



CONSUMERS' ONLINE BUYING BEHAVIOUR DURING COVID-19 IN CHENNAI CITY – A STUDY

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Abstract

In this study, consumers' online buying behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic is examined. Consumers' lives today are greatly impacted by online buying. Because of the ease, range of products, savings, and safety, it is becoming increasingly important. Due to technological advancements and consumers' increased usage of internet services in their daily lives, consumer behaviour is evolving towards fashion items and electronic goods when they shop on these online platforms. Consumer behaviour, purchasing attitudes, and habits have been quickly shifting during the epidemic era. This study shows that Covid-19 has increased consumer panic, and people have been extremely apprehensive about getting by throughout the Covid-19 phases, especially during the lockdowns and curfews. As a result of experiencing anxiety and terror during Covid-19, consumers are now hesitant to purchase several critical goods, such as food, medicine, and hygiene products through online. Consumer buying behaviour has always been a delicate topic that can be influenced by a variety of circumstances; this has been observed over the course of Covid-19. This study's primary goal is to identify the key variables influencing consumer purchasing decisions during the Covid-19 outbreak. The purpose of the study is to learn more about potential influences on customer purchasing behaviour, such as fear and illogical behaviour.

Key words: Consumer, Covid-19, Consumer Behaviour, Decisions, Online Buying and factors Influence.

Introduction

In the recent days, online purchasing of goods and services is growing in popularity. It is gaining popular due to the convenience, time savings, one-click purchasing, and Covid-19 safety. Online market places provide its customers a selection of brands that aren't even available in their home nation. These platforms offer the newest fashion to their customers along with a wide selection of items and services. Online buying has advantages and disadvantages. Online shopping does have drawbacks, such as tangibility (we can't physically touch the things), small shopkeepers having to close

their doors owing to lack of product diversity, discounts offered by online platforms, and pandemic situations. According to Singhal (2017), customers' behaviour need not alter permanently until online retailers provide them excellent discounts; otherwise, they will go back to doing their purchasing in-person.

Customers' patience levels vary as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, and they try to live stress- and orderly-free lives while shopping. Everyone has different requirements and wants, therefore consumer behaviour varies depending on personal preferences and circumstances. Consumer

behaviour is a crucial and continual search process for decision-making, the procurement, use, evaluation, and disposal of goods and services, according to Valaskova et al. (2015).

The transition to a more digital society has been expedited by the COVID-19 epidemic. As the global economy starts to recover, the reforms we make now will have an ongoing impact, according to UNCTAD Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi.

He claimed that as the globe transitions from pandemic response to recovery, the acceleration of internet buying globally highlights the need of ensuring that all

nations can take advantage of the potential presented by digitalization. Online sales are up, but consumer spending is down.

The Brazilian Network Information Centre (NIC.br) and Inveon participated in the UNCTAD and Netcomm Suisse e-Commerce Association survey, which revealed a 6–10 percentage point rise in online sales across the majority of product categories. ICT/electronics, gardening/do-it-yourself, pharmaceuticals, education, furniture/household goods, and cosmetics/personal care are the industries with the largest gains (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percentage of online shoppers making at least one online purchase every two months



Source: UNCTAD and NetComm Suisse eCommerce Association

Review of Literature

Bhatti et al. (2020) discussed in the study that there is a influence of Corona virus on the whole online business of the world. The nature of business has changed due to this pandemic. According to the research more than 50%, shoppers are avoiding to go for offline shopping and crowded places.

In their study, **Ota et al.,(2020)** found that throughout the pandemic, customer behaviour towards internet buying had changed. They are more concerned with safety than savings; customers can

compromise on product delivery time but not on safety and hygienic standards. Additionally, the study showed that, before to the epidemic, customers primarily purchased fashion and electrical goods online, but that this practise has decreased as a result of the pandemic. Consumers today are more likely to purchase foods and safety products.

In their study, **Otaru and Enegelele(2021)** found that while consumers were less likely to shop online before the pandemic, they were much more likely to do so during it.

The survey revealed that there was a considerable impact of pandemic on online purchasing and claims that characteristics like security, privacy, simplicity, service satisfaction, and loyalty are encouraging customers towards online shopping.

In their study, **Pham et al. (2020)** found that comprehending Covid-19 does not change the perception of usability or efficiency in online purchasing. Instead, they found that during the Covid-19 pandemic, online customers became aware of the efficiency of electronic shopping. Furthermore, according to the report, marketing strategy has no influence on consumer internet purchase.

Anute, Deshmukh (2015) The cosmetic industry caters mainly to the age group of 15-30 years, with a majority preferring domestic and organic brands. Television is the most popular source of information for cosmetic products. Customers remain loyal to their preferred brands and prioritize quality over packaging.

In his study, **Reddy (2020)** found that the pandemic had altered consumer behaviour. People don't feel safe going shopping because of COVID-19. They therefore favour internet shopping for their products. The study also predicts that by 2026, internet platforms would rise by US\$200 billion. More than 50% of customers bought things online during COVID-19, according to the report, which also showed that 90% of consumers modified their attitudes about buying.

Sharma(2020) found that customers' attitudes towards internet buying had changed as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. Although the marketing channel will soon return to normal after the pandemic's negative effects, the losses cannot be disregarded. Additionally, the study found that 46% of customers concur that these online platforms are necessary for information sharing and for making purchases.

Farha Fatema & Md. Ashraf Siddiqui (2021), examined the variables influencing consumers' online buying behavior in

Bangladesh during Covid-19 on a variety of aspects such as features quality, fair price, performance and durability, trust and reliability, security, and E-service quality, ease of use, time. In general, the study found that the results have supported the proposed model. The results indicate that of the eight dimensions, features and quality, fair price, performance and durability, trust and reliability, security, E-service quality, ease of use, and time are positively and significantly affects customers' online buying behavior during the Covid-19 in Bangladesh.

According to **Suri (2021)**'s report, the covidian-19 epidemic has caused a change in customer behaviour because of job losses or income reductions, which in turn has an impact on consumer purchasing habits. The pandemic has altered people's way of life, including their shopping and working habits and social interactions.

Statement of the Problem

The primary objective of the study was to examine consumer behaviour in Chennai with regard to online buying. The primary goal of this research is to uncover and gain insight into the key criteria that online shoppers examine before making purchases. The results of this study discussed in order to help online retailers better understand consumer's needs and improve the efficacy of their online marketing strategies. Therefore, the problem's statement is titled "Impact of Consumers online buying behaviour during Covid-19 in Chennai City."

Objectives of the Study

1. To study about consumers online buying behavior during Covid-19.
2. To identify the factors affecting and influencing online buying behaviour of consumers during Covid-19.
3. To examine the consumers online buying behavior during Covid-19 in Chennai City.

Research Methodology

This study used both descriptive and analytical methods. Both primary and

secondary data was used to achieve study objective. The questionnaire has circulated via social media to Chennai consumers in order to get primary data. Secondary data have gathered from a variety of surveys carried out by the Internet and Mobile Association of India, as well as from current literature, newspapers, and a number of online marketing publications. The pertinent data have collected from 145 respondents using convenient sampling. The gathered data are examined using straightforward percentage analysis and Correlation coefficient.

Hypothesis of the Study

- There is no correlation among the Factors affecting consumers' online buying behavior
- There is no Correlation among the factors influencing purchasing of products through online by the consumers.

Limitations of the Study

Since this is the product that Chennai consumers buy the most frequently through online shopping, our study has focus on it. Given the constraints on both time and resources, this seemed to be the best option.

Results and Discussions

Table – 1: Personal Profile of the Respondents

Particulars		Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	87	60%
	Female	46	32%
	Third Gender	12	8%
	Total	145	100%
Age	Up to 25	19	13%
	26-35	17	12%
	36-45	81	56%
	Above 45	27	19%
	Total	145	100%
Marital Status	Married	102	71%
	Un married	43	29%
	Total	145	100%
Education Level	School Level	35	24%
	Degree	64	22%
	Professional	29	20%
	ITI / Diploma	17	12%
	Total	145	100%
Occupation	Government employee	48	33%
	Privet employee	58	40%
	Business / Profession	29	20%
	Others	10	7%
	Total	145	100%
Monthly Income	Upto Rs. 25,000	58	40%
	Rs. 25,001-50000	41	28%
	Rs. 50,001-75000	35	24%
	Above Rs. 75,000	12	8%
	Total	145	100%

The above table 1 indicates that, out of 145 respondents:

- **Gender Wise Classification:** 60% of the respondents are male, 32% of the respondents are female and where as 8% of the respondents are third gender
- **Age Wise Classification:** Majority 56% of the respondents belongs to the age group between 36-45 years and least, 12% of the respondents belongs to the age group between 26-35 years.
- **Marital status Wise Classification:** Majority 71% of the respondents are married and least, 29% of the respondents are unmarried.
- **Educational Qualification Wise Classification:** Maximum 44% of the respondents are degree holders and least, 12% of the respondents are ITI/Diploma holders.
- **Occupation Wise Classification:** Maximum 40% of the respondents are Private employees and least 7% of the respondents are others like daily labour, contract labour, etc.
- **Monthly Income Wise Classification:** Maximum 40% of the respondent's monthly income are up to Rs. 25,000 and least, 8% of the respondent's monthly income are above Rs. 75,000.

Table 2: Frequently Purchasable Products through online by the Consumers

Frequently Purchasable Products	Respondents	Percentage
Food items	30	20.69%
Fashion	20	13.79%
Grocery	35	24.14%
Electronic Appliances	10	6.90%
Stationery items	13	8.97%
Medicines	25	17.24%
Beauty products	12	8.28%
Total	145	100%

The above table - 2 indicates, 20.69 % of the consumers are frequently purchased food items, 13.79 % of the consumers are frequently purchased fashion products, 24.14 % of the consumers are frequently purchased grocery items, 6.90 % of the consumers are frequently electronic appliances, 8.97 % of the consumers are frequently purchased stationery items, 17.24 % of the consumers are frequently

purchased medicines and 8.28 % of the consumers are frequently purchased beauty products. Hence we conclude that majority of the consumers are frequently purchased grocery items through online.

Ho: There is no correlation among the Factors affecting consumers' online buying behavior

Table – 3: correlation among the Factors affecting consumers' online buying behavior

		Shortage of Product	Reduction of Salary	Layoffs
Shortage of Product	Pearson Correlation	1	.601(**)	.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.457
	N	145	145	145
Reduction of Salary	Pearson Correlation	.601(**)	1	.183(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
	N	145	145	145
Layoffs	Pearson Correlation	.053	.183(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.457	.000	.
	N	145	145	145

*Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Hypotheses is rejected in the case of

1. The shortage of the products is correlated with reduction of salary of the consumers during Covid-19.
2. The reduction of salary of the consumers during Covid-19 is correlated with shortage of products and Layoffs of the respondents.
3. The Layoffs of the respondents is

correlated with reduction of salary during Covid-19.

Here the shortage of the products is not at all correlated with layoffs of the respondents during Covid-19.

Ho: There is no Correlation among the factors influencing purchasing of products through online by the consumers.

Table – 4: Correlation among the factors influencing purchasing of products through online by the consumers

		Money Saving	Convenient Shopping	Time saving	Discounts and Rewards
Money Saving	Pearson correlation	1	.656(**)	.659(**)	.661(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	145	145	145	145
Convenient Shopping	Pearson correlation	.656(**)	1	.628(**)	.649(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	145	145	145	145
Time saving	Pearson correlation	.659(**)	.628(**)	1	.622(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	145	145	145	145
Discounts and Rewards	Pearson correlation	.661(**)	.649(**)	.622(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	145	145	145	145

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypotheses is rejected in the case of

1. The money saving of the consumers is correlated with convenient shopping, time saving and discounts and rewards of their online buying during Covid-19.
 2. The convenient shopping of the consumers is correlated with money saving, time saving and discounts and rewards of their online buying during Covid-19.
 3. The time saving of the consumers is correlated with money saving, convenient shopping and discounts and rewards of their online buying during Covid-19.
 4. The discounts and rewards factors is correlated with money saving, convenient shopping and time saving of consumers online buying during Covid-19.
- Maximum 42% respondents are strongly agree that online platforms provide safe and secure shopping.
 - There is a correlation among shortage of products and reduction of salary but shortage of the products is not at all correlated with layoffs of the respondents during Covid-19.
 - There is a correlation among money saving, convenient shopping, time saving and discounts and rewards of factors influencing the consumers online buying during Covid-19.

Suggestions

Consumers' online purchasing behaviour during COVID-19, which aids in capturing customers' attention and money, aids in finding and comprehending the variables that affect consumers' intentions to make purchases online and also assists in developing strategies that encourage such purchases. Consequently, there was still a need to harness the influence of these elements on young consumers' conduct. Because no research has been done in the context of Chennai, despite the fact that much work has been done in this area, there is still a research gap. Study will assist in bridging these gaps, which will be helpful not only for consumers to make online purchases but also for marketers to develop tactics that will encourage customers to do so. Therefore, the suggested study would concentrate on how significant these variables are and how much they affect consumers' propensity to make online purchases.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a favourable effect on online purchasing because, according to the findings, online shopping has grown throughout this time in Chennai. In the instance of COVID-19, people have very successfully adjusted and, in a sense, had control over that even if they were unable to make physical purchases, they have checked in the best way possible by making

Major Findings

- This study reveals that the majority (60%) of the consumers are male.
- Majority (56%) of the respondents belongs to the age group between 36-45 years
- Majority (71%) of the respondents are married and least, 29% of the respondents are unmarried.
- Maximum 44% of the respondents are degree holders and least, 12% of the respondents are ITI/Diploma holders.
- Maximum 40% of the respondents are Private employees and least 7% of the respondents are others like daily labour, contract labour, etc.
- Maximum 40% of the respondent's monthly income are up to Rs. 25,000 and least, 8% of the respondent's monthly income are above Rs. 75,000.
- Most of the consumers are frequently purchased grocery items through online.
- Maximum 49% respondents are agree that online platforms provide timely delivery of products.
- Maximum 42% respondents are strongly agree that online platforms provide easy to choose and comparison with other products.

purchases through social networks. Especially when it comes to sustaining health and buying essential supplies, people develop and adopt innovative alternative ways of shopping using technology when faced with purchasing limits. Based on what we've discussed above, internet buying demonstrates how customers' behaviours have evolved to adapt to rapid change, but the epidemic hasn't given them more confidence to do so. Clothing, computer and technological equipment, books, and other items were among the most popular products, along with food and hygiene. Customers should carefully examine online shops that offer a variety of goods and services because frauds might be found there. They should also verify that the shops are legitimately registered businesses.

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