

The Changing Landscape of Online Shopping: Exploring Motivations and Behaviors in Online Buying

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Abstract

The emergence of online retailing and penetration of internet in India mushroomed new online retailers and marketers as well as brought competition for growth and survival. The growing population and changing lifestyle of youth in India make it crucial for the Indian online retailers to recognize the consumer's inspirations, source of idea and information behind buying a specific product over internet and online sites. So, this research explores the Indian online consumers inspiration for online shopping and uncovers the three major sources of idea and inspiration that persuade young online consumers to purchase specific product and to further analyze the impact of consumer's demographic variables like age, gender and education level on their source of idea and inspiration for buying online.

With this aim, the study was conducted on online shoppers and results reveal that for Indian online consumers, most prominent source of idea and information for buying a specific product online is advertisement. Social media networks like Facebook, Twitter etc. and recommendations of friend/family member were other major sources of idea and inspiration regarding buying a specific product over the internet. The significant association was also found between respondent's gender and source of idea and inspiration for online shopping. Females majorly get their idea and inspiration of buying a specific product online by advertisement and male get the idea and inspiration from the social networks.

Keywords: Youth, Internet, Online shopping, Inspiration.

Introduction

The tremendous growth of the internet and allied technologies in the last couple of decades has changed the shopper's life including their buying process, shopping experience etc. The internet has penetrated deep into the world's population. With nearly 4.95 billion active internet users by 2022, 4.62 billion social media users, 5.3 billion mobile users, 2.6 billion mobile social media users and 1.6 billion e-commerce users, the internet and e-commerce have revolutionized and have become the integral part of the population of world.¹⁹

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The internet is world's largest shopping mall where individuals, companies, enterprises can do business easier, faster, with low cost and high volumes. Enterprises do business which led to the growing trend for online shopping, trade and e-commerce. To have the benefits of online shopping, large number of persons are now entering in this area of online shopping.

According to Bain and Company report,¹ India is emerging online retail market with 140 million online shoppers just at the back of USA and China whose online markets are on top. Online shopping has opened new opportunities for the enterprises who can exploit them being smart, fast and competitive with the use of new technologies and strategies. Online business is now a high income business which is a significant portion of many countries GDP. Internet shopping is the most prominent and major type of e-commerce.

According to Bobble report,³ Indian e-commerce market observed boom of around 77% from year 2020 till end of 2021 and tier I and tier II cities got more than ever. As per RedSeer Consulting's report,¹⁵ tier I and tier II cities e-commerce market was expected to reach at 150 billion dollars till 2022 and Indian online retail market will outshine the USA e-commerce market to turn into second largest e-commerce market in world after China by 2034.

Review of Literature

Banu et al² stated that India has bright future of online shopping because Indian consumers are very fascinated to online shopping resulting in more online shopping each year. They found that Indian online shoppers purchased products at least once in every six months over internet and they are likely to plan their online shopping in advance and also to conduct product research for online shopping before actual buying.¹² Hirschman and Mazursky⁸ identified the information sources combination that influences the decisions of retail consumers. They found shoppers own knowledge, trade press, sales representatives and others store buyers and selling records as most important sources of information.

Kline and Wagner¹⁰ concluded that experienced buyers mostly need less information from outer sources. They rely on their own knowledge and experience for buying products whereas buyers who have less shopping experience and knowledge, majorly rely on external source of information and inspiration. Cai and Jun⁴ stated that information seeker may become an online shopper and made actual purchase

over internet while searching and reviewing any product information over internet if he felt online shopping as beneficial and the best option of purchase. Moreover, if any seeker found any bad online review and word of mouth, he may shift his purchase online to offline.

Senecal et al¹⁶ found that offline sources of information like opinion groups, recommendation of family, friends etc. and new information sources like intelligent-agent-based systems, recommendation system modified the way of consumer search of information. Haubl and Trifts⁷ and Novak et al¹³ stated that internet is growing source of providing full and fast information about product alternatives to the consumers. To et al¹⁸ identified that consumes who are exploration oriented, had no plan of shopping and search the information for the enjoyment and window shopping only whereas consumers who are goal oriented, plan shopping and search consciously for the purchase of actual shopping.

Park et al¹⁴ identified the impact of consumer's gender and product category on the information search behavior of consumer for online shopping. They revealed that females search more information regarding product in comparison to males. Females focused more on customer's reviews and take assistance from agent regarding online shopping more frequently as compared to males. Cao⁵ stated that source i.e. internet and traditional stores which provide idea and information about product to the shoppers were more likely to be the place of final purchase of that product.

Liao et al¹¹ perceived attractiveness of the online portal having a considerable effect on perceived playfulness, perceived usefulness and psychic cost perceptions. Attractive websites designs encourage more perceived usefulness and perceived playfulness as compared to unappealing designs. Statista report reveals that primary source of consumers online shopping inspiration is search engines followed by social media globally. Ipaper and Epinion⁹ identified that 67% of shoppers inspired for online shopping during online browsing and also found that only 29% online retail stores are inspirational. Moreover, relating to retailers, 57% assert that lack of consumer inspiration and poor shopping experience are major barriers of online shopping among shoppers.

Objectives of the Study

This study focuses on to reveal the consumer's source of an idea and inspiration to buy a particular product through an online store or site and to study the influence of demographics on consumer's inspiration for online.

Research Methodology

Data Collection: Empirical research was conducted through a questionnaire survey and this study focused on young online shoppers. 440 online consumers' data were recorded all the way through modified structured questionnaire from four administrative zones of Haryana

and Delhi-NCR in India. Non probability convenience sampling method was used to select the online consumers from the selected areas. The major research objective of this study was to identify the influence of demographics on consumer's inspiration for online buying.

Hypothesis proposed for Study: The study framed one broad and three sub hypotheses by reviewing available literature to study the influence of demographic variables age, gender and education on consumer's source of the idea and inspiration for buying a specific product through online shopping:

H01: There is no significant association between consumer's source of idea and inspiration for buying a specific product through online shopping and demographic variables age, gender and education of respondents.

H01a: There is no significant association between consumer's source of idea and inspiration for buying specific product through online shopping and age of respondents

H01b: There is no significant association between consumer's source of idea and inspiration for buying specific product through online shopping and gender of respondents

H01c: There is no significant association between consumer's source of idea and inspiration for buying specific product through online shopping and education of respondents

Consumer's Demographics: Demographic profile of respondents is displayed in table I. Consumers demographics shown in table 1 showed that in the study, the greater part of online consumers is aged between 26 years to 39 years (75.8 percent). Taking educational background into consideration, the majority of the online shoppers is well educated and possess post graduate degree (54.5 per cent). In the study, respondents are mainly unmarried people (58.2 per cent). For further detailed study and to achieve objectives, data were analyzed using SPSS software.

Results and Discussion

Consumer's Source of Idea and Inspiration for Online Shopping: To identify consumers Inspiration and source of idea about a particular product to buy through an online store or site, questions were asked and their responses were recorded. Frequency distribution and percentage were assessed and shown in table II. Result showed that advertisement by online mode as well as by offline mode is the most prominent source of idea and information for buying a particular product online. Maximum number of respondents (41 percent) get their idea about buying a specific product through advertisement (website advertisement, newspaper advertisement, television advertisement etc.).

Social networks like Facebook, Twitter etc. and recommendations of friend/family member were other

major sources of idea regarding buying a specific product over the internet. Around 36.7 percent of respondents get an idea of their product by social networks and 22.3 percent of respondents get the idea by the recommendation of friends and family.

Demographic Influences: In the second stage, data was analyzed using cross tabulation and chi-square goodness of fit tests to understand the influence of demographic variable age, gender and education level of respondents' on the source of idea for buying a specific product through online shopping. It helped to identify whether the source of the idea and inspiration for buying a specific product through online shopping varies with the demographic variables of the respondents or not. Table III represents that null hypothesis was accepted for demographic variable age ($X^2 = 9.030$, $p \geq 0.05$) and education level ($X^2 = 9.280$, $p \geq 0.05$).

It shows that there was no significant association between source of idea for buying a specific product through online shopping and age and source of idea for buying a specific

product through online shopping and education level of respondents. But in case of demographic variable gender, result of chi-square goodness of fit test depicted that null hypothesis was rejected as chi-square is equal to 13.002 and P value is 0.002, which is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). It reveals that there was a significant association between source of the idea for buying a specific product through online shopping and gender of respondents.

Thus, it can be concluded that the source of idea/inspiration for buying a specific product through online shopping was not varying with age and education level as there was no association found between them. But it found varying in case of gender of the respondents. In other words, there was a significant association between source of the idea for buying a specific product through online shopping and gender of respondents. Further detailed analysis by cross tabulation was done regarding the source of idea for buying a specific product through online shopping and demographic variable gender of respondents.

Table I
Demographic Profile of Online Consumers

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-25	107	24.2
26-32	125	28.7
33-39	208	47.1
Gender		
Male	262	59.6
Female	178	40.4
Marital status		
Unmarried	256	58.2
Married	184	41.8
Highest Qualification		
12 th	55	12.4
Graduation	145	33.1
Post graduation	240	54.5

Note: n = 440

Table II
Consumer's Source of Idea & Inspiration for Online Shopping

Source of Idea	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Recommendation of friend/ family	98	22.3
Advertisement (Online and offline)	180	41.0
Social networks	162	36.7
Total	440	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table III
Chi-Square Test across Age, Gender and Education Level

Pearson Chi-Square	Age	Gender	Education Level
Value	9.030	13.002	9.280
Asymp. Sig.(2-sided)	0.340	0.002*	0.158
N of Valid Cases	440	440	440

Source: Primary Data, *Significant at 5%

Table IV
Consumer's Source of Idea and Inspiration for Online Buying across Gender

Consumer's Source of Idea and Inspiration for Online Buying		Gender of Respondents		Total
		Male	Female	
Recommendation of Friend/ Family	Frequency	48	50	98
	Row %	49.0%	51.0%	100 %
	Column %	18.3%	28.2%	22.3%
Advertisement (online and offline)	Frequency	101	79	180
	Row %	56.1%	43.9%	100 %
	Column %	38.5%	44.6%	41.0%
Social Networks	Frequency	113	49	162
	Row %	70.2%	29.8%	100 %
	Column %	43.1%	27.1%	36.7%
Total	Frequency	262	177	440
	Row %	59.6%	40.4%	100 %
	Column %	100 %	100 %	100%

Source: Primary Data

Exhibit I: Summary of Results and Hypothesis for Source of Idea and Inspiration for Buying Specific Product through Online Shopping

Hypothesis	Statement	Accepted/ Rejected
<i>H01a</i>	There is no significant association between consumer's source of idea and inspiration for buying specific product through online shopping and age of respondents	Accepted
<i>H01b</i>	There is no significant association between consumer's source of idea and inspiration for buying specific product through online shopping and gender of respondents	Rejected
<i>H01c</i>	There is no significant association between consumer's source of idea and inspiration for buying specific product through online shopping and education level of respondents	Accepted

The source of the idea for buying a specific product through online shopping was found varying across gender. Table IV shows that the majority of the online shoppers were male in the study (59.6 percent) and within category male, the maximum number of male respondents were getting idea of specific product through the social networks like facebook, twitter etc. (43.1 percent) whereas within category female, maximum number of females get idea through the advertisements (44.6 percent). Recommendation of friends and family was a source of idea almost equal both for female and male respondents. So, it can be concluded that the majority of females get their idea of buying a specific product through online shopping by advertisement and male get the idea from the social networks.

Conclusion and Inferences

Increasing use of internet offers an evident prospect to the e-retailers. Indian retailers and online marketers have to recognize the major online shopper's inspiration and source of idea for buying specific product online. Therefore, this study identifies the major sources of idea and information among youth for shopping online. The results reveal that

advertisement by online mode as well as by offline mode (41 percent) emerged as the most prominent source of idea and information for buying a particular product online. After advertisement, social networks like Facebook, Twitter etc. (36.7 percent) and recommendation of friend/family member (22.3 percent) were other major sources of idea and inspiration regarding buying a specific product over the internet.

The results also indicated that significant association existed between consumer's source of idea and inspiration for buying specific product through online shopping and gender of respondents. Consumer's source of idea and inspiration for online shopping was found varying significantly across gender. Majority of females (44.6 percent) get their idea of buying a specific product through online shopping by advertisement and male (43.1 percent) get the idea from the social networks. But age and education level of respondents showed no significant association between consumer's source of idea and inspiration for buying specific product through online shopping and education of respondents.

There were no significant association between source of idea for buying a specific product through online shopping and age and source of idea for buying a specific product through online shopping and education level of respondents. Irrespective of age and education, all respondents get their idea and information for online buying of specific product through advertisement and social media. The findings of the study will help the Indian Online retailers and marketers to identify the online shopper's most important source of idea and information for the online buying. In this study, few limitations are there like limited sample size, restricted age group etc. The study focused on young online shopper's age grouped between 18-39 years only.

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