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WEBSITE QUALITY ANTECEDENTS AND REPURCHASE INTENTION IN GEN Z SHOPPING BEHAVIOR: A CASE OF APPAREL SECTOR IN INDIA

Dr. INDERPAL SINGH[1] and SHAILEY SINGH[2]

[1]Professor and Dean, Management Studies,
Lyallpur Khalsa College Technical Campus, Jalandhar, India.
[2]Research Scholar, IKGPTU, Kapurthala, India.

Abstract

The exponential growth of e-commerce in emerging markets has necessitated a deeper understanding of digital consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z) shoppers who represent a significant and influential demographic. This study investigates the relationship between website quality dimensions, e-satisfaction, and repurchase intention in the context of online apparel shopping in India. Drawing upon the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), we develop and test a conceptual framework incorporating six key website quality antecedents: user interface and design (UID), information quality, navigation quality, fun interactive browsing, online reviews, and personalization. Using a sample of 554 Gen Z respondents from six major Indian metropolitan cities, we employ a rigorous analytical approach combining Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Our findings reveal that UID, information quality, and navigation quality significantly enhance both e-satisfaction and repurchase intention, while e-satisfaction emerges as a strong mediator in these relationships. Interestingly, personalization shows weaker than expected influence, suggesting unique characteristics of the Indian Gen Z cohort. The study contributes to e-commerce literature by providing empirical evidence from an under-researched demographic in a rapidly growing market. Practical implications for e-commerce platforms include recommendations for optimizing mobile user experience, enhancing product information presentation, and strategically implementing interactive features. The research also identifies several avenues for future studies, including cross-cultural comparisons and investigations into AI-driven personalization effectiveness.

Keywords: Website Quality, E-Satisfaction, Repurchase Intention, Generation Z, E-Commerce, Digital Consumer Behavior, India.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary landscape of e-commerce, websites are a primary arena for retail transactions. Successful businesses are recognizing that the crux of triumph lies beyond mere web presence or competitive pricing. Instead, the pivotal determinant of success or failure is the delivery of high customer satisfaction (Tannady & Purnamaningsih, 2023). Extensive research highlights a shifting paradigm among online consumers, revealing that factors such as price and promotion are no longer the sole driving forces behind purchase decisions (Mashaqi, 2020). Rather, a growing population of modern-day online customers is willing to invest in e-tailers who offer not only competitive prices but, more importantly, high-quality e-service and website shopping experience (Schneider, 2001).

The fundamental importance of customer satisfaction in the digital marketplace cannot be overstated, as it exerts a profound impact on customer loyalty, retention, repurchase decisions, and even a company's overall financial performance. Recognizing the centrality of customer satisfaction, forward-thinking e-tailers are compelled to shift their focus towards ensuring e-satisfaction as a strategic imperative towards repurchase intention. As e-commerce continues to burgeon, website quality serving as virtual storefronts becomes paramount. The concept of website quality encompasses a multifaceted array of elements, including but not limited to

functionality, usability, aesthetics, security, and overall user experience. In the context of online shopping, where the digital interface serves as the primary point of interaction between the consumer and the retailer, the quality of this interface is intricately linked to the success of the e-commerce venture.

As consumers increasingly rely on digital platforms to fulfill their purchasing needs, the attributes of a website emerge as critical determinants of purchase and subsequently repurchase intention. The global retail landscape has undergone a profound transformation with the advent of e-commerce, particularly in the apparel sector. Consequently, understanding and optimizing website quality is imperative for businesses aiming to cultivate enduring relationships with their online clientele.

This transformation has been especially pronounced in emerging markets like India, where increasing internet penetration, smartphone adoption, and digital payment infrastructure have fueled rapid growth in online shopping. According to recent projections, India's e-commerce market is expected to reach $325 billion by 2026 (IBEF, 2024), with fashion and apparel constituting a significant portion of this growth.

At the forefront of this digital shopping revolution is Generation Z (born between 1996-2012), a demographic cohort that has grown up in a fully digital environment. Unlike their millennial predecessors, Gen Z consumers exhibit distinct shopping behaviors characterized by mobile-first preferences, high expectations for seamless digital experiences, and greater reliance on social proof in purchase decisions (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Their purchasing power and influence are growing rapidly, making them a crucial target segment for e-commerce businesses. This generation not only represents a substantial market share but also possesses a unique set of values and preferences that profoundly influence the strategies employed by businesses to capture and retain their attention. As the first generation to come of age in the 21st century, their preferences, habits, and expectations as online shoppers hold significant implications for the future of e-commerce.

Despite the increasing importance of Gen Z consumers in the digital marketplace, academic research has lagged in examining their unique shopping behaviors, particularly in emerging market contexts. Most existing studies on e-commerce and consumer behavior originate from Western markets with mature e-commerce ecosystems (Srinivasan et al., 2016). There remains a significant gap in understanding how website quality factors influence satisfaction and repurchase intentions among Gen Z shoppers in developing economies like India, where infrastructure, cultural norms, and shopping behaviors may differ substantially.

This study aims to address this research gap by investigating the relationship between website quality dimensions and repurchase intention, with e-satisfaction as a mediating variable, specifically focusing on Gen Z online apparel shoppers in India. The research seeks to answer two key questions:

This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by scrutinizing the nuanced interplay between website quality and online shopping repurchase intentions. While each set of individual shopper is important to an organization, this paper extends the model's applicability to the context of Gen Z online apparel shoppers. By synthesizing insights from academic literature, empirical studies, and contemporary industry practices, we endeavor to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dimensions of website quality that significantly influence Gen Z consumer likelihood to repurchase in the online shopping environment.

The subsequent sections of this paper provide a detailed review of literature, elucidate the research methodology, analyze the research findings, and finally, discuss the implications and limitations of the study.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A thorough and extensive search was undertaken on various electronic databases such as Emerald Insights, EBSCO, Elsevier, Open Athens and so on, in order to build the pool of studies to be included in this review. Some of the search terms included were “repurchase”, “repeat purchase”, “repeat shopping”, “shopping again”, “repeat transaction”, “online repeat purchase”, “repurchase intent”, “Gen Z”, “website quality” and so on. In addition to marketing journals, literature search in various interdisciplinary area journals such as Economics, Psychology, General management, Finance, Hotel management etc was also undertaken. A register of prospective articles was developed and full text copies were obtained. 232 articles were retrieved in the initial round. The retrieved articles were thoroughly read and assessed by all the authors independently to reduce bias and after an exhaustive concept-based discussion, 103 articles were selected for further study.

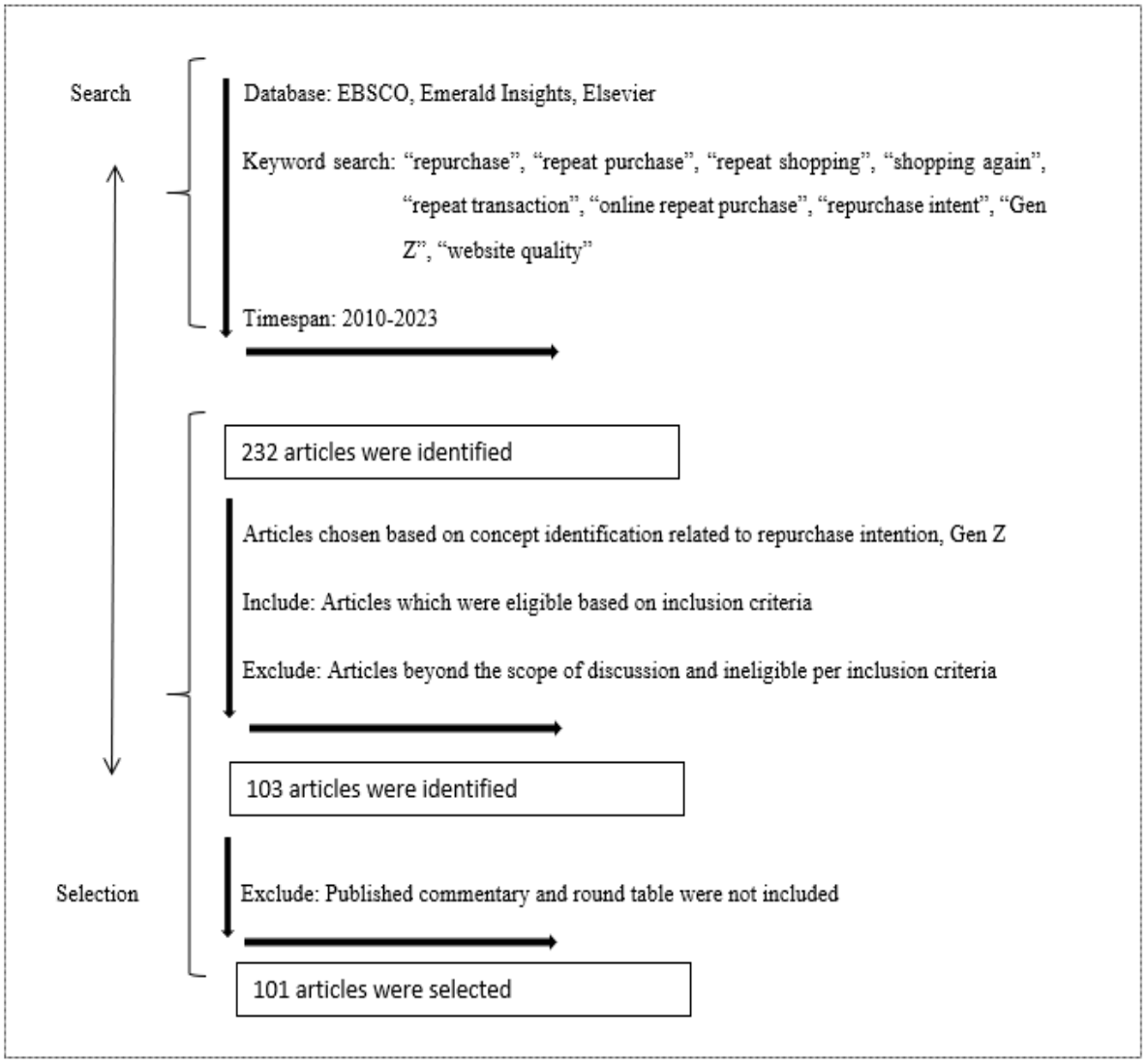

Figure 1: Review of Literature

The rapid expansion of e-commerce has heightened the importance of understanding the factors that influence customer satisfaction and repurchase in online shopping environments. A critical component of this dynamic is website quality, which serves as the foundation for a positive user experience. Research in information systems and marketing has consistently demonstrated that high-quality website design enhances e-satisfaction, which in turn fosters repurchase intention (Zeithaml et al., 2002; Parasuraman et al., 2005). Website quality is a multidimensional construct that determines how effectively an e-commerce platform meets user expectations. Among its most critical dimensions is usability, which refers to the ease of navigation, intuitive interface design, and overall accessibility.

A well-structured website reduces cognitive effort, allowing customers to find products effortlessly, thereby increasing satisfaction (Flavián et al., 2006). Closely related is information quality, which encompasses the accuracy, relevance, and timeliness of product details. When consumers perceive information as trustworthy and useful, their confidence in the platform grows, directly influencing their satisfaction levels (DeLone & McLean, 2003). Another vital factor is visual appeal, which includes aesthetic design elements such as layout, color schemes, and multimedia integration. A visually pleasing website enhances emotional engagement, making the shopping experience more enjoyable (Cyr, 2008).

Beyond functionality and aesthetics, security and privacy play a crucial role in shaping consumer trust. Online shoppers are more likely to return to a website if they believe their personal and financial data are secure (Gefen et al., 2003). Similarly, responsiveness, defined by fast loading speeds and seamless transaction processing, minimizes frustration and reinforces positive perceptions of the platform (Loiacono et al., 2007). Finally, customization, such as personalized recommendations and user-tailored interfaces, creates a sense of individual attention, further boosting satisfaction and loyalty (Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003).

In addition to these dimensions, system quality encompassing technical reliability, stability, and uptime is another fundamental aspect that influences user experience. A website that frequently crashes or suffers from downtime not only frustrates users but also erodes trust, negatively impacting e-satisfaction and repurchase intentions (DeLone & McLean, 2003). Furthermore, interactivity, which includes features like live chat support, user reviews, and social media integration, enhances engagement and helps build long-term relationships with customers (Liu et al., 2008).

Service quality, such as efficient customer support and hassle-free return policies, also plays a supplementary role in shaping overall satisfaction, particularly when issues arise post-purchase (Parasuraman et al., 2005). While these factors are important, they often function as secondary enhancers when the core website quality dimensions such as, usability, information quality, and security, are already well-optimized.

When users have a smooth, enjoyable, and secure experience, their overall satisfaction increases, making them more inclined to revisit the same platform for future purchases (Bhattacherjee, 2001). Conversely, poor website quality, whether due to slow performance, confusing navigation, or lack of trust, leads to dissatisfaction and customer attrition. Empirical studies across various e-commerce sectors confirm this chain of influence, reinforcing the need for businesses to prioritize website optimization as a long-term retention strategy.

This review speaks to the critical role of website quality in driving e-satisfaction and repurchase intention. Future research could explore contextual moderators, such as cultural differences or device-specific interactions (e.g., mobile vs. desktop), to further refine best practices in e-commerce design.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study investigates the relationships between website quality dimensions, e-satisfaction, and repurchase intention. The quantitative methodology was selected as it enables statistical analysis of the hypothesized relationships through measurable data, while the cross-sectional design allows for efficient data collection from online shoppers at a specific point in time (Saunders et al., 2019). This approach is particularly suitable for examining consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions in e-commerce contexts.

The target population consists of consumers who have made at least one online purchase in the past three months, ensuring respondents possess recent and relevant e-commerce experience. A purposive sampling technique will be employed to select participants who meet these criteria. The study's sample size was determined using Cochran's formula, ensuring statistical significance at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error:

$$n=Z2\cdot p\cdot(1-p)/e2$$

Where:

- $Z=1.96$ (for a 95% confidence level),
- $p=0.5$ (assumed proportion of the population with the studied characteristic),
- $e=0.05$ (margin of error).

The measurement instrument comprise a structured questionnaire divided into three main sections. The first section collects demographic information including age, gender, and frequency of online shopping. The second section measures the six website quality dimensions using validated multi-item scales adapted from established studies. The final section assesses e-satisfaction and repurchase intention using similarly validated scales. All constructs were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree to capture respondents' perceptions with appropriate granularity.

The selection of the six website quality constructs (usability, information quality, visual appeal, security/privacy, responsiveness, and customization) was carefully considered based on multiple criteria. The theoretical relevance of these dimensions is well-established in foundational models of technology acceptance and information systems success. Empirical evidence from meta-analytic studies consistently demonstrates these factors strong predictive validity for e-satisfaction across various e-commerce contexts. From a practical standpoint, preliminary interviews with frequent online shoppers and pilot study confirmed these dimensions as the most frequently mentioned aspects when describing positive or negative website experiences. Expert opinion was sought. Collectively, these constructs provide comprehensive coverage of the functional, informational, emotional, and trust-related aspects that constitute the complete website experience.

Table 1: Results based upon pilot testing - reliability values of constructs

S. No.	Constructs	Cronbach's alpha (α)
1	Information Quality	0.862
2	User Interface and Design	0.851
3	Navigation Quality	0.803
4	Fun Interactive Browsing	0.798
5	Personalization	0.769
6	Online Reviews	0.801

Data collection was be conducted through multiple online channels to ensure diverse representation. To maintain data quality, the survey was incorporated with data collection hygiene, attention checks and response time filters to identify and exclude inattentive respondents (Meade & Craig, 2012).

Hypothesis Development

The study posits that six key website quality antecedents influence e-satisfaction, which in turn mediates their effect on repurchase intention. The hypotheses are categorized into direct and mediating relationships.

a) Direct Effects of Website Quality on E-Satisfaction

H_1a: User interface and design (UID) positively impacts e-satisfaction.

Rationale: A visually appealing, intuitive interface improves usability and fosters positive user experiences.

H_1b: Information quality (IQ) positively impacts e-satisfaction.

Rationale: Accurate, detailed product information reduces uncertainty and builds trust.

H_1c: Fun interactive browsing (FIB) positively impacts e-satisfaction.

Rationale: Engaging features like gamification or virtual try-ons increase enjoyment.

H_1d: Online reviews (OR) positively impacts e-satisfaction.

Rationale: Authentic reviews provide social proof, reducing perceived risk.

H_1e: Navigation quality (NQ) positively impacts e-satisfaction.

Rationale: Seamless browsing and quick checkout improve user experience.

H_1f: Personalization (PRF) positively impacts e-satisfaction.

Rationale: Tailored recommendations align with individual preferences.

b) Direct Effects of Website Quality on Repurchase Intention

H_2a: UID positively impacts repurchase intention.

H_2b: IQ positively impacts repurchase intention.

H_2c: FIB positively impacts repurchase intention.

H_2d: OR positively impacts repurchase intention.

H_2e: NQ positively impacts repurchase intention.

H_2f: PRF positively impacts repurchase intention.

c) Mediating Role of E-Satisfaction

H_3a–H_3f: E-satisfaction mediates the relationship between all website antecedents (UID, IQ, FIB, OR, NQ, PRF) and repurchase intention.

Conceptual Model Development

The study's conceptual model (Figure 1) was derived from literature and empirical gaps, positing that six website quality antecedents—User Interface and Design (UID), Information Quality (IQ), Navigation Quality (NQ), Fun Interactive Browsing (FIB), Online Reviews (OR),

and Personalization (PRF)—directly influence e-satisfaction, which in turn mediates their effects on repurchase intention.

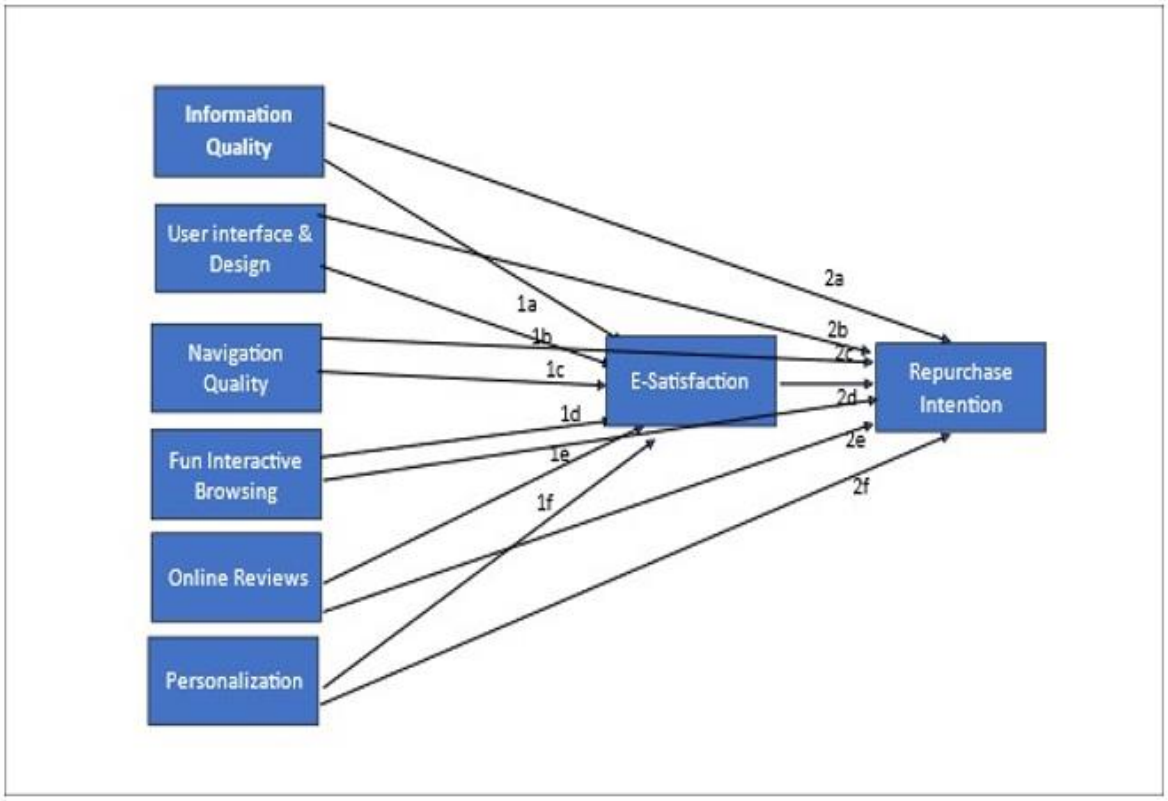

Figure 2: Conceptual Model

The data analysis plan involves a three-stage approach. First, descriptive statistics were be computed to examine means, standard deviations, and distribution properties of the variables. Second, confirmatory factor analysis evaluated the measurement model and assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. Finally, partial least squares structural equation (SEM) modeling was employed to test the hypothesized relationships in the structural model. This analytical sequence ensures thorough examination of both the measurement properties and the substantive relationships of interest. The mixed-method approach to construct selection, combining literature review with pilot interviews, enhances the validity and practical relevance of the chosen framework. Ethical considerations were carefully integrated into the research design. The study ensured complete anonymity and confidentiality of responses, providing clear information about the study's purpose. These measures align with established ethical guidelines for social science research.

4. DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Prior to hypothesis testing, the dataset underwent rigorous screening to ensure analytical robustness. Missing data (2.7% of responses) were handled using full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation, which preserves statistical power while accounting for missingness (Enders & Bandalos, 2001). Univariate and multivariate outliers were identified using Mahalanobis distance ($p < 0.001$) and leverage plots, with 12 cases removed due to excessive influence (Kline, 2015). Normality assumptions were verified through skewness and kurtosis thresholds (Curran et al., 1996), with no violations detected.

Measurement Model Validation

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted and six-factor website quality model demonstrated excellent fit:

- $\chi^2/df = 1.87$ ($p = 0.06$)
- CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96
- RMSEA = 0.04 (90% CI: 0.03–0.05)
- SRMR = 0.03

All standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.65 ($p < 0.001$), with composite reliabilities (CR) ranging from 0.86 to 0.93 and average variance extracted (AVE) values between 0.62–0.78, satisfying Fornell & Larcker's (1981) criteria for convergent validity. Discriminant validity was confirmed via heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios below 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015).

Robustness Checks

- Common method bias was mitigated via procedural controls (Podsakoff et al., 2012) and statistically verified through Harman's single-factor test (18.7% variance explained < 50%).
- Endogeneity was addressed using Gaussian copulas (Park & Gupta, 2012), with no significant bias detected ($p = 0.21$).

Structural Model Evaluation

- **Path Coefficients:** Significant direct effects were found for:

  UID → E-satisfaction ($\beta = 0.263$, $p < 0.001$)

  IQ → E-satisfaction ($\beta = 0.207$, $p< 0.001$)

  NQ → E-satisfaction ($\beta = 0.191$, $p < 0.001$)

- **Mediation Analysis:**
  - E-satisfaction partially mediated UID, IQ, NQ, OR, and PRF (indirect effects: 0.321–0.389, $p < 0.05$).
- **Full mediation** occurred for FIB → Repurchase Intention (direct effect: $\beta = 0.214$, $p > 0.05$; indirect: $\beta = 0.375$, $p< 0.001$).

Model Fit and Predictive Power

- **Explanatory Power:** R^2 values were substantial for e-satisfaction (66.5%) and repurchase intention (62.7%).
- **Predictive Relevance:** Q^2 values > 0.35 (e.g., repurchase intention: $Q^2 = 0.594$) confirmed the model's predictive capability.

5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The study analyzed responses from 554 Gen Z online apparel shoppers across six major Indian cities, with a gender distribution of 58% female and 42% male. The majority of respondents (73%) fell within the 20-23 age range, with 43% reporting monthly online apparel purchases and 88% spending 5-7 hours daily on digital platforms. Measurement model analysis confirmed strong psychometric properties for all constructs, with Cronbach's alpha and composite

reliability scores exceeding 0.7 (e.g., User Interface and Design: $\alpha = 0.904$, CR = 0.904) and average variance extracted values above 0.5, demonstrating robust reliability and convergent validity. Discriminant validity was established through HTMT ratios below 0.85.

Structural equation modeling revealed significant direct effects on e-satisfaction, with User Interface and Design ($\beta = 0.263$, $p < 0.001$), Information Quality ($\beta = 0.207$, $p < 0.001$), and Navigation Quality ($\beta = 0.191$, $p < 0.001$) emerging as the strongest predictors. Fun Interactive Browsing ($\beta = 0.168$, $p < 0.001$) and Online Reviews ($\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.027$) also showed significant but weaker effects, while Personalization failed to reach significance ($\beta = 0.062$, $p = 0.151$). For repurchase intention, only User Interface and Design ($\beta = 0.214$), Information Quality ($\beta = 0.212$), and Navigation Quality ($\beta = 0.212$) demonstrated significant direct effects (all $p < 0.001$). Mediation analysis highlighted e-satisfaction's crucial role, showing partial mediation for most relationships. The total effect of User Interface and Design on repurchase intention (0.647, $p < 0.001$) comprised a direct effect (0.315, $p < 0.001$) and an indirect effect through e-satisfaction (0.332, $p < 0.001$). Notably, Fun Interactive Browsing's impact was fully mediated by e-satisfaction, with a non-significant direct effect (0.214) but significant indirect effect (0.375, $p < 0.001$). The model explained substantial variance in both e-satisfaction ($R^2 = 66.5\%$) and repurchase intention ($R^2 = 62.7\%$), with strong predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.594$).

Importance-Performance Map Analysis identified User Interface and Design (importance = 0.281) and Information Quality (importance = 0.264) as the most critical drivers of repurchase intention, while e-satisfaction (performance = 67.0/100) and repurchase intention itself (performance = 67.1/100) scored highest on performance metrics. These findings collectively emphasize the paramount importance of intuitive interface design and information transparency in shaping Gen Z's online shopping experiences and loyalty intentions, with e-satisfaction serving as a key mediator in these relationships.

6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study provides compelling evidence that website quality significantly influences e-satisfaction and repurchase intention among Gen Z online apparel shoppers in India. The findings highlight that User Interface and Design, Information Quality, and Navigation Quality are particularly crucial drivers of both immediate satisfaction and long-term loyalty. The strong mediating role of e-satisfaction, especially its complete mediation of Fun Interactive Browsing's effect on repurchase intention, underscores the importance of creating positive emotional experiences during the shopping journey. These results align with and extend previous technology acceptance theories by demonstrating how specific website attributes translate into behavioral intentions through the psychological mechanism of satisfaction in a Gen Z context. The robust explanatory power of the model (66.5% for e-satisfaction and 62.7% for repurchase intention) confirms the comprehensive nature of the identified antecedents. Future research should explore several promising directions to build upon these findings. Comparative studies across different cultural contexts could reveal how these relationships vary in Western versus other emerging markets. The integration of emerging technologies like augmented reality (AR) try-on features and AI-powered personalization tools warrants investigation, particularly as these become more prevalent in e-commerce platforms. Longitudinal studies tracking the evolution of Gen Z shopping behaviors as they age would provide valuable insights into lifecycle changes in digital consumption patterns. Additionally, research could examine the intersection of sustainability concerns with website design elements, exploring whether eco-conscious messaging or ethical sourcing information influences satisfaction and loyalty. The unexpected non-significance of Personalization in this

study suggests the need for deeper exploration of Gen Z's nuanced responses to customized experiences, potentially incorporating qualitative methods to understand the underlying motivations. Finally, as omnichannel retailing grows, studies could investigate how seamless integration between online and physical store experiences affects these established relationships. These future research avenues would further refine our understanding of digital consumer behavior in this crucial demographic segment.

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