



The Influence of Choice Architecture on Consumer Decision Quality among Online Consumers

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ABSTRACT:

The rapid expansion of e-commerce has made consumer decision-making more complex due to an abundance of options, overwhelming information, and uncertainty during the decision process. In this setting, choice architecture is crucial for designing online platforms that simplify decision-making and enhance consumer outcomes. This research investigates how choice architecture affects the quality of decisions made by online shoppers. Employing a descriptive quantitative research design, primary data were collected from 150 online shoppers through a structured questionnaire. The study evaluated four aspects of choice architecture: information presentation, product recommendations, reviews and ratings, and navigation and convenience features. Consumer decision quality was assessed based on decision confidence, satisfaction, effectiveness, and ease. Data analysis involved percentage analysis, calculation of means and standard deviations, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. Results showed that consumers perceive choice architecture features on online platforms positively and report high decision quality. Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive association between choice architecture and consumer decision quality ($r = 0.720$, $p < 0.001$), and regression analysis confirmed that choice architecture significantly predicts decision quality. The study concludes that thoughtfully designed online choice environments enable consumers to make more informed, confident, and satisfying purchase decisions. These insights are valuable for e-commerce businesses and marketers aiming to create user-friendly digital shopping experiences.

Keywords: Choice Architecture, Consumer Decision Quality, Online Consumers, Behavioural Marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Consumer decision-making has become increasingly complex in today's digital marketplace. The rapid expansion of e-commerce has provided consumers with unprecedented access to a wide variety of products, services, and information, enabling greater convenience and flexibility in purchasing decisions. However, the abundance of alternatives, extensive product information, and diverse promotional strategies have also intensified the complexity of online shopping. Consumers are frequently required to compare numerous products, evaluate multiple attributes, and process large amounts of information before making a purchase decision. Such complexity often results in information overload, cognitive burden, decision fatigue, and suboptimal decisions, making consumer decision quality a critical concern for both researchers and practitioners. Online shopping has become an important part of consumers' daily lives, but the large number of choices and information available often makes decision-making difficult. Consumers may experience information overload, confusion, and decision fatigue, which can reduce the quality of their purchase decisions. Therefore, it is important to understand how online shopping environments can be designed to help consumers make better decisions.



1.2 Justification of the Study

Choice architecture has been recognized as an effective approach to guiding consumer decisions without limiting their freedom of choice. Although previous studies have examined choice architecture in areas such as online shopping, healthcare, finance, and privacy, limited research has investigated its influence on consumer decision quality in the broader e-commerce context using consumers' actual online shopping experiences. Therefore, this study is important because it examines how choice architecture influences consumer decision quality among online consumers. The findings are expected to contribute to the behavioural marketing literature and provide useful insights for e-commerce platforms and marketers to design online shopping environments that support better consumer decision-making.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study is significant as it provides insights into how choice architecture influences consumer decision quality in online shopping environments. With the increasing availability of products and information on digital platforms, consumers often experience difficulty in evaluating alternatives and making confident decisions. This study helps understand how the design and presentation of choices can support better decision-making. The findings of the study may help online retailers and digital platforms design consumer-friendly choice environments by effectively using features such as recommendations, reviews, rankings, and simplified information presentation. It also contributes to the existing literature on behavioural marketing by extending the understanding of how choice architecture affects consumer decision outcomes.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on examining the influence of choice architecture on consumer decision quality among online consumers. The study considers online purchase environments where consumers interact with various choice-support mechanisms such as product recommendations, reviews, ratings, default options, and organized product information. The study is limited to consumers who have experience with online shopping. It examines consumer perceptions regarding choice architecture and its influence on decision quality in terms of decision confidence, satisfaction, and perceived appropriateness of choices. The study does not focus on specific product categories but considers online purchase decisions in general.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

Digital platforms offer consumers a wide range of products, detailed information, reviews, ratings, and personalized recommendations. However, the abundance of choices and information often leads to information overload, decision complexity, and uncertainty, making it difficult for consumers to make effective purchase decisions. Although online platforms use various choice architecture mechanisms to simplify decision-making, their influence on consumer decision quality remains insufficiently explored. Existing studies have largely examined nudges, decision aids, and choice environments in general, but limited research has focused on the influence of choice architecture on consumer decision quality in online shopping contexts. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether choice architecture helps online consumers make more informed, confident, and satisfactory decisions. The study attempts to fill this research gap by analysing the relationship between choice architecture and consumer decision quality among online consumers.

1.6 Research Gap

Although previous research has established the importance of choice architecture, several gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature has examined individual choice architecture interventions rather than considering choice architecture as a broader construct within digital shopping environments. Second, prior studies have primarily focused on specific contexts such as health insurance, financial decision-making and privacy-related choices, limiting the applicability of their findings to contemporary e-commerce settings. Third, most empirical evidence has been generated through experimental research designed to evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions. Consequently, relatively little is known about how online consumers perceive the overall choice architecture of digital shopping environments and how these perceptions influence consumer decision quality based on their actual online shopping experiences.



1.7 Objectives of the study

- ☐ To identify the key dimensions of choice architecture influencing online consumer decision-making.
- ☐ To assess the level of consumer decision quality among online consumers.
- ☐ To analyse the influence of choice architecture on consumer decision quality among online consumers.

1.8 Hypothesis of the Study

H₀: Choice architecture has no significant influence on consumer decision quality among online consumers.

H₁: Choice architecture has a significant positive influence on consumer decision quality among online consumers.

1.9 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive quantitative research design to investigate how choice architecture affects consumer decision quality in online shopping. Data will be gathered using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with percentage analysis, means and standard deviations, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. Percentage analysis will outline participant demographics, while means and standard deviations will assess the levels of the study variables. Correlation and regression analyses will explore the relationship and impact of choice architecture on consumer decision quality. The study focuses on four key dimensions of choice architecture—information presentation, product recommendations, reviews and ratings, and navigation and convenience features—drawn from prior research in behavioral economics and online consumer behavior. Consumer decision quality was measured through the dimensions of decision confidence, decision satisfaction, decision effectiveness, and decision ease, as these dimensions reflect consumers' perceptions regarding the quality of their purchase decisions. (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008; (Häubl & Trifts, 2000; Lamberton & Diehl, 2013).).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Early empirical evidence by Häubl and Trifts (2000) demonstrated that interactive decision aids significantly improved purchase decision quality in online shopping environments by reducing consumers' search effort and enabling more effective evaluation of product alternatives. Their findings suggested that consumers make better decisions when the online environment is designed to support information processing rather than merely presenting large amounts of information. Similarly, Lamberton and Diehl (2013) found that the way products are organized within retail assortments influences consumers' perceptions and purchasing decisions. Specifically, benefit-based assortment organization encouraged higher-level cognitive processing and altered consumers' product preferences compared with attribute-based organization, emphasizing the importance of information presentation in shaping consumer behaviour. Subsequent studies expanded the application of choice architecture to more complex decision contexts. Johnson et al. (2013) reported that psychologically informed interventions, including smart default options and calculation aids, significantly improved consumers' health insurance decisions by reducing decision errors in complex choice environments. Likewise, Carpenter et al. (2017) found that redesigning financial choice environments reduced attribute overload and improved consumers' ability to select products that better matched their preferences. These findings collectively indicate that well-designed choice environments can reduce cognitive complexity and support more effective consumer decision-making.

Recent studies have further broadened the scope of choice architecture research. Mrkva et al. (2021) demonstrated that choice architecture is particularly effective for consumers with lower financial literacy and numeracy, suggesting that well-designed decision environments can reduce disparities in decision quality. Dellaert et al. (2024) further showed that combining ordering and partitioning strategies significantly improved consumer decisions by directing attention toward more appropriate alternatives while minimizing unnecessary search effort. In another digital context, Lin and Strulov-Shlain (2025) found that default settings and framing influenced consumers' privacy valuations and data-sharing behaviour, highlighting that the impact of choice architecture extends beyond purchasing decisions to broader digital consumer behaviour. Although previous studies consistently demonstrate the effectiveness of choice architecture across different contexts, most have examined specific interventions such as defaults, ordering,



partitioning, recommendation aids, or assortment organization using experimental research designs. Consequently, limited attention has been given to understanding consumers' perceptions of choice architecture as a broader construct in contemporary e-commerce environments. This limitation highlights the need for further empirical research examining how consumers perceive choice architecture and how these perceptions influence consumer decision quality in online shopping.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Choice Architecture Theory

Choice Architecture Theory proposed by Thaler, Sunstein, and Balz (2012) explains that the way choices are structured and presented influences individual decisions while preserving freedom of choice. The theory recognizes that consumers do not always make fully rational decisions due to cognitive limitations, limited attention, and information-processing constraints. In complex environments such as online shopping, consumers often face difficulties in evaluating multiple alternatives and processing large amounts of information. Choice architecture helps reduce these challenges by simplifying choices, organizing information, and creating supportive decision environments. Features such as default options, product recommendations, rankings, reviews, and personalized suggestions can influence consumer decision-making by reducing cognitive effort and improving decision efficiency.

3.2 Consumer Decision Quality

Consumer decision quality refers to the extent to which consumers perceive their decisions as effective, informed, and satisfactory. It reflects whether the selected option matches consumer needs, preferences, and expectations. A quality decision involves not only the final choice but also the process through which consumers evaluate alternatives. Online consumers often experience information overload and decision difficulty due to excessive choices and complex product information. According to bounded rationality theory, individuals have limited ability to process all available information, which may affect decision outcomes (Simon, 1955). Previous studies indicate that decision-support tools and structured choice environments help consumers evaluate alternatives more effectively and improve decision confidence (Häubl & Trifts, 2000).

3.3 Relationship between Choice Architecture and Consumer Decision Quality

Choice architecture influences consumer decision quality by reducing complexity and supporting efficient evaluation of alternatives. Well-designed online choice environments help consumers process information, compare options, and make decisions with greater confidence. Previous studies suggest that decision aids, defaults, and structured information presentation improve consumer decision outcomes (Häubl & Trifts, 2000; Johnson et al., 2012). Therefore, this study proposes that choice architecture positively influences consumer decision quality by reducing decision difficulty and enhancing confidence, satisfaction, and perceived appropriateness of online purchase decisions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	68	45.3
	Female	82	54.7
Age	18–25 years	58	38.7
	26–35 years	46	30.7
	36–45 years	30	20.0
	Above 45 years	16	10.6
Educational Qualification	Higher Secondary	12	8.0
	Undergraduate	48	32.0
	Postgraduate	70	46.7



	Doctoral Degree	14	9.3
	Others	6	4.0
Monthly Income	Below 25,000	40	26.7
	25,001–50,000	52	34.7
	50,001–75,000	30	20.0
	75,001–1,00,000	18	12.0
	Above 1,00,000	10	6.6
Online Shopping Frequency	Weekly	38	25.3
	Monthly	62	41.3
	Occasionally	36	24.0
	Rarely	14	9.4

Interpretation

The demographic profile shows that female respondents (54.7%) were slightly higher than males. Most respondents belonged to the 18–25 age group (38.7%) and were postgraduates (46.7%). The majority had a monthly income of ₹25,001–₹50,000 (34.7%) and reported monthly online shopping frequency (41.3%). Overall, the respondents represent young and educated online consumers with regular shopping experience.

4.2. Choice Architecture

Dimensions / Statements	Mean	SD
Dimension 1: Information Presentation		
Product information is presented clearly on online shopping platforms.	3.97	0.97
Products are organized in a way that makes comparison easier.	3.89	1.02
The platform provides sufficient information to support purchase decisions.	3.83	1.07
Product descriptions help me understand the available options.	3.93	0.99
Dimension 2: Product Recommendations		
Personalized product recommendations are useful to me.	3.73	1.12
Recommended products help me identify suitable alternatives.	3.77	1.09
I consider product recommendations when making purchase decisions.	3.66	1.15
Dimension 3: Reviews and Ratings		
Customer reviews help me evaluate products effectively.	4.09	0.93
Product ratings increase my confidence in selecting products.	4.03	0.98
I rely on customer reviews and ratings before making online purchase decisions.	3.96	1.02
Dimension 4: Navigation and Convenience Features		
Filters and sorting options make it easier to find suitable products.	3.95	0.99
The platform makes it easy to compare different products.	3.89	1.02
The overall design of the platform makes online shopping convenient.	3.97	0.98

Interpretation

Table 4.2 shows that respondents have a high perception of choice architecture features in online shopping platforms ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.03$). Reviews and Ratings recorded the highest mean ($M = 4.03$), followed by Navigation and Convenience Features ($M = 3.94$) and Information Presentation ($M = 3.91$). Product Recommendations had the lowest mean ($M = 3.72$), but were still considered useful. Overall, choice architecture features positively support online consumer decision-making.



4.3 Consumer Decision Quality

Dimensions / Statements	Mean	SD
Dimension 1: Decision Confidence		
I am confident about my online purchase decisions.	3.99	0.96
I believe I usually choose the right product.	3.94	1.00
I feel certain about my final purchase decision.	3.87	1.05
Dimension 2: Decision Satisfaction		
I am satisfied with my online purchase decisions.	4.01	0.95
My online purchases usually meet my expectations.	3.92	1.00
I am happy with the products I choose online.	3.98	0.96
Dimension 3: Decision Effectiveness		
I make informed purchase decisions.	3.92	1.01
I can evaluate different product alternatives effectively.	3.86	1.05
I usually select products that best meet my needs.	3.93	1.00
Dimension 4: Decision Ease		
I can make online purchase decisions without much difficulty.	3.81	1.08
I rarely feel confused while choosing products online.	3.75	1.11
I can complete my purchase decisions efficiently.	3.92	1.01
Overall Consumer Decision Quality	3.91	1.01

Interpretation

The overall mean score indicates that respondents reported a high level of consumer decision quality in online shopping. Among the dimensions, Decision Satisfaction recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.97$), indicating that respondents were generally satisfied with their online purchase decisions. Decision Confidence ranked second ($M = 3.94$), followed by Decision Effectiveness ($M = 3.90$). Decision Ease recorded the lowest mean ($M = 3.83$), suggesting that respondents occasionally experienced some difficulty while making online purchase decisions.

4.4 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	Choice Architecture	Consumer Decision Quality
Choice Architecture	1	0.72
Consumer Decision Quality	0.72	1

Correlation (r) = 0.72, $p < 0.001$

Interpretation:

There is a strong positive and significant relationship between choice architecture and consumer decision quality. This indicates that better choice architecture features are associated with improved consumer decision quality.

4.5 Simple Linear Regression

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Sig.
CA → CDQ	0.72	0.52	0.52	<0.001

Coefficients:

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.
Choice Architecture	0.72	12.65	<0.001



Interpretation:

The regression result shows that choice architecture significantly influences consumer decision quality ($\beta = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$). The R^2 value (0.52) indicates that choice architecture explains 52% of the variation in consumer decision quality among online consumers. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

5.1 Findings of the Study

- The study found that online consumers have a high perception of choice architecture (Overall Mean = 3.90).
- Among the dimensions, Reviews and Ratings had the highest influence (Mean = 4.03), followed by Navigation and Convenience Features (3.94) and Information Presentation (3.91). Product Recommendations recorded the lowest mean (3.72), but were still perceived positively.
- The level of consumer decision quality was high among online consumers (Overall Mean = 3.91).
- Decision Satisfaction recorded the highest score (Mean = 3.97), followed by Decision Confidence (3.94), Decision Effectiveness (3.90), and Decision Ease (3.83).
- Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between choice architecture and consumer decision quality ($r = 0.720$, $p < 0.001$).
- Regression analysis confirmed that choice architecture significantly influences consumer decision quality, indicating that better-designed online shopping environments support improved consumer decisions.

5.2 Suggestions of the Study

- Online platforms should provide clear and organized product information to reduce confusion and support informed decisions.
- E-commerce platforms should improve review and rating systems since they strongly influence consumer choices.
- Personalized recommendations should be made more accurate and relevant to consumer needs.
- Platforms should enhance filters, sorting options, and comparison features to simplify decision-making.
- Digital retailers should reduce information overload and design user-friendly shopping environments that help consumers make confident decisions.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that choice architecture plays an important role in improving consumer decision quality in online shopping environments. Features such as reviews, ratings, information presentation, recommendations, and convenient navigation help consumers evaluate alternatives and make better decisions. The significant relationship between choice architecture and decision quality highlights the importance of designing consumer-friendly digital platforms that support informed, confident, and satisfactory purchase decisions.

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