

## Study on Influence of Attributes on Online and Offline Buying Preferences: Understanding Opportunities and Future Options

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### ABSTRACT

Online shopping refers to purchase of a product or service at website with the help of an internet browser. It is very important for an online retailer as well as traditional store to identify the most influencing factors influencing buying decision making process. There is a constant change in consumer taste and preferences which retailers need to be aware of so as to stay ahead of the competitors. The study focuses on various demographical factors influence on frequency of online shopping. The study further throws some light on the selected important attributes influence on online and offline buying psychology.

Outcome and findings of this empirical research paper would be useful in understanding the opportunities and also future options, directions from the retailing industry point of view.

**Keywords:** Retail Industry; Buying Options; Online Buying; Offline Buying; Website Attributes; Future Directions.

### 1. Introduction

Online Shopping is growing at a very rapid stage and it would continue to make a significant growth in future. Keeping this in mind modern day retailers should focus on the specific attributes which would help them stay ahead of competitors. Such is the cut throat competition that modern day retailers are not only making their presence at online websites but extending their reach to physical stores. So, it important to focus on both online as well as offline attributes.

Today's consumer has a plethora of products to choose from, make comparisons online and then make the

purchase. With the accessibility of internet people can shop as and when required with just a click. Before purchasing any product consumer does sufficient information search thereby evaluating all alternatives available and then take the purchase decision. Due to the increase in cut throat competition retailers are not only making websites as a medium to reach consumer but extending their reach to traditional stores to reach a greater number of consumers. It is really essential for business startups to understand the psychology of Indian buyers so that they can focus on their marketing strategy so as to create consumer awareness.

## 2. Literature Review

There has been many research undertaken in the field of online and offline buying which has been listed as follows. Bagga & Bhatt, (2013) identified the various internal and external factors that influence the way online consumer behave. Here the internal factors refer to the motivation coming from inside whereas the external factors refer to outside factors such as social media marketing done by the retailer. The factors were website attributes, online advertising, enjoyment needs, convenience, reliability concerns, social communication and information search. Gatautis et al., (2014) tried to examine the key controllable factors of consumer behaviour. It was found out there were various factors which created a difference for sales in online environment as compared to sales in offline environment which can be categorized as psychological, cultural, social, situational and marketing. The study further identified that there were two groups of controllable factors that impacts two stages of online consumer behaviour which is intention and adoption. See-To et al., (2014) investigated the consumer attitude towards payment methods (debit card, credit card, cash, mobile wallets etc.) which is being considered as one of the most important factors in completion of online transaction. In case of online or offline transaction payment option is considered to be one of the most significant factor in not abandoning a purchase transaction. Shen et al., (2016) examined how addition of offline channels effect online customers. The study predicted how the attributes of offline channels influences the consumer intention to switch to offline channels which in turn leads to an increase in demand of online channel. The findings of the research were offline channel extension motivated online consumers to purchase highly utilitarian products which was not the case for hedonic products. Vora, (2018) focused on the psychographic profile of consumers and the attributes that had an impact on the way consumers behave towards online and offline shopping. The factors that were taken into account were convenience, variety, price comparison, buying old products at fewer prices, discreet purchases. It was found out from the study that in case of online shopping the factors which influences the most were convenience, variety, price comparison, buying of old products at less price while in case of offline shopping better prices was the most influential factor.

## 3. Research Gaps

Most of the researches have focused on online buying attributes individually with a very few studies on offline

buying and making a comparative study among them. Existing literature have largely focused on “online shopping intention” and “online satisfaction” with respect to online shopping with few other studies related to customer loyalty, demographic factors and customer repurchase intention. There has been hardly any research that has explored selected important attributes with respect to online and offline buying psychology in Indian context. This research tries to understand of psychology of Indian buyers which may help new startups and existing business entities to gain an insight regarding consumers taste and preferences.

## 4. Research Objectives

- To find out if demographic factors like (age, gender, etc.) has any influence on frequency of online shopping.
- To make a comparative study of selected important attributes of online and offline buying Psychology.

## 5. Methodology

It was a structured questionnaire based quantitative research. The data collected was primary through online and offline survey. The sample size was taken as 401. Validity and reliability tests were also conducted for the data. The data was collected from August 2021 to June 2022. Convenience sampling was used with an added effect of snowball sampling. The various statistical tools used for our data was bi-variate analysis like chi-square tests and Wilcoxon Signed Rank test.

## 6. Findings

### *Hypothesis to be tested:*

<sup>H01</sup> Marital status has no relation/association with expenditure during last six months in shopping online.

As per the findings from our data, we have found that there seems to be significant relationship between marital status and expenditure incurred during last six months shopping online (Pearson's Chi Square: 0.000).

Thus, the Chi Square null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be concluded that 'expenditure' is influenced by the demographic factor 'marital statuses'.

**Table 1.** Marital Status and Expenditure during last six months in shopping online cross tabulation

| Count          |                | Expenditure during last six months in shopping online |                   |                     |                     |            |
|----------------|----------------|---|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Qualification  |                | Less than Rs.1000                                     | Rs.1000 – Rs.5000 | Rs.5000 – Rs.10,000 | Rs.10,000 and above | Total      |
| Marital Status | Unmarried      | 45  | 102               | 45                  | 46                  | 238        |
|                | Married        | 10  | 31                | 36                  | 82                  | 159        |
|                | Separated      | 0   | 0                 | 1                   | 1                   | 2          |
|                | Widow/ Widower | 0   | 1                 | 1                   | 0                   | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>   |                | <b>55</b>   | <b>134</b>        | <b>83</b>           | <b>129</b>          | <b>401</b> |

**Table 2.** Chi-Square Test (Marital Status and Expenditure during last six months in shopping)

| Chi-Square Tests             |                     |    |                       |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
|                              | Value               | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 61.986 <sup>a</sup> | 9  | .000                  |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 64.716              | 9  | .000                  |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 48.100              | 1  | .000                  |
| N of Valid Cases             | 401                 |    |                       |

a. 8 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .27.

**Table 4.** Chi-Square test (Educational Qualification and Expenditure during last six months in shopping online)

| Chi-Square Tests             |                     |    |                       |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
|                              | Value               | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 55.630 <sup>a</sup> | 9  | .000                  |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 44.716              | 9  | .000                  |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 27.470              | 1  | .000                  |
| N of Valid Cases             | 401                 |    |                       |

**Table 3:** Educational Qualification and Expenditure during last six months in shopping online cross tabulation

| Count           |  | Expenditure during last six months in shopping online |                   |                     |                     |            |
|-----------------|--|---|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Qualification   |  | Less than Rs.1000                                     | Rs.1000 – Rs.5000 | Rs.5000 – Rs.10,000 | Rs.10,000 and above | Total      |
| Undergraduate   |  | 16  | 9                 | 2                   | 2                   | 29         |
| Graduate        |  | 13  | 34                | 13                  | 27                  | 87         |
| PG/Professional |  | 26  | 90                | 67                  | 100                 | 283        |
| Others          |  | 0   | 1                 | 1                   | 0                   | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>    |  | <b>55</b>   | <b>134</b>        | <b>83</b>           | <b>129</b>          | <b>401</b> |

*Hypothesis to be tested:*

H<sub>02</sub> Educational qualification has no relation/association with expenditure during last six months in shopping online

a. 5 cells (31.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .27.

As per the findings from our data, we have found that there seems to be significant relationship between educational qualification and expenditure incurred during last six months shopping online (Pearson’s Chi Square: 0.000)

Thus, the Chi Square null hypothesis is rejected. Further it can be interpreted that ‘expenditure’ is influenced by demographic factor ‘qualification’.

**Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test**

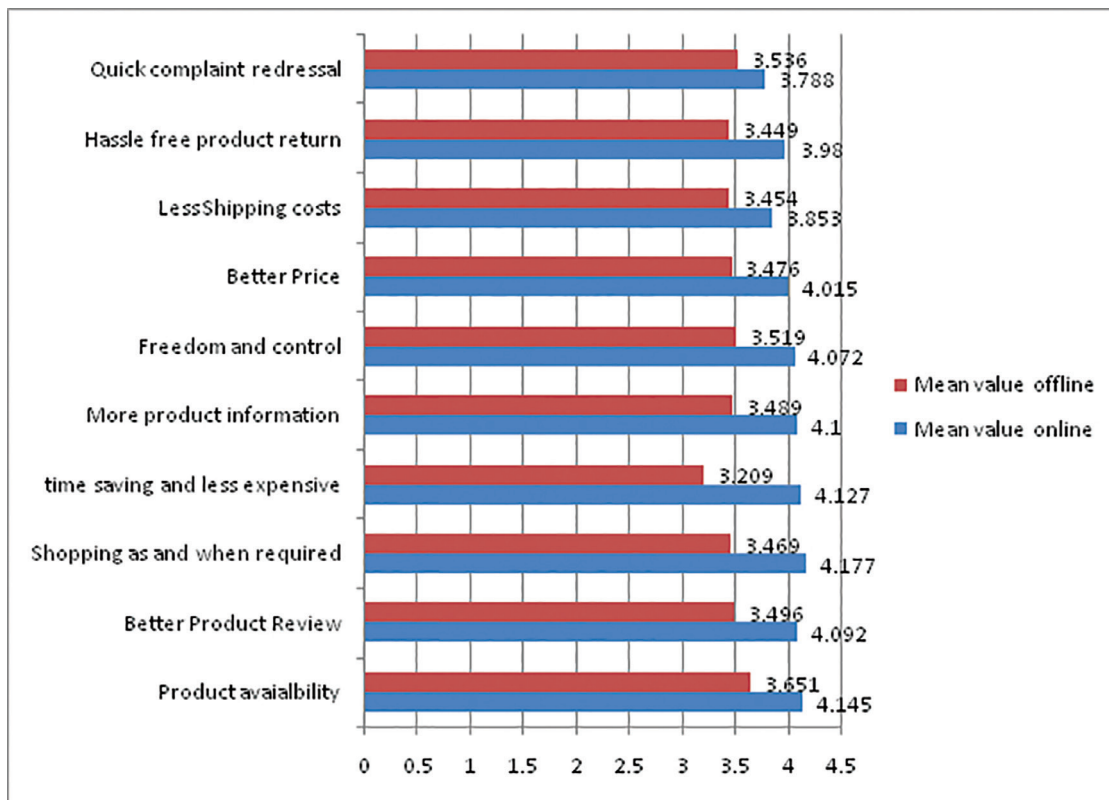
- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on positive ranks.

As per the Wilcoxon test all the factors of online and offline buying behavior have shown significant difference. Hence it can be inferred that online and offline buying behavior is different from consumer’s point of view. From the above table we can see that in case of online buying the attributes which are influencing the most based upon their mean value are shopping as and when required (4.177), availability of variety of products (4.145) time saving and less expensive (4.127).

In case of offline buying the most influencing attributes based upon mean value are availability of variety of products (3.651), quick complaint redressal (3.536),

**Table 5.** Descriptive Statistics and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test statistics

|                                     | Mean   |         | Std. Deviation |         | Z                    | Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-------------------------------------|--------|---------|----------------|---------|----------------------|------------------------|
|                                     | Online | Offline | Online         | Offline |                      |                        |
| Availability of variety of products | 4.145  | 3.651   | 1.0388         | 1.0922  | -7.849 <sup>b</sup>  | .000                   |
| Better Product review feedback      | 4.092  | 3.496   | .9402          | 1.0796  | -9.197 <sup>b</sup>  | .000                   |
| Shopping as and when required       | 4.177  | 3.469   | .8894          | 1.1466  | -10.100 <sup>b</sup> | .000                   |
| Time saving and less expensive      | 4.127  | 3.209   | 1.0056         | 1.2454  | -10.803 <sup>b</sup> | .000                   |
| More product information            | 4.100  | 3.489   | .9900          | 1.1513  | -8.668 <sup>b</sup>  | .000                   |
| Freedom and control in shopping     | 4.072  | 3.519   | .9419          | 1.1293  | -8.390 <sup>b</sup>  | .000                   |
| Better price                        | 4.015  | 3.476   | .9949          | 1.1181  | -7.982 <sup>b</sup>  | .000                   |
| Less shipping costs                 | 3.853  | 3.454   | 1.0681         | 1.1741  | -5.860 <sup>b</sup>  | .000                   |
| Hassle free product return          | 3.980  | 3.449   | 1.0414         | 1.1459  | -7.424 <sup>b</sup>  | .000                   |
| Quick complaint redressal           | 3.788  | 3.536   | 1.0665         | 1.1659  | -3.781 <sup>b</sup>  | .000                   |



**Figure 1.** Comparative study of mean value of attributes among online and offline buying.

freedom and control in shopping (3.519), better product review feedback (3.496). So, it can be inferred different attributes are influencing buying behavior in case of online and offline and all the attributes are significantly influencing buying behavior in both the medium of shopping.

**7. Conclusion**

As online shopping is not limited to adults but it has extended its reach to teenagers and young kids. As

understood from our analysis there is no significant relationship/association among demographical factors such as (marital status, educational qualification and etc.) on the frequency of online shopping. It can be concluded that how much time a person shops is not influenced by demographic variable like age and gender. Moreover, in case of comparing some important attributes by the help of Wilcoxon Signed rank test we can see that the mean value online is quite high as compared to mean value offline. Hence it depicts the change in way the people are shopping also people are more satisfied online as compared to brick-and-mortar stores.

## 8. Limitations

The study is confined to two cities of coastal Odisha that is Bhubaneswar and Khordha. There is a scope for extending the study to other states and abroad also. The sample size taken for our study may be a small representative of the population as study is limited to coastal places. There may be significant cultural differences if the research is carried on in other places. There may be other important factors which might be influencing psychology of Indian buyers which can be explored by future researchers.

## 9. Future Scope and Implications

It is very much important for newly start up business entities as well as existing businesses to understand the psychology of Indian buyers. India is place with diverse culture and traditions which vary across states. So this study will help future researchers, academicians and business entities to gain a thorough understanding regarding buyer's psychology with respect to both online and offline buying. As found out from our research consumers are more satisfied while shopping online as compared to offline. It depicts the change in buyer's psychology post covid. This will help online and traditional brick and mortar stores to create a distinctive strategy so as to stay ahead of their competitors and deliver products and services as per consumer needs and preferences.

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## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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