

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE FACTORS AFFECTING E-LOYALTY AMONG WORKING PROFESSIONALS IN TIRUNELVELI CITY

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Abstract *E-Commerce has become an inevitable player in the current marketing situation and has seen a massive rise in the number of consumers. The rise in the number of E-tailers has given consumers more choice and there arises a pattern where consumers tend to shift easily owing to many factors. This study aims to analyse various factors influencing the E-Loyalty of the consumers and their impact. A descriptive research design was used to study a sample population of 80 consumers who use E-Commerce. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using appropriate statistical tools for this detailed study. The study results indicate that socio demographic factor don't play an influential role in E-Loyalty among the working professionals of Tirunelveli city.*

Keywords *E-Commerce, E-Loyalty, E-Trust, E-Satisfaction, E-Service Quality, Online Shopping*

INTRODUCTION

E-Commerce, also known as electronic commerce or internet commerce, refers to the buying and selling of goods or services using the internet, and the transfer of money and data to execute these transactions. Successful E-Tailing requires strong branding. Websites must be engaged, easily navigable, and regularly updated to meet consumers' changing demands. Products and services need to stand out from competitors' offerings and add value to consumers' lives. E-Tailing includes more than just E-Commerce only companies. More and more traditional brick-and-mortar stores are investing in E-Tailing. Infrastructure costs are lower with electronic retailing versus operating brick-and-mortar stores. E-Tailing reduces advertising and marketing expenses as customers can find the stores through search engines or social media. E-Commerce websites can make additional information easily available to customers. Most of this information is provided by vendors and does not cost anything to create or maintain. Consumer shopping behaviour can be tracked to determine spending habits, page views, and length of engagement with a product, service, or website page. Effective data analytics can decrease lost sales and boost client engagement, which can lead to increased revenue.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Yang et al. (2001), E-Service is becoming increasingly important not only in determining the success or failure of electronic commerce but also in providing consumers with a superior experience with respect to the

interactive flow of information. The growth of e-commerce has numerous advantages over the traditional stores or brick-and-mortar stores, in including more flexibility, enhanced market outreach, lower cost structures, faster transactions, broader product lines, greater convenience, and customization as stated by Brynjolfsson et al. (2009).

Santos (2003) has stated that customer satisfaction and loyalty for online purchases is lower than that for shopping in more traditional ways. However in order to maintain and increase the satisfaction and loyalty of online customers online retailers face a tough challenge.

Developing and maintaining Customer Loyalty in online context is of paramount importance for online service providers, since the creation of a loyal customer base strongly affects online business performance Reichheld et al. (2000). Often referred to as 'customer retention', the ability of an e-commerce company is not only to attract but retain its customer base requires a complex and challenging series of actions. The reason for low loyalty in online markets are competition is one-click away and numerous comparative shopping sites, a consumer may not even need to make multiple clicks to find the most suited option for their needs.

Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) have defined E-Loyalty as "the customer's favourable attitude toward an electronic business, resulting in repeat purchasing behavior". Based on this definition, Customer Loyalty is a multidimensional construct where attitudinal and behavioural aspects are identified as the 2 alternate forms of Customer Loyalty.

Bilgihan et al. (2012) have stated in their study that the most important demographic determinant of social networking website loyalty is income. On the other hand, gender

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has no significant impact to the loyalty. Based on their findings, management of social networking websites can develop different strategies that foster loyalty for different demographic segments.

Saad et al. (2013) has reviewed the demographic factors such as age, gender, income level, occupation and lifestyle and their influence on Loyalty of consumers and has observed that only income has a positive influence among the other factors.

Mishra and Prasad (2014) has identified that education qualification and the number of members in the family also a play a vital role in the loyalty of consumers.

Borges and Monteiro (2015) have conducted a similar study to understand the influence of Socio demographic factors and found the factors identified have a significant influence and contribute to consumer satisfaction and in turn Loyalty.

From the reviewed literature, the influence of socio demographic factors has shown an influence in E-Loyalty. It is in this context, that the current study has been undertaken among the working professionals of Tirunelveli city to check whether it holds true and formulate better marketing plans and strategies.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the Socio-demographic factors and the shopping behaviour among the working professionals in Tirunelveli city.
- To analyse the impact of Socio-demographic factors on E-Loyalty.
- To determine the impact of Consumers Buying Behaviour on E-Loyalty.

HYPOTHESIS FOR STUDY

H₁: To determine if there is any mean difference in E-Loyalty based on Gender, Marital Status, Occupation, Choice of Shopping Platform and Preferred Shopping Mode is observed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research uses a descriptive research design and survey method using a self selection method of sampling. The primary data was collected using a well structured questionnaire to study the objectives and a Likert 7 point scale was used in the design of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was circulated with the help of Google Forms and respondents were given clear explanation of scales which will help them in responding to the questionnaire effectively. Among the responses received, a total of 80 samples were used for the data analysis.

The reliability test for all the factors has been checked using Reliability analysis option. This Test was conducted in SPSS Version 22. The above table shows a consolidated value of the Cronbach Alpha Value of all the variables of study and since all of them are above 0.7 we can infer that the reliability is high according to the Cronbach alpha Value indicator table.

Normality tests show the skewness ± 2 and kurtosis ± 3 value for the variables used in the study lie in the acceptable range and hence we can conclude that they are normally distributed. Hence we go for Parametric Tests for further analysis of the research objectives. Statistical tools one way ANOVA and Independent sample T Test were used for the analysis with the aid of the SPSS Version 22 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Frequency Distribution

The above table shows that majority of the respondents are male shoppers who prefer online shopping for the convenience it offers, compared to women who would like to touch and feel the product before purchasing. Women also appear to be more particular with the particulars of the product bought when compared and hence may prefer buying from shops. The above chart shows that 56.25% of the respondents are unmarried and the rest 43.75% are married. The study shows that unmarried respondents have lesser responsibilities when compared to married respondents and hence have money that can be spent on things according to their likings.

Table 1

Socio-Demographic Factors	Frequency(n)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	50	62.5
Female	30	37.5
Marital Status		
Married	35	43.8
Unmarried	45	56.3
Age Group		
19-25	40	50.0
26-40	37	46.3
41-60	3	3.8
Occupation		
Self - Employed	31	38.8
Private	45	56.3

Socio-Demographic Factors	Frequency(n)	Percent (%)
Government	3	5.0
Income		
Below 1 Lakh	31	38.8
1-2 Lakhs	16	20.0
2-3 Lakhs	19	23.8
3-4 Lakhs	6	7.5
Above 4 Lakhs	8	10.0
Preferred Shopping Mode		
Websites	21	26.3
Apps	59	73.8

From the above table, we can infer that the majority of the respondents are from the age group 19-25 and form a substantial percentage of online shoppers followed by the age group 26-40. We can understand that people of age 19-40 are more inclined towards online shopping as their needs are easily met with the click of button and are tech savvy. It is inferred from the above table that 56.25% of the respondents are Private Employees, 38.75% are Self Employed and 5% are Government Employed. It can be understood that majority of the respondents are Private Employees who are given Online shopping allowances and discounts, E-Retailers gift cards for birthdays and personal achievements as fringe benefits and it makes them more inclined towards online shopping.

The above results show that 38.75% of the respondents fall into the income group of below 1 Lac per annum, 23.75% of the respondents have a income range of 2-3 Lacs, 20% of the respondents have an annual income range of 1-2 Lacs, 10% of the respondents have an annual income of 4 Lacs and above and 7.5% of the respondents have an income range of 3-4 Lacs per annum. Therefore the majority of the respondents have an income level of below 1 Lac.

From the results, we can infer that majority of the respondents belong to low income group who have less choice when it comes to frugality. They look at making the most of their spending and tend to go for better deals and bargains in online shopping.

From the above table we can infer that a majority of 73.75% of the respondents used Mobile Apps for their online shopping preference and 26.25% of the respondents used Websites for their Online shopping needs. The online shopping retailers have now established user friendly mobile apps which make the online shopping hassle free. The mobile apps are also designed in such a way that makes payment easy with the use of wide range of UPI based payment mode.

Independent Sample T Test and ANOVA

The independent sample T Test results show that the significant p value (0.937) is greater than level of significance (0.05). There is no mean difference between male and female respondents on E- Loyalty and hence we fail to reject H₀.

Table 2

Variable	Category	Mean ± SD	T-Value	P-Value
Gender	Male	4.90 ± 1.202	-0.80	0.937
	Female	4.92 ± 1.455		
Marital Status	Married	5.10 ± 1.222	1.174	0.244
	Unmarried	4.76 ± 1.342		
Preferred Shopping Mode	Websites	4.83 ± 1.625	-0.313	0.755
	Mobile Apps	4.93 ± 1.169		

The independent sample T Test results shows that the significant p value (0.244) is greater than level of significance (0.05). There is no mean difference between married and unmarried respondents on E-Loyalty and hence we fail to reject H₀.

The independent sample T Test results shows that the significant p value (0.755) is greater than level of significance (0.05). There is no mean difference between preferred shopping modes of respondents on E-Loyalty and hence we fail to reject H₀.

Table 3

Variable	Category	Mean ± SD	F- Value	p- Value
Age Group	19-25	4.87 ± 1.045	1.928	0.152
	26-40	5.11 ± 1.130		
	41-60	6.07 ± 0.833		
Occupation	Self Employed	4.93 ± 1.127	0.013	0.987
	Private	4.88 ± 1.347		
	Government	4.95 ± 2.181		
Income	Below 1 Lakh	4.63 ± 1.244	0.871	0.486
	1-2 Lakhs	4.95 ± 1.225		
	2-3 Lakhs	5.33 ± 1.334		
	3-4 Lakhs	4.83 ± 1.886		
	4 Lakh and Above	4.95 ± 1.041		

The above table shows that the p value (0.987) is greater than the level of significance (0.05) and we can infer that

there is no difference in E-Loyalty based on Occupation. Hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

The above table shows that the p value (0.486) is greater than the level of significance (0.05) and we can infer that there is no difference in E-Loyalty based on Income. Hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. From the mean value of the different income groups, the respondents of income group 2-3 lakhs (Mean-5.33) have a relatively higher mean value, so they tend to show a positive influence on E-Loyalty.

The above table shows that the p value (0.152) is greater than the level of significance (0.05) and we can infer that there is no difference in E-Loyalty based on Age group. Hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. From the mean value of the different age groups, the age group of 41-60 (Mean-6.07) have a relatively higher mean value, so they tend to show a positive influence on E-Loyalty.

CONCLUSION

In the competitive world of e-commerce there is a fierce competition among the E-Commerce providers for attracting and retaining customers. A long term consumer relationship is more profitable than one time consumers or purchase. Customer Loyalty paves the way for customer conversion and retention. From the study we can conclude that Socio Demographic Factors and Consumers Buying Behaviour do not affect the E-Loyalty of the Consumers of the study population and hence E-Tailers must come up with innovative and effective strategies to retain the existing consumers. Customer Loyalty does not happen overnight and is a process which involves time, effort and willingness from the business to provide what it takes to assure that every purchase transitions into a repeat purchase. The process when done effectively will yield long term benefits to the E-Tailers.

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