EFFICACY OF E-TAILING IN MEETING CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Expectations imbibe a sense of urge and drive among the people to discover or invent appropriate and adaptable means to fulfill their expectations. One such remarkably note worthy and useful invention in internet. Without internet, e-tailing could not here come into existence. Customers when going for shopping through internet have great expectations and they expect that e-tailing should satisfy all their expectations. In this article, customers' expectations have been grouped under six broad heads. They are:

- On product aspects
- On price aspects
- On convenience
- On distribution and reach
- On security aspects
- On e-tailer related aspects

An empirical survey was conducted at Coimbatore city. Structured questionnaires were distributed to 627 respondents and data were collected and analysed by using percentage analysis, ANOVA Test and Henry Garrett Ranking Techniques.

Key words: E-Tailing, Customers expectations, Percentage analysis, ANOVA Test, Henry Garrett Ranking Techniques.

INTRODUCTION

Electronic retailing or e-tailing is the purchase and sale of goods and service through the internet. It encompasses business to business (B2B) and business-to-consumers (B2C) sales and purchases of goods and services. E-tailing necessitates the traders to tailer their traditional business models to the internet and it users. E-tailing is a new invention that is recent to fulfill the expectations of customers. Customers' expectations are grouped in their article under six broad heads.

They are:
1. Expectations of customers on product aspects
2. Expectations of customers on price aspects
3. Expectations of customers on convenience
4. Expectations of customers on distribution and reach
5. Expectations of customers on security aspects
6. Expectations of customers on e-tailer related aspects

LITRATURE REVIEW

James chen (2018) in his article "Electronic Retailing E-Tailing says that E-tailer can trace consumers' shopping behavior while going valuable insights into their shopping habit which may help identifying the expectations of customers the e-tailing is expected to fulfill.

Philip Kotler (2003) says that the internet today functions as on information source, an entertainment source, a communication channel a transaction channel and even a distribution channel. Give can use it as a shopping mall to get his/her expectations satisfied.

Parick M.Dunne etal.,(2007) highlight the two of the three major concerns of consumers who are shopping on online are slow delivery and handling returns. The obtain concern is the inability to see and touch items before the purchase. They say that these concerns are particularly important if e-tailers want to attract respect business by satisfying fully the expectations of customers.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this article is to identify the expectations of customers with regard to e-tailing and to measure the significance of variables determining the expectation of customers.

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

TABLE NO. 1
EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON PRODUCT ASPECTS

S.No.	Expectations	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1.	Availability of more choices	214 (34.1%)	338 (53.9%)	75 (12.0%)	0	0
2.	Availability of Quality/ Durable products	162 (25.8%)	327 (52.2%)	113 (18.0%)	25 (4.0%)	0
3.	Availability of adequate info about product	113 (18.0%)	324 (51.7%)	139 (22.2%)	51 (8.1%)	0
4.	Product image is clear for viewing	162 (25.8%)	289 (46.1%)	126 (20.1%)	38 (6.1%)	12 (1.9%)
5.	Availability of branded items	85 (13.6%)	297 (47.4%)	128 (20.4%)	103 (16.4%)	14 (2.2%)
6.	Availability of rare products	87 (13.9%)	262 (41.8%)	151 (24.1%)	127 (20.3%)	0
7.	Availability of trendy products	226 (36.0%)	191 (30.5%)	147 (23.4%)	37 (5.9%)	26 (4.1%)
8.	Comparison with other products	112 (17.9%)	337 (53.7%)	116 (18.5%)	62 (9.9%)	0

Note: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree;   N – Neutral; DA – Disagree; SDA - Strongly Disagree.

It is divulged from the above table that 36.0 percent of the respondents have strongly agreed that they have expectation on towards product aspects like 'availability of trendy products'. The respondents have agreed towards 'availability of more choices, availability of quality/ durable products, availability of adequate info about product, product image is clear for viewing, availability of branded items, availability of rare products and comparison with other products' as 53.9, 52.2, 51.7, 46.1, 47.4, 41.8 and 53.7 percent respectively. It is found from the analysis that majority (53.9%) of the respondents have agreed towards expectation on product aspects like 'availability of more choices'.

EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON PRICE ASPECTS

An attempt has been made to know the expectation on price aspects of the respondents. For the purpose of this study, it has been classified into nine categories viz., availability of different variants of

same product in different prices, competitive pricing value for money, cash on delivery, availability of credit options, availability of discount facilities, availability of EMI facilities, more credit/ debit card payment options and payment through paypal / paytm etc., like options. The details are furnished in the following table.

TABLE NO. 2

EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON PRICE ASPECTS

S.No.	Expectations	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1.	Availability of different variants of same product in different prices	251 (40.0%)	261 (41.6%)	88 (14.0%)	15 (2.4%)	12 (1.9%)
2.	Competitive pricing	112 (17.9%)	328 (52.3%)	150 (23.9%)	12 (1.9%)	25 (4.0%)
3.	Value for money	225 (35.9%)	227 (36.2%)	162 (25.8%)	13 (2.1%)	0
4.	Cash on Delivery	313 (49.9%)	213 (34.0%)	101 (16.1%)	0	0
5.	Availability of credit options	190 (30.3%)	187 (29.8%)	174 (27.8%)	76 (12.1%)	0
6.	Availability of discount facilities	174 (27.8%)	215 (34.3%)	126 (20.1%)	87 (13.9%)	25 (4.0%)
7.	Availability of EMI facilities	137 (21.9%)	228 (36.4%)	137 (21.9%)	98 (15.6%)	27 (4.3%)
8.	More credit/ debit card payment options	239 (38.1%)	150 (23.9%)	175 (27.9%)	25 (4.0%)	38 (6.1%)
9.	Payment through Paypal/ Paytm etc., like options	163 (26.0%)	264 (42.1%)	112 (17.9%)	51 (8.1%)	37 (5.9%)

Note:SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; N – Neutral; DA – Disagree; SDA - Strongly Disagree.

It is noted from the above table that the respondents have strongly agreed towards expectation on price aspects like 'cash on delivery, availability of credit options and more credit/ debit card payment options' as 49.9, 30.3 and 38.1 percent respectively. The respondents have agreed towards 'availability of different variants of same product in different prices, competitive pricing, value for money, availability of discount facilities, availability of EMI facilities and payment through paypal/ paytm etc., like options' as 41.6, 52.3, 36.2, 34.3, 36.4 and 42.1 percent respectively. It is found from the analysis that majority (52.3%) of the respondents have agreed towards expectation on price aspects like 'competitive pricing'.

EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON CONVENIENCE

An attempt has been made to know the expectation on convenience of the respondents. For the purpose of this study, it has been classified into nine categories viz., 24 x 7 information availability, 24 x 7 customer support/ toll free/ FAQ option, easy to place/ cancel order (user friendly), fast to surf, product features described with necessary photos, sound etc., relevant image and colour of the product being shown, availability of search option, availability of language option and providence of after-sales-service. The details are furnished in the following table.

TABLE NO. 3

EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON CONVENIENCE

S.No.	Expectations	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1.	24 x 7 information availability	276 (44.0%)	199 (31.7%)	87 (13.9%)	52 (8.3%)	13 (2.1%)
2.	24 x 7 customer support/ Toll	125	301	100	38	63

		SA	A	N	DA	SDA
	Free/ FAQ option	(19.9%)	(48.0%)	(15.9%)	(6.1%)	(10.0%)
3.	Easy to place/ cancel order (User friendly)	138 (22.0%)	237 (37.8%)	164 (26.2%)	50 (8.0%)	38 (6.1%)
4.	Fast to surf	162 (25.8%)	215 (34.3%)	151 (24.1%)	86 (13.7%)	13 (2.1%)
5.	Product features described with necessary photos, sound etc.,	112 (17.9%)	263 (41.9%)	175 (27.9%)	52 (8.3%)	25 (4.0%)
6.	Relevant image and colour of the product is shown	99 (15.8%)	340 (54.2%)	113 (18.0%)	63 (10.0%)	12 (1.9%)
7.	Availability of search option	161 (25.7%)	264 (42.1%)	176 (28.1%)	26 (4.1%)	0
8.	Availability of language option	136 (21.7%)	212 (33.8%)	189 (30.1%)	64 (10.2%)	26 (4.1%)
9.	Providence of after-sales-service	261 (41.6%)	150 (23.9%)	112 (17.9%)	78 (12.4%)	26 (4.1%)

Note: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; N – Neutral; DA – Disagree; SDA - Strongly Disagree.

It is inferred from the above table that the respondents have strongly agreed towards expectation on convenience like '24 x 7 information availability and providence of after-sales-service' as 44.0 and 41.6 percent respectively. The respondents have agreed towards '24 x 7 customer support/ toll free/ FAQ option, easy to place/ cancel order (user friendly), fast to surf, product features described with necessary photos, sound etc., relevant image and colour of the product is shown, availability of search option and availability of language option' as 48.0, 37.8, 34.3, 41.9, 54.2, 42.1 and 33.8 percent respectively. It is found from the analysis that majority (54.2%) of the respondents have agreed towards expectation on convenience like 'relevant image and colour of the product being shown'.

EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON DISTRIBUTION REACH

An attempt has been made to know the expectation on distribution reach of the respondents. For the purpose of this study, it has been classified into four categories viz., door delivery, timely delivery, availability of tracing facility and exchange options. The details are furnished in the following table.

TABLE NO. 4

EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON DISTRIBUTION REACH

S.No.	Expectations	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1.	Door delivery	316 (50.4%)	262 (41.8%)	49 (7.8%)	0	0
2.	Timely delivery	126 (20.1%)	335 (53.4%)	154 (24.6%)	12 (1.9%)	0
3.	Availability of tracing facility	224 (35.7%)	251 (40%)	113 (18.0%)	39 (6.2%)	0
4.	Exchange options	248 (39.6%)	215 (34.3%)	73 (11.6%)	77 (12.3%)	14 (2.2%)

Note: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; N – Neutral; DA – Disagree; SDA - Strongly Disagree.

It is inferred from the above table that the respondents have strongly agreed towards expectation on distribution reach like 'door delivery and exchange options' as 50.4 and 39.6 percent respectively. On the other hand, the respondents have agreed towards 'timely delivery and availability of tracing facility' as

53.4 and 40 percent respectively. It is found from the analysis that majority (53.4%) of the respondents have agreed towards expectation on distribution reach like 'timely delivery'.

EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON SECURITY ASPECTS

An attempt has been made to know the expectation on security aspects of the respondents. For the purpose of this study, it has been classified into four categories viz., safe to buy through credit/ debit card, keeps up promises in delivering what has been chosen, maintains confidentiality of their data and maintains privacy. The details are furnished in the following table.

TABLE NO. 5

EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON SECURITY ASPECTS

S.No.	Expectations	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1.	Safe to buy through credit/ debit card	251 (40.0%)	275 (43.9%)	51 (8.1%)	38 (6.1%)	12 (1.9%)
2.	Keeps up promises in delivering what has been chosen	223 (35.6%)	238 (38.0%)	126 (20.1%)	40 (6.4%)	0
3.	Maintains confidentiality of our data	188 (30.0%)	211 (33.7%)	139 (22.2%)	62 (9.9%)	27 (4.3%)
4.	Maintains privacy	223 (35.6%)	228 (36.4%)	87 (13.9%)	64 (10.2%)	25 (4.0%)

Note: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; N – Neutral; DA – Disagree; SDA - Strongly Disagree.

It is inferred from the above table that the respondents have agreed towards expectation on security aspects like 'safe to buy through credit/ debit card, keeps up promises in delivering what has been chosen, maintains confidentiality of data and maintains privacy' as 43.9, 38.0, 33.7 and 36.4 percent respectively. It is found from the analysis that most (43.9%) of the respondents have agreed towards expectation on security aspects like 'safe to buy through credit/ debit card'.

EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON E-TAILER RELATED ASPECTS

An attempt has been made to know the expectation on e-tailer related aspects of the respondents. For the purpose of this study, it has been classified into four categories viz., reputation of the retailer, providence of premium services, interested in buyers expectations and providence of accurate information in website. The details are furnished in the following table.

TABLE NO. 6
EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS ON E-TAILER RELATED ASPECTS

S.No.	Expectations	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1.	Reputation of the retailer	213 (34.0%)	276 (44.0%)	138 (22.0%)	0	0
2.	Providence of premium services	174 (27.8%)	265 (42.3%)	112 (17.9%)	63 (10.0%)	13 (2.1%)
3.	Interested in buyers expectations	124 (19.8%)	289 (46.1%)	188 (30.0%)	0	26 (4.1%)
4.	Providence of accurate information in website	211 (33.7%)	215 (34.3%)	114 (18.2%)	38 (6.1%)	49 (7.8%)

Note: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; N – Neutral; DA – Disagree; SDA - Strongly Disagree.

It is inferred from the above table that the respondents have agreed towards expectation on e-tailer related aspects like 'reputation of the retailer, providence of premium services, interested in buyers expectations and providence of accurate information in website' as 44.0, 42.3, 46.1

and 34.3 percent respectively. It is found from the analysis that most (46.1%) of the respondents have agreed towards expectation on e-tailer related aspects like 'interested in buyers expectations'.

ANOVA Test was employed to measure expectation of customers towards E-Tailing formulating hypothesis among demographic variables and testing them.

GENDER AND EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS E-TAILING

In order to find the relationship between the gender of the respondents and their expectation towards e-tailing, a hypothesis was framed and analysed with the help of ANOVA test.

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the mean score pertaining to the expectation towards e-tailing with regard to gender of the respondents.

TABLE NO. 7
GENDER AND EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS E-TAILING

S.No.	Gender	Mean Score	SD	'F' Value	'p' Value
1.	Male	3.88	0.55	0.381	0.537^{NS}
2.	Female	3.85	0.53		

Note : NS – Not Significant

From the above table, it is inferred that the highest level of expectation towards e-tailing is perceived by male respondents.

It is identified that the calculated 'F' value is lesser than the table value and the result is not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. From the analysis, it is found that there is no significant difference between gender of the respondents and their expectation towards e-tailing.

EDUCATION AND EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS E-TAILING

In order to find the relationship between the education of the respondents and their expectation towards e-tailing, a hypothesis was framed and analysed with the help of ANOVA test.

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the mean score pertaining to the expectation towards e-tailing with regard to education of the respondents.

TABLE NO. 8

EDUCATION AND EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS E-TAILING

S.No.	Education	Mean Score	SD	'F' Value	'p' Value
1.	Schooling	3.89	0.52		
2.	Diploma/ Polytechnic	3.86	0.53		
3.	Under Graduation	4.04	0.58	4.026	0.003*
4.	Post Graduation	3.89	0.54		
5.	Professional	3.78	0.52		

Note : * –Significant at 1% level

From the above table, it is examined that from among the five categories of education, the respondents those who qualified with under graduation are having maximum level of expectation towards e-tailing.

It is identified that the calculated 'F' value is greater than the table value and the result is significant at 1 percent level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. From the analysis, it is found that there is a significant difference between education of the respondents and their expectation towards e-tailing.

MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS E-TAILING

In order to find the relationship between the monthly household income of the respondents and their expectation towards e-tailing, a hypothesis was framed and analysed with the help of ANOVA test.

H_0 :There is no significant difference between the mean score pertaining to the expectation towards e-tailing with regard to monthly household income of the respondents.

TABLE NO. 9
MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND EXPECTATION OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS E-TAILING

S.No.	Monthly Household Income	Mean Score	SD	'F' Value	'p' Value
1.	Upto Rs.15,000	3.79	0.61		
2.	Rs.15,001 to Rs.30,000	3.86	0.49	7.536	0.000*
3.	Rs.30,001 to Rs.75,000	3.94	0.47		
4.	Above Rs.75,000	4.15	0.25		

Note : * –Significant at 1% level

It is inferred from the above table that from among the four categories of monthly household income, the respondents those who belong to above Rs.75,000 are having maximum level of expectation towards e-tailing.

It is surmised that the calculated 'F' value is greater than the table value and the result is significant at 1 percent level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. From the analysis, it is found that there is a significant difference between monthly household income of the respondents and their expectation towards e-tailing.

TABLE NO. 10
FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS TO VISIT THE E-TAILING WEBSITES / APPS

S.No.	Factors	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
1	Availability of varieties of products	40456	64.5	II
2	Competitive pricing	39244	62.6	III
3	Quality of products	40629	64.8	I
4	Image of the e-tailer	33416	53.3	IV

5	Huge demand	31650	50.5	V
6	Attractive offers/ freebies	31232	49.8	VI
7	Shopping festivals	30867	49.2	VII
8	Availability of auctions	26636	42.5	X
9	Comparative product information	29667	47.3	VIII
10	Peer pressure/ Positive word-of-mouth	26047	41.5	XI
11	Acceptable payment options	25582	40.8	XII
12	Prompt delivery	28260	45.1	IX
13	Maintenance of privacy	23474	37.4	XIII

It is explored from the above table that the major factor influencing customers to visit the e-tailing websites / apps as 'quality of products' which is ranked first with the Garrett score of 40629 points. It is followed by the second and third ranks that are assigned to 'availability of varieties of products' and 'competitive pricing' with the Garrett scores of 40456 and 39244 points respectively. The fourth and fifth ranks are assigned to 'image of the retailer' and 'huge demand' with the Garrett scores of 33416 and 31650 points respectively. The sixth and seventh ranks are assigned to 'attractive offers/ freebies' and 'shopping festivals' with the Garrett scores of 31232 and 30867 points respectively. The eighth and ninth ranks are assigned to 'comparative product information' and 'prompt delivery' with the Garrett scores of 29667 and 28260 points respectively. The tenth and eleventh ranks are assigned to 'availability of auctions' and 'peer pressure/ positive word-of-mouth' with the Garrett scores of 26636 and 26047 points respectively. The twelfth and thirteenth ranks are assigned to 'acceptable payment options' and 'maintenance of privacy' with the Garrett scores of 25582 and 23474 points respectively. It is found from the analysis that majority of the respondents are influenced to visit the e-tailing websites / apps for 'quality of products' and 'availability of varieties of products' available with them.

CUSTOMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS E-TAILERS

An attempt has been made to know the customer preference towards e-tailers in study area. For the purpose of this study, it has been classified into five categories viz., amazon.com, flipkart.com, snapdeal.com, futurebazaar.com and eBay. To identify the most preferred e-tailer, Henry Garrett Ranking Technique was employed and the details of ranking are shown in the following table.

TABLE NO. 11

CUSTOMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS E-TAILERS

S. No.	E-tail stores	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
1	Amazon.com	38229	61.0	II
2	Flipkart.com	38303	61.1	I
3	Snapdeal.com	32435	51.7	III
4	Futurebazaar.com	24874	39.7	IV
5	eBay	23536	37.5	V

It is determined from the above table that the most preferred e-tailer is 'Flipkart.com' which is ranked first with the Garrett score of 38303 points. It is followed by the second and third ranks that are assigned to 'Amazon.com' and 'Snapdeal.com' with the Garrett scores of 38229 and 32435 points respectively. The fourth and fifth ranks are assigned to 'Futurebazaar.com' and 'eBay' with the Garrett scores of 24874 and 23536 points respectively. It is found from the analysis that majority of the respondents preferred e-tailer 'Flipkart.com' followed by 'Amazon.com'.

FINDINGS

Even though there are number of variables which are taken into consideration when the expectation of customers towards e-tailing are dealt with only few variables are given top priority by the customers and they consider them as the most important determinants of expectation. Expectations are governed by gender, age, educational qualifications, monthly household income, marital status etc. Even though there are many variables which influence the expectation of customers, the variables considered in this article as most important are gender, educational qualifications and monthly household income.

SUGGESTIONS

E-tailing is not free from drawbacks. This cannot satisfy the customer who want to hold the product by hand or smell the product or touch the product. The e-tailer should start their outlet in important towns and cities whenever the ordered items should be kept for one day before delivery. In case if the customers want to smell, or touch the product they should be allowed and then the delivery should be effected. If they are not satisfied they should be allowed to return them back. In case the customers are satisfied the home delivery of the product should then be effected. In order to prepare this type of e-tailing, people should be made computer literates. Delivery should be speeded up and return handling should be made more efficient and the process should be expected.

CONCLUSSION

E-tailing, in spite of its drawbacks, is a most preferred and advantageous form of retailing. Ace efforts should be taken for broad casting it by making all the people become well verse in browsing internet and using computer. India is poised to see the day of fruition of expectation of the growth of e-tailing in every place stretching to the nook and corner of the country and every product encompassing with goods as well as service of all kinds.

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