

HOW BRAND IMAGE, BRAND REPUTATION, AND DISCOUNT FRAMING AFFECT VIETNAMESE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR ON E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS

OS EFEITOS DA ESTRUTURA DE DESCONTOS, DA REPUTAÇÃO DA MARCA E DA IMAGEM DA MARCA NO COMPORTAMENTO DO CONSUMIDOR EM PLATAFORMAS DE COMÉRCIO ELETRÔNICO

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Vu Thi Thanh Binh*

*VNU University of Economics and Business, Hanoi
Hanoi, 100000, Vietnam

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5139-5776>
vttbinh@vnu.edu.vn

Robert C. Rickards**

**German Police University
Münster, Germany

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6625-9133>
robert.rickards@dhpol.de

Pham Thi Thu Huyen***

***Mydico Company
Hanoi, Vietnam

huyenphamvb2@gmail.com

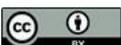
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Abstract

E-commerce has become a dominant form of retail globally, reshaping consumer behavior and marketing strategies. In emerging markets such as Vietnam, the rapid growth of digital platforms presents both opportunities and challenges for understanding customer decision-making. This study investigates the effects of discount framing, brand image, and brand reputation on customer behavior in online shopping contexts. It gathered data from 289 respondents who actively use e-commerce platforms via a structured questionnaire. After assessing their quality, the study employed them to test various hypotheses developed from marketing literature. The findings reveal that discount framing and brand image significantly and positively influence customer behavior, while brand reputation shows no statistical effect. These results suggest that promotional strategies and visual brand perceptions play a more decisive role than reputation in shaping online purchasing decisions in Vietnam. The study contributes to the literature by extending behavioral theories to e-commerce environments in a developing economy. It also has practical implications for

Resumo

O comércio eletrônico tornou-se uma forma dominante de varejo em todo o mundo, remodelando o comportamento do consumidor e as estratégias de marketing. Em mercados emergentes como o Vietnã, o rápido crescimento das plataformas digitais apresenta tanto oportunidades quanto desafios para compreender a tomada de decisão dos clientes. Este estudo investiga os efeitos da estrutura de descontos, da imagem da marca e da reputação da marca sobre o comportamento do consumidor em contextos de compras online. Utilizando uma abordagem quantitativa, um questionário estruturado foi aplicado a 289 respondentes que realizam compras ativamente em plataformas de comércio eletrônico. Os dados foram analisados por meio de testes e testes de hipóteses. Os resultados revelam que a estrutura de descontos e a imagem da marca influenciam de forma significativa e positiva o comportamento do consumidor, enquanto a reputação da marca não apresenta efeito estatisticamente significativo. Esses achados sugerem que as estratégias promocionais e as percepções visuais da marca desempenham um



platform developers and vendors seeking to optimize marketing strategies and enhance consumer engagement.

Keywords: Brand Image. Brand Reputation. Customer Behavior. Discount Framing. E-commerce.

papel mais decisivo do que a reputação na formação das ações de compra online. O estudo contribui para a literatura ao ampliar as teorias comportamentais para ambientes de comércio eletrônico em economias em desenvolvimento e fornece implicações práticas para que desenvolvedores de plataformas e vendedores otimizem suas estratégias de marketing e aumentem o engajamento do consumidor.

Palavras-chave: Imagem da Marca. Reputação da Marca. Comportamento do Consumidor. Estrutura de Descontos. Comércio Eletrônico.

1 INTRODUCTION

The emergence and rapid growth of online commerce (e-commerce) and online shopping platforms in recent years have dramatically changed business models worldwide. E-commerce is now the mainstream of global commerce, and Vietnam is no exception. Big names such as Alibaba, Lazada, Amazon, and Shopee, along with the decisive entry of domestic online shopping platforms such as Sendo and Tiki, offer opportunities for sellers and buyers alike. By offering customers more attractive options, suppliers and vendors can boost business and increase profits. According to a report by Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company (2021), 53% of the population was already making online purchases, and the country's e-commerce market grew by 20% to reach 16 billion USD. This development has made the digital marketing battle more competitive, especially for businesses with customer relationships.

E-commerce is the activity of buying or selling products via online services or over the internet. It usually takes place on e-commerce platforms. These platforms are web-based applications that allow businesses to conduct online transactions and interact with their customers through the internet (Nawi, Al Mamun, Md Nasir, and Rahman (2022). Various factors have driven their development, including mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, Internet marketing, online transaction processing, electronic data interchange, inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems.

Among the advantages e-commerce platforms offer businesses are increased reach, improved customer service, and reduced costs. For example, they enable businesses to service a global market without establishing physical stores in different

locations (Hussain *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, such sales platforms allow companies to offer personalized customer service through chatbots and other automated tools. Besides eliminating the need for brick-and-mortar businesses, e-commerce platforms furthermore help reduce transaction costs such as broker fees, commissions, and taxes, as well as the time, effort, and resources spent gathering information or enforcing agreements.

Suppliers in online retailing also continuously research and develop solutions to attract customers and increase sales. Three variables previously studied affecting consumer behavior in diverse settings in this regard are brand reputation, brand image, and discount framing (Kuo, Liu, & Shen, 2024; Simjanović, Zdravković, & Vesić, 2022; Tarmizi, Roslina, & Husna, 2024). However, there is a lack of evidence from Vietnam, a developing nation transitioning to a more market-oriented economy with a growing prevalence of online shopping. An investigation of the effects of the three variables on Vietnamese purchasing behavior should therefore be useful to all stakeholders involved.

In exploring these effects, this study contributes to customer behavior theory in two ways. First, in contrast to prior research focused primarily on offline shopping habits, this study investigates customer behavior in the context of e-commerce platforms. Second, it fills a gap in the literature by examining, measuring, and testing brand reputation, brand image, and discount framing as variables on online customer purchasing practices.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Customer behavior

Customer behavior is a key issue in marketing that relates not only to traditional commerce but also to e-commerce. In the modern business landscape, understanding consumer habits is critical for companies' success (Khawaja, Ali, & Mostapha, 2021). One can describe actual behavior purchasing conduct that is influenced by an individual's desire to attitudes and desire to act (Liu, Segev, & Villar, 2017). It furthermore refers to how people spend their time, financial resources, and effort buying products or services. Marketers undoubtedly can affect this decision by supplying information about their products or services that conditions a consumer's evaluation process (Slamet, Prasetyo, & Azmala, 2022). Understanding buyers' purchasing decisions requires marketing

managers to comprehend consumption patterns as well as the perceived benefits of and services from the customer perspective (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 2001). According to previous investigations, numerous factors influence purchase decisions, including brand reputation (Agmeka, Wathoni, & Santoso, 2019; Slamet *et al.*, 2022), brand image (Djatkiko & Pradana, 2016; Slamet *et al.*, 2022), and discount framing (Agmeka *et al.*, 2019; Tarmizi *et al.*, 2024).

Theory posits that in markets with information asymmetry, firms send credible signals to reduce uncertainty and influence consumer judgments (Kharouf, Lund, Krallman, & Pullig, 2020; Spence, 1973). In the branding domain, brand image and reputation act as salient signals of quality and trustworthiness, shaping how consumers infer underlying value and decide whether to make a purchase (Agmeka *et al.*, 2019; Erdem & Swait, 2008; Nyagadza, Kadembo, & Makasi, 2021). Discount framing similarly functions as a price-based signal that conveys perceived value or generosity, thereby affecting consumers' evaluative processes and behavioral responses (Bayer & Ke, 2013; Moon & Shugan, 2018; Pasek & Kasih, 2021). Recent empirical work in social commerce contexts has extended this logic, showing how signaling mechanisms mediate the processing of brand- and discount-related cues to drive purchase behavior (Xu & Jia, 2025). In e-commerce settings, studies also show that discount framing positively influences brand reputation, which in turn strengthens the path to consumer purchase (Tarmizi *et al.*, 2024). Taken together, signaling theory thus offers a robust framework for conceptualizing how brand messaging and promotional framing jointly channel actual customer behavior.

2.2 Brand image

The importance of e-commerce platforms has increased sharply in modern marketing (Islam & Rahman, 2017). The concept of brand image plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior and purchase decisions (Zhang, 2015). Brand image refers consumers' perception of it (Haverila, McLaughlin, Haverila, & Viskovics, 2021). This perception includes knowledge, feelings, and beliefs that a person has about a product or organization. It is what an individual knows, can describe, and remembers with regard to a good, service, or entity. These things a consumer associates with the brand are termed the brand's image (Agmeka *et al.*, 2019). This brand image constitutes a crucial intangible

asset (Martínez, Pérez, & Del Bosque, 2014). Two fundamental components of brand image are its functional and expressive dimensions. The former aspect involves observable and physical properties, while the latter feature concerns psychological feelings and attitudes (Agmeka *et al.* (2019).

In e-commerce, recent studies have highlighted the importance of measuring brand image on digital platforms (Chiang & Jang, 2007). Companies, therefore, must build positive images of both their e-commerce platforms (Al-Dwairi, Harb, & Shehabat, 2020) and products (Kim, Kim, Corner, & Yoon, 2019). Accordingly, they pursue such strategies as providing better value for money, offering unique product attributes, and otherwise differentiating their products from competitors (e.g., through eye-catching appearances, slogans, and logos). Companies additionally try to develop a brand association that reflects their central values, trust, humanity, and idealism through various marketing efforts, such as advertising and sales promotion (Kim *et al.*, 2019). These measures can help create a positive image of the brand in consumers' minds, which may thereby influence their purchasing decisions (Samant & Seo, 2020). Hence, marketing literature suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis H₁: Brand image has a positive impact on customer purchasing behavior.

2.3 Brand reputation

Brand reputation is another key concept in marketing and business management. On one hand, it refers to stakeholders' overall perception and evaluation of a brand (Agmeka *et al.*, 2019). On the other hand, it means the customer's perception of a product's quality in relation to the brand name (Zhang, 2015). When consumers judge a product's quality, regardless of a company's reputation, they also rely on its social standing (Martínez *et al.*, 2014). Purchasers consider brand reputation before buying well-known brands when they perceive a lower risk of product performance failure, financial loss, and social risk, as strong brands are viewed as more reliable and trustworthy (Agmeka *et al.*, 2019).

Brand reputation is also crucial in building and maintaining customer loyalty (Abbas, Mubeen, Iorember, Raza, and Mamirkulova (2021). A positive brand reputation enhances customer trust and confidence in the brand, leading to higher brand loyalty and

repeat purchase behavior. In addition, a strong brand reputation can also attract new customers and help the brand differentiate itself from its competitors. A positive reputation furthermore plays a role in crisis management, serving as a buffer against negative events or crises that might damage the brand image (Kapoor and Banerjee (2021). A well-established brand reputation can help the brand recover from such incidents more quickly and effectively, minimizing the long-term impact on brand performance and profitability.

From a marketing perspective, company reputation has a positive relationship with customer behavior. A good corporate reputation helps to increase sales performance and market share. It does so by fostering a loyal and trusting relationship between a company and its customers (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001). For their part, customers expect companies with a high reputation to develop and produce high-quality products and services (Hess Jr, 2008).

Besides that, when customers judge the quality of items, their impression is influenced by their social position (Martínez *et al.*, 2014). Consequently, brand reputation burnish a customer's social status. For example, consumers seeking to enhance their social status may try to associate themselves with a fashionable brand. Other individuals, then, may envy those consumers' privileged standard of living. Research has discovered that consumers indeed buy renowned brands to demonstrate their social position (Tarmizi *et al.*, 2024). Thus, marketing research suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis H₂: Brand reputation has a positive impact on customer purchasing behavior.

2.4 Discount framing

Discount framing is “*the use of different language and symbols to describe the discount of a product or service in marketing messages*” (McKechnie, Devlin, Ennew, and Smith (2012). Discount framing may take various forms, including percentage-off, dollar-off, free shipping, and gift-with-purchase (Kim *et al.*, 2019). Another type of discount framing is a reduction in payment speed relative to the credit period, as well as savings on prices charged to consumers that are lower than the median prices listed on product labels (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Discount framing may also entail a long-term plan to gradually cut prices after releasing a high-priced item (Janiszewski & Cunha Jr, 2004).

Discount framing can influence consumer purchasing behavior by altering the perceived value of a product, thereby shaping consumer choice (Kim *et al.*, 2019). For online products, discount framing can influence customer buying decisions by shaping the information they see, such as customer reviews, product prices, and promotions. Several studies have shown that discount framing can influence purchasing behavior by affecting customer emotions. For instance, a survey of price-cutting strategies found that percentage markdowns made customers happier than absolute dollar discounts (Park, Seo, Kim, and Ha (2018). That study also demonstrated that using the term “discount” elicited a more positive reaction from customers than using “promotion”. Furthermore, promotion positively influences customer purchasing decisions (Akbar, Ahmad, Asif, & Siddiqui, 2020; Helmi, Ariana, & Supardin, 2022).

Buyers do not feel guilty when they purchase an item at a discount frame. Consequently, cheap framing can boost product sales. Moreover, the relationship between intention and behavior may not be direct or immediate (Agmeka *et al.*, 2019). Prices that are unrelated to product performance also affect purchase intention and actual behavior (Keller, 2003; Tarmizi *et al.*, 2024). As a result, it is critical to recognize that low-cost items are more appealing to specific market segments. For example, pricing is a prominent consideration for Malaysian career women when purchasing Chinese-made household products (Hashim, Husin, Othman, and Zain (2017). In summary, price reductions stimulate consumption. So, the third hypothesis for testing is:

Hypothesis H₃: Discount framing has a positive impact on customer purchasing behavior.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data collection and analysis

The study used convenience sampling, selecting participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. The survey questionnaire was carefully structured in an online format to ensure clarity, consistency, and completeness of the collected information. The instrument was disseminated through various fanpages and online communities related to shopping activities and office-work groups. Data collection was conducted over a one-week period, during which respondents voluntarily completed

the survey. This approach enabled the study to obtain a diverse set of responses from individuals who are active in online consumer and workplace networks.

The final dataset consisted of 289 valid responses. Given that the measurement instrument included 19 items, the sample size exceeds the recommended threshold of at least 5–10 respondents per item, ensuring adequate statistical power for multivariate analysis. Prior to analysis, the data were screened for completeness and consistency. Responses with missing or invalid values were removed, resulting in a fully usable dataset for quantitative procedures. To address potential common-method bias, procedural remedies were incorporated into the questionnaire design, including item randomisation and assurance of respondent anonymity. Quantitative analytical techniques were employed, with data processing conducted using SPSS. The analysis comprised reliability assessment and an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to evaluate measurement quality, followed by hypothesis testing using correlation and multiple regression analyses.

Table 1

Demographic statistics

Characteristics	%	Characteristics	%
Gender		Income	
Male	22%	Below 7,500,000 VND	74%
Female	78%	7,500,000 – 9,999,999 VND	9%
Age		10,000,000 – 14,999,999 VND	6%
Under 24 years old	82%	15,000,000 VND or above	11%
From 25 to 34 years old	8%	Education	
Above 35 years old	10%	Higher education or below	26%
Marital status		Vocational/College diploma	9%
Single	82%	Bachelor's/Engineering degree	47%
Married	18%	Master's degree or above	17%

3.2 Variable measurement

The measurement constructs employed in this study were adapted from validated scales in prior research. In particular, the scales for shopping intention, discount framing, brand reputation, and brand image were adopted from Agmeka *et al.* (2019), who themselves built upon earlier works by Wee *et al.* (2014), McKechnie *et al.* (2012), and

Waddington (2011). Discount framing, brand reputation, and brand image were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, whereas customer behavior was measured on a 7-point Likert scale. Operational measurement items for all variables are presented in Table 2.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1 with the mean and standard deviation of all items measuring variables.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of variables

Variable	Code	Items	Scale	Mean	Std. Dev.
Discount Framing	DF1	I shop from e-commerce that give discounts on products that they sell	1-5	4.23	.971
	DF3	I shop from e-commerce that does not discount the product they sell.	1-5	3.91	1.040
	DF4	I shop from e-commerce because the store gives lower prices than the physical store.	1-5	4.01	.948
Brand Reputation	BR1	E-commerce platforms are trustworthy.	1-5	3.53	.882
	BR2	E-commerce platforms are reputable.	1-5	3.20	.903
	BR3	E-commerce platforms make honest claims.	1-5	3.19	.884
	BR4	E-commerce platforms are reliable.	1-5	3.07	.895
	BR5	I shop from e-commerce that offers affordable prices.	1-5	3.38	.993
Brand Image	BI1	Each e-commerce platform has a differentiated image in comparison with the other platform.	1-5	3.60	.971
	BI2	Being able to order by phone makes me interested in using P2P online transportation since I am accustomed to making phone calls.	1-5	3.69	.946
	BI3	E-commerce platforms have a clean image.	1-5	3.48	.928
	BI4	E-commerce platforms are well-established e-commerce.	1-5	3.51	.886
	BI5	E-commerce platforms arouse my sympathy to purchase the product.	1-5	3.57	.914
	CB1	I often buy products from e-commerce platforms.	1-7	4.96	1.456

Customer Behavior	CB2	I often buy products from e-commerce platforms because they are easy to use.	1-7	5.03	1.511
	CB3	I often buy products from e-commerce platforms because they are more convenient.	1-7	5.15	1.427
	CB4	I often buy products from e-commerce platforms for my needs.	1-7	5.04	1.461
	CB5	I often buy products from e-commerce platforms because they are safe to use.	1-7	4.31	1.385

Note: DF2 is a marker for common-method bias, which was eliminated in the reliability test.

This study examines measurement quality using a reliability test and EFA. The reliability test uses the Cronbach alpha (α) coefficient, which ranges from 0.6 to 0.9 to demonstrate the reliable measurement, and the variable-total correlation coefficient greater than 0.3 can accept the indicator (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Vaske, Beaman, & Sponarski, 2017). The EFA is a technique for reducing data to a smaller set of summary variables and investigating the underlying theoretical structure of the phenomenon. In this study, the EFA employed the principal component method with varimax rotation. Table 3 presents the results of the measurement quality test.

Table 3

The results of measurement quality tests

Variable	Cronbach's α	No. of items	KMO	Bartlett's Test	Sig.
Customer behavior	.900	5	.859	952.4	.000
<i>Independent variables</i>			.888	1559.03	.000
Discount framing	.729	3			
Brand reputation	.838	5			
Brand image	.811	5			

Table 3 illustrates the examination results of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of research variables. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients all exceed 0.6, indicating all measures of variables are reliable. No variables failed the standards and were not included in the model since no factors were discovered during analysis with coefficients less than 0.6. The factor group Cronbach's Alpha, which runs from 0.3 to 0.9, is also lower than the overall correlation coefficient. The factors are thus included in the study and have statistical significance. The EFA results for the independent variables, with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.888 (sig. = 0.000), indicate three factors with a total variance of 62.48%. For the dependent variable, only one factor in the EFA analysis with

KMO is 0.859 (sig. = 0.000), and the total variance extracted is 71.81%. These EFA results indicate the fit relationship between respondents and the variables. The KMO test assesses sampling adequacy with a recommended threshold of 0.5 or higher (Field, 2009; Kaiser, 1974), indicating the fit of the dataset with the theoretical model. The latent variables are calculated, including customer behavior (BEH), brand image (BRI), brand reputation (BRR), and discount frame (DIF).

The hypothesis tests include correlation analysis and multivariate regression analysis. According to the correlation study, there is a strong linear correlation at the 99% confidence level, and the dependent and independent variables are not significant (sig = 0.000). The results of the correlation analysis between the independent variables and the dependent variable show that the dependent variable in the model has a strong relationship with the independent variables, with a significance level of 0.000. The study used multivariate linear regression to estimate the research model. The results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

The results of hypothesis tests

	Correlations				Multiple regression			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	B	Beta	t	Sig.
BEH (1)	.547**	.667**	.451**	1				
BRR (2)	.490**	.570**		1	.054	.034	.631	.528
BRI (3)	.535**		1		.890	.510	9.304	.000
DIF (4)				1	.432	.258	4.998	.000
(Constant)					-.146		-.464	.643
	R-square = .496				Adjusted R-square = .491			
	F = 93.650				Sig. = .000			

The results in Table 4 indicate the model regression. The explanatory coefficient, R-square of 0.496, shows that perceptions of discount framing, brand reputation, and brand image explain 49.6% of the variation in customer behavior. The adjusted R² of 0.491 demonstrates that the model explanation is accurate, as each additional independent variable explains an additional 0.491 times the variation. Regarding the model fit assessment, the ANOVA table using the F-test with a significance level of sig. at 0.000, less than 5%. Therefore, the regression model is appropriate for the research data, and the independent variables explain nearly 50% of the variation in customer behavior (BEH) in online shopping. Based on the multiple regression results, the p-values of brand

reputation, brand image, and discount framing are 0.528, 0.000, and 0.000, respectively. The p-values of BRI and DIF are less than 0.5 at a significance level of 5%, indicating that brand image ($B_{BRI} = 0.89$) and discount framing ($B_{DIF} = 0.432$) have statistically significant effects on online shopping behavior, and they both have a positive influence on customer behavior when shopping on online platforms. Conversely, a p-value greater than 0.5 indicates no significant statistical relationship between brand reputation and customer behavior when shopping on e-commerce platforms. The VIF values were all below the threshold of 10, indicating no multicollinearity among the independent variables in the research model. This finding suggests that, from the customer perspective, a stronger perceived influence of discount framing and brand image is associated with a greater likelihood of engaging in online shopping, as these factors positively shape consumer behavior. Huyèn *et al.* (2023) reveal that brand image, brand reputation, and discount framing have a significant effect on customers' purchase intention on e-commerce platforms; however, the findings of this research reinforce that brand image and discount framing are two determinants of actual behavior. These findings are consistent with previous results of Tarmizi *et al.* (2024) or Agmeka *et al.* (2019). To enhance brand image and customer attitudes, companies consider implementing marketing strategies, such as corporate social responsibility, to improve their image, as Bình, Thành, and Loan (2021) suggest that customers develop a positive attitude toward socially responsible firms.

The regression results indicate that discount framing and brand image exert significant and positive effects on actual online shopping behavior, whereas brand reputation does not show a statistically significant relationship with consumer behavior. With an R-square of 0.496, the model explains nearly half of the variance in customer behavior, demonstrating strong explanatory power. The good model fit (F-test, sig. = 0.000) confirms the appropriateness of the regression specification, and the absence of multicollinearity ($VIF < 10$) further ensures the validity of the estimates. These findings align well with the theoretical expectations. Prior studies posit that consumer behavior is shaped by both cognitive evaluations and affective perceptions (Engel *et al.*, 2001; Liu *et al.*, 2017). Consistent with signaling theory (Erdem & Swait, 2008), brand image and discount framing act as salient signals that reduce uncertainty, enhance perceived value, and activate consumers' evaluative and emotional responses (Bayer & Ke, 2013; Moon & Shugan, 2018). The significant effects of brand image and discount framing in the

present study reinforce these theoretical mechanisms, supporting previous findings by Agmeka *et al.* (2019), Tarmizi *et al.* (2024), and Xu and Jia (2025).

However, brand reputation does not significantly influence actual shopping behavior, contrary to its positive role in shaping purchase intention reported in earlier works (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001; Slamet *et al.*, 2022). This divergence suggests that while reputation may form part of consumers' cognitive assessments, it does not necessarily translate into behavioral outcomes in online contexts where information is abundant, and decision-making is more heavily guided by immediate cues such as visual impressions and promotional framing. This result aligns with emerging findings in digital commerce research, which indicate that brand reputation may weaken as a behavioral predictor when consumers rely more on real-time online stimuli (Al-Dwairi *et al.*, 2020; Kim *et al.*, 2019).

This study advances the literature in several ways. First, it extends signaling theory by demonstrating that not all brand-related signals exert equal influence in e-commerce settings. While brand image and price-based signals (discount framing) remain strong predictors of actual behavior, brand reputation, traditionally considered a robust signal, appears less relevant in online purchase decisions. This finding identifies a critical boundary condition for signaling theory in digital markets. Second, the study moves beyond purchase intention, which has dominated prior studies (Agmeka *et al.*, 2019; Tarmizi *et al.*, 2024), to focus on actual consumer behavior. This distinction strengthens the behavioral validity of the research and contributes to a more realistic understanding of online consumption patterns. Third, by empirically validating the relative strengths of different signals (brand image vs. brand reputation vs. discount framing), the study clarifies the hierarchical influence of brand-related cues in emerging markets, an area where empirical evidence remains limited.

The findings yield several actionable managerial implications. The results highlight that discount framing and brand image are the primary drivers of actual online shopping behavior. Firms should therefore prioritize promotional strategies that clearly communicate value, such as percentage-off discounts, time-limited offers, and visually salient price cues. Well-structured discount messages can enhance perceived savings and prompt immediate purchase decisions, especially in digital environments where consumers rely heavily on quick evaluations. Moreover, strengthening brand image remains essential for building consumer trust and emotional connection. Online platform

owners should invest in enhancing visual identity, optimizing the online shopping experience, and engaging in corporate social responsibility activities, as these have been shown to influence customer attitudes positively. Because brand reputation alone does not significantly shape actual behavior in online contexts, firms should focus less on historical prestige and more on dynamic, experience-driven branding strategies that resonate with digital consumers.

5 CONCLUSION

Online shopping is growing in popularity globally. Online shopping generates significant revenue for suppliers and benefits customers. This study examined the effects of discounts, brand reputation, and brand image on customer buying behavior on online shopping platforms in Vietnam. The study shows that brand image and discount frames positively affect customer behavior on online shopping platforms. On the other hand, it is known that brand reputation does not significantly impact online customer behavior. These research results show that stakeholders, such as platform developers and vendors, can adopt policies to develop various discount frameworks and enhance brand image. Brand image and discounts will help customers increase buying behavior from commercial brands on these platforms.

The interpretation of these findings should also consider the demographic characteristics of the sample, which consists predominantly of younger consumers with moderate income levels. This demographic segment is generally more responsive to promotional cues and digital branding, which may partly explain the strong effects of discount framing and brand image observed in the study. Consequently, the non-significant impact of brand reputation may reflect the preferences of younger shoppers, who tend to rely less on legacy brand strength and more on real-time online information. Future research could extend these insights by examining whether the effects vary across different age groups or income segments. Older consumers or higher-income shoppers may place greater emphasis on brand reputation, risk reduction, and long-term trust compared with younger consumers. Comparative analyses across demographic clusters would therefore provide a more nuanced understanding of how age and income moderate the relationships between brand signals and customer behavior in e-commerce settings.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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