

Abstract

Due to the expansion of internet access and the complexity of e-commerce, security, privacy, and trust concerns have grown to be a top priority for both sellers and customers. This study examines the problems with security, privacy, trust, and integrity and how these affect Irish customers' protection when engaging in online transactions. Governments always enact consumer protection acts to enhance online trade and safeguard consumers. These regulations allow aggrieved customers to be compensated on time and easily. Also, it allows consumers to speak about injustices caused by traders or manufacturers. In the present day, when electronic commerce is developing significantly, this paper presents the findings from an analysis of the guidelines and trends seen in Ireland's regulatory process, as well as findings from a study of the relevant legal norms and their effects on supporting the regulation of remote payments. On the basis of the research findings, conclusions are reached that include suggestions for the future of the study, limits, and a proposed course of action for addressing consumer protection in e-commerce in Ireland. This paper investigates the extent of consumer protection in E-commerce. It assesses its achievements, strengths, challenges, and consumers' views regarding the regulations.

Declaration

I hereby affirm that this dissertation is solely mine. To the extent of my knowledge, this thesis does not include any material that has already been published by another individual unless it has been properly acknowledged.

Acknowledgements

I appreciate having the opportunity to collaborate on this project with all involved. I want to express my gratitude to my supervisor for their unwavering support and direction which has given me a lot of professional and personal advice and taught me a lot about both scientific research and everyday life.

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Introduction

One of the fundamental defining characteristics of today's social life is the emergence of civil society organizations and digital technology, which have given rise to developments like the online economy and e-commerce. The protection of consumer rights is one of the most pressing issues in a digitized economy, yet conventional issues nevertheless persist. This issue is exacerbated in the perspective of the specifics of the digital economy which has adopted information and communication technologies (ICT) in business and e-commerce (Riefa, 2020). In addition, the issue is getting worse in the societal point of view, which is concerned with striking a balance between members' private and public interests.

With increasing implementation of ICT in business, administrative legislation plays a vital role in ensuring protection of customers. This is because while ICT has many benefits, it is also linked to substantial risks for customers. The Consumer Protection Act 2007 (CPA) significantly improved consumer protection, although there are still substantial gaps in the laws that protect customer rights (Chasan & Prasetyo, 2022). Despite their importance, the problems with intricate e-commerce communication systems that are not addressed by the law complicate and make it cumbersome to defend consumers' rights. As a result, this paper serves to evaluate the extent of consumer protection in e-commerce in Ireland as it evaluates policies' of Ireland, successes, weaknesses, and consumer perceptions.

Literature Review

Consumer Protection

Consumer protection, as used generally, refers to safeguarding customers from various unfair business practices. The goal of this protection is to prevent consumer abuse by the commercial community and to prevent various business frauds. The intricacy of connections developed through e-commerce operations, their rapid development, and the use of new communication techniques by firms to reduce the expenses associated with establishing e-commerce requires insight into the laws governing the digital economy. Commercial firms typically have better organizational structures, informational advantages, and market dominance. These and other elements make it simple for businesses to take advantage of consumers (Chasan & Prasetyo, 2022). Protecting the most vulnerable clients of these charitable businesses is necessary, and doing so also safeguards the consumer.

E-commerce has a number of benefits, including lower costs, economies, higher company margins, better customer costs, faster and comparative shopping, and knowledge markets, but it also brings with it some disadvantages, including information exchange, dangers to data privacy, security, and integrity, a lack of customer loyalty, and the potential for violations of a variety of consumer rights in e-commerce (Yadav, 2022). The Consumer Protection Act of 2007 (CPA) offers all consumers general protection while doing business with merchants, whether online or offline. It contains clauses that forbid traders from making exaggerated promises about a good or service. Moreover, deceptive advertising is forbidden.

While there are many difficulties in conducting e-commerce transactions, consumer protection is of the highest concern. This is the case because if the problem of consumer safety is not fully resolved with an adequate mechanism, it could negatively impact genuine competition and the steady exchange of accurate information in the market, as well as result in consumer fraud and deception when conducting e-commerce transactions (Riefa, 2020). To

reduce fraud, deception and losses incurred by vulnerable customers, there is need to explore and analyze the relationship between e-commerce and consumer protection from a legal standpoint (Chawla & Kumar, 2022).

Consumer protection, as seen through the lens of regulatory mechanisms, comprises of rules and campaigns created to defend consumers' rights as well as the free exchange of accurate information and fair trade competition. The rules may offer further protection for the vulnerable and individuals who can't care for themselves. They are intended to prevent companies that indulge in fraud other particular unfair activities from acquiring an edge over rivals. For instance, a government may demand that companies provide comprehensive product information, especially in industries like food where hygiene or public health are concerns (Victor, 2022).

Importance of Consumer Protection

In the age of globalization and industrialisation where commercial organizations strive to generate more and more profit albeit through misleading the public, customers must be safeguarded from certain shady business practices. It follows that while on the one hand they are regarded as the king of the market in the modern era, on the other, this concept of consumer trust is not beyond a shadow of a doubt since consumers are still the most under-served market category and are in a disadvantageous position as a consequence of the lack of reinforcement of their rights.

Consumer protection refers to safeguarding customers from a variety of unfair business activities in order to prevent exploitation and prevent commercial practices that can be harmful to their interests and freedoms in competitive markets. It goes without saying that commercial companies are better knowledgeable, more organized, and in a better position to dominate consumers while conducting business (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). They can easily utilize their superior expertise to take advantage of customers. Commercial companies do this by selling

lower-quality goods at exorbitant costs in an effort to increase their company's earnings and revenues (Jouglex, 2022).

To make excessive profits, businesspersons engage in dishonest business tactics such as adulteration, hoarding, black marketing, and others. This technique deprives customers of receiving value for their money and exposes them to the risk of being economically exploited by large corporations who utilize their influence for their own benefit and at the expense of consumers. Corporations may rob citizens' rights and interests either intentionally or due to their oversight in increasing earnings to their accomplishment. Therefore, consumer protection is essential in such situations not only to shield buyers from sellers but also to promote inclusive global standards and sustained growth.

Consumer protection is essential for various reasons, which include ensuring moral and social responsibility on the part of commercial organizations, spreading awareness, ensuring service quality, promoting justice, upholding the principle of trusteeship, and assisting in the survival and expansion of businesses (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). Thus, consumer protection is essential to ensure social, ethical, and professional responsibility of business organizations in the context of healthy business growth and success, as well as to advance the cause for offering effective protection to consumers' rights in the emerging global market.

Information and communication technology has significantly altered the way that society, including corporate organizations and consumers in particular, interacts with businesses. With the advent of e-commerce transactions, technology has also revolutionized corporate transactions. Currently, the usage of computers and e-commerce via the Internet has elevated business dealings to new levels on a worldwide scale. The impact of technological developments and the tremendous coexistence of e-commerce transactions have drawn the

interest of potential customers, corporate organizations, governments, and international agencies.

Challenges to Consumer Protection in Ecommerce

E-commerce has certainly made it easier for consumers to buy products and services but it has also put them at risk by raising the possibility of severe violations of their fundamental rights and interests via e-commerce portals (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). The following are the main consumer issues from the standpoint of consumer safety in e-commerce transactions:

Dishonest marketing techniques

Some commercial companies do not disclose information, such as return policies, cancellation conditions, and warranty details thereby denying consumers important details like transaction verification and refund policies, for instance, cancellation rights, even for purchases they made in error.

Under-performance by commercial companies

This includes unsafe payment procedures, differences in description, quality, and quantity of components that the customer has paid for, late deliveries and trickery, since there is no way to physically validate online-purchased goods.

Lack of privacy

The seller's identity and private information like credit card financial data is liable to manipulation and interception through computer crimes like hacking.

Online Shopping Rights in Ireland

Online shoppers now have basic freedoms thanks to the Consumer Rights Act of 2022. Customers who purchased something online from Ireland on or after November 29, 2022, are entitled to these privileges (Victor, 2022). Online shoppers engage into a legal agreement known as a distance contract when they buy something. They cannot inspect the products before making a purchase because they cannot participate into this form of deal in person. As a result, they are given additional safeguards under consumer law. Before a customer makes a purchase, they must be provided with concise, intelligible information such as appropriate payment details, cancellation rights if applicable, and delivery details, prior to and following an online purchase (Andriushchenko et al., 2019).

Guidelines for Consumer Protection

Many consumer groups have previously debated for the introduction of an international body that would lead in organizing a consumer protection code. By establishing the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection in 1985, the UN made a substantial contribution to Ireland's consumer law (Chasan & Prasetyo, 2022). Subsequently, principles were enacted to serve as the first global and comprehensive foundation for consumer protection (Jougleux, 2022). The recommendations address a wide variety of consumer protection topics, such as fostering financial interests, security and health, consumer knowledge and awareness, and effective redress (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). In addition, they emphasize that consumers frequently deal with inequities in terms of resources, educational attainment, and bargaining power while acknowledging the significance of encouraging equitable, just, and stable growth in the economy and society (Ghonyan, 2020).

The Guidelines' purview has expanded over time and their attention has switched to a consumer protection strategy that is more inclusive and diversified. The newly amended version recognizes and gives careful consideration to the less fortunate and vulnerable

customers, in contrast to the earlier guidelines, which were concerned with a general consumer without differentiating between different groups of people (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). Also, it gives consumers' access to necessary goods and services a renewed focus. The most important developments from the new recommendations include the advancement of financial customer safety and dispute resolution, sound business strategies, and e-commerce, an effort to foster global cooperation (Jougleux, 2022).

E-commerce Solutions for Consumer Protection

Developments in online communication have facilitated market efficiency and improved the relationships between businesses and customers. For instance, the government of Ireland has made several efforts to provide the populace with electronic gadgets to encourage online commerce (Victor, 2022). It is crucial for advertisers to consider the elements that influence online shoppers' attitudes to build their business strategies and boost sales. The web has significantly accelerated changes in views and behaviors among individuals all around the world. This enormous advantage sparked the development of online purchasing, which changed how people lived their daily lives (Andriushchenko et al., 2019).

The recommendations include a section on ethical business conduct that mandates corporate accountability for consumer protection. This is a broad departure from earlier iterations that emphasized national governments as advocates for consumer protection (Kalinić et al., 2019). The United Nations Guidelines for consumer Protection (UNGCP)'s new framework aims to create benchmarks for standard habits to promote increased levels of moral conduct by online commercial businesses that create or deliver goods or services for consumers. This strategy adheres to a broader trend that emerged over the past ten years and tended toward co-regulation and self-regulation techniques for enterprises (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). As an example, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD), which published the Guidelines for Multinational Companies Suggestions for Responsible Corporate Behaviour, has become particularly active in this area.

In accordance with these suggestions, the UN Guidelines encompass a wide range of business practices, from openness and transparency to the fair and equal treatment of consumers; from teaching and increasing awareness to the safeguarding of personal data and dispute settlement. At every level of their relationship, businesses are obliged to treat customers fairly and honestly and to steer clear of any actions that might endanger them. They should avoid engaging in any illegal, unethical, discriminatory, or misleading actions, particularly abusive marketing techniques that could mislead consumers or expose them to unwarranted risks (Riefa, 2020).

The guidelines mandate that businesses adhere to stern measures of openness to help consumers make informed decisions. They must give consumers full, accurate, and non-misleading details on the products and services, restrictions, relevant fees, and ultimate charges (Ghonyan, 2020). Additionally, businesses are required to go above and above by assisting customers in acquiring the necessary information and skills to comprehend uncertainties and make decisions supported by expert guidance and assistance. To resolve issues efficiently, business managers should also provide procedures for managing complaints and safeguarding consumers' privacy. Additionally, member nations have a duty to aggressively promote these principles at the government level by enacting consumer laws that support ethical business practices and advance the necessary business and consumer education (Kalinić et al., 2019).

The Data Protection Commission's (DPC) emphasis on the use of cookies challenges commercial companies to make sure that their cookie settings do not contravene the DPC's standards (Victor, 2022). However, there is still a long journey to go for many retailers in this area. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, there has been a surge in online buying in Ireland.

For instance, numerous merchants have launched transactional websites to entice more consumers. As a result, privacy policies have been introduced to address the security concerns associated with keeping credit card information (Sajid, 2021).

According to the Digital Protection Commission (DPC), organizations must be guided and actively engaged to foster a more widespread attitude of data protection compliance. To achieve this, it plans to actively involve stakeholders in a gradual transition toward compliance so that upholding data protection rights becomes standard business procedure. To promote digital transformation throughout the Irish economy and society, the Irish government unveiled its new national digital plan, “Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework,” in February 2022 (Victor, 2022). The plan may help Ireland achieve its goal of being a technological innovator at the center of both European and global advancements. Underpinned by solid governance and an adequate regulatory framework, the strategy lays a significant emphasis on consumer safety, inclusion and security (Teixeira, 2020).

Self-regulation is more successful if more organizations cooperate in recommended practice schemes. The formation of impartial dispute resolution procedures can improve both trust and scheme oversight (Jougleux, 2022). Subsequently, the inclusion of various stakeholders, particularly government agencies and consumer organizations, in the formulation of industry standard codes can increase the quality of the programs and guarantee that a variety of views are considered (Yuniar & Fibrianto, 2019). Overall, there appears to be a growing understanding that both a strong set of norms established by legislation at the federal level and an acknowledged paradigm of good corporate behaviour created jointly by public servants and businesses are necessary. Considering that both have significant advantages and restrictions, neither can be used in place of the other.

Systems to Address Customer Complaints

In accordance with UNGCP principles, procedures for resolving customers' concerns through administrative, judicial, and other dispute resolution processes should be fair, effective, transparent, and impartial. These mechanisms must also be quick, affordable, and available, as well as accessible to customers who are less fortunate and more vulnerable (Yuniar & Fibrianto, 2019). Companies also play a significant role in settling customer issues by providing free consulting services and inexpensive, open, and impartial complaint procedures. These provisions promote internal dispute resolution, preventing the need for an external mediator or the judicial system (Meskic et al., 2022).

Limitations

Despite the UNGCP's wider scope, there are still concerns about how effective cross-border conflict mediation will be in the absence of official member state collaboration and oversight. Because of varied languages, complicated judicial systems, and continually high expenses, clients still encounter numerous obstacles when trying to seek justice (Yuniar & Fibrianto, 2019). Yet, several of the member states have been motivated and encouraged by the principles to review and improve existing consumer rights systems. This demonstrates that consumer rights act is moving beyond the realm of state law and into the spotlight of international law (Peráček, 2022). Additionally, the growing acknowledgment indicates that consumer protection is progressively evolving into a human rights concern that calls for universal coverage.

Ireland's legislative requirements for consumer protection in e-commerce transactions are neither targeted at effective consumer safety in e-commerce transactions nor are they tightly defined. Due to these factors, consumers who engage in e-commerce transactions do not have enough legal protection for their consumer protection laws (Yadav,

2022). If these problems are not properly resolved, it could influence consumers' interest in online shopping and have a detrimental impact on the expansion of online shopping. The simple declaration of consumer interests in the law is insufficient; immediate action must be taken to raise consumer awareness and ensure that they are strictly upheld in every setting (Ting & Gray, 2019).

Although the guidelines address product safety, there appears to be a gap in their coverage of customer compensation for damage caused by defective items. Cross-border trade has expanded as a result of new technology advancements and e-commerce, giving consumers more options and more affordable goods (Yadav, 2022). This can, however, open up markets for goods with weaker standards as well, posing new problems for national law enforcement in terms of inspection and enforcement as well as making it more challenging to assign blame when goods are exchanged over international boundaries. This makes tighter oversight and implementation measures, reinforced by cooperation between participating countries, increasingly necessary where counterfeit products like toys or medications may cause serious injury (Ting & Gray, 2019).

Conclusion

The UNGCP has been crucial in helping certain nations assess and enhance their administrations, or even establish them. A number of nations may have been motivated by the guidelines to include consumer rights in their legal frameworks. In addition the UNGCP have guided the evolution of cross-border involvement regionally. The protection of customers' economic interests, protection from risks to their health and safety, and information accessibility are just a few examples of constitutional provisions (Yuniar & Fibrianto, 2019). Moreover, certain, high-level legal provisions may support bolstering consumers' legal standing as the less powerful member in a conflict.

Improvements have been made to the UNGCP and they have a great deal of potential to further enhance consumer protection in Ireland. They are distinctive in that they seek to set standards encompassing the most important facets of consumer protection and have established themselves as a benchmark for both developed and emerging economies (Yadav, 2022). While other aid agencies have started to take an equal interest in this field, they usually only address a small portion of regulatory oversight, making no mention of an all-encompassing framework or simply focusing on a small area. The guidelines possess a dominant influence and already have a noticeable impact regionally and at the participating nations because they were unanimously adopted.

In conclusion, providing consumers with the highest level of protection from unethical business practices and harnessing their power to support the expansion of the e-commerce industry are two ways to create a fair, robust, competitive, growing, and developed market. To be more precise, it is suggested that a specific and adequately addressed constitutional system should be implemented in Ireland. This will make it easier for society to relate to and understand an acceptable consumer protection law that takes into account both the development of e-commerce and the needs of consumers.

Research Methodology

Research Objectives

This study set out to achieve the following key objectives. First, it set out to determine how e-commerce has affected the daily lives of online shoppers. Second, the work aimed to ascertain if legislative mechanisms for consumer protection can stop exploitative practices affecting e-commerce customers. Finally, the paper investigates how well-informed online shoppers are on current consumer protection laws and how they apply to their regular purchases.

Research Design

Research Philosophy

The term “research philosophy” describes the guiding principles of how data about a subject should be obtained, analyzed, and applied (Van der Walt, 2020). The research philosophy selected by a researcher shapes their research strategy. Researchers can choose from four research paradigms: interpretivism, positivism, pragmatics, and realism (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The two frequently used research philosophies are interpretivism and positivism. The approaches that are most frequently used in qualitative studies are ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative analysis because they allow the themes to emerge from the data while still retaining the unique experiences and reality of each individual. In quantitative studies, positivism is frequently the underpinning research philosophy (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020).

According to the positivism approach, the world is a single reality and researchers can view reality objectively. In contrast, interpretivism frequently involves qualitative studies and the approach assumes that each observer’s perception of reality is distinct from another.

Hence, the reality is perceived in a subjective manner (Scauso, 2020). The research philosophy used to carry out this study is interpretivism.

Justification

This research purposes to evaluate the level of protection guaranteed to e-commerce clients and how informed they are about existing consumer protection measures. The interpretivism philosophy employed during the structuring and execution of the study leads to qualitative research. This perspective is based on the idea that situations are subjective and people try to look at reality logically (Scauso, 2020). This approach is well suited to tackle the research question and it enables researchers to evaluate respondents' views and gain further insight into the phenomenon under research.

Research Method

The three types of research, qualitative, mixed, and quantitative methods, all have strengths and drawbacks. The following table summarizes the differences between qualitative and quantitative research.

Quantitative	Qualitative
Specific questions	Open ended questions
Causal	Exploratory
Large sample size	Small sample size
Non standardized data	Numerical data
Rich understanding	Deep understanding

Table 1: Differences between quantitative research and qualitative research

Researchers should understand the main features of each variable before selecting a type of research for their study. In this study, inductive research, which involves an exploratory approach, was used to investigate the extent to which e-commerce clients are safeguarded in Ireland (Kyngäs, 2020). The study adopts a qualitative approach to assess this

particular case study which focuses on small sample size and key points within the e-commerce platform to obtain useful data (Kamal, 2019).

Quantitative research was not considered for this study since it does not seek to test a theory or hypothesis but to understand the extent of e-commerce consumer protection in Ireland. As such, the study is analyzed using summaries and interpretations that are mainly expressed in words. In addition it requires few respondents who can provide information about their experiences by filling open-ended questions. Through the qualitative approach, the researcher can use responses from the focus group to gain a deeper understanding of consumer opinions and attitudes towards certain products or services (Bleiker et al., 2019).

Research Strategy

The action plan selected to complete this study entails a case study of consumer protection in e-commerce in Ireland. This type of research strategy produces a thorough, multidimensional understanding of an intricate problem in its actual setting (Rashid, 2019). It is a well-known research strategy that is widely applied in a range of fields, especially the social sciences.

A case study explores an issue or situation in depth and its real-life setting (Rashid, 2019). For this reason, it is at times called the naturalistic design contrary to the experimental design whereby researchers conduct studies in controlled states that allow them to influence variables and draw specific conclusions (Gaffey et al., 2021). Comprehensive research for this study was carried out to determine the extent of consumer protection in e-commerce in Ireland. The findings were evaluated based on the responses provided by participants.

Time Horizon

A longitudinal time horizon would entail gathering data over many years and was, therefore, unfavourable for this particular study. The total time allocated for completion of

the study was about three months. Therefore, it was appropriate to use a cross-sectional study design, given the short period allocated for data collection. The cross-sectional study design was effective for this study when used together with questionnaires, which are a less intensive method of data collection (Dillman, 2020). In addition, online questionnaires made it easier to reach a wider population.

Sampling Strategy

This research employed the convenience sampling technique, the most common form of non-probability sampling, to collect data from a subset of adult Ireland residents, who mirror the general population. This technique made it easier to establish the characteristics of the population. Another reason for choosing convenience sampling is the lack of adequate resources like capital required to acquire and contact the specific population. It was essential to establish, maintain, and then terminate connections with participants and access to the sites. These friendly interactions are important for the sampling procedure, and its quality, and they help to establish the validity of the study's final findings and conclusions. Basically, delays caused by negotiations and the complete process of obtaining authorisation to a facility or access to target people make it challenging to obtain a genuine random sample.

Sample population

The chosen sample comprises consumers who have used e-commerce at least once. Consumers who shop online made up the sample for this study's internet questionnaire. Depending on their way of life, customers' preferences can change. The research's conclusions can be used to identify the variables that influence how these consumers behave when it comes to online shopping. The study's target demographic is the general public in Ireland, including individuals from a range of genders, ages, and socioeconomic statuses. A close-ended internet questionnaire was utilized to gather the relevant data required for this

study. People over the age of 18, who are thought to be entirely responsible while making selections about their purchases, fill out the questionnaire. The study assumes that clients over the age of 18 have past online purchasing experience thus are a suitable demographic for this sample.

Sample size

This sample was taken through the convenience sampling method and eighteen consumers provided samples for this study. The respondents freely provided their responses to the survey. The intended group was reached via social media posts by the researchers that included a link to the internet poll distributed through sites like Gmail, Facebook, and, WhatsApp. The respondents were from a variety of sexes, age categories, and occupations. Due to time constraints, the study's anticipated response was 10 respondents. While the study required a relatively small sample, it was open to extra responses during the time allocated for the questionnaire survey to improve the authenticity and dependability of the results.

Data Collection

To achieve the goals of the defined objectives and respond to the asked research question, the method of data collection must be adequate. Given this and the goals of the study, a structured online survey with closed-ended questions was a good method for gathering data. These inquiries were derived from several research studies and writings. The data was gathered over two weeks.

There are many benefits to using internet questionnaires as a research tool. The biggest benefit is that the questionnaire may be shared across platforms without restriction, which makes it simpler to obtain the required number of participants while also enabling simple accessibility for all respondents. The researcher has complete control over the process when employing this questionnaire strategy. Another valuable feature of this tool is its affordability. Both the distribution and the analyses are free to complete (Dillman, 2020).

Questionnaires demand significantly less of the researcher in comparison to other methods like observation, thus allowing them to take their time in the preparation and outcomes (Jebb et al., 2021). In addition, questionnaires are helpful when specific responses are required for instance responses to “Tell us your opinion about this item.”, but they can restrict the amount of data you can collect because you can only ask certain questions (Dillman, 2020). This approach, like any other, has benefits and drawbacks. Nonetheless, use of questionnaires is suitable for this study since it provides different types of questions like multiple choice, rating scale, Likert scale, open-ended, ranking, dropdown, and demographic questions that cover the research questions and aims of the research. Respondents can use short and long answers to respond to the questions accordingly.

The data gathered using questionnaires may contain responses from participants who do not answer honestly. In between questions, respondents are free to lie or give multiple

answers. Therefore, the researcher cannot be sure they are collecting the right information, and they also run the risk of favouring one side of the argument in inquiries they make. Nevertheless, contrary to speaking to an interviewer, respondents typically tend to be more objective and precise in questionnaires (Dillman, 2020). The poll was generated using the Google Forms questionnaire platform, which was also used to track responses before the survey was closed. Finally, Google Spreadsheets and Microsoft Excel were employed for the statistical evaluation of the data gathered here.

Data Analysis

Data analysis has been a crucial component of this research. The two main types of data analysis techniques are qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The quantitative analysis approach was used to evaluate data collected using primary data gathering techniques. Eighteen online shoppers participated in an online survey that was used to collect the raw data. The Likert Scale, typically ranging from 1 to 5, was used for the analysis. Likert scales assign qualitative input a quantitative score (Jebb et al., 2021). It may, for instance, be used to determine the extent to which an individual agrees with a claim made about the worth of a product and to give that claim a data point. This is one of the main explanations for why the scale is highly valued by researchers.

Likert rating scale inquiries use a uniform data collection strategy which is very advantageous to researchers because it makes the findings simple to comprehend (Jebb et al., 2021). Once data was entered into the Likert Scale, graphs, charts, and figures were utilized to develop outcomes and results. Analyzing graphs and tables generated from the Likert scale facilitates understanding the extent of consumer protection in e-commerce in Ireland.

Respondents' opinions toward a certain subject or statement are gauged using Likert items. The data is often coded as follows for analysis: satisfied is indicated by a score of 5; dissatisfied is indicated by a score of 1. Since the mean of the Likert scale data is meaningless (i.e., what is the average of the satisfied and dissatisfied responses?), we cannot use it as a measure of central tendency. The most suitable measurement is the mode, the most frequent replies, or the median. A bar chart is the ideal tool for showing the distribution of replies, such as the percentage of respondents that are satisfied and dissatisfied.

Ethical considerations

This part addresses the principles adhered to during the execution of this study. To prevent any ethical concerns, this was thoroughly investigated. No questions about names, contact information, or personal addresses were asked of the participants. Subsequently, their identities were kept a secret. To guarantee that those taking part were well-informed about the research, the directions and details about the questionnaire were included in a message delivered to participants that were displayed above the link to the survey. Participants viewed research-related information and individually expressed their will to engage in the research. The respondent's personal details were kept private and data was only gathered for this research. Therefore, respondents' privacy was unaffected. All contributors' opinions were valued and no study subjects were harmed.

Limitations

This part outlines some of the researcher's constraints that might have an impact on the outcome. The study involves eighteen participants, a relatively small sample size. More information needs to be gathered to conduct an accurate study and provide a dynamic perspective of shopping behaviour around the world. A sufficiently high sample size guarantees that the broadest coverage of study subjects' impressions or opinions is taken into consideration, leading to more reliable results (Jebb et al., 2021). The possibility that different consumer groups, based on their age, gender, socioeconomic standing, affiliations, and social networks, may have varying perspectives suggests that including a larger sample would make the study more comprehensive.

Second, there is a slight possibility that many respondents did not read the questionnaire well. This results in different interpretations which reduce the credibility of the findings. In addition, bias is introduced into survey results when different respondents choose to reply to particular question while others choose not to thus causing data errors. Thirdly, there was a time limit on this study thereby limiting the total amount of data to be collected and analyzed thus the small sample size. Nevertheless, the online questionnaire method made it easier to access a wide range of data from respondents remotely and within a relatively short period of time compared to one-on-one interviews.

Summary

Primary data were obtained to gather the information needed to conduct this study. Any type of data that was initially gathered to answer the research question falls under this category. A random non-probability sampling technique was employed to sample the participants. Eighteen people took part in the online poll after receiving links to it through social media channels like Facebook, Whatsapp, and Gmail. Questions about consumer protection in e-commerce were asked using multiple-choice, short-answer, and long-answer formats. The Likert scale was used in data analysis to analyze the offered data through rational and analytical reasoning and thorough evaluation of all constituent parts of the acquired data.

Data Analysis and Findings

Data Analysis

This section outlines the qualitative analysis of data, along with the procedures that went into it. The data is broken down into developing themes, each of which will be discussed below. By using an interpretive paradigm to analyze the data from the current study, the research attempts to evaluate the narrative in relation to both the environment in which it was placed and the participants' subjective points of view (Scauso, 2020).

Participants in the study have working notions about how they behave and what they've gone through. These ideas are founded on local knowledge and are a part of the oral and written cultural materials of the group the participants belong to, thus offering context to their experience (Wahyuningrum et al., 2020).

The current study is suited for using an interpretive framework since it allowed the researcher to examine participants' views in relation to their cultural settings as well as through the prism of their cultural beliefs and values (Jain et al., 2021). The research requires close attention to what participants say is significant to them, as well as to their "working theories" and meaning attributions (Cypress, 2019).

Analysis Process

Understanding how to interpret the data was a necessary step in the process of data analysis. This required some kind of interaction with the material, thus the researcher focuses beyond their usual viewpoint, attitudes, or knowledge to acknowledge the liminal experience of straddling familiarity and strangeness. Researchers may be familiar with the participants' interpretations of the meaning in their lives but may not be able to relate to what the participants may be feeling or describing on a personal level (Scauso, 2020). Knowing this motivates researchers to approach data analysis with a feeling of adaptability and openness,

as well as improvisation and creativity, as well as planning and adherence to stages and norms (Cypress, 2019).

Data are turned into discoveries through analysis, which organizes, structures, and gives meaning to the large body of gathered data (Jain et al., 2021). The process of analysis involves decreasing the volume of the information, sorting out crucial from irrelevant facts, identifying patterns and trends, and creating a structure for communicating the key points of what was revealed by the data (Mezmir, 2020).

During the recording and translation of the data, expression patterns that exposed recurring or diverging themes emerged as data became available. Also, data analysis does not in itself offer solutions to research questions as these are discovered by way of interpretation of the examined data (Scauso, 2020). The process of interpretation entails analyzing and explaining the data. Again, this requires continual participation in the process since interpretation and analysis go hand in hand—the researcher naturally interprets as they conduct their analyses (Botta & Wiedemann, 2019). Thus, a coherent interpretation came about as a result of the combined processes of data collection and processing.

Developing Themes

This phase involved attentive reviews of the transcripts in an effort to comprehend all of them as a whole. The significance of this stage is to get lost in the intricacies and attempt to understand the situation in its entirety before breaking it down into its components (Botta & Wiedemann, 2019). Recurrent patterns emerged in the data to represent the participants' greatest emotions and the things that impacted them the most and were representative of their everyday lives. The most intellectually difficult stage of data analysis and one that can incorporate the entire project is the identification of prominent themes, recurring concepts or language, and patterns of thought that link the participants (Cypress, 2019).

As each participant's unique form of expression is preserved and represented, there is a conflict between doing so and drawing out greater meanings, interpretations, and implications in the form of universal themes shared by all participants (Scauso, 2020). The reason for this is that "the outcome of the research cannot simply be a set of particularized case histories," as may be the case with the presentation of discrete themes or distinct respondent traits (Botta & Wiedemann, 2019). This calls for a concept of generalization that allows social interpretations to go beyond the specific example while preserving the deeply particularized, socially formed essence of concrete individuals (Sechelski, & Onwuegbuzie, 2019). Insofar as topic creation is concerned, this statement supports the interpretive paradigm of this research and served as a guide for the interpretation process.

Themes

Three themes resulted from participants transcripts:

- Information requirements
- Website factors affecting shopping behaviour
- Role of the government in consumer protection

Information Requirements

Consumer protection issues can be found in the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages of consumer-business relationship (Wahyuningrum et al., 2020). Based on questionnaire responses, more than half of the respondents (52.9%) had heard of Consumer Protection Act while some (47.1%) had not (see figure 1). Twelve respondents (66.7%) could define consumer protection. A particular respondent stated, "These cover transactions between businesses and consumers across all sectors of the economy. Consumer protection legislation creates rights for consumers and imposes corresponding obligations on traders that must be honoured. We have a range of powers to help achieve compliance with consumer

protection law”. According to respondents, the population in Ireland informed about their consumer rights is relatively low.

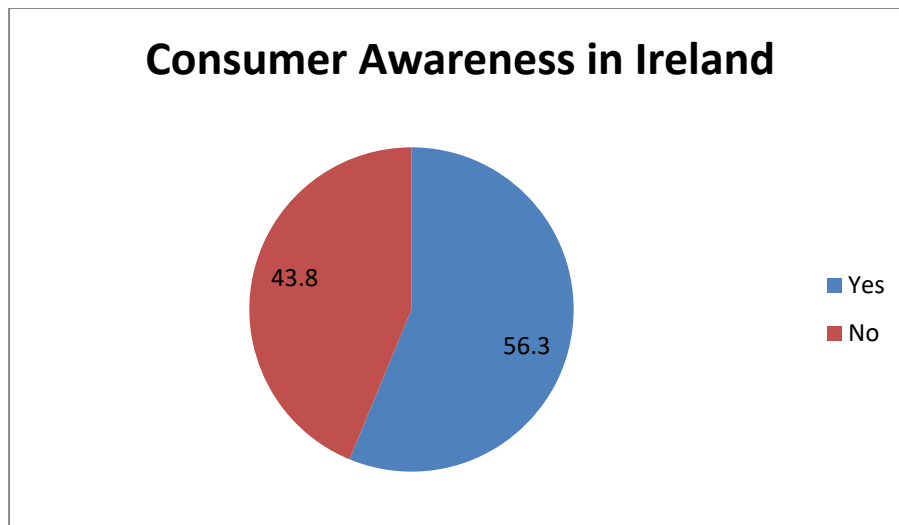


Figure 1: Consumer Awareness in Ireland

Website Factors Affecting Shopping Behaviour

Credibility

Users can determine the credibility of an online shopping website by interacting with family, peers, and online reviewers (Sengpunya, 2020). All respondents acknowledged that they always research items or services before acquiring them online. They did this search at varying frequencies and all expect one browsed and read through user reviews about companies' websites before buying. 75% of participants changed their mind about making a purchase online due to a negative review or issues with consumer protection after reading reviews on the websites while 25% had never cancelled their purchase because of an online review. Based on the findings, online shoppers usually encounter challenges such as overcharging, defective goods, misleading advertisement, poor customer service among others. However, none of the respondents reported an issue with contractual agreements.

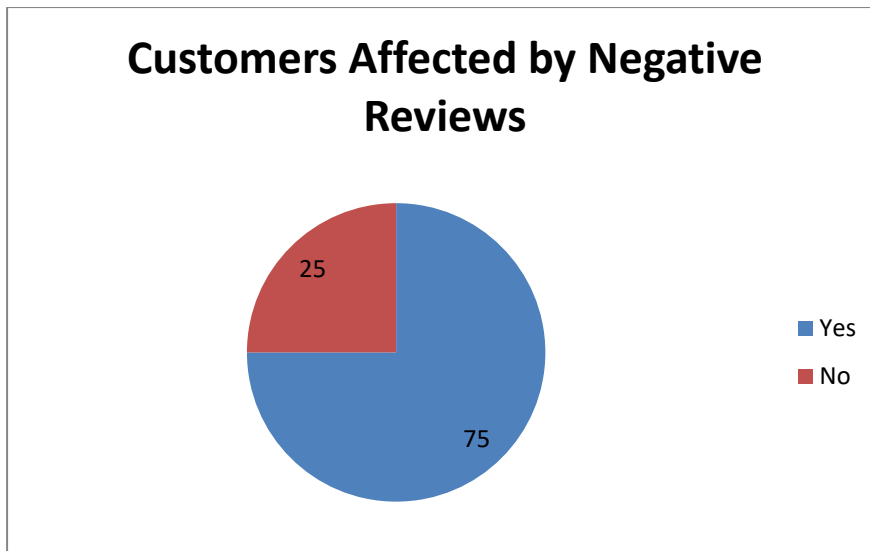


Figure 2: Customers Affected by Negative Reviews

Table 2: Consumer Issues

Consumer Issue	No. of respondents who reported
Overcharging	5
Defective goods	8
Misleading advertisement	5
Contractual disagreements	0
Poor customer service	5
Other	2

Returns and Refunds

Online shoppers prefer on-time delivery and products that are simple to return if they are not satisfactory. First-time users occasionally become alarmed when the delivered goods do not match the offered description (Brogan, 2020). Furthermore, buyers need accurate and timely refund processing. Among the respondents, 68.8% of those who found issues with products purchased online complained to the company while 31.3% did not seek any solution. Those who complained reported varying opinions whereby 43.8% were satisfied, 37.4% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 18.8% were dissatisfied. Twelve respondents out of eighteen deny that businesses in Ireland prioritize consumer protection and consider profits

their primary objective. One respondent reported that some businesses value their customers while another believed that businesses balance their priorities to make profit while guaranteeing user protection.

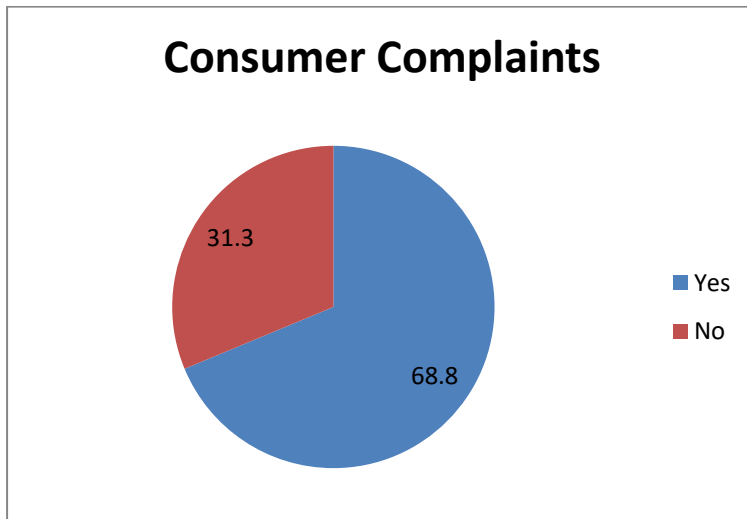


Figure 3: Consumer Complaints

Role of the Government in Consumer Protection

Ireland approaches internet-related concerns with a modern and accommodating mindset. The Electronic Commerce Directive has been put into practice and the overall legislative strategy reflects the government's declared intention to maintain a light and adaptable regulatory framework in this area that is technology-neutral. Ireland has seen a huge increase in e-commerce activity, with recent estimates placing the increase in online spending at 30 to 40% (Graef & Van Berlo, 2021). Based on responses from the questionnaire survey, 94.1% of the participants purchased products like household items and mobile accessories through e-commerce. Buyers use their products at many varying frequencies such as daily, once in three years, and not much often.

Participants in the survey awarded different ratings with regards to the level of consumer protection in Ireland. See figure 4.

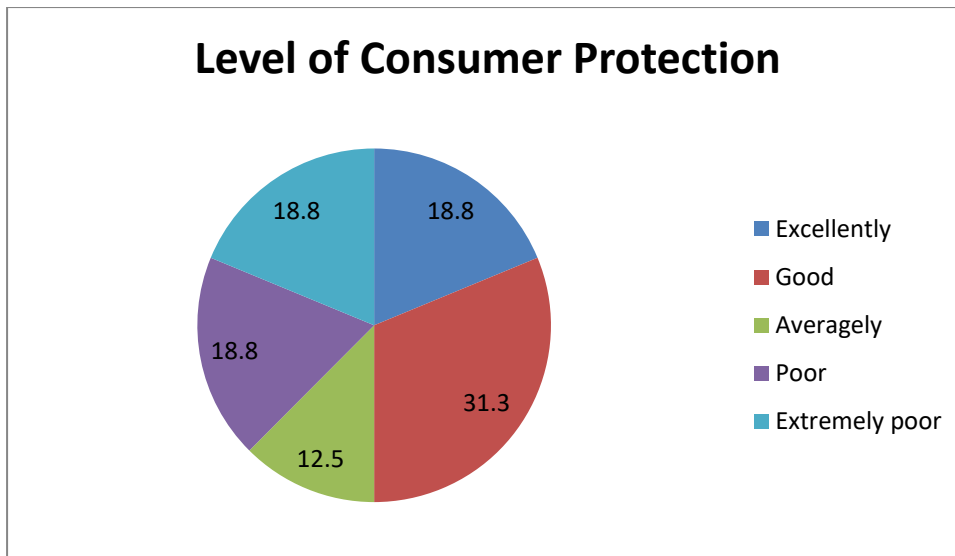


Figure 4: Level of Consumer Protection

Conclusion

Themes explored in this chapter imply that the respondents answered the questionnaire questions to express their views on the government's efforts in ensuring consumer protection in e-commerce. The survey responses also gave insight into the influence of the website features such as credibility on online shopping behaviour. Lastly, the chapter includes participant views on user awareness about consumer protection. These themes along with their categories have been expounded on with supporting statements from the participants' transcripts. Evidently, the survey allowed participants to communicate their opinions in constructive ways.

Findings

The aim of this research was to investigate the extent of consumer protection in e-commerce in Ireland. The research explores how e-commerce (EC) has affected various stakeholders such as online shoppers. This study draws from the effectiveness of legal structures pertaining to consumer protection and the extent to which online shoppers are aware of existing consumer protection acts and their role in transactions. The findings provided aimed to tackle the following research questions:

- To what extent are online consumers aware of the existing consumer protection acts and their role in their daily transactions?
- How effective are the legal structures of consumer protection in preventing unjust practices against e-commerce consumers?
- How has e-commerce impacted the livelihoods of online consumers?

A qualitative study using ethnographic research was carried out with data obtained from observations, documents, and questionnaires. Pseudonyms were formulated to ensure the privacy of all identities of the participants. This section will begin with a background of the situation in study followed by results from the respondents who filled out a questionnaire related to the research question.

E-commerce Consumer Protection in Ireland

In today's digital and technology-based economy, e-commerce is increasingly vital for corporate organizations to conduct online business transactions (Sechelski, & Onwuegbuzie, 2019). E-commerce has the capacity to transform business implementations, restructure business-to-business (B2B) functions, and business-to-consumer (B2C) operations (Jain, 2021). Nonetheless, few problems can stop EC from developing further as a potent and advanced electronic medium for corporate activities. The protection of EC infrastructure is

gaining importance due to EC's rapid expansion and significance to globalized trade.

Consumer security protection is still in its early stages, which is a hurdle for the progress of EC (Chawla & Kumar, 2022).

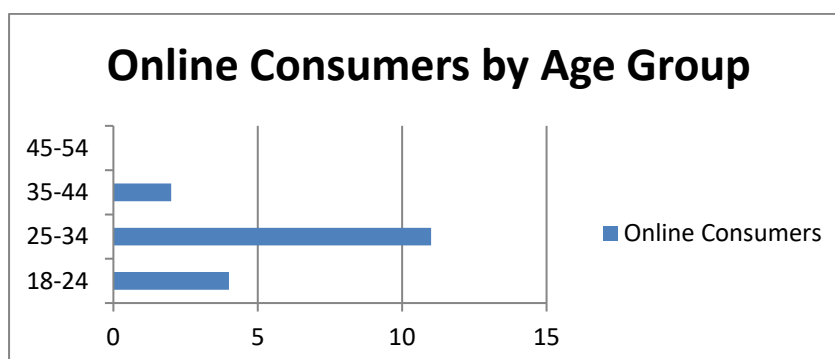
An estimated 79% of internet users in Ireland are shopping for goods and services online (Botta & Wiedemann, 2019). Subsequently, the demand for legislative and technical capabilities to safeguard client privacy worldwide is on the rise (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). Throughout the years, hackers have succeeded in executing credit debit card payments, bypassing company surveillance equipment, and obtaining data on many of credit debit card credentials (Jain, 2021). Websites operated by EC are still susceptible to numerous types of assaults, and these tactics are constantly evolving (Botta & Wiedemann, 2019). Therefore, as internet use for business transactions increases rapidly, there is a need to determine present weaknesses in consumer protection so that they can be dealt with effectively.

Demographic Information

Age

Among the respondents who filled in the questionnaires, four belonged to age group 18-24, eleven were between 25-34 years and two were between 35-44 years old. This shows that the researcher collected responses from participants across different age groups. See figure 5.

Figure 5: Graph showing online consumers by age group



Gender

From a total of eighteen participants in the questionnaire survey, five respondents (28%) identified themselves as female while thirteen (72%) identified as male.

Customer Awareness of Consumer Protection in Ireland

From the research, it emerged that twelve respondents (66.7%) could define consumer protection. Notably, results showed that many online shoppers are oblivious of their entitlement to replacements, refunds, or repairs when their purchases fail to meet their descriptions. A respondent quoted that, “I believe that consumer rights are something that is not adequately advertised. It is always overlooked, and people only find out when something goes wrong or when they have a bad experience, where knowledge becomes limited towards just procuring a solution.”

In addition, a respondent notes that “There should be a significant amount of knowledge-sharing in terms of what the consumer protection acts are and how they are currently established. Gaining knowledge is more essential that will equip the consumers to be protected against these illegal or unfair business practices.” This indicates that a significant population of Irish residents know of and can comprehend the consumer protection measures put in place. The government of Ireland should enact policies to improve consumer education and enhance ethical practices in business.

Complaints and Redress Mechanisms

If a customer had an issue with their product or service, they would contact the provider or a consumer protection agency and file a complaint. Eleven respondents from the survey reported having complained to e-commerce companies about issues with their purchases. With regard to whether businesses in Ireland focus more on profits and overlook consumer protection, a participant stated, “It’s at a breakeven point as a consumer point of view with relation to the customer satisfaction and profitability”. While businesses in Ireland adhere to ethical practices and consumer protection laws, they also consider their profits as a significant measure of the success of the business (Graef & Van Berlo 2021).

Consumers making purchases in the digital world may encounter different types and sizes of problems due to a difference between the purchasing procedure used for online and offline purchases. When a customer orders a product online instead of in a physical store, their likelihood to complain might shift. In practice, not all online customers opt to complain (Senatore & di Prisco, 2022). According to behavioural economics, many online shoppers resist filing complaints when they consider the possible losses resulting from filing a complaint and pursuing a remedy (Brogan, 2020). This is due to a variety of factors, including the simplicity of the complaint process, the consumer’s introversion, and the rate of resolution of prior complaints (Sengpunya, 2020).

Legal Structures of Consumer Protection

When asked about the efficiency of the Irish government in implementing consumer protection laws, majority responded with good, poor, extremely poor, and average respectively. One respondent conveyed that, “Consumer protection legislation creates rights for consumers and imposes corresponding obligations on traders that must be honoured. We have a range of powers to help achieve compliance with consumer protection law”. The latter indicates that the participant is aware of the laws that protect online shoppers and they acknowledge that they are protected by the regulations already implemented. In Ireland, Data Protection Acts and other regulations protect consumer personal data and ensure such data can only be stored after the provision of explicit consent or in case of a legal obligation (Ebers, 2021). The Data Protection Directive protects the privacy of clients and gives them increased control over the handling of their personal details in the digital environment (Teixeira, 2020).

Concluding Summary

This section presents a brief account of the study and the findings and conclusions drawn. The study aims to determine the extent of e-commerce consumer protection in Ireland. An online survey was conducted and a total of 18 respondents participated in filling a questionnaire made available via a link which was shared to social sites like Whatsapp and Facebook. The questionnaire was designed to address the research questions and objectives of the study.

Several obstacles still exist despite the potential advantages of online shopping and the possibility for the online setting to offer a more consolidated internal market. According to the study, the key factors preventing consumers from adopting e-commerce include privacy concerns and issues related to payment security, risk of delivery problems, complaint

handling and resolution, uncertainty about consumer protection laws, and miscommunication (Wahyuningrum et al., 2020).

Certain areas for future research emerge from this study. Since this study focuses on e-commerce consumer protection in Ireland, researchers working in the same context are encouraged to conduct studies on the same topic but on a wider scale. Other regions or nations can be included in the research. This will increase the reliability of the study and produce more inclusive findings. In future, researchers should focus on emerging technologies like AI content creation and live stream commerce, and their impact on consumer protection.

Discussion

This study aimed to determine the extent of consumer protection in e-commerce in Ireland. This chapter reflects on the research process and discusses key findings associated with literature on e-commerce consumer protection in Ireland, threats to consumer protection, measures of consumer protection, and aspects of legal defence in e-commerce consumer protection. However, due to limitations in the present study, the results must be interpreted carefully. The chapter ends with a discussion of the interpretation of the findings and limitations of the study.

This chapter provides deliberation to help tackle the following research questions:

- To what extent are online consumers aware of the existing consumer protection acts and their role in their daily transactions?
- How has e-commerce impacted the livelihoods of online consumers?
- How effective are the legal structures of consumer protection in preventing unjust practices against e-commerce consumers?

Results from the study indicate that a number of barriers reduce the potential for an online environment to provide a more integrated market (Cooney et al., 2021). Despite the potential benefits of purchasing goods and services online, the study found that privacy concerns, problems with payment security, delivery risk, addressing and resolving customer complaints, uncertainty over consumer protection legislation, and miscommunication are major barriers stopping consumers from adopting e-commerce (Adiyanto & Febrianto, 2020).

The data suggest that a significant population of Irish e-commerce consumers know and understand the protection measures that have been established to defend them from unfair and illegal business practices. Nevertheless, better popularization of consumer rights through advertisements will enable more online shoppers to be well informed of their rights

and privileges regarding replacements, refunds, and/or repairs when products or services they purchase fail to meet their descriptions. Obtaining knowledge through consumer education is pertinent to the protection of consumers and enhancement of ethical practices in business (Cooney et al., 2021).

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings provide insight drawing from participants views on the extent of e-commerce consumer protection in Ireland. Two common topics were prominent factors in the extent of consumer protection in e-commerce transactions. These topics are delved into in detail in the sections that follow.

Awareness of Existing Consumer Protection Laws

In line with determining the level of protection available for online shoppers against unfair business practices, this study sought to evaluate the actual level of awareness of consumers regarding their rights and defence systems already put in place. Responses obtained from the online survey conducted helped to inform the research on the perceptions of consumers regarding the online shopping experience. In addition, these responses represent the expectations and requirements of Irish online shoppers and point out emerging issues in the context of consumer protection.

This study conducts a fair evaluation of Irish consumers' understanding of their rights under the law while making online purchases of products or services. Consumers responded to specific questions designed to gauge their actual knowledge, as opposed to their subjective perceptions of their level of knowledge, regarding the existence of legal rights when purchasing goods or services online and the right to return purchases. The first question asked participants who had shopped online for goods and services whether they were aware of the Consumer Protection Act in Ireland. Fifty-three percent of the respondents had heard of the laws while forty-seven percent had not. Sixty-seven percent of those who were aware of

consumer protection could define it as, “Is the practice of protecting buyers of goods and services from unethical practices in the marketplace.”

The responses to specific questions demonstrate that consumers are not well aware of their legal rights. When asked about knowledge of their rights in relation to refunds, a particular respondent stated, “I believe that consumer rights are something that is not adequately advertised. It is always overlooked, and people only find out when something goes wrong or when they have a bad experience, where knowledge becomes limited towards just procuring a solution.” Even though a right is strongly recognized on paper, it may turn out to be relatively weak if consumers are not sufficiently informed of their rights protecting them from unfair activities (Cauffman & Goanta, 2021).

Legal Structures for Consumer Protection

In a commercial transaction, one party makes a commitment to do something, and the other party has the right to demand that the promise be kept. This is crucial because if one of the contract’s parties doesn’t comply, that party is breaching the agreement. Respondents provided a range of answers to the question on the effectiveness of the Irish government in enforcing consumer protection laws, including good, poor, extremely poor, and average. It was challenging to identify a prevailing pattern because participant’s responses varied greatly.

A respondent elaborated that, “Consumer protection legislation creates rights for consumers and imposes corresponding obligations on traders that must be honoured. We have a range of powers to help achieve compliance with consumer protection law”. The latter shows that the respondent has knowledge of the laws that safeguard online buyers and they accept that the controls already in place are there to protect them. However, forty-seven percent of the participants were not aware of the Consumer Protection Act in Ireland. Data Protection Acts and other laws safeguard consumer personal data in Ireland and ensure that

such data can only be stored with the consumer's express agreement or in the event of a legal obligation. Customers' privacy is protected, and the Data Protection Directive provides them more control over how their personal information is handled online (Sahi et al., 2021).

Limitations

Although the researcher continues to believe that a qualitative study was the best approach for this study, tools used in qualitative research, like interviews, are not intended to record objective data. If paired with quantitative research, this study would gain more credence. For instance, a survey created for quantitative research, followed by statistical analysis, may provide additional support for the information found using qualitative research approaches.

In this field of study, there is a dearth of pertinent literature reviews on consumer protection. Due to the differences in culture and circumstances, the information gathered for this study is primarily based on data from other nations, which may not correctly depict the state of consumer protection in Ireland. Furthermore, this research has only been carried out in Ireland.

The generalizability of the findings is limited since the research's sample size was small. This study limited the sampling to eighteen participants due to schedule restrictions. Future research studies will get to include more respondents to ensure the validity, accuracy, and better reflection of the study (Sahi et al., 2021). The questionnaire served as a means of gathering data on consumer protection. Additionally, the Likert scale used in part of the questionnaire for the present research prevented respondents from sharing their own views. Consequently, it has led to bias in the survey's response.

Conclusion

This chapter will draw to a close by summarizing the main findings of the study in connection with the study's goals and issues and exploring their worth and contribution. Additionally, the section will assess the limitations of the research and suggest areas for future investigation. The study can be used to draw more general conclusions about the value of educating consumers about several facets of safety for customers in e-commerce.

The survey enables us to create a rough image of the Irish customer in the internet space. According to the report, Irish consumers lack adequate information. The findings show that Irish consumers are unaware of their rights. Irish consumers appear to have a high level of confidence despite their general lack of information. The consumer spending that has fueled the expansion of the Irish economy has not been slowed by a lack of information (Cauffman & Goanta, 2021). Moreover, online customers in Ireland are not inclined to think that they lack protection or knowledge while making online purchases. Additional empirical research would be necessary to develop a broader perspective. Furthermore, this broader kind of research is essential for establishing Irish consumer policy (Peráček, 2022).

Legislators and lawmakers must understand the limitations of information-based consumer protection and how to apply it in relation to the specific stage of development of the consumer society in discussion in light of this study. The study's findings demonstrate the ineffectiveness of information-based consumer protection in Ireland at a time when the country's consumer society is still in its early stages. Information-based consumer protection may be less effective in underdeveloped consumer societies, but that is no indication that it is completely insignificant (Howells, 2020).

The study's findings suggest a link between consumer confidence and the availability of information. When they look up products and services online and even read user reviews,

a sizable portion of Irish online shoppers express their desire to learn more concerning various aspects of the transaction. Creating customers with confidence is the main objective of EC's consumer protection policy to support the growth of e-commerce in Ireland (Sahi et al., 2021). This might potentially be accomplished by actually giving consumers more power over their purchasing decisions. In this manner, customer confidence is preserved and consumer protection is established on solid principles as opposed to consumer perceptions (Keirsbilck et al., 2020).

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are provided in light of the findings above to establish a sufficient and effective legislative system for consumer protection in e-commerce at both national and international standards:

1. The mere declaration of consumer safeguards in the law is insufficient; in order to make them real, it is important to engage in consumer education campaigns and rigorous implementation of such campaigns at every opportunity (Keirsbilck et al., 2020).
2. When it comes to online transactions, the provider should also be granted a "suppliers' right to be compensated" if the customer decides to back out after the service has already started (Peráček, 2022).
3. To make e-commerce transactions more user-friendly, the complaints and redressal process and methods for the settlement of conflicts between a consumer and a vendor may be appropriately updated.
4. During the reflection period, the consumer has the right to withdraw from the contract without incurring any penalties and without providing any explanations. This is acceptable if the agreement was signed before the end user had read all of its terms

and conditions or if the consumer was subjected to unjustified pressure during the reflection period (Howells, 2020).

To promote consumer protection in online purchases with some level of confidence and reliance in e-commerce, a precise and suitable set of well-defined and well-addressed regulatory frameworks should be implemented (Adiyanto & Febrianto, 2020). This will make it easier for the entire society to relate to and understand an acceptable consumer protection law from the standpoint of both consumer protection and the expansion of e-commerce. In closing, a fair, robust, competitive, expanding, and flourishing market can be realized by giving consumers maximum protection against unfair business practices and by granting customers the vigour and spirit of the development of the e-commerce industry (Cooney et al., 2021). A fresh phase of consumer protection and a consumer-driven, established market for enterprises are considered to be on the horizon thanks to adequate legal safeguards for consumer protection.

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Appendices

Questionnaire

The Extent of Consumer Protection in E-Commerce in Ireland

SECTION A: Demographic Information

(Kindly tick where appropriate)

Age

18 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

Over 55

Gender

Male

Female

Non-Binary

SECTION TWO: Consumer Protection in Ireland

Have you heard of the term Consumer Protection Act in Ireland?

Yes

No

How can you define consumer protection?

.....

Have you ever purchased products including mobile accessories, and household items via e-commerce?

Yes

No

How often do you use purchase products such as mobile accessories and household items online?

.....

Have you ever experienced any of the following consumer issues in your daily purchases

Overcharging

- Defective goods
- Misleading advertisement
- Contractual disagreements
- Poor customer service
- Other

Have you ever complained to any company about an issue with something you purchased online?

Yes

No

What was the level of satisfaction you received after seeking a solution for your problem?

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor satisfied

Dissatisfied

Do you believe that businesses in Ireland prioritize consumer protection, or are profits their primary objective?

.....

How can you rate the level of consumer protection in Ireland?

Very good

Good

Average

Poor

Very poor

How efficiently do you think the Irish government implements consumer protection laws?

Excellently

Good

Averagely

Poor

Extremely poor

What changes would you like the Irish government to make regarding consumer protection?

.....

SECTION THREE: Consumer Behavior

Do you always research products or services before purchasing them online?

Yes

No

If yes, how often do you research?

Regularly

Frequently

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Do you always browse through customer reviews on companies' websites before making a purchase online?

Yes

No

If yes, how often do you read the customers' reviews?

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Have you ever decided not to purchase a product online from any organization as a result of a negative review or due to issues regarding consumer protection?

Yes

No

How vital is consumer protection to you when purchasing products or services online?

Very Vital

Vital

Average vital

Not very vital

Not vital at all

Do you think that consumers in Ireland are adequately informed regarding their rights?

Yes

No

Please outline the reasons why

.....

In your opinion, what can consumers do to better protect themselves from unfair or illegal business practices?

.....

Thank you for taking your time to complete and participate in this study!!!

Responses

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XxQqcCEELgzTUdew8GGnwqjv9B3oTKfT/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104918495639359631603&rtpof=true&sd=true>