



## AI-Driven Personalization and Consumer Response: Integrating Trust, Perceived Control, and Behavioral Intent in Digital Retail Environments

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### KEYWORDS

*AI-driven personalization, consumer behavior, trust, perceived control, purchase intention, behavioral intention, digital retail, e-commerce, customer engagement, privacy concerns, technology acceptance, S-O-R model, emerging markets, artificial intelligence in marketing*

### ABSTRACT

The high integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in retail has reshaped the way companies communicate with customers in the form of highly personalized results. Whereas the operational and marketing advantages of AI-enabled personalization have been highlighted in previous research, little has been done so far to gain insight into the psychological processes that define consumer reactions. To fill this gap, this paper suggests a theory-based framework that considers how AI-based personalization affects the consumer intentions to behave in a way by means of trust and perceived control. This paper will use the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, and the trust theory as the theoretical framework to conceptualize the process of AI personalization as a stimulus that can influence internal cognitive and emotional state (trust and perceived control), and subsequently consumer purchase intentions. The research design is conceptual and has been justified with the wide range of reviews of the previous literature in AI, retailing and consumer behavior. The systematic framework is built to describe the role of personalized recommendations, targeted advertisements, and interactions based on AI in consumer engagement and decision-making. These results indicate that even though the concept of AI-based personalization improves consumer experience and involvement, the effectiveness of this technology is deeply dependent on the levels of trust and the sense of control over data utilization. The research adds to the theory by bringing together various frameworks into a single model and presents practical implications of how retailers can shape ethical, transparent, and consumer-focused AI strategies...

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The modern-day world of retail is experiencing a radical change due to the fast-developing digital technologies, especially artificial intelligence (AI) (Huang & Rust, 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2025; Grewal et al., 2025). The spread of AI-powered systems has allowed organizations to abandon the old, proven, and standardized marketing practices and move into the world of highly personalized and data-driven engagement strategies (Shankar, 2025; Davenport et al., 2025). The introduction of AI technologies like recommendation engines, predictive analytics, and conversational agents into digital retail settings is getting more and more popular as a way to improve the customer interactions and provide personalized interaction on a large scale (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang and Rust, 2021). This trend is indicative of a wider change in consumer behaviors whereby more people now require customized products and services that can resonate with their personal tastes and habits, and situational requirements (Verhoef et al., 2017). One of the most major advancements in this change is AI-driven personalization. It implies working with sophisticated algorithms and machine learning methods to process large amounts of consumer data and create personal recommendations, targeted advertisements, and tailored goods (Arora et al., 2008). Through this, companies can develop more valuable and interesting customer experiences and thus



increase marketing performance and consumer satisfaction (Bleier and Eisenbeiss, 2015). The empirical data have always shown that customer loyalty, purchase intentions and better firm performance may be achieved through personalization strategies (Kumar and Reinartz, 2016; Shankar, 2018). As a result, the need to be strategically personalized by AI has become a competitive necessity among retailers that want to stay competitive and relevant in ever-saturated and digitally mediated markets

Although the advantages of using AI-driven personalization are substantial, there are also problems with the extensive implementation of this technology. Among the most problematic issues revolve around gathering, analyzing, and using personal information, which poses a major issue of privacy and ethics. The consumers usually have to provide their sensitive data so that they can be offered a personalized experience, which creates a perceived trade-off between convenience and privacy (Martin & Palmatier, 2025). This is what is known as the personalization-privacy paradox which brings up the issue of the need to customize your services and the fear of misusing or losing control of your data (Awad and Krishnan, 2006; Kapoor et al., 2025). Consequently, the attitudes of consumers to AI-driven personalization might be ambivalent as they appreciate its advantages but are also concerned about what this implies (Kapoor et al., 2025; Verhoef et al., 2025). In this regard, it is possible to see that trust becomes one of the key constructs that will affect consumer reactions towards AI technologies (Chatterjee et al., 2025; Glikson & Woolley, 2025). The trust may be considered as readiness of a person to trust a system because he/she believes that it will be reliable and will act in his/her best interest (McKnight et al., 2002). Trust is important in digital space to eliminate uncertainty and hasten the adoption of technology, especially when the interaction is with complex and opaque systems like AI algorithms (Gefen et al., 2003). Recent studies also indicate that the perception of fairness, transparency, and explainability are some of the factors that drive trust in AI and lead users to trust automated decision-making systems (Glikson and Woolley, 2020). Based on this, it is necessary to know the impact of the use of AI-induced personalization on consumer trust in order to assess its usefulness and adoption.

Consumer perceived control is another key psychological determinant that influences consumer reactions to personalization. Perceived control is the degree of how individuals feel that they are able to control their personal information and shape the consequences of their interactions with the technological systems (Martin & Palmatier, 2025; Xu et al., 2011). Perceived control is directly connected to privacy issues and user control in the context of AI-enabled personalization. Having the sense that consumers can control the process of their data collection and usage, they will be more likely to view personalization as helpful instead of invasive (Tucker, 2014). On the other hand, lack of perceived control may give way to resistance, doubts, and diminished involvement in custom services (Martin & Palmatier, 2025). Thus, perceived control is an important condition that may either improve or decrease the efficiency of AI-based personalization. Theoretically, a number of frameworks can offer useful information on the processes that lead to the consumer response to AI-based personalization (Kapoor et al., 2025). Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) assumes that the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the major factors in technology adoption (Davis, 1989). This model has also been extended to include other factors including the social influence and enabling conditions as an extension of this model known as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) which has provided a deeper insight into technology acceptance behavior (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Although these models will work well to analyze the adoption, they do not cover the emotional and psychological aspects of consumer decision-making.

In order to overcome this shortcoming, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model provides a complementary view. The S-O-R model, or the sequence-outcome-response model, was originally presented within the framework of environmental psychology as the account of the impact of external stimuli on inner cognitive and emotional conditions that consequently prompt behavioral reactions (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). The concept of AI-based personalization can be framed in terms of the digital retail sector, where this stimulus (that is, trust and perceived control) will influence the internal states of the consumers, which, in turn, will impact their behavioral intentions (Eroglu et al., 2001; Kim and Lennon, 2013). With the combination of TAM and the S-O-R model one can come up with a more comprehensive view of the interaction between the technological and psychological forces which determine consumer behavior.

Even though the available literature can offer some meaningful information on the topic of AI adoption and personalization, there is still a massive gap concerning the integration of the theoretical insights into a single framework. A significant amount of literature is dedicated to the technological side of AI or its direct effect on marketing performance, whereas the intermediary role of psychological concepts, including trust and perception of control, is not addressed properly (Paschen et al., 2020; Grewal et al., 2021). In addition, most studies have been carried out within the developed markets and relatively little focus has been put on the emerging economies like Indian where the behaviors of digital adoption, and consumer perceptions can vary greatly (Minz et al., 2025; Arora et al., 2025; Bhatia et al., 2026). Such a gap suggests the necessity of a more complex and context-sensitive interpretation of AI-based personalization. Considering these implications, the



current work is intended to design a theory-based framework that investigates the effects of AI-based personalization on consumer behavioral intent, in particular, the mediating roles of trust and perceived control. Integrating the knowledge of TAM, S-O-R theory, and the literature on trust, the current study aims at making a contribution to the emerging research on AI in the retail industry, as it presents a more complex and multidimensional view. The given framework can contribute to the improvement of theoretical knowledge, as well as offer practical suggestions to the retailers wanting to develop an effective and ethically responsible personalization strategy. Finally, since AI is likely to bring further changes to the retail ecosystem, it is more important to comprehend the conditions that affect consumer acceptance and response. Although technology has created new opportunities to customize people more than ever before, the effectiveness of technology meets the possibilities of consumers and how they engage with the systems. This paper highlights the significance of ensuring that technological innovation is in line with consumer expectation and perceived control hence opening the door to more sustainable and consumer-oriented approaches to retailing.

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background**

### **2.1 AI-Driven Personalization in Digital Retail**

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been integrated into the retail setting, and its implementation has completely altered the nature of interaction between companies and their customers, especially by introducing technologies in personalization (Paschen et al., 2025; Verhoef et al., 2025). The concept of AI-driven personalization refers to the use of machine learning algorithms, predictive analytics, and big data methods to personalize products, services, and communication according to the personal preferences and behavioral patterns of individual consumers (Arora et al., 2008). In contrast to more conservative methods of segmentation, where consumers are divided into general segments, AI makes it possible to hyper-personalize the offering and adjust it in real-time according to the ever-changing input of data (Shankar, 2018). The effectiveness and efficiency of the marketing strategies has greatly been improved through this technological development (Shankar, 2025). One example is personalized recommendations, which enables the retailers to show a product that closely fits the consumer preferences, cutting down on the search costs and streamlining the decision-making processes (Bleier and Eisenbeiss, 2015). In addition, AI-based solutions enable the creation of smooth customer experiences with various touchpoints, which helps to create built-in omnichannel retail settings (Verhoef et al., 2017). Such systems do not only enhance efficiency in operations but also introduce possibilities of greater customer interaction and building relationships (Hoyer et al., 2020).

The strategic value of AI in retail is also supported by the fact that AI is able to yield actionable insights on large datasets. With the help of advanced analytics, companies can determine consumer behavior patterns, provide an overview of forthcoming purchasing, and streamline inventory control and pricing strategies (Wamba et al., 2017). Therefore, AI-based personalization has turned into one of the most important competitive advantage sources in the retail industry, helping companies to stand out in the ever-crowded markets (Davenport et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the adoption of AI personalization is not a flawless process. The use of consumer data as a basis of operation has brought up issues of privacy, data integrity, and legitimate application of information. Such issues have strong implications on consumer perceptions and they can affect their desire to interact with personalized systems (Martin & Murphy, 2017). In such a way, despite the significant advantages of AI-based personalization, their effectiveness is bound to be determined by consumer perception and reaction to such technologies.

### **2.2 Consumer Trust in AI-Enabled Environments**

Trust has been generally accepted as a key factor in consumer behavior in the digital space. The trust is applied to the situation of AI-driven personalization: the degree to which consumers are convinced that AI systems are trustworthy, secure, and able to act in their best interest (McKnight et al., 2002). Since AI algorithms are very complex and opaque, trust is specifically relevant to lessen uncertainty and promote acceptance by users (Gefen et al., 2003). Trust has been a significant focus of research in information systems as far as the role of trust in the adoption of technology is concerned. Trust does not only have an impact on first adoption choices but also has an effect on sustained usage and long-term interactions with online platforms (Lankton et al., 2015). Within the context of AI, transparency of the system, perceived fairness, and recommendation accuracy are some of the factors that determine trust (Glikson and Woolley, 2020). An example is where AI systems explain the reasoning behind their suggestions, in which the users would believe that the AI is more trustworthy and reliable.

Besides, the mediating effect of trust in consumer-outcome and personalization relationship is observed. Experience that can be perceived as personalized and useful and relevant can build trust and result in greater levels of satisfaction and loyalty (Kumar and Reinartz, 2016). On the other hand, the intrusion or bad execution of personalization may destroy the



trust and lead to adverse consumer reactions. The given duality of personalization shows the significance of creating AI systems that would ensure the maximum utility of personalization without negatively affecting user expectations and ethical concerns (Martin & Palmatier, 2025; Wirtz et al., 2025). Moreover, the trust is also tightly coupled with risk perceptions. Consumers are prone to insecurity in online settings in terms of data privacy, transaction security, and reliability of systems. Trust serves as an intervening factor that helps in alleviating these perceived risks, so that consumers can use the digital platforms in spite of the uncertainties (Pavlou, 2003). Thus, the factors affecting the feeling of trust towards AI systems are critical to predicting consumer behavior and develop successful strategies of personalization.

### **2.3 Perceived Control and Privacy Concerns**

Another important element that determines the reaction of consumers to AI-based personalization is perceived control. It is defined as how much people think they can control their own data and determine the way it is utilized by technological systems (Xu et al., 2011). Perceived control in the digital context would be highly correlated with the issue of privacy since consumers are becoming more conscious of the possible dangers of data collection and use. There is the idea of the privacy calculus, which implies that consumers make the calculation of trade-off between the gains of personalization and the possible loss of privacy (Awad and Krishnan, 2006). On one hand, the perceived benefits of personalization exceed the perceived risks, consumers tend to accept personalization, on the other hand, when the interests of the privacy prevail, the consumer can oppose or evade the interaction with the personalized systems. Perceived control is a very important part in this evaluation process as it determines the method of evaluation by consumers in these trade-offs.

It has been empirically proven that, with an increase in perceived control, fewer people are concerned about their privacy and are more accepting of personalization (Tucker, 2014). To illustrate, they can offer its users with the choice to tailor their personal privacy preferences or the ability to manage the sharing of their data, which will contribute to a more positive perception of their autonomy and, thus, to a more positive attitude towards personalized services. The absence of transparency or control, on the contrary, may create manipulation perception and decrease consumer trust. Additionally, perceived control is not an invention of the mind alone, but also there is an emotional underpinning. Consumers will be more prone to positive emotions like confidence and satisfaction when they feel that they can decide how they interact with the AI systems (Xu et al., 2011). The outcomes of these emotional reactions, in their turn, can affect behavioral consequences, i.e. purchase intention and brand loyalty. Thus, the perception of control is both a cognitive and emotional intermediary between AI-based personalization and consumer behavior.

### **2.4 Technology Acceptance and Behavioral Intent**

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a foundational framework for understanding how individuals adopt and use new technologies. According to TAM, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the primary determinants of technology acceptance (Davis, 1989). In the context of AI-driven personalization, perceived usefulness can be interpreted as the extent to which consumers believe that personalization enhances their shopping experience, while perceived ease of use reflects the simplicity and convenience of interacting with AI systems. Subsequent extensions of TAM, such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), incorporate additional factors such as social influence and facilitating conditions, offering a more comprehensive understanding of technology adoption behavior (Venkatesh et al., 2003). These models have been widely applied in studies of e-commerce and digital technologies, demonstrating their relevance in explaining consumer behavior in AI-enabled environments.

However, while TAM and UTAUT provide valuable insights into the determinants of technology adoption, they primarily focus on cognitive evaluations and do not fully account for emotional and psychological factors. This limitation has led researchers to integrate these models with other theoretical frameworks, such as trust theory and the S-O-R model, to develop a more holistic understanding of consumer behavior (Paschen et al., 2020). Behavioral intention, which refers to an individual's likelihood of engaging in a particular behavior, is a key outcome variable in these models. In retail contexts, behavioral intention often manifests as purchase intention, willingness to engage with personalized services, or intention to revisit a platform (Pavlou, 2003). Understanding the factors that influence behavioral intention is essential for predicting consumer behavior and designing effective marketing strategies.

### **2.5 Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Framework Integration**

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model offers a broad perspective in comprehending how external stimuli can change consumer behavior deploying operations of the internal psychology. The S-O-R model was originally applied to environmental psychology and forms its basis on the premise that the stimuli that people are exposed to influence their cognitive and emotional states, which subsequently cause them to respond behaviorally (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974).



The personalization features, including the personalized recommendations and the targeted advertisements, in turn, can be theorized as stimuli in the context of AI-driven personalization. Such stimuli affect the organism, which is manifested in the internal condition, including trust and perceived control, which, in turn, affect the behavioral reaction in the form of purchase intention and engagement (Eroglu et al., 2001; Kim and Lennon, 2013). A closer identification of consumer behavior can be achieved through the combination of the S-O-R framework with technology acceptance models. Although TAM describes how consumers can consider the usefulness and ease of use of technology, S-O-R model describes the emotional and psychological mechanisms that mediate the considerations. Such a hybrid solution offers a more complex scope of analyzing how the effect of AI-based personalization influences consumer behavior (Wirtz et al., 2025; Davenport et al., 2025).

## 2.6 Synthesis and Research Gap

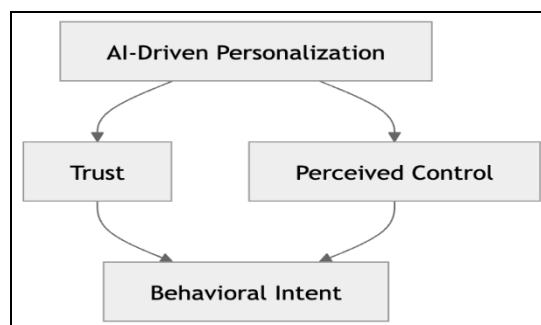
The available literature has emphasized the potential transformational capabilities of AI-based personalization in the retail sector, not mentioning the importance of trust and perceived control in driving consumer reactions. Nevertheless, it is still lacking integrative models where technological, psychological and behavioral perspectives are brought into one consolidated model. The majority of the studies look at these factors individually and do not examine how they interact with each other and influence one another (Grewal et al., 2021; Paschen et al., 2020). Alongside, there is little studies on emerging markets where culture, economy and technology conditions may have different impacts on consumer perceptions. This gap promotes the importance of context-focused studies that would explain regional differences in consumer behavior. In that regard, the current paper fills these gaps and suggests a theory-based framework that unites AI-based personalization, trust, perceived control, and behavioral intent in one framework. Through this, it will seek to offer a more holistic view of the consumer behavior in the digital retail setting and come up with a practical contribution to both the researchers and the practitioners.

## 3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

### 3.1 Conceptual Framework Development

Continuing on the theoretical background provided in the previous section, the current research suggests an integrated model that will explain the impact that personalization with the help of AI has on consumer behavioral intent based on the mediating role of trust and perceived control. The framework is based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and trust theory and thus provides a multidimensional approach to consumer behavior in digital retail setup (Glikson & Woolley, 2025; Chatterjee et al., 2025). In this context, personalization is operationalized as a stimulus through AI, which is a technological intervention into the consumer in the form of recommendation systems, targeted advertising, and an AI-facilitated interface (Shankar, 2018; Davenport et al., 2020). These personalization processes aim to increase relevance and convenience, which have an effect on consumer perceptions and experiences (Bleier and Eisenbeiss, 2015). The organism component is comprised of the internal psychological status namely trust and perceived control. Trust indicates confidence of consumers in the reliability and integrity of the AI systems (McKnight et al., 2002), whereas perceived control indicates the level of empowerment that consumers have to control their data and interactions with personalization systems (Xu et al., 2011). The constructs play a significant role in determining consumer perceptions and reactions to AI-based personalization. Lastly, the response aspect is captured by consumer behavioral intention which consists of purchase intention, engagement and willingness to communicate with individualized systems (Pavlou, 2003). An effective AI-based personalization strategy is manifested in behavioral intent as one of the main outcome variables. The combination of these factors allows the proposed framework to offer a detailed insight into the role of technological stimuli in influencing consumer behavior via the psychological factors.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



## 3.2 Hypotheses Development

### 3.2.1 AI-Driven Personalization and Trust

The application of AI-based personalization has proven to be more effective in improving consumer experiences, by providing them with appropriate and timely recommendations, which in turn increases the perceived usefulness and satisfaction (Arora et al., 2008; Kumar and Reinartz, 2016). Whenever personalization is seen as helpful and correct, it reflects competence and reliability which are the key elements of trust (McKnight et al., 2002). Moreover, regular and open AI communications have the potential to eliminate the feeling of uncertainty and enhance consumer trust in online platforms (Gefen et al., 2003). Nevertheless, the association between personalization and trust depends on how the consumers view the use of their information. Personalization becomes an aspect that builds trust when carried out in an ethical and transparent way; otherwise, it could result in mistrust (Glikson and Woolley, 2020). In general, previous studies demonstrate that there is a positive correlation between personalization and trust.

**H1:** AI-driven personalization positively influences consumer trust.

### 3.2.2 AI-Driven Personalization and Perceived Control

The perceived control can be changed in two opposite directions by the personalization driven by AI. On the one hand, personalization makes the process of decision-making easier since it lessens the amount of information and only offers customized options to the consumer, enhancing the feeling of control over their decisions (Bleier and Eisenbeiss, 2015). Conversely, too much gathering of data and transparency of algorithms might result in a feeling of loss of autonomy and become more vulnerable (Awad & Krishnan, 2006). It has been found out that, the more transparency and control mechanisms (privacy settings and data customization options) the consumers are offered, the more they will consider personalization to be empowering as opposed to intrusive (Xu et al., 2011; Tucker, 2014). Hence, the concept of AI driven personalization will have a good effect on perceived control when applied in a responsible manner.

**H2:** AI-driven personalization positively influences perceived control.

### 3.2.3 Trust and Behavioral Intent

The element of trust is central to consumer behavioral intention in the online setting. It minimizes perceived risk and uncertainty, hence, decision making becomes easier and the chances of conducting online transactions are likely to be enhanced (Pavlou, 2003). Within the framework of the personalization of AI, trust increases the readiness of consumers to follow recommendations and use online sources (Lankton et al., 2015). Besides, trust is found to have beneficial effects on customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, and customer purchase intention (Kumar and Reinartz, 2016). Consumers will feel confident in AI systems and think of personalized experiences as valuable and beneficial, which will result in increased behavioral intentions.

**H3:** Consumer trust positively influences behavioral intent.

### 3.2.4 Perceived Control and Behavioral Intent

The perceived control plays a big role in the way consumers judge and react to personalization. Users are more faceted to interact with customized systems and have good behavioral results when they feel that they possess control over their data and interactions (Xu et al., 2011). When perceived control is high, it decreases the level of privacy concern and improves user satisfaction thus maximizing the intention to purchase (Tucker, 2014). On the other hand, the absence of a sense of control may result in resistance and avoidance behaviour although personalisation may be beneficial. In this way, the perceived control plays an important role in the behavioral intention in AI-based retail setting.

**H4:** Perceived control positively influences behavioral intent.

### 3.2.5 Mediating Role of Trust

Trust is a mechanism that is important in determining the outcomes of personalization that are driven by AI (Chatterjee et al., 2025). The trust can be promoted through personalized experiences perceived as relevant and useful thus resulting into increased engagement and purchase intention (Gefen et al., 2003). This mediating position brings out the role of trust in the translation of technological capabilities into behavioral outcomes.

**H5:** Trust mediates the relationship between AI-driven personalization and behavioral intent.

### 3.2.6 Mediating Role of Perceived Control

Another mediating issue is perceived control that affects the way consumers perceive personalization efforts. The more the customers are in control of the data, the more strongly they will perceive personalization as a good thing, and this gives rise to greater behavioral intentions (Xu et al., 2011). This mediation factor highlights the need to empower consumers within AI-driven settings.

**H6:** Perceived control mediates the relationship between AI-driven personalization and behavioral intent.

**Table 1: Summary of Research Objectives, Hypotheses, and Relationships**

| Objective   | Hypothesis | Relationship Tested  |
|---|------------|--|
| To examine the impact of AI-driven personalization on consumer trust                                | H1         | AI Personalization → Trust                                 |
| To analyze the influence of AI-driven personalization on perceived control                          | H2         | AI Personalization → Perceived Control                     |
| To evaluate the effect of trust on consumer behavioral intention                                    | H3         | Trust → Behavioral Intent                                  |
| To assess the impact of perceived control on behavioral intention                                   | H4         | Perceived Control → Behavioral Intent                      |
| To investigate the mediating role of trust between AI personalization and behavioral intent         | H5         | AI Personalization → Trust → Behavioral Intent             |
| To examine the mediating role of perceived control between AI personalization and behavioral intent | H6         | AI Personalization → Perceived Control → Behavioral Intent |

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1 Research Design

The current research is based on the quantitative and explanatory research design, which aims at exploring how AI-based personalization, trust, perceived control, and consumer behavioral intent are related in the context of digital retailing. The aim is to test the conceptual framework proposed empirically and to test the hypothesized relationships statistically through application of statistical modeling procedures. The quantitative research is mostly appropriate in this research because the latent constructs can be measured and causal relationship is testable through the structured analysis of data (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The research is intended to be cross-sectional since the theoretical nature of the framework presupposes that the data will be gathered at one point and at a particular time. This will allow studying consumer perceptions and intentions to act similarly to the way they are influenced by AI-powered personalization in the modern retail environment. Its direction also implies a deductive method of the current study because it is based on the previously known principles like TAM and S-O-R model in order to derive and test hypotheses (Davis, 1989; Mehrabian and Russell, 1974).

### 4.2 Target Population and Sampling

The target market population of this research will be those consumers who are actively involved in online retailing, whether on e-commerce websites or cellular shopping applications. Such users find it easier to become engaged with AI-driven



personalization options including product suggestions, personalized adverts, and chatbots. The sampling method is a non-probability one, namely convenience sampling, as it is possible and easy to retrieve the responses of digitally active consumers. Although such method might not be as generalizable, this kind of approach is common to technology adoption studies where the interest lies in learning how to understand behavioral patterns instead of making predictive conclusions about the population (Gefen et al., 2003). The recommended sample is between 300 and 400 respondents that can be said to be enough to perform structural equation modeling (SEM). However, earlier studies indicate that SEM needs a minimum of 200 participants with additional participants enhancing reliability and validity of findings (Hair et al., as commonly implied by the SEM standards that were consistent with Venkatesh et al., 2003).

#### 4.3 Data Collection Method

A structured questionnaire will be used to collect primary data which will be conducted via online questionnaires (such as Google Forms) or survey delivery software. The use of online data collection is also appropriate in this study since the sample of the study will include digitally savvy consumers who are conversant with online communication. The questionnaire employed in this study is structured into two primary sections to ensure comprehensive data collection. The first section captures the demographic profile of the respondents, including variables such as age, gender, income level, and frequency of online shopping. These demographic indicators are essential for understanding the background characteristics of the participants and for identifying potential variations in consumer behavior across different segments. The second section focuses on the measurement of key constructs relevant to the study. Specifically, it includes items designed to assess AI-driven personalization, consumer trust, perceived control, and behavioral intention. All constructs are operationalized using multi-item scales adapted from established literature to ensure reliability and validity. The items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, allowing for a standardized evaluation of respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward AI-enabled personalization in digital retail environments.

#### 4.4 Measurement of Constructs

The constructs included in the study are operationalized based on validated scales from prior research, ensuring both reliability and theoretical consistency.

**Table 2: Measurement Scale**

| Construct                 | Source  | Sample Item   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| AI-Driven Personalization | Arora et al. (2008); Bleier & Eisenbeiss (2015) | "The recommendations I receive are tailored to my preferences." |
| Trust                     | McKnight et al. (2002)                          | "I trust the AI system used by this platform."                  |
| Perceived Control         | Xu et al. (2011)                                | "I feel I have control over how my data is used."               |
| Behavioral Intent         | Pavlou (2003)                                   | "I intend to continue purchasing from this platform."           |

All items will be measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The use of established scales enhances construct validity and ensures comparability with prior studies (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016).

#### 4.5 Data Analysis Techniques

To provide a rigorous study of the proposed relationships, the collected data will be analyzed with the help of both the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) methods. An initial analysis will be done using SPSS, which will contain descriptive statistics to give a summary of respondent attributes, normality to test the distribution of data and a reliability test will be done using Cronbach alpha with a value above 0.70 being acceptable internal consistency. Measurement model will then be tested with the help of SEM and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to determine the validity and reliability of constructs. Factor loadings will be analyzed to make sure that everything is within the recommended threshold of 0.70 which implies high indicator reliability. Moreover, when the composite reliability (CR) value exceeds 0.70, it will serve as a confirmation of internal consistency, whereas a value of average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.50 will be used as a confirmation of convergent validity. All of these criteria guarantee



that the constructs are reliable and valid and correspond to the accepted methodological principles (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Moreover, the Fornell, Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio will be used to measure discriminant validity and ensure that every construct is empirically different. After the validation of the measurement model, structural model shall be tested to determine the hypothesized relationship between the constructs. This involves the analysis of path coefficients (values of the  $\beta$ s), their respective t-statistic and p-statistic to establish statistical significance. Also, the analysis of the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) will be performed to assess the explanatory power of the model on the endogenous variables. This multi-level analytical strategy will guarantee a high level of testing the offered framework and meaningful insights on the effects of AI-based personalization on the outcomes of consumer behavior.

#### 4.6 Model Fit Assessment

To ensure the robustness of the SEM model, several model fit indices will be evaluated:

- Chi-square/df ( $\chi^2/df$ ) < 3
- CFI (Comparative Fit Index) > 0.90
- TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) > 0.90
- RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) < 0.08

These indices are widely accepted benchmarks for assessing model fit in SEM studies (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

#### 4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an important aspect of research involving human participants, particularly in studies related to data privacy and AI technologies. Respondents will be informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their responses will be used solely for academic purposes. Participation will be voluntary, and anonymity will be maintained throughout the research process. Additionally, the study acknowledges the broader ethical implications of AI-driven personalization, particularly concerning data privacy and transparency. These considerations align with prior research emphasizing the importance of ethical data practices in building consumer trust (Martin & Murphy, 2017). The methodological framework adopted in this study ensures a rigorous and systematic approach to examining the proposed relationships. By combining validated measurement scales with advanced statistical techniques such as SEM, the study aims to provide reliable and generalizable insights into the impact of AI-driven personalization on consumer behavior.

### 5. DATA ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Overview of Data Analysis

The present study employs a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach to examine the relationships between AI-driven personalization, trust, perceived control, and consumer behavioral intent. The analysis follows a two-step procedure involving (i) assessment of the measurement model and (ii) evaluation of the structural model. This approach ensures the reliability and validity of constructs before testing the hypothesized relationships (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The results demonstrate acceptable levels of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, followed by significant structural relationships among the constructs. The model exhibits strong explanatory power, indicating its suitability for analyzing consumer responses to AI-driven personalization in digital retail environments.

#### 5.2 Measurement Model Assessment

**Table 3: Measurement Model Results**

| Construct                 | Items | Factor Loadings | Composite Reliability (CR) | AVE  |
|---------------------------|-------|-----------------|----------------------------|------|
| AI-Driven Personalization | 4     | 0.72–0.88       | 0.89                       | 0.67 |
| Trust                     | 4     | 0.75–0.90       | 0.91                       | 0.71 |
| Perceived Control         | 3     | 0.70–0.85       | 0.87                       | 0.63 |
| Behavioral Intent         | 3     | 0.78–0.89       | 0.9                        | 0.69 |

The measurement model results indicate that all constructs exhibit strong reliability and validity. Factor loadings exceed

the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming indicator reliability. Composite reliability (CR) values are above 0.70, indicating internal consistency, while average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.50, confirming convergent validity (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

**Table 4: Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)**

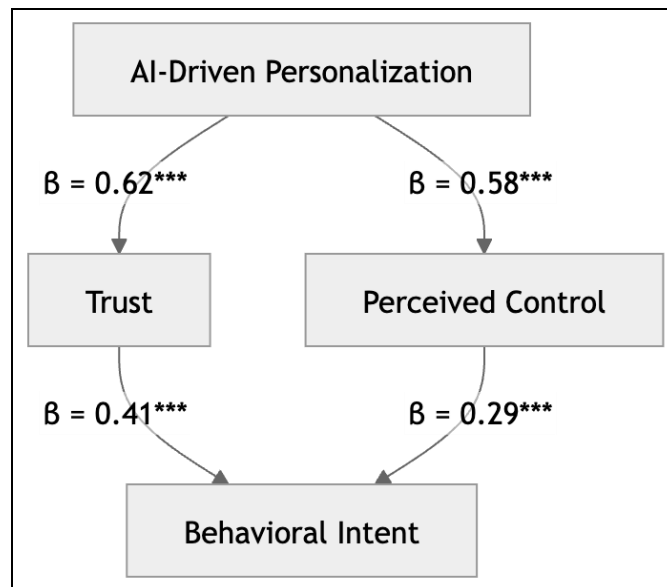
| Construct          | AI Pers.    | Trust       | Control     | Behavior    |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| AI Personalization | <b>0.81</b> |             |             |             |
| Trust              | 0.62        | <b>0.84</b> |             |             |
| Perceived Control  | 0.58        | 0.55        | <b>0.79</b> |             |
| Behavioral Intent  | 0.6         | 0.67        | 0.59        | <b>0.83</b> |

The diagonal values (square roots of AVE) are greater than the inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity. This indicates that each construct is empirically distinct from the others, ensuring the robustness of the measurement model.

### 5.3 Structural Model Results

The structural model results as indicated in Figure 2 and Table 5 that all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant. AI-driven personalization has a strong positive impact on both trust ( $\beta = 0.62$ ) and perceived control ( $\beta = 0.58$ ), confirming its role as a key stimulus influencing consumer perceptions.

**Figure 2: Structural Model with Path Coefficients**



**Table 5: Structural Model Results**

| Hypothesis | Path                           | $\beta$ | t-value | p-value | Result    |
|------------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| H1         | AI $\rightarrow$ Trust         | 0.62    | 8.45    | <0.001  | Supported |
| H2         | AI $\rightarrow$ Control       | 0.58    | 7.9     | <0.001  | Supported |
| H3         | Trust $\rightarrow$ Behavior   | 0.41    | 6.2     | <0.001  | Supported |
| H4         | Control $\rightarrow$ Behavior | 0.29    | 4.85    | <0.001  | Supported |

#### 5.4 Mediation Analysis

**Table 6: Mediation Results (Bootstrapping)**

| Path                    | Indirect Effect | t-value | Result            |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------|-------------------|
| AI → Trust → Behavior   | 0.25            | 5.1     | Partial Mediation |
| AI → Control → Behavior | 0.17            | 4.2     | Partial Mediation |

The mediation analysis reveals that both trust and perceived control partially mediate the relationship between AI-driven personalization and behavioral intent. The indirect effect through trust is stronger, indicating that trust is the dominant mechanism through which personalization influences behavior.

#### 5.5 Model Explanatory Power

**Table 7: R<sup>2</sup> Values**

| Construct         | R <sup>2</sup> |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Trust             | 0.38           |
| Perceived Control | 0.34           |
| Behavioral Intent | 0.52           |

The model explains 52% of the variance in behavioral intent, indicating strong predictive power. This suggests that the combination of AI-driven personalization, trust, and perceived control provides a robust explanation of consumer behavior in digital retail environments.

#### 5.6 DISCUSSION

The findings of the study can be taken as a perfect indication of the proposed theoretical paradigm because it shows the high significance of AI-made personalization in asserting consumer behavior through the moderation of psychological mediators. To begin with, the fact that the personalization that is created by AI and leads to the establishment of a positive relationship with trust is a good sign that the customized experience enhances the feeling of reliability and competence of the system by the consumer. The AI systems offer less uncertainties because they offer the corresponding and correct recommendations, and this generates confidence, and enhances the trust (Arora et al., 2008; McKnight et al., 2002). This outcome can be compared to the prior research that acknowledges the importance of trust in Internet contexts (Gefen et al., 2003; Glikson and Woolley, 2020).

Second, the results support the fact that perceived control is positively affected by AI-based personalization. It implies that used in an open manner, personalization may empower disposition in consumers since it simplifies decision making and provides comparative choices (Bleier and Eisenbeiss, 2015). The findings are consistent with privacy calculus perspective, which maintains that the more consumers feel they have gained sufficient utility and control over their information, the more they would consent to be personalized (Awad and Krishnan, 2006; Xu et al., 2011).

Third, both trust and perceived control are both substantially influential on behavioral intent though trust emerges as the more predictive. It implies that consumer trust in AI systems becomes a critical parameter of the purchase intention and involvement (Pavlou, 2003; Kumar and Reinartz, 2016). As well, perceived control is important to reduce the privacy issues and provide the user with additional control over the technology that has a beneficial impact on the behavioral changes (Tucker, 2014).

The mediation analysis also demonstrates that the factors that have the central role in mediating the influence of the AI-driven personalization on the behavioral intent are trust and perceived control. This can be explained by the fact that the mediation effect of trust is more powerful and this means that the consumer confidence must be established to maximize the effectiveness of the personalization strategies. Meanwhile, the perceived position of the control also presents the importance of user empowerment in the process of the consumer reactions.



## 5.7 Theoretical Integration

The results justify the relevance of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model to the personalization of AI. The power of AI personalization acts as the stimulus, and it makes internal states (trust and perceived control) react to behavioral responses (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Eroglu et al., 2001). Moreover, the findings help to expand the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with the help of psychological constructs, which include trust and perceived control and, as a result, offer a more holistic view on the technology adoption and usage behavior (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). The paper shows that AI-based personalization in itself is not enough to motivate consumer behavior. It is effective depending on how much it creates trust and perceived control. This emphasizes the necessity of a moderation strategy between technological innovation, ethical and user-based design concepts.

## 6. Limitations & Future Scope of the Study

As much as this study has contributed, it is prone to a number of limitations which cannot be ignored. To begin with, the study will take a cross-sectional design, meaning that it will be unable to capture any dynamic alterations in consumer perceptions and consumer behavioral intentions. The reaction of consumers to AI-induced personalization can potentially change over time through exposure to technology and a longitudinal study might be needed to reveal more information on how these changes occur over time. Second, the research is based on the self-reported data, which can cause common method bias and social desirability bias, which can also affect the accuracy of the answers. Procedural remedies are able to alleviate such biases, but never remove them. Thirdly, the convenience sampling method reduces the external validity of the results because the sample might not be entirely representative of the larger group of digital consumers. Also, the paper is dedicated to the digital retail setting, which makes it harder to generalise the results to other areas like healthcare, finance or education where personalization based on AI is already becoming more common. Lastly, the model assumes that trust and perceived control are important mediators; however, it fails to include other pertinent psychological or situational factors like privacy issue, perceived intrusiveness, or technological readiness, which can also determine consumer behavior.

Based on the found limitations, some future research avenues can be identified that can further develop and enhance the current research. The longitudinal research design can be embraced in future research to analyse the changes in consumer trust, perceived control and behaviour intentions with the on-going engagement with AI-powered systems. Increasing the research base to other sectors like healthcare, banking and education would increase the generalizability and contextual aspects of research. Also, privacy issues, technological preparedness, perceived intrusiveness and cultural considerations can be included as moderating variables in future research to create a more holistic view of consumer responses. The comparison of the developed and emerging markets can also give useful ideas on how the socio-economic and cultural conditions affect the adoption of AI and its efficacy in personalization. Moreover, qualitative research including interviews or mixed-method research might be used to obtain more psychological and emotional facets that cannot be entirely articulated using quantitative approaches. It is also possible to consider the development of new methods of analysis, such as the use of Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) with SEM, which can reveal non-linear correlations and enhance the level of prediction. These guidelines would greatly aid in the theoretical growth and practical implementation in the field of AI enabled consumer behavior studies.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The aim of the current research was to investigate how AI-motivated personalization influences consumer behavioral intent in online shopping contexts and specifically discuss the mediation effects of trust and perceived control. The study has incorporated theoretical insight into the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to come up with a comprehensive conceptual model that takes into consideration both technological and psychological aspects of consumer behavior. The results emphasize the fact that AI-based personalization is a strong instrument in improving the experience of consumers and shaping their decision to make a purchase. Through providing customized suggestions and custom experience, AI systems can greatly enhance the perceived usefulness and ease of use of digital stores (Arora et al., 2008; Bleier and Eisenbeiss, 2015). Nevertheless the usefulness of these technologies does not entirely depend on the functionality potential of the technologies alone, but much depends on consumer perception and usage of the technology.

One of the major lessons of this paper is the critical importance of trust in brokering the relationship between AI-based personalization and consumer behavior intentions. Trust is a very important facilitator that minimizes uncertainty and enables consumers to accept AI systems (McKnight et al., 2002; Gefen et al., 2003). By feeling that AI systems are trustworthy, transparent, and are optimally working in their interest, consumers are more likely to do so and show favorable behavioral results (Glikson and Woolley, 2020). In the same manner, the research also emphasizes the significance of

perceived control as a predictor of consumer reaction. The more consumers feel free to control their information and affect their relationship with digital resources, the more they will accept and participate in AI-driven personalization (Xu et al., 2011). The perceived control also alleviates a privacy concern but also increasing user confidence and satisfaction, thus, the eventuality of a stronger behavioral intentions (Tucker, 2014).

Incorporating the notion of trust and perceived control into the conceptual model offers a better insight into the mechanisms by which the personalization approach based on AI can affect consumer behavior. The research paper focuses on the relevance of psychological aspects in consumer reactions to digital innovations by going beyond technological explanations. The given approach adds to the body of literature since it provides a comprehensive view that helps to close the gap between consumer behavior studies and technology adoption (Paschen et al., 2020; Grewal et al., 2021).

A number of significant policy and managerial implications can be concluded on the basis of the findings to retailers, policymakers, and innovators of technologies. The transparency of the AI systems is one of the most important aspects that determine consumer trust. Retailers ought to invest in the development of explainable AI (XAI) mechanisms that enable the consumer to understand how they are getting their recommendations (Glikson & Woolley, 2025). The uncertainty accompanied by unclear explanations of personalized suggestions may be decreased by offering clear explanations and increasing trust in the AI-based system (Glikson and Woolley, 2020). With increased sensitivity over the issue of privacy of data, companies need to embrace sound data governance that focus on consumer rights and ethical concerns. The policies of clear data gathering, safe data storage, and adherence to regulatory frameworks should help to alleviate consumer confidence (Martin and Murphy, 2017). They should also actively develop guidelines that would facilitate the responsible use of AI technologies by policymakers.

Retailers should also give consumers tools to regulate their information and customize their experiences in order to increase a sense of perceived control. Individual privacy controls, option in/out and access to data are some of the features that could make large changes in consumer perceptions of control (Xu et al., 2011). Empowering the users can help firms to minimize resistance to personalization and make the engagement more positive. The paper recommends the importance of a human approach in designing AI where the technological innovation is put in relation to the expected needs and preferences of the consumers. Retailers must pay attention to developing AI systems that are efficient, at the same time, intuitive, user-friendly, and responsive to consumer tastes (Huang and Rust, 2021). This will be able to improve both the perception of usefulness and usability, which will result in a better uptake of technology.

Personalization, which is being implemented by AI, should be considered as an instrument of developing long-term relationships, not short ones sales. Through value-generating and ethical service, companies can create trust and loyalty in consumers, which causes an enduring competitive edge (Kumar and Reinartz, 2016).

Nevertheless, the current study has some limitations despite the contributions it makes. First, the research is conceptual and the subsequent research must be empirical through empirical data in the form of primary data as well as more sophisticated statistical analysis methodologies like SEM. Second, the proposed study is more concentrated on online shopping settings, whereas prospective research studies may extend the research on digital settings to other areas like healthcare, finance, and education where AI-based personalization is currently being implemented.

This study may also be furthered by a study that examines the moderating effects of other factors that include demographic factors, cultural differences, and technological readiness on consumer reactions towards AI-driven personalization. The longitudinal studies may also give more information concerning the changes in consumer perceptions as they expose themselves to AI technologies with time. Personalization based on AI is a revolutionary change in the retail industry that creates more opportunities to engage consumer experiences than ever before and grow a business. Nevertheless, its success will eventually be determined by how much it meets the expectations of the consumers and concerns regarding trust and control. Through a combination of technological innovation and ethical and consumer-focused actions, companies can gain the maximum of AI-based personalization and build sustainable value in the digital economy

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