



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS PRODUCT USAGE FEATURES IN ONLINE SHOPPING

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Abstract : This study has been undertaken to understand and analyze the online shopping behavior of consumers with special focus on the usage features available in online commerce platforms. The robust growth of online shopping in India has made the digital market space crowded; making the ecommerce companies compete for shoppers' attention and patronization. In such situations the deeper study into customer insights and the fine tuned study of the causative factors of product usage that lead to customer satisfaction would help the online shopping sites to create better user experiences. This study in Rayalaseema Region shows that along with influencing consumer preference, the variables of top brands, featured brands & plentiful stock lead to customer satisfaction.

Key Words: Online Shopping, Product usage, Customer satisfaction, E-Commerce

I. INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE SHOPPING

In India, online shopping is a thriving industry with many big and small players intensely competing in the market creating a vibrant ecommerce ecosystem. Consumer's positive attitude on the availability of numerous products and the avoidance of a compromise can be termed as one of the biggest traffic generators in online shopping. According to Indian Brand Equity Foundation IBEF report 2024¹, The Indian e-commerce market is projected to grow from US\$ 123 billion in 2024 to US\$ 292.3 billion in 2028.

The changing global environment has become a catalyst; smart phone revolution, internet penetration, internet speed, cheaper data packs, globalization, government initiatives like digitalization, new FDI rules, MNCs, Technology transfer, affordable costs of technology, increasing population, urbanization, increased mobility of people, raise in disposable income, etc have catapulted the growth of E-Commerce in India. Choice, price and convenience have made online shopping the most preferred shopping channel. Choices are made possible when the consumers are exposed to larger variety of products, rapid change to trends and broader assortments. Online shopping sites offer a variety of products ranging from staples to precious stones, standard products like books to customized jewellery and apparels. Their wide and deep choices without stepping out and from the comfort of the home attract many consumers to shop at web stores.

II. ROLE OF PRODUCT AVAILABILITY IN CREATING FAVOURABLE CONSUMER OPINION

Consumer's attitude is the feeling or opinion of favourableness or un-favourableness towards a product or a service. In the world of ecommerce the combination of consumer beliefs, opinions, feelings (affects) and behavioural intentions towards online shopping as a trustworthy mode of shopping have paved way for positive attitude formation. Along with the fulfilling experiences offered by the online stores, the facilitating situations in the economy have strengthened the consumer's beliefs. Online shopping offers not just the products but the emotional part of feeling happiness, security, freedom, autonomy, uniqueness and deal satisfaction. These exclusive features and the subjective norms of community combine to form positive consumer attitude that strengthen behavioural intentions.

None the less, the lack of human interaction of a sales assistant and personal feel and touch pose a hesitant consumer attitude, to compensate the online stores have come up with the arrangement of merchandize and easy to navigate homepages. The web stores are designing the website based on market segmentation, consumer needs, personas, purchase pattern, spending habits and shopping frequencies helps the online stores to position themselves as more appealing and reaching to the target consumers.

Plentiful stock, comparison modules, customized products, top and featured brands have become the distinctive feature of online stores. This depth of products cannot be replicated in traditional stores owing to the constraints of physical inventory, lack of space and cost maintenance. Along with this digital rich merchandise display and ease in browsing strengthens the sellers have come up with related links and customized products to engage the customer and offer a delightful shopping experience.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many researchers have explored this aspect of product availability in online stores more as a composite factor of convenience. However several researchers have focused more on this vital variable as an integral attribute that influences online purchase intention.

Eroglu. Elif 2014² states that the intention to purchase online is strengthened by the consumer rationality that a particular technology is easy to understand, easier to navigate and helps purchasing. Especially the international labels which previously needed longer waiting are now available all over the world at the same time as the web stores have been made easier to navigate and reach out.

Studies by Ganesh, Reynolds, Luckett and Pomirleanu 2010³ based on The Big Middle by Levy 2005⁴ says that consumers are prone to shop online because of the store attributes like merchandize variety and personalized services like notifications on new products and new deals, they attract the consumers exhibiting the quality of “Avant-gardism”. It refers to consumer’s who prefer to keep up with trends & shop for new products with an intention to create a unique image for themselves.

Vaggelis Saprikis, Chouliara and Maro Vlachopoulou 2010⁵ say that the usage of internet as a search tool helps in getting those products which the consumer would have been completely unaware of previously. Awareness on new brands and brand recognition in web stores is giving them more autonomy in choice wants rather than buying what is given. Verhagen.Tibert, Boter.Jaap and Adelaar 2010⁶ state that the consumers who go for hedonic purchase rely on websites ability to get hard to find products, assorted products, speed search and customization. To accommodate these behaviors they suggest web stores to tailor their content by creating a user centered approach supplemented with product centered design system.

Ankith Goel and Parul Garg 2014⁷ focus on the feature of variety of products and international brands which earlier were expensive or took time to reach; these have made youngsters prefer online stores. Online stores maintain excellent merchandise collections, logistics and supply chain management facilities; they even offer to accept orders for items which are out of stock and shipping it on availability.

The moderating effects of age, gender & experience are crucial in forming behavioral intentions to use online shopping. Muruganantham, Nandhini, Nivetha & Nandhini 2017⁸ say that youngsters show an inherent curiosity to know about new things and are always eager to try novel ideas- making them a perfect means to propagate. In Indian scenario it is the youngsters who have quickly accepted online services and they are also instrumental in spreading the concept among their family and friends and middle aged consumers who are already aware are welcoming new technological innovations in online stores. The young have become trend setters in trying out new online product lines.

Seethu and Anish. B. Bhaskaran, 2019⁹ have stated that as consumers are getting used to online shopping they are also widening the scope of their online purchases, ordering standard products has become a common thing and they have started experimenting with customized furniture, home decor, life style products and cosmetics which need more of product variety and customer involvement.

Shopify.com in its blog on E-Commerce trends for 2023¹⁰ speaks on how an online shopping process is more than a transaction, the online business have integrated marketing channels, streamlining operations like sales, order tracking and logistics and digital advancements to deliver best value and service fulfillments. The pandemic has given to Indian shoppers enough practice in choosing brands, products and mode of shopping; they have become more autonomous, speed and convenience driven.

Product availability is that operational area in online stores which has become also a promotional marketing campaign that differentiates from its competitors. Promoting the products/services which are in demand and strengthening those aspects which give much satisfaction helps marketers to adapt to the likes, dislikes of consumers.

IV. NEED FOR STUDY

Though online shopping has reached maturity phase in India, the incidence of research pertaining to the concept of Online shopping in Rayalaseema region is very less. As of 2011 census of India¹¹, Rayalaseema the southern region of Andhra Pradesh had a population of 15,184,908 and covers an area of 71,060 km² (27,440 sq mi).

The evidence gap regarding this regional area is wide and offers ground for present and future research. Even in the past studies the research is centered more towards consumer motivation and convenience factors but do not address the deeper topic of influence of product availability on consumer opinion and online purchase decision. This focused and systematic study would help the marketers understand and strategize better.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the Consumer’s Opinion Towards Product Availability in Online shopping
2. To find the Consumer opinion towards online shopping with Plentiful stock & Price range as means of making Products available
3. To find the effect of the features of Advanced navigation & Photo search in developing favorable consumer opinion towards online shopping.
4. To find the influence of the availability of Top brand, featured brands and customized products on online consumer preferences.
5. To identify which factor of Product availability influences the consumer to buy online.

VI. METHODOLOGY & SAMPLING

The present study is based on both primary data and secondary data; the primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire and the relevant secondary data are gathered from the Journals, Published reports etc. For the purpose of the study, online buyers located in Rayalaseema Region are targeted as research population. The total respondents of the study are 480 from the four districts namely, Ananthapur, Chittoor, Kurnool and YSR Kadapa. But, some of the respondents have not responded to few items of the questionnaire. Hence, they were eliminated from the study and the final resultant sample size is 419. Convenient Sampling method has been employed.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The primary and secondary data collected from different sources have been tabulated and interpreted meaningfully.

Table no 1.1 Consumer Opinion on Product Availability-Plentiful Stock

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Very High	134	32.0	32.0	32.0
High	148	35.3	35.3	67.3
Moderate	123	29.4	29.4	96.7
Very Low	14	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	419	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

It can be analyzed from the Table no. 1.1 that, regarding consumer opinion on product availability, 32% of consumers rate the feature of plentiful stock as very high, 35.3% of respondents rate it as high, 29.4% consumers rate it as moderate and 3.3% rate it as very low. As majority of respondents that is 35.3% rate plentiful stock as high it can be concluded that online consumers have high levels of confidence on the product availability.

Table no 1.2 Consumer's Opinion on Product Availability-Price range

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High	62	14.8	14.8	14.8
High	158	37.7	37.7	52.5
Moderate	189	45.1	45.1	97.6
Low	10	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	419	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

It can be concluded from the Table no. 1.2 that, regarding consumer opinion on product availability in online shopping site, 14.8% of respondents rate the price range as very high, 37.7% rate it as high, 45.1% rate it as moderate and 2.4% rate it as low. As majority of respondents that is 45.1% rate the price moderate; it shows that online platform are preferred for offering products which are cost effective/affordable/expensive relative to consumer's economical class.

Table no 1.3 Consumer's Opinion on Product Availability- Customized product

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High	111	26.5	26.5	26.5
High	142	33.9	33.9	60.4
Moderate	133	31.7	31.7	92.1
Low	5	1.2	1.2	93.3
Very Low	28	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	419	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

It can be described from the Table no. 1.3 that, regarding consumer opinion on product availability in online shopping sites, 26.5% of respondents rate it as very high, 33.9% of consumers rate the feature of customized product as high, 31.7% rate it moderate, 1.2% rate it as low, and 6.7% rate it as very low. As majority of respondents that is 33.9% rate customization as high, it can be implied that web stores are preferred as they are good places for buyers to get not just standardized products but unique products which are designed according to their interests and specifications. .

Table no 1.4 Consumer's Opinion on Product Availability- Top Brands

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High	215	51.3	51.3	51.3
High	90	21.5	21.5	72.8
Moderate	100	23.9	23.9	96.7
Very Low	14	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	419	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

It can be explained from the Table no. 1.4 that, regarding consumer opinion on product availability, 51.3% of respondents rate the availability of top brands as very high, 21.5% of consumers rate it high, 23.9% consumers rate it as moderate, and only 3.3 % rate it as very low. As majority of respondents that is 51.3% rate top brands availability as very high, it can be inferred that consumers positively perceive online stores as a source for top brands that offer the latest and in trend products which would not have been available to them earlier.

Table no 1.5 Consumer's Opinion on Product Availability- Featured Brands

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High	142	33.9	33.9	33.9
High	154	36.8	36.8	70.6
Moderate	123	29.4	29.4	100.0
Total	419	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

It can be illustrated from the Table no. 1.5 that, with regard to consumer opinion on product availability, 33.9 % of respondents rate the featured brand as very high, 36.8% of consumers rate the featured brands as high, 29.4% consumers rate it as moderate. As majority of respondents that is 36.8% rate featured brands as high, it implies that many top brands which differentiate themselves from run of the mill kind goods are widely available in online shopping sites.

Table no 1.6 Consumer's Opinion on Product Availability- Use Photo search

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High	119	28.4	28.4	28.4
High	86	20.5	20.5	48.9
Moderate	124	29.6	29.6	78.5
Low	43	10.3	10.3	88.8
Very Low	47	11.2	11.2	100.0
Total	419	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

It can be interpreted from the Table no. 1.6 that, with regarding consumer opinion on product availability, 28.4% of respondents rate the take a picture and ask as very high, 20.5% of consumers rate use camera take a picture and ask for the product feature as high, 29.6% consumers rate it as moderate, 10.3% rate it as low, and 11.2% rate it as very low. As majority of respondents that is only 29.6% rate taking picture and asking to get the same as moderate, this is a useful way of getting precisely what they want but is done by only a quarter of respondents.

Table no 1.7 Consumer's Opinion on Product Availability-Advanced Navigation

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High	61	14.6	14.6	14.6
High	158	37.7	37.7	52.3
Moderate	124	29.6	29.6	81.9
Low	15	3.6	3.6	85.4
Very Low	61	14.6	14.6	100.0
Total	419	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

It can be observed from the Table no. 1.7 that, regarding consumer opinion on product availability, 14.6% of respondents rate the stock availability as very high, 37.7% of consumers rate the feature of advanced navigation as high, 29.6% consumers rate it as moderate, 3.6% rate it as low, and 14.6% rate it as very low. As majority of respondents that is 37.7% rate it as high, it implies that the user friendly interface and simple navigational process is helpful to many shoppers to log in, go through, place order and check out easily.

VIII. Summary

Plentiful stock: Stock is always an issue in physical stores as it consumes lot of space and needs much human effort to arrange and sort, but in an online store, stock is no more an issue as the point of purchase is not the point of delivery. The difficulty of limited and costly shelf space of offline stores is overcome in online stores; as they never run out of merchandize; online stores are always stocked, refilled fast, readily available and updated on stock arrival. The digital environment displays numerous products with ease, the gap between purchase and delivery helps them to communicate with producers and get in time to the consumers. They maintain tie-ups with local as well as international sellers switch from one source thus maintaining a constant source of commodities to the consumers.

Price range: Along with this it has a good price range that caters to all the segments of the economy and is not confined to a particular premium or cheaper products. Price is a key initiator of a purchase process and has its say in evaluating the purchase and finally making purchase decisions especially regarding the consumers with more utilitarian values. Online pricing resonates with the budget needs of consumers, they feel much satisfied as no amount is lost to long chain of channels of distribution, and it caters to the combined motives for striking a good deal as well as getting the needed product within the expected price. Online shopping sites quote cost effective warehouse-website model as the reason for this slash of prices, it efficiently works on unification and merging several channel networks and reconciling staff who work on a variety of merchandize. This model has third parties who maintain warehouses and supply chain management that helps in time delivery and order fulfillment.

Customized products: Customization is the latest trend in online shopping that offers to the consumer what they actually seek that is the core values of a purchase offer rather than the run of a mill product. Customized products add the much missed human element to online shopping. Active involvement of consumers in creating the product of their choice make many consumers choose the site over others and also help in achieving satisfaction and loyalty towards the store. Marketers link the motive of personal identity with the product possessed by the consumer; they project customized products as a way of expressing the consumer's unique identity. The online market for customized products is robust in western countries and in India it is still in the growing phase.

Top brands: Top brands which were always thought to be in reach to the upper segments of the society are now available to everyone. Online stores have started connecting with the top brands and displaying large variety of latest products in return the top brands use the online stores to attract the attention of browsers, motivate them towards choosing something that was earlier beyond their reach and push them through the sales funnel. The increased middle class segment has offered a win-win situation, turning the online stores as the hang out place for the savvy urban middle class; the brands can penetrate into the masses, the consumers can order them right away

Featured brands: Consumer needs and goals change and grow in response to an individual's physical condition, environments, interactions with others and experiences, this dynamism have lead to the growth of a special category of online products called Featured products. Online consumers are more attracted to them as they are perceived to be latest and favorite choices offered. Featured brands are those brands that show distinctive characteristics or traits that differentiate them from other brands; this trait is much promoted for its trust and faith. Online stores have become the popular platforms for multiple featured brands which are liked by consumers for their distinctiveness in contrast to the monotonous and standard design of regular products. The regular introduction of new products, world class quality, updated styles and good prices is the combination for featured brands; this is what makes it attractive to all segments of consumers.

Use photo search: This is a very interesting search feature which analyses the user's requested picture and connects it with a shopping site, the online consumers feel the dearth of interactive sales experience and to communicate their needs properly they use various image recognition apps like cam find, goggle etc; this feature of photo searching helps the consumer to match the product with the utility he/she seeks and is of great use in finding out which are difficult to describe. Their popularity in organic searches has prompted online stores to build in photo search apps which are simple to use and produce effective results; they have become handy to consumers in getting the products of their choice and specific requirements like colour, size, shape, texture etc.

Advanced navigation: The online stores, because of their ability to display innumerable products may many times confuse and irritate the consumers with their endless catalogues. To wade through this overbearing situation, they have come up with Advanced Navigation feature that make shopping a more stimulating experience rather than a persistent chore. Along with simple navigation tools of top and sidebar, multiple columns of content, visual imagery, display options on hover, drop down menu, iconic menu, fewer but effective links, etc increase the consumer's website usability. Online consumers expect instant search results, pinpoint results and immediate order fulfillment in shopping sites and advanced navigation makes the shoppers to glide with ease.

IX. Conclusions

The study shows that the availability of a huge variety of products makes consumers prefer online shopping over brick and mortar stores. Along with influencing consumer preference, the variables of top brands, featured brands & plentiful stock have made online shopping sites their favorite companion. Customized products and using photo search is robustly increasing after the pandemic and is positively going to contribute to growth in online shopping. Re selling and cross selling of products is the area that needs special focus in this mature phase of online shopping.

The feature of price range is not considered as the vital issue by many consumers. Price is a key initiator of a purchase process and has its say in evaluating the purchase.

Online shopping sites popularize the notion that they thrive on the cost effective warehouse-website model but in many instances they do not offer the affordable prices making the consumer ponder over the purchase decision. Online websites need to offer products with affordable, premium and luxury price variants which could cater to the all the various segments of the society. Customizations and Advanced navigation usage for reaching more products is also an area that will have a future growth would flourish with customer engagement and customer experiences. The present shoppers with more dispensable incomes and more exposure to global activity are more interested in Private Labels and this can be used by online marketers as a lucrative area to

explore. The addition of reputed private labels in fashion, personal care, home décor and fitness products and services in the available categories will add a competitive leverage to the online shopping sites.

X. Scope for Further study

Wider choices is a strategy of online marketers use to attract consumers who are both utilitarian and hedonic in nature. Online shopping sites categorize and sort their products based on the consumer needs and help the browser to wade through the numerous products available to get what they want rather than take what is there.

The fertile grounds have attracted many big, medium and small players which need to differentiate themselves from each other more through Product availability, unique collections and service fulfilment. The product positioning can be an area of future research. Mass Personalization of shopping using advanced technology, AI, Data analytics and augmented reality in displaying products and creating a convincing experience is also a very interesting area for study.

The variety and expanded product lines have lead to larger number of shoppers and generate revenues that are bigger, consistent and profitable. The bleaker side is that it has created time windows which help successful products to reach full potential but after the time finishes they drop dead because of trend fluctuations; consumers are more prone to buy products which are in trend rather than out of fashion products which after a time feel burdensome. So they are constantly under stress to be on the go, agility with which online retailers must work on to keep up with the consumer preferences is a practical area for further research

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