Understanding Online Shopping Behaviour of Indian Shoppers

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Abstract
The growth rate of India’s e-commerce industry is fascinating. It was reported as 88% in 2013 which is a clear contrast picture of the slower economic growth of India. The rising inflation rate in recent years has not slipped away the performance of online shopping industry in India. Companies are using the internet to put across and commune the information. Simultaneously it helps the companies to give an idea about their products and instantly getting the feedback of customer’s fulfilment to get stimulated turnover for future. The primary objective of the current study is to understand the online buying behaviour of consumers in India. It has also made an attempt to get information about the scope of improvement in online shopping website.

Keywords
Online Shopping, Indian Customers, Marketing Strategies, Indian e-tail Industry

I. Introduction
The introduction and implementation of internet technologies has created new market for manufacturers and service providers and also has provided new arena for innovative marketing strategies by the professionals. There are various reasons of shifting the customers buying patterns towards online retail shops. The facility of comparing your product with competitive products on the basis of price, colour, size and quality is one of the biggest benefits of online shopping. Moreover the product remains at its place even you purchase it. It looks hilarious but this is also one of the most significant reasons reported by the online shoppers. The other popular names for online shopping are virtual store, e-shop, web-shop, internet shop, web-store and online storefront etc. These days Mobile commerce or m-commerce is also one of the popular means of shopping. The facilities of various coupon and discount scheme are also fascinating the customers in online shopping. In our time, internet is acknowledged as noteworthy valuable communication channel taxing with the traditional ones, such as walkie-talkie, magazines, and small screen. From the past few years, on-line shopping is the prevalent way of doing dealings in the field of E-Business and is unquestionably going to be the future of shopping in the human race. The increasing consumer base, principally of youths, is playing a significant role in the online shopping. Through this means, the shopper can buy the product from wherever he wants. Because of wide communication network e-commerce has become the new mediator between the companies/manufacturers and their customers. The growth rate of India’s e-commerce industry is fascinating. It was reported as 88% in 2013 which is a clear contrast picture of the slower economic growth of India. The rising inflation rate in recent years has not slipped away the performance of online shopping industry in India. If one tries to identify the cause of this growth rate then it will not take many efforts to find the answer. The more innovative ways of online payment and increasing internet penetration has given a paradigm shift and push to this industry. The increase of internet technology in India has colossal potential. It will trim down the cost of product and service delivery and lengthen geographical boundaries in bringing buyers and sellers together. The boost in use of internet by the customers in younger age bracket in India has provided a promising outlook for online retailers. The majority of the companies are operating their on-line portals to put up for sale (of both products & services), to shrink marketing costs, and subsequently plummeting the prices of their products and services to continue their position in the future market. Earlier the Indian customers were more attracted towards electronic gadgets and mobile phones for online shopping but now the products indicative of lifestyle, viz., watches, apparels, perfumes, beauty products are also in high demand through the medium of online shopping. The market is also developing for books, jewellery, home appliances and kitchen appliances etc. The following facts can help the academicians and researchers to understand the size and performance of Indian e-commerce industry.

- In 2013, the size of the market was $ 16 billion which was $ 8.5 billion in 2012.
- The growth rate in metro cities of India is expected to be much higher than the other cities of the country.
- The e-commerce industry is expected to be of $56 billion by 2023. But contradict to it, another forecast supported by IANS, the e-commerce market is expected to grow by $ 50-70 billion by 2020.

Companies are using the internet to put across and commune the information. Simultaneously it helps the companies to give an idea about their products and instantly getting the feedback of customer’s fulfilment to get stimulated turnover for future. In India the growth of the e-commerce industry is tremendous. Considering the latest updates from IBN 7, the number of on line shopping have crossed 600 in the year 2013 which was counted as only 100 in 2012. The popularity of local e-commerce sites is also noteworthy in addition to global leaders like eBay and Amazon. The following table gives a glimpse of the top ten leading e-commerce sites of 2013.

Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Websites</th>
<th>Services Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Flipkart</td>
<td>It is a mega online store which offers wide range of products including clothes, books and electronics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ebay India</td>
<td>It has unique business concept where a seller can sell the product directly to buyer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Snapdeal</td>
<td>It is online marketing and shopping company which has existence in more than 400 cities in India.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Review of Literature

Maigman and Lukas’s research (1997) and Rowley (2000) studied that the financial risks had been cited as a main reason to stop internet shopping and security had become a major concern both in online transaction relationships. Solomon (1998) studied the Consumer behaviour and said that it is the study of the processes involved when an individual selects, purchases, uses or disposes of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. In view for the Internet to spread out as a retail channel, it is imperative to realize the consumer’s mind-set, intention and conduct in light of the online buying practice. Bellman, Lohse and Johnson (1999) examine the relationship among demographics, personal characteristics, and attitudes towards online shopping. These authors find that people who have a more .wired lifestyle. And who are more time constrained tends to buy online more frequently, i.e., those who use the Internet as a routine tool and/or those who are more time starved prefer shopping on the Internet. Swaminathan, Lepkowska-White, and Rao (1999) referred vendor characteristics, security of transactions, content for privacy and customer characteristics as factors influencing electronic exchange. Donthu and Garcia (1999) proposed that risk aversion, innovativeness, brand consciousness, price consciousness, importance of convenience, variety-seeking propensity, impulsiveness, attitude toward advertising, attitude toward shopping, and attitude toward direct marketing would influence online shopping behaviour and found that among them, age, income, importance of convenience, innovativeness, risk aversion, impulsiveness, variety-seeking propensity, attitude toward direct marketing, and attitude toward advertising were factors influencing online shopping behavior. Bhatnagar, Misra and Rao (2000) measure how demographics, vendor/service/ product characteristics, and website quality influence the consumers, their attitude towards online shopping and consequently their online buying behavior. They report that the convenience the Internet affords and the risk perceived by the consumers are related to the two dependent variables (attitudes and behavior) positively and negatively, respectively. Sultan and Henrichs (2000) concluded that the consumer’s willingness to and preference for adopting the Internet as his or her shopping medium was also positively related to income, household size, and innovativeness. According to Miyazaki and Fernandez (2001), perceived risk affected consumer online purchasing behavior negatively. They also found that Internet experience is negatively related to the existence of concerns regarding the privacy and security of online purchase and the perceived risks of conducting online purchases. Schifman, Scherman, & Long (2003) in their study researched that “yet individual attitudes do not, by themselves, influence one’s intention and/or behaviour. Instead that intention or behaviour is a result of a variety of attitudes that the consumer has about a variety of issues relevant to the situation at hand, in this case online buying. Shergill and Chen (2005) conducted a study on ‘Web-Based Shopping: Consumer’s Attitudes Towards Online Shopping In New Zealand’ The model included several indicators belonging to four major categories; the value of the product, the shopping experience, the quality of service offered by the website and the risk perceptions of Internet retail shopping. The study concluded that regular web buyers were much more satisfied with all website variables than trial web buyers. Sorce et al. (2005) found that younger consumers searched for more products online and they were more likely to agree that online shopping was more convenient. This study was conducted on behaviour of youth in Malaysia. Wang, Liu and Cheng (2008) conducted a study on the Influencing Factors of Online Shopping and documented that consumers think it to be risky to make online payments. The consumers were also expecting a higher level of privacy in online shopping. This study was conducted in China and the Chinese consumer’s experience with the internet and computer skill was also found a factor influencing the consumer behaviour. Norazah Suki and Norbayah Suki (2009) conducted a study on ‘Cellular Phone Users’ Willingness to Shop Online’. The study suggested that marketers should propose more on attractive promotion such as advertisements or discounts through the web. Chowdhury and Ahmad (2011) conducted a study on ‘factors affecting consumer participation in online shopping in Malaysia’. The major focus of the study was to describe the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable using Pearson’s correlation method. The limitation of this study was that it only used four variables (ability, benevolence, integrity, and trust) in explaining the consumer participation but did not take other important variables into account (e.g., cost switching vendors and the presence of third party. The study provides a useful insight on the significant role of trust in students for online shopping. Yulihari, Islam and Daud (2011) conducted a study on ‘Factors that Influence Customer’s Buying Intention on Shopping Online’. The variables that were tested included usefulness of internet shopping, ease of use, compatibility, privacy, security, normative beliefs, self-efficacy, attitude and student’s buying intention. Pearson correlation analysis provided statistical information about the relationship of each independent variable

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jabong</td>
<td>It has been a front runner in online shopping websites in India and offer attractive discounts, promotional and deals for Indian customers on many fashion, home décor and lifestyle variants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Myntra</td>
<td>It retails many famous national and international brands like Puma, Adidas, John miller, Lotto and many more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tradus</td>
<td>It offers wide range of wholesale and retail products online. Tradus.com is an Auction and shopping company operate in many European countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Junglee</td>
<td>Junglee is an online website which provides electronics, lifestyle, men &amp; women apparel, accessories, movie CD/DVD, home décor products etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Homeshop18</td>
<td>It is an online shopping website and retail distribution network company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Shopclues</td>
<td>An online mega store recorded highest growth in year 2012 and Alexa ranked 1000 in mid of August -13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yebhi</td>
<td>It deals in many top national &amp; international brands and products such as footwear, fashion, accessories and jewellery.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: IBN 7
with dependent variables. It was studied that web advertising favourably influences the purchasing of a company’s products. Karim (2013) conducted a study on online shopping behaviour of customers and documented that online vendors can assure their consumers for transaction security and avoid long delays in completing online orders and the hassle of returning goods for better online shopping experience. Morris (2013) conducted a study on ‘More Consumers Prefer Online Shopping’ Shoppers increasingly want what’s called a “seamless omnichannel experience,” meaning one in which retailers allow them to combine online and brick and mortar browsing, shopping, ordering and returning in whatever combo they would like.

With the increasing size, more demand by youth and change in the behaviour of youth towards shopping has clearly indicated a huge market is available to the incumbents and existing performers. And at this stage it is important to understand the buying behaviour of Indian customers towards online shopping which is mandatory for a great marketing strategy by the players in this industry. The size and growth rate of this industry was never like this before. And considering all this, the present study has made an attempt to understand the online shopping behaviour of Indian customers.

III. Objective of Study
The primary objective of the current study is to understand the online buying behaviour of consumers in India. It has also made an attempt to get information about the scope of improvement in online shopping website. The objective of the study is destined to provide useful information to marketing professionals to develop a better marketing strategy to boost online shopping in Indian retail market.

IV. Research Design
Focussing the objective of the present study, a survey was conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire to collect data about the consumer behaviour for online shopping in India. The structured questionnaire was designed to collect information about demographic profile of the respondents such as age, gender, occupation. In addition to this, various questions related to the experience of internet usage, the purpose of using Internet, types of products purchased online, factors affecting consumer behaviour while online shopping etc. were asked from the respondents. Considering the time and budget constraints, the data was collected from Punjab region of India. Convenience sampling methods was used and questionnaires were got filled by email and personal interview methods. A target of 150 respondents was set, but many of the respondents provided half completed questionnaires therefore only 120 questionnaires were entertained for final analysis and data interpretation. Even out of these 120 respondents, some of the respondents did not answer 2-3 questions and the same has been mentioned at the time of analysis of data. Simple charting and tabulation tools are used to understand the behaviour of the respondents for online shopping. The following table gives a depiction of demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Features</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage in Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25 years</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 35 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time employment</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time employment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Analysis and Interpretation
The following table has broadly analysed the survey questions. The data collected has given some interesting findings. It has not only provided the information about the buying behaviour of the consumers through online mode but has also discussed the scope of improvement in web stores’ selling strategies. The findings can be useful for taking strategic marketing decisions to capture the huge Indian retail market through e-tail stores in place of retail stores.

Table 1 Analysis of the Data Collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buying Behaviour Towards online Shopping</th>
<th>Results Obtained through Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience of Using Internet:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The survey has shown that the maximum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people have an experience of 3-4 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or even more than 5 years and only 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people surveyed have an experience of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than a month.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experience of Using Internet:

- < 1 month: 3%
- < 1 yr: 15%
- 1-2 yrs: 34%
- 3-4 yrs: 14%
- > 5 yrs: 34%
Search for Product Information:
It has been documented that out of 120 people, 66 people are using the internet very often for searching a product’s information. It has also shown the interest of the respondents for a specific category of products on internet.

Internet shopping:
74 percent people have been frequently using online stores for shopping. Out of the sample taken 6 percent people have never used internet for shopping.

Products Preferred in Online Shopping:
It has been depicted that majority of the people bought online tickets (17%) followed by buying books online (39%). It was observed that many of the respondents bought other items like clothes, shoes and bags online. The least wished item for buying online was toys (2%). Thus this result can help marketers to formulate marketing strategies accordingly.

Does Online Shopping save time? The survey has shown that 98 percent respondents have agreed that online shopping saves time. Thus the majority of the people agreed with the time saving quality of online shopping.
Does Online Shopping Save money?
The survey showed that 50 percent respondents were strongly agreed and 35 percent respondents were found agreed that online shopping saves their money. Only 2 percent respondents were found disagreed to this statement.

Does Online Shopping give more relaxation?
It is one of the important factors that encourages for online shopping. The survey conducted showed that majority of the people strongly agreed to this reason and only 3 people out of 120 disagreed to call online shopping a more relaxing shopping.

Mode of payment preferred during online shopping?
The payment mode for online shopping included credit card, personal cheque, bank transfer and third party (e.g. PayPal/World pay). The majority of people were found making payment through credit cards. The data was not been obtained from 4 people for this question.

Is security of transactions has an issue in online shopping?
This is a major factor for which the respondents may have different perceptions for online shopping. The data collected from respondents regarding this showed that out of 120 people surveyed, 86 felt that online shopping is secure and 21 felt the opposite. The response wasn’t obtained from 13 people.

Do you consider Company profile and brand identity in market during online shopping?
This parameter may influence online shopping behaviour of consumers to a great extent. Out of 120 people surveyed, 63 strongly agreed that the profile of the company and brand is considered as an important parameter for them while doing online shopping.
Do you consider Security certification of an online shopping website?
Generally people look for security certified websites for online shopping. Approximately 90 percent respondents were agreed to this. These respondents were agreed that they strongly value security certification while online shopping.

Do you consider customer services provided by online shopping websites?
Consumers value customer service a lot and the survey revealed that the majority agreed to the importance of this feature.

Do you think that detailed information of product affects the selection of online shopping website?
Ninety percent respondents were saying that giving detailed product information of e-tail stores affect the decision of online shopping.

Do you think that a website giving large number of varieties with different options is preferred more than a website giving lesser number of options?
Only 2 percent respondents were not agreed to this statement. Majority of the respondents were convinced that an e-tail store giving large number of options is always preferred by them for shopping.

Does cost of delivery affect the decision of online shopping?
Cost of delivery sometimes comes under hidden charges if not properly noted during online shopping and majority of respondents were agreed to it. Thus it is also an important feature to consider. The analysis has been shown as under.
Does speed of delivery affect the online shopping decision?
This is another important feature of online shopping. Only 3 percent respondents were disagreed to it and eleven percent respondents gave neutral opinion. Rest all the respondents said that the speed of delivery affects their online shopping decision.

Does the simplicity of buying process affect the online shopping decision?
It is very important for the purchase process to be simple for encouraging online shopping. Thus is has been considered a very important feature by majority of the people (81%). Two respondents did not provide any information regarding this question.

Do you think that privacy of customer’s information affects the online shopping decision?
Every customer values this feature as privacy is the key concern for everyone. 44 people strongly agreed to this feature and 49 agreed. The response could not be obtained from 3 people for this question.

Do you think that the ability to track shopping history affect the online shopping decision?
It is also one of the important features as people expect to keep track of their shopping history for keeping track of various information. As can be seen from the pie-chart that majority of the respondents like this feature of an e-tail store.

Do you think that the speed of website selected for shopping boost the online shopping behaviour?
This is a valuable feature to encourage online shopping by keeping the customers calm and active. The majority of the people (45%) were found strongly agreed to it and 41 percent were found agreed to this statement. 12 percent people were of neutral opinion regarding this.
Do you think that the website interface for online shopping influences shoppers’ decision?
This is another feature of online shopping which if considered by the customers visiting e-stores. Majority of the respondents were agreed that the interface of online website is duly considered by them.

Do you think that personalised offers by website will stimulate you for online shopping?
The majority of the respondents showed their interest in excitement in personalized offers given by online shops.

In addition to above information, the respondents also shared the information regarding their expectations for improvement in online shopping websites. The respondents said that by improving the after sale services, securities of the online payments, speed in delivery of goods purchased and improving the packaging of the goods can further increase the interest of shoppers for e-tailing rather than visiting a retail store. (See Table 2)

Despite the possibility of security issues and some defaults in delivery and transaction process, the majority of the respondents said that in future too, they will continue their shopping through web stores and they love to compare the various features of the selected product with the competitor product. The results obtained have shown that majority of the people (96%) in favour of continuing with online shopping and 3 people did not respond for this question.

### Table 2: Scope for Improvement in Online Shopping Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Desired by Respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After Sale Service</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security of Services</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of Delivery</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging of Products</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VI. Conclusion and Implications of the Study
The current study is descriptive in nature and it has made an attempt to understand the behaviour of Indian consumers towards online shopping. Although statistical significance of various parameters has not been examined but the generalized results obtained through data analysis has given clear indication of increasing significance of online stores in the life of Indian people. The e-stores are frequently visited by the shoppers. The ease and convenience provided by these stores for 24x7 has made very easy shopping for consumers worldwide. The analysis discussed in the above section has documented that the Indian customers are also getting addicted to the online shopping and they do like various features of online shopping as by rest of the world. But the statistics available has shown that Indian market is still not a fully developed market for e-tail stores. There is huge scope of web-stores in various areas and in almost all the segments. The young population is the biggest attraction of this industry and they may contribute substantially to the growth of online shopping in India. The majority of internet users are youngsters, the majority of goods and services demanded are related to only this segment. Travel planning is one of the biggest services used by Indian online shoppers. The present study has several implications for
business strategists. Considering the empirical evidences of the present study it can be concluded that
1. The e-commerce market has a great potential for youth segment. If the demographic factors are considered carefully then it can be easily identified that maximum number of respondents of online shopping are lying in age group of 18-25 years. There is wide mismatch in this segment compared with the global market therefore the e-commerce companies in line with manufacturers and service providers should target this segment for rapid future growth of their business.
2. The buying behaviour of youth can be elaborated through findings obtained through survey. By focussing on various factors identified in this study, the corporate can make their marketing strategies in better way. It will help to convert their potential customers into active customers. By improving the after sales services, providing more secured payment options, timely delivery of the goods with better packaging can further boost the demand of various products and services through web stores.
3. The market segments like toys, flowers and house wares must be targeted by the marketers on through e-tail penetration. And the market for other products and services must be expanded through more awareness among the customers.
4. As many people (approx. 21 percent of sample) has shown fear of unsecured transactions in online payment therefore the e-stores specifically mention about the security of transactions of their e-stores which will increase the faith of customers for online shopping
5. Further the strategist can also focus on the internet penetration plan of the government to understand the future scope of size of online shopping in India.

References

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