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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON POST COVID TRENDS IN CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN INDIAN E-COMMERCE SEGMENT

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Abstract:

In terms of electronic evaluation, India ranks third in the world. Online consumer purchasing behaviour is a relatively new phenomenon in the world of e-commerce, and it will undoubtedly shape how Indians shop in the future. To market their goods and services, the majority of businesses have an online store. The purchasing habits of online shoppers are extremely typical of the entire market. The young/new generation in India is increasingly using the internet and mobile phones, which creates new opportunities for online shoppers.

Consumer behaviour is changing as a result of the internet, and this online business is thriving as a result of customer trust, technological familiarity, and internet access. Customers influenced by the internet are more informed about the brands and models in which they are interested. The consumer is constantly on the lookout for marketers who can provide him with the best value for his price, time, and brands. According to this study, Indian online shoppers' purchasing habits may accelerate in the future.

Keywords: Online Buying, E-Commerce and E-Business, Buying Behaviour, Post Covid Trends.

Introduction:

Online shopping has grown dramatically in recent years due to its distinct advantages for both consumers and retailers, such as 24-hour shopping locations, lower overhead costs, and a wide range of products. Online shopping, also known as E-tailing or computer-based purchasing, is a popular form of retail in India, similar to internet banking or E-banking. The facility and need of online purchasing and procuring-services due to lockdown is an excellent example of Indian corporate revolution in the form of E-commerce segment.

The Internet is now widely used for a variety of purposes and has become deeply embedded in daily life. The internet was originally used only for communication, but it has since evolved into a tool for learning, entertainment, and, most recently, an electronic platform for the exchange of goods and services between buyers and sellers with e-payment option.

Significance of the Study:

As a result of the internet, a new method of transaction between buyers and sellers has emerged, serving as a replacement for the traditional market. The ability to shop online has added a new dimension to commercial activity. Customers prefer online shopping over traditional retail due to benefits such as the ability to browse and shop at anytime from anywhere in the world, the ability to research products, and the ability to ask questions, leave reviews, and/or place orders. Convenience and significantly lower prices are two other factors that contribute to the internet's acceptance as a new channel for purchasing. When it comes to online purchasing convenience, speed, affordability, product information, and services, the Internet has fundamentally changed how consumers think. The internet has provided marketers with a completely new approach to adding value for clients and developing relationships with them through online purchasing.

Electronic shopping is defined as a computer activity or transaction performed by a customer through the use of a computer-based interface, in which the customer's computer is linked to and can communicate with a retailer's virtual storefront to make online purchases.

Review of Literature:

According to Burke, R.R. (2012), business-to-consumer (B2C) transactions conducted only online have been successful. The study found that many consumers enjoy purchasing online. This study focuses on the security measures that are now in place to ensure the safety of online shoppers as well as the fantastic

sales promotions and online deals that encourage people to purchase online.

Customers increasingly want what's known as a "seamless online channel experience," which is one in which retailers allow them to combine online and brick and mortar browsing, shopping, ordering, and returning in whatever combo they would like, according to a study by Morris (2013) titled "More consumers prefer online shopping."

Customers buying activities and way of selecting the products and retailers stem from their own buying behaviour (Priest et al., 2013). Coinciding with the increase of the offered services and options provided by the online channels, a significant attraction of more new and existing customers toward the newly developed online retail solutions and alternatives increased (Rita et al, 2019).

Customer buying behaviour might be affected by the quality of the service and the satisfaction of the previous experiences (Jayawardhena & Farrell, 2011). For instance, on the first hand, the customization option appears flexibly on the online channels (Nguyen, 2018). On the other hand, offline channels provide professional employees with different experiences that provide more satisfaction to several customers (Jayawardhena & Farrell, 2011).

Zhao & Bacao (2021) stated that the usage of the different technologies increased since the Covid-19 pandemic appeared, and people perceived benefits from the existing technology i.e. online retailing, in serving their different needs. Due to the pandemic and the increase in the need for online channels, retailers followed the strategy of investing more in their online channels.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To explore and identify the internet based shopping habits of consumers.
2. To assess the consumers' satisfaction with their online shopping habits.
3. To comprehend the factors that influence online shopper behaviour.

Research Methodology:

The research methodology outlines the techniques used to conduct the investigation. The primary and secondary data collection techniques were both taken into account.

A questionnaire was utilised to gather information from respondents for the primary data. Research papers, journals, magazines, and internet websites were used to gather secondary data.

Research design:

Exploratory Research Design was used to study the research question. Data from the respondents are collected using the simple sampling technique.

Sample Size and Research Methodology:

The researcher has identified a sample size of 300 respondents from vidarbha region for the data gathering. The structured questionnaire was used in the study to collect data. The factors for the research problem are chosen. The researcher is given the opportunity to gather information and reach a conclusion. The statistical tool "Percentage Analysis" and the "Chi Square test" are used for data analysis and interpretation.

Limitations:

The study's findings are exclusive and distinctive to the sample and dimensions used. Hence

1. It might not be applicable to the entire population.
2. It is quite possible that consumers' need, preferences, habits and satisfaction levels are flexible.

Analysis and Interpretation:

1. Age Group of Respondents who prefer online shopping.

Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentage
Below 20	65	23
20-40	108	36
40- 60	72	24
Above 60	55	18
Total	300	100

(Primary data)

Interpretation: From the above table, it was observed that 20-40 age group was most who prefer the online shopping with 36%.

2. Gender

Gender category	No of customers	percentage
Female	194	65
Male	106	35
Total	300	100

Interpretation: It is observed that Female customer are highly influenced by online shopping platform and in selected sample as high as 65 % are involved in it.

3. Income Levels :

Income in Rs.	No of customers	percentage
Below 25,000	46	15
25,000 to 50,000	50	17
50,000 to 75,000	93	31
75,000 to 100,000	111	37
Total	300	100

Interpretation: It is clear from above table that the customers belonging to higher income group (37 %) have more inclination towards online buying.

4. Reasons for selecting Online Shopping Platform:

Factors	No of customers	Percentage
Huge product variety	65	21.67
Convenient buying process	78	26
Affordable prices	94	31.33
Multi payment option	39	13
Return/ Refund guarantee	24	08
Total	300	100

Interpretation: The majority of customers (94%) stated that shopping online is less expensive than going to a physical store, while 78% also felt that it is a convenient process and 65% believed that wide and large variety of products make them happy and help them to choose from a rich variety of products. According to 39% of customers the EMI multi payment options are easy and comfortable.

5. Factors Influencing Buyer's Online Shopping Pattern

Factors	No of customers	Percentage
Festival Seasons	82	27.33
Discount offerings	88	29.33
Desire to buy	45	15
Strong Need	65	21.67
Only Online availability	20	6.67
Total	300	100

Interpretation: When there are significant discounts are available, 29% of respondents prefer making purchases online. 21% of respondent's shop when they have strong need, 15% shop whenever they feel like it, and 27% shop during the Festive season.

6. Category of Goods Purchased by online Platform

Factors	No of customers	Percentage
Ticket booking Movies	34	11.33
Tickets for Flights or Train	68	22.67
Fashion Jewellery	24	8.00
Electronic Goods	92	30.67
Apparels	82	27.33
Total	300	100

Interpretation: It has been observed that highest no of customer (92) buy electronic goods by online mode that is followed by apparels (82). Around 68 customers prefer the online tickets booking that shows the trend for customer's preferences.

7. Satisfaction level of Customers:

Factors	No of customers	Percentage
Highly satisfied	120	40
Satisfied	101	33.67
Unsatisfied	26	8.67
Neutral	31	10.33
Highly unsatisfied	22	7.33
Total	300	100

Interpretation: The above table shows that the majority of respondents, 120 (40 percent), agree that they are very satisfied with their online shopping experiences, while 101 respondents (33 percent) are satisfied, 8 percent are dissatisfied, and 10% are unable to comment.

Chi - square test

Testing of hypothesis is done to find out the significant difference between the customer's age group and the satisfactory level towards their online shopping.

H1: There is a significant difference between age of customers and their satisfactory level towards their online shopping behaviour.

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2 sided)
			0.047
Pearson Chi square	16.054	9	0.249
Likelihood ratio	10.285	9	0.137
Linear Association	2.183	1	
No of Customers	300		

level of significance = 5%, Calculated value = .048

Since the calculated value 0.048 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. As a result, H1 accepted. It is concluded that there is a significant difference between age and their level of satisfaction with online shopping.

Findings:

Major and significant findings that derive from this research are given here, based on data gathered from online shoppers in vidarbha region.

1. It is identified that one of the important finding is that consumers who shop online are satisfied with their shopping experiences.
2. The number of online shoppers are increasing day by day.
3. Due to updated knowledge about technology and craze for online shopping, youngsters and the younger generation (19 to 30 years old) are mostly highly interested in online purchases activities.
4. More Consumers have inclination to target other online market categories like apparel, shoes, housing decor, and consumer durable appliances.
5. Safety and security were two important and prime issues for internet shoppers.

The participants also responded to what triggers them for shopping at online stores like the following:

1. Easy to search and compare products online,
2. Saving time and effort,
3. Products availability according to specific preferences.
4. Online stores provide cheaper options than physical stores,
5. Inexistence of specific brands/producers at nearby physical stores,
6. Changing in lifestyle due to Covid-19,
7. Online campaigns,
8. More time to try products home.

The customers also responded to what discourage them from shopping/buying at online stores and reasons explored are as follows:

1. Inability to touch, try, and check the product,
2. Long delivery time,
3. Complex process to pick up and return,
4. It is less entertaining comparing to shopping offline.

It was also explored that whether Covid-19 have encouraged highly to buy and shop online products and services.

The first finding is that customers are increasingly migrating to online stores. It has been empirically confirmed that a large portion of the study's population has shifted their purchases to online channels. According to the survey results, (63%) of previous offline purchasers shifted to purchasing online after the outbreak of Covid-19, and today, nearly (75%) of the survey's population is oriented toward purchasing fashion products online.

The second finding is that new Covid-19-related behavioural patterns are influencing customer purchasing behaviour. This study looked at new factors related to Covid-19 restrictions that influence customer purchasing behaviour. This study's Covid-related factors are concerned with the limitations of the Covid-19 pandemic. These factors all play a role in encouraging or discouraging people to choose between online and offline channels. In this study, the following Covid-related factors were addressed:

Personal social responsibility, The study confirmed that people may choose to buy online to protect themselves and society from the risk of Covid-19, or because they are in contact with other people from high-risk groups.

Lifestyle modification It has been confirmed that changes in lifestyle caused by Covid-19 (i.e., people now spend more time at home, working, studying, and socialising online) have caused people to consider purchasing online more than before.

Conclusion:

This study shows that India's customer online shopping habits have a bright future. The expansion of the rural market and the market for environmentally friendly products for a wide range of consumer goods is a significant and recent trend among Indian consumers. The perception of online shopping in India is improving as more people use the internet. They can now shop whenever and wherever they want, with simple and secure payment options. This industry's main draw is the young demographic, and they could play a significant role in the expansion of internet shopping in India. Finally, the study found that buyers are eager to purchase online goods at reasonable prices.

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