

# Behavioural Advertising Avoidance In Online Retail Industry

Jayasuriya N.A, Udadeniya. U.P.R.P., Yalegama. M.M.H.H.

**Abstract:-** This study helps determine factors behind customer rejections on online behavioural advertisements. Five key factors such as privacy concern, goal impediment, perceived personalization, ad skepticism, and negative experience have been identified as influencing factors. The impact of these factors on behavioural advertising avoidance have been tested using the 430 responses. The data was collected using an online survey and analyzed using structural equation modelling. The results indicate that the personalization of advertisements could reduce ad avoidance behaviour. On the other hand, privacy concern, goal impediment, ad skepticism and negative experience increase the tendency to avoid behavioural advertisements.

**Keywords:** Advertising, Behavioral Advertising, Retail, Ad Avoidance

## I. INTRODUCTION

Online Behavioral Advertising (OBA) is a special form of targeted advertising which mostly used by online retailers to collect user's personal information about their online behaviour or the digital footprint to display personalized advertisements (Tene and Polonetsky, 2011). It is considered as one of the major influencing techniques in advertising (Tene and Polonetsky, 2011). Behavioural advertisements track the user's online activities (his or her browsing history, searching history, geography, and life interest and purchase history) and offer the contents based on the user's characteristics, taste, and preference (Kelly et al., 2010). The usage of OBA is commonly visual in the online retail sector. Consumers are now stuck with their busy lifestyles and tight schedules; therefore, time is a constraint for them to physically visit a retail store and purchase goods (Sanje and Senol, 2012). In addition, consumers are moving away from traditional purchasing/buying methods towards online purchasing platforms, is an emerging trend in the retail market. OBA supports customers to select products more conveniently while offering a wider choice. It also helps retailers to build a strong relationship with the customer and reach the most appropriate target audience to fulfil their goals (Miyazaki and Fernandez, 2000). Considering the global context recognized retailing companies/firms, eBay, Amazon, Henry, etc., use the concept of OBA in their online retailing sites (Akinwumi, 2018, Cambra, 2018). In Sri Lanka, lkman.lk, Daraz.lk, Kapruka.lk, WOW.lk are the leading retailers who apply the technique of OBA (Brown, 2017). Tracking of user preferences and digital footprint will result in creating more personalized content that is much focused; ads too appeal better in the eyes of users. Hence, Li and Huang (2016) stated that OBA will result in the formation of stronger customer seller relationships. Impact of OBA is high as 71%, in attracting customers for online shopping (Pauzer (2016). Even though OBA is beneficial to customers and retailers, a group/segment of customers tries to avoid online advertisements due to many reasons. Some of these are privacy-related issues, disbelieving of ads, misdirection, and previous negative experience towards OBA (Aytekin, 2015; Girona and Korgaonkar, 2018; Shin and Lin, 2016; Van den Broeck et al., 2018). At present, these factors pose major issues from the perspective of retailers. However, to examine the factors behind this online ad avoidance, there are limited studies conducted globally. Further, when considering the different

consumer service expectations between developed and developing countries (Ford, J.B. et al., 2005) make it difficult to apply the available researchers to the developing country context. Hence, a research gap exists in this area of study. This can be identified as an obstacle to further improve OBA by addressing the avoidance of advertisements. To fill this void in the literature this study focusses on to examine the factors of OBA avoidance in online retailing.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. OBA in Online Retailing

Online Behavioral Advertising (OBA) is a special form of targeted advertising. It is mostly used by online retailers to collect user's personal information about their online behaviour or the digital footprint to display personalized advertisements (Tene and Polonetsky, 2011). OBA tracks user's online activities (his history related to searching/browsing and purchasing, geography, and life interests) and offers content based on user's characteristics, taste, and preference (Kelly et al., 2010). Purpose of these personalized advertisements is such that it creates awareness about customers and also about their interest. Additionally, with the help of these ads, it is possible to search for a particular product according to customer preferences. Therefore, these kinds of tailored advertisements provide an opportunity for both the consumers and online retailers to build a strong mutual relationship (Munir et al., 2017). When online retailers carry out transactions more accurately and more often, the most essential approach is to identify, select the most suitable target audience. This should be conducted in a way that OBA allows online retailers to accomplish their goal by reaching out to the most appropriate target audience (Miyazaki and Fernandez, 2000). Nevertheless, in the online world, tracking and storing user's online personal activities have been important tasks for many years (Zhao et al., 2018). Li and Huang (2016) assert that 62% of the people will avoid or ignore online advertisements; according to their personal preferences, 66% of the adults don't need marketers to provide them with tailored advertising. When adults as users are aware that a major portion of personal information has been gathered, the percentage of such ad avoidance increased to 73% - 86%. Among the obstacles to the development of the retail industry, the main factor is that the consumer considers a market place is insecure due to

some issues (Sanje and Senol, 2012). Thus, consumers tend to use a tool called ad blockers. This is mainly used for blocking ads while watching online content. Due to the usage of different kinds of ad blockers, marketers are unable to grab the target audience. Thus, it leads to revenue reductions and loss of customer bases of those marketers as well. (Redondo and Aznar, 2018). When referring to past studies related to the advertising avoidance headed for online platforms, ad irritation, ad clutter, privacy concern, ad skepticism, negative experience, perceived personalization, and goal impediment could be identified as factors which affect online advertising. Among those factors, privacy concerns, ad skepticism, perceived personalization, negative experiences along with goal impediment can be identified as the most influencing factors towards OBA avoidance (Baek and Morimoto, 2012, Li and Huang, 2016). The rest of the chapter focuses on Advertising Avoidance and its relationship when compared against each of the above-mentioned factors on Advertising Avoidance.

### **B. Advertising avoidance**

The unlikeliness that drives avoidance of online advertisements can be alternatively expressed as “all actions by the media user that differentially reduces their exposure to ad content” (Speck and Elliott, 1997). Clancey (1970) reveals that having the hope of avoiding advertisements or driving their motive to somewhere else, can arouse some users to exhibit arrogant physical expressions towards advertising rejection. Based on the above reasons, Li and Huang (2016) express that three types of advertising rejections could be incorporated into the equation of ad avoidance as Behavioral, Cognitive, and Affective avoidance respectively. Whilst agreeing upon with Hossain (2018), behavioural avoidance is the negative action of users while belief about the content can be an influencing factor towards cognitive avoidance. It's the user's emotions towards particular ads which drive the fact of effective avoidance. Especially based on the prior studies which have been conducted and also as observed by Baek and Morimoto (2012) provide evidence towards a variation in between social media ad rejection and the traditional medium. In the context of the above scenario, another important factor towards ad avoidance is the disturbance to online browsing caused by advertisements; thus, such disturbances can finally make way for the users to look for “Ad-Blockers” (Hossain, 2018). Almost 50% of the worldwide online users block ads via a tool referred to as “precious data saver” (Daniyal, 2019). Hence, considering the order of these facts, behavioural and cognitive avoidance along with affective avoidance will be measured against the OBA avoidance in the online retailing industry in Sri Lanka.

### **C. Privacy concern & OBA Avoidance**

OBA avoidance can be mainly caused by the privacy concern of customers. Baek and Morimoto (2012) emphasized online privacy as “the degree to which a user is concerned or worried about the revelation of his data to a third party”. In OBA, collecting users' preference or willingness without knowing them in advance is unethical marketing which leads to advertising avoidance (Miyazaki and Fernandez, 2000). When users are aware that they are

subject to unethical marketing, their perception towards online retailers/online purchasing would be negative. According to Milne and Boza (1999), privacy concerns have a negative impact with regard to the purchasing behaviour and the perceived information control of the users. Thus, almost a percentage as higher as 95% of the online users of the United States of America wanted to regularize the access of personal data by third parties and among them (Kelly et al., 2010). Baek and Morimoto (2012) assert that anyhow matching the privacy concern against the OBA avoidance makes a positive relationship; based on this, they express how the concerns for privacy can make users avoid such traditional or online advertisements in advance. Most often, the privacy concern takes a special place in online platforms because there is a higher possibility to misuse personal information of users (Munir et al., 2017). Hence, this study will examine the impact of the privacy concern against OBA avoidance within the context of online retailing industry.

*H1: Privacy Concern has a significant impact on OBA Avoidance*

### **D. Goal impediment & OBA Avoidance**

Hossain (2018) is of the view that “The perception that one's ultimate goal of online browsing cannot be met as a result of online ads, hence leading to ad avoidance” is simply referred to as the concept of Goal Impediment. Goal-oriented behaviour, and experience-oriented behaviour, can be considered as the two types of consumer behaviour patterns in online retailing (San Martín et al., 2009). Users tend to be more goal directive when browsing the internet. Hence, (Li et al., 2013) explore that popping up of ads may adversely affect the said motive, thereby creating a disturbance. Speck and Elliott (1997) observe that in the above process, arousal of negative thoughts on OBA will result in rejection of those ads. Due to those sudden pop-ups of advertisements might create irritation to users and show more arrogant and aggressive nature, Cho and John Cheon (2004) stated that the marketers will have to face to some serious negative consequences. Additionally, Bang et al. (2018) found out that having highly animated advertisements might make the webpage load slowly and also respond slowly to low-end computers, will also make users more hostile towards such brands and products. Therefore, based on the facts of Bang et al. (2018), the factor of Goal Impediment can be easily identified as a predictor in rejecting OBAs. Hence, according to Hossain (2018), a positive relationship between Goal Impediment and OBA avoidance has been identified. This study will focus on the relationship of Goal Impediment with OBA avoidance when those two factors are compared in the online retailing industry within the Sri Lankan market.

*H2: Goal Impediment has significantly impact on OBA Avoidance*

### **E. Perceived personalization & OBA Avoidance**

According to Li and Huang (2016), when browsing the internet, some content is more familiarized towards the user. In such instances, the user develops an interest and keeps looking towards familiar content. Simply, this can be considered as the effect of personalization. In the digital

world, such scenarios are identified as the "Perceived Personalization". Based on the study of Li and Huang (2016), the goal of the theory of personalization is about sending the most suitable message to the right user, at the most appropriate time frame through the online platform; thereby this refers to web-based personalization. Additionally, those personalized ads are rich in memorability, attractiveness, preferability, and most importantly in understandability to the targeted consumers. Therefore according to the Munir et al. (2017), reaching a target customer base with personalized ads will not be a challenge to the marketers. However, based on the facts of Li and Huang (2016), the worst-case scenario of the personalized ads is described. Accordingly, if the tailored ads aren't as much as pleasurable or attractive at the first sight for users, the customer (user) rejection can occur; therefore, the marketers will have to face unfavourable consequences (losing customers can be a loss more than losing sales revenue etc.) of advertising avoidance. Upon obtaining insights from prior studies, a negative relationship between perceived personalization in terms of OBA avoidance could be observed/noticed. According to Li and Huang (2016), more the relatedness to the ads, less the consumers will avoid those in advance. Zhang et al. (2015) claim that since personalized ads have been able to increase consumer preferential, the rate of advertising avoidance will decrease. Thus, it will result in the creation of a much more favourable advertising campaign. Therefore, relying on the above information, this study will focus on exploring the relationship of perceived personalization with OBA avoidance in relation to the Sri Lankan online retailing industry.

**H3: Perceived Personalization has a significant impact on OBA Avoidance**

#### F. Ad skepticism & OBA Avoidance

Disbelief is referred to as not being accepted by someone regardless of its' facts being true or false. With regard to advertisements, ad skepticism occurs where the user disbelieves and has no trust regarding a particular ad. Thus, Bae (2018) found that it is the tendency of the user to distrust the ad based on details provided by the advertisement. When taking into consideration the above scenario, ad skepticism is of three types namely international, social and general skepticism. Thereby, ad skepticism can be carried out through various digital media platforms explored ((Khuhro et al., 2017). As pointed out by Baek and Morimoto (2012), when users are highly skeptical towards advertisements, ad skepticism occurs. Alongside, the user skepticism regarding personalized advertisements projects a general distrust among the consumers. Obermiller and Spangenberg (2013) found out that higher the skepticism towards ads, higher the rate of advertising avoidance; it also creates the need for obtaining information regarding a particular product from different sources. Therefore, a positive relationship exists between ad skepticism and advertising avoidance (Khuhro et al., 2017, Munir et al., 2017, Raziq et al., 2007). Hence, relating to the Sri Lankan context with regard to the online retailing industry, whether a relationship lies between ad skepticism and OBA avoidance will be explored further.

**H4: Ad Skepticism has a significant impact on OBA Avoidance**

#### G. Negative experience & OBA Avoidance

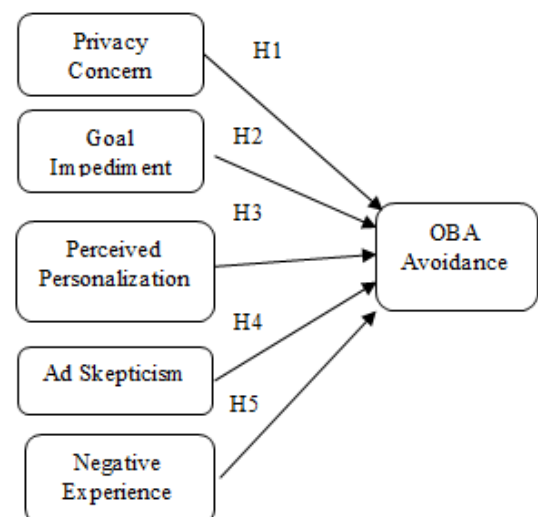
As discussed earlier, the internet is a goal-oriented medium where users need, and value the freedom of uninterrupted browsing. Therefore, Li and Huang (2016) stated that from the viewpoint of customers (as users, buyers), they being interrupted because the behavioural ads will lead through to have dislikes/negative feelings. Furthermore, the study of (Saxena and Khanna, 2013) reveal that perceived advertisements irritate users which makes ads less preferable to the viewers. Also, advertisements relating to alcohol and cigarettes along with more political oriented content will result in triggering negative feelings among online users. In addition, ads redirecting on into different spam websites upon clicks can be sufficient to create more negative experiences in the minds of users (Hossain, 2018). Additionally, Hossain (2018) also stressed what prior researchers proposed, that bad experiences automatically turn out to be negative attitudes, which will ultimately affect the purchase intention of the consumer. Therefore, considering the above-mentioned facts, this study mainly focuses on determining the relationship between OBA avoidance and negative experience in the Sri Lankan context.

**H5: Negative Experience has a significant impact on OBA Avoidance**

### III. METHODOLOGY

Based on the above literature study, the proposed conceptual framework consists of five independent variables such as privacy concern, goal impediment, perceived personalization, ad skepticism, and negative experience. Each of these independent variables is identified to have a direct relation to OBA avoidance (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



**Source: Compiled by author.**

As the first stage of the study, a pilot test has been conducted among 30 participants following the convenient sampling method. Data were collected by an online question sent via messenger. Based on the results of this

pilot survey reliability analysis, Cronbach Alpha values were tested. All the constructs exceeded the alpha coefficient of 0.7. It indicates that all underlying instruments are internally consistent and therefore, reliability of the same construct is justified (Table 1).

**Table 1: Reliability analysis of variables in the pilot survey**

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Initial Items	Final Items
Privacy Concern	.873	6	6
Goal Impediment	.904	6	6
Ad Skepticism	.698	6	6
Negative Experience	.920	6	6
Perceived Personalization	.919	6	6
OBA Avoidance	.962	6	6
Overall Value	.863	6	6

**Source:** Authors' representation based on SPSS results

#### A. Data Collection

The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section of the questionnaire aims to gather the basic demographic details of the participants including the gender, age, social status and the frequency of online transaction usage. The second section consists of five-point Likert Scale questions (1= Strongly disagree, 5= Strongly agree) which contribute to find and evaluate factors affecting OBA avoidance, based on past researches. These factors include privacy concern, goal impediment, perceived personalization, ad skepticism, negative experiences are independent variables affecting the dependent variable OBA avoidance. Data were collected from an online platform via e-mails and messenger. This method provides an opportunity for the researcher to access a large and diverse sample. To conduct a more accurate collection of data, this study focuses on effective response rates of past researchers who conducted similar studies. Based on Munir et al. (2017), an effective response rate of 91% has been obtained by researchers. Also, Zhang et al. (2015), found their response rate was 88%. In line with these response rates, this study expects to receive an effective response rate of approximately 90%. To obtain 384 responses, the questionnaire needs to be distributed among 430 participants in both online and offline basis. Hence, to obtain a confident level of 95%, this study will be conducted under a sample size of 384 participants of Sri Lanka (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). After conducting the survey by distributing the questionnaire among 430 respondents who are user-friendly and familiar with online retailing platforms living in Sri Lanka's, the following results can be illustrated. The demographic results show the characteristics of the

sample. Gender wise, male population represents 39.9% and the female population 60.1% in the sample. Most of the participants fall into the 18 – 30 age categories consisting of 62.1% of the population. Also, among all participants, 39.4% were employed. The majority of them (31.2%) use online retailing platforms once a week.

## IV. RESULTS

Data collected via the survey were analyzed using the SPSS V22.0 program and AMOS 18.0 statistical package to test the hypothesis of this study.

#### A. Measurement Model

The main data set underwent a reliability analysis and all variables result in Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.7. As the second step, factor analysis was conducted under the principles component matrix and varimax rotation. The results provide a six-factor solution with higher KMO value and 72% variation in data (Table 2).

**Table 2: Summary of reliability text.**

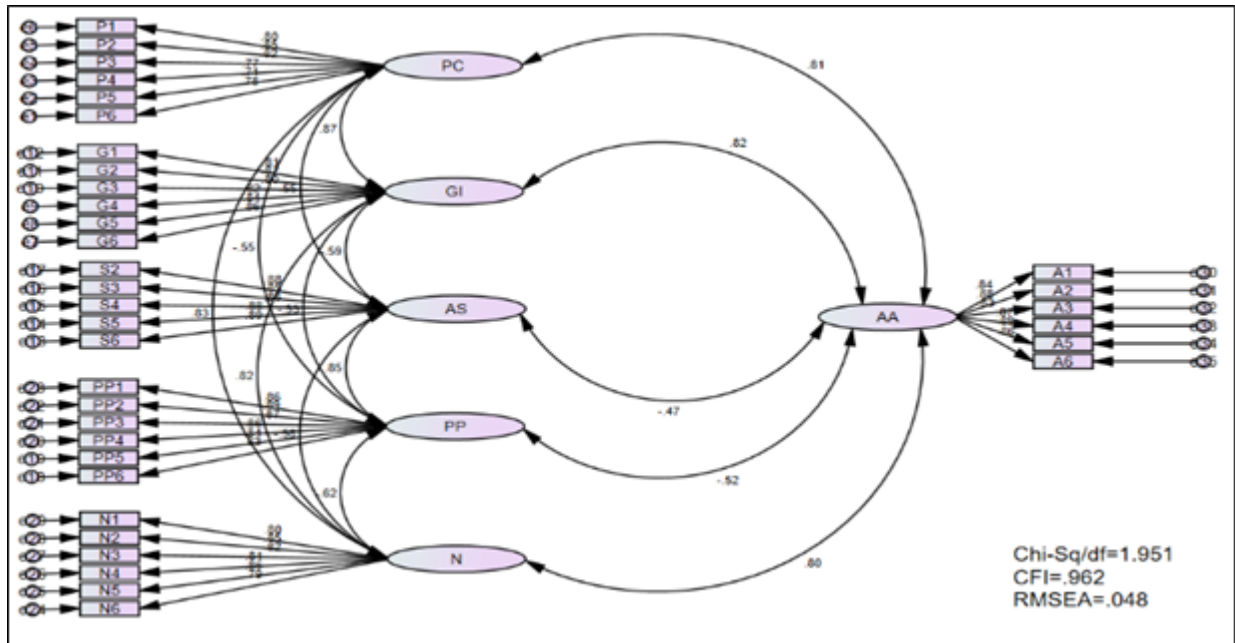
Variable	KMO value	Cronbach's alpha	Initial items	Final items
Privacy Concern	0.902	0.909	6	6
Goal Impediment	0.926	0.927	6	6
Perceived Personalization	0.914	0.944	6	6
Ad Skepticism	0.902	0.943	6	5
Negative Experience	0.908	0.926	6	6
OBA Avoidance	0.924	0.946	6	6

**Source:** Authors' representation based on SPSS results

Once internal consistency is confirmed, the model fit of observed data needs to be achieved. Accordingly, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Confirmatory Fit Index (CFI), and Chi-square (CMIN/DF) were tested. In this study, all index values reached the critical value margins (RMSEA = .048/ CFI = .962/ Chi-sq./df = 1.958) and the measurement model has a good fit for further analysis. Figure 2 indicates this measurement model with coefficient values. It shows highly positive correlation between Privacy Concern ( $r = 0.811$ ), Goal Impediment ( $r = 0.82$ ) and Negative Experience ( $r = 0.80$ ) with OBA avoidance at  $P > 0.001$  significant point. In addition, a moderate negative relationship between Perceived Personalization ( $r = -0.52$ ) and OBA avoidance at  $P > 0.001$  as well as with Ad Skepticism ( $r = -0.47$ ), creates a low negative correlation with OBA avoidance at  $P > 0.001$ . (Figure 2: Measurement Model)



**Figure 2: Measurement Model**

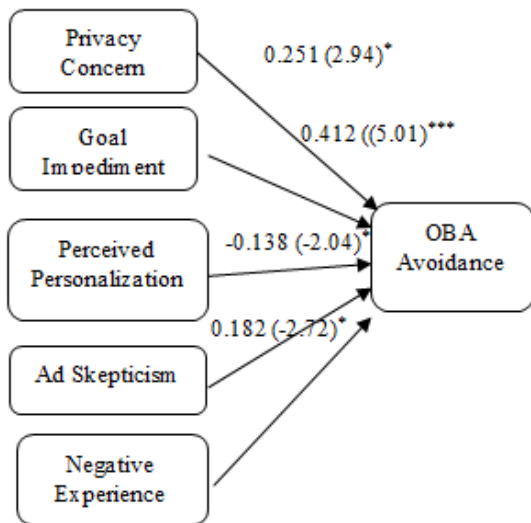


**Source:** Authors' representation based on AMOS results.

**B. Regression Analysis & Hypothesis Testing**

The hypothesis of this study has been tested using multiple regression analysis. Figure 3 represents the standard regression analysis weights.

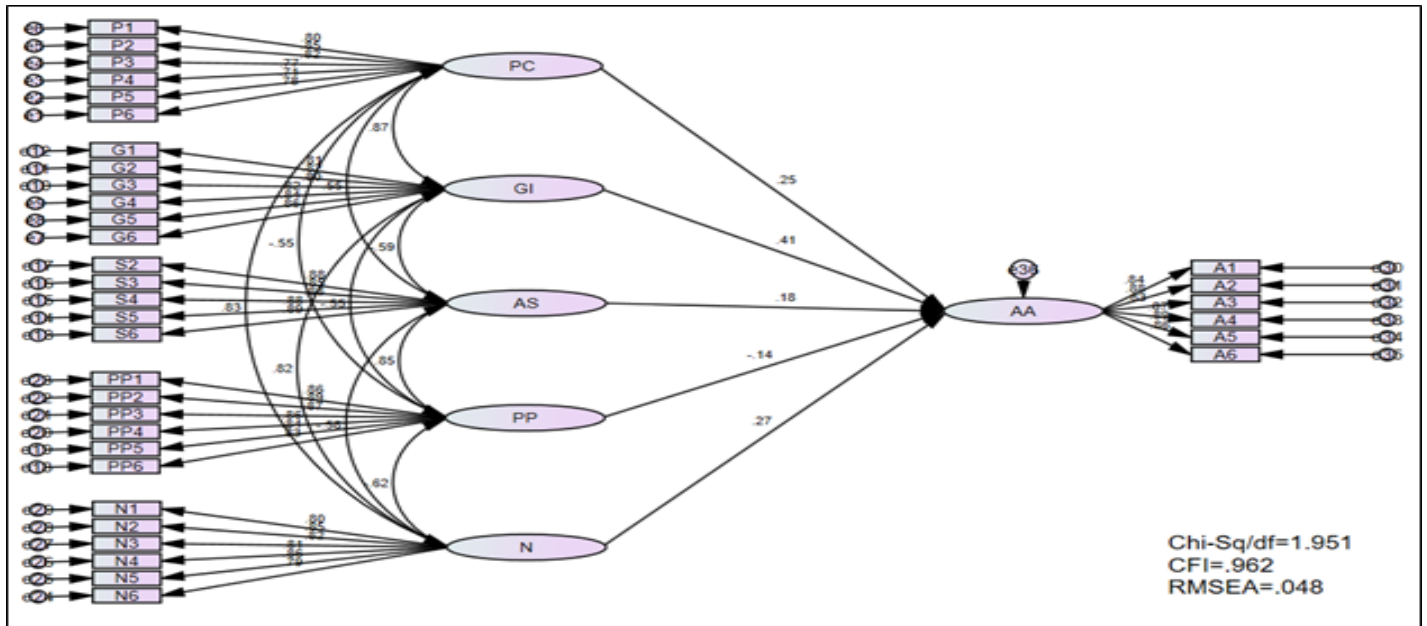
**Figure 3: The Standard Regression Weights**



**Source:** Authors' representation based on AMOS results.

Note: \*\*\*p < 000.1 is statistically significant.  
 \*p < 0.05 is statistically significant.  
 The AMOS output of the standard regression weight is shown below in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The Standard Regression Weights (AMOS Output)



Source: Authors illustration in AMOS.

Table 3 below represents the hypothesis testing pertaining to the study. To achieve the research objectives and determine the hypothesis, the main task is to find out the impact within variables. Privacy Concern creates a positive significant impact ( $\beta = 0.251$ ) on OBA avoidance ( $P < 0.05$ ), and the hypothesis was supported (H1: Privacy Concern create a significant impact on OBA avoidance). The goal impediment too creates a positive significant impact ( $\beta = 0.412$ ) on OBA avoidance ( $P < 0.001$ ), and the hypothesis was supported (H2: Goal Impediment create a significant impact on OBA avoidance). Perceived personalization

creates a negative significant impact ( $\beta = -0.138$ ) at ( $P < 0.05$ ) and the hypothesis was supported (H3: Perceived Personalization create a significant impact on OBA avoidance). To create positive significant impact, another two variables, ad skepticism ( $\beta = 0.182$ ) at ( $P < 0.05$ ) and Negative Experience ( $\beta = 0.271$ ) at ( $P < 0.001$ ) were considered. Results indicate that both hypotheses were supported (H4: Ad Skepticism create a significant impact on OBA avoidance) and (H5: Negative Experience create a significant impact on OBA avoidance).

Table 3 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis statement of path analysis	Estimate	Standard Estimate	C.R	P-Value	Result of Hypothesis
H1: Avoidance $\leftarrow$ Privacy	0.287	0.251	2.944	0.003	Supported
H2: Avoidance $\leftarrow$ Goal	0.400	0.412	5.018	0.001	Supported
H3: Avoidance $\leftarrow$ Personalization	-0.123	-0.138	-2.044	0.041	Supported
H4: Avoidance $\leftarrow$ Skepticism	0.148	0.182	2.725	0.006	Supported
H5: Avoidance $\leftarrow$ Negative Experie:	0.289	0.271	3.776	0.001	Supported

Source: Authors' representation based on AMOS results.

V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

This study provides new insight into the OBA practices in the retail industry, especially in the context of Sri Lanka. It answers the problem of OBA avoidance which is considered as the major barrier for online retailers as well as marketing agencies. In this study, key factors related to OBA avoidance have been identified through past literature and tested in Sri Lankan context. The significant impact of privacy concern on OBA avoidance ( $\beta = 0.287$  at  $P < 0.01$ ), indicates that consumers in a developing country have privacy concern same as the consumer in other parts of the world. This break the stereotype that consumers in developing countries are less privacy concern compared to the developed countries. Further, this result shows a red

light to the market practitioners in the OBA field not to exploit personal information of consumers. Thus, it supports the first hypothesis (H1: Privacy Concern has a significant impact on OBA Avoidance). This finding aligned with the studies conducted by OBA (Baek and Morimoto, 2012, Hossain, 2018, Li and Huang, 2016, Munir et al., 2017)). The goal impediment towards OBA avoidance indicates a significant impact of 40% ( $\beta = 0.400$  at  $P < 0.001$ ). Hence, it supports the second hypothesis (H2: Goal Impediment has a significant impact on OBA Avoidance). While a user engages in a particular task (regardless of its nature, trivial or important) appearing of those behavioural ads appear can block or distract users. In such instances, a frequent occurrence in OBA is that users tend to simultaneously

neglect those ads. This finding is in conformity with past studies conducted by (Bang and Wojdyski, 2016, Cho and John Cheon, 2004, Hossain, 2018, Li and Huang, 2016)). The above findings let market practitioners be more cautious in displaying advertisements without causing distraction towards the user's task. Further, when handling issues of this kind, notifications to the user prior to the appearance of ads can be a workable solution. When considering the relationship between perceived personalization and OBA avoidance a negative impact can be identified where OBA avoidance decreases by 12% while the perceived personalization of ads towards customers increases ( $\beta = -0.123$  at  $P < 0.05$ ). These results shed a light on the industry, proving that personalized advertisements could reduce ad avoidance among consumers. Baek and Morimoto, (2012) mentioned that most connectable and suitable information can grab the customers' mind. Even other researchers such as Li and Huang, (2016), Munir et al., 2017, Nyheim et al., (2015) conclude that perceived personalisation is caused low advertising avoidance. Everyone prefers some uniqueness; OBA is a good technique for this kind of person as it attempts to offer to convey some unique message to each and every customer. Since using OBA, a respective online retailer conveys an exclusive message to their target audience through their user name or by way of a hint/clue. This has created loyalty to a certain extent within customers towards that brand, product, or organization. Thus, the study's third hypothesis was supported (H3: Perceived Personalization has a significant impact on OBA Avoidance). Through this personalization; 1) it creates more confidence and loyalty in customers about the product and the organization, and 2) online retailers can gain more benefits to their business. Ad skepticism indicates a positive impact ( $\beta = 0.148$  at  $P < 0.05$ ) towards OBA avoidance. These results conclude the importance to trust in marketing. For this reason, if online retailers sell a product breaching trust, the respective transaction can be categorized as one-way. Unlike in cross-selling, this is where users do not make another deal with a particular product. This whole process can be identified as Ad skepticism, simply, disbelief of ads. Hence its support the fourth hypothesis (H4: Ad Skepticism has a significant impact on OBA Avoidance). Most past researchers classified Ad skepticism as a factor which creates an impact towards the OBA avoidance (Baek and Morimoto, 2012, Khuhro et al., 2017, Munir et al., 2017, Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998, Tran, 2017). Even in the Sri Lankan context, the result is similar to past studies. Once the user feels that the ad did not believable, they avoid those kinds of ads in their first sight. The experiences are creating the most prominent memories in the human mind. That measurement can be negative or positive in any platforms. In OBA, if that experience would be negative, it creates more obstacles towards the OBA. Most of the users, at first sight, make judgments on ads. Thus, the first impression of users can make an impact on their decision of accepting or rejecting an ad. Therefore, online retailers need to concentrate on their advertisement when these ads are displayed online. If not, a weaker first impression can alter the choices of users towards avoidance. Thus, this study's last hypothesis was supported (H5: Negative Experience has a significant impact on OBA Avoidance). The negative experience was

confirmed as an OBA avoidance factor by many past studies (Cho and John Cheon, 2004, Hossain, 2018, Li and Huang, 2016, Seyedghorban et al., 2015). Moreover, the negative experience customers receive in online retailing cause to increase by 28% ( $\beta = 0.289$  at  $P < 0.001$ ).

## VI. CONCLUSION

Various technological advancements have taken place almost in every industry worldwide. Among them, the role of marketing plays an important role in view of delivering products and services to the respective consumers. There is a number of ways in which online marketing of products are being carried out. Among them, the OBA technique has been trending, widely used and much sought after. Factors that create an impact on OBA and ad avoidance is an understudied topic in the Sri Lankan context. Due to diverse consumption patterns of Sri Lankans, conducting a study on identifying their behaviour is important for academia and practitioners. This study provides a clear as well as specific insights on the behaviour of Sri Lankan consumers towards online advertisements. In doing so, it focuses to reduce user rejection for online ads. This result will enable the overall effectiveness of online advertising activities to enhance its relative performance. Further, the results of this study also address the empirical gaps in understanding the factors which impact on OBA avoidance in the local setting. With the less usage of traditional mass media among people, the internet has become the green field for most business firms to promote their marketing messages and position their products/services. Behavioural advertisements facilitate this approach to be more effective until consumers start avoiding those advertisements. Hence to grab the opportunity of online advertisements, understanding the reason why people go away from OBA is important. This study identifies five factors like privacy concern, goal impediment, perceived personalization, ad skepticism, and negative experience, leading to advertising avoidance. Among them, goal impediment was the highest significant influencer towards OBA avoidance. This result concludes that distraction created by the behavioural ads did not in any way boost online retailers to attract new customers or increase their customer base. Thus, those online retailers should observe user responses to create behavioural ads that are attractive and free of distraction. Other factors such as negative experience, ad skepticism and privacy concerns sequentially created a positive and significant impact on OBA avoidance, while perceived personalization creates negative and significant impact. The results indicate that not all these variables generate a positive impact on OBA avoidance but some variables work as factors that generate a negative effect. These findings generate a new sphere of knowledge that assist local online retail firms to device online ads, to match well to be accepted within the Sri Lankan context. Further, results associated with the negative experience again proves the importance of the first impression. If a firm is unsuccessful in achieving customer trust at the initial stage, it is likely to negatively affect OBA avoidance in future. In addition to this, a unique finding concerning privacy has been discovered with regard to the online retail industry in Sri Lanka. Though privacy is a prominent issue in online retailing as observed in other countries, the impact of privacy concerns on OBA avoidance is very minimal in the

Sri Lankan context. It can be assumed that this customer habit reflects the nature of Asian culture. In Sri Lanka too, due to collective culture, people do not care much about divulging/disclosing their personal information to others. As a result, the researcher can assume, people do not worry much about privacy, that online retail users in Sri Lanka place low importance on the privacy factor when using online ads. Based on these unique findings, online retailers in Sri Lanka can redefine their marketing and advertising strategies to suit their target audiences for a better acceptance level by the users. Thus, online ads can be further personalized and enriched with more attraction component sustain the mutual relationship with users (buyer) and retail firms.

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