

Behavioral Changes of Female Consumers in Online and Traditional Shopping

by

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Abstract

Female consumers are more interested in shopping. They are enjoying while doing shopping whether it is online shopping or traditional shopping. Shopping the products through the internet gives the opportunity to try them on from home at any time. In offline shopping, there is no issue of wait for several weeks. When buying the urgent products, it becomes convenient. In this study, a survey has been undertaken to analyse the behavioural changes of female consumers in online and traditional shopping. It was found that young women have mostly attracted towards online shopping and further it was concluded that selection and availability of different brands are the attractive features of internet shopping.

Keywords: Female consumer, online shopping behavior, Traditional shopping behavior, etc.

Introduction:

The retail sector is one of the fastest-growing commercial sectors in India. It has become the backbone of the Indian economy. Indian consumers, especially female consumers may have some special interest in the product they buy as well as the mode they buy it. Both online and offline shopping have their own advantages and disadvantages. There is no need to travel long distances in online shopping and consumer can choose from a wide variety of products. It remains functional 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Customers get great offers and discounts and have the facility to check reviews of previous customers. Conversely, traditional purchasing has the advantage that customers can physically inspect the product and ensure the quality. Although in the modern age, shopping through the internet has become quite a craze among the masses especially among female shoppers. There are many types of online portals. Among those most popular online shopping sites are Amazon.in, Flipkart.com, Snapdeal.com, Jobong.com, and Myntra.com.

Consumers are said to be the leaders of the market. Therefore, studying and analyzing the behavior and attitudes of consumers is essential and inevitable for the survival of a business. The age of the consumers can influence their behavior. Purchasing behavior may vary according to their level of income. Similarly, gender is another significant demographic variable that needs to be studied further. A female consumer uses both types of shopping channels. Some of them consider physical stores as primary shopping channels and internet shopping as a supplementary channel while others follow the reverse pattern.

In a common perspective, people with higher learning and higher incomes are favorable to online shopping. The shoppers who are more knowledgeable and more explored to the internet are more into online shopping. The technological advancement is also creating a favorable attitude towards online shopping among the customer, especially female shoppers.

Problem Statement:

Although the customer is the key element of a business, their taste, preference and attitudes are unpredictable. This study will help to understand the problems of female consumers related to online and traditional purchasing. The need for clarity on the factors that make them reluctant to offline and online shopping is relevant. Some specific questions need to be answered. Why do female shoppers rely on internet shopping? Why do they shop from the physical market instead of relying on online shopping? The study creates an awareness of electronic shopping and gives an idea about the most beneficial shopping option among female consumers.

Review of Literature:

Given below the summary of previous findings that are significant for this study:

Fenigstein, A., Scheier, M., & Buss, A., (1975) concluded that females in comparison to males are highly knowledgeable about price and types of stores and hence this knowledge can influence the retailer management strategies.

Harris, M., & Rodgers, S.,(2003) Women are less emotionally content with online shopping than men are, since women found it less convenient. Women also had less trust in online shopping than men.

Sriparna, G.,(2013) found in her study on the changing perception and buying behavior of women consumers that working women are more involved with purchasing activities. They are more price-conscious as compared to non-working women. It has also been observed that working women are more store loyal than non-working married women.

Research Objectives:

- i. To examine the factors influencing female consumers to switch from traditional shopping to online shopping and online to traditional shopping.
- ii. To bring out the factors influencing the female respondents to purchase solely offline and solely online.
- iii. To analyze whether the educational qualification of the woman shopper affects online shopping and offline purchasing.

Study methodology:

The study was completed by implementing a research design that is partially descriptive and partially analytical. Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data was collected by issuing a questionnaire. Secondary data was collected through various reference books and journals. The study was conducted in Iritty municipality (Kerala) using a convenient sampling technique. Findings and conclusions are based on 150 sample responses.

Hypothesis:

Two attributes, educational qualification of respondent and preference of shopping mode are independent.

Limitations of the Study:

- i. The reliability of the findings purely depends on the information provided by the respondents.
- ii. The analysis is based on the research topic so that other areas of concern may be neglected.
- iii. The researcher limits the size of the sample to 150 respondents due to lack of time, so the result may not be accurate.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1: Educational qualification of the respondents¹

| Qualification | Number of respondents | Percentages |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Up to S S L C | 8 | 5.33 |
| Plus two | 22 | 14.67 |
| Graduate | 73 | 48.67 |
| Post graduate | 47 | 31.33 |
| Total | 150 | 100 |

Qualification is a significant factor that determines the mode of shopping. The above representation shows that 48.67% of respondents have qualified as graduates and 31.33% were qualified as post-graduate. The plus two groups consist of 14.67% and the SSLC groups consist of 5.33%.

Table 2: Preference of online shopping portals²

| Online shopping sites | Number of respondents | Percentages |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Flipkart | 62 | 41.33 |
| Snapdeal | 19 | 12.67 |
| Amazon | 40 | 26.67 |
| Myntra | 14 | 9.33 |
| Jabong | 10 | 6.67 |
| Others | 5 | 3.33 |
| Total | 150 | 100 |

The most relied upon the website for online shopping is Flipkart, i.e. 41.33%. Next in line is Amazon with 26.67% of people. 12.67% of respondents are reported to be shopping at Snapdeal. Myntra was chosen by 9.33% and Jabong by 6.67%. Just 3.33% of people rely on other portals.

¹ Source: Primary Data

² Source: Primary Data

Table 3: Influenced promotional strategies for online shopping³

| Promotional strategies | Number of respondents | Percentages |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Sale ads | 30 | 20 |
| Discounts | 75 | 50 |
| Festival offers | 40 | 26.67 |
| Others | 5 | 3.33 |
| Total | 150 | 100 |

Promotional activities play an important role in influencing shopping behavior. Here, it shows that discounted price attracts 50% of the respondents to online shopping. 26.67% of people are influenced by festival offers and make online purchases. 20% are found to be affected by sales ads and only 3.33% by other means.

Table 4: Preferred shopping mode if the price is same in the shop and on the internet⁴

| Shopping mode | Number of respondents | Percentages |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Online shopping | 90 | 60 |
| Traditional shopping | 60 | 40 |
| Total | 150 | 100 |

One important thing to understand from this study is that if the price of the product is the same, 60% of the population chooses online shopping. The reason behind this is that transportation costs and time can be saved. But 40% of people prefer traditional shopping. This is because the product can be examined directly to ensure quality. Lack of technical knowledge can also be stated as a reason.

Table 5: Is online shopping as safe as traditional shopping?⁵

| Opinion | Number of respondents | Percentages |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 70 | 46.67 |
| No | 29 | 19.33 |
| Sometimes | 51 | 34 |
| Total | 150 | 100 |

As per the table, 46.67% of the population thinks that online shopping is as safe as traditional shopping. 34% said that sometimes they have security problems while 19.33% commented that online shopping is not very safe.

Table 6: Is the selection of goods in online shopping very wide compared to the traditional market?⁶

| Comments | Number of respondents | Percentages |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Yes | 127 | 84.67 |
| No | 8 | 5.33 |
| Sometimes | 15 | 10 |
| Total | 150 | 100 |

³ Source: Primary Data

⁴ Source: Primary Data

⁵ Source: Primary Data

⁶ Source: Primary Data

84.67% of the population says that wide varieties of goods are available in online shopping and it is possible to shop with a single click. But 5.33% of female shoppers have no such opinion. The remaining 10% are of the opinion that such facilities are available only occasionally.

Table-7 Analysis of reasons for online shopping on the basis of age of the respondents⁷

| Age Groups | Saving of time | Door to door services | Saving of transportation cost | Availability of variety of products | Total number of respondents |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Up to 18 years | 3 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 14 |
| 18-25 years | 18 | 17 | 19 | 40 | 94 |
| 25-35 years | 6 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 31 |
| 35 and above | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 11 |

The survey is conducted among 150 female consumers of different age groups. Out of 14 female shoppers, up to 18 years of old 3 commented that they chose online shopping because of time savings. Another 3 people were attracted towards the feature of door-to-door service. 2 females stated that they don't need to go outside for shopping purposes and 6 people thinking that a wide variety of products are easily available. 94 females are in the age group between 18 and 25. Among them, 18 respondents stated that an attractive feature of online shopping is time-saving and 17 shoppers commented that door-to-door service is relevant. 19 people gave the reason that they can save transportation costs and the majority of them i.e. 40 respondents influenced on a wide selection. There are 31 women aging between 25 and 35. 15 of them are attracted to online shopping because of a wide selection of goods. 6 respondents gave the reason for time-saving and 5 customers said that it was door-to-door service and another 5 commented in favor of the factor 'saving of transportation cost'. 11 women shoppers aging 35 and above participated in this survey. Out of them, 3 shoppers were attracted towards time savings and 2 respondents gave the reason of door to door service and another 2 people influenced on transportation cost-saving and the majority of them i.e. 4 customers commented that wide selection of goods is the reason behind their online shopping.

Relationship between educational qualification of respondents and preference of shopping mode:

H0: Educational qualification and preference of shopping modes are independent

H1: Educational qualification and preference of shopping modes are not independent

$$\chi^2 = \sum (O-E)^2 / E$$

Where O = Observed frequency, E = Expected frequency

Expected frequency = Row total *Column total/ Grand total

Table 8: Observed frequencies

⁷ Source: Primary Data

| Educational Qualifications | Shopping Modes | | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| | Online shopping | Offline shopping | |
| Up to S S L C | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| Plus two | 7 | 15 | 22 |
| Graduate | 39 | 34 | 73 |
| Post graduate | 29 | 18 | 47 |
| Total | 76 | 74 | 150 |

Table 9: Calculation of χ^2 Value

| O | E | O-E | (O-E) ² | (O-E) ² /E |
|---|-------|-------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 4.05 | -3.05 | 9.30 | 2.296 |
| 7 | 11.15 | -4.15 | 17.22 | 1.544 |
| 39 | 36.99 | 2.01 | 4.04 | 0.109 |
| 29 | 23.81 | 5.19 | 26.93 | 1.131 |
| 7 | 3.95 | 3.05 | 9.30 | 2.354 |
| 15 | 10.85 | 4.15 | 17.22 | 1.587 |
| 34 | 36.01 | -2.01 | 4.04 | 0.112 |
| 18 | 23.19 | -5.19 | 26.93 | 1.161 |
| Calculated χ^2 Value | | | | 10.294 |

Degree of freedom = $(4-1)*(2-1) = 3$, Level of significance = 0.05

Table value = 7.815

The table value is less than the calculated value. So the null hypothesis has been rejected. Hence, it indicates that there is a significant association between educational qualification and preference of shopping mode.

Findings and Conclusion:

The most important thing that is clear from the data analysis is that highly educated females between the ages of 18 and 25 are more interested in online shopping. Many respondents over the age of 35 are more interested in traditional shopping instead of online shopping. The main reasons behind this are lack of awareness about online shopping sites and lack of technological knowledge. Therefore, it can be stated that online shopping is preferred by young women.

While comparing with traditional shopping, one of the major problems of online shopping is related to the payment system. Many respondents are afraid to make payments through net banking or debit card. Most of the participants in the survey are selected 'cash on delivery' as their payment option. It is also a fact that there are so many people complaining about the delivery system of online shopping. Some people are not interested in buying electronic products from online shopping. Although there are many online shopping portals, Flipkart is one that is mostly supported by respondents.

The study has been conducted to analyze the behavioral changes of female consumers in online and traditional shopping. Females are more passionate about shopping. They are finding enjoyment in shopping whether it is traditional shopping or internet shopping. The study is concluded that the majority of females especially young women are attracted to online shopping. Further, it may be added that time-saving, reduction in transportation cost, a wide variety of goods and its selection are the main factors that attracted the respondents towards e-shopping. The merit of traditional shopping is that the shopper can directly check and ensure the quality of goods.

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