

# **Study of Repurchase Behaviour in Online Shoppers: A Qualitative Review, Thematic Synthesis and Research Agenda**

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## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

How to improve repurchase intention in online shoppers who have such ample choice in the ever imploding e-commerce market? What are the factors which will initiate repurchase from the same company? These questions have been studied in the last decade with some empirical and theoretical researches aiming to address the strategic drivers and dimensions influencing repurchase behaviour in online shoppers. While in recent studies the emphasis has been to examine several impacting variables, models, effects and/or consequences of on- line repurchase intent but without formulation of any consolidated framework which could unequivocally lead other academic researchers in addressing research gaps or industry practitioners in strategizing especially during dire VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity) circumstances or even for ideating new product development.

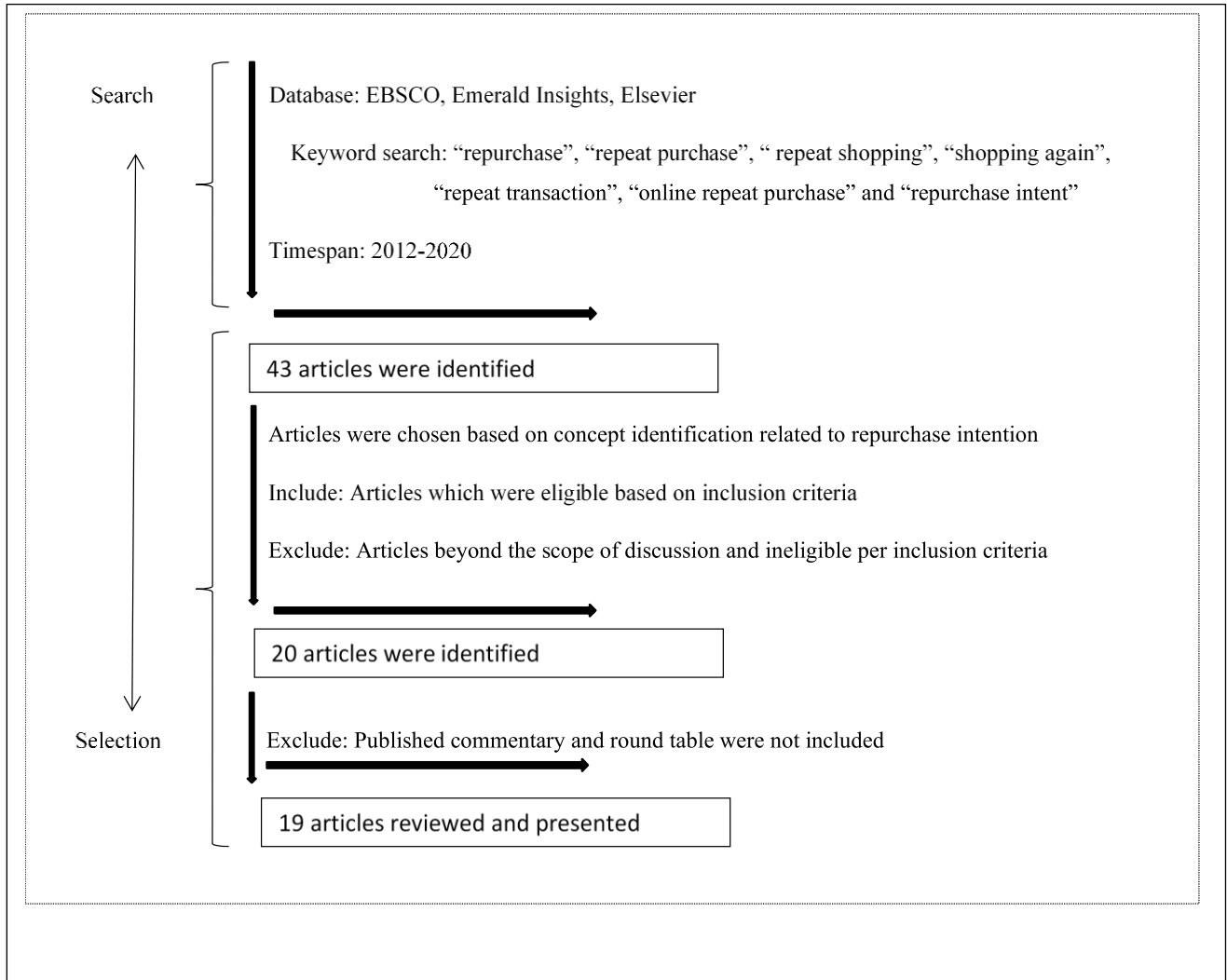
In this article we have set out to examine past research from an eight year period (2012-2020), identify relevant concepts/dimensions and thematically structuring the emerging parameters into a framework to bring to notice the different workable cores for new product ideation in industry practice and for future research development in academia. We also intended to separate the known from the unknown- what previous research answers ( what we know) and what is yet to be answered ( what we need to know).

Drawing on existing research we undertook a thorough and extensive search across various electronic databases including but not limited to Emerald Insights, EBSCO, Elsevier and Open Athens in order to build the pool of studies to be included in this qualitative thematic review. Some of the search terms included were “repurchase”, “repeat purchase”, “ repeat shopping”, “shopping again”, “repeat transaction”, “online repeat purchase” and “repurchase intent”. 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. We developed a register of prospective articles with full text copies. 43 articles were retrieved in the initial round. The retrieved articles were thoroughly read and assessed by both the authors independently to reduce bias and after an exhaustive concept based discussion, 19 empirical articles were selected for further study.

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**Figure 1:** Search and selection process (based on Gunther et. Al., 2017)

The initial round of 43 articles was followed by a thorough discussion between both authors keeping in view the conceptual background that emerged as depicted in Table 1. We worked on identifying concepts related to repurchase intention and adapted Webster and Watson approach of review synthesis methodology which is concept-centric and hence focuses deeply on the concept and not purely the author- centric approach which enlists what each author has enumerated in his published work. While both approaches are equally popular in managerial literature, the purpose of our study is focused on identifying not just what we know but also what we do not know; making it imperative to use a concept-centric approach vis-a-vis an author-centric one. After a thorough analysis of each paper, two major concepts which have been published in the last six years were identified as: antecedents of repurchase intention and consequences of repurchase intention while two “units of analysis” identified were- the buyer and the seller. Both these units are a pre-requisite for the repeat transaction to be made possible. Putting these concepts and units of analysis into a framework helped us raise 4 broad pertinent research questions as depicted in Table1.

Table 1: Repurchase intention organizing framework (*adapted from Webster and Watson 2002*)

		Concepts	
Units of analysis		Antecedents of repurchase intention ( cause)	Consequences of repurchase intention ( effects)
1	Buyer	Q1: Antecedents for buyers: why do consumers repeat a purchase?	Q2: Consequences for buyers: what are the effects for consumer post repurchase?
2	Seller	Q3: Antecedents for sellers: What is role of sellers to help a repeat purchase to take place/transact?	Q4: Consequences for sellers: what is the nature of impact of repurchase on seller's business and profitability?

Raising these questions we logically reasoned that each quadrant of Table1 deserved a separate study and framework development before an overarching umbrella framework could be synthesized rendering studying all together beyond the scope of one single study. Hence we in this article set out to address repurchase intent at the individual consumer level (unit: buyer) and not at the seller, market or industry vertical level. We in our current study are focused on reviewing the first unit of analysis (buyer) and examining the antecedents of repurchase intention for online buyers.

Our discussion explores the extant literature and identifies research gaps concerning antecedents of online repurchase intention in buyers. Specifically, it identifies five antecedents: three extending from traditional landscape to online markets while two being purely products of online markets and hence more techno- focused antecedents. The five major antecedents are: 1) perceived value (Wu et. al., 2014); 2) price perception; 3) customer satisfaction; 4) eWOM (electronic word-of mouth) (Shin et al., 2013) and 5) product delivery (Wenqian and Lee, 2018; Handayani et. al., 2020). Four moderators included 1) online shopping habit; 2) trust on seller (Li et. al., 2006); 3) switching barriers and 4) original purchase itself.

The insights from this study would benefit industry managers, consultants and practitioners to devise strategies and decision-making to enhance the repurchase intent of modern- day online shoppers. The managers should aim to enhance perceived value and customer satisfaction so that customers return to their websites to shop again. They should focus on original purchases and customer's price perceptions to devise more elaborate plans to bring the customer back for a second time. While these will enhance the customers re- purchase pattern, the organizations need to adapt, measure and support the traditional antecedents with more proactive techno-atmospheric cues like social media engagement and eWOM to increase customers repurchase intent as these have shown to have a strong bearing on customer's buying and post-purchase.

Managerially, our approach will enable marketers to create marketing value and to focus on the critical components in customer repurchase intention and subsequent decision-making process.

The proposed subsequent deductions and propositions which emerge in our study will provide new grounds for further research. We aim to conceptualize a model framework for more empirical research in measuring performance related marketing aspects of repurchase intention. Furthermore, empirical research may be conducted by future researchers in the different settings of peer-to-peer economy, digital service economy and collaborative marketplace models.

As this is primarily a review synthesis study, we therefore recognize that further empirical research is necessary.

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