

Research Article

Journal of Economic Research & Reviews

Does Online Convenience Drive Brand Equity for E-Retailers? Understanding the Factors Influencing Convenience and the Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction

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Submitted: 2023, July 01; Accepted: 2023, Aug 07; Published: 2023, Sep 02

Citation: Shourov, R. Z. (2023). Does Online Convenience Drive Brand Equity For E-Retailers? Understanding the Factors Influencing Convenience and the Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction. *J Eco Res & Rev, 3*(3), 233-244.

Abstract

Convenience is a central tenet for businesses as consumers desire to reduce decision-making time and effort burdens. This article investigates the influence of online convenience on brand equity in the context of e-commerce businesses in a South Asian emerging nation, Bangladesh. The article also discusses the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between online convenience and brand equity. In addition, the study examines website attributes, namely, navigational, interactive, and information design, driving online convenience. We conducted an online survey for data collection, performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate the measurement model, and undertook a structural equation model (SEM) to evaluate the hypotheses. While this study validates the online convenience framework, it contributes to the existing literature by providing evidence that online convenience drives brand equity. Moreover, the article demonstrates that customer satisfaction partially mediates the stated relationship. Another contribution is that this study highlights that the website attributes- navigational, interactive, and information design- are critical for online convenience. Finally, we observe that in a developing country context, search and evaluation are the critical-most dimensions of convenience.

Keywords: Online Convenience, Brand Equity, E-commerce, Customer Satisfaction, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

In today's global business landscape, an increasing number of consumers engage in online purchases. Consumers undertake online shopping as it reduces the time and effort required to complete a purchase [1]. Today's time-starved consumers prefer a one-stop solution and undertake a multitude of activities in a short time. According to Berry et al. the Internet's ubiquitous presence in our lives has reshaped our expectations of convenience. The time and effort considerations are crucial nonmonetary burdens for consumers leading to the conclusion that slow service is of minimal value [1,2]. In the online environment, as consumers are making more efficient purchasing decisions, minimizing the time and effort burdens is essential for firms to remain competitive, with marketers focusing on a compelling convenience proposition to attract and retain consumers [2].

The net revenue from global retail e-commerce sales amounted to approximately \$ 4.9 trillion, with estimated growth of over 40%, recording a net worth of 7.9 trillion in 2025 [3]. In the US alone, e-commerce revenues amounted to approximately \$ 770 billion in 2021, a year-on-year increase of about 20% [4]. Emerging economies are also experiencing impressive growth trends, with e-commerce spending in India growing at a yearly rate of approximately 40% [5]. The rise of pure e-tailing websites with no traditional brick-and-mortar outlets, such as Alibaba.com and Amazon.com, is a testament to the changing retail landscape. These retailers' ubiquitous use and rapid growth have meant that, as of early 2021, these two brands are among the five most prominent global retailers [6]. Even Walmart, the world's largest retailer, enjoyed e-commerce sales growth of over 70 percent in 2021, while its international segment observed increased e-commerce sales of 40% during the same period [4]. Therefore, over the last few years, companies have been growing their online presence and delivering convenience-oriented strategies [2,7].

Our review of the literature reveals a focus on understanding the multidimensional convenience constructs for service and offline retail settings; however, recent studies are focusing on online convenience (Shah et al., 2022) [7-14]. Previous studies conceptualized different first-order constructs to develop the second- order online convenience construct (Shah et al., 2022) [11,12,14].

Although Seiders et al. analyzed the antecedents of retail convenience in an offline environment, there is a gap in the literature concerning the situational factors and e-commerce website attributes critical to online service convenience [8]. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of e-commerce website attributes- navigation, interactivity, and information design on online convenience. Previous research evaluates behavioral intentions, e-WOM, and satisfaction as outcome measures of online convenience (Shah et al., 2022) [11,12,15]. Other studies examine the intervening effect of perceived value, service quality, and fairness, i.e., the indirect impact on behavioral intentions (Shah et al., 2022); however, the potential relationship between convenience and brand equity is not adequately investigated [11,14]. Brand equity is the critical-most driver of customer equity and forms the crux of competitive advantage [16,17]. Minimizing the nonmonetary time and effort expenditure is a prerequisite for increasing brand equity [2]. Therefore, we extend the existing literature by examining the relationship between online convenience and brand

equity. Finally, we argue that satisfaction is a crucial mediator in the convenience-brand equity relationship and investigate the role of satisfaction as a mediator in this relationship. It is worth noting that most studies on convenience are generally conducted in the context of developed countries. Therefore, conducting research in an emerging market context could help underline the relevance of online convenience in the global context.

2. Literature Review

Across the globe, we are observing rapid growth in e-commerce revenue. This is exemplified by the fact that in 2021, companies in the US and India experienced annual revenue growth of 20% and 40%, respectively. Retailers understand that convenience is critical in performing activities such as searching and browsing products to make the final purchase in an online setting (Kapoor and Vij, 2018). Therefore, in line with Colwell et al. and Berry et al. developing strategies with convenience as its central tenet is critical for sustained competitive advantage [2,18].

3. Conceptualization of Convenience

Extant literature reveals that convenience was initially conceptualized from the perspective of classifying goods (Copeland, 1923). Over time, convenience has been reconceptualized as a service-oriented construct and a retaildomain-focused construct [8,7,13,19,20]. It is critical to understand that time and effort considerations are required to conceptualize convenience in both service and retail settings [7,19]. With time-starved consumers engaging in online purchases, businesses are focusing on their online presence to meet the consumers' needs. As a result, recent studies have shifted their focus to retail convenience in an online setting and online convenience (Saha et al., 2022) [11-14]. Existing literature reveals convenience is considered a multidimensional construct [8,9,13,18,19]. While Berry et al. (2002) proposed decision, access, transaction, benefit, and post-benefit convenience as the dimensions of service convenience, Seiders et al. proposed access, search, possession, and transaction convenience as the dimensions of retail convenience [7]. The focus on online convenience gained traction when Beauchamp & Ponder (2010) investigated and validated the retail convenience construct in an offline and online environment. However, Jiang et al. developed and assessed the second-order online convenience construct in their study. For this study, we define online convenience as

consumers' ability to minimize the time and effort required to obtain products and services [12,21].

4. Online Convenience (OC)

The recent focus on the online convenience construct is exemplified by different conceptualizations of this multidimensional construct (Shah et al., 2022) [12,13,14,22]. The dimensions of online convenience initially proposed by Jiang et al. are access, search, evaluation, possession, and post-possession convenience. Access convenience (AC) We define access convenience as consumers' time and effort considerations to get to their retailer of interest [6,12,22]. If consumers cannot reach a retailer, a purchase intent will not be converted to purchases. Accessconvenience is critical for the sustainability of an enterprise. Furthermore, in an online setting, where traditional concepts of geographical limits such as store locations are inapplicable accessing the websites is critically important as this provides retailers with an additional revenue stream for time-starved and geographically dispersed consumers [2,23,24]. Therefore, e-commerce businesses should focus on ease of access to the website.

5. Search Convenience (SC)

We define search convenience as the ease and effort spent browsing for the products a consumer is inclined to purchase. Companies use various tools related to website design, search functionality, and product categorization (Shah et al., 2022) to ensure consumers can quickly locate their desired products on an e-tailing website. Using the tools present in an online setting, consumers can gain perceived value by overcoming the time and effort considerations associated with purchasing in a traditional brick-and-mortar store [12,13,22].

6. Evaluation Convenience (EC)

We define evaluation convenience as the presence of detailed yet simplified product descriptions using a variety of text, graphics, and videos for presenting the information [12,22]. Detailed information about different products and services helps consumers assess the product mix. Furthermore, in the case of an e-tailing business, having access to user-generated content (UGC) and reviews assist consumers in evaluating the utility of brands and products while deciding on product purchases [12]. Marketers leverage UGC to promote and push products and services [25]. Therefore, providing organized, detailed descriptions give consumers better decision-making abilities [13].

7. Transaction Convenience (TC)

We define transaction convenience as the speed and ease with which consumer can complete their transactions [13,22]. According to Seiders et al. consumers detest waiting in lines in traditional retail stores and prefer faster completion of transactions without any wait time. Increased wait time may lead consumers to engage in switching behavior [2,7]. Therefore, a defining advantage of online purchases is no wait time. Moreover, shopping on e-commerce websites is characterized by ease in payments that minimizes consumers' time and effort to complete a transaction [12,26,27].

8. Possession Convenience (PC)

We define possession convenience as the ease, and effort consumers expend in obtaining their desired products [13]. Rohm & Swaminathan explain that one of the physical outlets' core advantages is the ability to acquire the purchased product instantly [23]. However, Beauchamp & Ponder assert that consumers are inclined to buy online as they acquire products with minimal effort, often at the expense of waiting for delivery [13]. The nonmonetary cost of waiting for the product is compensated by savings in time and effort expended to travel to the physical stores and carry large quantities of products [12].

9. Post-Possession Convenience (PPC)

We define post-possession convenience as the perceptions of time and effort spent by consumers to reinitiate contact with retailers or enterprises [12,9]. Post-possession convenience is associated with the required initiation of communication with enterprises due to service problems, transaction issues, and other support information [2,8,19]. For an e-commerce business, providing uninterrupted customer support, instant messaging services, and consumer-facing services required to deal with consumer complaints and facilitate product exchanges can improve postpurchase experiences [27].

10. Website Attributes Influencing Online Convenience

Based on extant literature, the study analyzes the attributes of the e-commerce websites that are critical to the consumers' perceptions of convenience. Navigational Design (NV) Without any atmospherics, the website experience becomes the critical determining factor for providing convenience for shopping online. Online shoppers prefer websites to be less cluttered and ensure ease of browsing with an uncomplicated check-out process using the least number of steps [28,29]. Furthermore, as online shoppers desire to expend minimum effort using the least number of steps in completing a purchase, websites require navigation systems that aid consumers in completing this process efficiently. A significant number of online consumers engage in cart abandonment because of the complexity of the navigation process of a website [30]. Furthermore, improved experience with online shopping using an interactive interface and navigation tools lowers the motivation to shop in a traditional retail setting thus, the website's navigation design is critical for online convenience [31,32].

For this study, we operationally define navigation design as the extent to which consumers can easily access various pages, search functions, and filters whenever applicable. We propose that customers' ease of navigating a website impacts online convenience. **H1***There is a positive relationship between navigation design and online convenience.*

11. Interactivity Design (IA)

Interactivity is how an online environment facilitates two-way communication for consumers [33]. A technologically efficient process influencing a user to communicate is a critical driver of interactivity [34]. For this study, we can operationally define interactivity as the extent to which two or more communication parties can engage in synchronized communication via a specific medium [35]. Similarly, Srinivasan et al. explained interactivity as the presence of effective online customer support services and the extent to which two-way communication is ensured [33]. The detailed and increased flow of information combined with a faster response is a critical component of perceived interactivity [36]. Interactivity improves consumer information content (Watson et al., 1998), which, in turn, ensures consumers have user-generated content to make decisions, facilitating not only the search process but also in purchases and post- purchase support [33]. Thus, we propose that interactivity affects online convenience. **H2** *There is a positive relationship between interactivity and online convenience*.

11.1. Information Design (ID)

The availability of information for consumers is crucial; therefore, e-commerce businesses aim to disseminate uncluttered information [37]. Furthermore, our review of the literature reveals that information quality is linked to the information's relevance, currency, and understandability [38]. Therefore, we can operationally define information design as the website's ability to provide relevant, current, and coherent communication. Online purchases often require consumers to process factual information related to the products, prices, shipping, and e-retailer [29]. Consumers prefer relevant and clearly portrayed information for processing a purchase. Furthermore, the availability and access to product descriptions, clarity of refund and exchange policies, shipping details, and user-generated reviews influence consumer decision-making [37]. On the other extreme, consumers remain frustrated when they expend time and effort to process irrelevant, incomplete, and unclear information [39]. Therefore, we propose information design of the website impacts online convenience.H3 There is a positive relationship between information design and online convenience.

11.2. The Consequence of Online Convenience

We base the consequences of the research grounded on the cognition affect behavior (C-A-B) model [40-42]. According to Bagozzi, when consumers undertake a cognitive evaluation of an experience, it promotes an emotional (affective) response that culminates in their behavioral outcome. As a result, consumers' desire for convenience affects their attitude (disposition), which, in turn, impacts brand equity. For this article, consumers' perception of convenience (i.e., cognition) positively affects customer satisfaction (i.e., affect) and, as a result, brand equity (i.e., behavioral intention) [43].

11.3. Brand Equity (BE)

Traditionally, we define brand equity as the bundle of brand assets and liabilities associated with the brand, its name, and symbol that either increases or diminishes the value provided by a product or service to the firm and/or its consumers [44,45,46]. Brand equity is often analyzed from two disparate points of view: financial and consumers [47]. Understanding consumerbased brand equity is critical from the firm's point of view as it has an association with increased revenues and profits [17,48], as consumers are willing to pay more and are more receptive to marketing messages and stimuli. Based on this consideration, this study focuses on consumer-centric brand equity. For the study, we define consumer-based brand equity as the perceptions and beliefs of consumers that result in the brand generating increased sales volume and margins, which would otherwise not be possible without the brand name [17,41,49].

Berry et al. explain that time and effort considerations are nonmonetary expenditures that consumers wish to minimize [2]. Designing strategies with convenience as its focus leads to competitive advantage due to increased brand equity (Asli, 2021) [1,18]. One of the dimensions of brand equity is perceived/consumer value (Asli, 2021; Zeithaml, 1988), which in certain research forms part of another dimension of brand equity- brand associations (Asli, 2021) [45,50]. Previous research demonstrates associations between online convenience and service convenience with perceived value and fairness. Decreasing the time and effort costs is critical for increasing brand equity therefore, we propose that online convenience positively affects brand equity. H4 There is a positive relationship between online convenience and brand equity. The Mediating Effects of Online Satisfaction According to the expectationdisconfirmation theory, online customer satisfaction (OS) is the affective response that occurs when the perceived outcome meets or exceeds the expected performance of the online retailer ([2,11,15,21,41]. For this study, we consider the overall satisfaction measure and define satisfaction as the consumer's cumulative assessment of the experience with the e-retailer [18,51]. We consider the overall cumulative assessment to include both recent and past transaction experiences with the retailer [51]. This is important as aggregate (overall) consumer satisfaction is the ultimate objective of marketing initiatives [52]. Marketing literature explains that customer time and effort burdens are critical considerations for business [8,19]. Consumers desire to minimize the nonmonetary constraints of time and effort associated with purchases, and online retailers

that achieve this objective will be able to meet and exceed consumer expectations [2]. Increased ease of enjoying a product or service benefits leads to satisfied consumers (Hsu et al., 2010). Dissatisfied consumers have negative consequences on businesses [53].

Minimizing consumers' time and effort burden is a requisite for consumer satisfaction [54]. As consumer satisfaction relates to whether a given online shopping experience matches consumer expectations, we can expect increased positive shopping experiences to influence consumer satisfaction. Previous studies in offline settings demonstrate a significant positive association between convenience and consumer satisfaction [15,18]. Thus, we state that online convenience positively affects consumer satisfaction. These time and effort considerations are even more prevalent in an online setting and often determine the success of a business as slow service is of minimal value to consumers [1]. Customer satisfaction impacts present and future performance metrics and loyalty measures [55,56]. Across different industries, existing research reveals a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and brand equity (Ha et al., 2010) [57,58]. Meeting and exceeding expectations forms the crux of the valuation of the brand therefore, consumer satisfaction is critical for brand equity. Iglesias et al. highlight that customer satisfaction in the banking service has a crucial influence on brand equity [5,2,58]]. In a similar vein, for the insurance industry, Hsu demonstrates that consumer satisfaction positively affects brand equity [57]. A review of the literature reveals identical findings for the winery and hospital service industries [59,60]. An analysis of retail brands reveals a positive effect of satisfaction on brand equity for retail brands [61]. Therefore, firms' ability to minimize consumer time and effort expenditures would lead them to meet and exceed consumer expectations, which would, in turn, lead to increased brand equity. H5 Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between online convenience and brand equity.

	Constructs and Items	Factor Loadings
	Access Convenience (Jiang et al., 2013) & (Beauchamp and Ponder, 2010).	0.80
AC1	I can shop anytime I want.	0.72
AC2	I can order from anywhere I want.	0.79
AC3	The website is always accessible.	0.68
AC4	The website was easy to find.	
	Search Convenience (Jiang et al., 2013)	
SC1	I can easily find what I want without having to look elsewhere.	0.76
SC2	I can find desired products quickly.	0.85
SC3	It was easy to get the information I needed to make my purchase decision.	0.86
SC4	The product classification is intuitive and easy to follow.	0.74
	Evaluation Convenience (Jiang et al., 2013)	
EC1	The website provides in-depth product specifications.	0.87
EC2	The website uses both text and graphics to provide product information.	0.78
EC3	The website provides sufficient information to identify different products.	0.92
	Transaction convenience (Jiang et al., 2013) & (Beauchamp and Ponder, 2010)	
TC1	I experienced flexible payment options.	0.86
TC2	I could easily complete the purchase.	0.92
TC3	It did not take a long time to complete my purchase process.	0.87
TC4	The check-out process was fast.	0.74
	Possession convenience (liang et al. 2013)	
PC1	L experienced timely delivery	0.87
PC2	L received undamaged products	0.94
PC3	I received precisely what I ordered.	0.89
	Post-possession convenience (Seiders et al., 2007)	
PPC1	The retailer promptly takes care of product exchanges and returns promptly.	0.92
PPC2	Any after-purchase problems that I experience can be easily resolved.	0.94
PPC3	It is easy to reach the retailer for exchanges and returns.	0.91

	Navigational Design (Davari et al., 2016)	
IV1	The website provides a dynamic filter option for making and comparing choices.	0.69
IV2	The website provides a feature of keyword search.	0.81
IV3	The website page interface is easy to navigate.	0.82
IV4	The website displays the shopping cart at subsequent stages till the final order is placed.	0.80
	Interactivity (Song & Zinkhan, 2008)	
A1	The website facilitates two-way communication.	0.75
A2	The website gives me the opportunity to talk back.	0.89
A3	The website makes me feel it wants to listen to its users.	0.91
A4	The website is effective in gathering users' feedback.	0.92
	Information Design (Kapoor & Vij, 2018)	
D1	The website provides relevant information to my needs.	0.82
D2	The website provides with accurate information.	0.74
D3	The website provides the reviews of customers.	0.76
D4	The website provides a dedicated account for all my transactions.	0.81
	Online Satisfaction (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003)	
DS1	I am satisfied with my decision to purchase from this Web site.	0.83
DS2	My choice to purchase from this Web site was a wise one.	0.79
DS3	I think I did the right thing by purchasing from this Web site.	0.86
DS4	I am happy that I purchased from this Web site.	0.80
	Brand Equity (Yoo & Donthu, 2001)	
3E1	It makes sense to shop from this e-commerce website instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.	0.92
BE2	Even if another e-commerce website has same features as this one, I would prefer to use this e-commerce website.	0.92
BE3	If there is another e-commerce website as good as this one, I prefer to use this website.	0.93
3E4	If another e-commerce website is not different from this one in any way; it feels better to use this website.	0.92





Figure: Graphical results- Standardized estimates



Figure 2: Overall Correlation Matrix



Figure 3: Research framework

12. Methodology

12.1. Data Collection

We administered an anonymous online survey using Qualtrics in Bangladesh for a week in April 2022. We use a convenience sampling technique by providing a survey link in various discussion groups and Facebook forums typically accessed by students and graduates of a top business school in Bangladesh. We assumed this method of reaching out to the student population to be appropriate as there is no renowned platform such as MTurk to reach a wider pool of participants, and previous studies used this population pool for data collection purposes. Furthermore, the choice of university-going students in a Bangladesh context made sense as recent research indicates that the younger generations are likelier to engage in shopping online [37,62,63].

The survey had two sections. In the first section, we asked the participants what their most recent online purchase was and, if so, from where. Furthermore, we inquired about demographics such as age, gender, purchase frequency from the website, and their monthly online spending from that online retailer. In the second section, the respondents evaluated the different constructs of online convenience as well as questions related to navigation, interactivity, and information design of the website used. Finally, they had to answer questions related to online customer satisfaction and brand equity. We employed a sevenpoint Likert-type scale for respondents to assess the extent to which they agreed to the questions in the second part of the questionnaire.

In line with previous research, we accept that the constructs are reflective in nature, the dimensions being reflected in the measurement items 1,12,14]. Here, the proposed reflective first-order, reflective second-order model is a disaggregation second-order factor model with the indicators being the manifestations of the construct [64]. For our analysis purposes, we received 200 responses. We eliminated 20 questionnaires for incompleteness and 13 questionnaires for questionable responses leading to a usable sample size of 167 respondents (40.7% females, 66%

in the 18-24 age group, mean monthly spending= Tk. 2242, approximately four purchases per individual). The sample size meets the heuristics of acceptable sample size (n=150) for conducting confirmatory factor analysis [65].

13. Measures

We adapted and modified the measures from prior studies to fit the research context. Items for navigation were adapted from Davari et al. four items for interactivity were adapted from Song & Zinkhan, and the four items to measure information design was adapted. The measures of the six dimensions of online convenience are detailed below [30,36,37]. Three items for access convenience were taken from the study by and one from Beauchamp & Ponder four items for search convenience were adapted from Beauchamp & Ponder three items on evaluation convenience were borrowed from past research by Jiang et al. two items were adapted from Jiang et al. and two from Beauchamp & Ponder for transaction convenience; items for possession convenience were borrowed from finally, we modified three items for post-possession convenience from Seiders et al. The measures for customer satisfaction and brand equity were adapted from Anderson & Srinivasan and Yoo & Donthu [8,12,13,66,67]. It is worth reiterating that we made minor modifications to the wording to fit the research context.

14. Results

We analyzed the data using Mplus 7.0 software package. We evaluated the measurement model using the maximum likelihood (ML) estimation method and tested the hypothesized effects based on the structural equation modeling (SEM).

15. Measurement Model Estimation

We investigate reliability, validity, and multidimensionality considerations using confirmatory factor analysis. First, we evaluate the item loadings, keeping in mind that these are often the primary indicator of convergent validity. While literature specifies different cutoffs ranging from 0.5 (Hair et al., 2006) to 0.63 we accept 0.63 as the acceptable cutoff for the item loadings. Although the measurement items are borrowed from existing literature, we deleted a couple of items one at a time by observing the modification indices [68,69]. Based on the measurement model, the estimates are as follows: $\chi 2758 = 1119.57$, RMSEA= 0.053, CFI =0.93, TLI= 0.922, and SRMR= 0.070. The observed values of the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Comparative-Fit Index (CFI) meet the acceptable thresholds (0.90), and the $\chi 2/$ df (1.48) is smaller than the recommended cutoff of five [70]. Furthermore, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) reveal a good fit as those are below the desirable threshold of 0.08 [71]. Overall, we observe acceptable fit indices for the model. Next, we estimated Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability as checks for reliability [72]. The analysis reveals all the estimates exceeded the cutoff of 0.70 [73]. Furthermore, observing the convergent and discriminant validity are necessary checks for validity. The estimated factor loadings as greater than the threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2006), thus providing initial evidence of convergent validity. The average variance extracted (AVE) of the dimensions of online convenience and the other constructs are greater than the threshold of 0.50 providing substantial support for convergent validity. Moreover, we examined the discriminant validity using Fornell & Larcker's proposition [72]. The analysis demonstrates that the AVE of

each construct is greater than the variances shared between the construct and others, thereby providing support for discriminant validity. The values of Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE are provided in Table 1, the correlation matrix in Table 2, and the factor loadings are represented in Appendix-1.

Finally, we conducted the Harman one-factor test, a diagnostic technique to evaluate the common method bias concerns [74]. For this purpose, we undertake an exploratory factor analysis considering all self-reported items. The analysis demonstrates that only one factor explains only 20% of the variance. As this estimate is well below the threshold of 50% [74], we believe that common method bias, per se, is not a significant influencer of the results and is not apparent in the measurements in the study. We also apply the correlation matrix procedure to substantiate the consideration regarding the common method bias concerns [75]. As the correlation between any pair constructs does not exceed the cutoff (0.9), we can state there is no substantial evidence of common method variance [75,76]. We investigated multicollinearity by analyzing the variance inflation factor (VIF). The estimated VIFs were well below the threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, we can state that are no significant multicollinearity issues in the study.

Table 1: Reliability and validity measures

Constructs	Items	Mean	Variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
AC	4	6.14	0.65	0.82	0.84	0.56
SC	4	5.06	1.53	0.88	0.88	0.64
EC	3	5.22	1.78	0.89	0.89	0.73
TC	4	5.91	0.94	0.91	0.91	0.72
PC	3	4.45	1.88	0.93	0.93	0.82
PPC	3	3.95	2.05	0.94	0.94	0.85
NV	4	5.35	1.2	0.86	0.86	0.61
IA	4	5.43	1.72	0.92	0.92	0.76
ID	4	4.41	0.93	0.86	0.86	0.61
OS	4	5.12	1.04	0.89	0.89	0.67
BE	4	5.25	1.76	0.96	0.96	0.85

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

	AC	SC	EC	TC	PC	PPC	CON	NV	IA	ID	CS	BE
AC	1											
SC	0.32	1.00										
EC	0.30	0.47	1.00									
TC	0.23	0.35	0.34	1.00								
PC	0.19	0.29	0.28	0.21	1.00							
PPC	0.24	0.38	0.36	0.27	0.22	1.00						
CON	0.45	0.71	0.67	0.50	0.42	0.53	1.00					
NV	0.15	0.24	0.23	0.17	0.14	0.17	0.34	1.00				
IA	0.10	0.16	0.15	0.11	0.09	0.12	0.23	-0.02	1.00			
ID	0.08	0.13	0.12	0.09	0.08	0.10	0.18	-0.07	-0.05	1.00		
OS	0.13	0.19	0.19	0.14	0.12	0.15	0.28	0.10	0.03	0.16	1.00	
BE	0.14	0.21	0.21	0.15	0.13	0.16	0.42	0.20	0.19	0.07	0.42	1.00

16. Structural Model

Detailed results of the hypothesis tests are provided in Table 3. For the structural model, the observed values of the comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) are 0.93 and 0.92, with the $\chi 2/df$ ($\chi 2764$ = 1127) of 1.47. Furthermore, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) values of 0.053 and 0.072. Overall, we observe acceptable fit indices for the model. Furthermore, the model is significantly better than the baseline/ null model [$\chi 2820$ = 5820.50; p < 0.001].

The estimates of the results demonstrate evidence supporting the associations

between navigation (NV) and online convenience (OC) (β =

0.36, t= 4.04, p< 0.001), interactivity (IA) and OC, (β = 0.26, t= 3.10, p= 0.002), and information design (ID) and OC (β = 0.23, t= 2.16, p= 0.03). Therefore, based on significant statistical evidence supporting hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Furthermore, for hypothesis 4, we find a significant positive relationship between OC and brand equity (BE) (β = 0.233, t= 2.30, p< 0.022). Although we did not hypothesize the association between the individual dimensions of online convenience and the second-order OC, we observe that all dimensions have a statistically significant relationship with OC. Therefore, we validate the online convenience scale in the Bangladesh context. In this context, evaluation is the primary driver of online convenience, while possession is the least significant driver.

Table 3: Standardized weights and statistica	I significance of main effects (Hypothesis testing)
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Hypothesis	Path	Standardized	S. E.	t-value	p-value
		estimate, β			
H1	Navigation -> online convenience	0.363	0.090	4.043	< 0.001
H2	Interactivity -> online convenience	0.261	0.084	3.099	0.002
H3	Information design -> online convenience	0.229	0.106	2.161	0.030
H4	Online convenience (OC) -> brand equity	0.233	0.101	2.297	0.022
	Online convenience -> access convenience	0.461	0.093	4.948	< 0.001
	Online convenience -> search convenience	0.679	0.105	6.445	< 0.001
	Online convenience -> evaluation convenience	0.681	0.093	7.36	< 0.001
	Online convenience -> transaction convenience	0.506	0.087	5.822	< 0.001
	Online convenience -> possession convenience	0.403	0.121	3.333	0.001
	Online convenience -> post-possession convenience	0.520	0.099	5.226	< 0.001

We assessed the mediation effects using a 5,000-sample bootstrapping approach at 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI). The bootstrapping approach is a powerful and recommended method for detecting mediation (indirect) effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The analysis explains that there are indirect effects of OC on BE ($\beta = 0.10$, t= 2.048, p = 0.004), 95% CI (0.028, 0.186), i.e., customer satisfaction partially mediates this stated relationship.

Table 4: Mediation analysis

	Mediation analysis	Standardized estimate, β	Lower CI	Upper CI	p-value
H5	Online convenience -> brand equity	0.100	0.028	0.186	0.040

17. Discussion

The time-constrained lives of consumers incite their preference for engaging in online purchases. This has meant that enterprises have invested heavily in online offerings leading to competition in the online domain. However, as more and more businesses focus their offerings online, consumers are inundated with information about similar products and services, often at similar price points. Therefore, companies must strategically focus on convenience to sustain competitive advantage and brand equity [1,2,18]. Moreover, online enterprises can leverage convenience to develop strategies to enhance consumer relationships and competitiveness, leading to increased brand equit [2,7]. Although existing research demonstrates the influence of online convenience on behavioral intentions is gaining traction, understanding of whether online convenience influences brand equity has not been extensively investigated in the literature [11,12,77]. Moreover, retailers must meet and exceed expectations; thus, we examine the mediating role of customer satisfaction. Finally, this study is an endeavor to

understand the website-related attributes critical for providing online convenience to online consumers.

This study validates the online convenience scale comprising the six first-order constructs: access, search, evaluation, transaction, possession, and post-purchase convenience. The analysis estimates that the six different latent first-order constructs have a significant association with online convenience as expressed by substantial loadings. Furthermore, this is one of the first studies validating the six reflective first- order constructs of online convenience. Moreover, we observe evaluation (β = 0.681, p< 0.001) and search convenience (β = 0.679, p< 0.001) as the critical-most drivers of overall online shopping convenience. Facilitating online search and ease in comparisons ensure consumers expend less time and effort traveling to physical stores to search for products Shah et al.)

With time- constraint consumers, online retailers must direct efforts to engage consumers in seamless product searches and

comparisons that require minimal effort [1,7,13]. Consumers must be able to compare products and costs to make purchase decisions. Therefore, having detailed and extensive descriptions aid consumers in making a purchase decision [12]. We observe post- possession convenience (β = 0.520, p< 0.001), and transaction convenience (β = 0.506, p<0.001) as the following determinants of online convenience. While post-possession convenience is relevant for consumers as they must feel secure and be at ease in making returns, transaction convenience is critical as consumers hate waiting to make payments for their purchases [7]. The two least significant drivers of online convenience are access convenience (β = 0.461, p< 0.001) and possession convenience (β = 0.403, p= 0.001).

Possession convenience is relevant as consumers expect to receive the ordered products in a timely manner expending the least amount of time and energy. Despite the view that consumers prefer shopping in brick-and-mortar stores, our findings reveal that consumers accept waiting for their delivery. However, as quick delivery is now an industry norm, this factor is no longer a significant differentiator in online purchases. Previous research proposes access convenience as the foremost driver of online convenience as it enables ease of shopping. However, with the ubiquitous presence of retailer websites, this dimension is no longer the critical-most driver of convenience [12].

As stated above, there is limited empirical research examining the impact of OC on BE in the context of both emerging and developed nations. Thus, the study highlights the direct influence of OC on BE. Furthermore, across different industries, research highlights the influence of OS on BE [57,58,61,79]. While Shah et al. (2022) examine the relationship between OC and OS, we further explain, based on existing literature, that OS, in turn, influences BE, and thus, we provide evidence that OS partially mediates the relationship between OC and BE.

An increased focus on online convenience means it is essential to understand online communication and engagement tools necessary for providing convenience. Effectively, this study provides substantive evidence that the website's navigational, interactivity and information design are significant determinants of online convenience. The study demonstrates that navigation design has a significant effect on online convenience. Navigation design is the extent to which consumers can easily access various pages, search functions, and filters, i.e., their ability to seamlessly transition across different activities. Furthermore, a seamless navigation experience ensures ease in conducting critical activities in purchasing without expending time and effort, laying the foundation for improved consumer experiences [79]. Following this, we find that information design influences online convenience. Consumers prefer detailed information on websites as this helps them make informed decisions. The effect of information design on the ease of decision-making is similar to findings from previous studies (Zhou, 2011) [37]. Finally, we interpret that interactivity substantially influences online convenience. Websites with interactive tools reduce consumers' cognitive load meaning there is less dependence on memory for recollection [80]. In addition, improved interactive tools ensure

reduced time and effort required for searches, thus, enhancing convenience [33].

18. Implications and Conclusions

This study adds to the theoretical and managerial aspects related to online convenience. From a managerial perspective, the study has several implications. In 2023, e-commerce sales in the Southeast-Asian market are expected to cross the \$100 billion mark, a growth of over 170% from 2019 [81]. Like other Asian consumers, consumers in Bangladesh, especially youngsters, are more inclined to shop online [63]. The ease of engaging in purchases, i.e., minimizing the time and effort burden, is a central tenet for consumers. Therefore, online convenience is critical in ensuring that consumers maintain relationships with these businesses. E- retailers can often use the online convenience framework to weigh the constructs of relevance and focus attention on the dimensions that maximize value. According to our findings, e-retailers must focus on search, evaluation, and transaction as critical dimensions of online convenience. Similar to Mpinganjira and Shah et al. (2022), we reinforce the relevance of search and evaluation dimensions as critical for online convenience [14]. While similar to previous research by Jiang et al. this study finds the relevance of transaction convenience in driving online convenience; however, we counter their observation that access convenience is the foremost determinant of convenience [12]. Although most e-retailers have websites that enable ease of access, this alone is not the most critical component to driving convenience, as the accessibility of websites is standardized from the user's perspective.

Our literature review highlights there are limited studies focusing on the relationship between convenience and brand equity for online retailers. This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that online convenience affects brand equity, which is partially mediated by customer satisfaction. Brand equity is a relevant consideration for retailers as this provides support that consumers are confident and satisfied in the purchase decisio [44,45]. Furthermore, the finding that online convenience influences brand equity has meaningful value, as increased brand equity aids in the effectiveness of marketing programs, enhance the online retailer's ability to generate profits (Asli, 2021), and gain sustained competitive advantage [13,82].

Managers of online businesses should focus on functional aspects of the websites, i.e., navigation, interactivity, and information design, to provide continued convenience. Consumers prefer detailed information on the websites as this aid them in making informed decisions. Therefore, in relation to information design, businesses should provide detailed information, customer reviews, and user-generated content to aid in the evaluation and search convenience, leading to increased engagement and repurchases. Furthermore, interactivity is critical in ensuring two-way communication, including the search for the product, the ease of transaction, and the availability of seamless postpurchase services [34]. Thus, designing interactive websites is a worthwhile consideration for businesses. Moreover, it is critical to provide an uninterrupted navigational experience for consumers with easy-to-use search, transaction, and ordering options. Therefore, business managers need to consider these factors while enhancing their websites. In summary, navigational, interactivity, and information designs are crucial attributes in developing features for enhancing convenience.

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. Firstly, this study highlights the role of online convenience in influencing brand equity, with customer satisfaction partially mediating this relationship. Secondly, this study provides evidence of the website-related parameters impacting online convenience. Finally, this is one of the first attempts to validate the online convenience framework in the context of an emerging South-Asian market, Bangladesh.

19. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

A significant limitation of the study is the lack of extensive prior research in the domain of online convenience. Moreover, despite our best efforts, the sample size was relatively disappointing, while a significant portion of the respondents were students. Although students are a potential target in conducting studies focusing on online purchases, a larger and more diverse sample size would aid in the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, a more diversified sample size could have led to a different conclusion [637,2]. As the research stream on online convenience expands, researchers may look to include relevant dimensions to the online convenience construct. Furthermore, understanding how the conceptualization of customer online shopping convenience is changing over time is another avenue for research. Finally, researchers should focus on a cross-country study to validate the multidimensional online convenience scale.

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