



INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER PREFERENCES TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING WITH REFERENCE TO APPARELS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study paper is to examine the elements influencing customers' perceptions of online shopping as well as the consumers' perceptions of online shopping. To investigate customer preferences and the variables influencing those choices when purchasing clothes online, a descriptive research approach was used. The information from respondents has been gathered using a convenience sample method. Customers who have purchased clothes products online are among those who responded. There were 275 respondents in the study's overall sample. The SPSS 21 programme was used to do the data analysis. To determine the variations in consumer preferences for online clothing purchasing, the data were analyzed using percentage analysis and one way Anova. According to the results, convenience/time savings, straightforward product and price comparison, easy product customization, offers/discounts/schemes, product variety, payment method, loyalty programmes, warranty/guarantee, availability of personalized services, ease of return and refund, and after-sales services are all significant factors influencing customer preferences for online shopping of consumers in the apparel industry. Several powerful factors, including pricing, branding, the internet and catalogues, play a significant impact in purchasing decisions while shopping online.

Key words: Customer Preferences, Online Shopping, Apparels, One way Anova.

INTRODUCTION

Buying products or services directly from a vendor online in real time without the need of a middleman service is known as online shopping. It is a type of online trade. For virtual goods like access to premium content on a website, a significant portion of electronic commerce is handled wholly online, but most electronic commerce requires the conveyance of actual goods in some fashion. Internet retail is also

referred to as e-tail, and online retailers as e-trailers. Nowadays, almost all significant merchants have an online presence.

The Internet has had a more immediate and profound impact on Indian culture than any other breakthrough. People from all areas of life may now transport complete libraries, entertainment venues, post offices, and financial centers to a workplace, a desktop, or even their shirt pockets thanks to online access. The biggest and most significant impact of the Internet may be on how customers shop for anything from clothes, vehicles, and cruises to presents, gadgets, and groceries.

Statement of the Problem

One can learn from this study what influences customers' views and attitudes regarding a product or service. This study aids in understanding consumer perceptions of online shopping. Understanding how customers perceive, taste, and prefer the goods and services that are supplied at online shops enables them to run their businesses successfully.

Objectives of the study

*To comprehend how consumers feel about online buying.

*To examine the variables affecting how consumers see online buying.

Hypotheses of the study

- There are no appreciable differences in perceptions of convenience or time savings across age groups, genders, occupations, and levels of monthly income.
- Why Perceptions of Easy items and price comparison among individuals of various ages, genders, occupations, and monthly incomes do not significantly differ.
- There are no appreciable differences in attitudes towards product personalization across individuals of different ages, genders, occupations, and monthly incomes.
- Perceptions of offers, discounts, and schemes do not significantly change by age, gender, occupation, or monthly income.
- There are no appreciable differences in attitudes towards product variety across age, gender, occupation, and monthly income.
- There are no appreciable differences in attitudes about payment methods across age, gender, occupation, and monthly income.
- Perceptions of loyalty programmes do not significantly differ by age, gender, occupation, or monthly income.

- There are no appreciable differences in attitudes on warranty and guarantee across individuals of different ages, genders, occupations, and monthly incomes.
- Perceptions of the availability of individualized services do not significantly differ by age, gender, occupation, or monthly income.
- Perceptions of easy returns and refunds do not significantly differ by age, gender, occupation, or monthly income.

Limitations

- Similar to many other studies, this one has some restrictions about data collecting, sample, and extrapolation of the results.
- The study's sample size might not be sufficient to generalize the findings.
- The results of a similar study could vary since other major cities might have different demographic characteristics.
- Respondents were chosen for this study from the metropolitan area. The investigation should be expanded to include rural areas as well.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The emergence of the Internet has transformed commerce into an electronic era, affecting nearly every aspect of daily life, from how consumers communicate and learn about product offerings to how they shop and make purchases of goods and services. It goes without saying that online advertising is currently a vital source of buying information. With transaction volumes roughly treble those of all retail deals combined in 2004, the Internet is the retail channel that is growing the fastest. By 2010, it is expected that web retail sales would exceed \$331 billion. Notwithstanding the current financial hardships plaguing consumers worldwide, a more promising future for customer use of retail Internet seems to be extended by the growing popularity of the Internet among the general public. Customers are increasingly using the Internet to compile e-coupons and create their own customized virtual coupon books, ensuring that customers may access a variety of coupons online for everything from food purchases to theatre tickets to hotels. **(2016) (Kumar, Anand, & Mutha).**

Customers are increasingly using the Internet to compile e-coupons and create their own customized virtual coupon books, ensuring that customers may access a variety of coupons online for everything from food purchases to theatre tickets to hotels **(Swarnakar & Kumar 2016).**

Consumers are growing more engaged and at ease with online shopping, which may be linked to a number of causes including hectic modern lifestyles, longer working hours, the ability to peruse products from the comfort of one's home, the broader variety of options accessible, etc. Online transactions, product or service research, social and business networking, and purchase of tickets for travel. Customers' expectations of receiving prompt, high-quality customer care at numerous touch points have increased as a result of their increased online engagement (Rocco, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

To investigate customer preferences and the variables influencing those choices when purchasing clothes online, a descriptive research approach was used. The information from respondents has been gathered using a convenience sample method. Customers who have purchased clothes products online are among those who responded. There were 275 respondents in the study's overall sample.

The SPSS 21 programme was used to do the data analysis. Cross-tabulation and chi-square tests were used to evaluate the data in order to determine the differences in customer preferences for online clothing buying.

ANALYSIS

The demographic profile of respondents, data filtering, and one-way Anova are all covered in this chapter in order to determine the factors affecting consumers' perceptions of online clothing buying.

Percentage Analysis has been used to understand demographic profile of the respondent.

Demographic variable	Frequency
AGE	
Below 18	37
18-25	103
26-40	94
Above 40	41
Total	275
GENDER	
Male	71
Female	145
Transgender	59

Total	275
OCCUPATION	
Student	30
Business	67
Government Employee	69
Private	79
Others	30
Total	275
MONTHLY INCOME	
Less than 20000	42
20000-30000	99
31000-40000	89
Above 40000	45
Total	275

The above table shows that 103 respondents are between the age group of 18-25, there are 37 respondents below the age group of 18, 94 respondents between the age group of 26-40 and 41 respondents above the age group of 40 out of total 275 respondents. Out of 275 respondents 71 are male, 145 are female and 59 are transgender. Out of 275 respondents 30 are students, 67 are business, 67 are government employee, 79 are private, others are 30. Out of 275 respondents the monthly income for 42 respondents is less than 20000, 99 respondents between 20000-30000, 89 respondents between 31000-40000, 45 respondents above 40000.

ONE WAY ANOVA

To ascertain if samples from two or more groups come from populations with equal means, ANOVA has been used in the study. Age, gender, occupation, and monthly income are the test's independent factors, whereas dependent variables Convenience/Time Saving, Simple Product and Price Comparison, Product Customization Options, Offers, Discounts, and Schemes, Product Diversity, Payment Method, Loyalty Programs, Warranty/Guarantee, accessibility to individualised services, Refunding and after-sales services are simple.

One way anova for age and customer preference factors towards online shopping of apparels					
		Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Convenience/Time saving	below 18	3.78	.787	.792	.499
	18-25	3.64	.917		
	26-40	3.82	.927		
	above 40	3.83	.972		
	Total	3.75	.912		
Easy products and price comparison	below 18	3.41	1.166	1.624	.184
	18-25	3.69	1.155		
	26-40	3.84	1.120		
	above 40	3.88	.980		
	Total	3.73	1.124		
Choice of product customization	below 18	3.76	.925	1.740	.159
	18-25	3.59	1.024		
	26-40	3.91	1.033		
	above 40	3.85	1.108		
	Total	3.76	1.032		
Offers/discounts/schemes	below 18	3.62	1.010	1.451	.228
	18-25	3.60	.994		
	26-40	3.88	1.014		
	above 40	3.80	1.123		
	Total	3.73	1.025		
Product Variety	below 18	3.57	1.068	2.324	.075
	18-25	3.58	1.015		
	26-40	3.81	.942		
	above 40	4.00	.922		
	Total	3.72	.992		
Payment mode	below 18	3.24	1.211	3.592	.014
	18-25	3.41	1.167		
	26-40	3.76	1.084		
	above 40	3.15	1.195		
	Total	3.47	1.166		
Loyalty programs	below 18	3.38	1.255	1.496	.216
	18-25	3.52	1.145		
	26-40	3.68	1.193		
	above 40	3.24	1.200		

	Total	3.52	1.188		
Warranty/guarantee	below 18	3.81	1.050	2.627	.051
	18-25	3.91	.898		
	26-40	4.07	.895		
	above 40	3.59	1.140		
	Total	3.91	.966		
Availability of personalized services	below 18	3.76	1.011	2.655	.049
	18-25	3.75	1.026		
	26-40	3.88	.960		
	above 40	3.34	1.196		
	Total	3.73	1.039		
Easy to return and refund	below 18	3.68	1.132	3.699	.012
	18-25	3.84	.968		
	26-40	4.06	.948		
	above 40	3.46	1.185		
	Total	3.84	1.034		
After sales services	below 18	3.78	1.004	.081	.970
	18-25	3.84	1.082		
	26-40	3.81	1.060		
	above 40	3.76	.969		
	Total	3.81	1.043		

From the above Table, it is understood that payment mode with $P = 0.014$ & $F = 3.592$, Warranty/guarantee with $P = 0.051$ & $F = 2.627$, Availability of personal services with $P = 0.049$ & $F = 2.655$, Easy to return and refund with $P = 0.012$ & $F = 3.699$ are one those constructs having significant difference based on Age. Others have no significant difference in Age. Therefore, from the result it is concluded that Payment mode, Warranty/guarantee, Availability of personal services, Easy to return and refund are the only significant constructs.

One way anova for gender and customer preference factors towards online shopping of apparels					
		Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Convenience/Time saving	Male	3.83	.874	.462	.631
	Female	3.75	.939		
	Transgender	3.68	.891		

	Total	3.75	.912		
Easy products and price comparison	Male	3.93	1.096	1.282	.279
	Female	3.70	1.157		
	Transgender	3.63	1.072		
	Total	3.73	1.124		
Choice of product customization	Male	3.76	1.056	.667	.514
	Female	3.82	1.039		
	Transgender	3.65	1.001		
	Total	3.76	1.032		
Offers/discounts/schemes	Male	3.81	.991	1.304	.273
	Female	3.78	1.064		
	Transgender	3.56	.967		
	Total	3.73	1.025		
Product Variety	Male	3.86	.880	1.946	.145
	Female	3.75	1.024		
	Transgender	3.54	.998		
	Total	3.72	.992		
Payment mode	Male	3.86	1.008	4.776	.009
	Female	3.32	1.194		
	Transgender	3.44	1.168		
	Total	3.47	1.166		
Loyalty programs	Male	3.83	1.036	2.976	.053
	Female	3.39	1.243		
	Transgender	3.52	1.157		
	Total	3.52	1.188		
Warranty/guarantee	Male	4.29	.617	5.193	.006
	Female	3.77	1.046		
	Transgender	3.86	.961		
	Total	3.91	.966		
Availability of personalized services	Male	4.10	.607	3.900	.021
	Female	3.59	1.140		
	Transgender	3.72	1.044		
	Total	3.73	1.039		
Easy to return and refund	Male	4.17	.673	.667	.514
	Female	3.74	1.135		
	Transgender	3.76	1.021		
	Total	3.84	1.034		

After sales services	Male	3.61	1.130	1.304	.273
	Female	3.83	1.027		
	Transgender	3.93	.990		
	Total	3.81	1.043		

From the above Table, it is understood that payment mode with $P = 0.009$ & $F = 4.776$, Loyalty programs with $P = 0.053$ & $F = 2.976$, Warranty/guarantee with $P = 0.006$ & $F = 5.193$, Availability of personal services with $P = 0.021$ & $F = 3.900$, are one those constructs having significant difference based on gender. Others have no significant difference in gender. Therefore, from the result it is concluded that Payment mode, Loyalty programs, Warranty/guarantee, Availability of personal services, are the only significant constructs.

One way anova for Occupation and customer preference factors towards online shopping of apparels					
		Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig
Convenience/Time saving	Student	3.80	.887	1.878	.115
	Business	3.88	.769		
	Government Employee	3.59	1.034		
	Private	3.65	.988		
	Others	4.03	.615		
	Total	3.75	.912		
Easy products and price comparison	Student	3.83	1.147		
	Business	3.72	1.112		
	Government Employee	3.57	1.182		
	Private	3.75	1.044	.858	.490
	Others	4.00	1.203		
	Total	3.73	1.124		
Choice of product customization	Student	3.77	1.006	2.078	.084
	Business	3.79	1.008		
	Government Employee	3.55	1.065		
	Private	3.77	1.109		
	Others	4.17	.699		

	Total	3.76	1.032		
Offers/discounts/schemes	Student	3.90	.960		
	Business	3.76	.971	2.558	.039
	Government Employee	3.59	1.075		
	Private	3.68	1.092		
	Others	3.93	.907		
	Total	3.73	1.025		
Product Variety	Student	3.70	1.055	.737	.567
	Business	3.81	.857		
	Government Employee	3.55	1.105		
	Private	3.65	1.038		
	Others	4.13	.681		
	Total	3.72	.992		
Payment mode	Student	3.80	1.031		
	Business	3.43	1.234		
	Government Employee	3.41	1.276	1.428	.225
	Private	3.37	1.111		
	Others	3.60	1.003		
	Total	3.47	1.166		
Loyalty programs	Student	4.13	.900		
	Business	3.43	1.340		
	Government Employee	3.41	1.204		
	Private	3.41	1.127	1.918	.108
	Others	3.63	1.066		
	Total	3.52	1.188		
Warranty/guarantee	Student	4.20	.664		
	Business	3.78	1.126		
	Government Employee	3.86	1.047		
	Private	3.85	.921	2.078	.084
	Others	4.17	.648		
	Total	3.91	.966		
Availability of personalized services	Student	3.93	.740		
	Business	3.64	1.190	2.558	.039
	Government Employee	3.71	1.099		
	Private	3.68	.968		
	Others	3.93	.980		
	Total	3.73	1.039		

Easy to return and refund	Student	4.30	.750		
	Business	3.72	1.178		
	Government Employee	3.74	1.107		
	Private	3.82	1.010	.737	.567
	Others	3.93	.691		
	Total	3.84	1.034		
After sales services	Student	3.40	1.404	1.982	.097
	Business	3.91	1.097		
	Government Employee	3.81	.896		
	Private	3.89	.974		
	Others	3.80	.961		
	Total	3.81	1.043		

From the above Table, it is understood that choice of product customization with $P = 0.084$ & $F = 2.078$, Offers/discounts/schemes with $P = 0.039$ & $F = 2.558$, Warranty/guarantee with $P = 0.084$ & $F = 2.078$, Availability of personalized services with $P = 0.039$ & $F = 2.558$, After sales services with $P = 0.097$ & $F = 1.982$ are one those constructs having significant difference based on occupation. Others have no significant difference in occupation. Therefore, from the result it is concluded that product customization, Offers/discounts/schemes, Warranty/guarantee, Availability of personalized services, After sales services are the only significant constructs.

One way anova for Income and customer preference factors towards online shopping of apparels		Mean	Std. Deviation	F	sIg
Convenience/Time saving	LESS THAN 20000	3.90	.576	2.796	.041
	20000-30000	3.85	.747		
	31000-40000	3.73	.997		
	ABOVE 40000	3.42	1.215		
	Total	3.75	.912		
Easy products and price comparison	LESS THAN 20000	3.86	1.049		
	20000-30000	3.88	.993	1.552	.201
	31000-40000	3.66	1.196		
	ABOVE 40000	3.42	1.270		

	Total	3.73	1.124		
Choice of product customization	LESS THAN 20000	3.88	.739		
	20000-30000	3.81	.877		
	31000-40000	3.81	1.107	2.469	.062
	ABOVE 40000	3.47	1.358		
	Total	3.76	1.032		
Offers/discounts/schemes	LESS THAN 20000	3.88	.832		
	20000-30000	3.85	.885		
	31000-40000	3.75	1.080		
	ABOVE 40000	3.29	1.254	.761	.517
	Total	3.73	1.025		
Product Variety	LESS THAN 20000	3.90	.726		
	20000-30000	3.79	.860	.865	.460
	31000-40000	3.73	1.095		
	ABOVE 40000	3.38	1.193		
	Total	3.72	.992		
Payment mode	LESS THAN 20000	3.60	1.211		
	20000-30000	3.52	1.128		
	31000-40000	3.36	1.151	.386	.763
	ABOVE 40000	3.44	1.253		
	Total	3.47	1.166		
Loyalty programs	LESS THAN 20000	3.55	1.173	.488	.691
	20000-30000	3.63	1.148		
	31000-40000	3.48	1.188		
	ABOVE 40000	3.31	1.294		
	Total	3.52	1.188		
Warranty/guarantee	LESS THAN 20000	3.83	1.034		
	20000-30000	4.03	.863	2.010	.113
	31000-40000	3.84	.952		
	ABOVE 40000	3.82	1.134		
	Total	3.91	.966		
Availability of personalized services	LESS THAN 20000	3.52	1.215		
	20000-30000	3.93	.848		
	31000-40000	3.67	1.064	3.637	.013
	ABOVE 40000	3.62	1.154		
	Total	3.73	1.039		
Easy to return and refund	LESS THAN 20000	3.74	1.106		

	20000-30000	3.91	.970		
	31000-40000	3.85	1.006		
	ABOVE 40000	3.76	1.171	.480	.696
	Total	3.84	1.034		
After sales services	LESS THAN 20000	3.95	1.081		
	20000-30000	3.79	1.118		
	31000-40000	3.83	.856		
	ABOVE 40000	3.69	1.184		
	Total	3.81	1.043	.865	.460

From the above Table, it is understood that convenience/time saving with $P = 0.041$ & $F = 2.796$, choice of product customization with $P = 0.062$ & $F = 2.469$, Availability of personalized services with $P = 0.013$ & $F = 3.637$ are one those constructs having significant difference based on income. Others have no significant difference in income. Therefore, from the result it is concluded that convenience/time saving, choice of product customization, availability of personalized services are the only significant constructs.

IMPLICATIONS

Due to the constant availability of free online shopping on websites and mobile applications, customers shop online more regularly. These customers compare products with in-depth descriptions that are shown on websites through photographs, pictures, and texts. It focuses on important aspects of online shopping, such as how time- and space-saving it is, how many products and brands are available on websites, how trustworthy the sites are, how many product reviews there are, how accessible cash on delivery is, how readily available favorite brands are, how clear the terms and conditions are, how risky credit card transactions are, how previous purchases went, etc.

The results lead to the conclusion that consumer online purchasing behavior in the fashion and clothing business is significantly influenced by factors such as brand choice, advertising, sales promotion, pricing, and time savings. Several powerful factors, including pricing, branding, the internet and catalogues, play a significant impact in purchasing decisions while shopping online. Branding is the aspect that internet shoppers priorities while making purchases. The market for clothing and fashion is expanding significantly. So, it is essential for this age to comprehend consumer psychology and act accordingly. The results of this experimental study revealed that promotion, online apparel attributes, and price are the three main factors that influence consumers' decisions to purchase apparel. This indicates that apparel sites should place more emphasis on these factors in order to appeal to and draw in customers, and that

promotional campaigns should also be aggressive and appropriate. Consumer perception can be seen as a result that accounts for cultural factors as well as shifts in consumer behavior. With traits like materialism being a powerful driver of acquiring and consuming particular sorts of brands, the interaction between customer and brand attributes is becoming an increasingly significant marketing concern. As a result, the focus of this study is on analyzing the connections between brand perception and customer traits including gender, nationality, and materialism degree. Customers believe that companies offer both practical and emotional benefits (e.g. quality and low price). Their shopping habits are influenced by how they perceive a brand. In this case, it is argued that stronger brand preference corresponds to higher consumer perception of the brand, which in turn reflects higher purchasing behavior. The purpose of the current study was to identify the variables influencing Indian consumers' purchasing decisions for branded clothing sold in their country. The demographic diversity of the consumer for selecting branded clothing has been presented by the study.

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