

User Trust in E-Commerce through Product List Pages, Detail Pages, Reviews, and Security Features

Published: October 3, 2024

Kazi Harunur Rashid, Wahid bin Ahsan

Department of Human-centered Design

Userhub

Abstract

This study investigates how design elements on Product List Pages (PLPs) and Product Detail Pages (PDPs) impact user trust in e-commerce. Using a mixed-methods approach with 65 survey respondents and 22 interview participants, the research reveals that consistency in UI design, high-quality product images, detailed descriptions, verified customer reviews, and visible security features are critical in fostering user trust. Well-structured navigation, accurate product information, and robust security measures significantly enhance trust and influence purchasing decisions, while misleading product descriptions and unreliable payment methods detract from user confidence. The study provides practical recommendations to optimize platform design, focusing on consistent interface elements, improved product imagery, and secure payment options.

Keywords: e-commerce, user trust, product list pages, product detail pages, customer reviews, security features, online shopping behavior, UI consistency, product imagery, payment security.

Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of e-commerce, the design of digital interfaces plays a critical role in shaping users' trust, engagement, and purchasing behavior. Product List Pages (PLPs) and Product Detail Pages (PDPs) serve as crucial touchpoints for online shoppers, where the visual and functional design elements can either enhance or diminish users'

Open-access under CC BY 4.0

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

© 2024 Userhub. Publisher: Userhub.

Please cite as:

Rashid, K. H., & bin Ahsan, W. (2024). User Trust in E-Commerce through Product List Pages, Detail Pages, Reviews, and Security Features. Userhub. <https://doi.org/10.58947/journal.dmvq89>

confidence in a platform. Understanding the psychological and behavioral impacts of design on user trust is essential for e-commerce platforms to optimize their user experience and boost conversion rates.

Research has shown that well-crafted visual design can significantly influence users' perceptions of trustworthiness. Key web design attributes, such as layout consistency, navigation ease, and content quality, directly contribute to user trust and satisfaction, particularly in high-uncertainty avoidance cultures (Faisal et al., 2017). Design aesthetics—elements such as color, typography, and layout—have been found to enhance trust within mobile commerce environments (Li & Yeh, 2010). These aesthetic choices not only attract users but also shape their perceptions of the platform's credibility and security.

Visual appeal is not the only driver of trust. A combination of visual design, content quality, and social cues can significantly affect user trust in e-commerce platforms (Wang & Emurian, 2005a). This is supported by research showing that perceived security through transaction encryption and payment system clarity are central factors that mediate users' trust and satisfaction (Aggarwal & Rahul, 2018). Creating a visually cohesive, functional, and secure environment is pivotal to fostering trust in e-commerce settings.

Product information, reviews, and customer ratings also significantly influence users' trust and purchasing decisions. Detailed product descriptions, high-quality product images, and authentic customer feedback are critical components that impact trust and drive purchase intentions on e-commerce platforms (Iqbal et al., 2024; Mokobombang & Kusumawati, 2023).

This research explores how well-optimized PLPs and PDPs—through clear product descriptions, effective visual designs, and secure transaction processes—contribute to building user trust, fostering brand credibility, and driving successful conversions.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to examine the impact of Product List Pages (PLPs) and Product Detail Pages (PDPs) on user trust in e-commerce platforms. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to gather comprehensive insights from diverse groups, including frequent online shoppers, occasional shoppers, tech industry analysts, and UX/UI experts.

Research Questions

The central research question guiding this study is: What design elements of product list and product detail pages affect user trust in e-commerce platforms, and how can these elements be optimized to enhance trust?

To address this, six sub-questions were developed:

1. How does UI design consistency on PLPs affect user trust in e-commerce platforms?
2. How does the quality of product images on PLPs and PDPs influence user trust?
3. What role do detailed product descriptions on PDPs play in building user trust?
4. How do specific UI features (e.g., navigation, layout, interactivity) enhance or hinder trust?

5. How do personalized product recommendations influence user trust?
6. What improvements do users suggest for enhancing trust in PLP and PDP designs?

Participants

Participants in the study consisted of two groups. The first group included 65 respondents who provided data through an online survey aimed at quantifying user perspectives on PLP and PDP design elements. The second group involved 22 purposively selected participants for in-depth interviews, representing diverse user groups such as frequent and occasional shoppers, industry experts, and UX and UI specialists. These interviews offered rich qualitative insights to complement the quantitative findings.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted using two primary methods. First, an online survey captured quantitative data on user preferences and trust factors related to PLP and PDP design elements. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom, with sessions lasting 20-30 minutes. These interviews were recorded with participant consent and later transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify key trends and factors influencing user trust. For qualitative data, ATLAS.ti software was used for thematic content analysis. The process involved coding transcripts, identifying recurring themes, and synthesizing insights to provide a deeper understanding of the factors shaping user trust in e-commerce.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethical guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association (2017). Participants were fully informed of the research objectives, and their anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, ensuring that they were aware of their rights and the measures taken to protect their privacy.

Findings

The findings presented in this section draw from both qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data to explore how specific design elements of Product List Pages (PLPs) and Product Detail Pages (PDPs) influence user trust in e-commerce platforms. By examining user feedback, we identify key factors that shape trust, including interface consistency, product presentation, and security features. The integration of descriptive statistics further quantifies these insights, providing a clearer understanding of the features that most impact user behavior and trust in online shopping environments.

Consistency in UI Design

Consistency in website design emerged as a crucial factor for building trust. Both frequent and occasional shoppers highlighted the importance of clear navigation, structured layouts, and uniform design elements. Survey results showed that 84% of respondents rated the overall look and feel of the website (including ease of navigation) as important for trust,

with an average rating of 4.2 out of 5. Over half of the users (53%) gave the website's design a 5-star rating, underscoring the significance of a well-structured interface.

One shopper shared, *"If the layout is messy, I instantly lose trust. It makes me wonder if the business is professional."* This sentiment aligns with the quantitative data, where users consistently valued coherent, visually appealing interfaces.

Quality of Product Images

The quality of product images had a significant impact on user trust and purchasing decisions. A total of 78% of respondents rated image quality as an important factor, with an average rating of 4.1 out of 5. Detailed visuals, multiple angles, and zoom functionality were crucial for helping users feel confident about their purchases. Notably, 62% of respondents rated image quality 4 or 5 stars, while 41% specifically mentioned image clarity as a decisive factor when choosing to explore a product further.

As one respondent explained, *"If I can't see the product from different angles or zoom in, I won't trust the quality and won't buy it."* The survey data reinforces this point, showing that clear, high-resolution images are pivotal for driving trust and engagement on e-commerce platforms.

Product Information and Descriptions

Clear and accurate product descriptions were identified as essential for building trust. Many interviewees expressed frustration when key details like dimensions or material specifications were missing or unclear. One respondent noted, *"If I don't have all the information, I hesitate to buy because I don't want surprises when the product arrives."* This view was echoed in the survey, where 80% of respondents rated detailed product descriptions as critical to trust, giving it an average rating of 4.0 out of 5. Missing or vague information often led to doubts about product authenticity and quality.

Impact of Customer Reviews and Ratings

Customer reviews and ratings were another major factor influencing trust. Both interviewees and survey respondents indicated they relied heavily on reviews before making a purchase. In the survey, 86% of respondents considered reviews and ratings essential to their decision-making process, with an average rating of 4.3 out of 5. However, concerns about fake or overly positive reviews were common, eroding trust in both the product and platform. As one respondent noted, *"If the reviews seem fake, I lose trust in the entire platform."*

Trust in Security Features

Visible security features, such as HTTPS encryption and secure payment gateways, played a key role in building trust. A significant 90% of respondents rated security features as critical to their trust in an e-commerce platform, giving it an average rating of 4.5 out of 5. Cash on Delivery (COD) emerged as the most trusted payment method, with users emphasizing the added security of paying only after receiving the product. One frequent shopper mentioned, *"I always choose cash on delivery—it's the safest option because I don't have to risk my money upfront."*

Negative Experiences with Online Purchases

Despite the importance of trust-building factors, several respondents reported negative experiences that significantly diminished their trust in e-commerce platforms. The most commonly reported issues were products not matching

descriptions or images, delivery problems, and payment issues. Survey data showed that 35% of respondents reported receiving products that did not match descriptions or images, while 25% cited delivery problems and 15% mentioned payment issues, such as delayed refunds. One user shared, “*When I ordered something, I was supposed to get one thing, but I got something completely different.*” These negative experiences highlight the areas where e-commerce platforms must improve to maintain user trust.

Key Design Features Influencing User Trust

In e-commerce platforms, trust is often established through thoughtful and user-centered design. The structure, functionality, and aesthetics of both Product List Pages (PLPs) and Product Detail Pages (PDPs) play a crucial role in shaping user perceptions and confidence. This section explores the key design elements of PLPs and PDPs that most significantly impact user trust, as identified through qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data. By focusing on the aspects that users value most—such as ease of navigation, clarity of product information, and security features—these design features are essential for creating a trustworthy and engaging shopping experience.

Preferred Product List Page (PLP) Features

Through both qualitative interviews and survey responses, users identified the following as the most important features for building trust on Product List Pages (PLPs).

Table 1: Key Features of a Preferred Product List Page (PLP)

Feature	Description	Why It's Important
Consistency in UI Design	Clean, structured design with intuitive navigation	A consistent interface builds trust and makes the platform easy to navigate. A messy layout discourages users.
Effective Filters and Search	Filters for price, size, brand, etc., and an efficient search function	Enables users to refine results quickly, saving time and increasing confidence in the platform.
High-Quality Product Thumbnails	Clear images with zoom-on-hover and multiple angles	High-quality images increase trust, as users rely on visuals to evaluate products quickly.
Price Visibility and Discounts	Clear display of prices and promotions	Transparency in pricing builds trust and helps users make informed decisions without additional clicks.

Table 1: Key features that build trust on a Product List Page (PLP), based on user preferences for navigation, clarity, and transparency.

Preferred Product Detail Page (PDP) Features

The following features of Product Detail Pages (PDPs) were identified by users as the most important for building trust and facilitating purchasing decisions.

Table 2: Key Features of a Preferred Product Detail Page (PDP)

Feature	Description	Why It's Important
High-Quality Product Images	Multiple high-res images with zoom and various angles	Users want to inspect products thoroughly, especially for visual-dependent items like clothing.

Comprehensive Product Descriptions	Detailed information (dimensions, materials, etc.)	Missing or unclear product details lead to hesitation and mistrust.
Customer Reviews and Ratings	Verified reviews with positive and negative feedback	Reviews validate the product's quality and increase platform credibility.
Security Features and Payment Options	Visible security badges and clear payment options	Secure payment methods increase trust and reduce purchase anxiety.
Return Policy and Shipping Information	Clear information on shipping times, costs, and return policies	Users expect transparency on returns and shipping to avoid post-purchase complications.

Table 2: Key trust-building features on a Product Detail Page (PDP), focusing on product presentation and secure transactions.

These findings underscore the critical role that design elements play in fostering trust on e-commerce platforms. By aligning design features with user expectations, businesses can enhance customer satisfaction, reduce negative experiences, and ultimately drive higher conversion rates.

Discussion

This study highlights the critical role of design elements on Product List Pages (PLPs) and Product Detail Pages (PDPs) in shaping user trust in e-commerce platforms. By integrating qualitative interview insights with quantitative survey data, we identified several key factors—UI design consistency, product images, detailed descriptions, customer reviews, and security features—that significantly influence users' trust and purchasing behavior. These findings align with existing literature and provide a framework for enhancing the user experience in e-commerce platforms.

Consistency in UI Design

Our findings reveal that 84% of respondents rated website design consistency, including navigation, as crucial to trust, with an average rating of 4.2 out of 5. This supports research by Robins & Holmes (2008), who noted that aesthetic appeal and usability are critical drivers of trust. A clean, structured interface facilitates ease of navigation and enhances the credibility of the platform. More than 53% of users rated the design 5 stars, reinforcing the role of UI consistency in maintaining trust.

Quality of Product Images

Product images were identified as a key trust factor, with 78% of respondents rating image quality as critical (average rating: 4.1 out of 5). High-resolution images that provide multiple angles and zoom functionality help users evaluate products with greater confidence. These results are consistent with findings by Mokobombang & Kusumawati (2023), who demonstrated that clear, detailed images positively impact purchase intentions. Users in our study emphasized that blurry or unclear images erode trust, confirming the pivotal role of visual presentation.

Product Information and Descriptions

Detailed product descriptions are essential for building trust, with 80% of respondents rating comprehensive descriptions as critical (average rating: 4.0 out of 5). Missing or vague information creates uncertainty and undermines user confidence. This aligns with Wang & Emurian (2005), who highlighted the importance of detailed information in reducing uncertainty. By providing clear, well-structured descriptions, e-commerce platforms can facilitate informed purchasing decisions and enhance trust.

Customer Reviews and Ratings

Customer reviews and ratings were also a significant factor, with 86% of respondents considering them essential to decision-making (average rating: 4.3 out of 5). Iqbal et al. (2024) noted that both the quality and quantity of reviews influence trust. However, concerns about fake reviews highlight the importance of verified content. Authentic reviews act as social proof and contribute significantly to trust, a finding echoed by Faisal et al. (2017).

Trust in Security Features

Security features, such as HTTPS encryption and secure payment options, were rated as critical by 90% of respondents (average rating: 4.5 out of 5). Our findings echo Kim et al. (2008), who argued that secure transactions reduce purchase anxiety. The strong preference for Cash on Delivery (COD) further highlights users' need for payment security, particularly in developing markets like Bangladesh, where users prioritize paying after receiving the product.

Negative Experiences with Online Purchases

Negative experiences, including receiving incorrect products or facing payment issues, were reported by 35% of respondents and significantly eroded trust in the platform. This aligns with Apau & Koranteng (2019), who found that mismatched products and delayed refunds are major contributors to distrust. Improving transparency in product descriptions, return policies, and refund processes can mitigate these issues and restore trust.

Key Design Features Influencing User Trust

The study underscores the importance of user-centered design in fostering trust. Consistent interfaces, high-quality images, detailed descriptions, authentic reviews, and robust security features are essential for building and maintaining trust. These design elements, backed by both user feedback and scholarly research, emphasize that aligning platform features with user expectations is critical for creating trustworthy e-commerce environments. By enhancing these aspects, platforms can improve user satisfaction, reduce negative experiences, and boost conversion rates.

Recommendations

Based on our findings, we propose the following design improvements that e-commerce platforms can implement to significantly enhance user trust:

1. **Ensure Consistent UI Design:** Standardize navigation, layout, and visual elements (color schemes, typography). Regularly test for usability and consistency across PLPs and PDPs.
2. **Prioritize High-Quality Product Images:** Provide multiple high-resolution images from various angles. Enable zoom and 360-degree viewing, ensuring images accurately reflect the product.
3. **Provide Comprehensive Product Descriptions:** Include detailed specifications (e.g., dimensions, materials). Use clear, structured formats like bullet points. Regularly audit product descriptions for accuracy.
4. **Promote Authentic Customer Reviews:** Implement verified reviews, allowing filtering by rating and relevance. Encourage balanced and authentic feedback from customers.

5. **Enhance Security Features and Payment Options:** Display security badges (e.g., HTTPS encryption) on checkout pages. Offer a variety of payment options, including COD and mobile payments, and clearly communicate security protocols.
6. **Address Negative Experiences:** Provide clear and accessible return/refund policies. Ensure efficient customer service for rapid issue resolution, offering real-time updates on deliveries and returns.

By adopting these recommendations, e-commerce platforms can significantly enhance user trust and satisfaction. Incorporating a user-centered design (UCD) approach with regular iterations based on user feedback will ensure these improvements align with evolving user expectations. This will foster a reliable and user-friendly shopping experience, encouraging repeat purchases and long-term customer loyalty.

Conclusion

This study highlights the critical role of key design elements such as consistent UI, high-quality product images, comprehensive descriptions, authentic reviews, and robust security features in building user trust on e-commerce platforms. Both qualitative and quantitative findings confirm that platforms offering intuitive navigation, accurate product representations, and visible security measures are more likely to foster user confidence, encourage purchases, and build long-term customer loyalty. Addressing issues like mismatched descriptions or delays in resolving problems is equally important for maintaining trust and ensuring customer satisfaction.

By prioritizing user-centered design strategies and aligning them with user expectations, e-commerce platforms can significantly improve engagement, boost conversion rates, and create a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Long-term success will depend on continuously iterating and optimizing these design elements to meet evolving user needs.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. The sample size for both the quantitative (65 respondents) and qualitative (22 participants) data, while sufficient for exploratory purposes, limits the generalizability of the findings across broader e-commerce platforms and diverse user groups. Additionally, the focus on specific cultural and geographic contexts may not fully represent global variations in user trust. Relying on self-reported data also introduces potential biases, such as social desirability and recall inaccuracies.

Future research should address these limitations by expanding the sample size and including more diverse geographic and cultural participants. Longitudinal studies could assess how design changes in PLPs and PDPs affect user trust over time. Exploring the impact of emerging technologies, such as AI-driven personalization and augmented reality, could further enhance understanding of how to build user trust in e-commerce environments.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the participants who generously shared their time, experiences, and insights for this study. Our sincere thanks also go to Userhub for their invaluable logistical and technical support.

Additionally, we are grateful to our colleagues for their thoughtful feedback and encouragement, which greatly contributed to the success of this research.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest concerning this study. This research was conducted independently, without any external influences or funding that could have impacted the outcomes.

References

- Aggarwal, A., & Rahul, M. (2018). The effect of perceived security on consumer purchase intentions in electronic commerce. *International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management*, 4(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPSPM.2018.10009501>
- American Psychological Association. (2017). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>
- Apau, R., & Koranteng, F. N. (2019). Impact of Cybercrime and Trust on the Use of E-Commerce Technologies: An Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, 13(2), 228–254. <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.3697886>
- Faisal, C. M. N., Gonzalez-Rodriguez, M., Fernandez-Lanvin, D., & de Andres-Suarez, J. (2017). Web Design Attributes in Building User Trust, Satisfaction, and Loyalty for a High Uncertainty Avoidance Culture. *IEEE Transactions on Human-Machine Systems*, 47(6), 847–859. <https://doi.org/10.1109/THMS.2016.2620901>
- Iqbal, A. I., Wajidi, E., Khan, M., & Khan, M. J. (2024). Impact of Review Quantity, Review Quality, Reviewer Expertise, Product/Service Rating on Purchase Intention: The Moderating Effect of Consumer Trust. *Journal of Social & Organizational Matters*, 3(1), 11–29. <https://doi.org/10.56976/jsom.v3i1.43>
- Kim, D. J., Ferrin, D. L., & Rao, H. R. (2008). A trust-based consumer decision-making model in electronic commerce: The role of trust, perceived risk, and their antecedents. *Decision Support Systems*, 44(2), 544–564. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2007.07.001>
- Li, Y.-M., & Yeh, Y.-S. (2010). Increasing trust in mobile commerce through design aesthetics. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(4), 673–684. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.01.004>
- Mokobombang, M. G., & Kusumawati, N. (2023). Impact of Product Description, Product Photo, Rating, and Review on Purchase Intention in E-commerce. *Journal of Consumer Studies and Applied Marketing*, 1(2), 137–147. <https://doi.org/10.58229/jcsam.v1i2.100>
- Robins, D., & Holmes, J. (2008). Aesthetics and credibility in web site design. *Information Processing & Management*, 44(1), 386–399. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2007.02.003>

Wang, Y. D., & Emurian, H. H. (2005a). Trust in E-Commerce. *Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations*, 3(4), 42–60.
<https://doi.org/10.4018/jeco.2005100103>

Wang, Y. D., & Emurian, H. H. (2005b). Trust in E-Commerce. *Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations*, 3(4), 42–60.
<https://doi.org/10.4018/jeco.2005100103>