UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

UNVEILING NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS: UNDERSTANDING SWEDISH CONSUMER DYNAMICS IN CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE WITH AMAZON AND TEMU

Huma Tariq

Zitong Chen

Supervisor: Eva Maria Jernsand

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Graduate School, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

ABSTRACT

Driven by advancements in technology, the growth of cross-border e-commerce has impacted the entire retail sector by offering customers incredible levels of global market access. However, this has also resulted in concerns as well as negative sentiments regarding established e-commerce platforms such as those of Amazon and Temu among Sweden customers. Through illuminating the complex interactions between customer expectations, experiences, and future intentions, this study seeks to identify the fundamental causes of these negative views.

Through a rigorous exploratory research design, the study employs in-depth interviews with Swedish consumers, leveraging snowball sampling to ensure diversity and representativeness. The semi-structured interviews, conducted both online and face-to-face, provide rich insights into the participants' lived experiences and perspectives, unveiling the nuances that shape their attitudes towards cross-border e-commerce platforms.

The research design is the systematic effort of capturing broad and rich possibilities and capturing the dynamic of consumers experiences and their thoughts, incorporating ethically sensitive topics, green consumerism, trust and reputation, customer satisfaction and service quality. Thus, in gaining deeper insights about these critical areas, it is the objective of the study to expose the complex relationship determinations that shape the negative attitudes towards Amazon and Temu in the Swedish market.

The implications of the study that is presented in the current paper are therefore of significant significance for consumer advocacy organizations, legislators, and various online retailers. By understanding the antecedents that lead to negative attitudes towards cross-border purchases, there are likely signs and strategies developed by stakeholders that can address consumer concerns, enhance the level of information disclosure, and enhance the overall satisfaction that consumers get when making their purchases from international companies. Consequently, this study contributes towards apprehending opportunities and challenges for the continuous and dynamic e-commerce environment and paves way towards a consumer oriented and sustainable e-commerce in Sweden and globally.

Keywords: E-commerce, Cross-border platforms, Customer experience, Sweden, Ethical concerns, Trustworthiness

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The digital revolution has completely changed how we shop, work, and live. This change has been greatly aided by the growth of e-commerce (Criveanu, 2023), E- commerce provides customers access to a vast array of goods and services at unmatched ease (Yue, 2022). Cross-border business has increased as a result of e-commerce globalization. Due to reasons including product availability, price competition, and access to a broader choice of options, consumers are looking for foreign goods and services more frequently (Leeflang et al., 2014). Cross border expansion has contributed to important factors. First off, a greater variety of goods and services are now available to consumers, and companies are finding it simpler to reach out to clients abroad thanks to the extensive use of the internet and the growth of e-commerce platforms (Cho & Lee, 2017). This tendency has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as customers have shifted their shopping patterns towards online channels due to travel limitations and lockdowns (Mitsui & Co. Global Strategic Studies Institute, 2021).

According to Statista (2022) the worldwide cross-border e-commerce sector is predicted to grow from $3.5 trillion in 2022 to $4.8 trillion by 2026. This trend is especially noticeable in areas like Europe, where the Digital Single Market program of the European Union has improved consumer protection and removed legislative obstacles to enable cross-border e-commerce (Gomez-Herrera et al, 2014).

Cross-border e-commerce presents firms with opportunities to expand into new countries and consumer categories, which might lead to substantial growth. Businesses may contact consumers worldwide without having to physically be present in the target market by utilizing e-commerce platforms and digital marketing methods (AnyMind Group, 2023).

Personal beliefs and attitudes shape consumers' views of the similarities and differences between local and international internet businesses (Schwartz, 1992). Consumer perceptions of buying from overseas e-commerce platforms are influenced by values including success, hedonism, self-direction, and stimulation (Schwartz, 1992). Moreover, the degree of uncertainty that customers perceive influences their choice to make purchases from overseas internet merchants. Customers often choose domestic shops to avoid feeling doubtful because they lack information or understanding about the appropriate circumstance (Lim et al., 2004). This uncertainty avoidance behavior is driven by the amount of information available and the customers' views of the situation (Lim et al., 2004). In the context of cross-border e-commerce, where customers may encounter a variety of concerns and perceptions that impact their purchasing decisions, it is crucial to understand consumer behavior and attitudes regarding making purchases from foreign online shops. E-commerce platforms may devise tactics to foster confidence, minimize ambiguity, and improve the overall customer experience during international transactions by taking these elements into consideration.

Negative opinions can also influence the larger conversation about the function and significance of e-commerce in society (Giuffrida et al., 2020; Mou et al., 2020).They bring up significant concerns about labor laws, corporate social responsibility, and the consolidation of economic power in the hands of a small number of powerful individuals. A more just and sustainable digital economy may be achieved by e-commerce platforms by addressing these issues and working to enhance existing procedures (Kiron & Unruh, 2018)

1.2 Cross-Border E-Commerce in Sweden

In today's rapidly evolving global commerce landscape, Sweden stands out as a highly digitized and developed nation, actively contributing to the European and international e-commerce markets (Laresvuo, 2015). With the advent of the digital age, e-commerce has become an indispensable part of the global economy, reshaping consumer behavior and business operations (Turban et al., 2017). According to Statista (Yltävä, 2024) Swedish e-commerce market is thriving, making it the largest in the Nordic region. In 2023, e-commerce made approximately 133 billion Swedish kronor in revenue which represents about 14 percent of all retail sales in the industry.

Sweden's high degree of digital literacy, the availability of effective logistics and delivery services, and the rising demand for a greater range of goods and services are all contributing reasons to the country's growing cross-border e-commerce. (Spante et al, 2018; Awais et al, 2021; Sweden, 2000).

10% of Swedish customers reported doing online shopping from outside the nation in a Post Nord (2020) survey, with 60% of these purchases coming from international e-commerce sites. According to Edwards (n.d.), Sweden's top cross-border online shopping destinations are Germany ($23.1 billion), the Netherlands ($10.9 billion), and Denmark ($9.6 billion).

1.3 Problem Statement

Cross-border e-commerce's explosive expansion has changed the retail landscape and given Swedish customers access to an unparalleled range of goods and services. But this growth has also resulted in serious worries and unfavorable opinions among customers about well-known e-commerce sites like Chinese and American.

Previous studies have demonstrated the complex character of these unfavorable attitudes, which frequently center on concerns about labor laws, corporate social responsibility, and the concentration of economic power (Giuffrida et al., 2020; Mou et al., 2020). Customers are becoming more and more interested in these platforms' environmental and ethical policies, as well as the possible hazards of doing business across borders, such issues with product quality, data privacy, and logistics (Lim et al., 2004).

Customers may have trouble purchasing from foreign internet shops owing to linguistic, cultural, and customary variations, in addition to worries about the security and legitimacy of the products (Sia et al, 2009). These variables may cause significant degrees of uncertainty and fear in

consumers, which might result in mistrust and reluctance to complete online transactions (Cham et al, 2022). Uncertain perception, sometimes referred to as the perception of disparities between the consumers' own country and the foreign retailer's country, is a crucial factor to take into account when studying consumer behavior toward international online shops. The prevalence of identity theft, phishing, and hacking has increased, and customers are becoming more worried about the protection of their personal and financial data (Burnes et al, 2020).

As one of the world's largest e-commerce platforms, Amazon boasts a large user base in Sweden (Aguilar Montaño, 2022). Meanwhile, despite being relatively new, Temu has gained recognition and influence in the European market as well (Hyldig, 2024). This study aims to understand why Swedish consumers choose these platforms and clarify their primary choices in the global e-commerce market. Amazon and Temu, as cross-border e-commerce platforms, offer a wide range of international products and convenient global shipping services. Sweden's status as an open economy further promotes the demand and convenience of cross-border shopping (Medeiros, 2014). Against this backdrop, studying these platforms can provide insights into Swedish consumers' experiences, preferences and behaviors in cross-border shopping. Despite their different market shares and strategies, Amazon and Temu compete in the Swedish market. By comparing these platforms, this study seeks to understand their competitive positioning, user experience, product supply, pricing strategies, and other factors, thereby providing deeper market analysis and strategic decision-making support for businesses operating in this field (Rathore, 2019; Rosário & Raimundo, 2021). Amazon's strategy revolves around maintaining its position as a one-stop shopping platform for a vast array of high-value branded products through its extensive supplier network and efficient logistics (Kumar, 2024). On the other hand, Temu targets budget-conscious consumers by offering carefully curated, often unbranded, unique products at significantly lower prices (Hung, 2024; ECDB, 2024). These dynamics of competition not only influence the development of the Swedish e-commerce market but also offer significant insights for the global cross-border e-commerce industry.

1.4 Purpose

To explore the complex interactions between customer expectations, experiences, and future intentions that influence the formation of unfavorable opinions regarding Amazon and Temu among Swedish consumers engaged in cross-border e-commerce.

Specifically, the study focuses on Swedish consumers' preferences for cross-border e-commerce platforms, primarily Amazon and Temu. By closely examining subtle differences in consumer behavior and preferences, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the Swedish e-commerce market and elucidate factors influencing consumers' choices in cross-border transactions. Using qualitative research methods, the study will explore consumers' negative evaluations of Temu and Amazon, with a particular emphasis on investigating the fundamental reasons for user dissatisfaction with these platforms. The specific objectives are to identify the primary catalysts triggering negative evaluations and to examine emotional factors exacerbating these experiences.

Through this research, the paper hopes to offer a deeper understanding of the drivers behind consumer behavior in e-commerce and provide guidance for the future development of e-commerce platforms.

The research will employ a comprehensive analysis to identify the events causing customer dissatisfaction, which serve as the initial catalysts for customers' negative evaluations of Temu and Amazon. Subsequently, the paper will study the emotional amplifiers associated with these interactions, considering that subjective emotional intensification of dissatisfaction contributes to an overall negative sentiment. By analyzing these components, we intend to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics leading to consumers' adverse emotions toward these e-commerce companies in the specific context of the Swedish market. Furthermore, this study will explore the concept of "event digestion," demonstrating how customers comprehend their poor experiences on Temu and Amazon and how this understanding influences their future cross-border shopping behavior. This comprehensive research should provide insightful information regarding potential customer churn.

1.5 Delimitation

The scope of this study is delimited to understanding Swedish consumers' preferences and behaviors regarding cross-border e-commerce platforms, specifically Amazon and Temu. Key aspects to be explored include familiarity with these platforms, preferences regarding price versus brand reputation, competitive dynamics, trust and security perceptions, influence of product selection and quality, preference for convenience or personalized services, and the impact of promotion and marketing strategies. Additionally, the study will investigate the importance of delivery time and logistics services in Swedish consumers' cross-border purchases.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Trust Landscape in Digital Commerce

2.1.1 Trust in E-Commerce: Its Evolution and Significance

The quote from Luhmann (2018), "a complete lack of trust would prevent us from getting up in the morning" highlights how important trust is. Instead the history of this idea has changed over time, moving from limited trust to friends and family to unidentified users on peer-to-peer networks (Mazzella et al. 2016). Due to its importance in differentiating between buyers and non-buyers, this idea has permeated electronic commerce (e-commerce), and is seen as crucial to its success (Chang et al. 2013). According to a 2013 Kim and Park poll of 6000 consumers, e-commerce platform trust was more important than price. Nevertheless, similar studies conducted by Ernst and Young (2000), raised questions about how reliable these platforms were, particularly in situations where privacy and security overlapped (Connolly and Bannister 2007). Since e-commerce has become a more significant market and economic force over the past 20 years (Lim

et al., 2006), many scholars have been interested in the notion of trust and have begun utilizing models from a variety of disciplines to investigate it. Although a number of studies have looked at the causes and effects of online trust, or e-trust, there seems to be some uncertainty over the characteristic that gives rise to e-trust (Kim et al. 2006). Global e-commerce sales increased dramatically between 2020 and 2021, from 2.9 trillion to 4.2 trillion dollars, according to Forbes (Verdon 2021). The effect of trust on disruptive models and platforms utilized in electronic markets has also been examined in earlier research. For example, trust was divided into two categories in a study on the sharing economy by Hawlitschek et al. (2018): "trust in peers" and "trust in the platform". With regards to the nature of sharing economies, trust can be classified as 'trust in peers' and 'trust in the platform (Möhlmann 2016). Trust in peers entails the belief in the other users' honesty, ability, and dependability in the context of the platform, on the other hand, trust in the platform is defined as the belief in the platform's capacity to maintain and enforce rules, offer assistance, and guarantee security and safety of the platform's users (Möhlmann, 2016).

2.1.2 E-Commerce's Trust Dimensions

Multiple scholars have defined trust in different ways depending on their perspective. These definitions were divided into two categories by McKnight et al. (2002): conceptual types and referents types. Conceptual kinds include attitudes, beliefs, actions, and dispositions. Whereas referent types include trust in something, trust in someone, or trust in a particular quality of someone (e.g., honesty). McKnight and Chervany (2001) broadened the categorization of trust by adding three new categories: pre-disposition to trust (which is the extent to which an individual is willing to trust other people), trust in other people (which is the trust placed in other people such as e-vendors), and trust in the system (which is the faith placed in the systems).

In view of these categories, various meanings of trust have emerged. For example, Mayer et al. (1995) have defined trust as 'the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party.' The research on the antecedents of trust has produced the concept of electronic commerce trust in the late 1990s (Fung and Lee, 1999).

Prior research has also looked at other aspects of trust including the impact of uncertainty, new taxonomies of trust (McKnight and Chervany, 2001; Grabner-Kräuter and Kaluscha, 2003), uses of existing trust theories (Huang et al., 2007), and earlier trust models (Papadopouou et al., 2001). Research carried out showed that the highest level of trust occurs when the trustors, who are the consumers in this case, expect the third party, which could be the sellers, to act appropriately within a society. For instance, Carter et al (2014) sought to determine the relationship between trust and loyalty among travelers and online service providers.

Concerns of the consumers, which are considered as the challenges to the electronic transactions, affect the e-commerce process of building the trust with the consumers (Agag et al., 2020; Kim, 2008). The four main concerns of the internet buyers are privacy, security, perceived technology

risk and integrity (Connolly and Bannister, 2007; Shukla, 2014). McKnight et al. (2002) defined disposition to trust or propensity to trust as "the degree to which an individual is inclined to be ready to rely on others in any given context and with any given partner" (p. McKnight and Chervany (2002) argue that dispositional characteristics are more influential to trust than the other elements including the institution based trust. This general propensity to trust may have a bearing in the intents and perceptions of trustors towards e-vendors.

Familiarity is another customer related antecedent that deals with the past behavior of a customer. "Familiarity as defined by Bhattacherjee (2002, p. 220) as an individual's perception of another person's behavior derived from previous interactions". As trustees become familiar with the conduct of trustors, familiarity gradually increases and increases the trust of online purchasers. Based on this, it can be held that an online client can develop calculative-based trust due to the assessment of costs and benefits of trustees whose actions show whether they are being deceitful or not. Customers who think that e- vendor is not reliable will not act in a given manner because calculative based trust is deterrence based. According to Gefen et al., 2003a, when buyer feels that an online vendor either has little to gain out of betraying buyer's confidence or has much more to lose out of lying, then buyer is likely to trust that particular online vendor.

Community one-to-many trust is when faith is placed in several trustees or trustors, especially when the trustor is an unidentified group of vendors or buyers that can be helped and supported by a specific online marketplace (Pavlou and Gefen, 2004). Pavlou and Gefen (2004) noted that it is quite unlikely for the buyers to encounter the same seller while shopping online. According to Sun (2010, p.6), trust in the community of buyers refers to 'Seller's subjective beliefs that buyers will behave in accordance with the seller's confident expectations by showing ability, integrity, and benevolence'.

The first of the seller qualities discussed in the literature is reputation, which is the extent to which a trustee believes that a trustor is honest, and that it cares about its customers (Kit et al., 2013). In the case of studies regarding reputation, the various terminologies that seem to have been utilized include perceived efficacy of the feedback system, brand recognition, brand identity, perceived accreditation, association with a portal, and portal attractiveness.

Reviews left by users substantially influence the general perception of the credibility of the sellers/platforms. Consumers' reviews of products and services are an essential source of product information that is widely utilized in e-commerce platforms and is often used as a competitive tool to achieve competitive advantage (Gutt et al. 2019). They play a role in marketing communications and assist the consumers in recognizing the products (Chen and Xie 2008) and make preliminary purchase decisions (Hong and Pittman 2020; Eslami et al. 2018; Klaus & Changchit 2019; Reyes-Menendez et al. 2019). In cases where the consumer does not have the physical contact with the product, these help the consumer to make decisions based on the experiences of other consumers who have used the product on the e-commerce platform (Klaus and Changchit 2019). Opinions enable consumers to share information on their experiences with a particular product, brand or

company, which is helpful to the managers in marketing their products (Smith 2011). The products that received more than 5 reviews have a 270% higher conversion rate than the products that do not have even a single review (Collinger et al. 2017). The credibility issue also comes up when the company asks the reviewers to write a positive review in support of the brand and another review that puts down the competitor's product, by offering the reviewer an incentive to do so (Wu et al. 2015).

In the case of e-commerce, reputation is one of the primary building blocks that often precede trust. The studies done by Hofmann et al. (2014), Kit et al. (2013), and Shiau & Chau (2015) shows that reputation has direct relationship with trust in online environment and, therefore, it is an essential factor for trust in online transactions. Likewise, some of the articles like Qureshi et al., (2009) further note that reputation has a strong impact on trust and hence the repurchase behavior of users of the e-commerce platforms.

2.1.3 Trust Antecedents and Technology in E-Commerce

In addition to the factors discussed above trust antecedents comprise a range of factors that are essential in determining the dynamics of trust in e-commerce settings. These include the ability to interact closely in social networks and interpersonal ties. Moreover, structural assurance and guarantees are included in institutional measures meant to promote trust in e-commerce transactions (Wang and Benbasat (2008); Huang et al 2005).

Too little emphasis has been placed on sellers' confidence in other stakeholders, particularly purchasers, despite the fact that several studies have been done on the topic of seller trust. Sun (2010) highlights buyers and sellers behave differently when it comes to trust due to a number of institutional, political, and technological reasons. Therefore, the degree of confidence that sellers have in the buyers determines their willingness to take a chance on a sale, even in the face of uncertainty. Sellers must trust buyers to do business with skill, integrity, and professionalism (Chong et al., 2003; Resnick and Zeckhauser, 2002). Guo et al. (2018) conducted a survey among Chinese sellers on a Business-to-Business (B2B) platform in order to ascertain the conditions surrounding their ability to trust an online trading transaction. In a similar vein, further research took into account the prospect of a transaction as the B2B model's result (Sun and Zhang 2008).

In previous research, various technological trust components, such as social commerce websites, online stores, and platforms, as well as online buying trust, have been extensively studied. Technology trust was defined by McKnight (2005) as the trustor's conviction that information technology (IT) is reliable enough to complete a task. Recent years have seen an increase in the reliance on technology, which has raised concerns about technology trust. When a client makes an online purchase, for example, they expect the technical infrastructures to allow online monitoring, online assistance, photos, quality, and information specificity. Though many websites include services like product comparisons, suggestions, and customer reviews, technology trust is seen to go beyond transaction fulfillment (Li et al. 2009). Numerous studies have demonstrated the beneficial effects of third-party organizations and high-quality websites on trust. Jones and

Leonard (2008), for example, looked at trust in customer-to-customer (C2C) settings. Customers who are unfamiliar with one another in an online setting confirm that they follow social cues such as website quality and third-party organizations. Users' opinions of some aspects of a website, such its usability and informational value, are reflected in its perceived quality (Awad & Ragowsky 2008). Web visitors must experience the website is precisely planned, timely, accurate, and well-organized to accept the reliability of online merchants (Flavin et al. 2006; Qureshi et al. 2009).

2.1.4 Intermediaries: Facilitating Trust in E-commerce Markets

Intermediaries play a crucial role in helping customers gain confidence in e-commerce markets (Datta & Chatterjee, 2008). According to McKnight and Chervany (2002), an intermediary might be responsible for transferring consumers' confidence in a brand to e-vendors since trust is transferable. A "third-party institution that uses internet infrastructure to facilitate transactions among buyers and sellers in its online marketplace by collecting, processing, and disseminating information" is what Pavlou and Gefen (2004, p. 44) characterize as an online intermediary. The significance of middlemen in e-commerce transactions is emphasized by this definition. Accordingly, a trustworthy third party can carry out this duty to make transactions easier (Clemons et al., 2016). By creating a trustworthy and secure environment, enacting transparent policies, offering accreditation and evaluation, removing unreliable sellers, and promoting ethical transaction practices, intermediaries can lower the risk of conducting business in an online setting. In order to help purchasers lower their real risk in transactions, several intermediaries, including eBay and Amazon, attempt to decrease transaction risk by offering coverage up to a $250 maximum to guarantee their auction transactions (Pavlou and Gefen, 2004). According to Giaglis et al. (2002), online intermediaries can assist sellers in obtaining market signals, lowering search expenses, finding better pricing, delivering goods at a reduced cost, facilitating transaction settlements, and keeping an eye on purchasers. Sellers must have faith that the intermediary will carry out these duties in an ethical, professional, and sellers'-interest-focused manner.

2.2 Cross-Border Ethical Challenges in E-Commerce

2.2.1 Security and Privacy Risks in E-Commerce

One of the main obstacles to the expansion of e-commerce remains to be the necessity for customers to feel secure while making financial transactions (Wang et al., 1998; Furnell and Karweni, 1999; Chou et al., 1999; Jarvenpaa et al., 2000; Gefen, 2000; Lee and Turban, 2001; Dong-Her et al., 2004). At its core, information privacy and data security in the context of e-commerce deal with the activities that consumers engage in online. It encompasses the collection, exchange, use, and preservation of data, including demographic, personal, and transactional data. Online privacy is sometimes known as "internet privacy". "A person's right to access and control their personal information with respect to its collection, use, and transfer over the Internet" is how Boritz et al. (2011) define internet privacy.

E-commerce transactions provide this information as a byproduct (Milberg et al., 2000; Petty, 2000; Rezgui et al., 2003). Every commercial transaction necessitates the sharing of information, and the transactions themselves produce additional data (Caudill and Murphy, 2000; Shapiro and Baker, 2001).

Online consumers sometimes hesitate to give financial or personal information to businesses because they fear that the businesses may use it for improper purposes or share it with other businesses (Lim, 2003). Castañeda and colleagues (2007) quantified the two-dimensionality of worries over online privacy. They believed that the first dimension dealt with concerns about the data collection method itself, while the second dealt with the internet company's improper use of this information (Roca et al., 2009). One of the significant obstacles hindering the growth of e-commerce is not only privacy concerns but also consumer apprehensions regarding security, especially concerning online investment, which elicits more security apprehensions compared to conventional trade

Security, as defined by Flavián and Guinalíu (2006, p. 604), is the "subjective probability with which customers believe that their personal information will not be viewed, stored, and manipulated during transit and storage by inappropriate parties in a manner consistent with their confident expectations''.

Chinese customers' adoption of mobile banking was reportedly largely motivated by security concerns, with an emphasis on safeguarding their financial data from assaults and illegal access, according to Laforet and Li (2005). The adoption of online trading methods is hindered by security breaches and unlawful access to investors' accounts, underscoring the need for strong security protocols. Furthermore, customers may supply limited, inaccurate, or incomplete information in an effort to protect their personal data from misuse or exposure due to rising privacy concerns.

2.2.2 Green Washing Practices

Organizations are making their sustainability efforts public in response to mounting demand from both governments and customers to be more sustainable and work towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to research, companies' reputation and consumer loyalty may be enhanced by their CSR initiatives (Torres et al., 2012; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012.) However, whereas a large number of research found a strong relationship between these values and pro-environmental activities, some studies found none at all. First, it has been demonstrated that biospheric value positively influences environmental attitudes, environmental concerns, and pro-environmental behaviors like ecotourism (Lee & Jan, 2018) and donations to environmental or humanitarian organizations (Groot & Steg, 2008). It can also indirectly influence pro-environmental behaviors through pro-environmental beliefs (Kim et al., 2015). E-commerce platforms themselves often utilize deceptive wording. It is difficult to discern the precise environmental or social elements that are being taken into consideration from vague phrases like "sustainable" or "eco-friendly" (Gillespie, 2008).

A phenomenon known as "greenwashing" has also increased in tandem with the growth of sustainability information and businesses exhibiting their efforts in this area. The use of ambiguous or deceptive information about their sustainability promises in comparison to their actions is known as "greenwashing" (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015). Instead of presenting entirely false statements, greenwashing typically involves presenting information that is vague, deceptive, or more positive than what is actually true (Atkinson & Kim, 2014)In response, the emergence of "greenwashing" has sparked doubts about whether businesses are genuinely attempting to become more sustainable or if it's merely a ploy to set themselves apart from competitors (Aji & Sutikno, 2015). . Gillespie's (2008) study supports this idea, indicating that customers are becoming more skeptical of greenwashing and are looking for detailed information about a company's social and environmental policies.

Prior research has demonstrated that when greenwashing techniques are revealed, consumers' opinions and intentions toward a company might change negatively (Atkinson & Kim, 2014). Furthermore, research by De Jong et al. (2020) shows that an organization's image is not just enhanced by environmentally friendly measures like following the law; the absence of more extensive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives might reduce reputational advantages. Businesses must handle corporate social responsibility (CSR) holistically, taking into account both the social and environmental aspects. According to the study, creating misleading views about sustainability measures is preferable to being open and accurate about CSR actions (De Jong et al., 2020). Further emphasizing the need for increased awareness and attention in both environmental and social elements of CSR is the possibility that companies would unintentionally make false or unsustainable claims about their CSR activities (De Jong et al., 2020; Atkinson & Kim, 2014).

2.2.3 Environmental Impact and Pro Environmental behavior

Scholarly research that connects environmental values to behavior has centered on how people's egoistic and biospheric-altruistic values drive them to act in ways that benefit the environment (Stern & Dietz, 1994; Wesley Schultz, 2001). While biospheric-altruistic values encourage activities taking into account the wellbeing of the biosphere and others, egoistic values drive people to act in ways that are congruent with their own personal gains (Stern & Dietz, 1994; Groot & Steg, 2008

Egoistic values drive pro-environmental behavior when people believe their own gains outweigh their costs (Groot & Steg, 2008; Stern & Dietz, 1994). On the other hand, taking into account the costs and benefits to the biosphere and others, biospheric-altruistic ideals result in environmental conservation (Groot & Steg, 2008; Stern & Dietz, 1994).

If individuals feel that protecting the environment would benefit them, then acting to protect it will be motivated by egoistic value (Groot & Steg, 2008; Stern & Dietz, 1994). In contrast, persons who hold biospheric-altruistic values are more likely to safeguard the environment based on the costs and benefits to both the biosphere and other people (Groot & Steg, 2008; Stern & Dietz,

1994). Furthermore, it was discovered that altruistic values also had a positive impact on adopting a green lifestyle (Sony & Ferguson, 2017); giving to charitable or environmental organizations (Groot & Steg, 2008); and being willing to pay more for ethical clothing (Geiger & Keller, 2018). Accordingly, pro-environmental actions are the outcome of balancing the advantages and disadvantages of actions associated with these core principles (Groot & Steg, 2008; Stern & Dietz, 1994). As a result, the majority of empirical research has looked into how these values influence pro-environmental behavior.

However, whereas a large number of research found a strong relationship between these values and pro-environmental activities, some studies found none at all. First, it has been demonstrated that biospheric value positively influences environmental attitudes, environmental concerns, and pro-environmental behaviors like ecotourism (Lee & Jan, 2018) and donations to environmental or humanitarian organizations (Groot & Steg, 2008). It can also indirectly influence pro-environmental behaviors through pro-environmental beliefs (Kim et al., 2015). E-commerce platforms themselves often utilize deceptive wording. It is difficult to discern the precise environmental or social elements that are being taken into consideration from vague phrases like "sustainable" or "eco-friendly" (Gillespie, 2008).

Nevertheless, other research also revealed no such significant correlations between biospheric value and consumers' willingness to pay for clothing with a fair trade label (Geiger & Keller, 2018), biospheric value and green lifestyle behavior (Sony & Ferguson, 2017), or biospheric value and attitude (Groot & Steg, 2008). However, they did not predict attitudes toward recycling (Groot & Steg, 2008); environmental concern (Groot & Steg, 2008; Landon et al., 2018); good citizenship (Lee et al., 2014); nor did they predict environmental activist behavior or green purchase behavior. Third, it was discovered that egoistic values negatively impacted attitudes and behaviors related to recycling (Groot & Steg, 2008), corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, product environmental impact consideration (Lee & Cho, 2019), driving behavior restriction (Steg, Perlaviciute, et al., 2014), and environmental concern (Groot & Steg, 2008). On the other hand, non-significant relationships were discovered in other previous research between egoistic values and environmental concern (Landon et al., 2018) or between egoistic values and charitable giving to environmental or humanitarian organizations (Groot & Steg, 2008). It has even been demonstrated that egoistic values positively correlate with green living practices (Sony & Ferguson, 2017). Thus, further clarification is required about the link between environmental values and behavior.

2.3 Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality

Due to transition from transactional to relationship marketing, customer satisfaction has emerged as an essential index of the relationship between the firm and the customer (Heinonen, 2014). Customer satisfaction is a key area where businesses put a lot of money to develop it and there is need to quantify the impact of such investment. There are numerous approaches which can be employed to measure customer satisfaction (Zeinalizadeh et al., 2015), one of which are model

based, including ACSI and EPSI. These indices are the Customer Satisfaction Barometer (CSB) which was developed in the beginning of the 1990s in Sweden to measure the customer satisfaction on a national level and to predict economic conditions (Fornell, 1992).

A company's total customer experience with its products or services is measured by customer satisfaction. It also shows how effectively goods and services suit the requirements and preferences of consumers. Customer satisfaction serves as a barometer for both the caliber of services provided to current clients and the capacity to draw in new ones (Gomez, M.I.; McLaughlin, E.W.; Wittink, D.R. 2004) Customer satisfaction in e-commerce is based on how well the customer's expectations and experiences match during the interaction with the merchant at the online contact point (browsing a website, making a purchase, contacting technical support, receiving a delivery, or using a mobile application (Wijaya, I.; Rai, A.; Hariguna, T2019). Customer happiness in e-commerce has been the subject of a great deal of research in recent years, and many models were developed based on novel formulae for assessing customer satisfaction for a product or service (Praseptiawan, M.; Gultom, M.O.N.; Untoro, M.C. 2022) or existing indices. Other facets of the issue were also investigated, including national specifics, particularly in emerging nations.

In the last twenty years, academic and online sales channel practitioners have shown an interest in the way that customers see e-commerce. When assessing perceived consumer delivered value in e-commerce, customer happiness is crucial (Kotler et al., 2012). E-consumer satisfaction, as highlighted by Lin (2003), occurs when an online purchase exceeds the expectations of the client. The availability of information and knowledge, the ubiquity of connectivity, and the selection of items available online are shaping the tastes, inclinations, and even habits of modern Internet users. Because of this, studying online user behavior becomes even more complex and necessitates investigating new angles including brand, user type, and customer circumstance. Online customer happiness is measured using a variety of indicators, including attrition rates, service satisfaction, and customer effort score. Nevertheless, these metrics frequently exclude thorough evaluations of customer satisfaction. Acknowledging this drawback, researchers have worked to create substitute models. For example, Vasić et al. put up a theoretical framework with 26 variables and six essential elements, which are security, availability of information, shipping, quality, pricing, and time. The complex character of consumer satisfaction has been addressed by this model, which has been experimentally tested in the Serbian market through online purchase (Junardi, J.; Sari, M., 2019). The key elements influencing consumer satisfaction for websites, online transactions, and e-commerce in Oman have been examined by Sanyala and Hisamb. Price (price and offers), usability, and the availability of several payment alternatives are significant variables that might affect consumer satisfaction, according to the research (Vasić, N.; Kilibarda, M.; Kaurin, T. 2019). According to this study, pricing has the most influence on consumer satisfaction, with simplicity of use and a variety of payment choices coming in second and third. Access and safety have no statistically significant effects, though.

2.3.1 Risk Mitigation and Customer Satisfaction

The literature assessment indicates that a theoretical model of six constructs—security and privacy, information availability, delivery, quality, price, and time saved—can capture the key elements affecting consumer satisfaction. The suggested combination incorporates many signs that are typical of online buying, as well as the traditional 4Ps of marketing: product as quality, price, location, and promotion as information availability. (Security, delivery, and time saved). We go into further depth about the recommended factors in the next subsection.

2.3.2 Advancements in E-Commerce: Technologies and Strategies

Transactional websites receive visitors who either come to buy a specific product or who come to explore. Both alternatives have to be available on websites and other e-commerce platforms (Mou, J., Zhu, W., & Benyoucef, M.2020). Multimedia and shopping cart features are combined in certain contemporary 3D websites to provide customers with the entire environment of a physical business and its surroundings (Billewar, S.R., Jadhav, K., Sriram, V.P., Arun, A., Abdul, S.M., Gulati, K., & Bhasin, N.K.K. 2021). Another technical advancement in online retail is called "visual commerce," which involves the use of augmented reality and other interactive media in product displays (Uhm, J.P., Kim, S., Do, C., & Lee, H.W.2022). Social media platforms are a valuable information resource for online retailers. Here, different kinds of user-generated material are exchanged between people and civilizations to facilitate communication. Social networks not only provide helpful industry data, but they also provide online retailers with feedback on customer sentiment (Kaushik, K., Mishra, R., Rana, N.P., & Dwivedi, Y.K.2018).

(a) Delivery

Online shopping Shipping includes all the services needed to deliver online purchases from the store to the customer's delivery location on schedule. E-sellers improve their supply chain in a variety of ways, aiming to strike a balance between product pricing, customer service quality, and delivery time. Some depend on third-party distribution that keeps up the required inventory of in-demand products (warehousing services) and has efficient logistical networks (logistics services) (Ponce, D., Contreras, I., & Laporte, G. 2020). Others use drop shipping with competitively priced distribution services to deliver purchased products to recipients quickly (Pokhylko, S.V., Dvorianova, T., & Voloshyna, E.E.2021) Retailers are under more and more pressure these days due to Omni channel commerce to control warehouse expenses, transportation, location selection, and inventory levels.

(b) Quality

Zeithaml et al. define excellent e-commerce as the degree to which the online store's website enables customers to make purchases of goods and services without encountering any difficulties (Zeithaml, V.A., Parasuraman, A., & Malhotra, A 2002) The efficiency, fulfillment, system availability, and privacy 22-item scale is the foundation of the Parasuraman et al. basic E-S-QUAL quality model (Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A., & Malhotra, A. 2005). Rita et al. claim that fulfillment, security, and website design are the three aspects of e-service quality that have an

impact on total e-service quality. Customer service, however, has little bearing on the general quality of an e-service (Rita, P., Oliveira, T., & Farisa, A.2019).

(c) Pricing

When it comes to price, buyers and sellers have opposing interests. As a result, the final price ought to represent a fair exchange between the buyer's desire to pay and the merchant's offer. The appropriate pricing for the product has an impact on the business's total revenue. Price is one of the most important factors in choosing an online retailer, according to Pragmatica's research on customer attitudes about online shopping. The respondent's state that the most crucial component of their ideal online store is the cheap pricing (Investor.bg. Accessed on 1 October 2022). According to research by Ali et al. Perceived value is significantly influenced by perceived price and delivery quality, and perceived value is significantly influenced by repurchase intention (Ali, A., & Bhasin, J.2019).

(d) Conserving Time

Because e-transactions are more convenient for customers, there is less inconvenience associated with traveling to high street retailers and less traffic in busy city locations. The researchers stress that convenience involves not just getting enough sleep but also having enough time to acquire anything online whenever the consumer wants (Abdul Aziz, A., Mohd Rashid, R., & Adnan, W.H.2021). Time is the most crucial element in online purchasing, according to a Pragmatica survey on customer preferences for this type of shopping (59%) (Investor.bg. Accessed on 1 October 2022).

Researchers conducted a thorough investigation that considered a variety of external elements, including characteristics of the company environment, in order to determine the significance of these crucial variables in influencing customer satisfaction. Online businesses may maintain consistent client experiences and foster long-lasting consumer loyalty by utilizing these criteria.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

Interpretivism has been chosen as the philosophical foundation for this study because it promotes qualitative analysis techniques and aims to understand human behavior through in-depth research into complex phenomena (Saunders et al., 2016).

Theory development can be achieved through deduction, induction, and abduction (Saunders et al., 2016). Deduction involves hypothesis testing based on existing theory, while induction develops new hypotheses and theories based on collected evidence. The advantage of induction lies in its ability to construct a more comprehensive theoretical perspective than previous literature. Therefore, this study adopts an inductive approach for exploratory analysis, although it's important

to note that the study isn't entirely inductive as theory informed the creation of the interview guide. Existing literature on Swedish consumer behavior in cross-border e-commerce is limited, especially regarding the complex factors influencing their perceptions of platforms like Amazon and Temu. Most studies focus on the impact of Amazon on the Swedish domestic e-commerce market (Elfström & Tam, 2021; Gunnarsson & Lilliehorn, 2021; Reinhardt, 2022), or on general factors of e-commerce behavior or specific issues related to trust and reputation, rather than detailed analyses of specific platforms.

Exploratory research design is highly effective when flexibility and adaptability are required. Descriptive design is mainly used to identify specific characteristics of people, things, or situations, while explanatory design clarifies how one variable influences another (Saunders et al., 2016). To more accurately understand Swedish consumers' attitudes towards Amazon and Temu, this study adopts an exploratory research approach. This method allows for flexibility in adapting to new questions and phenomena discovered during the research process, providing in-depth insights and understanding (Saunders et al., 2016). Consequently, this paper will employ a qualitative research method, using interviews to delve deeply into respondents' views, attitudes, and experiences (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994), offering a comprehensive understanding of Swedish consumers' perspectives on foreign cross-border e-commerce.

3.2 Participant Selection

The study conducted by Sorce et al. (2005) suggests that younger customers are more inclined to utilize online shopping platforms and are more proactive in searching for product information compared to older individuals. It has been established that e-commerce companies could potentially derive significant benefits from this particular demographic both now and in the future. Therefore, young adults aged between 20 and 35 will constitute all of our target respondents. Focusing on this age group can provide crucial insights into the preferences and habits of an important demographic in the Swedish e-commerce industry.

In terms of sampling methodology, this study employed a range of techniques including purposive sampling, snowball sampling, and random sampling to ensure the participant sample is as diverse and representative as possible. Purposive sampling was the preferred method, deliberately selecting individuals with rich experiences and perspectives within the Swedish cultural context (Tongco, 2007). These participants, having grown up in Sweden and deeply influenced by its culture, are crucial for understanding Swedish consumers' attitudes towards foreign e-commerce platforms. Snowball sampling provided a broad approach to participant recruitment, expanding the sample range continuously through individuals already participating in the survey, thereby encompassing a more diverse population with different backgrounds and viewpoints (Sadler et al., 2010). This method helps capture voices and experiences that might be overlooked by traditional methods. Random sampling, as a supplementary method, helps mitigate bias and enhances the credibility and generalizability of the research findings (Gobo, 2004). By integrating these sampling techniques, we strive to ensure that our research sample is as diverse and representative

as possible, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of Swedish consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards foreign e-commerce platforms.

3.3 Interviews

In qualitative research, interviews are a popular method of data collection because they can provide in-depth and comprehensive insights into people's experiences and perspectives. Semi-structured interviews are conducted in various ways based on participants' descriptions (Knox & Burkard, 2014). As details become clearer, parts of the experiences that could not be predicted in advance can be further explored.

Twelve interviews were conducted, ranging in duration from 20 to 60 minutes each. Three of these interviews were conducted online via Zoom and Meet, while nine were conducted face-to-face. In terms of conversation quality, excessive reliance on digital devices may lead to certain limitations. On one hand, tools like Zoom facilitate recording interviews and communicating with distant participants (Hanna, 2012). However, they may also present some disruptions (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). In the current interviews, no specific issues were encountered during the conversations. Interruptions were rare, occurring only a few times due to unstable internet connections and once because a participant received a phone call. Nevertheless, the conversations were reviewed and resumed later.

To facilitate the interviews, an interview guide was prepared and is included in the appendix. After introducing the project, the first five questions aimed to build participants' confidence and understand their general approach to online shopping. During the interview process, the interview guide consists of fifteen questions focusing on ethical challenges and environmental behavior, seven questions involving trust and reputation, and an additional six questions related to customer satisfaction and service quality. All questions throughout the interview process are intended to explore various aspects of these main themes within the research context.

Name	Gender	Age	Profession	Interview Time
Alex	Male	32	Engineer	22 mins
Anmol	Male	25	Student	32 mins
Bernth	Male	27	Verification Engineer	30 mins
Cecilia	Female	26	student	35 mins
Cristian	Male	29	Software Developer	39 mins
Derk	Male	29	Battery testing	30 mins
Emily	Female	27	Software Developer	55 mins
Freja	Female	25	student	30 mins

Gabriel	Male	23	Student	49 mins
Gustav	Male	31	Handels consulting	38 mins
Lena	Female	25	Student	32 mins
Michel	Male	30	Software Developer	26 mins

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection primarily relies on in-depth interviews, all of which are audio-recorded and transcribed. Some transcriptions are verbatim to accurately capture participants' speech, while others are broad to protect participants' privacy. The data analysis stage employs thematic analysis methods, including verbatim transcription of interviews and systematic coding of transcripts to identify repeated themes and patterns related to participants' attitudes toward the platform (Terry et al., 2017). Through iterative coding and ongoing comparison, themes are refined and organized into consistent categories to comprehensively understand participants' viewpoints (Morgan & Nica, 2020).

In the context of interpreting meaning associated with text, interviewers first listen to recordings multiple times and transcribe the interview content to ensure no important words are overlooked. Subsequently, they adjust and refine the material according to a complex verbatim transcription style. Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) point out that meaning condensation is used to compress lengthy narratives into more manageable phrases. Therefore, when abbreviations are noted in this paper, meaning condensation is also cleverly employed. Simultaneously, meaning coding is used to systematically categorize interview statements (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The interviews in this paper are thus divided into three parts based on meaning coding, which are Trust and Reputation, Ethical Challenges and Environmental Behavior, and Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality.

Several factors are used to determine the trustworthiness of qualitative data: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens, Moser 2017). According to Korstjens and Moser (2017), credibility ensures that the collected data undergo thorough scrutiny and its uniqueness is reliable. To ensure the credibility of data content, this study has ensured that research participants have relevant experience or knowledge and can provide authentic and credible information (Birt et al., 2016). Additionally, by using different data sources to collect data, cross-verification of multiple data sources and methods can reduce the possibility of bias and errors (Roberts et al., 2017).Transferability refers to whether research results can be applied to different contexts. Dependability determines if research results are consistent and align with the techniques used. The term "confirmability" refers to the objective analysis and interpretation of evidence.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

At every stage of the study process, ethical concerns have been used, which is fundamental to the integrity of this article. The purpose of this thesis has been explained to the participants both online and during the interviews so they may choose whether or not to participate in the study (Israel & Hay, 2006). Additionally, they were made aware of their ability to leave the project at any time during the process without facing any repercussions. They had to acknowledge that they had read about the research's purpose and had the opportunity to withdraw before they could begin answering the questions the same thing happened during the interviews.

In addition to being identified by numbers in this report, participants were also given anonymity during the data gathering process. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality of their responses. Participant anonymity was ensured, and measures were taken to protect their personal information (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Furthermore, strict adherence to ethical guidelines regarding research conduct, integrity, and respect for participant autonomy was maintained to ensure transparency and ethical compliance in the research.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Trust and Reputation

4.1.1. Platform Features and Trustworthiness

In the modern e-commerce environment, trust is the cornerstone of consumer decision-making. Whether purchasing everyday items or high-value goods, consumers often rely on the reputation of platforms and past experiences to determine whether to transact. This section, through the discussion of different consumer viewpoints, reveals the multidimensional nature and importance of trust in e-commerce.

Emily and Derk share similar views on the importance of trust, especially when dealing with unfamiliar websites. Emily emphasizes reliance on familiarity and reputation, feeling more comfortable on Swedish websites, highlighting a preference for platforms perceived to have higher levels of trust, similar to the community trust concept discussed by Pavlou and Gefen (2004). She states, “I always feel a bit uneasy when ordering from a new website” (Emily), indicating her awareness of how trust is influenced by familiarity and reputation.

Similarly, Derk's views on the differing levels of trust between Amazon and Temu align with the evolution and importance of e-commerce trust outlined by Chang et al. (2013) and Kim and Park (2013). His trust in Amazon is high, stating, “Amazon has been around for a long time... I trust it enough” (Derk). Reflecting trust built from the historical development of established e-commerce platforms. This further confirms the crucial importance of trust for e-commerce success, often

developed gradually through continued positive experiences and established reputations (Chang et al., 2013).

However, Derk's skepticism towards Temu indicates the importance of peer trust in new or relatively unknown platforms, as discussed by Hawlitschek et al. (2018). He mentions, “I haven't heard anyone raving about it being a really good experience yet” (Derk), highlighting the necessity of community validation when establishing trust in new e-commerce platforms.

Regarding platform reliability and preferences, Emily relies on platforms like Zalando for fashion shopping, emphasizing the role of reputation and perceived reliability in shaping consumer choices. Reputation has been identified as a key factor influencing trust in online transactions (Hofmann et al., 2014; Shiau & Chau, 2015). As she mentions, "If I buy something online, especially in fashion, I will buy from there” (Emily), illustrating how reputation and credibility influence her decision-making process.

Cristian's views on platform ownership and its limited impact on trust are evident in his statement, “This is a bit tricky because for me, it doesn't matter whether the owner is Chinese, American, or Swedish... I think platform integrity and seller reputation are more important than their national background.”(Cristian)

This aligns with academic discussions emphasizing trust in the platform itself rather than its national background (Möhlmann, 2016). His emphasis on platform integrity and seller reputation corresponds to research highlighting the role of reputation in fostering consumer trust (Kit et al., 2013). Anmol expresses a preference for platforms owned by American companies, stating, “I trust American companies a bit more, I think.” (Anmol)

Gustav's caution regarding Chinese ownership, driven by concerns over data privacy and a preference for American companies, reflects broader geopolitical and cultural factors influencing trust perceptions (Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). Trust in e-commerce platforms can be influenced by perceptions of data security, government influence, and corporate ethics. As he expressed,

“Yeah. I mean, somewhat, yeah, of course. I mean, China is shit, I think. From time to another. It's like... Yeah. I don't know. China has a bad reputation. And of course, that affects you in some way. I mean, if... Chinese big companies and... I don't know. I don't want my data to be... To be. Like, my personal information to be owned by the Chinese government. I think that's... That's kind of crazy.” (Gustav)

Cristian emphasizes the importance of trust in his statement “I think trust is very important because every time I buy something from a platform, especially a new platform, I always check what kind of validation they have from reliable payment processors, like Klarna or integration with bank IDs…” (Cristian) His attention to reliable payment processors and secure integration reflects the literature's emphasis on trust markers and security features as key determinants of consumer trust (Connolly & Bannister, 2007).

Anmol emphasizes the importance of trust, stating that “I like having established websites or known websites, for example, usually I prefer websites with phone contact information, so if something happens I can call. This makes me trust it more.” (Anmol) This viewpoint aligns with the fundamental concept in e-commerce that trust is foundational, with users tending to trust familiar entities and websites with clear contact information (Mazzella et al., 2016).

Gabriel underscores the importance of trust in online shopping, stating, “I think trust is one of the most important factors for online shopping.”(Gabriel) This viewpoint aligns with academic research, emphasizing trust as a key determinant of consumer behavior in e-commerce (Kim & Park, 2013). In situations where products cannot be physically inspected before purchase, reliance on trust in the platform and seller is necessary (Luhmann, 2018). Gabriel's assertion highlights the importance of trust in mitigating perceived risks associated with online transactions (Mayer et al., 1995).

Anmol shares a personal anecdote, stating “Just recently, I was planning to buy some shoes online, but the brand name was a bit suspicious. I didn't know it and couldn't find a phone number, so I didn't buy.” (Anmol) This anecdote reflects the importance of trustworthiness in consumer decision-making, echoing concerns raised in previous research about the reliability of e-commerce platforms (Connolly & Bannister, 2007).

Michel states, “I think being able to trust them is very important. If I don't receive what I ordered, I might never shop there again.” (Michel) This aligns with scholars' viewpoints, such as Luhmann (2018) and Chang et al. (2013), who emphasize the critical role of trust in facilitating digital commerce transactions.

In conclusion, the importance of trust in e-commerce is indisputable, and its influencing factors are diverse. The viewpoints of various consumers together outline the complex landscape of trust in e-commerce. These observations not only confirm discussions in academic research regarding trust and reputation but also emphasize the necessity for platforms to focus on providing reliable payment processing, transparent contact channels, and a good user experience in building consumer trust. By understanding these multidimensional factors of trust, e-commerce platforms can more effectively meet consumer needs, enhancing transaction success rates and user loyalty.

4.1.2 The impact of geographical and cultural factors on trust

In today's globalized e-commerce environment, consumer trust and behavior are influenced by various factors. This section explores the perspectives and experiences of several Swedish consumers, revealing the prevalence and acceptance of cross-border shopping platforms in Swedish society. Through the analysis of these different viewpoints, we can more comprehensively understand the interplay of consumer trust, cultural norms, and technological advancements in e-commerce development.

Emily's cautious attitude towards platforms outside Europe and her reservations towards low-cost platforms like Temu reflect concerns about privacy, security, and integrity, considered challenges

in e-commerce transactions (Connolly & Bannister, 2007; Shukla, 2014). She notes, “I feel a bit uneasy when ordering outside Sweden's borders…” (Emily), indicating the influence of trust by geographical boundaries and perceived risks associated with unfamiliar platforms.

Bernth's observation of cross-border platforms and their prevalence in Swedish society emphasizes the global nature of e-commerce and its increasing integration into daily life (Lim et al., 2006). He pointed out, “I mean, it's becoming more and more common everywhere.” (Bernth), His observations underscore the importance of considering cultural factors in understanding e-commerce dynamics, as consumer behavior and preferences may vary across different social contexts (Hofmann et al., 2014).

While Michel himself does not use cross-border shopping platforms, his awareness of their prevalence among friends and family reflects their increasing ubiquity in society, as noted by Lim et al. (2006). He mentions, “But I have friends and family who use it, you know, it used to be this Wish platform. But what it's called now, I don't know, maybe it's Temu?” (Michel)

On the other hand, Cristian's observation of Swedish society's attitude towards change and technology adoption is highlighted in his statement, “Swedish society finds it difficult to accept change and progress. They basically believe that if something has been effective for a long time, like physical stores, then they don't see the need to change it.” (Cristian), this insight emphasizes the interaction between social norms and the dynamics of trust in the e-commerce environment, validating the influence of cultural factors on consumer behavior and trust perception (Hofmann et al., 2014). Cristian's recognition of the increasing prevalence of e-commerce in Swedish society is evident in his statement, “Yes, I believe e-commerce platforms are growing because we are continually digitizing society.”(Cristian), this reflects discussions on the growing importance of digital commerce in contemporary society (Lim et al., 2006), emphasizing technological advancements as a driving force for e-commerce expansion (Verdon, 2021).

Regarding the increasing prevalence of online platforms in Swedish society, Anmol comments, “I think it's becoming more and more common, just like Temu is becoming more common.” (Anmol), His observation reflects the trend of global e-commerce growth and the increasing ubiquity of online platforms in society (Lim et al., 2006). Anmol raises cultural factors affecting trust, stating, “I think here (in Sweden), people are a bit more conservative, whereas I think Americans are more like 'Well, let's give it a try.' So, I think there's that difference.” (Anmol)

Gustav's comments on Swedish cultural factors highlight how social norms and values influence trust preferences in e-commerce. He pointed out,

“I think that most of the swedes They are having high standards, because we have been having, like, very mature, digitalized societies since, like, the early 2000s. So I think no one likes Amazon because it feels like you're going back 15 years. And I don't think that Swedes have the culture of shopping in that manner, that they buy anything because it's just cheap. I do know that most of my friends care about the type of products, if they are having chemicals or child labor, etc. And you

know without even thinking that if something is very cheap, then it's obviously made by suppliers that have very poor working conditions. And all of those matters. And buying a little whatever thing for as cheap as possible isn't, I think, something that Swedes tend to do. You rather pay more to know that you have a stable product from a firm that's serious and do not exploit human rights and the environment and so forth." (Gustav)

These insights underscore the interaction of trust, cultural norms, and brand familiarity in consumer behavior. Emphasis on quality, ethical practices, and environmental considerations reflects consumer attitudes prioritizing reliability and sustainability in purchasing decisions (Hofmann et al., 2014).

The findings analyzes the perspectives and experiences of several Swedish consumers, revealing the prevalence and acceptance of cross-border shopping platforms in Swedish society. Consumer caution reflects concerns about privacy, security, and integrity, while cultural factors play a significant role in influencing consumer behavior and trust preferences. Additionally, the driving role of digitalization processes in e-commerce and society's acceptance of change are prominent in the discussion. Through these analyses, we gain deeper insights into how consumer trust, cultural norms, and technological advancements collectively shape the dynamics of e-commerce development.

4.1.3 The Impact of Customer Reviews and Social Circles on Trust

In this digital age, consumer trust in online shopping platforms relies not only on official promotions or product descriptions but more on the voices and experiences of other consumers. However, consumers have varied attitudes towards and ways of handling reviews, reflecting that individual trust perceptions are influenced by multiple factors. Therefore, in studying and understanding consumer trust in online platforms, it's crucial to not only focus on the reviews themselves but also delve into the underlying processes and dynamic interactions behind individual trust formation. This section will explore the role of customer reviews in e-commerce and investigate the mechanisms behind consumer trust formation, aiming to provide new perspectives and insights for understanding and enhancing the credibility of online platforms.

Emily and Derk both recognize the importance of customer reviews in establishing platform reliability and consumer trust. Emily points out that while reviews have limitations in providing a comprehensive assessment, they are crucial as sources of product information and tools for building consumer trust. She notes, "Yes, sometimes. But it's hard to say... It's an amazing five-star review... I hate this one-star review…" (Emily)

Emily's response illustrates the complexity of building trust through reviews alone. Derk highlights the role of customer reviews in establishing trust based on computation. He mentions, "Customer reviews are definitely useful…" (Derk), emphasizing how past consumer experiences influence trust and decision-making processes. These viewpoints collectively underscore the importance of

customer reviews in the decision-making process, as they not only provide product information but also influence consumer trust in the platform.

Furthermore, Emily acknowledges the potential impact of others' negative experiences on platform credibility, highlighting the nature of dynamic interrelations in online business trust. Her cautious attitude reflects a desire for reliability, transparency, and positive experiences, emphasizing the intricate interplay of trust, environmental considerations, and personal experiences in shaping consumer choices, which is a core theme in e-commerce trust research. As she implies, “Yes, they do.” (Emily), indicating how negative reviews affect her trust in the platform.

Regarding the impact of consumer reviews, Cristian expresses skepticism towards written product reviews and prefers organic video reviews. He notes, “I'm not really into written reviews because it's very easy to buy thousands of cheap reviews from abroad…” (Cristian), Cristian’s response reflects a wider discussion about the credibility and influence of online reviews, and the growing role of multimedia content in shaping consumer perceptions.

Michel relies on reviews to determine his trust in online shopping platforms, consistent with findings from studies by Gutt et al. (2019) and Chen and Xie (2008), which emphasize the impact of user reviews on consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. He avoids visiting poorly reviewed websites, reflecting the importance of reputation in building trust, as emphasized by Kit et al. (2013) and Qureshi et al. (2009). He mentions, “If the reviews say it's a bad website, if things haven't arrived, etc., I won't shop there…” (Michel), indicating how reviews shape his trust in online platforms. These viewpoints consistently emphasize consumer reliance on reviews and the influence of reviews on their shopping behavior and trust in the platform.

Interestingly, Bernth's handling of user reviews, mainly leaving negative feedback, adds subtle nuances to the discussion about how online reviews shape consumer trust (Gutt et al., 2019). While positive reviews are often emphasized as key factors in building trust and credibility, Bernth's behavior suggests that negative feedback also plays an important role in informing consumer decisions and demanding product quality and service standards from platforms. He stated, “I only leave renew when I'm not satisfied, you know. I will give bad reviews. So, you know, always leave bad reviews.” (Bernth)

In shopping decisions, Anmol highlighted the influence of customer reviews. He stated, “Yes, I think it helps a lot. If you see positive reviews, I think it helps or encourages you to buy because then you feel that others have said it's good, and you trust it more, I think.” (Anmol), This insight underscores the importance of reputation and user-generated content in building trust on online platforms (Kit et al., 2013).

Similarly, Gabriel emphasized the significance of customer reviews and quick delivery in his platform choice. He said, “For me, I think customer reviews are very important, but in recent years I’ve paid less attention to them… But I also really like quick delivery, and I think Amazon does a great job in this, especially in Sweden.” (Gabriel), This reflects research findings on the significant

role of customer reviews in influencing purchasing decisions (Chen & Xie, 2008), although concerns about fake reviews might diminish their impact (Wu et al., 2015). Additionally, Gabriel's preference for quick delivery highlights the importance of logistical factors in enhancing consumer trust and satisfaction (Jones & Leonard, 2008). These perspectives collectively reveal the influence of customer reviews and logistical factors on shopping decisions and their role in building consumer trust and platform reputation.

Regarding user reviews, Alex's perspective elucidates the role of user-generated content in shaping trust perceptions. Alex is reluctant to write reviews but relies on others' opinions, reflecting the importance of user-generated content as emphasized by Gutt et al. (2019). As Alex mentioned, “I care more about what others think rather than sharing my thoughts…” (Alex), indicating a reliance on balanced and detailed feedback (Wu et al., 2015).

Gabriel's trust in Amazon stems from positive experiences, while his avoidance of Temu is influenced by its reputation for low-quality products. He noted, “I’ve used Amazon many times before, and I’ve heard many people shop on Temu, but I’ve never used it myself… Because I think Temu is known for selling Chinese junk.” (Gabriel), this observation highlights the role of reputation in establishing trust in e-commerce platforms (Hofmann et al., 2014). Positive experiences and word-of-mouth recommendations help form trust (Kit et al., 2013), whereas negative reputation-based perceptions may deter consumers (Qureshi et al., 2009).

Meanwhile, Gabriel's trust considerations are influenced by his friends' negative experiences with Chinese online shopping platforms. He pointed out, “As for Temu, without having placed an order, I really don’t know, but...if it’s a Chinese site, I might avoid it based on my friends’ experiences.” (Gabriel)

This indicates that platform trust is influenced by the collective experiences of users (Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). Gabriel's reliance on social network experiences reflects the importance of peer influence in shaping trust perceptions (Sun, 2010).

On the other hand, Gustav mentioned, “I haven’t engaged in any reviews. Yes, I wouldn’t say I think that has much of an impact on me.” (Gustav) This highlights an interesting aspect of trust formation, where individual trust perceptions may vary despite the influential nature of user reviews in providing social proof (Gutt et al., 2019). Gustav observed that his friends have similar preferences and do not frequently use these platforms, aligning with the impact of social networks on trust and platform usage (McKnight et al., 2002). Trust often spreads through social circles, with shared experiences or opinions among peers significantly influencing individual trust decisions.

Anmol mentioned, “My friends usually shop online. They use Amazon, and yes, I think Temu is also becoming popular.” (Anmol), This observation emphasizes the social dimension of trust, where peer and platform trust influence consumer behavior in online transactions (Hawlitschek et al., 2018).

Michel observed that all his friends and family use online shopping platforms, reflecting that trust in e-commerce has expanded from being limited to friends and family to including transactions with unknown users on peer networks (Mazzella et al., 2016). He noted, “I’d say everyone.” (Michel), indicating the widespread adoption of online platforms within his social circle.

Customer reviews play a crucial role in the formation of consumer trust in online shopping platforms. Both positive and negative reviews have a direct and profound impact on consumers' purchasing decisions and trust perceptions. The respondents' perspectives reflect the extent to which consumers rely on reviews and how these reviews influence individual trust perceptions. However, it is noteworthy that consumers' attitudes and approaches to reviews vary, influenced by factors such as personal beliefs, experiences, and social networks. Therefore, research on trust in online platforms needs to consider both the reviews themselves and the underlying processes and dynamic interactions in individual trust-building. By understanding consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward reviews, we can better comprehend and enhance the credibility of online platforms, providing consumers with a safer and more reliable shopping environment.

4.1.4 The Relationship between Trust, Events, and Controversies

Trust plays an indispensable role in the realm of e-commerce. This section delves into the significance of trust in new market entry, consumer purchasing behavior, personal experiences, and the operation of transaction platforms. By analyzing Amazon's challenges in the Swedish market, consumer concerns about brand reputation and service quality, and the influence of personal experiences on trust, we explore the complex role of trust within the e-commerce ecosystem. This in-depth analysis will help us better understand the nature of trust in digital commerce.

In Cristian's recollection of the impact of events on trust, he mentioned Amazon's challenges in Sweden, particularly when the company first entered the market. He noted, “When Amazon first started in Sweden… there were no local products at all. They didn't have any warehouses in Sweden. So the delivery time was very long.”(Cristian), This example highlights the real impact of trust dynamics on consumer behavior, confirming the crucial role of platform reputation and service quality in shaping consumer trust perception (Kim et al., 2006).

Meanwhile, Anmol expressed concerns, saying, “Temu, I would say, it's like customs issues. If it's from China, customs issues might be a problem.” (Anmol), this concern reflects consumer attention to issues affecting cross-border e-commerce trust, such as product delivery and customs problems (Connolly & Bannister, 2007).

Gustav voiced concerns about Temu’s offshore operations and excessive advertising spending, saying, “Yes, well, I mean, Temu, it's...yes, I know they have a quarter in the Cayman Islands. I find that very suspicious.” (Gustav), this indicates that factors like organizational transparency and ethical practices influence trust perception (Wang & Benbasat, 2008). Similarly, his criticism of

Amazon's neutral reputation and website interface aligns with the importance of brand reputation and user experience in shaping trust (Kit et al., 2013).

Discussing the impact of personal experiences on trust, Bernth's interview provided profound insights. He bluntly stated, “Well, I don't trust companies at all.” (Bernth) This sentiment reflects scholars' concerns about privacy and security practices on online platforms (Luhmann, 2018; Chang et al., 2013). His perception that platforms might exploit user information aligns with broader discussions about trust in the digital age, where concerns about data privacy and corporate motives are prevalent (Mazzella et al., 2016; Connolly & Bannister, 2007).

Moreover, Bernth noted that trust is not a significant factor in his platform choices, reflecting the evolving landscape of e-commerce. He said, “If I choose one platform over the other, it's because of other reasons other than my trust of them.” (Bernth) Besides trust, factors such as convenience or product variety might drive consumer decisions (Kim & Park, 2013). This underscores the complexity of consumer behavior in digital commerce, where trust may play different roles depending on individual preferences and priorities.

Anmol shared an example of his trust being breached, saying, “Yes, sometimes it happens, like you buy something, but it's not really what you expected, and the seller is not very reliable.” (Anmol), His experience highlights the challenges of maintaining trust in an online environment, especially when dealing with unfamiliar sellers or misrepresented products (Jones & Leonard, 2008).

Additionally, as Alex mentioned, “I had an instance where the product delivery time was extremely long…” (Alex), illustrating how factors like familiarity with seller behavior influence trust (Bhattacherjee, 2002; Wang & Benbasat, 2008). This highlights the importance of structural assurances and guarantees in establishing trust in online transactions.

Michel discussed using platforms like Temu (formerly Wish) and Amazon for cross-border shopping, reflecting the trend of consumers using diverse platforms, as discussed by Hawlitschek et al. (2018). He acknowledged that uncertainty with receiving items from cheaper platforms might lead to trust violations, aligning with Connolly and Bannister's (2007) concerns about the reliability of certain e-commerce platforms. He noted, “So that could be a breach of trust, you know…” (Michel), indicating the risks associated with using less established platforms.

Derk's reliance on Amazon's reputation aligns with the view that trust is built on perceptions of integrity and past performance (Kit et al., 2013). He values brands he trusts to deliver, saying, “Some brands I trust… I believe they can deliver.” (Derk) This view aligns with Mayer et al.'s (1995) definition of trust as the willingness to take risks based on positive expectations of another party's actions.

Derk’s experience with Amazon's technical reliability reflects McKnight's (2005) concept of technological trust. Despite minor issues with customs fees, his trust in Amazon remained robust, indicating that his overall trust in the platform is resilient to occasional service failures. He

recalled, "It didn't really affect my trust in Amazon much…" (Derk), showing that his overall trust in the platform withstands occasional service issues.

Gustav stated, “Yes, I would say trust is very important. I actually wouldn't buy anything on Temu because I know they have…or at least I've heard they don't handle your privacy properly.” (Gustav), this aligns with literature on the importance of platform reliability and data privacy (Luhmann, 2018; Mazzella et al., 2016). His reluctance to use Temu due to privacy concerns highlights a crucial aspect of trust in e-commerce platforms.

In terms of personal trust experiences, Derk's trust in Amazon illustrates the significant role of intermediaries in facilitating trust, as discussed by Pavlou and Gefen (2004). Amazon, as an intermediary, ensures reliable transactions, provides customer protection, and offers a platform for user reviews. Derk's reliance on these aspects, especially customer reviews and brand reputation, demonstrates how intermediaries help build and maintain consumer trust. He emphasized, “If the shipping cost is as much as the actual product, then I probably wouldn't buy it …” (Derk), highlighting that transparent logistics and cost considerations are crucial factors in fostering trust through intermediaries.

Conversely, Gustav's remark, “No, I wouldn't say that because I don't shop often…” (Gustav), emphasizes the role of trust experiences in shaping future behavior (McKnight & Chervany, 2002). Trust is often built or eroded through repeated interactions and experiences.

After exploring consumer perceptions of trust and its influencing factors, it can be concluded that trust plays a vital role in the e-commerce domain, but it is a complex concept influenced by multiple factors. From personal experiences to platform reputation, from product delivery to privacy protection, the formation and maintenance of consumer trust involve multiple considerations. In this process, the role of intermediaries is particularly important, as they provide a reliable transaction environment for consumers and enhance trust through transparent information and protection measures. However, consumer trust is not static; it changes with time and experience. Therefore, establishing and maintaining consumer trust requires continuous effort and improvement by platforms to adapt to changing consumer needs, improve service quality, and protect user rights, thereby promoting the healthy development of the e-commerce industry.

4.2 Ethical Challenges and Environmental Behavior

4.2.1 Ethical Dilemmas and Environmental Impact

Although peak events such as over-customization or delayed delivery certainly contribute, participant narratives show that discontent frequently results from a combination of variables. This is best shown by a participant's statement of "feeling suspense" while awaiting a product. You may think of this "suspense" as a mixture of uncertainty and expectation. The doubt of delivering by the time is mixed with the eagerness for the required object. This lack of clarity could be worsened by ethical concerns along the supply chain. Imagine a buyer who cherishes decency in making

things and hopes to buy items that are made with a moral consideration. His or her anxiety over the wait has a possibility of being accompanied by fear of an unknown origin for the commodity

In Anmol case the responder shows ethical concern for fair treatment and labor procedures in organizations such as Amazon by expressing worry about the working circumstances of employees. A desire to match purchasing decisions with moral principles may be seen in the tendency to support businesses. This preference may also be impacted by worries about how profits are distributed and how workers are treated across the supply chain.

"When it comes to ethical questions, I think a lot of like these Asian markets maybe is cheap labor or child labor which is not like accepted in Sweden. That could be one major issue, ethically. And also the environmental aspect to like mass producing and what kind of materials are used for it. But I'm not sure if this is ethical, but like sometimes, you know, in EU, you have... When you buy something, you noticed, it's a specific standard and it can be everything from pollution to like all these materials. Like how do you... How has it is for you? I think that buying from Asian markets, you don't know what you're getting in terms of original materials. I think that's an ethical question to consider and also like how long it's going to last. That's the environmental aspect of it."(Anmol)

Anmol's response introduces the notion of ethical concerns related to labor policies, environmental effects, and Asian market products. His comments are in concurrence with a study conducted by Torres et al. (2012) and Aguinis & Glavas (2012) that established that myriad of CSR has a positive effect on the firm and the consumers. However, Anmol voiced the same concerns Gillespie (2008) had for the green initiatives stating that many consumers are usually wary of being taken for a ride through greenwashing strategies.

Now some of the actions portrayed as sustainable can be defined as "greenwashing," as described by Lyon & Montgomery (2015). Greenwashing is a form of pretexting, where an organization provides unclear or misleading information about its sustainability initiatives while presenting information that is even more positive than what is in the real sense (De Jong et al., 2020). According to the conversation analyzed above, it can be concluded that Anmol is familiar with it, and is cautious about this approach, which is in harmony with the conclusions made by Aji & Sutikno (2015), who have determined that with the appearance of greenwashing, there are concerns to the commitments to sustainability.

According to the literature analysis by Atkinson and Kim (2014) for a firm when its greenwashing tactics are unmasked consumers can turn against the firm. This is in accordance with the atrocities that Anmol had in mind when asking questions pertaining to the purchase of goods from firms that may be engaging in unethical acts that include exploitation of labor and degradation of the environment. Moreover, De Jong et al. (2020) have uncovered that organizations' image also receives non-unsustainable improvements through, for instance, environmental compliance; moreover, if an organization lacks comprehensive CSR projects, it can result in fewer reputation bonuses. This simple observation implies that CSR cannot be considered as a one-dimensional

concept, where only the social issue is important, but must be considered in the light of the environmental factor, an aspect that is also reflected in the response by Anmol.

In contrast Gustav raises ethical concerns about buying from particular sites, where prices might seem arbitrary or unusually cheap. They emphasize how crucial it is to have faith in the business and its policies, implying that if people think a business is reliable, they could be less inclined to think about possible moral dilemmas including the environment, animal rights, and human rights. The responder does, however, admit that they become more alert and wary when making purchases from platforms with lower levels of trust, suggesting that trustworthiness affects their ethical concerns when making selections about what to buy.

"I care about human rights, animal rights, and the environment, but I prefer not to think about these issues when I'm shopping. If I feel a company is trustworthy, I won't dwell on whether they're exploiting suppliers or ethical concerns. When I shop on high-end Swedish websites or in stores, everything feels premium and I don't question these things. In contrast, on other platforms, strange pricing models make me more suspicious. Prices like 143 crowns seem random and less trustworthy compared to more standard pricing. This lower sense of trust makes me more cautious about buying from such platforms, as I feel that unusually low prices might come at a hidden cost elsewhere."(Gustav)

As for ethical procedures, Gustav's concern is buying from such platforms and such pricing as he does not trust such sellers, which in turn leads to attention towards potential covert costs which might involve exploitation or negative impact on the environment. His observation is consistent with literature illustrating trust and reputation as key factors essential in customer satisfaction (Torres et al. , 2012; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Gillespie, 2008).

Lyon & Montgomery's (2015) work predicted this unawareness that Gustav harbors not to think about issues that are ethical in nature such as human rights, animal rights, environment when shopping and its similarity to the concept of "greenwashing". There is also the possibility that the use of positive images accompanied by ambiguous or even misleading sustainability messages known as greenwashing in the companies may have the effect of making people like Gustav less likely to think about ethical issues when making purchases.

On the other hand the Emily also discusses the moral issues of e-commerce, especially in light of how consumers behave and make decisions. The respondent talks about their internal struggle with buying from stores, which provide fashionable clothes at reasonable prices but have come under fire for immoral actions including child labor and environmental damage. They articulate a conflict between adhering to their ethical business practices principles and promoting a Swedish brand they enjoy.

"Yeah, I tried to think a bit about it actually. And so like, like an easy example, where I'm very conflicted myself, you know, the Swedish brand, H&M. So they have like affordable clothes that

also kind of my style and fit me very well. But they have enormous environmental impact. They kind of make their clothes in a non-ethical way, basically using children labor and stuff."(Emily)

Emily thoroughly shares the concept of ethical consumerism and talks about the problem with cheap, but often unethical brands like H&M who have been accused of child labor and harming the environment. Her story reflects ethical reasoning and consumer-oriented decisions made by customers when deciding between their personal beliefs, brand preferences and budget, as provided by research on CSR influence on loyalty and reputation (Torres et al., 2010; Aguinis and Glavas, 2012; Gillespie, 2008).

From the previous response, Bernth has offered a rather contrasting view to these matters at hand. He points out that there is a lack of ethical information provided to the buyer when purchasing a product online; this means that when you are a buyer, it can be hard to decide what product to buy based on what you believe is ethical. Bernth has noted that there is a profusion of unethical information and lack of certification information given to the consumer when undertaking online purchases. Lyon and Montgomery (2015) and De Jong et al. (2020) have also observed that companies use practices of greenwashing that hide true sustainability measures.

Speaking to the ethical issues surrounding e-commerce, Bernth openly brought attention to the widespread obstacles customers have when trying to get trustworthy and honest information about the moral standing of the things they buy online.

"There is never any ethical information, you know, there's when you buy a product, there's never any ethical information such as, 'Oh, this product does guarantee that child labor was never used.' I mean, there's no such, there's no such, how do you say, certification. And/or, I mean, I don't have the patience enough to go through every product I want to buy and manufacture and see what are their ethical stances and their responsibilities. So I just completely ignore it but I completely boycott Russian products." (Bernth).

The participant Lena recognizes the significance of ethical considerations but draws attention to the difficulties in finding out all the details regarding the source and manufacturing processes of a product.

"Definitely, but it can be tricky sometimes. There's not always a clear picture of where things come from or how they're made. I try to do my best to research and learn more all the time, but yeah, nobody's perfect, right." (Lena)

Lena's narrative brings to the surface of the realization that consumers are limited to making informed decisions in regards to the source of products and the process through which they are manufactured. Despite her understanding of business principles on ethical and moral issues, she singles out the main problem of inconclusive identification of a product or its production process. This element of the lack of visibility jeopardizes the consumers' capability to assuage the purchase of items that are ethically appropriate. This corresponds with the findings of Lyon & Montgomery (2015) and De Jong et al. (2020) works on the subject of greenwashing. While it is the

management's responsibility to ensure that sustainability is integrated into its operation and procedures, they take advantage of this weakness by presenting information that is more positive than is the actual truth through greenwashing. One such example is Lena's inability to get straightforward and relevant data in relation to some of the products that she buys could be attributed to this.

On the other hand, Alex acknowledges the environmental impact of cross-border platforms but admits that price often outweighs environmental concerns, especially for smaller items. This tension between ethical considerations and economic constraints reflects the complexities of consumer decision-making. "Yeah, I would say like pollution and working conditions would be what I would be most worried about. That something is produced in a toxic way or that people are getting used as cheap labor." (Alex). His sentiments on pollution and working conditions fall in line with Groot & Steg (2008) and Stern & Dietz (1994) where ego-self identified values for Pro environmental behavior depends on one's perceived gain from their uptake other than the total costs. Alex's statement about the fact that the price for products sometimes conquers environmental problems, indicates that he might make his decisions based more on self-orientation than biosphere-altruism.

Such refinements revealed by the responses from Lena and Alex have indicated the seriousness of the clarification in terms of connecting the environmental values and behavior. As for the relationship between these values, some research has suggested a high degree of compatibility while others denied it.

Groot & Steg (2008) and Lee & Jan (2018) established that biospheric values have the potential of influencing environmental attitudes, concerns, and behaviors positively, other research did not establish any significant relationship between biospheric values and the willingness of consumers to pay for a fair trade label on clothes (Geiger & Keller, 2018), biospheric value and green lifestyle behavior. Unlike other studies that suggested that egoistic values prompt pro-environmental action when there is perceived hints of self-benefit, other studies have shown that egoistic values are detrimental to attitudes and behaviors towards recycling (Groot and Steg, 2008), corporate social responsibility, product environmental impact consideration (Lee & Cho, 2019), driving behavior restriction (Steg, Perlaviciute, et al., 2014), and environmental concern (Groot & Steg, 2008).

These inconsistencies point to the possibility that connection between self-reported environmentalism and environmentally responsible behaviors could be not direct and may depend on the person characteristics, situational factors, or the specific types of actions analyzed. Lena and Alex provided such a narrating of the complexity – thus such complications should be taken into consideration when trying to evaluate how ethical and environmental factors influence the consumer behavior concerning online purchasing.

4.2.2 Customer Experiences and Platform Accountability

Temu and Amazon are e-commerce companies facing dilemmas that extend beyond timely transportation and product quality, among other things. Time taken may be the reason for discontentment but it is not the only one. Consumer opinions regarding a firm, which eventually affect trust and loyalty, are shaped by factors such as labor conditions, environmental friendliness, privacy and data manipulation besides others.

Gustav expressed

"I remember Temu from a long time ago. They were always at the top of Google, which was annoying because I didn't trust them. The website seemed unfamiliar and shady. The products looked cheap, and I didn't bother checking them out. It felt like Temu was everywhere, targeting me aggressively. I felt trapped, like they were forcing me to buy from them. It's like being on a street with people yelling at you to come into their restaurant. I hate that feeling. Temu gave me those same concerns." (Gustav)

Gustav's narrative highlights the best practices of online businesses, where trust is key. This is illustrated well by his empathy to not interact with Temu, which he considered as a foreign and forceful, thus bringing out the impact of trust on consumer behavior. This is in congruency with the observations made by Wang et al.(1998), Furnell & Karweni (1999), Chou et al. (1999), Jarvenpaa et al (2000), Gefen (2000), Lee & Turban (2001) and Dong-Her et al (2004) opining that the need to make customers feel secured while effecting financial transactions is a key factor

Anmol's response raises concerns on accountability and transparency in handling of data. It also touches on moral issues that are surrounding data privacy and protection.

"You don't really know where that the data is ending up. Who's really taking it and how are they using it? And to whom are they providing our data? That's something quite hard to know. And also, I'm not sure how they're aligning with the EU rules, like GDPR and stuff like that. That's ethical for me. It can be both American and Chinese. That doesn't matter. Okay. I think that, like, I still want my user information and data protected. And that's very, like, important to for them to disclose and make, like, measures to protect it." *(Anmol)*

In response, Anmol offers a different understanding. Some of these are related to the challenges of accountability and the issue of transparent handling of the data he is talking issues related to moral issues of data privacy and protection. His uncertainty to where his data goes, who utilizes it, and how it is utilized also mirrors the sentiments expressed in the article by Castaneda and associates (2007) regarding the rampant data collection and potential misuse of data. His wish to have his user information and data protected and would like companies to let him know how he can be protected resonates well with the commonly held definition of Internet privacy by Boritz et al. (2011) as the right of a person to exercise control over his/her information in regard to its acquisition, use and sharing through the internet.

The intricacies of platform responsibility and consumer safeguarding in the online market space is laid bare by one participant Cristian sharing his own experience with an individual seller on Amazon.

"I had a frustrating experience with an individual seller on Amazon who sold me an automatic cat toilet that turned out to be a basic plastic box with just a light sensor, despite costing over 5,000 crowns. The seller provided a Chinese address for returns, which Amazon's policy prohibits. After multiple attempts to resolve the issue directly, I reported it to Amazon. They helped facilitate the return and refunded my money, demonstrating how Amazon handles sellers in breach of their terms." *(Cristian)*

Cristian's frustration with the seller who misrepresented the product aligns with the findings of Wang et al. (1998), Furnell and Karweni (1999), Chou et al. (1999), Jarvenpaa et al. (2000), Gefen (2000), Lee and Turban (2001), and Dong-Her et al. (2004), who identified the necessity for customers to feel secure while making financial transactions as a main obstacle to the expansion of e-commerce. His experience of receiving a product that did not match the description can be seen as a breach of this security, leading to a loss of trust in the seller.

The seller's provision of a Chinese address for returns, which is prohibited by Amazon's policy, further compounds this breach of trust. This lack of transparency and adherence to policy can hinder consumers' ability to make informed decisions that align with their ethical values, a concern that is echoed in the studies by Lyon & Montgomery (2015) and De Jong et al. (2020), which discuss the phenomenon of greenwashing.

However, Cristian's narrative also highlights the role of e-commerce platforms in facilitating dispute resolution. His report to Amazon led to the facilitation of the return and the refund of his money, demonstrating how Amazon handles sellers in breach of their terms. This aligns with the definition of internet privacy by Boritz et al. (2011) as a person's right to access and control their personal information with respect to its collection, use, and transfer over the Internet. In this case, Amazon acted to protect Cristian's rights as a consumer, restoring his trust in the platform.

Cecilia expresses anxiety over privacy and manipulation especially concerning how platforms collect and utilize personal data for targeted advertising. They also find it disconcerting that ads seem to reflect their recent online activity which begs questions about just how much information is gathered and what this means for privacy.

"Yeah, these personalized ads can feel a little creepy sometimes, you know? Like, how do they know I was just looking at those hiking boots? It makes me wonder what kind of data they're collecting on me, and what they're doing with it all. Privacy is a big deal in Sweden, and this whole targeted advertising thing feels a bit iffy." (Cecilia)

Cecilia's concerns about privacy and targeted advertising are deeply rooted in the broader discourse on data privacy and security in the digital age. The literature underscores the importance of these issues, particularly in the context of e-commerce and online financial transactions (Wang

et al., 1998; Furnell and Karweni, 1999; Chou et al., 1999; Jarvenpaa et al., 2000; Gefen, 2000; Lee and Turban, 2001; Dong-Her et al., 2004). At the heart of this discussion is the concept of "internet privacy," defined by Boritz et al. (2011) as a person's right to access and control their personal information with respect to its collection, use, and transfer over the Internet. This encompasses demographic, personal, and transactional data, all of which are routinely collected and used in e-commerce transactions (Milberg et al., 2000; Petty, 2000; Rezgui et al., 2003).

Cecilia's discomfort with targeted advertising reflects a common concern among online consumers. Many hesitate to share personal or financial information with businesses for fear that it may be used improperly or shared with other businesses (Lim, 2003). Castañeda et al. (2007) identified two dimensions of online privacy concerns: concerns about the data collection process itself, and concerns about the improper use of this information by internet companies.

This study is in line with previous research studies, which claim that e-commerce dissatisfaction is brought about by misleading information and unfulfilled promises. Negative results can arise from emotional complications as well as ethical violations. In order to satisfy customers and fulfil their promises, platforms must offer accurate information. This can make clients feel useless in terms of moral concerns because transparency is a key factor in these processes. In addressing labor practices, environmental effects and sourcing transparency among others, platforms may help reduce concerns.

Speaking to the ethical issues surrounding e-commerce, Bernth openly brought attention to the widespread obstacles customers have when trying to get trustworthy and honest information about the moral standing of the things they buy online.

"There is never any ethical information, you know, there's when you buy a product, there's never any ethical information such as, "Oh, this product does guarantee that child labor was never used." I mean, there's no such, there's no such, how do you say, certification. And/or, I mean, I don't have the patience enough to go through every product I want to buy and manufacture and see what are their ethical stances and their responsibilities. So I just completely ignore it but I completely boycott Russian products." (Bernth)

Describing the absence of references to ethics Bernth said there's never any ethical information. Such statement highlights the deficiency of easily accessible information on ethical production inside e-commerce platforms. This is consistent with Gillespie's (2008) discovery of padded-language employed by platforms, which conceals the extent of a product's sustainability or eco-friendliness –labelling them as 'sustainable' or 'eco-friendly' despite having heinous effects on the environment or society. Thus it is postulated that Consumers values determine the inclinations of their choice behavior (Stern and Dietz 1994; Groot and Steg, 2008). For instance, biospheric–altruistic attitudes, which suggest concern for the preservation of biological life forms and other people, can encourage the response (Groot & Steg, 2008). They can be seen to be in agreement with such values, in light of Bernth's boycott of Russian products. However, the findings revealed for studies conducted on the connection between values and behavior are not always quite murky.

Geiger & Keller (2018) & Landon et al. (2018) does not have any positive relationship with biospheric values and certain pro-environmental consumer behaviors.

Geiger & Keller (2018) and Landon et al. (2018) elaborate that biospheric value's correlation with distinct pro-environmental consumer behavior patterns appear to be nonexistent. The acknowledgment of not having "the patience enough to go through every product" was expressing from Bernth indicates that egoistic values were at play. Generally, these values are (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015).related to self-interested motivation, which can promote behaviors that are convenient for consumers and disregard the ethical issues; in many situations, seeking information on the product origin appears to be tiresome to a consumer than not going through the whole process (Groot & Steg, 2008; Stern & Dietz, 1994).

The participant Lena recognizes the significance of ethical considerations but draws attention to the difficulties in finding out all the details regarding the source and manufacturing processes of a product.

"Definitely, but it can be tricky sometimes. There's not always a clear picture of where things come from or how they're made. I try to do my best to research and learn more all the time, but yeah, nobody's perfect, right." (Lena)

Lena's misadventure in search of a "clear picture" regarding the genesis of a product or the process of its production points to a problem of concern in the electronic commerce platforms – that of obscurity. This is in the same vein as Gillespie (2008) where she noted, 'greenwashing' some platforms use to present fake environmental and social impact. Lacking clear and accessible information, inferred an 'ethical information divide' (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015, p. 484). Ethical consumers such as Lena end up frustrated and unable to make any choices since information is not clear. It is on this angle that the same authors posited that the lack of transparency erodes the much-needed trust (De Jong et al., 2020) which is equally crucial to the establishment of the ethical marketplace.

When asked about ethical research, Lena has to agree with the notion that she has done this: While she appreciates the fact that this is something she has done, she also elaborates on the fact that such processes may take time or patience, which is a major problem.

Alex acknowledge that cross-border platforms often come with environmental costs although he also admits that sometimes price takes precedence over environmental arguments especially for small items. "Yeah, I would say like pollution and working conditions would be what I would be most worried about. That something is produced in a toxic way or that people are getting used as cheap labor" (Alex). This implies that consumer decision-making is complex because there seems to be a conflict between economic limitations and ethical considerations

Themes such as pollution and/or injustice regarding the labor market as demonstrated by Alex. Nevertheless, these claims are counterbalanced by other factors mostly convenience that makes it possible to connect CCM with the concept of egoistic value (Stern & Dietz, 1994). Alex remains

focused on the price of the products they buy highlighting that perhaps financial constraints overshadow the ethical factors sometimes.

Macroeconomic environment also presents another reality that countries' consumers like Alex have to tackle, that is; the price-ethics nose dive. Groot & Steg (2008) & Stern & Dietz (1994) both claims that, the perceived benefits of an action, in this case cheaper prices, are pitted against the perceived negative externalities which are the negative environmental or social effects. This is evidenced by Alex's readiness to compromise on price for small items as a means of eliminating the competition from other products. Sometimes the prices of products are significantly lower than their humanitarian counterparts due to the low costs of production; this leads to the consumers bringing in the point that it is practically impossible to practice ethical consumption unless it is called for by their employers' stimulus, especially during festive occasions. This shows that one is not entirely in total control of his/her decisions all the time due to these economic factors especially after considering the ethical implications of the decision making processes especially for cost-sensitive consumers.

4.2.3 Transparency and Social Responsibility

Transparency in supply chains emerges as a common theme among consumers. Cristian underscores the need for more openness in disclosing information about supply chains and analytics, emphasizing the importance of clarity for consumers. "I believe the dialogue should be definitely more open. And indeed, not all of the analytics are shown to us as consumers. This is a very fair point that they should be clearer about it". (Cristian)

Cristian's statement about the need for more transparency in reporting on supply chains captures an overarching issue – the 'ethical information deficit' which defines cross-border e-commerce (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015). Some of the disservices of e-commerce platforms are that they do not include essential information concerning the source, production of the product, and the effect of supply chains on social and ecological systems. This kind of opaque structure is self-defeating, and reduces the consumer's ability to make effective decisions as well as presents a major problem for those who seek sustainable and ethical products. Prior literature recommends transparency as it helps enhance the trust between consumers and businesses (De Jong et al., 2020 November 18).

In the eyes of the consumers, hidden information constitutes an act of deceit, and therein lies the fall of trust and proper corporate values, or the lack thereof, fail to encourage consumers to make purchases that reflect their personal values (Crane et al., 2019). When such information is not well provided, it is very likely that the consumers would develop some level of suspicion and doubt the ethical standards amongst the various products they intend to patronize. This follows the assertion Bernth (discussed earlier) that had the same feeling with regard to supply chain of e-commerce.

Anmol also finds it challenging to determine the exact origin and production process of products bought online, highlighting the opacity of major platforms like Amazon and Temu. "It's quite hard

sometimes to find the sender, the supplier. It's usually just go under the name of the big companies, Amazon or Temu." (Anmol）

Anmol's experience is an illustration of a prevalent issue – the lack of transparency in how some products are sourced and manufactured, and their subsequent sale on e-commerce sites such as Amazon and Temu. This is so because the nature of the information is not made available to the public hence helping consumers who are willing to purchase products from companies with good Standard ethical conduct to make informed decisions. Lyon & Montgomery's (2015) study defines this as the 'ethical information gap', where the consumer remains helpless, and has no means to make a proper decision because information is all a little hazy. In the same way that transparency erodes consumer trust (De Jong et al., 2020), it also thwarts the establishment of an ethical marketplace. Through this, consumers are unable to know how the social and environmental factors affect their products and thus they cannot pressure the platforms or brands to act rightly.

This form of deception does not only take advantage of consumers but also threatens the growth of an ethical business market. If the consumers are given misinformation continuously, they are not going to trust any other claims about sustainability hence hampering the progression of ethical consumerism within e-commerce business (Crane et al., 2019). This resonates with the general discourses on greenwashing, which was also a subject of argument by other scholars such as Michaelidou et al. (2017) who argue that sustainability claims harm the level of consumer trust.

Moreover, Bernth perceives e-commerce platforms as secretive about disclosing information regarding their supply chains, reflecting a broader skepticism among consumers regarding the transparency of online platforms. In the absence of clear information, consumers like Bernth may resort to skepticism, questioning the ethical practices behind the products they purchase. "They are very secretive, right, I think." (Bernth）

4.2.4 Privacy and Security Concerns

Across various perspectives, concerns about personal information security emerge as a recurring theme. Bernth and Gustav express worries about the security of their personal information when shopping online, highlighting the need for robust data protection measures aligned with regulations like GDPR. "Yeah, and sometimes, for instance, if I buy one thing out of Amazon, they don't require bank ID. And that I really strongly dislike." (Bernth)

"I don't think the products that they sell are products that people are actually that interesting in all the time so…for that sake I don't think it's hard to say but I think the market stays neutral." (Gustav) According to Flavián and Guinalíu (2006) security is the customer's perceived confidence that his or her information is secure throughout the entire transaction process in an online situation. This belief majorly depends on the security measures put in place so as to ensure that only the right people accesses the information, that information cannot be intercepted by the wrong people, and the information cannot be used in the wrong way. This can be well explained by Laforet and Li's

(2005) research study on the subject of Mobile banking in China – the issue of security, especially as it concerns financial data use, plays an important role in influencing the user behavior.

Nevertheless, Derk's comment reproduces a real-life situation. Customers are also skeptical when it comes to 'suspicious' websites and heavy security measures such as requiring identification log-in to a bank account before making a purchase which Bernth dislikes about Amazon seems to hinder the consumers shopping repertoire. Perhaps specifically it may dissuade customers reducing the very essence of convenience that e-commerce provides.

Derk suggests government oversight, particularly from the European Union, to regulate e-commerce platforms and ensure the security of personal information. This call for regulatory intervention reflects a broader push for enhanced consumer protections in the digital marketplace. "I think I wouldn't put my credit card into a shady website." (Derk)

Following Derk's call for specific government supervision and urging the application of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR, many such sentiments have emerged. Measures such as GDPR are consumer-centric and establish accountability within organizations with respect to data protection and management. On the one hand, while there is a certain level of added bureaucracy for corporations to go through, from a societal perspective, such rules might be beneficial for easing concerns and thus promoting the general use of e-commerce.

4.3 Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality

4.3.1 Service Quality and Customer Experience in E-Commerce

Gustav expresses annoyance with out-of-stock messages after placing purchases, emphasizing the desire for frictionless online shopping experiences through clear and concise articulation. To prevent feeling duped, they emphasize the significance of clear communication and open procedures. They also emphasize how important it is to have quick customer service in order to address problems, especially those involving missing information and delayed deliveries.

"I don't know about service quality and those things I expect to work things smoothly, I don't want the websites to email me and say that they are out of stock when they placed my order. Because I feel like I am scammed. So I except things to work smoothly I not they better have a good customer service that actually register complain and try to solve every issue because I hate having problems with delay delivery times and missing information." (Gustav)

One common value that can be identified in both the theoretical background and Gustav's response is the issue of service quality. Based on the study carried out by Zeithaml et al., (2002), e-commerce service quality is the extent that a website enables an individual to make purchases without experiencing any difficulties. This means that the user cannot experience any bad interface, or even face any errors, let alone massive delay, which is something that is expected by Gustav of the things he is using. Other research by Parasuraman et al. (2005) divides service quality into antecedent variables; fulfillment, system availability, privacy and efficiency. In other words,

customers such as Gustav enter the online store with expectations of a seamless platform, on-time and satisfactory delivery of products, and protection of their personal data. When these multiple experiences create a single, fluid impression on the part of customer – which of course they can't always – the notion of perceived value arises. As actualized by Ali et al. (2019), perceived value is an essential aspect of purchasing that depends on perceived price and delivery quality. In other words, the utility of a commodity that a customer assigns depends not only upon the amount of money they pay for it but also the ability of an online store to meet those promises. Outsourcing of operations to other suppliers is another deference that reflects this point; Gustav got frustrated out of stock problems and late deliveries. In situations where an order is delayed, or there are stock problems during an order fulfillment cycle, customers are left with a perceived value that is skewed from the actual situation.

Emily case insightful information on what customers anticipate from e-commerce platforms in terms of service quality. When it comes to things like return policies and explicit shipping terms, the responder shows that they have a clear awareness of their rights and expectations. Additionally, they stress the need of user-friendly website interfaces, stressing the necessity of effective filtering choices and simplicity of navigation. Furthermore, their proactive practice of evaluating the ordering procedure prior to completing a transaction shows that they expect dependability and openness from the platform.

"I often check shipping terms and return policies before making purchases, especially with new or unfamiliar websites. In Sweden, we typically have 14 days or even a month to change our minds after ordering. I expect clear information about services provided to customers. Sometimes, I test the checkout process by adding items to my basket to assess payment handling before making a purchase. The overall website experience matters a lot to me—it should be easy to use filters to find what I want, especially when shopping for clothes with specific criteria like size, color, and price. Good IT infrastructure and high-quality product images are crucial for a positive shopping experience." (Emily)

Emily underlines her routine of checking the shipping terms and return policies before purchasing something online especially from unknown sites, and this has brought out the aspect of transparency that is imperative when dealing with customers. This goes in line with perceived value which is congruent with Ali et al. (2019). In this case, customers will be able to make a decision on which online stores to use to buy products with the information provide, thus eliminating the need for them to worry about being scammed. Such transparency helps in creating a perception of trust which is one of the important antecedents of perceived customer benefits as pointed out by Heinonen (2014). According to Zeithaml et al. (2002), the definition of service quality used in the context of e-commerce is the extent to which a website facilitates the customer to make purchases

Lena emphasizes important elements that influence customer's pleasure with online buying, including top-notch customer support, dependable service, transparent communication, simple

return policies, and safe payment methods. “When shopping online, I look for excellent customer service and reliable service quality from these platforms. Because I look for easy returns, and secure payment options that greatly impact my satisfaction with the overall shopping.”(Lena)

The literature also notes that factors such as responsiveness of customer service can reduce the effects of vici borias. Gomez et al. (2004) are correct to note that customer service is on sensitive indicators that not only reflect current customer loyalty but also the potential for new customer acquisition. Customer service is a function that can accept criticism, mitigate such complaints, provide the needed remedy, and restore customers’ confidence, and that is what Gustav wants. It would go a long way in restoring the perception of the customer by making them feel that they have not been scammed by the particular commodity.

Upon analyzing the participant narratives, it is apparent that a considerable amount of discontent with e-commerce services is aimed at the shops. Retailers have a clear incentive to make sure their customers are happy. But in addition to what the merchants do, a critical element that also plays a significant role in creating the impression of unhappiness is the consumer's perspective on the entire shopping process. Recollections from the participants indicate a strong emotional bond with the things they bought, frequently accompanied by enthusiasm and anticipation. Customers may be extremely disappointed and have their hopes completely dashed if they do not obtain a long-anticipated goods. As a result, when presented with such unfavorable situations, customers could feel frustrated and even more powerless to solve the problem.

4.3.2 Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

Environmental considerations emerge as a significant factor for Emily, who values transparency in product listings. “I do like some pages now that started with having like some kind of environmental effect.” (Emily)

Emily’s use of websites that include information about environmental impact in product descriptions and indicators is quite reasonable as more and more companies shift towards sustainable solutions. This supports the concept of perceived value in a way, namely when the customer has comprehensive knowledge about the product, they make the right decision regarding its relevance to their values. The consumer base is becoming more exigent in demanding information on the impact of products they buy on the environment. It remains apparent that traditional e-commerce companies that do not address this change may lose sustainable green customers in the future and unsatisfied customers.

The proposed evaluation criteria are based on the Parasuraman et al. (2005) categorization of website services: functionality, reliability, information privacy, and interface. Even if environmental management is not considered from the perspective of responsible business, In addition, by examining the relationship between information availability and customer satisfaction, Vasić et al. (2019) argue that information availability is an important determinant of satisfaction indices. One of the reasons that were identified by Emily includes the fact that different

products have some level of impact on the environment, which makes her prefer information on the impact of products on the environment.

Anmol emphasizes sustainability and corporate social responsibility, urging platforms to align with consumer demands for ethical practices. “I mean, for my satisfaction, to have some kind of contact or assistance, if needed, is important for me. And maybe, like, transparency is always, like, nice to have, because it gives you a sense of trustworthiness.” (Anmol)

Anmol points to the significance of clarity as beneficial to the public and referring to it as a key to trusting the establishment of any type of venture. This goes with the perceived value framework highlighted by Ali et al., (2019) which underscores the importance of clear information to enable the customers make their decisions. As highlighted by Vasić et al. (2019), it is crucial to create transparency in the business practices, ethical standpoints, and information about the products, services, or brands, which helps to enhance trust and customer loyalty.

The respondents’ concerns on customer support options are in consonance with the notion of service quality in e-commerce business. According to Zeithaml et al. (2002), the facility of transactions defines it, but highlights the aspect of easily accessible support for improving the experiential satisfaction. This broader perspective of service quality where the key determinant is the ability to solve issues in the most efficient manner (Parasuraman et al., 2005).

Gabriel underscores the importance of trustworthiness and accurate product information, while Derk emphasizes clear visualization of total costs to avoid surprises. “I think my expectation is that the information of the product should be very clear and I should not be confused about what kind of products they offer and if they're the real ones or the fake ones.” (Gabriel)

“Following up on the pictures were made like that the product actually looks and feels as advertised I think is probably a very big factor, clear visualization of the entire price so that you don't get surprised by things like customs as an extra price add-on and free returns.” (Derk)

Derk emphasis on understanding the product information and providing accurate information that would help customers and the business. According to Gabriel, there is the need the kind of information that will help in the elimination of confusion that may lead to counterfeit products and dimension of improved product features. This is in line with the perceived value which was presented by Ali et al., (2019), for a clearer information provides the customer with the power of a decision. As illustrated by Gabriel, customers want to know everything about a particular good and the whole process of purchasing it. When Derk mentioned “clear visualization of the entire price” as one of the greatest benefits of buy-now-pay-later, it is similar to the insight from Vasić et al. (2019) where customers may be unsatisfied because of fees such as customs fees. Sharing the information about price also creates trust and eliminates “shock” while checking the totals, which can significantly influence customers’ satisfaction (Fornell, 1992).

Another challenge that Gabriel witnessed is the concern for the authenticity of products in the market. To this end, Einsiedel et al. (2019) turn to the notion of CSR for establishing trust with

customers. Specifically, e-commerce platforms can capitalize on proper labeling of ethic sourcing and cooperation with reliable suppliers, thus appealing to customers with senses of authenticity similar to the one Gabriel possesses.

According to Junardi and Sari (2019), one of the key metrics what affect customers' decisions is the quality of product images and their correspondence to the appearance and characteristics of the goods. Misleading pictures and images reduce the credibility of the service provider and can result to dissatisfaction when the physical product does not tally with the displayed image. Using high-quality photographs of the products and research use of new fad technologies such as the 360 degrees view and angle of the product can help change the customers Impression and build trust with them (Uhm et al., 2022).

4.3.4 Local Products and Cross-Border E-Commerce

While some interviewees, like Michel, express uncertainty about purchasing locally produced items through cross-border platforms, "I think so... Something that you don't have here in Sweden, but maybe they have that in Asia." (Michel)

Michel's hesitation may be caused by a simple fact that one only uses products produced in his country and therefore, may not be familiar with products of a foreign country. This has some of its roots in the perceived value as posited by Ali et al. (2019). Hence, when customers have prior knowledge of a product or when they are inexperienced, they are unable to evaluate quality, and thus, perceived value is low. Furthermore, it is also importance to build trust in the seller and the selling platform of the product. Some more literature on e-commerce points out that the type of marketing that is espoused with internet marketing is relational rather than transactional, according to Heinonen, 2014. That is why it is even more difficult in the case of cross-border business relations, where distance creates doubt and potential cultural differences augment mistrust.

However, as seen from Michel's case, cross-border e-commerce opens a universe of opportunities to find products that are not available in the domestic market. This has to do with customer satisfaction in e-commerce as appears in the work of Gomez et al. (2004, p. 5) where satisfaction was described as the net difference between customer expectations and perceptions during an e-shopping trip. In the context of cross-border trading programs, these traffic sources can go beyond expectations as they offer the customers' access to interesting and new products.

Others like Cristian and Gustav haven't explored this avenue extensively. However, there's consensus on the potential impact of global corporations on local markets, with concerns about monopolization and competition. "Do you think we have that in Sweden? Do you have something that's produced here, maybe shipped somewhere else, and then you can buy it back?"(Cristian)

"In Sweden I don't think they put the competition at all because I would be surprised if swedes actually buy from these websites so on a global scale level absolutely its harmful if these platforms gets too much of a market share, the monopoly is never good." *(Gustav).*

The significance of e-commerce platforms on an international level, which has blossomed recently is a two-sided coin for domestic markets. On the one hand, these platforms provide more choice for the final consumers and the exposure to as many relevant products (Junardi & Sari, 2019). Haidar, M., M. T. Harrah, and Z. A. Altawel (2015) argued that customers have the opportunity to discover products which are not available locally thus improving customer satisfaction (Gomez et al., 2004). This is in concordance with the perceived value as described by Ali et al. (2019); in that, when customers have many suppliers to choose from, they are likely to find items that will serve their needs and preferences in the best way.

Cristian and Gustav have some real points for arguing the possible adverse effects that the spread of global e-commerce has on local markets. It can also become a problem when the BIIs are too big like the famous large platforms which in many scenarios can be detrimental to the local players especially SMEs. It poses challenges to local players in terms of competition from foreign players with larger markets, and also have very aggressive prices that local players may find hard to match. This may potentially result to a reduction of the number of products since economic globalization will lead to a removal of culturally different products.

One possible drawback that Gustav had regarding monopolization is a major factor. This means that if a handful of international players dominate the e-commerce market, there may be reduced options, and limited opportunities for growth may arise. In addition, it can result in such platforms setting rules and defining prices and terms, which will affect consumers as well as the domestic business entity.

5. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the multifaceted nature of consumer expectations and experiences in the realm of cross-border e-commerce, particularly focusing on Swedish consumers' perceptions of platforms like Amazon and Temu. The research has illuminated several critical factors influencing the formation of unfavorable opinions among Swedish consumers, ranging from trust issues encompassing security, privacy, and ethical considerations to concerns regarding service quality and customer satisfaction.

One key finding is the paramount importance of trust in shaping consumer preferences and decisions. Swedish respondents, unlike their global counterparts, prioritize trustworthiness, transparency, and reliability when engaging with cross-border e-commerce platforms. Security and privacy concerns.

Ethical factors such as greenwashing and labor practices, significantly impact consumer perceptions and trust levels. It is imperative for platforms to address these concerns through robust security measures, transparent sustainability practices, and ethical supply chain management to build and maintain consumer trust.

Moreover, customer satisfaction and service quality emerge as pivotal factors driving consumer behaviors in e-commerce. Participants emphasized the significance of superior customer service,

prompt conflict resolution, and transparent communication in shaping their purchasing decisions. Meeting and exceeding customer expectations regarding website usability, product quality, pricing competitiveness, and delivery efficiency are crucial for enhancing consumer satisfaction and fostering repeat business. Swedish consumers' growing interest in ethical consumerism underscores the need for platforms to align with sustainability practices and societal expectations. The study also acknowledges concerns over the monopolistic tendencies of global platforms and emphasizes the importance of responsive governance and regulatory frameworks to ensure a balanced e-commerce landscape.

5.1 Theoretical Contribution

This paper provides a systematic, theoretical analysis of the variables shaping consumers' attitude on well-known e-commerce sites with references to Sweden.

Our research also shows that although these platforms provide customers with direct access to the global market, they also encourage customers' concerns and negative emotions. These attitudes are even more apparent when it comes to priority specifications of Swedish consumers. This research also shows that these negative attitudes are not inborn but are learned through experiences that customers have when dealing with the service providers and what they expect from the providers in the near future.

We expand on a range of other ethically sensitive issues having to do with green consumerism, trust and reputation, services consumers' satisfaction and service quality in enhancing these attitudes. Based on the analysis of the results obtained which characterizes the general state of affairs and tendencies in the sphere of e-commerce, it can be stated that these factors influence the customer attitudes toward e-commerce platforms to a great extent. This is especially the case regarding ethics in particular, as it is known that Swedish consumers heavily weigh the ethical aspect of their purchases.

Consequently, this study broadens the knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings of e-commerce by identifying the numerous drivers and restraints influencing customers' perception of such platforms. It also advances knowledge in this area and helps enlighten the public by focusing on a somewhat understudied segment and supplying a more comprehensive take on multiple factors that unfolded in the e-commerce field.

5.2 Practical Contribution

The finding from this research can significantly benefit consumer advocacy organizations and legislators. Identifying the specific issues that would be of interest to Swedish consumers when it comes to e-commerce and the things that they would want to see more of can facilitate the work of consumer advocacy organizations with an aim of promoting and safeguarding consumer interests. In the same way, the findings made by this research work can be of benefit to the

legislators in formulating or enhancing policies that control e-commerce activities. This can make a certainty that the rule is in confirmation to the realities and expectations of the consumers hence guaranteeing social justice in e-commerce.

It is also paramount to note that this study can be of interest to several other actors involved in the sphere of commerce, particularly with reference to the considerations. By identifying the influences that affect consumer attitudes, consumers can make necessary adjustments to their strategies to appropriately address consumers, build trust, and improve satisfaction among their customers. The information obtained in the framework of this study can be useful for improving consumer perceptions and behavior promoting the formation of rational, sustainable e-commerce. Through the concerns of the consumers and the expectations that are meet, e commerce system enable the reputation of the platforms to be built, continually customer loyalty to be won and hence the sustainability of e commerce business. Summative, the pragmatic implications of this research pertain to consumer advocacy, policymaking, managerial frameworks, and a supportive culture for e-commerce to thrive.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

In the light of this research, knowledge of the factors affecting consumers' experiences on established e-commerce platforms is viewed comprehensively. It becomes useful especially in marketing techniques especially for those companies that are operating in e-commerce since they will understand the best methods to employ in order to create trust and in turn increase satisfaction from customers. Specifically, decision-makers in organizations can use these ideas in understanding the customer care grievances, and therefore, develop appropriate strategies for dealing with such concerns in order to foster better customer relationships.

The study employs snowball sampling, which, though effective in providing diverse and representative participants, can give rise to some level of bias as the actual sampled population is probably not perfectly representative of the entire pool of Swedish consumers. Also, it is specifically relevant for the latter as the research is based on traditional e-commerce giants like Amazon and Temu. Since they are based on a selection of popular general-purpose e-commerce platforms, the findings may not generalize to newer or less well-established platforms. Lastly, the study reflects on Swedish consumers only, and the impression that other consumers have towards clothing companies may be different.

Several implementable key findings can be identified and followed in the near future as main directions for further research. This research can be further extended in the future, consumer from different countries could has been taken in to account to get more generalized idea regarding the attitudes towards e-commerce platforms. To address these gaps, future research could also look into understanding consumers' perceptions on emerging or scarcely researched e-commerce sites. A longitudinal investigation could help investigate the temporal dynamics of consumers' response to variations in e-commerce environment. While this study offers qualitative research

understanding, future studies should use quantitative research designs for the findings to be more comprehensive and generalizable.

Thus, by pointing out these limitations and proposing ideas for further investigation, we can be confident that our research adds to the existing knowledge in the field of e-commerce and consumer behavior. Not only does this approach support the practice findings to attack the validity of our current findings but also it opens up a further avenue for further research and exploration in this field.

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APPENDIX

1. Please briefly introduce yourself, including your name, profession, and age.

2. Are you studying or working, in what field?

3. Do you like shopping?

4. Do you prefer to shop online or in physical stores? Why?

5. How often do you shop online? What products are you mostly looking for and why?

6. How significant do you believe trust is when considering platforms like Amazon and Temu? Can you provide examples of how trustworthiness impacts your decision-making process when shopping on these platforms?

7. How many of your friends or family use Amazon and TEMU for shopping? Do you believe these platforms are becoming more common in Swedish society?

8. Can you identify any specific incidents or controversies that have significantly impacted the trust levels associated with Amazon and Temu in the Swedish market?

9. Have you ever participated in user reviews or ratings in Amazon and TEMU? What impact do you think these reviews have on other consumers' shopping decisions?

10. Have you ever experienced any instances where your trust in Amazon or Temu was compromised? If so, how did this experience affect your overall perception of the +platform's reliability and credibility?

11. How does awareness of a platform's ownership (whether Chinese or American) influence consumers' trust when making purchasing decisions?

12. Are there any cultural or societal factors unique to Sweden that influence how consumers perceive the trust and reputation of e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Temu?

13. Are ethical considerations a factor for you when purchasing products online? If so, could you elaborate on the specific ethical concerns you have, and how they influence your decision-making process regarding which products to buy

14. How transparent are Amazon and Temu in disclosing information about their supply chains, including the journey of products from manufacturer to consumer? Are there challenges in verifying the authenticity and ethical sourcing of products?

15. In your shopping experiences, have you paid attention to the social responsibility of e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU? How do you assess their performance in terms of social responsibility?

16. What are your thoughts on the future development of the relationship between Swedish consumers and cross-border e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU? What role should consumers play in this relationship?

17. What ethical considerations arise from Amazon and Temu's use of data analytics and customer profiling to target Swedish consumers with personalized advertisements and promotions? Are there concerns about privacy infringement or manipulation?

18. In cross-border e-commerce, what do you see as the main ethical challenges? Do you feel that some companies engage in deceptive practices regarding green environmentalism?

19. Have you ever made purchasing decisions based on the sales strategies of cross-border e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU? How do you think these platforms' promotional activities influence your shopping decisions?

20. Have you noticed the environmental impact of cross-border e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU? Are you willing to choose other platforms or products to support environmental protection?

21. Have you encountered any risks or problems during the shopping process on e-commerce platforms? How do you deal with these risks?

22. When using cross-border e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU, do you prefer to buy locally produced products or products sold across borders? What factors influence this choice?

23. To what extent do Amazon and Temu engage in responsible sourcing practices, particularly concerning the origin and production methods of the products sold on their platforms to Swedish consumers?

24. What aspects do you priorities When choosing cross-border e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU? For example, product variety, logistics speed, customer reviews, etc.?

25. What impact do you think cross-border e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU have on the local market in Sweden? Do you consider this impact to be positive or negative?

26. When shopping online, have you ever worried about the security of personal information? How do you evaluate e-commerce platforms' measures for protecting customer data?

27. In your shopping experiences, what are your expectations for customer service and service quality provided by e-commerce platforms? What factors do you think most affect your satisfaction?

28. Have you ever purchased locally distinctive products through cross-border e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU? What is your evaluation of the purchasing experience of these products?

29. What are your expectations for the future development direction of cross-border e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU? How should they improve to meet consumer demands?

30. Do you think cross-border e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU have a positive role in consumer choice and competition? Or may they lead to market monopolisation or reduced competition?

31. How do you perceive the value of loyalty programs and rewards offered by Amazon and Temu, such as points systems or exclusive discounts for frequent shoppers? Do these programs contribute to your satisfaction and loyalty to the platform?

32. Is there anything else you would like to share or any other thoughts you have regarding your experiences with e-commerce platforms like Amazon and TEMU, or any suggestions.