

Dear Mr. Wang,

We deeply appreciate your decision to reconsider our manuscript for publication. We extend our gratitude to the reviewers for their invaluable feedback, which has significantly enhanced the quality of our manuscript. Furthermore, we agree with the reviewers' two main concerns regarding the causality of our findings and a lack of sufficient evidence in the hypothesis derivation of the second hypothesis. In response to their well-founded insights, we meticulously revised relevant sections within our manuscript, with a particular focus on avoiding any unwarranted causal claims. Additionally, we significantly expanded the body of evidence supporting the derivation of our hypothesis concerning customer relationship status. As an exemplary testament to our dedication to meeting the exacting standards of your journal, one can exemplify our commitment through a substantial change in our manuscript's title:

“Influence of price comparison website usage and repeat buying behavior on online retail price tolerance”

to

“Exploring price tolerance in online retail: A comparative analysis of price comparison website use and repeat purchases”.

Furthermore, we have made several improvements to the manuscript. In addition to your feedback, we've optimized certain sections, including the removal of Figure 1, as it did not offer significant additional value beyond the text (p. 15). We also rephrased the results of H3 to make it more concise and comprehensible (p. 20). Significant revisions have been **clearly marked** and will serve as a basis for our responses to the comments provided. Therefore, instead of

extensively restating these changes within this communication, we kindly direct your attention to the relevant sections within the manuscript itself:

1. Causal Claim: Authors should refrain from making any causal claims regarding the impact of price comparison websites (PCW) on customer price tolerance due to the presence of selection bias:

- Where appropriate, the authors refrain from making any causal claim regarding PCW impact on price tolerance. Areas previously insufficiently addressed include title (p. 1), abstract (p. 2), introduction (p. 6), hypothesis derivation (p. 11), hypotheses formulation (p. 11, 15), discussion (p. 21), and limitations (p. 23-24).
- Additionally, we introduce the potential for selection bias as the primary reason why causality cannot be conclusively determined (p. 8).

2. Interpretation: Authors are to provide “evidence” to support why repeat customers are more price tolerant than new customers

- To properly consider this point, we rephrased the introduction to give the reader a brief overview about CRS and its potential effect on online price tolerance (p. 6). This includes extending the initial focus on trust as major factor for customer by other aspect “such as loyalty program rewards or reduced shipping cost on repeat purchases” (p.6).
- Further (empirical) evidence to support the hypothesis derivation on why repeat customers might be more price tolerant than new customers is provided through the introduction of several studies throughout chapter 2.2 (p. 11-14) such as [20, 25, 43, 44, 49, 67, 88, 116].

The changes have been made to enhance the manuscript in response to the valuable feedback provided. If any concerns persist, it's not indicative of a lack of commitment to addressing the reviewer's critique but could stem from a misinterpretation of the instructions. In such a scenario, we would greatly appreciate the opportunity for a brief exchange with the respective reviewer to resolve any potential misunderstandings. We hope that our manuscript now meets the high academic standards and qualifies to be published in your esteemed journal.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Berends

Editor Statement

Based on the advice received, I have decided that your manuscript could be reconsidered for publication should you be prepared to incorporate major revisions. When preparing your revised manuscript, you are asked to carefully consider the reviewer comments which can be found below, and submit a list of responses to the comments. You are kindly requested to also check the website for possible reviewer attachment(s).

Thanks for your revision and resubmission. The reviewers expressed diverging opinions on this revision, with one reviewer suggesting rejection. After a careful reading, I agree with the reviewer's concern on the causal claims and the interpretation. However, I would like to offer another major revision to provide an opportunity for the authors to address the reviewer's concerns and suggestions and improve the manuscript quality.

Should the authors choose to take another round of revision, I would suggest the authors seriously address and clearly indicate how they have addressed the reviewer's concern. Please highlight the revisions so they can be easily identified for evaluation. For issues that the authors may not be able to address, discussions of limitations need to be added.

We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript before 30 Sep 2023.

With kind regards,

Fang Wang

Associate Editor

Electronic Commerce Research

Referee Report: “Effects of price comparison website usage and repeat buying behavior on online retail price tolerance”

The article investigates the influence of price comparison websites on price tolerance among two distinct customer segments: new and existing customers. By analyzing data from an online store in Germany, the study reveals that individuals who use PCWs exhibit a lower tolerance for prices compared to non-users. Additionally, the authors contend that existing customers demonstrate higher price tolerance than new customers. Lastly, the study demonstrates that the effect of PCW usage on price tolerance is less pronounced among repeat customers compared to new customers. The authors of the paper suggest that they have addressed my comments from the previous round. However, it is challenging to identify the revisions they have made to the manuscript. Furthermore, their responses do not adequately address my main concerns. Allow me to illustrate two primary concerns in this report.

1. Causal Claim

As noted in ID 10, I mentioned that reviewers should refrain from making any causal claims regarding the impact of price comparison websites (PCW) on customer price tolerance due to the presence of selection bias. The authors' response states the following: “Main body of text modified according to suggestion and paragraph added in limitations section of paper.” However, the authors continue to make numerous unsupported causal claims throughout the paper. An example of this is the very first sentence of the abstract.

2. Interpretation

As noted in ID 11 from the previous round, I requested that the authors provide “evidence” to support why repeat customers are more price tolerant than new customers. I am having difficulty

finding any modifications made to the hypothesis. Furthermore, there is no direct empirical evidence presented to support their hypothesis. In other words, there are still numerous factors that could potentially explain their findings