



Understanding Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Online Shopping: Amidst COVID-19

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Abstract:

The study focus primarily on understanding the ever changing consumer buying behaviour towards online shopping in India to know the reasons behind the changing buying pattern of the consumers while shopping online amidst pandemic. This work has been successfully accomplished with the help of referring to the various networking sites and prior studies that offer a descriptive account of information and data regarding the topic of the research study. Thus, the study basically attempts to explore the factors responsible for particular behaviour of the consumer while deciding to purchase online during COVID-19 period. The major findings from the research are associated with the purpose of this study which is mainly to identify and get insights into what main factors the online consumers takes into consideration when purchasing a particular goods and services. On the basis of the findings, conclusion is drawn as well as numerous suggestions were offered that will be beneficial to both consumers and e- retailers. The guidelines will help enhance the knowledge and awareness of consumers when shopping online during COVID-19. As a result, retailers will be able to identify the needs of the consumers and will work towards the problems faced by consumers thereby improving their marketing strategies to fulfil their consumers requirements.

Keywords: Consumer buying behaviour, COVID-19, online shopping.

1 INTRODUCTION:

Online shopping has revolutionized the marketing strategies of the many sellers in recent decades as consumers have grown familiar to online purchasing and the door-to-door-delivery of products from anywhere from the entire world (Bucko, Lukáš and Martina 2018; Mohammad et al. 2018). With the arrival of COVID-19, this shift in consumer behaviour has greatly enhanced, prompting businesses to succeed in even their most loyal offline or traditional consumers in the digital space. This massive challenge is exclusive and has forced organizations to formulate different solutions to adapt to the new normal (Carnevale and Hatak 2020). Restrictive lockdown rules and social-distancing practices have severely disrupted consumer behaviour worldwide (Sheth 2020a). Let's discuss about few important concepts associated to this research topic:

Consumer behaviour:

It is broadly the study of individuals, or organizations and therefore, the processes consumers use to search, select, use and eliminate products, services, experience, or ideas to satisfy needs and its impact on the buyer and society. Consumer behaviour involves the psychological processes that consumers go through, in recognizing needs, finding ways to unravel their needs, making purchase decisions, interpret information, make plans, and implement these plans. It merges elements from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, social anthropology and economics. It attempts to comprehend the decision-making processes of buyers, both individually and in groups. It studies characteristics of individual consumers like demographics and behavioural variables in an attempt to understand people's wants.

There are a variety of factors which is affecting shopping behaviour of consumers. Permitting to Angel et al., (1968) "Consumer buying behaviour is influenced by the chief three factors: i.e. **social, psychological and individual factors**".

Impact of COVID-19:

The planet is facing the highest human tragedy since the Second World War. Practically every country has been suffering from the crippling Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The outbreak from China has spread all over the world. Indirectly, billions of people have suffered as a result of the global pandemic of COVID-19.

Undoubtedly, this Coronavirus has put the planet economy at a significant risk. Coronavirus is damaging the economic pillars of world trade. The pandemic has made customers rethink about the way they purchase various products including the groceries products , we explore the impact of the outbreak of the epidemic on consumer behaviour discussing, how epidemic outbreaks impact the consumption and shopping behaviours of consumers. Consumers, in particular, have significantly reduced spending on conventional shopping outlets, but have seen an outsized rise in spending on e-commerce.

The results are especially important therein the reaction of consumers to the outbreak was due to a psychological element, fear of contagion, instead of budgetary constraints.

Online shopping:

“The procurement of goods or services over the Internet, using either a computer or an Internet websites” (Laudon & Traver, 2008, p. 56)

Purchasing goods or services over the Internet, online spending has attained huge popularity in recent, mainly because people finding it convenient and easy to shop from the comfort of their home or office and also relieved from the trouble of moving from shop to shop in search of the good of choice.

Online shopping (from electronic retail or e-shopping) is defined as a form of e-commerce which permits consumers to directly buy goods and services from the internet through virtual shop/ online sites. Internet creates life simple and innovative. People are practising business online and trade has become more easy and fast. Internet make available new ways to promote business. Website becomes the substantial part of online business as to show their services and products. Internet meets all competitors and consumers in one place. It brings new track to promote, advertise products and services in market.

The standard definition of E-commerce is a commercial transaction which is occurred over the internet. Online stores like Amazon, Flipkart, Snapdeal, Myntra, eBay, Quikr, India mart are examples of few popular E-commerce websites. By 2020, global retail e-commerce can reach up to \$27 trillion was estimated. E-commerce is one of the firmest growing industries in the global economy. As per one estimate, it raises nearly 23% every year. And it is expected to be a \$27 trillion industry by the end of this decade. India is 3rd biggest e-commerce economy in the world after China and U.S.A.

Let's see monthly traffic on different websites:

TOP INDIAN WEBSITES	
WEBSITES	MONTHLY TRAFFIC(Millions)
Amazon	200.0
Flipkart	157.5
India mart	52.2
Myntra	14.2
Snapdeal	12.9
Firstry	12.55

FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE SHOPPING

1.Price

Price is basically to be an advantage of shopping online. Due to hectic competition, prices online are lower and there are more deals and promotions available online. Retailers and online sellers know that customers have other options just a click away, and so as to stay in the game, they need to keep their prices competitive. Prices are also lesser because of no state tax applies in online shopping.

2.Convenience

Online shopping is best when it comes to convenience. One can do the shopping from home, or anywhere, and there is no need to get dressed, drive to a store, look for the item, wait in line, and then return home. By shopping online, one can remove all such additional tasks that take up time and energy. It is also more convenient since one can do it anytime of the day or night, and aren't restricted by store opening and closing hours. Also, when shopping online, people can purchase a variety of items and products at the same time, which saves the inconvenience of getting to go to more than one store to get everything one need.

3.Variety

Another advantage of shopping online is variety. People need to visit many stores, which could take days, or even weeks, to seek out the same variety that they can find online within an hour or two. On the internet sites, they can find almost anything they are looking for. The quantity of items available for sale on the internet is astounding, and lots of those items are not even available in traditional stores. So, not only people have access to more variety in less time, but they also have access to more variety in general, irrespective of how much time you spend physically going from store to store .

4.Discreet shopping

People might want to buy a bit personal or private, and that they do not want anyone to know, or at least they do not need to have to come face to face with a salesperson when they purchase this particular item. They could want to buy some diet products, or a self-help book, or under garments. By ordering these sorts of items online, they will have them delivered to their home discreetly and need not worry about others' views and opinions.

5.Cash on Delivery

In online shopping, people might be reluctant to pay for their purchases before receiving them as such. They could worry that either the delivery might get delayed or might not get delivered at all. In order to overcome such problem, e-tailers give buyers the option of paying for the product at the time of delivering it, which is termed as 'cash on delivery'. First of all, buyers have to look whether such an option is available with the e-tailer for the chosen product and they have the option of paying through cash or credit card

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

A brief review of selected studies has been presented below:

Bhatti et al. (2020) examines that e-commerce grew thanks to coronavirus. E-commerce became a substitute source and thought of top in this condition and consumers bought in superstore traditionally. Coronavirus impact on whole e-commerce. In the meantime we would like to comprehend their efficiency to constancy both cost and benefits as well as connected activities in upcoming years.

Tran and L.L.T. (2020) study embraced uses and gratifications theory to improper the conceptual model while adding a limited condition of pandemic fear. The first research technique of this study is a quantitative examination and analysis. Using sample size of 617 online consumers with PLS analytical procedure. This study discovers a positive restraining effect of pandemic fear on the associations among PEEP, economic benefits, and sustainable consumption.

Hasanat et al. (2020) the key purpose of this research is to work out on the impact of coronavirus on the online business Malaysia. The results exemplified that because the maximum of the products brought from China and the maximum of industries are lockdown which implies that there are not at all import and export of the product. Therefore, it is presumed that this deadly virus will severely influence the Malaysian online business expressly the Chines products.

Pantelimon et al. (2020) the study consists of two parts, the primary one analyses the impact of the mobile commerce's growth on the Gross Domestic Product for equally a West European country-Germany and an East European country-Romania in between period 2014 to 2019. The analysis intends to comprehend the mobile commerce significance in the pre-COVID-19 era, within the context of stable economies. The second part studies the overall consumer behaviour towards classic commerce and electronic commerce in the context of COVID-19 pandemic state. Throughout this regard we examined data for January-April 2020 and studied the leading changes for the countries which were either early affected by the pandemic, severely affected or might both.

Global Web Index, 2020

a). Review of literature clearly highlighted that there is progressive growth in Digital in India, and therefore studies were conducted that touched different aspects of digital. A study was conducted by Global Web Index that aimed on understanding the shopping behavior of Indians at the time of COVID-19. Some of the important findings of these study are: 47% of the respondents agreed that they buy products digitally for getting a home delivery, 47% people also agreed that they spend time online researching about the products before paying a visit to the store, 43% people visit stores less frequently, 38% said that they spend less time inside stores.

b). Another study was conducted by Global Web Index, that aimed on understanding that which digital feature is considered more important by Internet users in India. Here 60% of the respondents mentioned that for them most important feature is Free delivery, 52% opted for digital shopping because of reliable delivery, 47% respondents opted for digital shopping because of free return policy, 45% agreed for digital shopping because the website was reliable and 36% of the respondents mentioned that they shop online because of same or next day delivery.

c). Global Web Index conducted another research for understanding that which items would the internet users in buy more in India once the Pandemic is over. 42% of the people mentioned that they would order groceries online, followed by 37% of the respondents who will order personal care products online, 35% of the respondent mentioned that they would buy clothes online, and 35% respondents mentioned that they will buy household products online. 31% respondents agreed that they would buy smartphones online, followed by 27% people who would buy other electronic products online, 26% of the people mentioned that they will buy cosmetics online with only 11% people who mentioned that they would buy alcohol online.

E-commerce of different products volume growth :

Products	%growth from 2019
Fashion and accessories	20%
Electronics and Home appliances	22%
Beauty and wellness	130%
Health and Pharma	38%
Eyewear	47%
FMCG and agricultural	55%
Others	13%

Need of the study:

The COVID-19 pandemic has essentially transformed the world as we know it. People are different in living, buying in a different way and in many ways, thoughts are different. Supply chains have been tested. Retailers are closing doors. Consumers across the globe are looking at products and brands through a new lens (www.accenture.com) this paper, we explore the impact of the outbreak of the epidemic on consumer behaviour discussing, how epidemic outbreaks impact the consumption and shopping behaviours of consumers. Consumers, in certain, have significantly reduced spending on conventional/traditional shopping outlets, but have seen a large rise in spending on e-commerce. The results are specifically important in that the reaction of consumers to the outbreak of pandemic was due to a psychological element, fear of contagion, rather than budgetary constraints.

Objectives

1. To understand consumer behaviour towards online shopping , amidst COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To analyse the various factors influencing to opt for online shopping in general.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to look into articles from every peer-reviewed journal published , when a literature search was performed. In need to be as systematic as possible, this review tracked industry papers published in all disciplines. Other publications such as conference proceedings and industry reports were included and also the journal articles, books, and other content relevant to the research study.

4. CONCLUSION

Consumer approach and shopping behaviour are changing very fast. Online shopping is going to become main stream in the next years to come obviously because of the prevailing pandemic. Taking the advantage of this changing scenario now; the e-commerce, companies are finding a very good opportunity and are searching the ways to exploit it.

The COVID-19 pandemic is assumed to have affected consumer behaviour worldwide, impacting local and global economies. Various studies have shown that consumer behaviour has changed in response to the pandemic. Thus, many companies are innovating to adapt to the new circumstances. Remarkably, technology has grow into more influential in the daily lives of consumers and businesses. Studies show that COVID-19 has both positive and negative impacts on worldwide economies, disrupting both supply chains and sales channels. It's clear that COVID-19 is Reshaping Consumer buying Behaviour to a completely different league. The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply changed the way we live and work, how and where we shop, what we value, and how we contemplate about the future. Although some of these changes are temporary, others will sustain beyond this pandemic. As COVID-19 is redesigning industries and rapidly hastening long-term underlying trends, it is now more important than ever for businesses to understand consumer behaviour and have a complete vision of the market trends. Thus, Limited availability and fear of infection, post lockdown, has led to a shift in consumer behaviour and a subsequent rush of online customers.

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