

Consumers' Perception and their Gender Implications on Online Shopping

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Abstract

Smart phones and easy internet availability have changed the concept of shopping worldwide. The Internet has changed the shape of shopping stores, as the physical stores are now converted to online stores. In the 21st century as most people are busy and loaded with hectic schedules, online shopping has become the easiest mode of shopping where you get things at your doorsteps. Online shopping not just gives ease, but being a business-to-consumer market it becomes more affordable too. Both male and females have several behavioral changes towards online shopping on the basis of convenience, touch and feel of the product, variety, home delivery facility, payment method, etc. This paper examines and compares such factors between male and females in Pune city.

Keywords: Online Shopping, Consumer, Behavior, Gender difference; Consumer satisfaction

1. Introduction

Online shopping is a buzzword in this modern tech-based busy world. In metropolitan cities like Pune, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru, where people are too busy with their work and personal life, online shopping gives them an ease to manage their shopping, saving time from traffic. From 2020, post Covid 19 lockdown, where everything was shut and people were scared of coming out of their house due to the pandemic, e-shopping acted as a boon as availability and delivery of daily essentials got easier. Online shopping evokes the physical analogy of buying products and services in regular brick-and-mortar shopping centers with the process called business-to-consumer online shopping¹.

Trade and commerce has become so diversified that it has reached throughout the world. Starting from eBay, Amazon, Flipkart, Snapdeal to Nykaa, Myntra, Ajoio, Firstcry to UrbanClap, Urban Company to Swiggy, Zomato, Food Panda to Swiggy Insta, Blinkit, and

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_shopping

many more, the e-commerce has become more versatile and has stepped in all products like clothes, food, furniture, baby products, groceries, medicines, etc. The journey started from products and has now reached to services like salon, medical, repair and maintenance, education, and many more. We name it and it's available online on a click with multiple options, varieties, and price range. Infrastructural development and transportation facilities acted as a blessing to them as delivery became easy. In the start where essentials took a few hours or even days to get delivered now, we get it as quick as 15 minutes.

The online stores facilitate customers to use the "search" feature to find the product and brand. Online customers must have access to the internet and a valid method of payment to complete the transaction, like debit card, credit card, or applications like Gpay, Paypal, etc. Many physical products like books, CD, DVD's, etc have now changed to e-books on sites like Amazon Kindle, digital audio files on applications like Spotify, Jio Saavn, and many more.

Risk and trust are two important factors that influence consumer buying behavior in the digital environment. Online reviews play a major role in consumer buying behavior whether online or offline. Customers switch between the channels in order to compare the price, varieties, and delivery dates. There are three major risks involved in consumer buying behavior online, such as the quality of the product received, as if it's not what the consumers wanted they will ask for return. Secondly, after-sale-services. Finally, many times customers may fail to understand the language used in e sales. It is generally observed that more than brand all consumers need is ease and comfort when choosing online shopping.

2. Review of Literature

(Singh, 2013) in his study on Consumer Behaviour in Online Shopping: A Study of Aizawl examines that, increased internet penetration, annoy free shopping environment, and high level of Net savings to see Indians online shopping. But at the same time companies want to decrease the risks associated with customers. The objective is not to convert all shoppers to online procuring, but to display them it's a choice. In totaling to above, efforts want to be taken to teach the online consumers on the stages that need to be started while creating an online buying. Furthermore, the response of an online customer should be taken to classify defects in service transfer. This can be done over online people and blogs that assist as marketing and advertising apparatuses and a basis of response for enterprises. Thus, the online selling increases more subjects than the benefits it presently proposes. The quality of products obtainable online and dealings for service delivery are yet to be uniform. Till this thing is done, the buyer is at a great risk of fraud.

(Negahdari, 2014) in his study explored gender differences among 13 factors concerning the interned buyer. With regard to factors, the findings of this study show that Merchandise, security, and company items gained more scores for men than women in online shopping in Iran. The study says that both genders have equivalent resources and equal access to the internet but the gender difference seems to be existing in this generation. For male, the ranking of most important factors seemed to be security, company factors

and merchandising and for females the ranking of most important factors seemed to be company factors, security, and merchandising. The target market in Iran for online shopping is between 25 and 45 years of age. Most frequently bought items from online retailers are Books and CDs, then are electronic goods and then sports equipment. These findings enable internet marketers to conduct effective demographic segmentation.

(Lim, Cheng, Cham, Ng, & Tan, 2019) summarized from their study that there are gender differences in Internet users' attitude towards online shopping, attitude towards web advertising, perceived usefulness of online shopping and perceived enjoyment of online shopping. They also analyzed that male internet users have a more positive attitude towards online shopping and web advertising and also find online shopping to be less risky and perceive online shopping to be more useful than female Internet users. Female internet users enjoy online shopping more than males. Website quality and marketing initiatives could be effective in cultivating positive attitudes among the Internet users. State-of-the-art website designs, reliable web connections, and catchy ad information content might promote a favorable impression among the buyers.

(Santosh & Basavarajappa, 2022) in their study discovered that the customers acknowledge sensible cost with respect to quality. Customers get better offers online in comparison to offline. They also found that age is an important factor that affects consumer buying decisions on the contrary as per the author's gender doesn't affect the online buying behavior. They examined whether a person is independently employed or owns a business; they are happy with online shopping. Also, solitary family size respondents seem to be exceptionally happy with their online shopping.

3. Overview of Online Shopping in Pune City

In a metropolitan city like Pune, where we have a mixed age group of people from different parts of the globe for jobs, business, and education, online shopping act as a support system for people to make their life easy. People have convenient options to buy their daily needs like milk and bread from application like suprdaily to food from Zomato, Swiggy, to groceries from applications like Blinkit, Swiggy Insta, Big Basket, etc to clothes from Ajo, Myntra to furniture or other households from applications like Flipkart, Amazon, etc. Online has become a one stop solution for all the requirements made available at our doorsteps. Looking at the boom of online shopping, many offline stores are finding their ways to go online, for example, Pepperfry, a reputed furniture chain has started their online application. During Covid-19, we have seen many schools from Pune city have found excellently handling their classes along with celebrations and extra co-curricular activities. With increasing traffic and hectic schedules, online has given next level ease to people. Apart from this ease, lots of card/bank offers or application discounts give add-on motivation to the rational consumers to go online.

4. Objective of the Study

This paper focuses on consumers' perception and their gender implications on online shopping.

5. Data Collection Method

The researcher has used a survey method to explore consumers' perception and their gender implications on online shopping. Research includes both primary and secondary data. Primary data for this study is collected with the help of a structured questionnaire collected from 50 participants residing in Pune City of different age groups selected randomly.

6. Analysis and Interpretation

Data was collected from 50 participants selected by using Simple Random Sampling Method on the basis of convenience. Out of the total participants 26 (i.e. 52%) were females and 24 (i.e. 48%) were males.

6.1. Age Wise Distribution

The figure given below shows the percentage distribution of consumers age wise. Out of the total population 26% were of 15 to 25 years, 30% were 25 to 35 years, 18% were 35 to 45 years and 26% were 45 years and above.

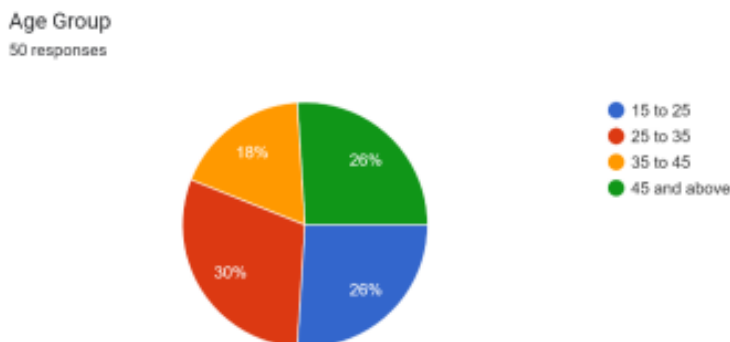


FIGURE 1. Consumers' age.

6.2. Frequency of Online Shopping

Out of 26 only two females of age group 25 to 35 and 45 and above responded saying that they choose online shopping just once in a year wherein four males out of 24 aged one consumer between 15 and 25, one from 25 to 35, and two from 45 and above choose

online shopping once in a year. Six females, three of 35 to 45 years of age and three of 15 to 25 years of age and three males of 15 to 25 years of age choose online shopping once in six months. Number of consumers using online shopping frequently or atleast once in a month were maximum, that is, 18 females and 17 males of mixed age groups. Therefore, with these numbers we can conclude that maximum people of mixed age groups prefer using online shopping.

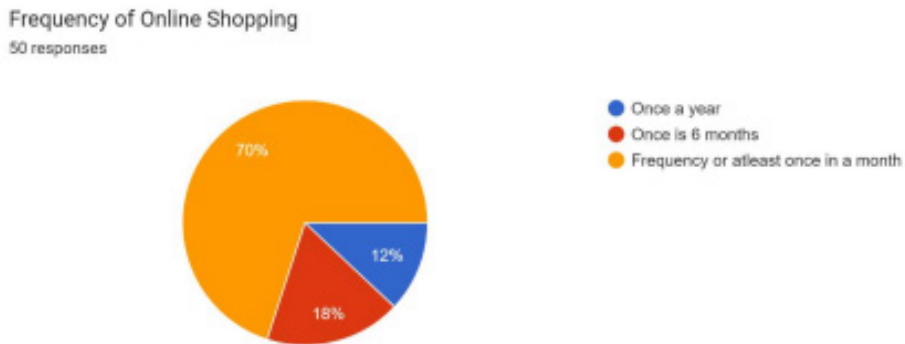


FIGURE 2. Frequency of online shopping.

6.3. Payment Method

All males and females on age 45 and above were found using credit and debit cards for the payment, only one female was found using a third party payment gateway, that is, Gpay, Paypal, phonepe, etc. Only two females of age between 35 and 45 attended the survey and both of them were more fond of third party payment gateways. Out of four males of 35 to 45 years, two use credit and debit cards along with a third party gateway, one choose bank transfer and one use third party gateway along with Cash on delivery. Maximum males females of age between 25 and 35 were found using Credit and debit cards along with third party payment gateway, only one male and female of this age group was found using cash on delivery. Females and males of age between 15 and 25 were found using third party gateway only one of them was found using cash on delivery. Therefore, we can conclude that the popularity of third party payment gateway is more amongst the youth, possibly that is one of the reasons why these vendors come up with attractive offers for consumers to encourage purchase. Similarly, banks also give attractive discount coupons which encourage people to purchase using cards. A brief description on the payment methods used by all samples is given below in a graphical form.

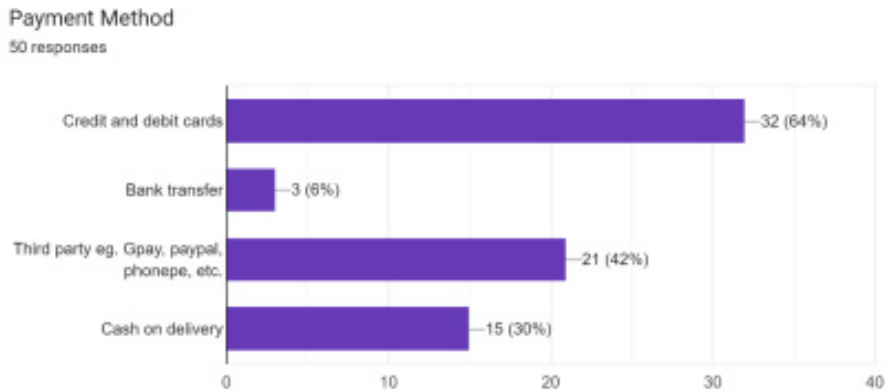


FIGURE 3. Payment methods.

6.4. Things Purchased Online

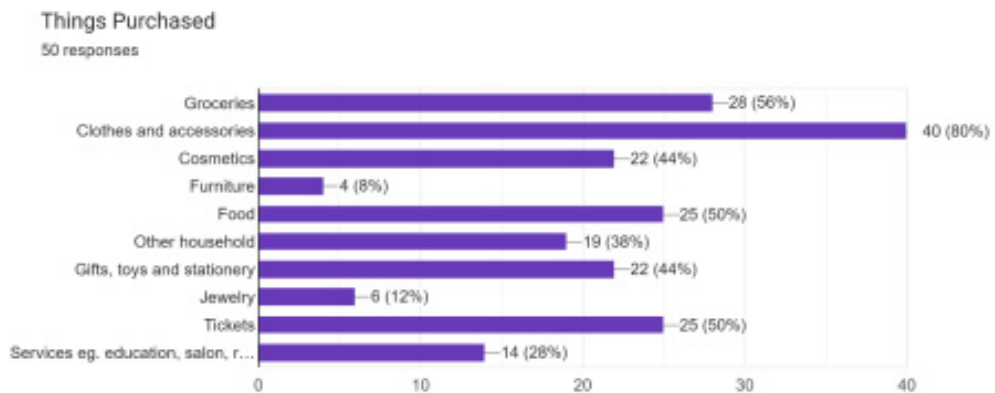


FIGURE 4. Things purchased online.

Things that maximum people, that is, 80% purchase online are clothes and accessories which is followed by Groceries (56%), Tickets (50%), and Food (50%). Cosmetics which are mainly purchased by females only are also preferred to be purchased online by 44% consumers and then are Gifts, toys, and stationery (44%). Other household goods are the next most purchased goods, that is, 38%. People are also preferring to choose services such as education, salon, repair, and maintenance etc. but less, that is, 28%. But the least preferred goods are Jewelry (12%) and Furniture (8%) probably because these are expensive goods and people prefer to touch and try before they purchase them. The above data seemed equal for both males and females.

6.5. Motivation to Choose Online Shopping

About 78% consumers use online shopping because they find it convenient and it saves them to travel to buy is what 72% consumers said. About 54% consumers use online shopping as they can easily compare the price with offline stores along with several online vendors, this helps them save money. About 50% of the total population choose shopping online as they get a wide range of products as there are many applications which give them a lot of variety. Also offers and coupons given by bank and credit & debit card vendors are the next encouragement for people to choose online shopping is what the 50% of population say.

About 48% of males and females seemed to choose online shopping because the payment is easy and return and replacement is convenient which is mostly difficult in offline shopping. With improved infrastructure and amazing transportation networks, the geographical hindrances have been removed. This gives an ease in purchasing things from other cities; states and countries too. Online shopping helps people in sharing their culture and traditions and people can conveniently purchase those goods with an online medium. Thus, 38% of consumers picked online shopping as it helps them shop beyond their geographical boundaries. Only 16% of consumers said that they choose online shopping as there are many application options. But most surprisingly, only 12% consumers said that they choose it as they get genuine reviews from existing users of that product or service that they are using because 76% of the population mentioned that they do consider reviews while choosing online shopping.



FIGURE 5. Motivation to use online shopping.

6.6. Barriers in Online Shopping

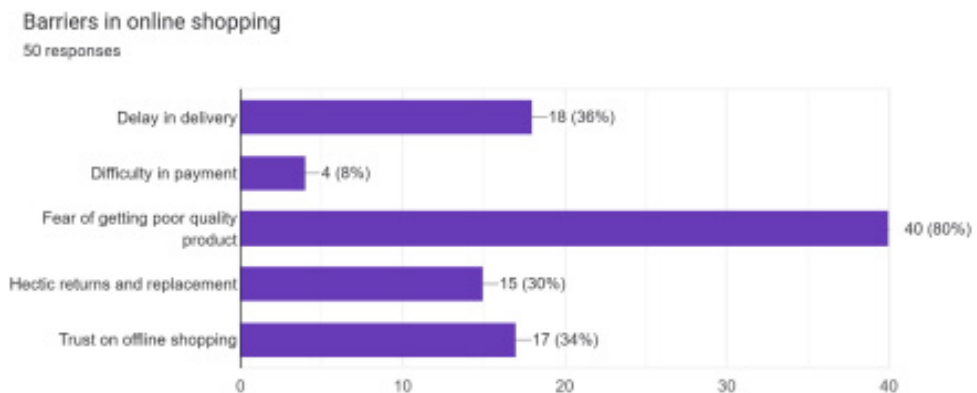


FIGURE 6. Barriers in online shopping.

About 80% of male and females find online shopping a problem as they have fear of getting poor quality products. Getting goods on time is one of the main reasons why people choose offline shopping these days as that is one barrier that 36% of online shoppers find. (Singh, 2013) in his study mentioned that till the time online product quality and delivery gets uniform, buyers will be at risk of frauds. 34% people don't find online shopping good because they have more trust in traditional methods of shopping, that is, to buy after trying the product once. Online shopping does facilitate easy returns and replacement but at the same time it's hectic too, as it may cause loss of money if the product is not delivered back to the same vendor. Along with that, some online vendors do have a long return and replacement process. Only four consumers mentioned that they don't prefer online shopping much as they find the payments difficult.

6.7. Considerations during Online Shopping

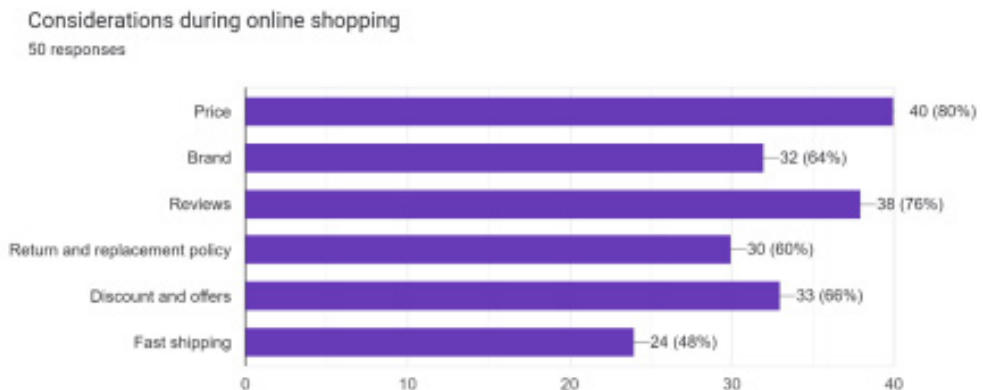


FIGURE 7. Considerations during Online Shopping.

Price is indeed a main factor considered while shopping whether online or offline. And when we choose online shopping, many options, offers, coupons, make shopping more pocket friendly. This is what 80% of consumers say. Online reviews are the next important thing that people consider even if they are going offline to any restaurant, doctors, tutors, or any shops. People share their reviews in the form of video and/or images, which make purchase decisions easy. About 76% consumers consider reviews while shopping online. About 66% of consumers get influenced with discounts and offers when shopping online. Online we get all brand options at ease and to assure the quality 64% consumers choose brand as a consideration while choosing online shopping. About 60% of consumers get attracted with return and replacement policies while choosing online shopping. About 48% of people are also concerned about the number of shipping days while choosing online shopping.

7. Conclusion

(Lakshmi, Niharika, & Lahari, 2017) in their study concluded that gender shapes different characteristics of male and female shoppers and women are internally focused and men are externally focused, (Lim, Cheng, Cham, Ng, & Tan, 2019) said that, female shoppers find Online shopping is more enjoyable than males, but this study contradicts these points as the researcher has found similar enthusiasm in males and females for online shopping. Consumers from different cultures may have different attitudes and preferences while shopping online, thus, this can be a scope of future research. (Shanthi & Kannaiah, 2015) in their study mentioned that transformation in shopping is coming because of changing lifestyles of consumers in India and expansion in online activities. This study reveals that price, brand, Zero travel, attractive discounts and offers, convenience, and a variety of products are major attractions for consumers going online to shop. Improved infrastructure, boost, and facilitate online shopping more as it eases the delivery of products on time. The researcher didn't find any gender implications on online shopping, both men and women equally find the payments, and online ease influencing shopping online. In metropolitan cities like Pune, where people are busy with their hectic jobs, online removes all hindrances of shopping at a click.

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