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Perception of Youths towards Internet Usage and Online Shopping in Prayagraj District of UP

PRAVEEN NAYAK¹

ABSTRACT

Internet usage has been widely studied and has been found as an important driver of online shopping. Specifically, students have always been considered the major sample or population for such studies. The present paper attempts to analyse the perception of Youths towards internet usage and online shopping patterns among university students in India. To fulfil the objective a survey method was adopted where primary data was collected from 100 select University students in Prayagraj District of UP. For gaining significant insights, the data was further utilized to test the hypothesis by the application of the Chi-square test. The analysis of data revealed that the sample students were heavy internet users and used mobile phones for the same. Yet, online shopping is not the major reason for internet usage. Traveling and apparel remain the most preferred over online. in contrast to major reasons, books are not one of the favoured articles bought online. This study concluded to provide significant findings and insights about the current internet behavior and online shopping habits of university students in India based on gender.

Keywords: *Internet usage, online shopping, university students, India.*

I. INTRODUCTION

With the introduction of information technology in the post-economic reform era in 1990 In India a vast section of the Indian population directly buys goods or services from a seller over the Internet using a web browser or a mobile app. Consumers find a product of interest by visiting the website of the retailer directly or by searching among alternative vendors using a shopping search engine, which displays the same product's availability and pricing at different e-retailers. An online shop evokes the physical analogy of buying products or services at a regular "brick-and-mortar" retailer or center the process is called business-to-consumer (B2C) online shopping. Online stores usually enable shoppers to use "search" features to find specific models, brands, or items.

¹ Author is a Research Scholar at Department of Commerce and Business Administration, University of Allahabad, India.

(A) Online customer's buying behavior- The marketing around the digital environment, customer buying behavior may not be influenced and controlled by the brand and firm when they make a buying decision that might concern the interactions with search engines, recommendations, online reviews, and other information. Subsequently, risk and trust would also be two important factors affecting people's behavior in digital environments. Customers consider switching between e-channels because they are mainly influenced by the comparison with offline shopping, involving the growth of security, financial, and performance risks in other words, a customer shopping online they may receive more risk than people shopping in stores. There are three factors that influence people to make the buying decision, firstly, people cannot examine whether the product satisfy their needs and wants before they receive it. Secondly, customer may concern at after-sale services. Online retailers have placed emphasis on customer trust aspect, as trust is another way driving customer's behaviour in digital environment, which can depend on customer's attitude and expectation. Customer's purchase intention based on rational expectations, and additionally impacts on emotional trust. Moreover, those expectations can be also established on the product information and revision from others.

(B) Consumer needs and expectations- online buyers are self-conscious and focused on customized consumption of products and services, which makes the demand for online consumption different. Online customers have different requirement and need which depends on time and their environment. Even different online customer has different requirements at the same level of demand due to the difference in income level and other factors.

(C) Online shopping factors-

- Product Quality and Variety - customers want a broad range of quality, price, and variety in products, The online market allows for such diversity.
- Product Promotion-Product promotions attempt to influence the customers' purchasing behavior, online channels have various promotional tools such as corporate logos, banners, pop-up messages, e-mail messages, and text-based hyperlinks to websites.
- Delivery Methods -Online purchasing typically involves the use of a delivery service because of the physical separation between the buyer and seller.
- Technology Factor- To a degree, online buying will depend on the efficiency and availability of the technology.

(D) Factors Influencing the Customers' Online-

- Ease of Use–Ease of use in the context of online search includes Web design, format, template, and user- friendly program.
- Effectiveness of Search–Effectiveness of search can be defined as the customer's ability to acquire and utilize relevant information from the external environment. Interactive decision aids on the Internet help customers locate useful information.
- User Satisfaction–User satisfaction can be defined as an individual's positive and/or negative reactions to the use of information or computer technology.
- Perceived Cost of Information Search–Perceived costs consist of monetary, temporal (time), mental, psychological, and behavioural (physical) effort required in a search process.
- Situational Factor–Urgency and time pressure are situational variables. An immediate need shortens purchase decision time and therefore reduces information seeking.
- Personal Factor–information search is positively related to enjoyment of shopping. In the Internet environment, the extent to which potential goal-directed shoppers can find relevant and reliable information with ease should be a key determinant in their repeated use of the Web.

(E) Drivers for Customers' Adoption of Online for buying.

- Accessibility and convenience–The possibility to shop anytime, from anywhere is the most obvious and most commonly cited advantage of online marketing and was found to be the most important perceived consumer benefit of internet shopping.
- Global choice - Since the boundaries of online marketing are not defined by geography or national borders
- Online delivery -For digital products, the whole commercial cycle, including distribution, can be conducted via a network, providing instant access to products immediately when a need arises.
- The real-time nature of the medium–The internet can provide customers with up-to-the-minute information on prices; availability, etc.
- Time savings- Customers may benefit from the shopping process being faster in the market space than in the marketplace as a result of the rapidity of the search process and the transactions.

- *Possibilities for comparison shopping*- By allowing customers to shop in many places and conduct quick comparisons of offerings and prices.
- *Competitive prices* - By embracing online marketing customers may benefit from price reductions as a result of increased competition as more suppliers are able to compete in an electronically open marketplace.
- *Availability of personalized offers*—Customers can benefit from IT enabled opportunities for personalized interactions.

(F) Review of literature –

Madhura K. & Niyaz (2022) in their research study explored that internet enables fashion businesses to reach out to remote areas of the world without making significant investments. Fashion companies might have their own website to promote and sell their products or they can also exhibit their products on e-commerce and social networking platforms, drawing a larger number of buyers. *Smriti Tripathi (2019)* in their research paper aimed to investigate the impact of social media on buying behavior and factors influencing the purchasing of fashion apparel among generation Y on social media platform. Highlights The present study is focused upon the influence of social media on the behavior of generation Y. *Rao, Hymavathi and Rao (2018)* The authors in the present research study focused on the factors that influence female online-shopping behavior. The factors that motivate female buyers to shop online and their attitudes toward online marketing are studied. *Hasan, (2010)* in a research paper observed that Attitude a multidimensional variable is categorized, as the affective, cognitive, and behavioral components. *Sanjay Hood and Sandeep Agarwal (2012)* in their research study examine the key consumer behavior attributes and relations among them from an E-marketing perspective. An attempt has been made to study the acceptance rate of e-marketing among Jaipur customers and its impact on their purchase decision. *Tanjila Tabassum, Tahsina Khan, and Nazia Farhana (2017)* in their paper aimed to comprehend the correlation among the influential factors, price, trust, convenience, and experience, for measuring the attitude towards online marketing.

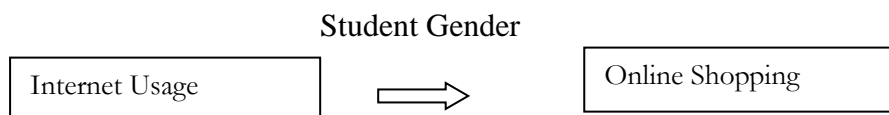
The Indian online shopping industry is about 25 years old. The credit for starting of online mode of shopping goes to reservation and banking. The current study is both perspective and descriptive. The study considers students' internet usage and online shopping patterns in India. The study regards internet usage as one of the major activities performed by university students and tries to relate it with online shopping, which is one of the important organized forms of B2C form of e-commerce. It is termed a dynamically continuous innovation (Makhitha & Dlodlo, 2014) which significantly affects consumer behavior. The Internet has been reported as one of

the major drivers (Park & Jun, 2003) (Freathy & Calderwood, 2013) (Ogunla, 2013) (Soopramanien & Robertson, 2007). This article in hand can be helpful and worthy in presenting current patterns of internet usage and online shopping patterns, for developing a path to ensure sustainable competitiveness in this new mode of selling, in terms of customer acceptance. This is a prerequisite not only for an online marketer to know and interpret the online market trends in India; but also, for academicians to identify the current patterns and explore the relationship in different growth drivers. Specifically, students are studied to make a differentiation between internet usage as browsers or as online shoppers (Soopramanien & Robertson, 2007). Moreover, in developing countries like India with poor infrastructure educated “21-30 years age” group is found to be the existing online shopper (Sharma, 2013). But there is no consensus over the preferred product bought over the internet or preference of this mode by any of the genders. The current study intends to explore the link between existing internet usage and online shopping patterns, focusing on students online for which data is collected from students studying in select Universities in the Prayagraj District of UP.

(G) Research Methodology

The exploration started with primary data collection from students about their Internet Usage and online shopping. Results were summarized in tabular form. In the present study, statistical tools- regression analysis and chi-square test were employed to test the hypothesis.

Regression analysis was employed to explain the variation in dependent-variable “Internet Usage” and “online buying”, based on variation in demographical independent variables. The chi-square test was employed to test the hypothesis, as it’s been previously used in similar studies (Magesh, 2011) (Kim, 2008) and doesn’t need assumptions of continuous normally distributed data. Current data satisfy the required assumptions: variables must be categorical; observations must be independent and; all cells must have five expected observations. The following framework has been employed:



- *Research Framework*

The above research framework limits the scope of current research to explore internet usage and online shopping by students and also understanding the differences based on student gender with internet usage and online shopping.

- *Research Objectives*

1. To find out the existing internet usage and online shopping by students
2. To find out their reasons for internet usage and their relation with online shopping –

(H) Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis are assumptions that are required to be tested. In order to fulfill the objectives of the present study the following hypotheses are formulated.

H_{01a}: there is no statistically significant difference between the frequency of Internet usage among male and female students.

H_{01b}: there is no statistically significant difference between the duration of Internet usage among male and female students.

H_{02a}: there is no statistically significant difference between online shopping among male and female students.

H_{02b}: there is no statistically significant difference between the length of online shopping among male and female students.

(I) Research Instrument

The study instrument was developed on the basis of previous research and personal unstructured interviews with five students, a self-administrated instrument was employed online through Google Forms, which consisted of three sections about respondents' demographics, Internet usage, and their online shopping. A total of 28 questions were asked, which were developed on the basis of previous research and students' personal responses.

- Sampling Technique:

Probability sampling was employed in the collection of Primary data

- Data Collection:

Both Primary and Secondary data were collected for the analysis. The primary data was collected through structured, designed, and developed using the closed-ended variables using a 5-point Likert scale was employed to measure the rate of usage/ buying ranging from “Strongly Agree to strongly Disagree (Strongly Agree =5 to Strongly Disagree=1).

- Data Analysis:

The primary data was analyzed by the application of statistical tools viz, percentage, Mean, and Chi-square test. SPSS Ver.19 was employed for the analysis of collected responses. Major sample descriptive are reported in tabular form and later statistical analysis is conducted to identify the relationship and test the hypothesis.

- Sample and data collection

The sample in this study was drawn from two Universities in the Prayagraj District of UP. University students met the criteria of this study, as they have been brought up in a technology-intensified environment whereas as studying in Prayagraj Division provides them improved infrastructural support. Probability sampling was employed in mailing the instruments to students collected through Google Forms during the month of April 2022. On the final scrutiny of data 100 forms were found correct for analysis.

- Sample Composition

The sample mainly consisted of male students studying in BBA/ B.Tech / MBA. The major cohort consisted of students in the age group 21 to 23 years (72%), that really makes the study appropriate to relate to online shopping, as online shoppers are reported to be mostly under 30 years of age. A substantial percentage (70%) lives in PG or hostel and only 30% stays along with family, this highlights that Prayagraj students majorly come from other parts of the country to study. However, they must build early shopping habits, and this may influence their parents' shopping decisions as well. 61% of students reported that they get more than Rs.5000/- monthly as pocket money, with no additional source of income, which can be because of majority of students do not stay with the family. The demographic profile is presented in the following table.

II. ANALYSIS

(A) Demographic profile of the respondents.

	Categories	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondent
<i>Gender</i>	Male	75	75
	Female	25	25
<i>Age</i>	Below 18 years	1	1
	18-20	19	19
	21-23	72	72
	24-26	8	8
<i>Residential status</i>	Hostel	30	30

	PG	40	40
	Family owned	30	30
<i>Educational qualifications</i>	Graduate	32	32
	Post-Graduate	55	56
	Professional Degree	13	13
Pocket Money (Monthly)	Less than 5000	26	26
	5000-7000	62	62
	7000-10000	12	12
	Above 10000		
Personal income other than pocket money	yes	8	8
	no	92	92

About internet uses

	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage of respondent</i>
<i>Use of Internet</i>	Daily	82	82
	Weekly	8	8
	Seldom	10	10
Visits of online marketing website per week.	Less than 2 time	5	5
	3-5 time	26	26
	6-8 time	62	62
	Above then 9	7	7
Most attractive factors in online	Price	52	52
	Social Image	6	6

shopping	COD	18	18
	Home Delivery	18	18
	Advertisement	6	6
Length of Internet Usage	Less than 6 months	89	89
	6 months -1 year	5	5
	1-2 years	6	6
Online shopping	yes	88	88
	no	12	12
Money spent on Online shopping	Less than 4000	44	50
	4000-6000	22	25
	6000-8000	5	5.7
	Above 8000	17	19.3
Reason of Internet usage	Never	Rarely	Sometimes
Entertainment	1	8	25
Info search	0	0	3
Communication	0	0	14
Education	0	0	18
Online shopping	3	19	33

The sample students access internet through University and Home wi-fi, but mostly very less of university and more from home. More than 75% access mostly through their own mobile phones. A big percent 87% are using internet for more than 4 years, implying they must have started using internet in their schooling of 10th standard or before. The sample consist of heavy internet users (88%), which we can relate with their having mobile internet connections. The same result data is presented in the above table. It's clear that shopping online is still not a major reason for using internet by the students.

(B) Online Shopping by Students

There is a large cohort of students (88%) who shop online. Yet still students not at all shop online. Most of the students are shopping online for more than one year but monthly spending is very low. The same results data presented in following table. Nearly half (44%) have spent only less than Rs. 4000/- during the last six months, which relates to the other responses of preferring apparels and accessories along with travel and payments online. Mobile phone charging is majorly reported as major online payment made online by students, specifically by hostlers and PG students. The preferred items online are apparel, travel, movie tickets, and online payments; while gifts, fast-foods, electronics, books, and daily items are less preferred. Interestingly, in the total sample, only 25% of females responded yet gift items are least preferred online.

(C) Items Bought Online

Items	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Gift items	25	27	33	15	0
Fast Food	30	20	27	22	1
Travel	6	6	25	36	27
Apparel	6	20	36	22	16
Electronics	5	23	40	23	9
Books	23	25	25	17	10
Movie tickets	6	23	27	28	16
Recharge	12	12	26	27	23
Daily Groceries	27	33	23	11	6

Online Shopping by the Students

(D) Hypothesis Testing-

Chi-Square Test Data analysis was done on SPSS. The results of the independent t-test highlight that there is no difference regarding internet usage and online shopping between males and females.

H_{01a}: there is no statistically significant difference between the frequency of Internet usage of

male and female students. The result of Levene's Test $F(100) = 5.946$, $p = 0.017$ (which is larger than 0.05), indicate that the variance of the two populations are "assumed to be approximately equal. Thus, the standard t-test was used. An independent t test was conducted to determine if a difference existed between the mean score of Internet usage of male and female students. In case of the 2-tailed value of p is 0.243, which is greater than 0.05, so we conclude that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean Internet usage (frequency) of males and females (frequency). The effect size $n_2 > 0.0192$, was small, i.e., the magnitude of difference explained by gender is too small. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

H_{01b}: there is no statistically significant difference between the duration of Internet usage of male and female students. The output of the t-test reported, in the case of a 2-tailed value of p is 0.206, which is greater than 0.05, so we conclude that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean Internet usage (duration) of males and females (frequency). The effect size $n_2 > 0.0225$, was small, i.e., the magnitude of difference explained by gender is too small. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

H_{02a}: there is no statistically significant difference between the online shopping of male and female students. The output of the t-test reported, in the case of a 2-tailed value of p is 0.859, which is greater than 0.05, so we conclude that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean online shopping of males and females (frequency). The effect size $n_2 > 0.0072$, was very small, i.e., the magnitude of difference explained by gender is too small. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

H_{02b}: there is no statistically significant difference between the length of online shopping of male and female students. The output of the t-test reported, in the case of a 2-tailed value of p is 0.354, which is greater than 0.05, so we conclude that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean length of online shopping of males and females (frequency). The effect size $n_2 > 0.0138$, was small, i.e., the magnitude of difference explained by gender is small. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

III. CONCLUSION

The study in hand intended to explore internet usage and online shopping along with identifying the differences between male and female students. The initial findings of this study highlighted the major insights about internet usage and online shopping patterns of students. However, hypothesis results clearly indicated that gender-wise there is no significant difference in online shopping and internet usage, moreover gender as such alone is not sufficient to explain the differences. The finding is not consistent with other recent studies like that of Pakistan

(Mahmood, 2009) where females have been found using internet less as compare to males. It is glaring to observe that number of studies highlights the differences in motivation based on gender (Jen-Hung & Yi-Chun, 2010). Moreover, security concerns for both the gender groups differ while shopping online, but are same in other aspects e.g., ease of use, benefits (Makhitha & Dlodlo, 2014). Indian studies, like females prefer online shopping and apparel and accessories are the most preferred (Sharma, 2013) needs to be further confirmed by extending current research by probing in detail about the product types preferred by students along with major rationales for shopping online the same. As a consequence of higher rate of online shopping Indian online market is gaining the attention of foreign players and attracting government infrastructural support in terms of getting along with a wider scope for more foreign direct investment. However further research can be conducted to identify new product categories to be added to the existing Indian online market, based on customer motivations and current level of satisfaction; focusing on various drivers of online shopping satisfaction like website design, brand image, add-on services, personalization, etc.

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