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Studying Consumer Behaviour of Shopping Through Online Portals from Students' Perspective

BHAGYASHREE DESHPANDE

Online buying has risen to prominence among modern college students because of the booming worldwide e-commerce sector. An empirical study was conducted among management students of various b-schools in Maharashtra to understand their shopping habits on online portals. The intention was to identify the factors that drive students purchase decisions. This paper also analyzes the impact of gender on purchase types. It was observed that gender has no impact on purchase decisions of students. The findings demonstrate that enjoyment, perceived risk, and social influence have a considerable impact on students online shopping habits. Indian online business owners may find these results to be a useful source of information for their marketing plans.

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Introduction

The internet is an important part of our daily lifestyles, so much so that quite a few daily activities are conducted using it. The internet has made online shopping possible, enabling people make all sorts of purchases; they can easily compare product prices and features, explore optimum payments gateways, and check the quality of products virtually, among others (Kuswanto et al., 2019). It is said that consumer behaviour integrates concepts from diverse fields such as sociology, psychology, chemistry, biology, and economics, which helps in targeting the correct market segment market. In order to target customers, organisations must identify the need of the hour, work on better reach, create brand loyalty, and finally, make things available. Students being the most avid internet users in comparison to other segments, the online mode of purchase can become a greater part of the lifestyle of students.

Online shopping through e-commerce portals enables buyers to acquire products directly from sellers. Customers can opt for products of their liking by visiting retail websites directly or by searching among the best alternative suppliers. Business-to-consumer shopping in the online mode is being increasingly adopted in the present times, although customers also visit brick-and-mortar stores as they have been so far. Business-to-business procurement of goods online denotes businesses purchasing from other businesses through virtual stores.

A classic online store is one that enables buyers to explore all the available options and then allow the selection of goods and services offered by them. It enables a 360-degree examination of goods and access to critical information like the cost and features of products. Customers are able to easily navigate through the websites

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to find the products needed, and finally, there are easy payment options in the form of applications and other banking systems.

As of July 2017, around 450 million or 40% of the country's total population in India were internet users. The second largest user base in the universe - China being the first, with 650 million, i.e., 48% of population - has low levels of browsing access. When compared to markets such as the United States (266 million, i.e., approximately 84%) or France (54 million, i.e., around 81%), the Indian user base is expanding at an unprecedented rate, adding about 6 million new users each month. Growth is at an inflection point, according to industry consensus. Around 75% of all e-retail transactions occur in India; payments are normally made after the delivery of the product. Demand for international consumer goods is increasing much more quickly than the supply.

Evolution of Online Shopping in India

Online shopping in India was found to have developed in a disorderly manner due to low awareness levels and initial connection speeds. Another factor that hindered the growth of the online market in India was due to stigma that every customer had regarding physical availability of product. Customers wanted to touch and feel the products they intended to purchase, and virtual shopping was not trusted. Online shopping was introduced in early 1995, around the same time as the internet itself. But online shopping picked up pace only in 1999-2000 when many online brands were introduced and people started buying products online. The first site that introduced online buying culture in Indian minds was bazee.com. Later, through its online bookstore, Amazon became the first to sell books online.

It can be observed that, since 2010, many digital platforms like Facebook have transformed the way people see shopping. In 2011, Big Basket amazed buyers by giving them the ultimate online shopping experience. They successfully launched the distribution of perishable goods online. By 2014, it had crossed the 1 billion mark in sales and the 10 billion mark by 2023. This spurred the trend of online purchasing such that, right now, 7 out of 10 people prefer buying things online. Students follow the latest trends, and the internet revolution enabled them to access all kinds of brands online. Features such as easy selection options, variety of products available, easy payment options, comfortable pricing, and the promotional strategies adopted by online retail platforms have paved the way for online purchasing and traditional retail shopping has

become history to them.

IRCTC is another milestone platform through which people can conveniently book train tickets online. Started in 2002, it has been successful in creating trust in online transactions. Then came airline companies like Air Deccan, Spice Jet, and Indian Airlines; customers could save money by bypassing the agents who used to do bookings for commission, thus making online transactions more trustworthy. As a result, the connection between brands and customers was also strengthened. Flipkart's discount-heavy model was another pioneer move that attracted people to online rather than physical purchasing. Then came the era of Jabong, Myntra, Amazon, Rediff, eBay, ShopClues and other such portals which increased the craze for online shopping.

According to a report by Unicommerce and Wazir Advisors, as of 2022, the number of internet users in India is 834 million, which is the second highest after China which has 1011 million users (n.d.). Due to easy access, internet speeds, convenience, cost effectiveness and easy returns are the major reasons for online shopping. Students are wide users of the internet and internet related activities. There is a considerable increase in online purchase activities. This exponential rise was particularly observed after the pandemic. India has always preferred traditional brick-and-mortar retail outlets for shopping; since the pandemic, however, people had been reluctant to go out for shopping and preferred shopping from home, leading to a 69.4% growth in volume in 2022 (Unicommerce, n.d.).

There are various factors that makes online shopping more likable as in efficient time and money saver, any time anywhere selection can be done, can obtain reviews not only from friends but from the entire users of the product, variety of brands in one device, discounts, offers and other rewards make purchase more fun. Privacy in purchase can be obtained in online purchases. Thus, all these benefits make it easier and attractive for purchasing online.

Review of Literature

Delafrooz et al., (2010) conducted a study in Malaysia to identify the various factors which affects Malaysian buyers making online purchases. A sample of 370 students was identified using simple random sampling and their attitude towards online shopping analyzed. The results obtained showed that utilitarian orientation, convenience and price were some factors that affected the students attitude towards online shopping.

Junaidi and Miralam (2020) studied the online behaviour of 236 students from selected universities in India and Saudi Arabia. It was observed that these students were heavy internet users and that easy payment systems were the major reason behind all online purchases. The results also pointed out that trust in brands was another major reason behind online purchasing.

According to Joshi and Upadhyay (2014), increased internet accessibility, reliable measures, convenience of buying in time-constrained lives, and, of course, the availability of dozens of store are a few factors drawing more and more people online. Ansari (2016) found that Saudis were quite familiar with the idea of online shopping, that women were more interested in it than men, and that the features of online store (such as, store design) were crucial for encouraging online purchases. Patel (2015) provides a glimpse of how Indian consumers switched from traditional to online purchase behaviour. According to this article too, the trust that was infused in the minds of customers by various brands is also an important factor contributing to online purchasing. Muntaqheem and Raikar (2019) compared online and offline shopping behavior and conclude that online shopping is no temporary trend; the number of people favouring online shopping has been on the rise. Due to their familiarity with technology and online shopping, the majority of children and young adults aged between 19 to 30 years are particularly interested in making purchases online (Vijayalakshmi & Lakshmi, 2018). Loganathan and Santhi (2018) studied online shopping behaviour of a sample from the city of Coimbatore to identify the factors responsible for online purchase behaviour. The authors also studied the relationship between the age and attitude towards online purchase behaviour. The results were varied; there was no relationship between educational qualification and consumer attitude and between annual income and attitude.

Jerin Rose (2018) studied the shopping behaviour of college students in the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, concentrating on various determinants like security, quality, pricing, faith, delightedness, and valence of shopping experience, among others. Some findings from this study are that while purchasing online, the prices and features of products can be compared and others' opinion can be obtained. It also helps in understanding brands' after sales services and other benefits for a broader understanding about brands' service quality etc.

Jukariya and Singhavi (2018) studied various factors affecting students' buying behaviour through online portals, including costing, quality, choices, privacy, trust, after sales support in the form of product returns. According to this research, security in monetary transactions, payment choices through different portals, reduced transport, speed of delivery and after sales support are some significant factors that students find attractive in online purchasing.

Sreekanth et al., (2020), who studied the online shopping behaviour of college students in the Hyderabad region, established that firms reputation, value, privacy and trust are some variables that influence online purchasing. According to the study, most young students prefer online shopping, because it provides continuous, easy access. Another study by Nedumaran and Tamil Selvi (2021) studied online buying behaviour of college students from the Karaikudi region. The key influencing factor found in this study was applications as easy purchase options. They become more portable; they can be accessed from anywhere and at any time as long as there is an internet connection, because convenience is the most important factor.

Anuradha and Selvaraju (2021) conducted a study on college students in Gudalar in Tamil Nadu with the goal of determining the characteristics that influence people to purchase online. According to the findings of this study, the key reason for the popularity of online shopping is its ease of use and accessibility. Online shopping offers a large range of things under one roof. The majority of college students shop online since it allows them to readily acquire products from both domestic and multinational corporations. Customers do not have to worry about their purchase, time spent on travel, time spent on searching, etc., as orders can be placed from any location.

Islam (2021) investigated various elements that contribute to online buying behaviour decisions of international students from the Belt and Road countries in China. Product based information, cost, convenience, easy reach, and secure payment options are some factors which influence students' purchase decisions; privacy, perceived value, and reputation are some other contributory factors.

Research Methodology

Data for this study was obtained by conducting a survey among students from various management institutes in the city of Pune. This study is based on descriptive

research, i.e., the data was captured, tabulated, analyzed, and finally, presented. It frequently employs pictorial representation such as graphs and charts for a better understanding of the data distribution, and as a result, provides a clearer picture of consumer behaviour towards online buying. A questionnaire was framed and student opinion collected using a Likert scale where the responses range from fully satisfied to fully dissatisfied. Data for the study was gathered using convenience sampling methods. The total number of colleges identified in Pune was around 162. The total number of students identified who were studying in a management institute was around 20000. Using the formula for sample size calculation with an error tolerance of 5%, the total sample size obtained was 377.

Objectives

The prime objective of this work is to analyse the motivational factors that affect the online shopping decisions of university students.

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between gender and type of purchase preferred.

Factors

To investigate the various factors that influence online shopping, various factors like convenience, wider selection, price, customer service, fun, well-known brand, quality, positive reviews, and comments for website were considered.

Data Analysis

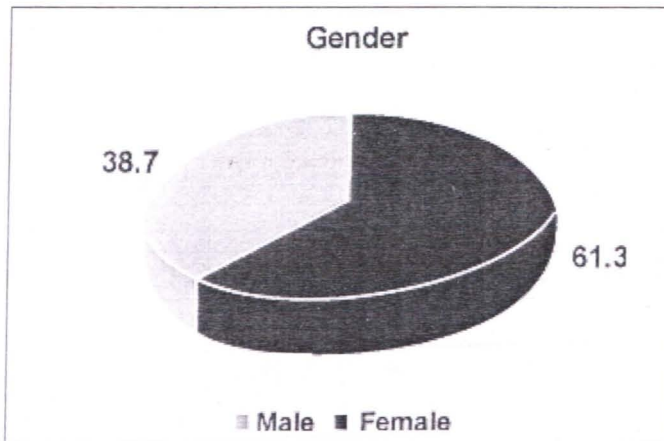
The first step in analyzing the students purchasing behaviour was to construct single and bivariate tables using SPSS for ascertaining the frequency distribution of the data collected. An ANOVA was conducted to test the hypothesis framed. This paper helps in analyzing the purchase behaviour of students and the type of purchase preferred based on their gender.

Table 1: Gender-wise Distribution of the Responses Collected

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	233	61.3	61.3	61.3
	Female	147	38.7	38.7	100.0
	Total	380	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own

Figure 1: Gender-wise Distribution of the Responses Collected



Source: Author's own

From the table and figure above, it can be observed that 61% of the respondents are men and 39% are women. The male students were found to be more proactive in

participating in the survey in comparison to the female students.

Table 2: Types of Purchases

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Grocery	22	5.8	5.8	5.8
	Mobiles	64	16.8	16.8	22.6
	Fashion	90	23.7	23.7	46.3
	Electronics	64	16.8	16.8	63.2
	Home Appliances	61	16.1	16.1	79.2
	Travel	41	10.8	10.8	90
	Beauty, Toys & More	21	5.5	5.5	95.5
	Vehicles	17	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	380	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own

When asked about the type of purchase preferred, 24% respondents mentioned fashion, 17% mentioned mobiles and electronics respectively, and 16% mentioned home appliances. Other responses included travel (10%)

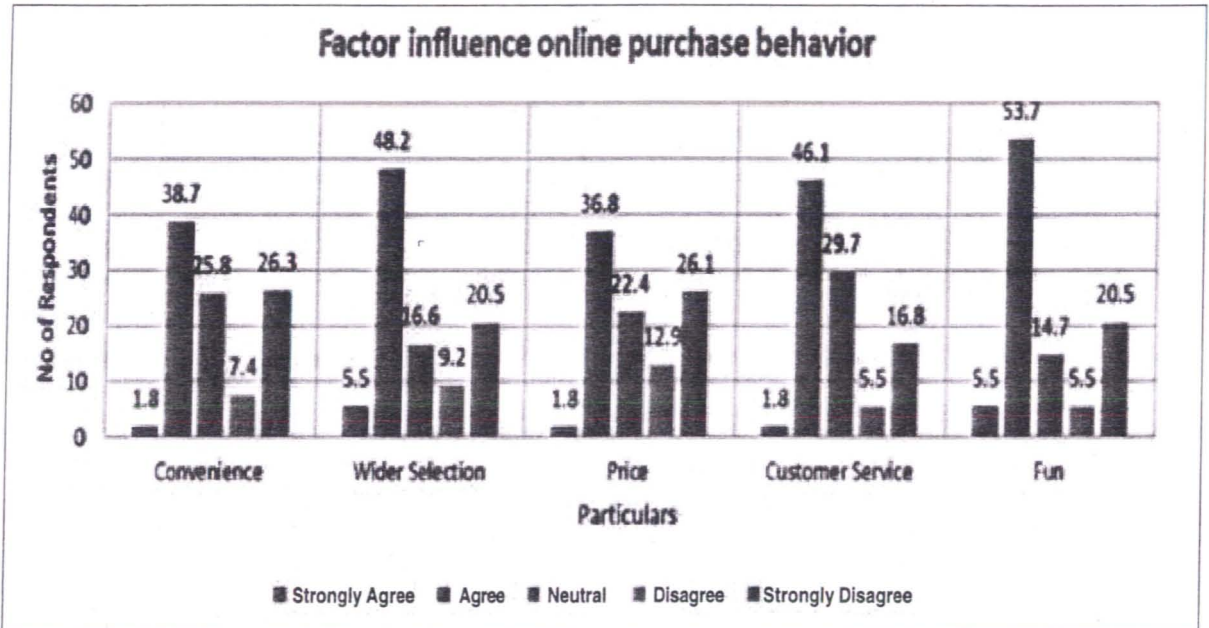
travel, beauty, toys and more (5%), and grocery items (6%). This means that fashion, electronics, and mobiles are more commonly purchased than other items.

Table 3: Factors Influencing Online Purchase Behaviour

Particulars		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Convenience	Frequency	7	147	98	28	100	380
	Percent	1.8	38.7	25.8	7.4	26.3	100
Wider Selection	Frequency	21	183	63	35	78	380
	Percent	5.5	48.2	16.6	9.2	20.5	100
Price	Frequency	7	140	85	49	99	380
	Percent	1.8	36.8	22.4	12.9	26.1	100
Customer Service	Frequency	7	175	113	21	64	380
	Percent	1.8	46.1	29.7	5.5	16.8	100
Fun	Frequency	21	204	56	21	78	380
	Percent	5.5	53.7	14.7	5.5	20.5	100

Source: Author's own

Figure 2: Factors Influencing Online Purchase Behaviour



Source: Author's own

It is evident from Table 3 and Figure 3 that while 39% of the respondents felt that convenience was the most important factor for choosing online shopping, 26% were neutral, 26% strongly disagreed, and only 2% strongly agreed. When asked about the availability of a wider selection of products on online platforms, 48% of the respondents agreed that it was the major reason behind opting for online shopping; 21% strongly disagreed, 17% were neutral, while 6% strongly agreed. It was observed that 37% of the students agreed that price was the major reason behind their purchase decisions, while 26% strongly disagreed and 22% had a neutral opinion. For a majority of students (46%), customer service was the major reason behind online shopping, 30% were neutral, and 17% strongly disagreed. It was observed that 54% of the students agreed that fun was a major reason behind online shopping, while 21% strongly disagreed. About 13% were neutral about access to well-known brands, i.e., quality. The last factor analyzed was reviews and comments being the reason behind online shopping; a majority of 43% strongly disagreed.

Hypothesis Testing

In order to understand the shopping behaviour of the student respondents, a hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between gender and type of

purchase preferred was identified. A one-way ANOVA was applied to the bivariate table constructed, whose output is as in Table 4.

The results from the ANOVA test show a significance of 0.029 which is less than alpha 0.05, therefore, the hypothesis is not rejected. This means gender does not affect students' purchase decisions.

Conclusion

It can be observed from the above analyses that convenience, fun, well-known brands, quality, and a wide selection of products are the reasons behind online purchase decisions. While almost everything is available online, from the students point of view, fashion and mobiles were of greater interest. Male students were found to be greater in number in comparison to female students. It was observed from the ANOVA test that there is no significant relationship between gender and purchase behaviour. We can conclude that Indians are great users of internet and many attractive measures from brands online have captured the minds of the customers. Since students are avid consumers online, brands must come up with most comprehensive and attractive products and create a big market in India.

Table 4: Cross-Tabulation of Gender Type of Purchase

Type of Purchase		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Grocery	Count	13	9	22
	% within Type of Purchase	59.1%	40.9%	100.0%
Mobiles	Count	39	25	64
	% within Type of Purchase	60.9%	39.1%	100.0%
Fashion	Count	54	38	90
	% within Type of Purchase	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Electronics	Count	40	24	64
	% within Type of Purchase	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%
Home Appliances	Count	41	20	61
	% within Type of Purchase	67.2%	32.8%	100.0%
Travel	Count	28	15	41
	% within Type of Purchase	63.4%	36.6%	100.0%
Beauty, Toys & More	Count	11	10	21
	% within Type of Purchase	52.4%	47.6%	100.0%
Vehicles	Count	9	8	17
	% within Type of Purchase	52.9%	47.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	233	147	380
	% within Type of Purchase	61.3%	38.7%	100.0%

Source: Author's own

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

Convenience

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male	233	2.71	1.269	.083	2.55	2.88	1	4
Female	147	3.0	1.199	.099	2.80	3.20	1	5
Total	380	2.82	1.249	.064	2.70	2.95	1	5

Source: Author's own

Table 6: Results of the 1-way ANOVA

ANOVA

Convenience

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.453	1	7.453	4.826	.029
Within Groups	583.734	378	1.544		
Total	591.187	379			

Source: Author's own

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"The biggest risk is not taking any risk. In a world that's changing quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks."

–Mark Zuckerberg