

Do Age and Gender Play a Role in Online Search Behaviour? A Study of Online Shoppers

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Abstract

In this digital era, online shopping has become a trend these days. Retailers are coming up with their online stores providing a wide range of product and shoppers get plentiful information related to the products online. Shoppers search for the product information on various online channels like media, social networking sites, blogs and online reviews etc. Therefore, to know the online search behaviour of the shoppers, this study attempts to find out the impact of age and gender on online search behaviour of online shoppers. Online search behaviour of shoppers was studied on two aspects i.e. online search platforms and online information search. To achieve the objective of the study, research was conducted on 400 respondents from Chandigarh, Delhi, Ludhiana and Faridabad. Respondents were taken from the age group of 18 to 35 both males and females. Data was collected with the help of self structured questionnaire and to analyze the data, mean, frequency and t-test were used with the help of SPSS 16. Results revealed that age and gender has a significant impact on online search platforms especially on search options on retailer's website. In terms of reliability, gender has a significant impact on online information sources mainly on online reviews on third party's website. No significant impact of age was found on online information sources.

Keywords: Online Shopping Behaviour, Online Search Behaviour, Online Search Platforms and Online Information Sources

Introduction

In this technology driven market place, e-commerce has grown rapidly which ultimately created vast scope for the market players for doing business on a global front (Al-Maghrabi and Dennis, 2011). E-commerce has given opportunities to retailers to come up with online retail stores where they can have variety of product offerings for online shoppers. As more and more shoppers are moving towards online shopping, online stores are providing ample amount of information to online shoppers so that shoppers can make the final purchase (Changchit, 2006).

Shoppers consult many information sources in their pre-purchase process like online retailer's website, media advertisements, blogs, online intermediaries and information available on social networking sites (Suki and Suki, 2013). Such information sources collect information of the products from different sources and then provide a comparison with other alternative products available on the internet (Chung, 2013). Consumer online reviews are good source of information and the influential one also. Information on this platform is created by the shoppers who had past experience in using product (Lee et al., 2011).

Correct information sources also help in decreasing perceived risk associated with online shopping. The appropriate and effective information helps in purchase decision of the online shoppers (Zha, Li & Yan, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to study online search behaviour pattern of online shoppers so that online retailers can make continual improvement to meet shoppers' changing needs and requirements. Hence this study focuses on online search behaviour of online shoppers.

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Review of Literature & Hypotheses

In the recent past, many studies have been conducted in an extensive manner based on online shopping behaviour. Researchers are taking interest in exploring new dimensions in this segment. One of the dimensions of online shopping behaviour is online search behaviour of the shoppers. In the second stage of process of online buying decision, consumers start searching for the product online and seek relevant information related to that identified product like product features, price comparison, online reviews and online recommendation sources etc.

Online Search Behaviour

There are some factors which influence shoppers' online searching behaviour like type of product, amount of information available on the internet, knowledge about the required product, brand and time available for searching on internet, which help shoppers to take purchase decision (Malone and Low, 2002). They were of view that shoppers did not make changes in their online information search behaviour when they look for same type of product again. Sometimes shoppers didn't make any strategy in searching any product online (Debowski, 2001). They follow the same pattern over and again and commit same mistake in searching again.

Other factors that persuade shoppers for online information search were experience, sentiments, compassion, intent, outlook, significance, time and sources (Jiang et al., 2015). Seock and Norton, (2007) revealed that if the shoppers search for the product on their favorite online stores then they tend to purchase more products from there.

Online Search Platforms

In a study by Detlor et al., (2003) revealed that in decision making process shoppers followed two aspects in pre-purchase information search i.e. searching and browsing; while searching, they were focused on product specifications and in browsing they were more interested in knowing about the retailer and their way of doing business. Pre-purchase information search aids in decision making, when there is lots of information available on the internet. There are various information sources also, which help shoppers to take decision. But the shoppers use those information sources only which they feel suitable

for making purchase decision (Broilo et al., 2016). It was also found that shoppers' perception towards information sources and their previous experiences motivated them to use those information sources for shopping online. Sometimes shoppers' characteristics also revealed their online search behaviour.

In a study by Wan, Nakayama, & Sutcliffe, (2012) highlights that for searching any product online, shoppers used online search engines which was very time efficient and used by every age group. It was found that young shoppers were experiencing web interfaces as compared to older age group. Study by Kumar (2012) also examined age and gender impact on online search engines and online public access catalogs. It was resulted that there was significant difference between age and the search pattern of online shoppers. In case of gender, no such difference was found. Brown, Pope and Voges (2003) also did not find any significant difference in terms of gender.

Reliability of Online Information Search

For shopping online, shoppers search for different sources of information available on the internet. Blogs are such an example of those online sources. Blogs provide product reviews and some recommendations related to that product which online shoppers want to buy (Hsu et al., 2013). Therefore, blogs help online shoppers in their purchase decision. In a pre-purchase information search process, available online information and e-word of mouth are very significant as they are based on shoppers' familiarity and appropriate to the purchase of the product (Ha, 2002). He also added that pre-purchase information search helped in reducing risk acuity in online shopping.

Online intermediaries also play a vital role in online search of information and decision making. They provide non-biased product information and price comparisons regarding the available products on the online platforms (Chung, 2013). Other aspects which affect shoppers' decision making are media advertisements and customers' online review. Studies had shown that it was shoppers' ability to search available online information for taking effective purchase decision which in turn gives satisfaction to the shoppers. And also if the shoppers were not able to take decision by their own then they tend to rely more on web advertisements for making purchase decision (Zha, et al., 2013). Another study by Yan et al., (2017) found that information on digital library and social

networking sites help shoppers to take purchase decision but digital libraries were more effective as compared to social networking sites.

Studies found that shoppers seek that information which comes directly to them from third party or from other shoppers who have used the products earlier (Lepkowska-White, 2013). In some cases characteristics of shoppers such as gender, internet usage, outlook towards online shopping and product knowledge also affect their online search behaviour. Study by Gallent and Arcand, 2017 suggested that societal persuasion, product knowledge and level of internet usage motivated shoppers to go online for information search and they used available online information sources including e-word of mouth. It was also found in the study that male shoppers had positive approach towards online information sources.

Seock and Bailey (2008) studied online shopping pattern and online information search behaviour of US college students and also difference between male and female shopping pattern. Researchers found that students were focused basically on time, brand, convenience, price, trust, and brand loyalty (Ling et al., 2010). It was also shown that most of the students searched for the product online especially female students who liked the brand and enjoyed shopping online. Female students searched more information online than male students before making any purchase.

Literature Gap

Review of literature reveals that most of the studies have been conducted in Western world and few studies are based on Indian online shoppers. It was also found that the previous works were not focused on more than one demographic but this study attempts to contribute impact of age and gender on online search behaviour in the domain of online buying behaviour. Moreover, past studies covered different aspect of online search behaviour in a standalone manner. Thus, there was major gap in the field of online search behaviour. Hence this study tries to cover main aspects of online search behaviour in a wholesome manner.

Need and Significance of the Study

The Online search behaviour is an important aspect in the process of online decision making process. After

recognizing the need of the product, potential shoppers search for the product online then online information search comes into the main frame. There is lots of information available on the internet about the products but it is important to know what type of positive and negative information are available in the online shopping sphere. Reviews and recommendations are also provided by the previous shoppers according to their past experiences. Sometimes online retailers also come up with the information about the product. Now a day, Social networking sites and blogs etc. also play a major role in providing online information and comparison of the product with other products. Thus, online shoppers have a broad spectrum of information available on the internet. Therefore, it is important to know how online shoppers act in the process of online information search. The present study is significant to online marketer to gain an insight of the shoppers online search behaviour so that they have knowledge about shoppers' online information search pattern.

Objective of the Study

The present study has the following objectives:

- To assess the usage level of various online search platforms by the online shoppers while searching for search for product information.
- To assess the level of perceived reliability of various online search platforms by the online shoppers while searching for search for product information.
- To examine the impact of age and gender on usage level and perceived reliability of online search platforms.

Hypotheses of the Study

To examine the impact of age and gender on the usage level of various online search platforms such as online search engines, retailer's website, Online Shopping Website and Search Engine Advertisements it was hypothesized that:

H₀1: There is no significant difference in usage level of online search engines by online shoppers across age categories.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in usage level of retailer's website by online shoppers across age categories.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in usage level of online shopping website by online shoppers across age categories.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in usage level of search engine advertisements by online shoppers across age categories.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference in usage level of online shopping agents by online shoppers across age categories.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference in usage level of online search engines by online shoppers across gender.

H₀₇: There is no significant difference in usage level of retailer's website by online shoppers across gender.

H₀₈: There is no significant difference in usage level of online shopping website by online shoppers across gender.

H₀₉: There is no significant difference in usage level of search engine advertisements by online shoppers across gender.

H₀₁₀: There is no significant difference in usage level of online shopping agents by online shoppers across gender.

To examine the impact of age on the perceived reliability of various information search platforms such as Online Product Reviews via Video Advertisements, Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website, Online Product Reviews on Third Party's Website, Advertisements through Social Networking Sites, E-forums/Blogs related to Products, Promotional E-mails, E-Word of Mouth through Social Networking Sites, Online Display Advertisements and Online chat it was hypothesized that:

H₀₁₁: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online product reviews via video advertisements across age categories.

H₀₁₂: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online product reviews on retailer's website across age categories.

H₀₁₃: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online product reviews on third party's website across age categories.

H₀₁₄: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of advertisements through social networking sites across age categories.

H₀₁₅: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of e-forums/blogs related to products across age categories.

H₀₁₆: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of promotional emails across age categories.

H₀₁₇: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of e-word of mouth through social networking sites across age categories.

H₀₁₈: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online display advertisements across age categories.

H₀₁₉: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online chat across age categories.

To examine the impact of gender on the perceived reliability of various information search platforms such as Online Product Reviews via Video Advertisements, Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website, Online Product Reviews on Third Party's Website, Advertisements through Social Networking Sites, E-forums/Blogs related to Products, Promotional E-mails, E-Word of Mouth through Social Networking Sites, Online Display Advertisements and Online chat it was hypothesized that:

H₀₂₀: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online product reviews via video advertisements across gender categories.

H₀₂₁: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online product reviews on retailer's website across gender categories.

H₀₂₂: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online product reviews on third party's website across gender categories.

H₀₂₃: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of advertisements through social networking sites across gender categories.

H₀₂₄: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of e-forums/blogs related to products across gender categories.

H₀₂₅: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of promotional emails across gender categories.

H₀26: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of e-word of mouth through social networking sites across gender categories.

H₀27: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online display advertisements across gender categories.

H₀28: There is no significant difference in perceived reliability of online chat across gender categories.

Research Methodology

Scope of the Study

The theoretical scope of the study is limited to online information search behaviour of online shoppers. The geographical scope of the study is Chandigarh (UT), NCT of Delhi, Punjab and Haryana.

Research Design

For the purpose of present study descriptive research design is used.

Target Population

Target population of the study is those internet users who have made at least two online purchases in last one year.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

For the purpose of data collection, purposive sampling was used. Here one city from each state was selected on the basis of predominance of e-commerce activity. Therefore, Ludhiana from Punjab, Faridabad from Haryana, NCT of Delhi and Chandigarh (UT) was selected. 100 respondents from each city were selected by using purposive sampling and the sample size was 400.

Research Instrument

Structured questionnaire was used to get responses from the online shoppers. The questions were based on demographic profile, online search platforms and online information sources.

Data Collection

Data was collected by self administered questionnaire by using survey method.

Statistical Tools for Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used to analyze the data. SPSS 16 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive tools like frequency and percentage. Inferential statistical tools like t-test was used to compare mean of the responses of the respondents.

Analysis of the Results

Demographic Profile

Demographic profile of the respondents represents the distribution of the respondents across selected cities. Table 1.1 shows Gender and Age.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

N=400

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	204	51.00
	Female	196	49.00
Age (Years)	18-25	200	50.00
	26-35	200	50.00

The table shows that in the sample the number of 'Males' (51.00%) was more than 'Females' (49.00%). Distribution of 'Age' in the sample across the selected cities i.e. number of respondents in age category '18-25' (50.00%) and age category '26-35' (50.00%) was equal.

Online Search Platforms

This section deals with demographic wise analysis of online search platforms used for online shopping. Analysis of online search platforms was done on the bases of age and gender. Online search platforms included online search engine, retailer's website, online shopping website, search engine advertisements and online shopping agents.

Table 2: Age Wise Usage of Online Search Platforms for Online Shopping

N=400

Sources	Total Mean	Age (years)		t-test Statistics	
		18-25	26-35	t-value	p-value*
Online Search Engine	2.51	2.49	2.54	.395	.693
Retailer's Website	2.16	2.04	2.28	1.985	.048*
Online Shopping Website	2.42	2.42	2.43	.137	.891
Search Engine Advertisements	1.58	1.56	1.59	.257	.797
Online Shopping Agents	1.18	1.12	1.22	.805	.422

*Significance level 0.05

This table shows age wise usage of online search platforms for online shopping where usage frequency was calculated of 5 point Likert scale 0- Never, 1- Rarely, 2- Sometimes, 3- Frequently and 4- Always. It shows that the usage level of 'Online Search Engine' is highest as obtained mean score is 2.51 followed by 'Online Shopping Website' (2.42) as online search platforms. Among the lowest was 'Online Shopping Agents' with mean score value of 1.18 which shows that it is least used for searching on internet. In terms of Age group '18-25' also, 'Online Search Engine' (2.49) was mostly used by the respondents as a search platform followed by 'Online Shopping Website' (2.42), 'Retailer's Website' (2.04) and 'Search Engine Advertisements' (1.56). 'Online Shopping Agents' with a mean score of 1.12 were rarely used by the respondents. In case of age group '26-35', similar results were obtained, 'Online Search Engine' (2.54) being the highest and 'Online Shopping Agents' (1.22) as the least used online search platforms.

The t-statistics shows that there was a significant difference in the usage of online search platforms across age groups '18-25' and '26-35' regarding [Retailer's Website, $t(398)=-1.985$, $p=0.048$]. The table further shows that there was no significant difference in the usage of online search platforms across age groups '18-25' and '26-35' regarding [Online search Engine, $t(398)=-.395$, $p=0.693$], [Online Shopping Website, $t(398)=-.137$, $p=0.891$], [Search Engine Advertisements, $t(398)=-.257$, $p=.797$] and [Online Shopping Agents, $t(398)=-.805$,

$p=.422$]. Therefore, Hypothesis H02 was rejected, and Hypotheses H01, H03, H04 and H05 were not rejected.

Table 3: Gender Wise Usage of Online Search Platforms for Online Shopping

N=400

Sources	Total Mean	Gender		t-test Statistics	
		Male	Female	t-value	p-value*
Online Search Engine	2.51	2.54	2.48	.501	.617
Retailer's Website	2.16	2.36	1.96	3.527	.00*
Online Shopping Website	2.42	2.38	2.47	.815	.416
Search Engine Advertisements	1.58	1.50	1.65	1.341	.181
Online Shopping Agents	1.18	1.19	1.17	.137	.891

*Significance level 0.05

This table shows Gender wise usage of online search platforms for online shopping where usage frequency was calculated of 5 point Likert scale 0- Never, 1- Rarely, 2- Sometimes, 3- Frequently and 4- Always. It shows that 'Online Search Engine' obtained highest mean score value of 2.51 followed by 'Online Shopping Website' (2.42) as online search platforms. Among the lowest was 'Online Shopping Agents' with mean score value of 1.18 which shows that it was not used as a mean for searching on internet. In terms of Gender, 'Male' also 'Online Search Engine' (2.54) was mostly used by the respondents as a search platform followed by 'Online Shopping Website' (2.38), 'Retailer's Website' (2.36) and 'Search Engine Advertisements' (1.50). 'Online Shopping Agents' with a mean score of 1.19 were rarely used by the respondents. In case of 'Female', similar results were obtained, 'Online Search Engine' (2.48) being the highest and 'Online Shopping Agents' (1.17) as the least used online search platforms.

The t-statistics shows that there was a significant difference in the usage of online search platforms between 'Male' and 'Female' regarding [Retailer's Website, $t(398)=3.527$, $p=0.000$]. The table further shows that there was no significant difference in the usage of online search platforms between Gender categories 'Male' and 'Female'

regarding [Online search, $t(398)=.501$, $p=0.617$], [Online Shopping Website, $t(398)=-.815$, $p=0.416$], [Search Engine Advertisements, $t(398)=-1.341$, $p=.181$] and [Online Shopping Agents, $t(398)=.137$, $p=.891$].

Therefore, Hypothesis H07 was rejected, and Hypotheses H06, H08, H09, H10 were not rejected.

Reliability of Online Information Sources

This section deals with demographic wise analysis of reliability of online information sources used for online shopping and helped in decision making. Analysis of online information sources was done on the bases of age and gender. Online information sources included in the study were Online Product Reviews via Video Advertisements, Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website, Online Product Reviews on Third Party's Website, Advertisements through Social Networking Sites, E-forums/Blogs related to Products, Promotional E-mails, E-Word of Mouth Through Social Networking Sites, Online Display Advertisements and Online chat.

Table 4: Age Wise Reliability of Online Sources of Information in Online Shopping

N=400

Sources	Total Mean	Age		t-test Statistics	
		18-25	26-35	t-value	p-value*
Online Product Reviews via-Video Advertisements	2.75	2.76	2.74	.138	.891
Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website	2.98	2.98	2.98	.047	.963
Online Product Reviews on Third Party's Website	2.68	2.64	2.72	.618	.537
Advertisements through Social Networking Sites	2.95	3.04	2.86	1.708	.088
E-forums/Blogs related to Products	2.84	2.88	2.80	.673	.501
Promotional E-mails	2.44	2.43	2.46	.261	.794

E-Word Of Mouth Through Social Networking Sites	2.78	2.80	2.78	.175	.861
Online Display Advertisements	2.82	2.88	2.76	1.083	.279
Online chat	2.63	2.72	2.54	1.461	.145

*Significance level 0.05

Above table highlights age wise reliability of online sources of information while shopping online where reliability was calculated on 5 point Likert Scale i.e. 1 - Not at all Reliable, 2 - Slightly Reliable, 3 - Moderately Reliable, 4 - Reliable and 5 - Highly Reliable. It shows that 'Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website' was more reliable amongst all as it obtained highest mean score of 2.98 followed by 'Advertisements through Social Networking Sites' (2.95). 'E-forums/Blogs related to Products' and 'Online Display Advertisements' received similar mean score of 2.84 and 2.82 respectively as both of them were slightly reliable. 'E-Word of Mouth through Social Networking Sites' and 'Online Product Reviews via Video Advertisements' were also slightly reliable as they got mean score value of 2.78 and 2.75 respectively followed by 'Online Product Reviews on Third Party's Website' (2.68) and 'Online Chat' (2.63). 'Promotional Emails' received lowest mean score value of 2.44 which shows that it is least reliable amongst them all.

With respect to Age group '18-25', 'Advertisements through Social Networking Sites' was found to be reliable as it received mean score value of 3.04. Rest of them were moderately reliable showing 'Promotional E-mails' (2.43) being the lowest. In case of age group '26-35', all of them were moderately reliable, being 'Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website' (2.98) as the highest mean score and 'Promotional E-mails' (2.46) being the lowest.

The t-statistics in the table shows that there was no significant difference in the reliability of online sources of information between age group '18-25' and '26-35' regarding [Online Product Reviews via Video Advertisements, $t(398)=.138$, $p=0.891$], [Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website, $t(398)=.047$, $p=0.963$], [Online Product Reviews on Third Party's Website, $t(398)=.618$, $p=0.537$], [Advertisements through Social Networking Sites (398), $t=1.708$, $p=.088$], [E-forums/Blogs related to Products, $t(398)=.673$, $p=.501$], [Promotional E-mails, $t(398)=.261$, $p=.794$], [E-Word

of Mouth through Social Networking Sites, $t(398)=.175$, $p=.861$], [Online Display Advertisements, $t(398)=1.083$, $p=.279$] and [Online Chat, $t(398)=1.461$, $p=.145$].

Therefore, Hypotheses H011, H012, H013, H014, H015, H016, H017, H018, H019 were not rejected.

Table 5: Gender Wise Reliability of Online Sources of Information Search for Online Shopping

N=400

Sources	Total Mean	Gender		t-test Statistics	
		Male	Female	t-value	p-value*
Online Product Reviews via Video Advertisements	2.75	2.78	2.72	.517	.606
Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website	2.98	3.08	2.89	1.850	.065
Online Product Reviews on Third Party's Website	2.68	2.86	2.50	3.175	.002
Advertisements through Social Networking Sites	2.95	2.88	3.04	1.511	.131
E-forums/Blogs related to Products	2.84	2.94	2.74	1.828	.068
Promotional E-mails	2.44	2.47	2.43	.303	.762
E-Word Of Mouth Through Social Networking Sites	2.78	2.85	2.72	1.137	.256
Online Display Advertisements	2.82	2.82	2.82	.026	.979
Online chat	2.63	2.72	2.54	1.358	.175

*Significance level 0.05

Above table highlights gender wise reliability of online sources of information while shopping online where reliability was calculated on 5 point Likert Scale i.e. 1 - Not at all Reliable, 2 - Slightly Reliable, 3 - Moderately Reliable, 4 - Reliable and 5 - Highly Reliable. It shows that 'Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website' was more reliable amongst all as it obtained highest mean score of 2.98 followed by 'Advertisements through Social

Networking Sites' (2.95). 'E-forums/Blogs related to Products' and 'Online Display Advertisements' received similar mean score of 2.84 and 2.82 respectively as both of them were slightly reliable. 'E-Word of Mouth through Social Networking Sites' and 'Online Product Reviews via Video Advertisements' were also slightly reliable as they got mean score value of 2.78 and 2.75 respectively followed by 'Online Product Reviews on Third Party's Website' (2.68) and 'Online Chat' (2.63). 'Promotional Emails' received lowest mean score value of 2.44 which shows that it is least reliable amongst all of these.

With respect to Gender category 'Male', 'Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website' was found to be reliable as it received mean score value of 3.08. Rest of them were moderately reliable showing 'Promotional E-mails' (2.47) being the lowest. In case of gender category 'Female', all of them were moderately reliable, being 'Advertisements through Social Networking Sites' (3.04) as the highest mean score and 'Promotional E-mails' (2.43) being the lowest.

The t-statistics in the table shows that there was a significant difference in the reliability of online sources of information between Gender categories 'Male' and 'Female' regarding [Online Product Reviews on Third Party's Website, $t(398)=3.175$, $p=0.002$]. The table further shows that there was no significant difference in the reliability of online sources of information between 'Male' and 'Female' regarding [Online Product Reviews via Video Advertisements, $t(398)=.517$, $p=0.606$], [Online Product Reviews on Retailer's Website, $t(398)=1.850$, $p=0.065$], [Advertisements through Social Networking Sites, $t(398)=1.511$, $p=.131$], [E-forums/Blogs related to Products, $t(398)=1.828$, $p=.068$], [Promotional E-mails, $t(398)=.303$, $p=.762$], [E-Word of Mouth through Social Networking Sites, $t(398)=1.137$, $p=.256$], [Online Display Advertisements, $t(398)=.026$, $p=.979$] and [Online Chat, $t(398)=1.358$, $p=.175$].

Therefore, Hypothesis, H022 was rejected and Hypotheses H020, H021, H023, H024, H025, H026, H027, H028 were not rejected.

Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of the present research was to study the impact of age and gender on search behaviour of the online shoppers. The analysis reveals that amongst the

online search platforms, online search engine was widely used by the shoppers for online shopping whereas online shopping agents were least used by the shoppers. It was also found that age and gender of online shoppers has a significant impact on usage level of retailer's website. Hence, null hypothesis H_{02} and H_{07} were rejected and in rest of the cases where age and gender of online shoppers didn't impact online search platforms, null hypothesis were not rejected. On the other hand, only gender has a significant impact on the reliability of online information sources especially on online reviews on third party's website. Therefore, null hypothesis H_{022} was rejected and rest of the hypotheses were not rejected. In case of age, no significant impact was found on the reliability of online information sources and all the null were not rejected. Results also showed that online product reviews on retailer's website was considered more reliable by the online shoppers.

The present paper is an attempt to study online search behaviour of the online shoppers. Studies have shown that shoppers use different online information sources for searching any product before making the final purchase. These sources help online shoppers in their online decision making process. Shoppers used various online search platforms where they seek for information related to the product they wish to buy. In the process of gathering information they make use of media information, social networking sites, blogs, mails and chat etc.

This study provides a comprehensive picture of online shoppers of four cities limited to gender and specific age categories. Therefore, the results of the study should be assessed with other demographics also like education, occupation and income etc. Shoppers from other geographical regions also should be taken for the future studies.

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