

# Factors Influencing the Attitude and Word of Mouth of Pakistani Online Shoppers

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**Abstract:** *This study empirically analyzes the impact of perceived website quality on two variables viz., attitude of online shoppers and their electronic word of mouth (eWoM) intentions. The study further explores the impact of benefits perceived by the online shoppers on both attitude of online shoppers and eWoM. Furthermore, the mediating role of electronic Trust (eTrust) in the model is also evaluated. The authors have used field survey approach to gather respondent data. A structured and self-administered questionnaire is employed to gather data from young adult online shoppers. The hypothesized model is analyzed through partial least square – structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) and factor analysis through IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. The findings exhibit that attitude of young adult online shoppers is highly impacted by the benefits they perceive from a particular online retail store and the perceived quality of website as well. Furthermore, the level of eTrust also works as a mediator in the development of their attitude towards a particular online retail store. The owners of online retail stores should focus on building better quality websites so that online shoppers may perceive greater benefits from an online retail store, which would result in positive customer attitudes towards online shopping and positive customer eWoM intentions. The research is only limited to young adult mobile shoppers in Lahore, Pakistan and it is a cross-sectional study, so future researches are encouraged to contribute as a longitudinal study. The originality of this research lies in the proposal and validation of the research model. With the increasing trend in online shopping, the quality of website and perceived website benefits play a key role in developing trust and positive attitude in the minds of online shoppers. Thus, this research is an empirical evidence regarding the factors involved in the development of positive customer attitude in an online shopping environment. Online retail store owners, who are planning to expand their business can formulate and implement the strategies discussed in this research paper.*

**Keywords—**Online shopping, online shoppers, perceived shopper benefits, perceived website quality, eTrust, eWoM, online shopper attitude

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are 4.5 billion internet users around the world, meaning approximately 60 percent of the world's population has internet access. Asia has the largest number of internet users in the world, however with a penetration rate of 54.2 percent which is also below the world average of 58.8 percent, while it supersedes only Africa in terms of internet penetration rate (World Internet Users Statistics, 2019). The reasons are a mix of emerging economies and lack of infrastructure as compared to its developed counterparts such as North America and Europe, with 89.4 percent and 87.7 percent penetration rates respectively. Among the developing markets of Asia, the internet penetration in Pakistan is only 35 percent, considerably below the average penetration level in Asia (PTA, 2019). Though the percentage of internet users in Pakistan may seem low, it was a mere 18 percent in 2016 (Internet Live Stats, 2016). Putting it into the context, we can safely assume that the industry is growing at a rapid pace. This growth rate is further augmented by the introduction of 3G/4G technology in the recent past, which has made internet available to the far off areas where it was not present prior to its introduction. This low penetration percentage provides an

interesting case to study a market in its rapid growth phase. This research study will explore consumer attitudes towards online shopping in Pakistan.

Consumers can purchase almost anything over the internet and online shopping is fast becoming a major purchasing channel in Pakistan. This fast-paced growth in online shopping has provided many opportunities to e-marketers and benefits to end customers (Dai et al., 2019). The primary benefit of online shopping is that it saves money, time, effort, and energy, and it makes available online a plethora of products irrespective of their physical location (Al-Debei, Akroush, & Ashouri, 2015). Customers can make comparisons among different brands from the same product line and choose the best offers. The information available online related to products is immense, and it sometimes includes actual users' experiences, that can influence a consumer's decision. Consequently, there is reason to believe that the benefits of online shopping will have an effect on consumer attitudes towards online shopping. However, online shopping is not without its disadvantages: the first one is the lack of look and feel of the product, which is important in many categories like utensils and apparel. Second, in emerging economies, there exist trust issues between consumers and online retailers. Consumers are skeptical

about the online sellers because they are unsure what they would actually get what they order. Therefore, studying eTrust and its impact on consumer attitudes towards online shopping becomes interesting in an emerging context.

Despite its challenges, online shopping is growing at a rapid pace in Pakistan. The largest online retailer in Pakistan is daraz, a subsidiary of Alibaba. Like its parent company Alibaba that made record-breaking 37 billion US dollars on singles day 11.11 sales, daraz also introduced 11.11 sales in Pakistan and the results were staggering. They broke all the previous records of sales. This shows that people are more than interested in online shopping. The number of orders was more than the last year. The number of deliveries was also higher than the last year. To ensure the timely delivery of the products, they have introduced a whole team known as daraz express, the logistics arm of daraz.

Consumers can make purchases directly from e-retailers such as Alibaba, Amazon, daraz, etc. without any intermediaries. This makes the purchase an actual experience in online settings. Therefore, this purchase experience may be affected by the quality of the e-retailer's website in a way that a better-perceived website quality may have a positive effect on the consumer attitudes towards the e-retailer. Having higher perceived website quality may result in greater perceived benefits from that website such as safety, privacy, time and money-saving, etc. Better perceived website quality and perceived benefits may result in greater e-trust from the consumer. As mentioned earlier, Trust is extremely important in emerging markets as consumers are inherently skeptical about doing business with the e-retailers.

In this paper, the authors have studied the impact of perceived quality of the website and the perceived benefits on the attitude of an online shopper. Although, different researchers have studied the attitude of online shoppers in different geographies including the developed and the developing countries but as the trend of online shopping is increasing in the developing countries, and this research paper responds to the important calls by previous researches (Al-Debei et al., 2015; Al-Maghrabi, Dennis, & Halliday, 2011; Aladwani, 2006) who have encouraged to study the attitude of an online shopper in the emerging markets. The researchers also study the mediating effect of e-trust in defining the attitude of an online shopper. The aim of this paper is to recognize the major factor that is involved in defining the attitude of an online shopper so that it would be helpful for the online retailers to formulate and implement the strategies for their business to attract maximum shoppers leading to growth in the business.

The results of this research paper contribute to the fields of online shopping with the dynamic nature of trust, plays an important role in defining the attitude of an online shopper. Also, this research paper implies that the benefits perceived from an online retail store and the quality perceived from an online retail store play an important role in defining the

attitude of an online shopper in the emerging country like Pakistan where the online markets are still in the developing stages and where the trends in the online shopping is increasing day by day. Managers of the online retail stores can take great help from the results of this research paper in formulating and implementing the strategies that would help them to grow their business.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 eTrust**

Different definitions of trust are proposed in the extant literature (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998). Trust is defined as mutual confidence between two parties where no party would exploit the vulnerabilities of the other (Barney & Hansen, 1994). Trust is an interesting construct for researchers and marketers alike in web-based commerce because the constitution and the global presence of the internet has made trust a pivotal element in e-commerce (Hoffman, Novak, & Peralta, 1999). In online shopping context, trust is actually considered as a direct determinant of the loyalty of online customers (Ribbink, Streukens, Van Riel, & Liljander, 2004), so here it will be called "eTrust". In online shopping context, a high level of uncertainty is usually present, therefore trust is characterized as the direct determinant of the attitude of the online consumer towards any particular website (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). Furthermore, eTrust increases the willingness of an online shopper to shop through online stores by creating a psychological state in his mind (Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). In order to survive in an online market, the online store will have to deliver maximum trust depending upon the nature of the products, the competition in the market, and the ability of the online store to innovate (Qualls, 2014).

### **2.2 Perceived Benefits**

Online purchases bring convenience as well as enjoyment to the shopper (Childers, Carr, Peck, & Carson, 2001). All the advantages necessary to fulfill the needs and wants of the customers are termed as the perceived benefits (L. Y. Wu, Chen, Chen, & Cheng, 2014). Perceived benefits are termed as significant incentives for online consumers which later help in creating a favorable and positive attitude towards online shopping (Al-Debei, Akroush, & Ashouri, 2015). The perceptions about the benefits of an online store keep on changing but if a user is perceiving more advantages from a specific online store as compared to any other store, perceived benefits will be increased accordingly which will be a relative advantage (Rogers, 1995). Therefore, it can be assumed that in the context of shopping online, customers get the opportunity to purchase different products and services having an ease to access the variety of products. This way, if a consumer is perceiving higher benefits from a particular online store, there will be more chances of showing some favorable attitudes towards that online store as described by Al-Debei et al. (2015).

### 2.3 Perceived Quality of Website

Before you begin to format your paper, first write and save the content as a separate text file. Perceived website quality of represents the quality and performance of any online retail website with the key features of smoothness, effectiveness, reliability, and simplicity (Al-Debei et al., 2015). Similarly, it can also be defined as the degree to which an online shopper believes that his/her requirements about the characteristics and design of a website are being fulfilled (Hsiao, Lin, Wang, Lu, & Yu, 2010). Basically, the website of any online store mostly comprises of two main elements, information system and marketing, as explained by Jahng, Jain, & Ramamurthy (2000) that the e-commerce systems are a type of information systems, meaning the website of any online store should be addressing different features and designs as Liu, Kirk P. Arnett, & Chuck Litecky (2002) have described some of the key design features for the online stores as well. Some important factors in designing a website include the quality of information, the quality of service, the quality of system design, and use of the system (Liu et al., 2002). Liu et al. (2002) have also explained that the customers would be able to have better recall and recognition of the products or services and thus would show a favorable attitude towards a particular online store if the website is well-designed.

### 2.4 eWoM

When a customer, existing, former or a potential, of any product or service, makes any statement about that product or service or the company, and this statement can be positive or negative, and is available over the internet for general public is defined as eWoM (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). The importance of word-of-mouth has always remained a very crucial topic for researchers. Different researchers have found out the pivotal role of eWoM in defining the choice of product or service in the consumer (Engel & F., 1969; Richins, 1983; Katz & Paul, 1955). Researches have also explored the impact of eWoM on post-purchase perceptions regarding a product or service (Bone, 1995). The online available information is useful for new online shoppers in building trust in their minds about any particular online retail website (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006) which, resultantly considered to have a vital effect on the users of the internet (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). There are various factors that motivate the consumers to participate in the forums and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) have also conducted research where he has studied these factors and has concluded that the participants of eWoM are having shown the similar set of motivations like the participants of traditional eWoM. But unlike traditional eWoM, Chatterjee (2001) has explained in his studies that recommendations in eWoM are generally from unknown individuals and other online shoppers may have some difficulty in determining the credibility of the information.

### 2.5 Attitude Towards Online Shopping

As the online shoppers can purchase the products or services reliably over the internet, thus, the understanding of these shoppers in an online store actually represent the experience of those online shoppers with the whole environment (Al-Debei et al., 2015). There are different studies that have already examined the attitude of online shoppers as well as the factors which affect the attitude of an online shopper. Al-Debei et al. (2015) stated that an attitude of the online shopper will be affected greatly by different factors and the design and the appearance of the online store play an important role among these factors. An online shopper will show a more positive attitude towards an online store if he observes an online store with a high quality of the website (Zhou, 2011). Al-Maghrabi, Dennis, & Halliday (2011) added that although there is a great importance of the quality of any online store, the attitude of an online shopper would be more greatly affected by the existing reviews and comments about the products and services of the online retail store. Therefore, in this study, we have studied the attitude of an online shopper and how other variables affect the attitude of an online shopper in a positive or a negative manner.

### 2.6 Perceived Benefit and eTrust

Due to the absence or lack of eTrust in online stores, many consumers do not tend to go for online shopping (J. J. Wu & Chang, 2006). McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar (2002) have explained that the perceptions of eTrust in consumers will be higher for an online store if the consumers are perceiving higher benefits from the online store. Shopping online gives consumers an experience to shop whenever and wherever they want. Thus, we assume that:

H1. If perceived benefits from an online store are higher, it would be resulting in building more high perceptions of eTrust.

### 2.7 Perceived Quality of Website and eTrust

We assume that if the online shopper perceives a higher website quality, then the perceptions of eTrust associated with those particular products or services from that online store would also be higher. According to the research of Hsiao et al. (2010), in an online shopping context, the construct of perceived website quality is having the strongest effect on developing consumers' eTrust. Thus:

H2. Higher perceptions of website quality would result in higher perceptions of eTrust.

### 2.8 eWoM and eTrust

As mentioned earlier that eWoM is considered to be having a great persuasiveness impact on users. We believe that the online shopper would be posting more positive reviews about any online store if the perceptions of eTrust were higher (Al-Debei et al., 2015). So, we formulate another hypothesis:

H3: Higher perceptions of eTrust will result in more positive eWoM about any online store.

### **2.9 eTrust and Attitude towards Online Shopping**

The attitude of any online shopper is directly proportional to the degree of eTrust he has upon any individual online shopping website (Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). So, we can assume that:

H4: The attitude of a consumer towards an online store will be more positive if there is a higher level of eTrust.

### **2.10 Perceived Quality of Website and Perceived Benefits**

Previous researches have shown that if an online customer is having higher perceptions about any online retail store, he would be perceiving higher benefits from that particular website (Al-Maghrabi et al., 2011). As we know that the consumer who perceives a website more qualitative in terms of convenience of use, easy shopping, navigation, convenient price comparison with competitors, he will be perceiving more benefits, thus. So:

H5: Higher benefits will be perceived when there will be higher perceptions about the quality of the website.

### **2.11 Perceived Benefits and eWoM**

It is a well-known fact that eWoM of the consumers influence the choice of the consumers by playing an important role in the development of consumer buying decisions (Elihu Katz, Lazarsfeld, Roper, Lazarsfeld, & Roper, 2017). Elihu Katz et al. (2017) further explained that the perceptions about the benefits of the consumers are created more effectively through eWoM as compared to traditional marketing tools, therefore we can assume the following hypothesis:

H6: Higher perceptions about benefits from an online retail store will result in positive eWoM.

### **2.12 Perceived Quality of Website and Attitude towards Online Shopping**

Perceived website quality plays an important role in explaining the attitude of an online shopper (Aladwani, 2006). So we can assume that if an online shopper is perceiving a higher website quality, a more positive and favorable attitude towards a website would be developed. Thus:

H7: Higher perceived website quality will result in more positivity in the attitude of an online customer.

### **2.13 Perceived Benefits and Attitude towards Online Shopping**

Prior research shows that among the factors affecting the decisions of an online shopper, perceptions about the benefits from an online store play an important role (Eastin, 2002; D. J. Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2008; Sui & Rejeski, 2002; Zhou, 2011). So, we assume that:

H8: Higher perceptions about the benefits of an online store develop a more positive attitude towards that store.

### **2.14 Perceived Quality of Website and eWoM**

In terms of the website design and navigation, customers feel that the better quality of the website has been observed that has encouraged us to post positive feedback about the website (Al-Debei et al., 2015). Previous research shows that there is a positive relationship between the quality of website and eWoM (O’Cass & Carlson, 2012). Thus, we assume that:

H9: Better perceptions about website quality encourage customers to give more positive reviews.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

In the recent past, internet shopping has grown at a noticeable rate, and so has the competition over the internet. Globally, online shopping has made it convenient for retailers to reach their potential customers directly as opposed to the traditional model of shopping. In this research, we have studied the attitude of Pakistani customers towards shopping online using different platforms. Pakistan is a country that is not fully developed and due to the availability of very limited resources, Pakistan is counted as a developing country, but it has been achieving competitive differentiation by focusing on seizing upon IT. It is also a fact that the trend of shopping online is still in the early stages, but still there are a number of online retail stores in Pakistan, and due to rapid growth of internet shopping in Pakistan, there arises a need for further studies to conduct and understand the attitude and behavior of consumers in this digital context as attitude is known to be the major predictor of behavioral adoption intention as explained by Al-Debei et al. (2015).

### **3.1 Population and The Sample of Research**

All young adult internet shoppers of Lahore, Pakistan are considered as a population of this research who use different online stores or websites to buy different products or services. As per January 2019, report by Pakistan telecommunication authority shows that total internet subscribers in Pakistan are 65.13 million with a penetration of 31.19% (PTA, 2019). There are multiple platforms which are working as online retail stores in Pakistan and it was impossible to access the complete database of all the customers from different operators all the operators, therefore, we have used convenience sampling to collect the data because prior researches show that the convenience sampling is more effective and efficient in investigating attitude towards online shopping (Hsiao et al., 2010; O’Cass & Carlson, 2012; Park & Kim, 2003). A self-administered, close-ended questionnaire (Appendix A) was used to collect the responses from the respondents via distributing the survey questionnaires manually and through social platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and emails as well through posting an online web survey. In the questionnaire, researchers have also



added some questions which were mainly for the purpose of collecting some basic information about the respondents.

**Table 1**

Measures	Female	Male	Grand Total
<b>18-22</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Graduate</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>
0-15,000	8	4	12
15,000-30,000	4		4
<b>Postgraduate</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>
0-15,000	6	3	9
<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>107</b>
0-15,000	54	50	104
45,000-above	3		3
<b>22-27</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Graduate</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>107</b>
0-15,000	23	45	68
30,000-45,000	10	17	27
45,000-above	6	6	12
<b>Postgraduate</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>
0-15,000	2	9	11
15,000-30,000	2		2
30,000-45,000		4	4
<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>
0-15,000	8	7	15
45,000-above	3	3	6
<b>23-27</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Graduate</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>
0-15,000	5	3	8
15,000-30,000	2	1	3
30,000-45,000	1		1
45,000-above		2	2
<b>Postgraduate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
0-15,000		2	2
15,000-30,000	1		1
<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
0-15,000		2	2
15,000-30,000		3	3
45,000-above	1		1
<b>28-32</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Postgraduate</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>3</b>
0-15,000	3		3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>303</b>

As this research is only focused to measure the attitude of online shoppers, therefore, researchers also notified at the beginning of the questionnaire that if the respondents do not shop online, they are not allowed to submit their responses. Our research is mainly focusing the experience of online shopping including perceived website quality, perceived benefits, eWoM, eTrust, and attitude toward online retail stores from the perspective of a Pakistani online shopper. Total 351 respondents submitted their responses manually through field survey and 40 respondents submitted their responses online. Thus, total number of 391 responses were used for initial screening. Out of those 391, total of 303 responses was valid for further analysis and thus the response rate was almost 78%.

### 3.2 Constructs and Items of Measurement

Mostly, the items for the measurement of constructs were developed from previous studies relevant to online shopping and online shoppers. 'eWoM' is measured using a 5-item scale derived from Al-Debei et al. (2015), while 'Perceived benefits' construct is measured using a 3-item scale derived from Forsythe, Liu, Shannon, & Gardner (2006). 'Perceived web-quality' is measured using a 4-item scale derived from Szymanski & Hise (2000), 'eTrust' is measured using a 3-item scale derived from Falk, Hammerschmidt, & Schepers (2010), and 'attitude towards online shopping' is measured by using a 3-item scale derived from Van der Heijden (2003).

### 3.3 Demographic Profile of the Research Sample

Table 1 explains the demographic profiles of the research sample. Out of total 303 responses, total 132 belong to age group of 18 years to 22 years, 145 respondents belong to the age group of 22 years to 27 years, 23 respondents belong to the age group of 23 years to 27 years, and only 3 respondents belong to the age group of 28 years to 32 years old. Furthermore, out of 303 responses, 142 females and 161 males were involved in total which means that almost 46.8% of the respondents are females and 53.2% are males. The education level of the respondents along with their monthly income is also shown here in Table 1.

### 3.4 Common Method Variance and Assessment

Data were reviewed for the presence of common method variance (CMV) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). For this purpose, the technique of exploratory factor analysis was used. On completing the analysis, it can be seen in Table 2 that the total variance explained of every construct was above the minimum threshold which is 50%. For factor loadings of the construct, Guadagnoli & Velicer (1988) explained that if it is having four or more loadings of 0.6 or above regardless of the sample size, then it would be more reliable. Table 2 exhibits that all the thresholds are met for factor loadings as well as for total variance.

**Table 2**

Items Measuring Variables	Factor loadings	Total explained Variance
<b>eWoM</b>		<b>50.43%</b>
<b>EWM1</b> I often read online recommendations to buy products from online retailers	0.688	
<b>EWM2*</b> I often post positive online comments about online retailers	0.649	
<b>EWM3</b> I often read positive reviews about the products offered by online retailers	0.740	
<b>EWM4</b> My e-community frequently post online recommendations to buy from an online retailer	0.724	
<b>EWM5</b> When I buy any product online, Consumers' online reviews and recommendations make me more confident in making the purchase	0.745	
<b>Perceived Benefits</b>		<b>60.17%</b>
<b>PB1</b> Through online shopping, I can shop in the privacy of home	0.764	
<b>PB2</b> I can buy from online stores whenever I want	0.782	
<b>PB3</b> Buying from online stores save my effort of buying what I want from traditional stores	0.780	
<b>Perceived Web Quality</b>		<b>60.86%</b>
<b>PWQ1</b> The website is always convenient to search for any product	0.915	
<b>PWQ2</b> The website is always convenient to place an order	0.772	
<b>PWQ3</b> The site is easy to navigate to wanted pages	0.769	
<b>PWQ4</b> The site is user-friendly	0.607	
<b>eTrust</b>		<b>54.78%</b>
<b>ET1</b> The website protects information about my web-shopping behavior	0.694	
<b>ET2</b> The website does not share my personal information with other sites	0.779	
<b>ET3</b> I can trust shopping online	0.745	
<b>Attitude towards online shopping</b>		<b>50.38%</b>
<b>AT1</b> The idea of buying from an online retail shop is a good idea	0.649	
<b>AT2</b> Buying online is better than buying from a real store	0.745	
<b>AT3</b> Buying online is a pleasant thing to do	0.731	

Note: \*Not applicable

**4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

**4.1 Reliability and Validity of Construct**

We have used the technique of the Partial least square – structural equation model to evaluate the model as well as to

test the hypotheses. The reason we use this model is that it does not require any data normality and mostly the marketing scholars use this model because of small samples and the presence of the formative constructs. Hulland (1999) mentioned that the item loadings will only be accepted if their value is around or above minimum threshold i.e., 0.50 and it can be seen in Table 3 that all the values of item loadings are meeting the minimum threshold. It is necessary to mention here that one of the items was eliminated (EMW2) because of its low item loading which would be unacceptable (Hulland, 1999). For measuring the reliability of the constructs, Bagozzi & Yi (1988) mentioned that the value of composite reliability of each construct which is equal or greater than 0.7 justifies the reliability of the construct. Table 3 shows that all of the constructs are reliable.

**Table 3**

Latent Construct	Items	Items Loadings	CR	AVE
<b>eWoM</b>	EWM1	0.6660	0.8349	0.5033
	EWM2	N. A.		
	EWM3	0.7445		
	EWM4	0.7089		
	EWM5	0.7409		
<b>Perceived benefits</b>	PB1	0.7631	0.8190	0.6014
	PB2	0.7964		
	PB3	0.7666		
<b>Perceived web quality</b>	PWQ1	0.8969	0.8592	0.6071
	PWQ2	0.7688		
	PWQ3	0.7794		
	PWQ4	0.6521		
<b>eTrust</b>	ET1	0.7115	0.7839	0.5475
	ET2	0.7599		
	ET3	0.7477		
<b>Attitude towards online shopping</b>	AT1	0.7863	0.7405	0.4906
	AT2	0.5948		
	AT3	0.7069		

Note: \*Not applicable as loadings of EWM2 was deleted

In order to confirm the validity of the constructs, Fornell & Larcker (1981) mentioned that if the square root of the AVE is greater than the highest correlation between a specific construct and any other particular construct, the model will be confirmed as valid. Table 4 shows that the square root of the AVEs of all the constructs is greater than the values of correlations with all other constructs which proves the validity of our model.

**Table 4**

Constructs	At	ET	EWM	PB	PWQ
At	0.700				
ET	0.552	0.739			
EWM	0.529	0.611	0.709		
PB	0.494	0.599	0.612	0.775	
PWQ	0.575	0.629	0.622	0.547	0.779

Note: Square Root of AVE on diagonal

#### 4.2 Hypotheses Testing

According to Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena (2012), it is mentioned that in order to test the relationships between the variables, the structural model requires the global evaluation. This includes the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) and the path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) as well. In Table 5, we can see that the predictive relevance of the model is also confirmed as the value of R<sup>2</sup> is greater than the minimum threshold which is 0.10 (R. F. Falk & Miller, 1992). Furthermore, for the value of R<sup>2</sup>, if it is equal to or greater than 0.20, then it is considered as high (Hair et al., 2012) which is explaining the explanatory power of our model as it can be seen in Table 5. Furthermore, in order to test the hypothesized relationships in our model we used the technique of bootstrapping (Hair et al., 2012) in which we have taken 5000 samples and 303 cases. Table 5 has shown the results of all our hypotheses depending on the value of  $\beta$ , R<sup>2</sup>, and t-values which concludes that all our hypothesized relationships are in accepted state and none of the results is contradicting with the previous studies.

**Table 5**

	IV	DV	$\beta$ - Path coefficient	t-values	R <sup>2</sup>	Result
H1	PB	ET	0.363	8.615	0.489	Accepted
H2	PWQ	ET	0.431	9.635		Accepted
H3	ET	EWM	0.236	3.916	0.521	Accepted
H4	ET	AT	0.244	4.023	0.407	Accepted
H5	PWQ	PB	0.547	12.943	0.299	Accepted
H6	PB	EWM	0.303	5.552		Accepted
H7	PWQ	AT	0.33	6.042		Accepted
H8	PB	AT	0.168	2.819		Accepted
H9	PWQ	EWM	0.309	6.104		Accepted

#### 4.3 Mediation test

Researchers have evaluated the mediating role of eTrust either between perceived benefits (PB) and attitude towards online shopping (ATOS) and between the Perceived quality of website (PWQ) and eWoM (EWM). This mediation test was suggested by (Barron and Kenny 1986). The mediating role of the variable is dependent on three basic conditions. As suggested by the authors, according to the first condition, there must be a significant relationship between the proposed mediating variable and the independent variable (IV), according to the second condition, there should be a significant relationship between proposed mediating variable and the dependent variable (DV), and according to the third condition, it is also necessary to check whether a direct relationship between IV and DV becomes insignificant or weaker when the proposed mediating variable is present in the model compared to the relationship between IV and DV when the proposed mediating variable is absent.

**Table 6**

IV	DV	With Mediator		Without Mediator		Mediation Test
		$\beta$	t-value	$\beta$	t-value	
PB	EWM	0.303	5.552	0.319	6.862	Passed
PWQ	AT	0.33	6.042	0.446	8.692	Passed
PB	AT	0.168	2.819	0.249	4.519	Passed
PWQ	EWM	0.309	6.104	0.486	11.229	Passed

It can be seen in Table 6 that the presence of a mediator in the model has a significant impact on the direct relations of the independent variables and the dependent variables. When the authors ran the test of model in the absence of the proposed mediating variable, it was seen that the IVs and the DVs were having a significant relationship as shown in Table 6. So, we can say that eTrust is full mediating variable because, in its presence, the direct relationship between the IVs and the DVs is not as stronger as in the absence of eTrust.

#### 5. DISCUSSION

This research provides meaningful insights to the online retail store owners as the research is conducted through the potential, existing, and former online customers. This research has identified the role of benefits perceived from an online store and the role of perceived quality of the website in developing the attitude of an online shopper towards an online store. Moreover, this research has also helped in identifying the role of e-trust working as a mediator in the model.

In line with the literature discussed, the hypothesized model has undergone the reliability and validity testing and all the tests confirmed the validity and the reliability of the

model overall. Our model shows that e-trust plays an important role as a mediator. Actually, e-trust is the main factor affecting the attitude of an online shopper as already discussed in the previous studies (Al-Debei et al., 2015; Gefen et al., 2003; Van der Heijden, 2003). Furthermore, it is also mentioned by Gefen et al. (2003) that those companies who are having a high potential of building trust in their online retail stores, then they will be having a better more prosperous performance than those who do not have a high potential of building trust in online shoppers. This clearly exhibits that the online retail stores should focus on building e-trust so that they may have success in throughout the internet market. And in order to improve the level of e-trust in online shoppers, owners of online retail store should focus on to the improvement of the quality of website perceived by the online shoppers and the benefits perceived by the online shoppers through their online retail stores.

E-trust seems to be having a positive relationship with perceived benefits as well as with perceived website quality and accordingly we suggest that higher the benefits and the website quality perceived by the online shoppers, a higher level of e-trust would be developed in potential, existing, and the former online shoppers of an online retail store. Also, this research paper contributes that one should bring innovation into the field of online shopping which can be related to the design or convenience of shopping through the online retail store or either can be related to the benefits perceived by online shoppers. This would help in the development of e-trust in online shoppers and thus would lead to a more positive attitude of the consumers toward online retail stores. A more positive attitude of online shoppers would lead to repurchase intentions of online shoppers (Al-Debei et al., 2015; Van der Heijden, 2003) thus helping to grow the online business.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Pakistan is a developing and an under-research country and despite the significance of this research, there are few limitations in this research as well and which should be addressed in future research. This research has been conducted in the region of Lahore, Pakistan targeting only young adult mobile shoppers. As the process of online shopping is basically in the early stages of its growth, therefore, the research is mainly showing the characteristics of early adapters. Early adopters are usually explained as risk-takers and innovators which clearly means that the perceptions of the early adopters may have some contradictions with the perceptions of others. Thus, for future research, it is encouraged that they should focus on certain non-adapters, etc. as it would be more interesting to investigate those differences. As our research has been done in a developing country and it may mean that the current results are also applicable for other countries which are in developing stages but it is not necessary that the results would be applicable for those countries, as other developing

countries, might have been moved beyond Pakistan or may have been lagged behind Pakistan in terms of online shopping. That is why we would suggest that further studies in other countries would more strengthen and validate the findings of the study. Furthermore, researchers also state that this is a cross-sectional study where the responses of the respondents have been investigated in a specific point of time, and there is a limitation that the research is not describing the change in the behavior of online shoppers happening over a period of time. So future research is encouraged to work as a longitudinal study.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study has explained the attitude of online shoppers toward online retail stores as the trend of online shopping is increasing day by day in Pakistan. Different factors have been studied affecting the attitude of an online shopper. Results have shown that the attitude of an online shopper is mostly affected positively when there is an amount of eTrust has been developed in the consumer. In a similar way, the development of more positive eTrust also leads to more positive word of mouth regarding a specific product or service. We have also seen as eTrust mediates the relationship of IVs proposed with the proposed dependent variables.

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