Online Shopping Behaviour of University Students

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Abstract

The advancement in information and communication technology brought big change in the way shopping is being done. It has diminished all the boundaries of space and time by allowing people to shop almost from anywhere and at anytime. The increasing trend of online shopping among people and youngsters in particular is emerging as an opportunity for business houses to sell their products online and access the large customer base. The present paper examines the dominance of variables which influence customer behaviour for online shopping. The data was collected using self administered questionnaire from the students of Punjabi university, Patiala. Further, data was analyzed using ANOVA, t-test etc. The results showed significant results with regard to most popularly used online sites, frequency of online shopping, factors affecting online shopping etc. The findings of the study can help the online sellers to get better insight into customer behaviour towards online shopping.

Keywords: Online, Shopping, Consumer, Marketing

Introduction

Lifestyle and technology are the key factors which are driving shift of customers from brick and mortar retail outlets towards the online e-tail shopping outlets (or online shopping websites). This shift is not an adhoc one, but a gradual one with a dramatic rise during the past few years. Online shoppers are also termed as the Global Consumers as they are continuously defying the boundaries. The advent of online shopping websites can be traced back to the interest of the corporate houses in transferring the

information across networks in 1960s. Michael Aldrich of Redifon Computers Ltd. was the pioneer in maturing the idea with the success of teleshopping in United Kingdom. Following which France also witnessed, during 1982, the success of Telecommunications network through 'Minitel'. US got the first online shopping portal - Swerg, but only for developers and software engineers in 1987. Thereafter, with the invention of worldwideweb (WWW) by Tim Berners Lee, the Netscape and Pizza Hut opened the doors for online selling space. From 1995 onwards Amazon.com started selling everything on web and ebay.com adopted the selling of goods through online auction mode. With the upsurfacing of Paypal and the boom of dotcom business, the online shopping websites got their businesses accelerated and the world discovered the new categories of consumers i.e. the global consumers. The online shopping websites are dealing with the consumers who know no boundaries and are ready to explore the web of information loaded with a wide array of products. In order to make a mark in the arena of online marketplace these shopping portals must understand the consumer behaviour and inculcate its impact in their marketing and business strategies.

"Consumer behaviour is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society" (Kuester, 2012). Proper delineation of the dimensions of consumer behaviour would enable the online business houses to influence more consumers and create a significant impact thereof. The current study focuses on the influences of different factors on the consumer's propensity to shop on online shopping websites.

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Review of Literature

Donthu and Gracia (1999) suggested that risk aversion, brand consciousness, price, convenience, range of products offered, income and age, attitude towards direct marketing and advertising were significant factors impacting the online shopping decisions. Bhatnagar, Misra and Rao (2000) analyzed that demographics, service quality, and product characteristics along with website quality influenced consumers' online buying behaviour. They suggested that convenience of online shopping was positively and the risk of online purchase was negatively related to online purchase of goods. Liu and Arnett (2000) studied the responses of the webmasters from Fortune 1000 companies. They found that the success of a website in the arena of e-commerce was related to four major factors such as quality of information and service, system use, playfulness and system design quality. Dholakia and Uusitalo (2002) analyzed the shift of consumers from physical stores to e-stores in US households and identified that influence of individual characteristics such as age, household income and family composition along with past behaviours on the shopping benefits was significant in this shift of consumers to e-stores. Rangnathan and Ganapathy (2002) examined the perceptions of 214 consumers of online shopping websites to conclude that security and privacy had greatest effect on the purchase intent of consumers out of the four key dimensions like information content, design, security and privacy. Park (2003) investigated 602 Korean customers of online bookstores and found that information quality, user interface quality, and security perceptions affected the satisfaction and relational benefit and were significantly related to each consumer's site commitment and actual purchase behaviour. Monsuwe and Ruyter (2004) reviewed the framework of understanding consumer's attitudes toward online shopping and their intention to shop on the internet and concluded that online shopping behaviour of consumers was affected by ease of use, usefulness, enjoyment, product characteristics, previous experiences, and trust. Shergill and Chen (2005) found website design, web site reliability, web site customer service and website privacy were dominant factors influencing customer attitude in New Zealand. Hasan and Bassam (2010) explored gender differences in online shopping attitude from 80 students of Midwestern University. They noticed significant gender difference across all attitudinal components namely cognitive, affective and behavioural. Maditinos (2010) concluded that product information quality, user interface quality led to a significant impact on the overall satisfaction of customers of Greek online marketplace. He also revealed that the service information quality, purchasing process, security perception and product attractiveness had positive impact on customer satisfaction and this satisfaction level affected the post-purchase behaviour of customers. Dange and Kumar (2012) found that online buying motives were affected by both internal and external factors such as security, privacy and trust worthiness. Haq (2012) surveyed 200 Indian consumers and established that the perception of online shoppers was independent of their age and gender but not independent of their qualification and income. He also suggested that online buyers' perception on the consumer service was the most influencing factor for online shopping. Furthermore, customer service, web security and commitment were significant in explaining the variation in online buying intention. Gehrt et al. (2012) explored the concept of shopping orientations in the Indian online shopping field by surveying 536 consumer panel members. They identified that the quality at any price and reputation were the predominant factors among online shoppers. The study had put forward an interesting fact that pioneer Indian shoppers were not motivated by the price alone in contrast with the US early online shoppers. Javadi et. al. (2012) found that financial and non-delivery risks were the negative factors impacting the online shopping behaviour in Iran. They also suggested that domain specific innovativeness could have positive effect on online shopping behaviour. Ling and Suan (2012) surveyed 300 online shoppers of Maleka, Malaysia and found that most of the shoppers belonged to urban areas and purchase goods online at least once a month. He further stressed that security issues were the main concern of online shoppers. Man (2012) investigated the factors affecting Hong Kong consumers' online purchasing decisions and behaviour on apparels. From the analysis of 172 respondents he found that price, product quality and web trust were found significant in affecting the consumer's online purchase behaviour. Further, he suggested that after sales services and the attitude of sellers, good communication with consumers, proper layout of website could enhance the possibilities of repeated purchase Nazir et al. (2012) examined factors affecting online buying behaviour in Pakistan. They found that price, confidence, security, convenience, time, after sale services were important factors affecting online

shopping behaviour while privacy and security were major barriers for online shopping. Vachhani and Bhayani (2012) analyzed the responses of 100 consumers from Gujarat, India to find that ease of navigation, quick loading times and accurate product delivery were the drivers of the online retail shopping system whereas clear transaction policies, online interactivity between buyer and seller, transaction safety and transaction privacy were facilitator factors. Bhandari and Kaushal (2013), after surveying the Indian consumers in Punjab region, concluded that trustworthiness, convenience, information, ease, experience and better prices were the main factors which impacted the online shopping behaviour in the positive direction. Upadhyay and Kaur (2013) surveyed 100 online shoppers of Kota city, India and concluded that payment on delivery was the most preferred channel of payment. Further, they suggested that clear information about product and service, convenience, security and delivery on time were important factors determining the online purchase behaviour. Malhotra and Singh (2013) identified dimensions that influenced young consumers' perception of online shopping. It was found that perceived trust and perceived risk influenced behaviour of youngsters towards online shopping. Vegiayan (2013) identified that purchase quality had the highest influence on the Malaysian customer's online shopping satisfaction. Akbar and James (2014) employed stratified random sample of 240 employees in Nonthaburi, Thailand. They concluded that search engines, online shopping malls, auction websites, convenience, price, brand, security, promotion and refund were the critical nine factors leading to the acceptance of online shopping. Jain, Goswami and Bhutani (2014) studied the behaviour of 160 online customers in the area of Delhi, India and concluded that perceived risk, i.e. lack of trust involving chance of being cheated regarding inferior quality of product was the most significant factor which affected the online shopping behaviour whereas perceived enjoyment, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness had no significant relationship with online shopping behaviour. Jiang and Jones (2014) suggested that the international online shoppers trusted foreign vendors and had high preference and confidence in online shopping. Lian an Yen (2014) studied drivers and barriers affecting younger (21-25) and older (56-70) consumers' intention to shop online. The findings indicated that performance expectation and social influence were major drivers and value, risk and tradition were major barriers towards online shopping. Pawar et al. (2014) studied online buying behaviour of college students of Maharashtra. The study found ease of shopping as an important influencing factor for online shopping. Further, significant association was found between gender and goods purchased online. Males preferred to buy electronics and shoes while females preferred software online. Sharma, Mehta and Sharma (2014) analyzed the online shopping behaviour of 120 respondents in the Punjab region of India. They found that the online shopping was preferred by youngsters and concluded that ease and convenience were significant factors impacting the online shopping behaviour whereas the lack of trust while concluding online payments to e-stores turned out to be a significant barrier in online purchase process. Zhou and Wang (2014) explored relationship between online shopping and shopping trips based on NHTS (2009) survey. Both the variables namely online shopping and shopping trips were affected by regional, household related, person related and travel pattern related variables. Further, online shopping stimulated shopping trips while shopping trips suppressed online shopping.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this paper is to analyze the dominance of the variables which influence the consumer behaviour in case of online shopping among the students of the university in Punjab region.

Research Methodology

Construction Scheme of the Sample

The sample has been constructed on the basis of following scheme. First of the all the students of all courses studying in the campus of Punjabi University, Patiala have been considered as the universe for the sampling purposes. The university students have been stratified into different strata on the basis of the educational streams i.e. Professional, Science and Arts. Secondly, out of each educational stream, three class groups have been selected randomly. Lastly, from each class, a sample (R1, R2,...... R9) of 10 respondents has been selected with the help of random tables in order to constitute a final stratified sample $(FSS = \sum_{i=1}^{9} R_i = \sum_{i=1}^{9} R_i + R_2 + \cdots + R_9))$ of 90 students. The complete scheme of sample construction has been depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Construction Scheme of the Sample

| Universe | University Students | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----|----|------|----|------------|----|----|----|
| Educational Streams | Professional Science | | | Arts | | | | | |
| Class Groups | P1 | P2 | P3 | S1 | S2 | S 3 | A1 | A2 | A3 |
| Sample Considered | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 | R6 | R7 | R8 | R9 |
| Final Stratified Sample of 90 Students | | | | | | | | | |

The data has been collected using self structured questionnaire from the final sample of 90 respondents. The study considers the exploratory research and analyses the results obtained through business research methods like ANOVA, Levene's test and t-test.

Discussion and Analysis

Profile of the respondents: The profile of the respondents has been constructed on the basis of the demographics which are analyzed on the basis of the gender as well as educational stream. Bhatnagar, Misra and Rao (2000) emphasized that demographics influence the online shopping and the analysis based on the demographics of the respondents can lead towards more meaningful results. The complete profile of the respondents is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Complete Profile of the Respondents

| Profile of the Respondents | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| On the basis of Gender | Male: 28 |
| | Female:62 |
| On the basis of Educational Streams | Professional: 30 |
| | Science: 30 |
| | Arts: 30 |

Stafford et. al. (2004), Almousa (2011) and Sharma, Mehta and Sharma (2014) suggested that youngster belonging to age group 18-25 years had higher degree of adaptation towards online shopping. Working on the same lines, the range of age of the respondents is 18-22 years as all the respondents considered are the students of the university. The first aspect considered in the analysis is the frequency of usage of online shopping sites. This aspect stresses upon those visits of the respondents during which they have made a decision of making an online purchase of a commodity. So, this aspect excludes all those visits of a respondent to online shopping website which did not lead to actual online purchase. By keeping this aspect in mind,

the further analysis can be considered to be more precise and reliable for policy decision making.

Table 3 reveals that majority of the respondents have greater inclination to make an online purchase once in a month, both on the basis of gender as well as educational stream. 53.33 per cent of the total purchases are on monthly basis. It has been further observed that 59.67 per cent of the females go for a monthly online purchase. Adding to the dimension of frequency of online purchases, an interesting dimension has been added to the analysis which reveals that 83 per cent of the monthly online purchases are being made by arts students followed by 31.25 per cent monthly purchases of students belonging to science background. Followed by the monthly online purchase, the weekly online purchase is the frequency which has grabbed the next highest level of online purchases of 25 per cent out of which 67 per cent are being made by professionals. So, it has been observed that the students with arts and science background tend to make monthly purchases while those belonging to post-graduate courses in professional streams have a greater inclination towards the weekly purchases making the sample of respondents skewed towards the monthly purchases.

Table 4 tries to capture the most popular online shopping website among the students of postgraduate courses in the university. It has been observed that out of the given set of websites considered (i.e. Amazon, Myntra, Jabong, Ebay, Flipkart & others), Myntra.com got acquired by Flipkart. com but it is running as a competitor in the marketplace. So this is the reason why these two websites (myntra.com and flipkart.com) have not been clubbed together for the purpose of this study. Amazon.com is a clear winner in terms of popularity followed by Myntra.com both on the criteria of gender wise distribution and educational stream wise distribution of respondents. It can be observed that the male respondents have greater inclination of 60.71 per cent towards the Amazon.com followed by 35.71 per cent opting Myntra.com for online shopping. On the other hand, in case of female respondents a comparatively more distributed marketplace has been observed i.e. 35.48 per cent of female respondents choose Amazon.com for online shopping purposes and 35 per cent opt for Myntra. com

Table 3: Frequency of Online Purchases

| Frequency of online purchase | On the b | asis of Gender | On the basis of Educational Background | | | Total |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------------|--|---------|------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Professional | Science | Arts | |
| On daily basis | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Thrice a week | 5 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| Once a week | 8 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 15 |
| Once in 15 days | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| Once a month | 11 | 37 | 8 | 15 | 25 | 48 |
| Beyond the above time horizons | 0 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| Total | 28 | 62 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 90 |

Table 4: Preference for the Online Website

| Site | | Gender | | Total | | |
|--------------|------|--------|--------------|---------|------|----|
| | Male | Female | Professional | Science | Arts | |
| Jabong | 5 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 17 |
| Amazon | 17 | 22 | 17 | 11 | 11 | 39 |
| Ebay | 2 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| Myntra | 10 | 21 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 31 |
| Others, etc. | 5 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 16 |

Table 5: Popularity of Website (in terms of percentage of users)

| | Male | Female | Professional | Science | Arts |
|----------------|-------|--------|--------------|---------|-------|
| Jabong | 17.86 | 19.35 | 16.67 | 20.00 | 20.00 |
| Amazon | 60.71 | 35.48 | 56.67 | 36.67 | 36.67 |
| Ebay | 7.14 | 9.68 | 3.33 | 10.00 | 13.33 |
| Myntra | 35.71 | 33.87 | 33.33 | 33.33 | 36.67 |
| Flipkart, etc. | 17.86 | 17.74 | 26.67 | 10.00 | 16.67 |

It has been observed that on the basis of educational background the sample has showcased a balanced distribution of respondents among the different websites. So, it has been observed that educational stream does not put constraints while opting for a website for online shopping whereas gender does have an influence upon the popularity of a website. Also, the variability of exploring more websites for online purchase is greater among the

females as compared to the male counterparts. The Table 5 clears shows that even though Amazon.com has the highest level of popularity but the market hold of Myntra. com is equally significant and makes it a significant competitor for Amazon.com

Table 6 showcases the buying pattern of the type of products being preferred for making online purchases by

the respondents. It can be clearly inferred that the clothing is the one of the commodity which has got the highest preference from samples drawn across all the dimensions. The next preferred commodity by the respondents has turned out to be books when the shopper is a female

(i.e. 32.25 percent) as compared to a male counterpart (i.e. 28.56 per cent). On the contrary, FMCG goods are lowest on the likeliness with overall low percentage of female respondents opting for FMCG goods and no male respondent opting for the same.

Table 6: Buying Pattern of Goods Shopped Online (in %age)

| | Male | Female | Professional | Science | Arts |
|---------------|-------|--------|--------------|---------|-------|
| FMCG | 0.00 | 6.45 | 0.00 | 3.33 | 10.00 |
| Durable | 3.57 | 11.29 | 13.33 | 6.67 | 6.67 |
| Entertainment | 17.86 | 11.29 | 16.67 | 16.67 | 6.67 |
| Clothing | 57.14 | 58.06 | 63.33 | 56.67 | 53.33 |
| Books | 28.57 | 32.26 | 33.33 | 23.33 | 36.67 |
| Others | 10.71 | 6.45 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

The next aspect which has been focused in the analysis is the 'Mode of Payment' being opted mostly by the respondents

in case they place an order online. Three most prevalent modes of payment currently are payment via Debit/Credit card, via internet banking, and cash on delivery. The analysis has also included the scope for other sort of payment options like Electronic fund transfer under the option of 'any other mode'. The results for this aspect as shown in Table 7 clearly indicate that the 'Cash on Delivery'

is the most preferred and prevalent mode being used by the respondents followed by the payment via credit/debit card. It is to be noticed here that internet banking is still not being opted by the respondents who are supposed to be well aware of the technological advancements. One possible reason for not opting internet banking is lack of trust and confidence among the customers.

Table 7: Comparison of Different Modes of Payment (in %age)

| | Male | Female | Professional | Science | Arts |
|------------------------|-------|--------|--------------|---------|-------|
| Credit Card/Debit Card | 14.29 | 25.81 | 13.33 | 33.33 | 53.33 |
| Internet Banking | 7.14 | 6.45 | 0.00 | 6.67 | 13.33 |
| Cash on Delivery | 85.71 | 70.97 | 93.33 | 63.33 | 70.00 |
| Any other mode | 0.00 | 1.61 | 0.00 | 3.33 | 0.00 |

This segment of the analysis focuses on the various factors which influence a shopper to execute his decision of making online purchase of a commodity. In this segment a total of seven factors have been stressed upon. The analysis has been carried out separately for the categorization of respondents on the basis of educational background as well as gender. Firstly the results of the ANOVA applied on the samples based on educational background have been shown in Table 8. The results try

to analyze the factors that are significant and important in turning a desire into demand for the online shopping websites.

As we can observe from the Table 8, all the factors have scored a weighted mean average of greater than the value of '3' which means all the respondents are showing their inclination towards the affirmation of the factors across all the educational streams.

Table 8: Results of ANOVA for Factors Influencing Online Purchase

| Factors | Professional | Science | Arts | F-value | p-value |
|--|--------------|---------|------|---------|---------|
| Reliability of Information | 3.53 | 3.77 | 3.4 | 2.042 | 1.36 |
| Convenience | 4.17 | 3.83 | 3.63 | 4.006 | 0.22 |
| Discounts, Competitive prices | 3.8 | 3.67 | 3.33 | 2.15 | 1.23 |
| Huge range of products | 4.27 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.565 | 0.32 |
| Better quality of products | 3.7 | 4.13 | 3.6 | 2.725 | 0.071 |
| Time saving | 4.03 | 4.27 | 3.9 | 1.16 | 0.318 |
| Better and easier comparison of products | 3.9 | 3.9 | 3.73 | 0.349 | 0.706 |

Table 9: Results of Levene's test for Factors Influencing Online Purchase

| | Weighted Mean | | Levene's test result | | t-test results | |
|--|------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------|----------------|---------|
| Factors | Male | Female | F-statistic | p-value | t-test | p-value |
| Reliability of Information | 3.57 (1.08)* | 3.56 (0.099)* | 3.26 | 0.074 | 0.042 | 0.957 |
| Convenience | 4.07 (0.154)* | 3.79 (0.092)* | 0.000 | 0.997 | 1.636 | 0.105 |
| Discounts, Competitive prices | 3.68 (0.146)* | 3.56 (0.12)* | 2.092 | 0.152 | 0.549 | 0.585 |
| Huge range of products | 4.29 (0.144)* | 3.76 (0.117)* | 0.61 | 0.437 | 2.654 | 0.009 |
| Better quality of products | 3.71 (0.211)* | 3.85 (0.112)* | 1.471 | 0.228 | 0.642 | 0.523 |
| Time saving | 4.11 (0.149)* | 4.05 (0.129)* | 1.575 | 0.213 | 0.271 | 0.787 |
| Better and easier comparison of products | 3.93 (0.135)* | 3.81 (0.121)* | 1.565 | 0.214 | 0.603 | 0.548 |

Note: *shows Standard Error

It indicates that all the factors are relevant enough to stimulate the demand for online shopping. Time saving, Huge range of products and convenience of buying products are the factors which influence the professional students more than other factors considered. The results of ANOVA, contained in F-value, lead to the acceptance of null hypothesis in all the factors (i.e. Ho: There is no significant difference in the affirmation for the factors among the students belonging to different educational streams) at 5 per cent level of significance.

Table 9 showcases the results for the impact of factors on the online shopping behaviour on the basis of dichotomy of gender. It tries to capture the difference of gender impacting the degree of affirmation for the factors. It can be clearly observed that there is not much wider difference between the values of weighted mean among males and females. In turn, it would be interesting to check whether the consensus shown in the weighted means of responses by males and females is significant or is just random in nature, which can be tested with t-test. The results for null hypothesis (Ho: There is no significant difference in the opinion of males and females for the affirmation of the given factors individually) showed that the difference between the opinion among the two genders has not turned out to be significant except for the factor: Huge range of products. Thus, we can say that the factors considered are influential in stimulating the demand for the purchasing

online across the dimensions of educational background and the gender.

Table 10: Analysis of Satisfaction Level Among the Different Genders

| | Professional | Science | Arts | F-value | p-value |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|---------|
| Level of Satisfaction | 3.7 | 3.77 | 3.63 | 0.355 | 0.702 |
| Weighted Mean | | | | | |
| Male | 3.64 | | | | |
| Female | 3.73 | | | | |
| Levene's test results for Equa | lity of Varian | ce t-test for E | Equality of N | Jean | |
| F-statistic | 0.003 | t-statistic | | -0.597 | |
| p-value | 0.955 | p-value | | 0.552 | |

Table 10 reveals the results for the overall satisfaction level perceived by the respondents from having an experience of online shopping. The weighted mean for the responses along the dimensions of educational stream as well as gender have given an above average affirmation which indicates that the respondents are overall satisfied with the online shopping experience. Further, it has been statistically checked whether there is any significant difference in the level of satisfaction or not. The F-statistic and the t-statistic indicate that the difference is insignificant across the respondents on the basis of educational stream and gender respectively.

Research Implications & Conclusion

The results of research reveal that the orientations of online shopping behaviour in the Punjab region of India is based on Time savings, Better range of products and convenience of buying products. It seems that with the phasing out of deep discount price wars, the factors like website security, more reliable information and consumer experience would be the prominent factors where online shopping needs more elaboration. Among the products, clothing and books have better prospects for the managers from the marketing point of view. Several studies such as Haq (2012), Vachhani and Bhayani (2012), Bhandari and Kaushal (2013), Upadhyay and Kaushal (2013), Jain, Goswami and Bhutani (2014), Pawar (2014) and Sharma, Mehta and Sharma (2014) carried on Indian consumers over the past decade have indicated that ease and convenience of shopping, and suitable delivery time are the prevalent factors influencing the Indian online shopper. Thus, the findings of present study are in

consistent with the findings of previous studies.

The results can also be fruitful to those online marketers who are in still emerging stage and have not attained competitive position in the market.

Further Scope

This cross-sectional study can be extended with longitudinal research to reveal how Indian consumer's behaviour in the online marketplace is evolving along the dimensions of market development and enhanced consumer sophistication.

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