A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING THE CONSUMERS' ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR IN RAMANATHAPURAM TOWN

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Abstract

Online shopping is the process of buying goods and services from merchants who sells on the internet. Shoppers can visit web stores from the comfort of their homes and shop as they sit in front of the computer. Online shopping has become new type of retail shopping. It has now been adopted all over the world including India. This shopping method is still not as well known or accepted as in many other countries, and though the knowledge of online shopping in India is now beginning to increase rapidly. The main purpose of this study is to determine the factors influencing consumers' attitude towards e-commerce purchases through online shopping. This study also investigates how socio demographic pattern of online buying and purchase perception affect consumers' attitude towards online shopping. The study used both primary and secondary data. The secondary data were collected from the standard text books, journals, magazines and websites. The primary data were collected through a tested interview schedule. Since the actual strength of the consumers are unknown, sampling survey has been applied in gathering primary data from the consumer convenient random sampling technique has been adapted to collected primary data from the consumers sample of 100 respondents were selected for the study. The researcher has chosen in the Ramanathapuram District. This study found that the major factor affecting online shopping according to customer is "selection of goods available on the internet is very board". The study scaling technique was applied and on that scores were calculated in order to find out the ranks of the variables.

Key words: Online shopping, Perception affect customer, Buying and Purchasing behavior.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the growing areas of E-commerce is Online Buying. More and more consumers are turning to the World Wide Web for their shopping needs, which gives them access to either local or international products with just a click of the mouse. The theme of anytime anywhere shopping appeals to consumers who cannot take time off their busy schedules to go out and shop. Keeping this in mind, many online shops have sprung up in cyberspace offering products right from books, music CDs, household goods, groceries to furniture and cars. The consumers can also avail of a variety of services for communication, consultancy and so on. But even with all its advantages, online buying sill raises many questions – Are the transactions secure enough? Does the consumer get the goods he has ordered? and so on. These unanswered questions have raised many issues on the potentiality and utility of Online Buying. E-commerce is the buying and selling of the goods and services online; internet is the best source to use this tool. Today the amount of trade that is conducted electronically using e-commerce has increased with a wide spread usage of internet and technology. E-commerce includes transferring of funds through online, supply chain management and marketing over internet. Online shopping, we can say "e-commerce" is the area in which almost every enterprise will enter and make the best use of it in the future, many products have started to be put up for online sale. In addition to the benefits of anywhere-to-buy and anytime-to-buy. The internet is being developed rapidly since last two decades, and with relevant digital economy that is driven by information technology also being developed worldwide. The detailed product information and improved service attracts more and more people and changed their consumer behavior from the traditional mode to more rely on the internet shopping. On the other hand, more companies have realized that the consumer behavior transformation is unavoidable trend, and thus change their marketing strategy. In the business to consumer (B2C) e-commerce cycle activity, consumers use Internet for many reasons and purposes such as: Searching for product features, prices or reviews, electing products and services through internet, placing the order, making payments, or any other means which is then followed by delivery of the required products through Internet, or other means and last is sales service through Internet or other mean. Not only benefits but also risk is associated with online shopping. Generally speaking internet users avert online shopping because of credit-card fraud, lack of privacy, non-delivery risk, lack of guarantee of quality of goods and services. Concerned authorities are devising policies to minimize the risk involved in e-business. On the other hand E- commerce has been grown very fast because of many advantages associated with buying on internet because of lower transaction and search cost as compared to other types of shopping. Through online shopping consumers can buy faster, more alternatives and can order product and services with comparative lowest price.

2. Statement of the problem

Consumers to use caution when visiting online shopping websites regularly. The convenience of online shopping could pose a potential threat to those with addictive personalities." people have a serious Amazon habit, and spend far too much each month… since pay the credit-card account, spouse has little inkling of just how much spend" confesses a man (Spencer, 2010). Because of the easy accessibility and simple click of a button to purchase goods, shopping addictions could be a serious danger of online shopping. This habit can lead to financial and domestic problems in the household. Making purchases online means consumers will use virtual shopping carts. Online shopping makes picking out items a quick process. It makes picking out items so quick. Consumers shopping online

exhibit an odd behavior of abandoning their shopping carts instead of proceeding to checkout. This behavior would be very unlikely to see in a physical store. While physical shopping carts are used in actual stores with the intent of purchasing the product in the cart immediately, "retailers cannot assume that their website patrons use their carts to purchase a product immediately" (Close &Kukar-Kinney, 2010). Many online shoppers use their shopping cart as a type of "wish list". "They frequently utilize the Internet as a tool for 'window shopping' and product comparison" (Kim & Ammeter, 2008). Shoppers add their items that they would like to buy and, instead of proceeding to check out, abandoning his or her virtual shopping cart to rethink the possible purchase.This behavior of abandoning a shopping cart is not seen very often in physical stores. This is a problem very much characteristic of online retail store consumers. If this problem is not given proper examination and paid attention to, sales profit may decrease quite a bit. Retailers need to study the differences between online consumer behaviors versus in-store consumer behaviors. It is important for the online retail companies to learn about consumer behaviour so that they can make changes accordingly to increase productivity. Keeping this on mind, this study has been conducted to know the factors influencing the consumers' online shopping behavior in Ramanathapuram .

3. Objectives of the study

Themain objectives of the study are

- To study the attitude towards the factors affecting online shopping.
- To analyze the Online buyers' perception of factors measuring the quality of websites.

4. Methodology

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from books, websites and journals. Primary data were collected from 100consumers through structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part includes the socio - economic profile of the customers and the second part consists of the consumer buying perception and consumer attitude. 100 consumers were selected by adopting convenient sampling technique. The study is conducted in Ramanathapuram.   The researchers themselves carried out the fieldwork for this study. It. The data are analyzed by applying simple percentages, weighted mean score, standard deviation and coefficient of variation.

5. Findings of the study

The finding of the study includes.

a)Socio – economic factors of the respondents

b) The consumers' attitude towards factors affecting online shopping

c) Online buyers' Perception factors measuring qualities of the websites

a) Socio – economic factors of the respondents

Gender: 66 per cent of the respondents were male and 34 percent of were female.

Age: 48 per cent of the respondents were in the age group of 25 – 35 years, 30 per cent of the respondents were in the age group of 35 – 45 years, 16 per cent of the respondents were in the age group of 15- 25 years and the remaining 6 per cent of the respondents were in the age group of above 45 years.

Educational qualification: 40 per cent of the respondents had completed their U.G degree, 34 per cent of the respondents had completed their P.G degree,18 per cent of the respondents had studied up to Higher secondary level standard and remaining 8 per cent of the respondents had completed their professional degrees.

b) The consumers' attitude towards factors affecting online shopping

The Researcher has measured the level of attitude of customers in online shoppinganalyzed by using Likert Scaling technique. 5 points are given for 'Strongly Agree' (S.A), 4 points for 'Agree' (A), 3 points for 'No Opinion' (N.O), 2 points for 'Disagree' (DA) and 1 point for 'Strongly Disagree' (S.D.A). Based on this scoring technique, weighted mean scores are calculated and presented in Table.1

Table 1
The consumers' attitude towards factors affecting online shopping

No	Factors	S.A	A	N.O	D.A	S.D.A	Weighted Mean score	Rank
1.	I think shopping on the internet saves time.	10 (50)	76 (304)	11 (33)	2 (4)	1 (1)	3.92	V
2.	It is a great advantage to be able to shop at any time of the day on the internet	29 (145)	55 (220)	10 (30)	6 (12)	1 (1)	4.08	III
3.	Shopping online is risky	2 (10)	5 (20)	6 (18)	56 (112)	31 (31)	1.91	VIII
4.	I believe online shopping will eventually supersede traditional shopping	15 (75)	22 (88)	46 (138)	15 (30)	2 (2)	3.33	VII
5.	I will prefer online shopping only if online prices are lower than actual price	32 (160)	46 (184)	15 (45)	4 (8)	3 (3)	4.00	IV
6.	A long time is required for the delivery of products and services on the internet	25 (125)	41 (164)	25 (75)	8 (16)	1 (1)	3.81	VI
7.	Selection of goods available on the internet is very broad,	35 (175)	59 (236)	3 (9)	1 (2)	2 (4)	4.26	I
8.	While shopping online, I hesitate to give my credit card number	28 (140)	66 (264)	1 (3)	3 (6)	2 (4)	4.17	II

Source: Computed Data

The major factor affecting online shopping according to customer is "selection of goods available on the internet is very board" followed by "While shoppingonline, I hesitate to give my credit card number" and "It is a great advantage to be able to shop at any time of the day on the internet"

c)Online buyers' Perception factors measuring qualities of the websites

Table 2 shows the factor analysis of the seventeen variables which online buyers used to measure the quality of websites most recently visited. This factor analysis extracted four factors from the seventeen variables. At least three scale items defined each factor. The result is consistent with the findings of Wolfinbarger and Gilly [2002]. The reason was probably that fourteen out of seventeen items borrowed from their scale measured the four factors at a global level.

Table 2
Online buyers' Perception factors measuring qualities of the websites

Factors	Website Variables	Mean	S.D	C.V
Design Website Factor	It is quick and easy to complete a transaction at this website	3.44	1.18	34.30
	This site has competitive prices.	3.42	1.18	34.50
	This website has a good selection.	3.42	1.16	33.92
	This website understands my needs.	3.38	1.19	35.21
	The website provides in-depth information.	3.37	1.13	33.53
	I feel comfortable in surfing this site.	3.32	1.24	37.35
	The site does not waste my time.	3.24	1.14	35.19
	The level of personalization at this site is about right, not too much or too little.	3.19	1.15	36.05
	Overall mean of Website Design Factor	3.45	1.17	33.91
Website Reliability / Fulfillment Factor	The product that came was represented accurately by the website	4.07	1.02	25.06
	You get what you ordered from this website.	3.94	0.94	23.86
	The product is delivered by the time promised by the company	3.65	1.10	30.14
	Overall mean of Website Reliability/ Fulfillment Factor	3.89	1.02	26.22
Website customer service factor	The company is willing and ready to respond to Customer needs	3.55	1.04	29.30
	Inquiries are answered promptly.	3.55	1.06	29.86
	When you have a problem, the website shows a Sincere interest in solving it	3.44	1.07	31.10
	Overall mean of Website Customer Service Factor	3.51	1.06	30.20
Website privacy / security factor	I feel safe in my transactions with this website.	3.19	1.14	35.74
	This website has adequate security features.	3.17	1.14	35.96
	I feel that my privacy is protected at this site.	3.05	1.12	36.72
	Overall mean of Website Privacy/Security Factor	3.13	1.13	36.10
Overall mean of the factors		**3.50**	**0.312**	**8.91**

Firstly, the website design factor had; as stated in Table 2; a slightly lower mean score of 3.45 than the overall mean score of 3.50. Express checkout processing, price advantage and diversity of merchandise had high meanscores within this factor. Ease of navigation had a lower mean, which implied that online purchasers were less satisfied with this area of service. This, in turn, had a less favorable effect on buyers' online shopping experiences.

Secondly, online Ramanathapurami buyers rated the website reliability/fulfillment factor the highest mean score. This implied that they were more satisfied with the honesty attributes of E-retailers. Both the factor mean scores and website variables means indicated online buyers' satisfaction with E-retailers' fulfillment and reputation. All of the variables were higher than the overall factors' mean score of 3.50.

Thirdly, online Ramanathapuram buyers rated the website customer service factor at 3.51, which was just slightly higher than the overall perceived average score of 3.50.

Fourthly, compared with the perceived overall perception of a website with a mean score of 3.50, online Ramanathapuram buyers rated the website privacy/security factor at a considerably lower mean score. The mean score for this factor was 3.13. All three variables within this factor had lower means than the variables of the other 3 factors; at 3.19, 3.17 and 3.05. The considerably lower mean score of the privacy/security factor suggested that consumers considered this factor to be a possible obstacle to their online purchasing.

6. Suggestion

Online websites should concentrate more to the female segments as results prove that females shop more in online shopping as compared to men. Therefore, companies should devise the policies and strategies to magnetize more number of people in this segment in future also.

➢ Many consumers' lack the time to study privacy policies of internet marketers and some do not know how to evaluate an internet site for security. Thus, consumer protection for online shoppers needs to move towards online global standardization.
➢ Before purchasing, read reviews from other customers to get an idea of the product's quality and performance.
➢ Use comparison websites or browser extensions to compare prices across different retailers to ensure you're getting the best deal.
➢ Subscribe to newsletters or set up alerts for your favorite products to be notified of price drops or special promotions.
➢ Create wishlists on your favorite shopping platforms to keep track of items you're interested in and to easily monitor price changes.
➢ Make sure to review the return policies of the online store before making a purchase, especially for items like clothing and electronics.

7. Conclusion

The study was accomplished to discover the effects of online shopping towards the attitude of consumer buying behavior in Ramanathapuram. The economic status of people in Ramanathapuram can vary widely, with some engaged in traditional occupations like fishing and agriculture, while others work in the industrial sector or are involved in trade and commerce. Factors such as education, skills, and access to employment opportunities also play a significant role in determining individuals' economic status in the region. According to the survey, online shopping is getting popularity in the young generation such as students and professionals. Students usually prefer to buy goods from its original source and they mostly prefer online shopping. When a consumers to make purchases online to buy something, he or she is affected by assorted factors. One of the prime obstacles in the way back-up of online shopping is that people usually get petrified when the other computer demands the complete details of the customers. Due to which a customer gets anxious that his or her personal details may be disclosed and their precious money and account details are damaged. Tranquility is obviously necessary given that the consumer must share personal information (full name, delivery address and date of birth) and financial information (credit card detail) when shopping online.

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