Clear communication includes conveying accurate information about the product, and the ability to listen and understand consumer needs and concerns. A positive attitude from a salesperson can create a pleasant atmosphere and build a better relationship with the consumer, which in turn can increase trust.

Good product knowledge enables a salesperson to provide in-depth and relevant information, so that consumers feel more confident about making purchasing decisions. Effective use of technology, such as chatbots or real-time communication platforms, can also improve the quality of interactions by providing quick and accurate responses to consumer questions. All of these factors contribute to consistency in service, which is essential to building long-term trust between companies and consumers.

E-commerce companies must proactively focus on improving the quality of interactions between salespeople and consumers to increase sales conversion rates and overall customer satisfaction. Strategies that can be implemented include ongoing training for a salesperson to improve communication skills and product knowledge, as well as the application of technology that supports better interaction. For example, companies can utilize data analytics to understand consumer behavior patterns and tailor their sales approach according to individual preferences. Creating effective feedback channels allows consumers to provide input on their experiences, which can be used for continuous improvement. By integrating this approach, companies can increase sales conversion rates and build stronger customer loyalty, which is critical in competitive e-commerce markets. In the long-term, this focus on interaction quality will contribute to the company's success and sustainability in an ever-evolving industry.

CONCLUSION

Based on all the discussions that have been held, it can be concluded that the quality of interaction with sales staff has a very significant influence on consumers' decisions to conduct online transactions. The competitive digital environment and lack of physical interaction gives consumers a sense of how their interactions with salespeople are perceived. Quality interaction includes clear and informative communication, and demonstrates a positive attitude, a high level of product mastery, and the ability to utilize technology to communicate effectively. All of these factors contribute to creating a pleasant shopping experience for consumers, which in turn increases their trust in the company. In e-commerce, good interaction with a salesperson can strengthen the relationship between the company and the consumer, increase loyalty, and encourage repeat purchases.

The trust that is created through quality interactions greatly affects customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions. Consumers are not only looking for products that suit their needs, but also expect a smooth, transparent and pleasant purchasing process. Consumers tend to choose companies that provide consistent and responsive service and show concern for their needs and wants. The quality of service offered by a salesperson determines short-term satisfaction and plays a major role in creating long-term loyalty and increasing the company's competitiveness. Companies must continue to improve the quality of their interactions with consumers, optimize the ability of a salesperson to provide the best service, and utilize technology to facilitate consumer communication and decision making.

Based on this conclusion, the advice that can be given is that companies need to train salespeople to improve their communication skills, product knowledge, and responsiveness to answer questions or provide solutions to consumers. This training will help salespeople to be more confident and able to provide clear and timely information to consumers, thus strengthening the relationship between the two. Companies must take advantage of the latest technology to support more effective and efficient interactions, such as chatbots, video calls, or mobile applications that facilitate communication. Finally, companies must maintain consistency in service and ensure that high service quality standards are maintained across all their communication channels, both online and offline. This will help increase consumer confidence, which in turn can strengthen the company's competitiveness in the increasingly competitive e-commerce market.

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