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**Vida Davidaviciene,**

Ph.D., Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania

 ORCID ID, 0000-0002-0931-0967

email: [vida.davidaviciene@vilniustech.lt](mailto:vida.davidaviciene@vilniustech.lt)

**Jurgita Raudeliuniene,**

Ph.D., Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania

 ORCID ID, 0000-0003-4003-0856

email: [jurgita.raudeliuniene@vilniustech.lt](mailto:jurgita.raudeliuniene@vilniustech.lt)

**Akvile Jonyte-Zemlickiene,**

Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania

email: [akvile.jonyte-zemlickiene@stud.vgtu.lt](mailto:akvile.jonyte-zemlickiene@stud.vgtu.lt)

**Manuela Tvaronaviene,**

Ph.D., Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania

 ORCID ID, 0000-0002-9667-3730

email: [manuela.tvaronaviene@vilniustech.lt](mailto:manuela.tvaronaviene@vilniustech.lt)

Correspondence author: [jurgita.raudeliuniene@vilniustech.lt](mailto:jurgita.raudeliuniene@vilniustech.lt)

## FACTORS AFFECTING CUSTOMER BUYING BEHAVIOR IN ONLINE SHOPPING

**Abstract.** Globalization processes rapidly advance information and communications technologies that influence social, economic, and cultural changes and transform consumers' needs and buying behavior in online shopping. Business sector organizations operating in a dynamic environment have to adjust to the environment's uncertainty, consider the changing needs of consumers and find effective and efficient ways to create a unique value for them. However, researchers and business practitioners have different interpretations and assessments of the factors influencing end-user purchasing behavior in the internet space. Therefore, the main problem area is how to assess which approach more comprehensively reflects and conveys the online market reality related to consumer buying behavior. This study examines these issues by combining various researchers' and business practitioners' positions to assess factors influencing consumers' decision-making in online shopping. This study aims to evaluate the critical factors related to e-shop characteristics and the product features that significantly impact consumer buying behavior in online shopping. Scientific literature review showed that the most crucial e-shop characteristics are e-shop design, e-shop informativeness, e-shop convenience, e-shop security, and e-shop popularity. From product features' perspectives, scientists and business practitioners mainly focus on product design and packaging, price, brand, customer reviews, and delivery time. The case study analysis of Lithuanian consumers was chosen for a comprehensive investigation because there is a lack of complex research in Lithuania to identify which factors are the most significant for consumer decision-making in the electronic space. Research methods such as scientific literature analysis, survey (structured questionnaire), correlation, and regression analysis were used to achieve the research goal. The survey results demonstrated that Lithuanian customers prefer traditional shopping compared to online purchases. As a result, the investigation results indicate that online purchases in Lithuania are still a growing market. Depending on survey results, the most crucial e-shop characteristics affecting Lithuanian customer buying behavior in online shopping were identified as e-shop design and e-shop security. Furthermore, the most influencing product features related to customer buying behavior in online shopping were product design and packaging, product price. Correlation and regression analysis proved that significant factors are e-shop design, e-shop security, product design and packaging, product price, and customer reviews for Lithuanian buyers in online shopping.

**Keywords:** customer buying behavior, e-shop characteristics, product features, online shopping, Lithuania.

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**Introduction.** Information and communications technologies are becoming increasingly important in society and significantly impact different business sectors and consumer self-determination in the online market (Grewal et al., 2017). Rapid technological development makes it possible to meet the constantly changing consumers' needs in online shopping more effectively and efficiently (Chiabai et al., 2014; Darsono et al., 2019; Javaria et al., 2020; Rezaei et al., 2016). It also poses particular challenges for business organizations seeking to create unique value for consumers by facing environmental dynamics and constraints leading to different forms of risk (Andryeyeva et al., 2021; Cherenkov et al., 2020).

Because of the continuous changes in the online environment, business organizations encounter a diverse goods supply and the impact of various factors related to e-shop and product diversity that strongly influence customers' decision to choose one or another product in a physical store or e-shop. Therefore, the variety of components of the e-shop and the offered product depends not only on the product's final price but also on the consumer's final decision to purchase the product or not. As a result, the impact of both e-shop and product components on the consumer is significant because this combination creates representative, informational, or unique value leading to customer's buying behavior. Based on research results, the overall value offered by product brand, product design and packaging, product price, customer reviews, or product delivery time (Cao et al., 2018; Hussain et al., 2015; Park et al., 2012) becomes essential drivers of online shopping if lack of possibility to inspect the product before purchasing. Besides, most companies invested in e-shop design, informativeness, convenience, security, or popularity to create a unique user experience and value, for instance, by exploring tactile sensations (Overmars and Poels, 2015b; Spence and Gallace, 2011), sensory perception (Krishna, 2012) or creativity aspects (Davidaviciene et al., 2019). However, due to rapidly changing information and communication technologies, business organizations face opportunities and challenges that these technologies create (Rausser et al., 2018; Stefko et al., 2019; Strielkowski et al., 2020). Consequently, there is still a lack of comprehensive research to assess the impact of the e-shop and product components on consumer buying behavior in a virtual environment. Researchers and business practitioners have different perspectives and assessments of the factors influencing end-user behavior in online shopping. This study examines these issues by combining various positions associated with assessing e-shop and product factors affecting consumers' online shopping decision-making.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the critical factors related to e-shop characteristics and the product features that significantly impact consumer buying behavior in online shopping. The Lithuanian online market case study analysis was chosen because of the lack of complex research in Lithuania about e-shop characteristics and product features that affect consumer buying behavior in the electronic space. Research methods such as scientific literature analysis, survey (structured questionnaire), correlation, and regression analysis were used to achieve the study goal.

**Literature Review.** Researchers and business practitioners distinguish between different combinations of factors that influence end-users decisions to buy online (Bartikowski and Singh, 2014; Overmars and Poels, 2015a; Simionescu and Strielkowski, 2017; Rahman et al., 2018). One of the main factors is product and packaging design (Dong and Gleim, 2018; Hussain et al., 2015; Kahn, 2017; Rundh, 2013; Wu, 2015; Yu et al., 2018). With a wide range of products supply, every business organization looks for innovative and unique solutions to stand out in the market. One of them is related to product and packaging design solutions. Most researchers emphasized that design is an integral part of a product and packaging. Scientists define design concept broadly when design can be described as a process (designing, modeling), activity outcome, or created value designed to affect the target audience's emotions purposefully (Agariya et al., 2012). Product and packaging design integrates visual, functional, sensory, aesthetic, or informational dimensions (Dong and Gleim, 2018; Hussain et al., 2015; Kahn, 2017; Pieters et al., 2010; Spence and Gallace, 2011). The functional design dimension is related to the product's primary purpose and functional characteristics. The sensory aspect is associated with the user's sensory senses, which help create a unique experience and product value. The aesthetic design dimension is

related to the aesthetic demonstration of a product and the aesthetic assessment of consumers about the physical parameters of the product. The information dimension is designed to convey consumer-specific information about product unique features. For instance, Pieters et al. (2010) underlined in their study visual complexity the importance of capturing customer's attention, including perceptual features and creative design elements (Pieters et al., 2010). Hussain et al. (2015) conducted a study that looked at product packaging as brand communication with consumers (Hussain et al., 2015). Based on scientific research results, e-shop and product design could be decisive factors influencing the consumer's decision to buy online because it stimulates the consumer's visual perception or tactile sensations, encouraging them to purchase the product (Hasan, 2016; Koo and Ju, 2010; Overmars and Poels, 2015b). For instance, Lim (2012) indicated that e-shop design, informativeness, and functionality are essential customers' motivation factors in online shopping. Properly selected e-shop design, music, and other interactive tools integrating their usability, simplicity, and informativeness create a greater incentive for the user to visit that e-shop more often (Lim, 2013; Lim and Ting, 2012). Various scholars argued that e-shop and product design and the accompanying visual information influence consumer decision-making related to consumers' perception and associations, leading to brand popularity and value (Kahn, 2017). Dong and Gleim's (2018) study showed that visual presentation has the most significant influence on consumer decision-making (Dong and Gleim, 2018). As a result, the various design elements of a product and packaging and their functions increase visual appeal and create a particular functional or sensory value of the brand in terms of credibility, image, popularity, or reputation.

In an e-shop for presenting a spectrum of products, innovative technologies also enable consumers to communicate online to discuss product features and customer reviews. Advances in information and communications technologies also create the preconditions for most online shops to develop e-shop web design by using eye, mouth track techniques' results (Imai et al., 2019; Lin and Yang, 2014) or exploring mobile applications (Davidaviciene et al., 2021; Grewal et al., 2017; Rezaei et al., 2016). That helps observe customers' behavior and propose a unique user experience by forming new visual or sound sensations. In this way, the total proposed value of both e-shop and product combination becomes essential in assessing consumer behavior in online shopping to develop more excellent emotional value through various visualization and audio technologies (Vonkeman et al., 2017).

In recent years, most companies have invested in the visual presentation of products through social networks and e-shop components, such as e-shop design, informativeness, convenience, security, or popularity to create a unique user experience leading to the overall value to the consumer. For instance, Richard et al. (2010) investigated the impact of internet experience (skills, challenge) and web atmospherics (entertainment, structure, informativeness, information content effectiveness) on customer behavior (website involvement, exploratory behavior) and outcomes (website attitudes, pre-purchase evaluations). Research results indicated that internet experience, information content effectiveness, entertainment positively affect exploratory behavior (Richard et al., 2010). Another critical component of product design and packaging is sustainability (Nassar and Tvaronaviciene, 2021; Tesarova et al., 2020). It becomes vital to some customers to choose products and packaging produced in an environmentally friendly way, including organic raw materials and reusable or recyclable products and packaging.

Based on previous scientific studies results (Cao et al., 2018; Davidaviciene et al., 2019; Park et al., 2012), the combination of the e-shop and product components have a decisive impact, especially on those business sectors that produce similar quality products. In this case, a unique proposed value of e-shop and product elements can determine the customer's final decision in online shopping. Scientific literature analysis results show that the most crucial e-shop characteristics are e-shop design, e-shop informativeness, e-shop convenience, e-shop security, and e-shop popularity. From product features' perspectives, scholars mainly focus on product brand, product design and packaging, price, customer reviews, and delivery time (Figure 1).

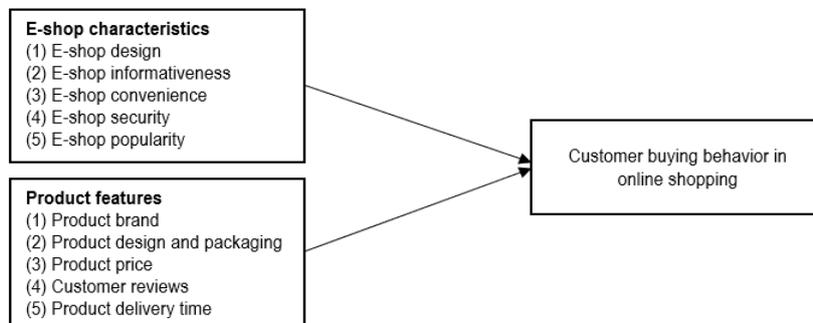


Figure 1. Research model

Sources: developed by the authors based on scientific literature review.

**Methodology and research methods.** This study aims to identify the key factors influencing potential end-user behavior in online shopping. The case study analysis of Lithuanian consumers was chosen for a comprehensive investigation. A lack of extensive research in the Lithuanian online market leads to identifying which factors are the most significant for consumer decision-making in the electronic space.

Based on the Lithuanian Department of Statistics data on the e-business sector in Lithuania and the number of consumers buying online, the identified survey sample size was 384 potential respondents: consumers who purchase products or services online. Three hundred fifty-six respondents living and shopping online in Lithuania agreed to participate in this investigation. The survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire in 2019, in April-November. The survey was performed by distributing questionnaires online. The research aimed to examine which e-shop characteristics (e-shop design, informativeness, convenience, security, and popularity) and product features (product brand, delivery time, product design and packaging, product price, and customer reviews) most significantly influence Lithuanian consumers to purchase products online.

Thus, 356 respondents participated in the survey having purchasing products or services online experience. During the study, 62 percent of women and 38 percent of men have interviewed. The majority of participating respondents belonged to 18-24 years (31%) and 25-30 years (30%) age groups. More than half of the respondents (53%) have a higher university-level education. The survey results indicated that 60% of respondents live in big Lithuanian cities, such as Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Respondents' profile		Frequency	Percent %
Gender	Female	222	62
	Male	134	38
Age	18-24	112	31
	25-30	107	30
	31-39	42	12
	40-50	61	17
	51 and over	34	10

Continued Table 1

Respondents' profile		Frequency	Percent %
Education	Secondary or lower	45	13

	Vocational	39	11
	Higher non-university-level	81	23
	Higher university-level	191	53
	City	212	60
Location	Suburb	69	19
	Small town	51	14
	Village	24	7

Sources: developed by the authors.

**Results.** The study aimed to identify how often consumers visit a physical store compared to online shops. The survey results showed that respondents usually visit the physical store more than three times a week (44%) or at least once a week (31%). About 20 percent of respondents visit a one-time physical store every two weeks, and 6 percent of users visit only once a month. When the respondents were asked how often they shop online, 7% of consumers indicated that they make purchases only online, 13% more than a few times a month, 25% once a few months, and the rest part of respondents shop online no more than a few times a year or even less. These research results substantiate that there is a potential online market in Lithuania, although many consumers prefer the traditional way of shopping.

To explore the importance of e-business components on consumers' decision-making processes in the online market, e-shop key evaluation factors such as e-shop design, informativeness, convenience, security, and popularity were identified for further investigation. Respondents were asked to distinguish the most critical elements on a scale [1, 5], where 1 is the most significant factor influencing the consumer buying behavior in shopping online, and 5 is the minor significant factor in shopping online. The study results showed that the most crucial factor is e-shop design (38%) and e-shop security (20%). In the second place, e-shop informativeness (44%) was singled out as a critical factor (Table 2). Appropriately, the study results demonstrate that the main factors affecting customers buying online behavior are e-shop design and e-shop security aspects. The survey also sought to determine the critical factors of product influencing the consumer choice in online shopping: product brand, delivery time, product design and packaging, product price, consumer reviews.

**Table 2. E-shop characteristics affecting customer buying behavior in online shopping**

Factors	Ranking (Percentage)				
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
E-shop design	38	13	15	12	22
E-shop informativeness	8	44	20	22	6
E-shop convenience	17	17	49	12	5
E-shop security	20	18	10	42	10
E-shop popularity	17	8	11	11	53

Sources: developed by the authors.

Respondents were asked to rank the factors according to significance and impact on consumer shopping behavior online on a scale from 1 to 5. In this case, 1 is the most significant factor influencing consumer behavior in online shopping, and 5 is the minor significant factor influencing customer decision-making in online shopping. The survey results showed that the product design and packaging (44% in the first choice) and product price (26% in the first choice; 33% in the second choice) have the most significant influence on their self-determination. Furthermore, the brand of a product has the most negligible effect on consumer choice (6% in the first choice). The survey results indicated that the Lithuanian consumer is

sensitive to the final product price, and this aspect has a substantial impact on product or service choice (Table 3).

**Table 3. Influence of product features on customer buying behavior in online shopping**

Factors	Ranking (Percentage)				
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Product brand	6	13	10	23	48
Product delivery time	13	9	13	42	23
Product design and packaging	44	15	15	9	17
Product price	26	33	26	8	7
Customer reviews	11	30	37	18	4

Sources: developed by the authors.

Both correlation and regression analysis were used in the study to check the dependence of the variables. Linear regression analysis was used to compare three principal coefficients:  $R^2$ , ANOVA p, and coefficient  $\beta$ . The dependent variable was the number of purchases in the e-shop (Table 4).

**Table 4. E-shop characteristics affecting customer buying behavior in online shopping: regression analysis results**

Variables	$R^2$	Coefficient $\beta$	ANOVA p
E-shop design	0,36	0,19	0,003
E-shop informativeness	0,16	-0,18	0,002
E-shop convenience	0,004	-0,02	0,760
E-shop security	0,26	0,12	0,048
E-shop popularity	0,04	0,20	0,012

Sources: developed by the authors.

The regression analysis results indicated that for customers in online shopping are important two essential variables: e-shop design and e-shop security. Based on the determination coefficient ( $R^2$ ) outcomes, the factors that determine the consumer's decision to buy in an e-shop are classified according to significance: e-shop design, e-shop security, e-shop informativeness, e-shop popularity, and e-shop convenience. A regression analysis was performed to determine which product features affect consumers' decision to buy in the electronic space. The dependent variable was online shopping, and the independent variable – product features.

The results of the study present that only three product characteristics influence consumers' decisions to buy online. According to the values of the determination coefficient ( $R^2$ ), the variables were divided in the following way: product design and packaging ( $R^2 = 0.46$ ), product price ( $R^2 = 0.30$ ), and customer reviews ( $R^2 = 0.26$ ). Based on ANOVA p results, the variables were distributed in this way: customer reviews, product price, and product design and packaging. As a result, outcomes illustrate that if the price of a product decreases, customers tend to buy the product online. Besides, shopping is also encouraged by a positive customer review and product design and packaging (Table 5).

**Table 5. Influence of product features on customer buying behavior in online shopping: regression analysis results**

Variables	$R^2$	Coefficient $\beta$	ANOVA p
Product design and packaging	0,46	0,07	0,026
Customer reviews	0,26	0,08	0,037
Product price	0,30	-0,70	0,030

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Product brand	0,01	0,01	0,065
Product delivery time	0,003	-0,50	0,092

Sources: developed by the authors.

Based on research results, it can be stated that e-shop design and e-shop security are the most crucial aspects for Lithuanian customers to buy online. The most significant factors influencing customer buying behavior in online shopping are product features perspectives: product design and packaging, product price, and customer reviews.

**Conclusions.** This research presents a Lithuanian case study analysis by investigating e-shop and product characteristics that impact customer buying behavior in online shopping. Based on scientific literature analysis results, the most significant e-shop characteristics are e-shop design, e-shop informativeness, e-shop convenience, e-shop security, and e-shop popularity. Scientists and business practitioners mainly focus on product design and packaging, customer reviews, price, brand, and delivery time from product features' perspectives.

The survey results showed that Lithuanian customers prefer more traditional shopping than online purchases. For instance, consumers usually visit the physical store more than three times a week (44%) or at least once a week (31%); in the meantime, only 7% of respondents indicated that they shop almost online, and 13% underlined that buying online more than a few times a month. As a result, this study suggests that online purchases in Lithuania are still a growing market. Depending on survey results, the most crucial e-shop characteristics affecting Lithuanian customer buying behavior in online shopping were identified as e-shop design and e-shop security. Meanwhile, the most influencing product features related to customer buying behavior in online shopping were determined product design, packaging, and product price. Correlation and regression analysis proved that for Lithuanian buyers, the most significant factors in online shopping are e-shop design, e-shop security, product design and packaging, product price, and customer reviews. The primary study limitations are related to one case study illustration performed in the Lithuanian online market. Further research could be linked to the expansion of geographical regions with similar economic and cultural environments to examine comprehensive customer buying behavior in online shopping.

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**Віда Давідавічене**, Ph.D., Вільнюський технічний університет імені Гедимінаса, Литва  
**Юргіта Рауделюнісн**, Ph.D., Вільнюський технічний університет імені Гедимінаса, Литва  
**Аквіле Йоніте-Земліцкене**, Ph.D., Вільнюський технічний університет імені Гедимінаса, Литва  
**Мануела Тваронавічене**, Ph.D., Вільнюський технічний університет імені Гедимінаса, Литва  
**Онлайн-шоппінг: фактори впливу на поведінку споживачів**

Глобалізаційні процеси сприяють прискоренню розвитку інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій, які обумовлюють появу соціальних, економічних та культурних трансформацій, що своєю чергою впливає на потреби та поведінку споживачів в Інтернет-середовищі. З огляду на це, організації, в умовах невизначеності та постійної зміни поведінки споживачів, повинні впроваджувати ефективні інструменти створення та промоції унікальної торговельної пропозиції. Авторами наголошено про відсутність загальноновизнаного та уніфікованого підходу до визначення та оцінювання факторів, які впливають на поведінку споживачів в Інтернет-середовищі. Таким чином, актуальним є визначення підходу, який найбільш повно враховує всі аспекти поведінки споживачів в Інтернет-середовищі. У ході дослідження проаналізовано теоретичні та практичні підходи щодо оцінювання факторів впливу на рішення споживачів здійснювати купівлю в інтернет-магазині. Метою дослідження є оцінювання індикаторів якості функціонування Інтернет-магазину, як головних факторів впливу на поведінку споживачів в Інтернет-середовищі. Аналіз наукових напрацювань з означеної тематики дослідження дозволив зробити висновок, що дизайн, інформаційна цінність, зручність, безпека та популярність Інтернет-магазину є найбільш значущими факторами впливу на поведінку споживачів. З іншого боку, науковці та практики приділяють значну увагу характеристикам наявного товару в Інтернет-магазині, а саме: дизайн, упаковка, ціна, бренд, відгуки клієнтів та час виконання замовлення. Інформаційну базу для емпіричного аналізу засновано на даних анкетування споживачів, які проживають у Литовській Республіці. Для досягнення поставленої мети, у роботі застосовано такі методи дослідження як: аналіз наукових напрацювань, опитування (структурована анкета), кореляційний та регресійний аналізи. За результатами опитування встановлено, що литовські споживачі все ще надають перевагу традиційним, аніж Інтернет-магазинам. При цьому Інтернет-ринок у Литовській Республіці з кожним роком зростає. Результати кореляційного та регресійного аналізів засвідчили, що найбільш значущими факторами впливу на поведінку литовських Інтернет-покупців є: дизайн та безпека інтернет-магазину, упаковка та ціна товару, а також відгуки споживачів.

**Ключові слова:** поведінка, особливості Інтернет-магазину, характеристики товару, Інтернет-магазин, Литва.