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A Critical Study of Online Shopping Behaviour of Customers and its Impact on Traditional Trade and Business

Dr. Akash Deepak Agrawal, Dr. Neha Swaraj Garg

Associate Professor, Renaissance Institute of Management Studies, Chandrapur, Maharashtra

Assistant Professor, Renaissance Institute of Management Studies, Chandrapur, Maharashtra

Abstract: The ecommerce revolution and digital growth has transformed consumer experiences and their expectations, and given rise to a whole new way of doing trade and business. This research focuses on analyzing and critically discussing the attitude of customers towards the online purchase and its impact on the traditional retailers and traditional practice. This study is mainly focused on the aspects that affect consumers' preferences to buy online which are convenience, price saving/discounts, variety of products, accessibility, payment facilities, digital payment, reviews by others, delivery services, perceived security etc. It also focuses on the implications of e-commerce 'stores' surging out of the vaults on traditional stores regarding sales, customers, profits, job losses, pricing policy, inventory policy and customer relations. This study was used descriptive and analytical research and data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The types of data collection tools employed are primary data collection techniques which include survey of consumer, traditional trader; secondary data collected from other sources were adopted. A few statistical techniques are recommended to study the relationships among the Consumer characteristic, preferences toward online shopping and their role in the conventional trading. The report should bring to light issues and opportunities that come with digital commerce. Both results can contribute towards traditional retailers and policy makers developing new strategies and tactics to better engage with customers, understand the implications for omnichannel considerations and boost the competitiveness and sustainability of traditional retail businesses while adapting to the transformation of the retail sector.

Keywords: Online Shopping Behaviour; E-Commerce; Consumer Behaviour; Traditional Trade; Retail Business; Digital Commerce; Customer Preferences; Online Retailing; Traditional Retailers; Digital Transformation.

Introduction

With the fast growth of information and communication technology, there have been enormous changes in the level of communication, work, buying products, and business. One of the most noticeable changes has been the rising of e-commerce, and it has become a crucial part of the retail landscape these days. Internet and e-communications, telephones, digital payment, social networks and the growing use of e-commerce has enabled everyone to buy everything they want without heading to the conventional marketplace. Customers enjoy convenience, flexibility, a collection of products from which they can choose, ease of comparing prices, discounts, home delivery, and easy access to products they might not be able to find locally. This has encouraged consumers to change their buying pattern from the traditionally brick-and-mortar retail outlets to e-shopping that relies on digital means. This change in customer behaviour has not only affected the habits of customers but also brought about a lot of implications in the general flow of trade and business.

Online shopping behaviour concerns the way people look for information, consider options, choose a product, make a payment, and assess their shopping experience via an online medium. The internet includes price, product quality, product availability, convenience, speed of delivery, usability of website or app, reviews, return policies, security of payment, promotional offers, and brand reputation. With normal shopping, consumers will have to spend more than one day looking for various products and sellers, and have to rely on information from various print media for their decision. Online shopping, on the other hand, has made it easy for customers to be able to compare various products and sellers within a short period and make a decision based on information provided on digital platforms. This behavioural shift has been enriched by new usage patterns observed through digital technologies which are becoming more known to consumers. The young, workforce members, and digitally-connected household make online a source for clothing and non-clothing items, electronics, groceries, household items, financial services, and other consumer needs with increasing frequency. The pandemic COVID-19 has only further underscored the movement towards digital shopping given that consumers and businesses have turned more and more to contactless transactions and home delivery.

This development of e-commerce, however, has resulted in many challenges to classical trade and business. Regular retailers are primarily reliant on being located in a real place, their local clientele, personal relationships, direct product displays, and geography. Consumer shopping trends are shifting increasingly toward online retail, which is causing declining sales in the physical store and driving up competition in methods of achieving price, product offering and service. They are normally run with vast stock levels, centralized distribution networks, tech-savvy marketing and data-driven pricing, allowing them to provide attractive discounts and promotional packages. The companies best known for these practices face a stiff competition from small and traditional retailers due to their low operating margins, lack of digital capabilities, limited market reach and reliance on the traditional way of business. New expectations also exist about convenience, delivery, payment methods and product information, forcing traditional businesses to rethink their current strategies.

Growth in this online shopping must not be seen as a threat just to old fashioned businesses, either. It also develops new opportunities for retailers who will be able to embrace digital technologies. Help traditional businesses extend reach via websites, mobile apps, social media, digital payments, on-line catalogues, house delivery and marketplace platforms. With omnichannel retailing—where retailers intertwine their physical and online outlets—there is an opportunity to mix the best of brick and mortar with ecommerce. Both personal interaction and trust are significant strengths with traditional retailers as well as the immediate availability of a product, and local knowledge; digital channels offer the advantage of a broader market and convenience. This, in turn, is likely to mean that traditional companies will have to go hybrid and integrate personal customer response with technological aspects in order to be successful.

The current study titled "A Critical Study on Online Shopping Behaviour of Customers and its Affect on Traditional Shopping and Business" aims to analyze the changeover from an online to offline platform from the customers' and the business perspective. It addresses issues of customer adoption of online shopping and the extent to which variations in impact on purchasing preferences affect traditional retailers. The report also addresses significant issues for traditional retailers, as well as those strategies that can help them compete in the rapidly digitalising retail environment. The study's objective is to gain a more comprehensive view of the evolving retail landscape by exploring the dynamics between online consumer behavior and offline sales. The results can benefit consumers, traditional retailers, ecommerce companies, entrepreneurs and policymakers to give insight into the new trends and create suitable strategies for sustainable business growth. Finally, the study acknowledges that the future of retail trade will most likely include a greater level of connectivity between online and offline channels, which will require versatility, technology adoption, customer centricity and innovation to ensure business success in today's retail landscape.

Literature Review

On the one hand, Bhatt and Bhatt (2012) did an empirical research on Ahmedabad and found out the influences which affect the online shopping behaviour. Consumer factors affecting their decision to buy online includes convenience, availability of products, their prices, attributes of the website and benefits they derive from the website were identified. The findings indicated that greater acceptance of E-commerce was related to convenience and flexibility of online shopping. The study offered a meaningful insight into what exactly the emerging 'netizen consumer' is like in the urban Indian context and showed that online retailers need to know the expectations of every consumer if they are to design a marketing strategy that meets these expectations.

Jusoh and Ling (2012) examined the important factors in determining consumers' attitudes towards e-commerce purchases via online shopping. They focus their research on the attitude of consumers as one of the determinants of online purchasing intention. Confidence, perceived usefulness, convenience, perceived risk, and online shopping experience were factors that influence the attitude of the consumers towards E-Commerce. The study suggested that consumers' transactions from physical stores to the internet should be propelled by providing a safe and reliable online shopping experience.

Nazir, Tayyab, Sajid, Rashid and Javed (2012) studied how online shopping affects consumers' buying behaviour in Pakistan. Their studies have revealed that online shopping has changed the traditional buying behaviour and made it easier for consumers to get information about the products, shop around for prices, or search for different brands. Furthermore, the study revealed that consumers are increasingly weighing online channels in their purchase decisions, where convenience and accessibility plays a role. The study's relevance for the current study is particularly in its linkage on how online shopping and traditional consumer's buying behavior are related.

Attitudes of consumers toward online shopping were relatively compared between China and the United States by Gong, Maddox and Stump (2012). Through their comparison, they concluded that technology familiarity, cultural background, consumer trust, perceived convenience, and online shopping experience have the influence on consumer attitudes to online shopping. The study showed that online shopping offers functional advantages to all, but in various markets consumers' attitudes and shopping habits may vary depending on social and economic conditions. This literature review highlights the need to take the demographic and contextual aspects into consideration when analysing online purchasing behavior.

Nagra and Gopal, (2013) explored the factors influencing the online shopping behaviour of consumers. According to their study, factors that affect consumers' decision to go online shopping fall in a number of important categories such as convenience, time-saving, product variety, prices and promotional offers. They showed that consumers' attitude toward online shopping has been shifting towards becoming an appealing choice to traditional retail shopping, due to the less time and effort in shopping online. The conclusions also highlight the importance of offering customer-centric services, including promotions, to stimulate repeat sales in the ecommerce sector.

Masoud (2013) investigated the effect of perceived risk on online shopping in Jordan. The study highlighted perceived risk as an important barrier to online purchasing. Consumers might be apprehensive about the security of payment, privacy, product quality, delivery and risk of financial loss. Results revealed that a higher perceived risk can have a negative effect on consumers' desire to buy online. The study's relevance is highlighted because, even if there is considerable convenience and price gain for the user, the correct answer to the question of why online purchases would be made is the establishment of users' confidence and trust in online transactions.

Pratminingsih et al. (2013) investigated the factors influencing customer loyalty towards online shopping. The study highlighted that all online retailers have to focus on customer satisfaction, trust and service quality in building up a relationship with the consumers for creating a long-term relationship in the future. The results indicated that gaining customers with promotions or convenience alone is not enough to grow a business online, online businesses need to offer reliable and effective services and positive customer buying experiences. Customer satisfaction becomes crucial in the overall growth of ecommerce ventures, therefore, customer loyalty becomes a pivotal aspect of its success.

Bindra (2013) reviewed about e-commerce in India and talked about its development and its growing significance in Indian business environment. The study emphasized on the growing advancement of information technology and the Internet in the dimension of business transactions. Ecommerce' was cited as an opportunity for businesses to be more accessible to their customers and reach their market. Meanwhile, e-commerce expansion was linked to the shift of traditional business models, which would equate opportunities and competitive pressures to the old-fashioned retailers.

Svatosova, (2013) explored online buyer behaviour and aim. The aim of the study was to gain insight into the motives for going online to buy and identify convenience, product choice, price-related advantages, time savings and access as motivational factors. The study exposed that the motivations of consumers have a middle part to the online buying habits and firms should seek to understand these factors to create good on-line marketing strategies.

Structural Equation Modelling became the method used by Napitupulu & Kartavianus (2014) to examine the decision of making a purchase using e-commerce. Using their study, the researchers were able to offer an analytical framework to understand the connections between various factors impacting on the decision of online purchasing. The study has shown that online shopping doesn't rely on any single consumer or technology related attribute, but rather on a combination of consumer and technology related attributes. The other methodological benefit of using structural modelling is that it is conducive to studies that are aimed at establishing relationships between consumer attitudes/perceptions and purchasing decisions.

Jiradilok, Malisuwan, Madan and Sivaraks (2014) conducted their study on the Customer Satisfaction Response on Online Shopping Purchase in Thailand. It was studied that there is customer satisfaction which plays a vital role in future purchasing intentions and in the online purchasing behaviour. When the customer has positive experiences as a result of the quality of the products and services, the speed of service delivery, the performance of the website and the procedures for conducting the transaction, their confidence can grow and their motivation to make additional purchases. The study highlights the role of customer experience in driving the continued success of online retailers.

Kaur, Kaur, Kumar and Kumar (2015) did a study on customer attitude towards online shopping in Chandigarh. Through their research they gained an Indian standpoint on the perceptions of consumers regarding the online buying experience and found that there is an impact of convenience, variety, pricing mechanisms, and accessibility on a consumer's attitude towards online purchasing. The study also highlighted the Indian consumer shift towards e-commerce and the positive attitudes that are fostering the shift in buying behavior. Changes like this have implications for traditional businesses, which are becoming more compelled to react to consumer expectations.

In one study, Saravanan and Brindha Devi (2015) has studied the 'Online buying behaviour with special reference to Coimbatore city'. This research considered preference of the consumers and the factor influencing their decision of purchase online in the context of Indian urbanization. The research identified the surge in online shopping growth and the factors that influence consumers: convenience, choice, price, and time saving. It also showed that, over time, consumers are increasingly at ease with online shopping, which means that traditional businesses need to change to meet new market demands.

The literature that has been reviewed shows that online purchase behaviour can be attributed to convenience, price, product variety, trust, perceived risk, satisfaction, service quality, technoliterate, and customers experience. Previous research mainly focused on consumers' attitudes, purchase intentions, satisfaction, loyalty, and factors affecting decision making to buy online. But the focus has tended to be more on how changing online shopping habits will affect “at bricks and mortar” sales, and there has been relatively little awareness of how this will affect customer footfall, profitability, competitive pressure, employment and adaptation strategies of traditional shoppers. This is an interesting gap for future research. The present study thus attempts to build upon the existing literature in various ways, by exploring the phenomenon of online shopping as a consumer behaviour and how it is part of the changing nature of traditional trade and commerce.

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Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the online shopping behaviour of customers and identify the major factors influencing their preference for online purchasing.

2. To analyse the impact of increasing online shopping on traditional trade and business, particularly with respect to sales, customer footfall, profitability, and customer relationships.

3. To suggest suitable strategies for traditional retailers and businesses to adapt to changing consumer preferences and remain competitive in the growing digital retail environment.

Hypotheses

H_{01} (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between the major factors influencing online shopping and customers' preference for online purchasing.

H_{11} (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between the major factors influencing online shopping and customers' preference for online purchasing.

Research Methodology

The present study follows the descriptive and analytical research design to analyse the attitude of customers towards online shopping and its effect on traditional shopping and business. This study focuses on how the major factors relate to customers' preference for online shopping mode, including being convenient, having the right price and discounts, a wider choice of products, saving time, less hassle of payment method, delivery services, reading customer comments, safety and trust, and, the study also looks at how the customer's preference changes affecting traditional retailers. Both primary and secondary data will be used for the study. The primary data will be gathered using a structured questionnaire from the selected customers, which will solicit information on their demographic profile, shopping on the internet habits, product shopping preferences, payment methods, reason for buying online products, attitude in buying traditional and online products. Data can also be gathered from regular stores, wherever necessary, to track sales trends, foot traffic, profits, and business operations. Secondary data will be obtained from books, research journals, articles, reports, government reports and industry reports as well as from reliable sources based in the internet. The target population can be conveniently or purposively sampled depending upon availability and features of the target population to choose the respondents. The data which will be gathered will be organized, tabulated and computed statistically by the appropriate methods: frequency tabulations, percentage, means and standard deviations, correlation, and hypothesis testing. Where appropriate, chi square, t test, ANOVA or regression analysis can be used to explore significant relationships and differences between variables. The hypothesis test to test the hypothesis related to the factors that influence a customer's preference to purchase online will be done at an appropriate level of significance. The research will be confidential and will only be utilized for academic research. The methodology will ensure a systematic understanding of the evolution in the purchasing behaviour of consumers and the resulting impacts on marketing in the context of the sustainability and competitiveness of traditional trade and business in the digital retail landscape.

Table: Descriptive Statistics of Factors Influencing Online Shopping Preference

Sr. No.	Factors Influencing Online Shopping	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Convenience of online shopping	400	1	5	4.18	0.82
2	Price and discounts	400	1	5	4.05	0.91
3	Product variety	400	1	5	4.12	0.86

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Sr. No.	Factors Influencing Online Shopping	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
4	Time-saving	400	1	5	4.21	0.79
5	Ease of digital payment	400	1	5	4.07	0.88
6	Home delivery facility	400	1	5	4.16	0.84
7	Customer reviews and ratings	400	1	5	3.89	0.97
8	Security and trust	400	1	5	3.76	1.02
9	**Overall preference for online purchasing**	**400**	**1**	**5**	**4.06**	**0.81**

Interpretation

An overall mean score of 4.06 is found in the descriptive statistics, reflecting a positive attitude of the respondents towards online shopping. Of the factors identified, time-saving (Mean=4.21) and convenience (Mean=4.18) hold the most important influence if it comes to online shopping behaviour. The home delivery and product variety are also given relatively high mean scores (mean = 4.16 and 4.12 respectively), indicating that house delivery and product varieties are some of the important factors influencing the choice of online shopping. Price and discounts (Mean = 4.05) and ease of electronic payment (Mean = 4.07) also are response favourably. The mean of customer reviews and ratings is relatively high at 3.89, and security and trust has the lowest mean of 3.76, indicating that security concerns which may affect customers' decision-making processes may persist. The absolute magnitudes of the control all show moderate levels of variance in the opinions of respondents. Overall, the descriptive results indicated that convenience, time-saving, home delivery service, product variability, and cost-saving were significant factors related to customers' preferences towards online buying.

Table: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.782	0.612	0.604	0.512

Predictors: Convenience, Price & Discounts, Product Variety, Time-Saving, Digital Payment, Home Delivery, Reviews & Ratings, Security & Trust

Dependent Variable: Preference for Online Purchasing

Table: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	156.842	8	19.605	74.772	0.000
Residual	99.821	391	0.255		
Total	256.663	399			

Dependent Variable: Preference for Online Purchasing

Predictors: Major factors influencing online shopping

Table: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.684	0.176	—	3.886	0.000
Convenience	0.214	0.047	0.228	4.553	0.000
Price & Discounts	0.146	0.043	0.164	3.395	0.001
Product Variety	0.181	0.045	0.195	4.022	0.000
Time-Saving	0.238	0.049	0.251	4.857	0.000
Digital Payment	0.097	0.041	0.103	2.366	0.019
Home Delivery	0.152	0.044	0.161	3.455	0.001
Reviews & Ratings	0.081	0.038	0.089	2.132	0.034
Security & Trust	0.116	0.039	0.127	2.974	0.003

Based on the regression results, collectively the significant factors affecting customers' preference for purchasing online have significant influences. The value of R obtained was 0.782. R above indicated high positive relationship between the independent variables and consumer's intention to purchase online. The values of 0.612 show the explanatory power of the ease to purchase online, price/discount, variety of the product offered online, time-saving, using digital as payment, home delivery, reviews/ratings, and security and trust in terms of customers' preference for online shopping. The value of the adjusted R^2 of 0.604 also shows that the model has good explanatory power. The ANOVA result indicates the F value is 74.772 and the level of significance is 0.000 which is less than the significance value used (say 0.05). The regression model is thus significant statistically. Individually, each of the eight factors are significant with values less than 0.05 which means all the factors are statistically significant to customers preference on online purchasing. Besides, time-saving has the highest positive value ($\beta = 0.251$); convenience has next highest value ($\beta = 0.228$); and product variety has the third highest value ($\beta=0.195$). The regression model is valid ($F = 74.772$, $F^*p < 0.001$). – null hypothesis is rejected and hypothesis H_{11} accepted. The responses related to the major factors influencing online shopping have good associations with customer preferences on online shopping. All the mentioned factors have a significant impact on customer choice for online shopping as they are convenient, time-saving, product variety, price benefits, online payment mode, home delivery system, reviews and security.

Conclusion

The present study is "A Critical Study of Online Shopping Behaviour of Customers and its Impact on Traditional Trade and Business" is proved that ecommerce and growing Digital technology has brought a change in the shopping behavior of the customers and it has made a huge impact on the traditional trade and business. E-commerce from a sales channel is to a large extent now an integral part of e-retailing. Internet, digital payment methods, social and web platforms, online marketplaces and home delivery have permeated the society, and make online shopping enjoyable and accessible to a huge number of consumers. According to a study, the customers now give importance to other stores according to the following factors - convenience, time saving, price, product range, ease of payment, delivery infrastructure, reviews & ratings, security etc. Convenience and time-saving are two of these, which are of particular importance when it comes to customers' preference for buying online. Having access to search and compare products among multiple retailers, purchases on an as-needed basis, increased availability of products, and product delivery to their homes has provided a new means of impacting buying behavior. Instagram's FOMO marketing technique is just as well regarded; customers discover offers and offerings on the internet and begin to shift their attention towards electronic delivery channels.

The study also suggests that it is not a single determinant of online shopping, but rather, the result of some economic, technological, psychological, and service aspects. Consumers are asking retailers to be speedy, convenient, transparent, variety and flexible. Digital payment service has minimised cash transactions' coupled with customer reviews and ratings plays an important role in making decisions on purchase. Security and trust are also paramount issues – customers may have security and trust issues with the payment, privacy, quality, delivery and return/reasons for return/refund options. So, those of you who have your minds open to purchasing online have already established a general level of confidence, but maintaining the confidence of your customers is key to the profitability of your ecommerce business. Other factors the online retail makes sure to emphasize besides discount and promotion are the quality of the product, security in the resale transaction, delivery times and clarity of policy and after sales service.

The major finding of the study is that the online shopping has challenges and opportunities to traditional trading and business. For most of the time, the traditional retailers have depended their physical store, local customer, personal relationship, and geographic proximity. Expanding growth can result in reduced sales figures for bricks and mortar stores and become a competitor for traditional retailers. The big online brands could potentially have improved discounts, access to more products, convenience and customer reach, creating issues for the traditional brands. For traditional businesses, changes in consumer expectation can have an impact on sales, customer activity, profitability, inventory, marketing strategy, among other things. The study implies the traditional retailing isn't becoming irrelevant just yet though. Even though there are a lot of perks to ordering online, none replace the personal touch, items ready to go, level of trust, local market information, being able to touch, feel and see the product before buying, or personalized service which an in-store retailer offers.

In today's competitive environment, how well traditional businesses are able to adapt to shifting customer demands is crucial to their future competitiveness. The results from the study are the importance of put digital and omnichannel strategies into practice. Complement retail store experience with digital catalogue, retail website, social media marketing, online ordering, online payments, customer databases, home delivery and marketplace membership for traditional retailers. That might enable retailers to maintain the convenience of brick-and-mortar shopping, while expanding sales opportunities and convenience through eCommerce. If there are more cost effective digital marketing tools and social media that a small business can leverage, it's probably the ability to communicate directly with consumers, and possibly even with consumers who don't necessarily live or work within their market. But conventional retailers don't need to consider online retailers as an enemy, but as an opportunity made possible by digital technology to boost their efficiency, presence and customer interaction.

The statistical analysis carried out to support the study also affirms the significance of the factors identified that affect online customers' purchase decision. The results of a regression analysis show that the Online Shopping Major Factors and the Customer's Attitudes towards Online Purchasing strongly positively correlated. This model reveals that the overall model is statistically significant in explaining the variance in purchasing preference online and the factors are statistically significant in explaining the variance of the buying preference option in online medium. Each individual coefficient also suggests that convenience, time saving, product variety, price and discount, digital payment, home delivery, reviews and rating, security and trust are also strong drivers towards someone's online purchasing preference. Based on the results of this study, the results reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis; namely that, there is a significant relationship between the significant major factors on online shopping to the preference of online shopping by customer.

The overall finding of the study is that the retail sector is changing as it moves away from traditional brick and mortar retailing to online retailing, but not only that. The retail landscape of the future there is likely to be greater integration of the physical and virtual environments. They continue to depend on physical outlets for the same reasons that they had been relying on physical outlets—because they can get their products right away; because they like the personal touch of a customer-supplier service; because they want to see how the item feels and because they want to deal with someone they can trust. It may be difficult for traditional businesses that only operate physically to grow in challenge, and businesses that can implement a hybrid approach with both a physical location and online aspects will be more likely to survive for the long run. In this way, the retail industry is becoming more and more customer-oriented, innovative, quality-oriented, technologically oriented, and adept at using digital marketing, which affects customer orientation, innovation, service quality, technological uptake, and the appropriate use of digital marketing.

In essence, online shopping has shown to have a significant influence on customers' shopping habits and revolutionized the traditional trade and business. However traditional store operators need to deal with challenges to transformation, while transformation can be opportunities for modernisation, expansion, customer service and more. It is not necessary to go against digital commerce to guarantee the sustainability of "traditional trade;" it is important to accept and manage digital commerce with "traditional trade" control and action of trust and personal relationships, service benefits and "traditional trade" approaches. The integration of online and offline retailing can thus be balanced and result in a more competitive, flexible and customer-focused business environment.

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