

# GENDER DIVERSITY IN E-TAILING SATISFACTION

Bodh Raj Sharma\*, Saransh Gupta\*\*, Ankit Sharma\*\*\*, Nitika Sharma\*\*\*\*

**Abstract:** *The study empirically explores the gender-wise differences in perception regarding customer satisfaction in online shopping. The data were collected from 200 respondents who shopped online, contacted through purposive sampling. The respondents were contacted both physically as well as through e-mails, social media like Facebook, Whats app etc. The results depict that e-customers seem to receive detailed information from the website/application about their orders and the e-store protects their information. As far as inventory, prices, quality of products, return/cancellation policy, visual interface of website/application, and browsing experience are concerned, scores for males turned out to be higher than females. On the other hand, females seemed more satisfied as far as lucrative offers, variety of products, payment options; website and advertisement customisation is concerned.*

**Keywords:** *Gender, Diversity, E-tailing, Social Media, Online Shopping.*

## INTRODUCTION

E-tailing is the use of telecommunication and Internet to facilitate the trade of products and services. E-tailing is popularly known as e-web-store, e-shop, e-store, internet shop, web-shop, web-store, online store, online storefront, and virtual store. Online shopping was invented by Michael Aldrich in 1979 and launched Redifon's Office Revolution in 1980, which allowed consumers, distributors, suppliers, and service companies to be connected online to the corporate systems, allowing business transactions to be completed electronically in real-time. It is a fact that e-commerce technology is the foundation of the Indian startup landscape that has brought cut-throat pricing and convenient shopping experience to the customers. It has proved to be an important trade channel without any gap between products and consumers (Lucian & Farias, 2009). The success of the initial players has spurred many new players stepping in with exciting propositions and products, and is poised to excel even more so. In 2013, retail e-commerce sales amounted to 3.59 billion US dollars and are expected to grow to 17.52 billion US dollars in 2018. The vast majority of earlier research on this area is conceptual in nature and limited in scope by focusing on consumers. The main purpose of this study attempts to offer more insights into the consumers' perceptions regarding the online retailing in northern India. The topic of customers' perception regarding online shopping is still an under-researched and consequently, previous scales are not widely validated. The study by Bellman *et al.* (1999) investigated various predictors to see if an individual will

purchase online and concluded that demographic variables, such as income, qualification, and age have a meek impact on the decision of a customer to buy online. They discovered that the most important determinant of online shopping .was previous behaviour, such as previous online purchases. In addition, Steinfield and Whitten (1999) pointed out that the combination of Internet and physical presence provides more opportunities to capture business than the online-only presence because of improved pre and post purchase assistance. Further, Kotler and Armstrong (2000) revealed that a person's buying choices are influenced by four key psychological factors viz., motivation, perception, learning and beliefs, and attitude. Another study by Ernst and Young (2000) considered the factors that influence or hinder online shopping and reported that Internet users purchased online because of good product selection, competitive prices, and ease of use, but were concerned about shipping costs, lack of ability to prior examining the products, as well as, the privacy of credit card and personal information. Know and Lee (2003) observed a negative relationship between outlook towards onlineshopping and concerns about security of online payment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic of customers' perception regarding online shopping is still an under-researched area, and consequently, previous scales are not widely available. Past research on online retailing has primarily focused on privacy issues and ignored other important ethical marketing issues such as

\* Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, University of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, India.  
Email: drbodhsharma@gmail.com

\*\* NIT, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, India. Email: saranshgupta92@gmail.com

\*\*\* NIT, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, India. Email: ankitsharma1944@gmail.com

\*\*\*\* ICccR and HRM, University of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, India. Email: nitikasharma34@gmail.com

security, non-deception and reliability etc. Potential ethical issues related to marketing on the Internet and online retailing firms' activities are also under-researched. In what follows, we review various studies carried out by researchers in an attempt to understand consumers' online buying behaviour. We also summarise the results of the empirical studies that address various issues related to marketing on the Internet. A survey by AC Nielsen (2009), covering 38 markets and over 21,100 respondents across the globe has revealed that more Indians are adopting online shopping suggesting an upward trend in online shopping across the globe. A noteworthy observation of this study was that India beat the global counterparts in number of purchases permonth, with a mean of 5.2 purchases against the global average of 4.9. In India, books are the most frequently bought items, followed closely by airline reservations, with 35% of online shoppers buying them online. Nearly 24% have bought electronic items and more than 20% have bought apparel, music and electronic entertainment such as movies, DVDs and games. The preferred mode of payment for online purchases in India is the use of credit cards followed by cash-on-delivery. There have been some studies analysing online retailers' revelation of privacy and security policies on websites, and their effects on consumers' perceived risks for online shopping. The findings of the study by Miyazaki and Fernandez (2000) pointed out that a positive correlation exists between the percentage of privacy- and security-related statements on websites and consumers' online purchase intentions. In addition, Meinert *et al.* (2006) showed that the willingness of graduate students to provide personal information to online retailers increased as the level of privacy guaranteed by the statements increased. Moreover, Kim and Stoels studied the effects of website quality on online customers' satisfaction. Results confirmed the direct association between website quality and consumer satisfaction. In addition, Vijay and Balaji (2009) confirmed that customers are increasingly shifting from the crowded stores to online shopping format. In spite of the convenience offered, online shopping is still not the most preferred form of shopping in India, particularly rural areas. The results depicted that the motivators for online shopping in India are convenience and saving of time while security and privacy concerns discourage them from shopping online. Further, Kim and Park (2005) suggested the positive attitudes as well as willingness to search for pre-purchase information leads to a strong likelihood of consumers shopping online. Various studies found Internet buyers' demographic variables such as gender, marital status, residential location, age, education, and household income as important predictors of online shopping (Fram & Grady, 1997; Kunz, 1997; Mehta & Sivadas, 1995; Sultan & Henrichs, 2000). The study of Akhter (2002) showed that educated, younger, wealthier, and males are more likely to shop online than less educated, older, less wealthier, and females. This paper bridges the

gap in literature by examining the differences between men and women regarding online customer satisfaction. Further, previous research work suggests that females are more concerned than males with losing their privacy both in Internet contexts (Bartel-Sheehan, 1999; Kehoe *et al.*, 1997) and non-Internet contexts (Westin, 1997). It is important to consider the gender gap in online shopping, as females' participation can improve the sustainable growth of online shopping. Internet usage has become more popular among females these days, and the population of female Internet users is increasing to the level of male users. In addition, females tend to be more active shoppers in the offline shopping environment, and as such, it is reasonable to expect that they can become as involved online shoppers as males currently are.

## HYPOTHESIS AND OBJECTIVES

The present study is based upon the following hypothesis and objectives:-

**H1:** Gender wise respondent do not differ in their perception about online customer satisfaction.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the extent of customer satisfaction in online buying.
2. To elicit gender wise differences among the perception of customers regarding online customer satisfaction.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The various aspects of research methods are discussed as under:

### Instrument

For gathering the primary data, a questionnaire was framed after thorough review of extant literature and deliberations with experts. Various studies were considered for framing the questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised some items of demographics viz., gender, age marital status, qualification etc. and 21 items measuring customer satisfaction based on five point Likert scale ranging from 5 to 1, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree.

### Data

After pre-testing on 30 respondents, the final survey was conducted on 200 consumers contacted personally and through online services viz., e-mail, social media, etc. selected through purposive sampling from a Northern Indian state. The proportion of male respondents figured

lower (44%) than their female counterparts (56%). The average age of respondents came up as 24 years and more than half of them (57%) had below average age. About 7% respondents had the average age (24) and remaining (36%) had above average age. Majority of the respondents (86%) were unmarried. As far as qualification is majority of the respondents (59%) were postgraduates and above and about 70% were unemployed. Urban locality accounted for 63% of respondents with majority of them (66%) belonging to Jammu region (Table 1).

**Table 1: Demographic Profile**

| Variables              | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age                    |           |            |
| Below Average          | 114       | 57         |
| Average                | 14        | 07         |
| Above Average          | 72        | 36         |
| Gender                 |           |            |
| Male                   | 88        | 44         |
| Female                 | 112       | 56         |
| Marital Status         |           |            |
| Married                | 28        | 14         |
| Unmarried              | 172       | 86         |
| Qualification          |           |            |
| Undergraduate          | 8         | 4          |
| Graduate               | 70        | 37         |
| Post-Graduate or above | 113       | 59         |
| Occupation             |           |            |

|            |     |    |
|------------|-----|----|
| Employed   | 135 | 70 |
| Unemployed | 58  | 30 |

## RESULTS

For identifying the mean differences between male and female respondents regarding online customer satisfaction, independent sample t-test has been applied. It was found that male and female differ in their satisfaction levels only regarding two aspects viz., ‘customer’s feedback is valued and implemented’ and ‘e-stores are customised to customers’ needs (Sig <.05). However, gender-wise, there turned out to be no significant difference in majority of variables namely, the e-stores offer most reasonable prices, lucrative offers, wide range of products, regular tracking of my order, quality of products is always good, visual interface of website/application is pleasant and smooth, browsing experience is smooth, inventory of store is good, payment/checkout is easy, delivery of products is always on/before promised time and the website displays complementary goods that match their needs. Both male and female have same opinion regarding post-purchase assistance. It is also evident that the return/cancellation policy is adequate. In addition, the customers get regular reminders about making purchases from the e-store and the e-store always tries its best to serve their customers’ needs. Both kinds of respondents were highly satisfied with online shopping as they have access to wide variety of products (Table 2).

The male respondents accorded the least mean score to feedback implementation (3.13) and their counterpart female

**Table 2: Gender wise Difference in Online Satisfaction**

| S. No. | Items                                                            | Male |      | Female |      | Mean Difference | T      | Sig. |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|--------|------|-----------------|--------|------|
|        |                                                                  | Mean | S.D. | Mean   | S.D. |                 |        |      |
| 1      | e-Stores offer most reasonable prices.                           | 3.77 | 0.96 | 3.59   | 0.94 | 0.19            | 1.386  | .167 |
| 2      | They offer lucrative offers.                                     | 3.60 | 0.99 | 3.66   | 0.95 | -0.06           | -.443  | .658 |
| 3      | They provide wide range of products.                             | 4.14 | 1.01 | 4.30   | 0.92 | -0.16           | -1.189 | .236 |
| 4      | Quality of products is always good.                              | 3.34 | 0.99 | 3.22   | 0.93 | 0.11            | .833   | .406 |
| 5      | Visual interface of website/ application is pleasant and smooth. | 3.52 | 1.08 | 3.49   | 0.88 | 0.03            | .189   | .850 |
| 6      | Browsing experience is not smooth.                               | 3.38 | 0.98 | 3.17   | 0.95 | 0.21            | 1.549  | .123 |
| 7      | Payment/checkout is easy.                                        | 3.80 | 1.02 | 3.88   | 0.92 | -0.08           | -.582  | .561 |
| 8      | Delivery of products is on/before promised time.                 | 3.53 | 1.14 | 3.58   | 1.13 | -0.05           | -.294  | .769 |
| 9      | They offer regular tracking of my order.                         | 3.67 | 1.12 | 3.64   | 0.96 | 0.03            | .230   | .818 |
| 10     | Inventory of store is good.                                      | 3.51 | 0.96 | 3.47   | 0.92 | 0.03            | .246   | .806 |
| 11     | Your feedback is valued and implemented.                         | 3.13 | 0.97 | 3.46   | 0.99 | -0.33           | -2.391 | .018 |
| 12     | The website displays complementary goods that match my needs.    | 3.52 | 1.02 | 3.63   | 1.00 | -0.11           | -.777  | .438 |
| 13     | My preferred site is customised to my needs.                     | 3.31 | 0.99 | 3.59   | 0.89 | -0.28           | -2.064 | .040 |

|    |                                                                  |      |      |      |      |       |        |      |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|------|
| 14 | Post-purchase assistance is good.                                | 3.37 | 1.02 | 3.37 | 1.00 | 0.00  | -.011  | .991 |
| 15 | Return/cancellation policy is adequate.                          | 3.22 | 1.17 | 3.14 | 1.06 | 0.08  | .501   | .617 |
| 16 | The e-store always tries its best to serve my needs.             | 3.52 | 1.08 | 3.48 | 0.93 | 0.04  | .286   | .775 |
| 17 | I get detailed information from the website.                     | 3.65 | 1.02 | 3.80 | 0.93 | -0.16 | -1.129 | .260 |
| 18 | The e-store protects my information.                             | 3.59 | 0.95 | 3.76 | 0.81 | -0.17 | -1.360 | .176 |
| 19 | I get regular reminders about making purchases from the e-store. | 3.74 | 1.13 | 3.87 | 0.85 | -0.13 | -.879  | .381 |
| 20 | The promotions/advertisements are as per my needs.               | 3.29 | 1.08 | 3.34 | 0.88 | -0.05 | -.365  | .715 |
| 21 | Overall you are satisfied from e stores.                         | 3.76 | 0.82 | 3.82 | 0.73 | -0.06 | -.498  | .619 |

respondents are least satisfied with return/cancellation policy (3.14) as the procedure may complex and time consuming. The e-customers seem to receive detailed information from the website/application about their orders and the e-store protects their information. As far as inventory, prices, quality of products, return/cancellation policy, visual interface of website/application and browsing experience are concerned, scores for males turned out to be higher than females. On the other hand, females seemed more satisfied as far as lucrative offers, variety of products, payment options; website and advertisement customisation is concerned. Females are also more satisfied as the e-stores protect their personal information. The results of t- test indicate that gender-wise, there is no significant difference in majority of variables (Table 2). Thus, the hypothesis is accepted. The present study examined the gender differences in online shopping and the future research can consider other demographic factors such as age, qualification, occupation and income of e-customers. The study shall be highly beneficial to researchers for new insights and all the stakeholders in e-tailing.

## REFERENCES

- Ahluwalia, R. (2000). Examination of psychological processes underlying resistance to persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(2), 217-232.
- Arthur, C. (1992). Fifteen million Americans are shopping addicts. *American Demographics*, 14(3), 14-15.
- Bartel-Sheehan, K. (1999). An investigation of gender differences in on-line privacy concerns and resultant behaviors. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 13(4), 24-38.
- Bickart, B., & Schindler, R. M. (2001). Internet forums as influential sources of consumer information. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 15(3), 31-40.
- Bimber, B. (2000). Measuring the gender gap on the Internet. *Social Science Quarterly*, 81(3), 868-876.
- Bonabeau, E. (2004). The perils of the imitation age. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(6), 45-54.
- Briones, M. G. (1998). On-line retailers seek ways to close shopping gender gap. *Marketing News*, 32(2), 10.
- Bybee, J., Glick, M., & Zigler, E. (1990). Differences across gender, grade level, and academic track in the content of the ideal self-image. *Sex Roles*, 22 (5-6), 349-358.
- Carl, W. (2005). Word-of-mouth and gender. Retrieved from [http://wom\\_study.blogspot.com/2005/06/word-of-mouth-and-gender.html](http://wom_study.blogspot.com/2005/06/word-of-mouth-and-gender.html).
- Chatterjee, P. (2001). Online reviews: Do consumers use them? *In The Proceedings of ACR 2001*, pp. 129-134.
- Chen, Y., & Xie, J. (2008). Online consumer review: Word-of-mouth as a new element of marketing communication mix. *Management Science*, 54(3), 477-492.
- Cheong, H. J., & Morrison, M. A. (2008). Consumers' reliance on product information and recommendations. *UGC Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 8(2), 38-49.
- Chevalier, J. A., & Mayzlin, D. (2006). The effect of word of mouth on sales. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43(3), 345-354.
- Chu, W., Choi, B., & Song, M. R. (2005). The role of on-line retailer brand and infomediary reputation in increasing consumer purchase intention. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 9(3), 115-127.
- Clancy, S. M., & Dollinger, S. J. (1993). Photographic depictions of the self: gender and age differences in social connectedness. *Sex Roles*, 29(7-8), 477-495.
- Dellarocas, C., Zhang, X. M., & Awad, N. F. (2007). Exploring the value of online product reviews in forecasting sales: The case of motion pictures. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 21(4), 23-45.
- Duan, W., Gu, B., & Whinston, A. B. (2008). The dynamics of online word-of-mouth and product sales-an empirical investigation of the movie industry. *Journal of Retailing*, 84(2), 233-242.
- Duhan, D. F., Johnson, S. D., Wilcox, J. B., & Harell, G. D. (1997). Influences on consumer use of word-of-mouth

- recommendation sources. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(4), 283-295.
- Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (1981). Sex of researchers and sex-typed communications as determinants of sex differences in influence ability: A meta-analysis of social influence studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 90(1), 1-20.
- Gallagher, K., Parsons, J., & Foster, K. D. (2001). A tale of two studies: replicating -Advertising effectiveness and content evaluation in print on the Web. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 41(4), 71-81.
- Garbarino, E., & Strahilevitz, S. (2004). Gender differences in the perceived risk of buying online and the effects of receiving a site recommendation. *Journal of Business Research*, 57, 768-775.
- Jen-Hung, H., & Yi-Chun, J. (2010). Gender differences in adolescents' online shopping motivations. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(6), 849-857.
- Lucian, R., & Farias, S. (2009). Effects of information overload on Brazilian e-consumers. *American Journal of Economics and Business Administration*, 1(21-26). DOI:10.3844/ajebasp.2009.21.26
- Nardal, S., & Sahin, A. (2011). Ethical issues in e-commerce on the basis of online retailing. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 190-198.
- Richa, D. (2012). Impact of demographic factors of consumers on online shopping behaviour: A study of consumers in India. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Sciences*, 3(1), 43-52.
- Roman, S. (2007). The ethics of online retailing: A scale development and validation from the consumers' perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 72, 131-148.
- Bellman, S., Lohse, G., & Johnson, E. (1999). Predictors of online buying behaviour. *Communications of the ACM*, 42(12), 32-38.
- Kehoe, C., Pitkow, J., & Morton, K. (1997). Eighth WWW user survey. Retrieved from [http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/user\\_surveys/survey-1997-04/](http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/user_surveys/survey-1997-04/), 1997.
- Westin, A. (1997). *Privacy and American business study*. Retrieved from <http://shell.idt.it/pab/women.html>.
- Akhter, S. (2002). Digital divide and purchase intention: Why demographic psychology matters. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 24, 321-327.
- Fram, E. H., & Grandy, D.B. (1997). Internet shoppers: Is there a surfer gender gap? *Direct Marketing*, 59(1), 46-50.
- Kunz, M. B. (1997). *On-line customers: identifying store, product and consumer attributes which influences shopping on the Internet*. Published doctoral dissertation. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
- Mehta, R., & Sivadas, E. (1995). Direct marketing on the Internet: An empirical assessment of consumer attitudes. *Journal of Direct Marketing*, 9(3), 21-32.
- Sultan, F., & Henrichs, R. B. (2000). Consumer preferences for Internet services over time: initial explorations. *The Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 17(5), 386-403.
- Vijay Sai, T., & Balaji, M. S. (May 2009). Online shopping in India: Findings from a consumer research. *Marketing Mastermind*, 5. The ICFAI University Press.
- Miyazaki, A. D., & Fernandez, A. (2000). Internet privacy and security: An examination of online retailer disclosures. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 19, 54-61.
- Meinert, D. B., Peterson, D. K., Criswell, J. R., & Crosland, M. D. (2006). Privacy policy statements and consumer willingness to provide personal information. *Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations* 4, 1-17.
- AcNielsen. (2009). *Indians beat world in cyber shopping*, [online document].
- Know, K., & Lee, J. (2003). Concerns about payment security of Internet purchases: A perspective on current on-line shoppers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 21(4), 174-184.
- Ernst, & Young. (2000). *Global Online Retailing* [Online], Retrieved from <http://www.ey.com>
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2000). *Marketing* (5th ed.), Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Steinfeld, C., & Whitten, P. (1999). Community level socio-economic impacts of electronic commerce. *Journal of Computer mediated Communication*, 5(2). Retrieved from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol5/issue2/steinfield.html>