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Customer Perceived Value and Trade-Offs in the Online Shopping Market

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of online shopping has increased the importance of understanding how consumers evaluate the benefits they receive relative to the costs, risks, and compromises associated with digital purchasing. This study examined customer perceived value and the trade-offs considered by online consumers in Henan Province, China. Specifically, it assessed perceived value in terms of emotional, social, and economic factors; examined trade-offs involving convenience and cost, product quality and price, and perceived risk and potential benefit; and determined the relationships between these dimensions. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire administered to 386 online customers who had made purchases through e-commerce platforms within the previous six months. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, ranking, and Spearman's rho correlation. Emotional value obtained the highest composite mean (3.28), followed by social value (3.15) and economic value (2.62). Among the trade-offs, convenience and cost ranked highest (3.48), followed by product quality and price (3.45) and perceived risk and potential benefit (3.35). Significant positive relationships were found between all customer perceived value dimensions and the examined trade-offs, with correlations ranging from rho = .262 to .589 and all p-values below .001. The findings indicate that online purchasing decisions reflect both experiential value and deliberate evaluation of convenience, price, quality, and risk. Online retailers should therefore manage customer experience, transparent costs, credible product information, transaction security, and return policies as interconnected components of the value proposition.

Keywords: *customer perceived value; online shopping; trade-offs; e-commerce; consumer behavior; Henan Province*

1. Introduction

Online shopping has become an increasingly important component of contemporary retail and consumer markets, particularly in China, where digital platforms, mobile commerce, live-streaming sales, and social-media-based purchasing are integrated into the consumer shopping experience. The growth of this environment has intensified competition among online retailers while expanding consumers' access to products, information, price comparisons, and alternative sellers. Under these conditions, business performance in digital markets depends not only on competitive prices but also on how customers evaluate the overall value generated by the shopping experience.

Customer perceived value is multidimensional because consumers evaluate online purchases according to benefits that extend beyond monetary price. Emotional value may arise from enjoyment, excitement, personalized recommendations, interactive features, and product discovery. Social value may emerge from trend awareness, social interaction, online communities, and the ability to express identity through consumption. Economic value reflects competitive pricing, promotions, discounts, and perceived savings. Prior research on online and omnichannel shopping similarly shows that perceived value, shopping experience, and perceived benefits can shape attitudes, satisfaction, and continued usage (Kim et al., 2023; Patel et al., 2023; Sharma & Fatima, 2024). Digital marketing channels have similarly been shown to shape consumer-facing decision processes beyond the point of product purchase, underscoring their broader influence on behavioral intention (Espelita et al., 2026).

At the same time, online purchasing requires consumers to evaluate trade-offs. Convenience can reduce travel and search effort, yet customers still consider shipping charges, delivery conditions, and total transaction cost. Product quality must be evaluated against price, frequently through product descriptions, reviews, ratings, and seller information. Consumers also weigh risks involving security, fraud, inaccurate product representation, or difficult returns against the potential benefits of broader selection, personalized recommendations, and purchasing flexibility. Studies of online shopping risk, trust, and experience indicate that consumers' assessments of transaction conditions can materially shape their willingness to purchase (Alrawad et al., 2023; Mofokeng, 2023; Roy & Shaikh, 2024).

Understanding these assessments is strategically important for online retailers. If consumers derive value from several dimensions while simultaneously evaluating benefits against sacrifices and uncertainty, managerial strategies based primarily on low prices may be insufficient. Retailers must understand how emotional, social, and economic value coexist with practical judgments about convenience, quality, cost, and risk. Such knowledge can inform pricing, customer-experience design, promotional strategy, product presentation, risk reduction, and relationship management.

Henan Province provides the empirical context for examining these relationships. The province contains a large and diverse consumer population with substantial participation in digital commerce. Examining online customers within this regional setting provides a focused basis for understanding how perceived value is associated with the trade-offs consumers make when evaluating digital purchases. The study is therefore positioned at the intersection of customer value management, consumer decision-making, and digital retail strategy.

The study is particularly relevant because perceived value and purchasing trade-offs represent related but analytically distinct aspects of consumer decision-making. Research on perceived value explains what customers believe they gain from an offering, whereas a trade-off perspective emphasizes how those gains are evaluated relative to costs, quality, convenience, and risk. Examining these dimensions together provides a more integrated account of how customers assess online-market offerings.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to assess customer perceived value in the online shopping market and determine the trade-offs considered by online customers when evaluating the benefits and costs associated with their purchasing decisions. Specifically, it sought to:

1. assess customer perceived value in terms of emotional, social, and economic factors;
2. determine the trade-offs considered by online customers in terms of convenience and cost, product quality and price, and perceived risk and potential benefit;
3. determine the significant relationship between customer perceived value and purchasing trade-offs; and
4. develop an action plan for online retailers to improve customer perceived value in the online shopping market.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Customer Perceived Value in Online Shopping

Customer perceived value refers to the consumer's overall evaluation of what is received from an offering relative to what must be given up to obtain it. It reflects more than price because customers can evaluate tangible benefits, such as quality and functionality, together with intangible benefits arising from the purchase experience. Research on mobile shopping applications and social shopping environments indicates that perceived value is shaped by customer experience, social interaction, well-being, and contextual expectations (Agag et al., 2024; Garrouch & Ghali, 2023).

In digital retail, customers interact not only with the product but also with the platform through which the transaction is completed. Ease of use, customer service, transaction security, product information, and shopping experience can therefore enter the consumer's overall judgment of value. This broader view is consistent with multidimensional approaches to customer value, which emphasize that value can encompass experiential, social, and economic elements rather than a single utilitarian judgment (Cankul et al., 2024; Sairanen et al., 2024).

Perceived value is especially salient in online commerce because consumers can compare competing sellers with relatively low search costs. The retailer's value proposition is therefore both product-based and experience-based. This perspective provides the conceptual basis for examining the emotional, social, and economic dimensions measured in the present study.

2.2 Emotional, Social, and Economic Dimensions of Perceived Value

Emotional value concerns the positive feelings associated with acquiring or consuming an offering. In online environments, browsing, product discovery, personalization, interactive features, and anticipation surrounding delivery can produce experiential benefits independent of financial savings. Research in social commerce likewise links environmental characteristics and customer-to-customer interaction with customer perceived value and purchase intention (Liu et al., 2021). Value propositions can also create relational and experiential benefits that extend beyond conventional price comparisons (Laukkanen & Tura, 2022). Personalization has similarly functioned as a value-innovation lever in other digitally enabled service contexts, where app-based customization allows customers to align offerings with purpose-specific needs (Benosa et al., 2026).

Social value concerns the extent to which consumption contributes to social interaction, identity, belonging, or recognition. Online shopping environments can enable customers to share purchases, seek recommendations, follow trends, and participate in interest-based communities. These social elements can be important in omnichannel and digital retail because customer satisfaction and perceived value are increasingly produced across connected physical, social, and digital touchpoints (Khalid, 2024; Sharma & Fatima, 2024). Social-media discourse has likewise been shown to shape how consumers define value in digitally mediated decision-making, reflecting both emotional and cognitive drivers of choice (Espelita & Atento, 2025).

Economic value concerns the financial advantages customers perceive from a transaction, including discounts, promotions, competitive prices, reduced travel costs, loyalty benefits, and other savings. However, online customers often evaluate economic benefits together with transaction risk and other contextual factors. Research on shopping abandonment and online-shopping risk shows that perceived risk and psychological conditions can shape whether economic or convenience benefits are ultimately regarded as worthwhile (Akhtar et al., 2024; Alrawad et al., 2023). Taken together, the three dimensions indicate that customer value in digital markets is inherently multidimensional.

2.3 Convenience-Cost and Quality-Price Trade-Offs

Online purchasing involves systematic trade-offs. Consumers may value continuous access, reduced travel, easier product search, and rapid comparison among alternatives, yet these conveniences can be offset by shipping charges, delivery delays, taxes, or other transaction costs. Mofokeng (2023) shows that online-shopping experience is relevant to customer trust and loyalty, reinforcing the importance of the purchasing process itself. The relevant judgment is therefore not simply whether online shopping is convenient, but whether convenience remains attractive after the complete cost of the transaction is considered. Comparable pressures have been observed in other Philippine retail sectors undergoing digital transition, where legacy book and pharmacy retail chains have needed to adapt their strategic positioning to intensifying e-commerce competition and shifting consumer expectations for convenience and transaction transparency (Atento & Atento, 2025, 2026b).

A second trade-off concerns product quality relative to price. Because customers cannot always inspect merchandise physically before purchase, they frequently depend on descriptions, photographs, ratings, reviews, seller information, and other cues. Research on online apparel shopping shows that consumer attitudes are formed through interacting evaluations rather than a single price cue (Patel et al., 2023). The quality-price relationship therefore reinforces the broader concept of perceived value: a low price may not create value if expected quality is weak, while a higher price requires credible signals that the additional cost is justified.

2.4 Perceived Risk and Potential Benefit in Online Purchasing

Risk represents another important component of online consumer decision-making. Digital transactions can expose customers to concerns involving payment security, data privacy, fraud, inaccurate product representation, unreliable sellers, and difficulty returning unsatisfactory purchases. Alrawad et al. (2023) show that online-shopping risk is multidimensional, while Roy and Shaikh (2024) demonstrate that perceived risk can contribute to cart abandonment when consumers face uncertainty and confusion. Trust operates as a related mechanism: research on Filipino consumers shows that perceived credibility of an information source can shape purchase intention through the trust relationship it establishes with buyers (Atento & Atento, 2026a).

Online shopping nevertheless provides substantial potential benefits, including broader product selection, price comparison, personalized recommendations, and purchasing flexibility. Consumers therefore weigh expected benefits against perceived uncertainty rather than treating risk as an absolute deterrent. Situational factors can influence this process (Kvalsvik, 2022), while fear-related and attitudinal conditions have also been shown to affect online-shopping preferences (Budziński & Daziano, 2023). Risk-mitigation mechanisms such as secure payment systems, transparent policies, credible sellers, accurate product information, responsive service, and manageable return procedures can therefore strengthen the perceived value of online transactions.

2.5 Synthesis and Research Gap

The reviewed literature establishes customer perceived value as a multidimensional judgment derived from benefits received relative to sacrifices incurred. Within online shopping, emotional experience, social relevance, and economic advantages can contribute to this evaluation, while platform characteristics and transaction conditions influence whether these benefits are realized (Agag et al., 2024; Garrouch & Ghali, 2023; Liu et al., 2021). The literature also shows that digital purchasing requires consumers to consider convenience, total cost, product quality, price, trust, and risk (Alrawad et al., 2023; Mofokeng, 2023; Roy & Shaikh, 2024).

Although substantial research exists on perceived value and online consumer behavior, the literature assembled for this study treats perceived-value dimensions and purchasing trade-offs largely as related but separate streams. Less attention is given to whether consumers who report stronger emotional, social, or economic value also differ systematically in the extent to which they evaluate convenience-cost, quality-price, and risk-benefit trade-offs. The present study addresses this gap by simultaneously measuring these constructs among online consumers in Henan Province and examining their empirical interrelationships.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to examine customer perceived value and the trade-offs considered by consumers in the online shopping market. Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and nonparametric statistical techniques. The design was appropriate for describing respondents' assessments of the identified value and trade-off dimensions and for examining statistical relationships among the constructs.

3.2 Participants and Study Context

The participants consisted of 386 online customers in Henan Province, China, each of whom had made at least one purchase through an e-commerce platform during the six months preceding the survey. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for an unknown population based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The study employed a combination of quota sampling and convenience sampling. Eligible respondents were online customers in Henan Province who satisfied the requirement of having completed an online purchase within the previous six months. Because the sampling procedure was non-probabilistic, the findings are interpreted primarily as representing the perceptions of the surveyed consumers rather than as population estimates for all online shoppers in Henan Province.

3.4 Research Instrument and Reliability

Data were collected using a self-developed structured questionnaire organized around the two principal constructs of the study. Customer perceived value was measured through emotional, social, and economic factors, with five items for each dimension. Purchasing trade-offs were measured in terms of convenience and cost, product quality and price, and perceived risk and potential benefit, also with five items for each dimension. Responses used a four-point Likert scale: 3.50-4.00, Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49, Agree; 1.50-2.49, Disagree; and 1.00-1.49, Strongly Disagree. A pilot test involving 30 respondents produced Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .747 for emotional value, .813 for social value, .848 for economic value, .806 for convenience and cost, .826 for product quality and price, and .714 for perceived risk and potential benefit. All six scales therefore met at least an acceptable level of internal consistency. The questionnaire also underwent expert validation and refinement before full administration.

3.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher obtained the necessary approvals and communicated the study procedures, confidentiality provisions, and consent requirements to prospective participants. The validated questionnaire was distributed through WeChat, email, and Questionnaire Star. Responses obtained through the different modes were systematically collected and recorded, with quality-control procedures used to monitor completeness and consistency.

3.6 Data Analysis

Weighted mean and ranking were used to describe respondents' assessments of customer perceived value and the three purchasing trade-off dimensions. Normality was evaluated using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Because the reported p-values were below .05, the distributions were treated as non-normal, and Spearman's rho correlation was used to test relationships between customer perceived value dimensions and purchasing trade-off dimensions. Statistical significance was interpreted from the reported p-values.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from respondents. The purpose of the data collection and confidentiality provisions were communicated to participants. Anonymity was maintained by not collecting respondents' names through the questionnaire, and the research procedure emphasized voluntary participation and protection of participant welfare.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Customer Perceived Value in Online Shopping

The respondents generally perceived online shopping as providing value across the emotional, social, and economic dimensions. The overall composite mean for customer perceived value was 3.02, interpreted as Agree. Emotional value obtained the highest composite mean of 3.28, followed by social value at 3.15 and economic value at 2.62.

Table 1. Customer Perceived Value in Online Shopping

Dimension	Composite Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Emotional Factor	3.28	Agree	1
Social Factor	3.15	Agree	2
Economic Factor	2.62	Agree	3
Grand Composite Mean	3.02	Agree	-

The predominance of emotional value indicates that the online shopping experience was valued most strongly for feelings and experiences associated with purchasing rather than for strictly monetary advantages. Within the emotional dimension, enjoyment of browsing and discovering new products obtained the highest item mean (3.49), followed by the sense of control over purchasing decisions (3.41). Product discovery and perceived autonomy therefore appear to be important experiential elements of online shopping.

Social value ranked second. The highest-rated social-value item concerned the ability of online shopping to help consumers stay current with trends (3.19). Expressing personal style and connecting with others who share similar interests each obtained a mean of 3.16. Sharing purchases directly with friends and family ranked lowest within the dimension at 3.10, although it remained within the Agree range.

Economic value, while positively assessed, obtained the lowest composite mean. The strongest economic-value item was the ability to take advantage of discounts and promotions (3.01). By comparison, the perception that online prices were better than prices in physical stores obtained a mean of 2.50. These results suggest that customers recognize financial advantages in online shopping but do not necessarily regard digital channels as consistently cheaper than physical alternatives.

4.2 Purchasing Trade-Offs Considered by Online Customers

Respondents also reported substantial consideration of the trade-offs involved in online purchasing. The grand composite mean for the three trade-off dimensions was 3.43, interpreted as Agree. Convenience and cost obtained the highest composite mean of 3.48, followed closely by product quality and price at 3.45. Perceived risk and potential benefit obtained a mean of 3.35.

Table 2. Purchasing Trade-Offs Considered by Online Customers

Trade-Off Dimension	Composite Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Convenience and Cost	3.48	Agree	1
Product Quality and Price	3.45	Agree	2
Perceived Risk and Potential Benefit	3.35	Agree	3
Grand Composite Mean	3.43	Agree	-

For convenience and cost, the highest-rated item was the balancing of time saved through online shopping against price differences relative to physical stores (3.55, Strongly Agree). Respondents also strongly agreed that they balanced ease of shopping against obtaining the best possible price (3.54), convenience against overall cost savings (3.53), and free shipping against the base product price (3.52). These results indicate that convenience is not treated independently from monetary considerations; customers assess whether the time and effort saved through digital shopping justify the total price paid.

Product quality and price produced a similarly strong pattern. The highest-rated item in this dimension was the consideration of both product quality and price before purchasing online (3.57). Respondents also strongly agreed that they evaluated product descriptions or reviews together with price (3.54) and balanced their desire for higher quality against obtaining a reasonable price (3.53). Customers therefore appear to seek acceptable value rather than merely the lowest-priced alternative.

Perceived risk and potential benefit ranked third but remained strongly considered. The highest-rated indicator involved evaluating the seller's return policy together with the potential benefit of the purchase (3.51, Strongly Agree). Perceived platform safety and potential benefits followed with a mean of 3.49. The prominence of return policy suggests that reversibility is an important mechanism through which customers manage online-purchasing risk.

4.3 Relationship Between Customer Perceived Value and Trade-Offs

Spearman's rho analysis indicated statistically significant positive relationships between all dimensions of customer perceived value and all three purchasing trade-off dimensions. The coefficients ranged from .262 to .589, and every relationship had a reported p-value below .001.

Table 3. Relationships Between Customer Perceived Value and Purchasing Trade-Offs

Customer Perceived Value	Convenience and Cost	Product Quality and Price	Perceived Risk and Potential Benefit
Emotional Factor	.539***	.589***	.532***
Social Factor	.427***	.531***	.476***
Economic Factor	.262***	.301***	.306***

*Note. Values are Spearman rho coefficients. ***p < .001 for all relationships.*

The strongest relationship occurred between emotional value and product quality-price trade-offs (rho = .589), followed by emotional value and convenience-cost considerations (rho = .539), emotional value and risk-benefit considerations (rho = .532), and social value and product quality-price considerations (rho = .531). Economic value showed comparatively weaker but still statistically significant relationships with convenience and cost (rho = .262), product quality and price (rho = .301), and perceived risk and potential benefit (rho = .306).

The pattern suggests that stronger consideration of purchasing trade-offs is not confined to customers who are highly price conscious. Emotional and social components of perceived value showed stronger associations with trade-off evaluation than the economic component. These correlations should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects because the research design does not establish temporal or causal direction.

4.4 Proposed Managerial Action Plan

The original study developed an action plan focused on strengthening social and economic customer value. For journal presentation, the plan is condensed into strategic actions and measurable indicators.

Table 4. Proposed Managerial Action Plan for Enhancing Customer Perceived Value

Key Result Area	Proposed Strategies	Responsible Unit	Suggested Success Indicators
Social Factor	Enable social-media sharing; establish customer communities; collaborate with relevant content creators.	Marketing Team; Social Media Manager	More social-media shares and brand mentions; stronger community engagement
Economic Factor	Use loyalty promotions and value bundles; disclose total prices, including shipping charges and taxes.	Marketing Team; Sales Department	Higher promotional sales and retention; improved feedback on pricing transparency

The action plan emphasizes social engagement and economic-value communication rather than reliance on price reductions alone. For social value, the strategies focus on customer sharing, online communities, and trend-oriented promotional activity. For economic value, the emphasis is on targeted promotions, value-based bundling, and transparent total-cost information.

4.5 Discussion

The findings indicate that online customer value is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to financial savings alone. Emotional value ranked ahead of social and economic value, suggesting that product discovery, browsing, and perceived control contribute meaningfully to how customers evaluate digital retail. This interpretation is consistent with research describing mobile and social shopping value as an experiential as well as transactional construct (Agag et al., 2024; Garrouch & Ghali, 2023).

The relatively lower position of economic value does not imply that price is unimportant. Rather, the trade-off findings show that customers incorporate price into broader comparisons. Convenience and cost ranked first among the trade-offs, while product quality and price followed closely. Customers therefore appear to ask not simply whether a product is inexpensive but whether the overall transaction remains worthwhile after considering time savings, shipping, quality, reviews, and the total amount paid. This interpretation is compatible with research linking online-shopping experience, trust, and risk assessment with customer behavior (Alrawad et al., 2023; Mofokeng, 2023).

The prominence of quality-price evaluation is particularly significant for online retail strategy. In an environment where customers frequently cannot inspect merchandise physically before purchase, product information becomes part of the value proposition. Accurate descriptions, credible customer reviews, realistic images, and transparent seller information can help consumers judge whether expected quality justifies price. This is consistent with the broader evidence that online consumer attitudes are shaped by multiple interacting assessments rather than price alone (Patel et al., 2023).

The risk-benefit findings add another dimension to this evaluation process. Although perceived risk and potential benefit ranked third among the three trade-offs, the seller's return policy produced one of the highest individual scores. This suggests that consumers may accept the uncertainties of digital transactions when mechanisms exist to mitigate possible loss. Research on online-shopping risk and cart abandonment similarly indicates that perceived risk and uncertainty remain central to digital purchasing behavior (Alrawad et al., 2023; Roy & Shaikh, 2024).

The correlation analysis further indicates that perceived value and trade-off evaluation are interconnected. Emotional and social value exhibited stronger positive relationships with the trade-off dimensions than economic value. Thus, consumers who reported stronger experiential or social value also tended to report greater attention to the compromises involved in online purchasing. The findings do not suggest that emotionally engaged customers ignore price, quality, or risk; instead, value appreciation and deliberate trade-off evaluation appear to coexist.

From a managerial perspective, digital retail strategy should therefore avoid a false choice between customer experience and economic value. Engaging interfaces, product discovery, trend relevance, community interaction, transparent pricing, reliable product information, secure transactions, and clear return mechanisms together shape the environment through which customers determine whether an online purchase is worthwhile. The strategic challenge is to construct a value proposition in which the benefits offered remain persuasive after consumers account for the sacrifices and uncertainties associated with the transaction.

5. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

5.1 Conclusions

The study established that the surveyed online consumers generally perceived value in online shopping across emotional, social, and economic dimensions. Emotional value emerged as the most prominent dimension, followed by social and economic value. The perceived worth of online shopping among the respondents was therefore not based solely on monetary savings; enjoyment of browsing and product discovery, perceived control over purchasing decisions, and social relevance contributed to the overall customer experience.

Respondents also demonstrated substantial consideration of purchasing trade-offs. Convenience and cost emerged as the most strongly considered trade-off, closely followed by product quality and price, while perceived risk and potential benefit ranked third. Online customers therefore evaluated purchases through a balancing process in which time savings, total cost, expected quality, price, and transaction risk were considered together.

All dimensions of customer perceived value were positively and significantly associated with the three purchasing trade-off dimensions. Emotional and social value displayed stronger relationships with trade-off evaluation than economic value, although all relationships were statistically significant. Because the design was descriptive and correlational, these results indicate association rather than causal influence.

Overall, customer perceived value in the online shopping market appears to be multidimensional and closely connected with how consumers evaluate the sacrifices, uncertainties, and benefits associated with digital purchasing.

5.2 Recommendations

- Online retailers should treat customer experience as a strategic value component by supporting engaging browsing, product discovery, personalization, and a sense of customer control throughout the purchasing process.
- Retailers should strengthen the social dimension of online shopping by enabling customers to share experiences, participate in communities, interact around products, and remain connected with relevant trends.
- Pricing strategy should focus on total perceived value rather than low price alone. Competitive pricing should be combined with transparent shipping charges, promotions, loyalty incentives, product bundles, and other mechanisms that improve the customer's overall economic evaluation.
- Because convenience and cost constituted the highest-ranked trade-off, retailers should reduce friction in the purchasing process and disclose total transaction costs clearly before purchase whenever possible.
- Product quality information should be strengthened through accurate descriptions, realistic images, credible reviews, and clear seller information to help consumers evaluate whether expected quality justifies price.
- Online retailers should prioritize risk-reduction mechanisms, especially clear return policies, secure payment systems, responsive customer support, and dependable transaction procedures, since unresolved service delivery failures and slow response can compound into customer attrition over time (Mendoza et al., 2026).
- Future research may use qualitative or mixed-method designs and compare other provinces, consumer segments, or e-commerce environments to determine whether the observed patterns remain consistent across settings.

5.3 Implications of the Study

The study has managerial implications for online retailers because customer value should not be conceptualized primarily as a pricing issue. The stronger position of emotional and social value indicates that competitive advantage in digital markets may also depend on how effectively firms create engaging, relevant, and trustworthy purchasing experiences. Managers should integrate customer experience, pricing, product information, platform usability, and risk reduction within a unified value strategy.

The findings also have implications for digital marketing strategy. Emotional engagement, social relevance, and economic incentives operate alongside deliberate consumer evaluations of cost, quality, and risk. Promotional communication can generate interest, but sustainable perceived value requires consistency between the promised experience and the actual transaction. This reinforces broader calls for marketing strategy to be redesigned around credible, substantiated value propositions rather than promotional messaging alone (Espelita & Atento, 2026).

For consumer-decision theory in e-commerce, the results show that perceived value and trade-off evaluation are positively associated. Consumers who perceive stronger emotional, social, or economic value do not necessarily become less attentive to cost, quality, or risk. Rather, the two evaluative processes appear to coexist. Online consumer behavior may therefore be better understood as a process in which customers recognize benefits while simultaneously evaluating the sacrifices required to obtain them.

Strategically, online retailers should seek to improve the value equation as a whole rather than optimize one component in isolation. Enhancing emotional appeal without addressing transaction risk, lowering prices without demonstrating quality, or improving convenience while allowing hidden costs to accumulate may weaken the total value proposition. This is consistent with strategic frameworks showing that even small and family-owned enterprises can redesign value creation beyond price-based competition through more customer-centric and digitally supported service models (Atento et al., 2025).

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