A Comparative Analysis Of Online Versus Offline Shopping: A New Arena

Dolly Tripathi

Research Scholar

Department of Commerce

Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to create an impression of the online shopping choice process by comparing offline and online decision-making and identifying the elements that encourage people to choose between online and offline buying. Consumers purchase when and where they choose when they are at ease with the products and purchasing options. According to the report, females purchase online more than males. Online purchasing has expanded dramatically in the last two years as people have become more conscious of technology. People aged 35 and higher are less likely to perform internet purchasing since they are less familiar with the technology. However, the respondent stated that they would prefer to buy through online shopping if the product price was lower than the market. They mentioned that going for e-shopping is quite relaxing. Both internet and traditional shopping have benefits and drawbacks. Online shopping eliminates the need to travel great distances, provides more variety, is available 24 hours a day, offers large discounts, and extends the facility of user feedback. Traditional buying, on the other hand, allows people to personally scrutinize things that online shopping does not. Consumers may use both online and conventional modes of purchasing depending on their choices at the time, resulting in fundamentally different behaviour between the two modes of shopping. This article seeks to provide some light on the distinctions that emerge between online and offline shopping behaviour.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Online Buying Behaviour, Offline Buying Behaviour, Consumer, Online Shopping, Offline Shopping

INTRODUCTION

When a consumer wants to buy something, the most important question is what kind of shopping they should do. They can shop both online and in traditional stores. The fact that consumers have so many options has made it hard for businesses to figure out how to target customers in order to stay ahead of the competition. In developed countries like the United States, buying clothes online has almost become the norm, especially for clothing. But in a developing country like India, where most people still buy things at brick-and-mortar stores, this is not the case. In the last few years, online shopping has become very popular, especially among teens and young adults. However, in terms of numbers, offline shopping is still much more popular than online shopping. In the modern world, it is very important for the success of a business, whether it is online or not, to learn and analyze how customers act. The market is driven by consumers. All business activities are done with the best interests of customers in mind. Online shopping is a relatively new thing in India, but it has grown in popularity over the past few years. This is due in part to the growing number of people who have access to the internet, which has left consumers with too many options. Through online ads, the Internet is helping to get the word out about products. Due to the healthy competition between online stores and their brick-and-mortar counterparts, a new era has begun in which shoppers can choose the shopping method that best suits their needs. Some of the biggest differences between the two ways to shop are how users find out about products, how risky users think they are, and how easy it is to find similar products that fit ones needs.

The development of technology gives businesses good opportunity to reach customers more quickly, easily, and affordably. Online shopping has grown quickly in recent years. The retail market is now focused on the internet. Online shopping is used by millions of individuals. On the other hand, people are still continuing to buy products from traditional markets. Many clients want to buy offline so they may inspect the product and have it in their possession as soon as they pay for it. Customer loyalty in today's society rests on the capacity to consistently provide quality, value, and satisfaction. Many people shop both online and offline, while others only purchase online. The study focuses on consumers' decisions to shop in traditional stores and online during the information acquisition phase. However, compared to offline purchasing, online shopping is more convenient for consumers and costs less. Consumers should be aware of their options before making any purchases, whether they choose to shop online or offline. The channel that best fits a consumer's needs and wants and can satiate those needs and wants should be chosen by the consumer. From a managerial perspective, it is crucial to understand how consumers choose a certain medium for their purchases of goods in today's cutthroat marketplace. According to **(Laing and Lai, 2000),** internet shopping is the second best and most popular online activity after online shopping. The use of email, instant messaging, and web browsing follow. These are the two extremely typical ideas that occur to people's minds when thinking what internet users do when they are online, and they are even more significant than viewing or being entertained by the internet or acquiring any information or news.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this paper/research is:

- To study the factors affecting online and offline shopping.
- To determine the factors influencing online and offline shopping.
- To study whether online shopping is better than offline shopping.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to illustrate the concept of online versus offline shopping, as well as the interplay of numerous elements that influence online shopping behaviour in a progressive manner. Research is totally descriptive in nature. This is a conceptual study based on a survey of past research in this field. All essential information for the research paper was gathered from primary and secondary sources, including e-journals, research papers, and numerous e-resources.

ONLINE SHOPPING

People's lifestyles are changing nowadays. Going to crowded markets makes people feel uneasy and time-consuming. So, E-Shopping is a blessing because it saves time. Online shopping is the process of purchasing goods, services, and other items directly from a seller over the Internet without the need of an intermediary provider. Shoppers can access web retailers from the comfort of their own homes and shop just as if they were sitting in front of a computer. Online stores are typically open 24 hours a day, and many consumers have access to the internet both at work and at home. As a result, shopping online is quite convenient for them. One of the most appealing aspects of internet shopping, particularly during the Christmas season, is that it eliminates the need to wait in long lines or search a store for a certain item. A wide range of products are offered online.

DEFINITION

Federal Standard 1037C defines online and offline in computer technology and telecommunication. They are "device or equipment" states or "functional unit" circumstances. A system may be directly controlled by another device, directly controlled by the system with which it is related, or immediately accessible for use on demand by the system without human interaction for it to be deemed online. In contrast, a device that is offline does not match any of these requirements (for example, its primary power supply is cut off or disconnected, or it is off power). The Oxford Dictionary defines "online" (sometimes referred to as "On the Line") as an activity or service that is "accessible on or conducted via the Internet or other computer network" and is "managed by or connected to a computer." In phrases like "online identity," "online predator," "online gambling," "online shopping," "online banking," and "online learning," the term is used. The prefixes "cyber" and "e," as in the phrases "cyberspace," "cybercrime," "email," and "e-commerce," give other terms to online context.

ONLINE SHOPPING AND ITS AFFECTING FACTORS

Online shopping has been more popular during the past ten years. The type of business that online retailers conduct is sufficient evidence that they are giving customers conveniences that physical purchasing does not. The following factors influences online shopping:

1. Risk: When customers buy things online, they do not physically touch or feel the products. As a result, we recognize that there is a lot of risk involved when purchasing an online goods. Whether it will arrive on time or not is also a problem, and there may be a danger of product size and color as they may differ in actual view or sense. Sometimes the requested product arrives damaged.

2. Convenience: Online shopping is a lot more convenient than traditional shopping. You can shop while sitting at home rather than leaving your car and going from store to store. It is convenient to shop for the item of our choosing while seated in one location rather than travelling from place to place. Once you made your purchase decision, the payment process is simple and the stuff will be delivered at the place.

3. Anxiety: People who are unfamiliar with sites such as Flipkart, Amazon, or any other sites may perceive it as a difficult and complicated activity over the internet. They are not liked of performing online shopping because it takes time to study the product's details. This activity irritates them and makes them annoyed of any fatal online platform.

4. Previous online experience: How a person has previously experienced online shopping is a big source of concern. Previous experience is important since it can be a hindrance or help people to maintain a positive attitude or mood. There are two types of experiences: positive and negative. Both have their own distinct impact on purchasers' minds. As a result, these factors have an impact on online shopping, often known as e-shopping.

5. Pricing policy: Online stores have an advantage when it comes to pricing because they don't have to pay for store rent, bills, etc. They can give customers their prices directly, and most of the time, those prices are lower than in the offline market. Even if you have to pay for shipping, shopping online is still better than shopping in person.

6. Product quality: Both online and offline retailers offer a wide range of product quality, which influences how frequently people shop online. Quality has a positive impact on nature more than any other type of buying. As a result of their significant financial investment, consumers and buyers demand to receive high-quality goods. In general, qualities are a top priority when making any kind of purchase because they help to secure the transaction, provide a positive purchasing experience, or act as a guarantee for the chosen product.

7. Tangibility of the product: Customers may touch and feel products in stores before making a purchase, which helps them decide whether to buy the item or not and whether it will meet their needs. A person's desire to go shopping is also influenced by their ability to touch and examine a thing. The tangible nature of any object affects internet shopping as well. Nobody can be sure of a favoured product's worthiness, quality, or sense without actually feeling the preferred or sought thing.

8. Delivery period: The consumer must wait at least six to seven days to receive the thing they ordered through online purchasing. However, when purchasing offline, the buyer receives immediate possession of the purchased items. Therefore, this is a significant aspect that influences online shopping. People want to receive a product at a specific moment or within a short period of time, thus they want a good delivery time. The second most important factor influencing product demand is duration.

10. Taste and preferences: Each customer has different tastes and preferences, which also change over time. Taste and preferences also affect online shopping. When you shop online, your age group and how you like to shop also matter. Old people buy things that they can use in their own way. Young people or teenagers used to buy the things they liked. Taste and preferences change as people age and make different choices. The choices that each customer or buyer makes depend on their age.

11. Information: The information provided on the website may or may not be accurate or appropriate. The consumer may not receive complete information regarding the product's quality. Therefore, it will affect the customer's online purchases. There may be discrepancies between the product-specific details offered by the chosen sites. Perhaps clients are dissatisfied with the seven offered details and information. It is very uncommon for many buyers to purchase a product only after gaining a thorough understanding of its specifications, since they prefer details that are correct and logical. When a product arrives or is delivered to a customer, the actual meaning of the product's information may differ.

12. Discounts: Most online stores frequently provide special discounts in partnership with various banks, brands, and other entities. Hence, consumers can anticipate even greater cost savings from their online shopping. Discounts and sales at brick-and-mortar stores are rare and only occur during stock-clearance periods or when the manufacturers themselves offer discounts. When you purchase online, you can get discounts at any time of day.

FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE SHOPPING

1. Fewer options: When it comes to offline shopping, there are fewer options available. There are few varieties available. The product selections offered in stores are limited. Sometimes the inventory is out of date and on sale at a discount. Due of the manual labor involved, offline stores and stores in general provide fewer selections. Due to a manual factor, we must choose from a smaller pool of materials.

2. Time-consuming: It takes a considerable amount of time to shop at a store. The travel time from home or the office to the store is lengthy. It is also time-consuming when putting on clothes in a store or perusing other merchandise. In offline shopping, customers walk from location to location and store to store in pursuit of the desired item.

3. Information: Usually, shopkeepers supply inaccurate information. Moreover, this information does not always meet our requirements. And we purchase items based on what they claim, despite our lack of information about the products. When we know the shops, we make these kinds of purchases out of compassion.

4. Authenticity: The offline shopping experience is more authentic than the online shopping experience. While purchasing the product, we can feel its texture and determine its nature. When shopping offline, we

know precisely what we are purchasing. However, when we shop online, we do not always know what we are purchasing. This is due to the fact that what we see on websites is not often what we purchase when the goods arrives.

5. Taste and preferences: Customers' tastes and preferences change over time. When we buy something from a store, we have the freedom and choice to try it on first. But we don't have this option when we buy something from a website. Because of this, customers' tastes and preferences change more often when they buy offline.

6. Bargaining: In an offline store, a customer can talk to the seller in person and try to get a better deal. The price of a product is set when you shop online, so you can't try to get a better deal. Some customers buy things based on how much they can save, so they do not even shop online because they think it will be more expensive than going to the market.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN ONLINE AND OFFLINE SHOPPING

1. Online shopping, as the name suggests, is done through the internet, so you don't have to leave your house or wait in line to buy the things you want, as opposed to offline shopping, which requires you to travel to a nearby mall or store and then buy the things you want there.

2. In Online shopping, If you buy shoes or clothes online, you can't try them on before placing your order. This makes it more likely that the real product won't be the same as what you thought it would be. Meanwhile, in offline shopping, you can try it on first and then buy it, so there's no chance that the real product won't be the same as what you thought it would be.

3. Online shopping is transparent because you can compare the price of a product on different websites to make sure you buy it at the best price. When you shop offline, you don't have this option because you have to buy the product at the price the seller gives you, and you have no way of knowing if the price the seller gives you is fair or not.

4. Thousands of different products are available at one location or website when shopping online, but this is not possible when shopping offline. As a result, if you want to buy a mobile phone and pants, you must visit two different stores because they are two different products, which wastes time. Therefore, it is safe to claim that online buying undoubtedly beats out traditional retail in terms of time savings.

5. Online shopping scope is used by people who are tech-savvy, and therefore it is primarily used by young people; however, middle age and older age people have become accustomed to it in recent years. In contrast, offline shopping is done by older people or those who are unfamiliar with technological advancements in e-commerce and their benefits; these individuals view online shopping as risky due to the fear of fraud and the unknown.

SHOPPING ONLINE IS BETTER THAN SHOPPING OFFLINE

In the past few years, online shopping has grown tremendously, to the point where many people now only buy new things online. It is really easy to see how online shopping could be helpful, but some people still prefer to shop in offline, and they have their own reasons. In the end, it looks like online shopping is becoming more and more popular, but it is highly unlikely that regular stores will go away. So, what do you think about it? Here is a quick look at the things that play a role in the debate.

• Convenience

Convenience is something that many people value when purchasing. Most individuals do not appreciate spending countless hours shopping, whether in a store or online, and it is always preferable to finish these experiences as soon as possible. This is one of the primary reasons why internet shopping has grown in popularity, since it allows you to switch retailers and products by clicking a button rather to physically going to a new store. For example, in Marks & Spencer, you can buy an entire Christmas list's worth of different products.

• **Quickness**

When you buy a new product, whether for yourself or for someone else, it is usually preferable to have it in your possession right away. This gives you more control over the product and allows you to wrap it fast if necessary. This is one area where traditional purchasing still has an advantage because you don't have to wait for shipping.

• **Saving money**

Trying to save as much money as you can is a crucial component of any shopping experience. People like internet shopping since you can frequently find products there for less money than you can in stores. However, to balance this fact, there are frequently additional delivery expenses, which can offset the money you save with the base price. Benefit: Toss-Up.

• **Deals and discounts**

Yes, online shopping is better than shopping offline because we can shop at any of our favourite brands and get delivery. We can get different deals and discounts when we shop.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey was conducted on a limited size, thus it should be performed on a bigger scale and the ratio between females and males and between age groups should be assessed, as different genders and age groups can have different cognitive processes.

CONCLUSION

According to the survey, the majority of people prefer online shopping, and the reasons for this include time savings, reduced work, the ability to order products from anywhere at any time, and a greater selection. On the other hand, however, they are also carrying concerns about security, the ability to physically hold and feel products before making a purchase, and ongoing trust issues with online shopping. As a result, it is also acknowledged that wholesalers are necessary in the market, which makes the task even more difficult. The majority of the studies have been carried out abroad, according to the evaluation of pertinent literature. There hasn't been any research focused on India. The vast majority of studies have concentrated on how consumers switch between channels. The research reveals that those with a high degree of education, awareness of technology, and knowledge are particularly interested in online buying.

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