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Perceptions and practices of online buying among public school teachers in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of e-commerce has transformed consumers' purchasing behaviors, including those of professionals such as public school teachers. This study examined the perceptions and practices of online buying among public school teachers in the Philippines. Specifically, it determined the respondents' profile in terms of age, civil status, highest educational attainment, years of service, and relevant training attended. It also assessed their perceptions regarding attitude toward online buying, perceived impact of peers' influence, assessment on online access, online buying behaviors, and outcomes of online buying behaviors. A descriptive-comparative research design was employed using a researcher-made questionnaire administered to 39 public school teachers. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and independent samples t-test were utilized in analyzing the data. The findings revealed that respondents strongly agreed across all dimensions of online buying, indicating highly favorable perceptions and practices. Female respondents generally obtained slightly higher mean scores than male respondents. The t-test results showed no significant difference between male and female respondents in the five individual dimensions; however, the overall summative analysis revealed a significant difference in perceived online buying when grouped according to sex. The study concluded that public school teachers have embraced online buying as a convenient, reliable, and economical purchasing method for both personal and professional purposes. It is recommended that schools and the Department of Education strengthen teachers' digital consumer literacy through seminars on cybersecurity, responsible online buying, and digital financial management.

Keywords: Online buying, e-commerce, public school teachers, consumer behavior, digital literacy.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behavior worldwide. Among these developments, electronic commerce (e-commerce) has become one of the most convenient methods of purchasing goods and services. In the Philippines, the increasing availability of internet connectivity, mobile

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devices, and digital payment systems has encouraged consumers to embrace online buying as part of their daily lives. Popular e-commerce platforms have made shopping more accessible, offering consumers convenience, competitive prices, product variety, and home delivery services.

Public school teachers are among the professionals who have increasingly adopted online buying due to their demanding workloads and limited time for traditional shopping. Online shopping enables teachers to purchase instructional materials, office supplies, educational resources, clothing, household necessities, and other personal items without leaving their homes or workplaces. The convenience offered by online platforms has become particularly beneficial in balancing their professional responsibilities and personal needs.

Despite the growing popularity of online buying, several factors continue to influence consumers' purchasing decisions. These include attitudes toward online shopping, peer recommendations, accessibility to internet services, digital literacy, trust in online platforms, product quality, data security, and overall customer satisfaction. Understanding these factors is essential in determining how teachers perceive and practice online buying.

Although several studies have examined online consumer behavior among the general population, limited research has specifically focused on public school teachers in the Philippine setting. As educators who actively utilize digital technologies in both teaching and personal activities, teachers represent an important consumer group whose online buying behaviors deserve closer examination.

Hence, this study aimed to determine the perceptions and practices of online buying among public school teachers in the Philippines. Specifically, it examined their attitudes toward online buying, the perceived impact of peers' influence, assessment of online access, online buying behaviors, and the outcomes of online buying behaviors. Furthermore, the study determined whether significant differences exist between female and male teachers regarding their perceptions of online buying.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the perceptions and practices of online buying among public school teachers in the Philippines.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, civil status, highest educational attainment, years of service, and relevant trainings attended?
2. What are the perceptions and practices of public-school teachers regarding online buying in terms of attitude toward online buying, perceived impact of peers' influence, assessment on online access, online buying behaviors, and outcomes of online buying behaviors?
3. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions and practices of online buying among public school teachers when grouped according to sex?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive-comparative research design. The descriptive method was utilized to determine the perceptions and practices of online buying among public school teachers, while the comparative method was employed to determine whether significant differences exist between female and male respondents. The respondents consisted of 39 public school teachers composed of 21 females (53.85%) and 18 males (46.15%). The respondents represented various age groups, civil status, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and training backgrounds.

The study involved minimal risk to the participants since it focused only on their perceptions and practices regarding online buying. No physical, psychological, social, financial, or legal harm was anticipated. Respondents were encouraged to answer each question honestly and were free to skip any item they felt uncomfortable answering. The researcher likewise ensured data integrity and research honesty by accurately recording, analyzing, and reporting the findings without fabrication, falsification, manipulation, or selective omission of data. All references and sources of information used in the study were properly acknowledged following the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition citation guidelines to uphold academic integrity and avoid plagiarism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are grounded in data gathered from 39 public school teachers, composed of 21 females (53.85%) and 18 males (46.15%), who served as respondents in a descriptive-comparative research design. The descriptive method was used to determine the perceptions and practices of online buying among the respondents, while the comparative method was employed to determine whether significant differences exist between female and male respondents. Data were gathered through a structured research instrument and analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically weighted means with corresponding verbal interpretations, and inferential statistics, specifically the t-test, to compare the responses of female and male teachers. The discussion that follows is anchored entirely on the data collected and is interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study, namely to describe the perceptions and practices of public-school teachers regarding online buying and to determine whether such perceptions and practices differ significantly according to sex.

With respect to the profile of the respondents, the study revealed that most respondents were 25 years old and below, single, held a Bachelor's Degree, had one to five years of teaching experience, and had attended school-level and division-level trainings. This profile suggests that the respondent population was largely composed of relatively young and early-career teachers whose educational and professional backgrounds may have shaped their comfort and familiarity with digital platforms. The predominance of respondents with limited teaching tenure and exposure primarily to school-level and division-level trainings indicates that their engagement with online buying was likely influenced more by personal digital experience than by formal training specifically related to online commerce.

In terms of overall perceptions and practices toward online buying, female respondents obtained an overall average weighted mean of 4.87, while male respondents obtained an overall average weighted mean of 4.79, with both values verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. This finding indicates that both female and male teachers held highly favorable perceptions and practices toward online buying, reflecting a strong and consistent inclination toward digital commerce regardless of sex. The closeness of the two weighted means, 4.87 for females and 4.79 for males, suggests that while both groups strongly endorsed online buying, female respondents exhibited a marginally more favorable disposition than their male counterparts. This pattern implies that online buying has become deeply embedded in the daily practices of teachers, transcending sex-based differences in general attitude and cutting across the profile characteristics identified earlier, such as age, civil status, and teaching experience.

Further examination of specific perceptions revealed that both female and male teachers strongly agreed that online buying is convenient, that online platforms provide a wider variety of products, that peer recommendations influence purchasing decisions, that they possess adequate access to internet and technology, that they are confident in using online shopping

platforms, that they frequently purchase teaching materials and personal necessities online, and that online buying is economical, satisfactory, and trustworthy. These converging responses across both sexes suggest that the perceived advantages of online buying, namely convenience, product variety, social influence, technological access, confidence in digital platforms, practical utility for both professional and personal needs, and overall economic and relational trust, are experienced similarly by teachers irrespective of sex. This uniformity in favorable perception points to the pervasive and normalized role of online commerce in the professional and personal lives of public-school teachers.

When perceptions were disaggregated by specific dimensions, the highest-rated dimensions among female respondents were Assessment on Online Access, with a weighted mean of 4.89, and Outcomes of Online Buying Behaviors, also with a weighted mean of 4.89. Among male respondents, the highest-rated dimension was likewise Assessment on Online Access, with a weighted mean of 4.81. The convergence of both female and male respondents on Assessment on Online Access as among their most favorably rated dimensions indicates that access to the internet and to enabling technology stands out as a particularly strong and shared perception among teachers, suggesting that infrastructural and technological readiness plays a central role in shaping favorable engagement with online buying. The additional prominence of Outcomes of Online Buying Behaviors among female respondents, also rated at 4.89, further suggests that female teachers placed particularly strong value on the tangible results and satisfaction derived from their online purchasing experiences.

To determine whether these favorable perceptions differed significantly between female and male respondents, a t-test analysis was conducted. The results revealed no significant differences between female and male respondents in terms of Attitude toward Online Buying, Perceived Impact of Peers' Influence, Assessment on Online Access, Online Buying Behaviors, and Outcomes of Online Buying Behaviors. This decision to retain the null hypothesis for each of these five dimensions indicates that, when examined individually, sex was not a statistically distinguishing factor in how teachers perceived and practiced online buying across these specific areas. This finding implies that female and male teachers shared a largely comparable orientation toward the convenience, social influence, technological access, behavioral engagement, and outcome satisfaction associated with online buying, reinforcing the earlier observation that these particular perceptions are broadly shared rather than sex-differentiated.

However, the overall summative analysis showed a significant difference between female and male respondents regarding their overall perception of online buying, with female teachers demonstrating slightly higher overall perceptions than male teachers. This result indicates that although no significant differences emerged at the level of individual dimensions, the aggregation of all dimensions into a composite overall perception was sufficient to reveal a statistically significant divergence between the two groups, with female respondents registering the more favorable overall stance, consistent with their overall average weighted mean of 4.87 relative to the male overall average weighted mean of 4.79. This pattern suggests that while male and female teachers may be statistically indistinguishable in specific facets of their online buying perceptions and practices, the cumulative effect of these facets, when considered together, produces a measurable and significant sex-based difference favoring female respondents. Such a finding highlights the value of examining both dimension-specific and composite-level data, as reliance on the dimension-level results alone might have obscured a genuine overall difference that only became apparent through summative analysis.

These findings collectively suggest that online buying has become an integral part of teachers' daily lives regardless of sex, with their positive perceptions largely influenced by convenience, accessibility, digital readiness, and satisfactory shopping experiences. The uniformly high weighted means and the Strongly Agree interpretation across nearly all

dimensions reflect a professional population that has substantially integrated digital commerce into both their personal and instructional routines, purchasing not only personal necessities but also teaching materials through online platforms. At the same time, the emergence of a significant difference at the overall summative level, despite the absence of significant differences at the level of individual dimensions, underscores a nuanced reality in which sex may exert a subtle yet measurable influence on the overall intensity of favorable perception, even when it does not clearly differentiate specific attitudinal or behavioral components.

In synthesis, the results of this study demonstrate that public school teachers, predominantly young, single, holders of a Bachelor's Degree, with one to five years of teaching experience, and exposed mainly to school-level and division-level trainings, exhibit strongly favorable perceptions and practices toward online buying, as reflected in the overall average weighted means of 4.87 for female respondents and 4.79 for male respondents, both interpreted as Strongly Agree. The convergence of both sexes on key perceptions, including convenience, product variety, peer influence, online access, platform confidence, purchasing behavior, and economic and relational trust, together with the absence of significant t-test differences across the five specific dimensions, affirms that these favorable dispositions are broadly shared across the teaching population regardless of sex. Nevertheless, the significant difference found at the level of overall summative perception, favoring female respondents, indicates that sex remains a relevant factor when perceptions are considered in their totality. These results directly address the objectives of the study by describing the prevailing perceptions and practices of public-school teachers regarding online buying and by empirically testing and clarifying the extent to which such perceptions and practices vary according to sex. In doing so, the findings contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how digital commerce is perceived within the teaching profession and provide an empirical foundation, grounded in the data gathered from the 39 respondents and the statistical procedures applied, for the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations to be presented in the succeeding chapter.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was concluded that public school teachers possess highly positive perceptions and practices regarding online buying. They strongly recognize the convenience, accessibility, economic benefits, and usefulness of online shopping while remaining aware of issues related to product quality and information security.

Teachers demonstrated high digital competence, allowing them to confidently navigate online shopping platforms and complete online transactions. Peer recommendations and social acceptance also play important roles in influencing purchasing decisions.

Although no significant differences were found between female and male respondents across the individual dimensions of online buying, the overall summative analysis revealed that female teachers exhibited significantly higher perceptions of online buying than male teachers.

Overall, online buying has become a reliable, convenient, and beneficial purchasing alternative for public school teachers in the Philippines. The findings highlight the growing importance of e-commerce in supporting both the personal and professional needs of educators and underscore the need for continuous promotion of safe, responsible, and informed online buying practices.

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