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A Study on Impact of E-Commerce on Consumer Buying Behavior: A Focus on Grocery Products in Bilaspur District

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ABSTRACT

E-commerce goes beyond merely conducting business online. In today's era of internet technology, e-commerce has significantly transformed our lifestyles. As e-commerce continues to achieve notable success, it becomes essential for businesses to adapt to emerging trends, as shifts in technology directly impact consumer behavior. The influence of consumer behavior on e-commerce is substantial. E-commerce encompasses much more than online transactions; its effects are expected to be far-reaching and more significant than we currently recognize. This is due, in part, to the simultaneous occurrence of the information technology revolution and other major trends, such as business globalization. The rise of global e-commerce is fostering a new economic era that will deeply impact our lives, reshape competition across various industries, and alter the global economy.

Keywords: E-commerce, Consumer Behavior, Online Grocery Shopping

INTRODUCTION

The Internet serves as a vast global communication network, connecting various networks across the world. It enables people to share information, thoughts, and reviews. Beyond influencing everyday life, the Internet has significantly transformed the business landscape. It has reshaped how businesses operate and how consumers make purchasing decisions. Many companies have embraced e-commerce to reduce market costs, ultimately leading to lower prices for products and services. This approach also helps businesses gain insights into consumer preferences, tastes, and needs related to goods and services.

For consumers, the Internet offers the opportunity to learn more about products and services, including feedback and experiences—both positive and negative—shared by other customers. E-commerce has become one of the largest sectors in today's world, with nearly 90% of companies maintaining a website, even if they do not offer direct e-commerce services. This sector plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior.

With advancements in technology, consumer lifestyles, standards of living, preferences, needs, and purchasing habits are continually evolving. This study aims to understand the impact of technological changes on consumer buying behavior. It seeks to assist e-commerce firms in comprehending consumer needs and market trends. The study explores both the positive and negative aspects of consumer behavior, as both influences buying decisions.

ONLINE SHOPPING IN INDIA

Online shopping in India began with the introduction of the internet in 1995. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, it gained significant popularity. K. Vaitheeswaran launched India's first e-commerce website, marking the beginning of a new era for online retail in the country. The online market in India encompasses various sectors, including net banking, travel, and tourism. Prominent e-commerce platforms in the Indian market include Amazon, Big Basket, Myntra, Flipkart, and Snapdeal, among others. Online shopping has played a pivotal role in contributing to the country's development and economic growth.

STATEMENT OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on examining the impact of e-commerce on consumer buying behavior, with a specific emphasis on grocery products in the Bilaspur district. In the digital age, e-commerce has revolutionized the way consumers shop, offering convenience, variety, and competitive pricing. This transformation is particularly evident in the grocery sector, where consumer preferences, shopping patterns, and purchasing decisions are being reshaped by the growing adoption of online platforms. The study seeks to explore the factors driving the shift from traditional brick-and-mortar stores to online grocery shopping, the challenges and opportunities faced by consumers and businesses, and how e-commerce platforms influence purchasing decisions. By analyzing these dynamics, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of consumer behavior in Bilaspur's grocery market, contributing to a broader understanding of e-commerce's impact on local economies and consumer choices.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the impact of e-commerce on consumer buying behavior in the Bilaspur district.
- To determine the most preferred e-commerce website or application among consumers in the Bilaspur district.
- To identify the preferred payment model for online shopping or e-commerce, considering the importance of payment security.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

- H1: E-commerce has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

E-grocery is gaining significant traction in India, and in the future, online shopping may surpass traditional offline shopping. Although offline shopping will continue to be present, online shopping has the potential to reshape consumer buying behavior. This study aims to understand consumer behavior toward online shopping and identify the factors influencing their decision to purchase groceries online. It also seeks to explore the aspects of e-shopping that consumers find appealing and those they do not.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1. **Primary Data**: Primary data refers to information collected directly from its original source. For this study, primary data was gathered from a sample of 95 respondents residing in the Bilaspur district.
2. **Secondary Data**: Secondary data consists of pre-existing data obtained from sources such as literature, the internet, and books.

Sample Size

The chosen sample size for this study comprises 95 respondents from the Bilaspur district.

Sampling Method

The stratified random sampling method was employed for this study.

Data Analysis

- **Percentage Analysis** was used to examine relationships between two or more data series.
- **Chi-Square Test** was conducted for hypothesis testing.

Limitations of the Study

- The study primarily focuses on online consumer buying behavior.
- The survey was limited to the Bilaspur district.
- Data collection relied on a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, which did not allow for personal interaction.
- Another limitation was that many respondents completed the questionnaire poorly.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

K.S. Silpa, P.U. Rajasree, and Dr. P. Balasubramanian (2016) [1] conducted a study to understand people's perceptions of online shopping. The survey results revealed that while the majority favored online shopping despite facing certain challenges, they agreed that it would become more popular than offline shopping in the near future. Online marketing is expected to have a wider scope in the coming years. Many respondents preferred cash on delivery over net banking and encouraged others to try e-shopping. However, concerns about product quality, security of credit card information, and the preference for traditional shopping methods were identified as barriers to online shopping. The growing interest in online shopping presents immense opportunities for marketers.

Dr. Kanjer Hanif (2015) [2] focused on consumer spending on online grocery platforms using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The study utilized both primary and secondary data, gathered through a questionnaire method. It found that average consumer spending on online portals was below Rs. 2700, indicating lower expenditure likely due to a lack of confidence or unfamiliarity with the platforms. The study also determined that the average monthly visits to online grocery websites stood at 3.34 per month, suggesting limited engagement. Consumers aged 20 to 40 showed the highest preference for online shopping. The research recommended that marketing efforts should focus on online advertisements to boost portal visits.

Prof. Ashish Bhatt (2014) [3] conducted research on "Consumer Attitude towards Online Shopping in Selected Regions of Gujarat." Key findings included that 49.5% of respondents believed the product information provided online was sufficient, 32% felt that online transactions were secure, and 46.5% preferred cash on delivery. Approximately 29.5% of respondents purchased computer accessories, with 40.5% spending more than Rs. 2500 online. The data highlighted a growing popularity of online shopping, especially among younger generations, though it has gained acceptance across all age groups.

Rudresha C.E., Manjunatha H.R., and Chandrashekarappa R (2018) [4] conducted an empirical study on "Consumers' Perception towards Online Shopping." Most respondents found online shopping advantageous due to quick access to a wide variety of products, cash on delivery, and easy replacement options. The study concluded that online shopping offers customers the convenience of buying from anywhere at any time, providing benefits such as time savings, fast refunds, secured deliveries, and privacy. The ability to research and browse products before purchase enhanced customer confidence.

Lissy N.S. (2021) [5], in her study "Belief and Perceived Risk in Online Shopping – A Pragmatic Study," emphasized the importance of building online trust for vendors to succeed in the e-commerce environment, where transactions are often impersonal and anonymous. Lack of trust in online providers can deter customers from engaging in transactions due to perceived risks.

Sandeep Jashwan and Dr. Bhuvana Venkatraman (2022) [6] studied "Customer Perception towards Online Shopping" and inferred that most individuals have a positive attitude toward online shopping despite facing certain challenges. Many believe that online shopping will eventually surpass traditional methods, indicating a broader reach for internet marketing in the coming years.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS

Table: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	**Respondents**	**Percentage**
Male	44	46.32%
Female	51	53.68%
Total	**95**	**100%**

Interpretation: The table indicates that among the 95 respondents surveyed, 53.68% were female and 46.32% were male.

Table: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Respondents	Percentage
20 – 30 Years	86	90.53%
30 – 40 Years	5	5.26%
40 – 50 Years	3	3.16%
Above 50 Years	1	1.05%
Total	**95**	**100%**

Interpretation: This table shows that the majority of respondents (90.53%) were aged between 20 and 30 years. Respondents aged 30-40 years accounted for 5.26%, while 3.16% were aged 40-50 years, and only 1.05% of participants were above 50 years.

Table: Preference for Online Shopping

Preference for E-Shopping	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	90	94.74%
No	5	5.26%
Total	**95**	**100%**

Interpretation: The data reveals that 94.74% of the respondents preferred online shopping, while only 5.26% did not. This suggests that the majority of respondents favor online shopping.

Table: Most Preferred E-Shopping Apps and Sites

E-Shopping Sites	Respondents	Percentage
Amazon	80	84.2%
Big Bazaar	16	16.8%
Walmart Grocery	5	5.3%
Flipkart	79	83.2%
Big Basket	14	14.7%
Myntra	14	14.7%
Nykaa and Purple	4	4.21%
OnDoor and Gofer	3	3.15%
Ajio	2	2.2%
Koovs and Symtten	2	2.2%
Total	**95**	**100%**

Interpretation: The table shows that the majority of respondents preferred shopping from Amazon (84.2%) and Flipkart (83.2%). Other popular platforms included Big Bazaar, Big Basket, and Myntra, which were also well-utilized but to a lesser extent.

Table: Frequency of E-Grocery Purchases

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Always	7	7.37%
Often	15	15.79%
Sometimes	39	41.05%
Rarely	19	20.00%
Never	15	15.79%
Total	**95**	**100%**

Interpretation: The data shows that 41.05% of respondents sometimes purchased e-groceries, while only 7.37% always made e-grocery purchases. This indicates that, for the majority, e-grocery shopping was occasional rather than frequent.

Table: Chi-Square Analysis

Chi2 Statistic	p-value	Degrees of Freedom
1.611842105263158	**0.20423305209436854**	**1**

Interpretation: The Chi-square analysis conducted on the relationship between gender and preference for online shopping among respondents in Bilaspur revealed no statistically significant association, with a p-value of 0.204. This indicates that male and female respondents demonstrate similar tendencies regarding online shopping preferences. The results suggest that factors driving online shopping behavior, such as convenience and platform features, might appeal broadly across genders. For e-commerce businesses, this implies that marketing strategies can focus on enhancing overall customer experience rather than tailoring campaigns based solely on gender distinctions.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- The study observes that young individuals, particularly those in the 20-30 age group, are more inclined toward online shopping.
- It was found that a majority of respondents prefer Amazon and Flipkart as their primary platforms for online shopping.
- The study indicates that most respondents consider purchasing groceries online to be more beneficial and cost-effective than buying from physical stores.
- Data collected reveals that factors such as price, delivery time, product freshness, quality, speed, and time savings are the most significant considerations for consumers when making online grocery purchase decisions.
- When presented with a hypothetical scenario—an annual membership fee with no delivery charges—the majority of respondents were likely to accept this arrangement for online grocery purchases.
- The study highlights that respondents tend to avoid purchasing items if there is insufficient information about the products, unspecified production practices, or concerns about unsafe handling during delivery.
- The findings also reveal that e-shopping platforms often attract consumers by offering discounts and rewards.
- Cash on delivery emerged as the preferred payment method for the majority of respondents.
- Data indicates that most respondents believe that e-payment security is an important factor when choosing an online shopping platform.
- The study further shows that disadvantages such as the inability to physically inspect products, poor return policies, incorrect deliveries, and inadequate after-sales services present significant challenges to e-shopping.

SUGGESTIONS

- The analysis indicates that factors such as time savings, convenience, product variety, quality, and speed significantly influence consumers' decisions to shop for groceries online. To address the issue of insufficient product information, e-commerce platforms should be designed to enable consumers to easily access detailed and relevant information about specific products and services.
- To enhance consumer awareness, companies should utilize various advertising channels to promote their shopping platforms, products, and services effectively.
- Given that freshness and quality are crucial factors in e-grocery purchasing decisions, companies should ensure that grocery products are delivered in refrigerated containers or cool boxes to maintain their freshness.
- The inability to physically inspect products remains one of the key disadvantages of online shopping. Many consumers prefer to see products before making a purchase. Efforts should be made to change this perception by educating consumers about the benefits of online grocery shopping.
- Rather than solely relying on traditional e-commerce models, companies could collaborate with established retailers to bring their presence online. Consumer education initiatives should focus on building awareness about e-commerce safety practices, including reading product listings, checking seller feedback ratings, asking relevant questions, identifying fraudulent emails, and staying informed about emerging online threats.
- As technology continues to evolve rapidly, consumer behavior also shifts. To gain a better understanding of consumer preferences, needs, wants, and choices, companies should regularly evaluate and analyze consumer behavior through surveys and feedback mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

The Indian e-commerce market has seen remarkable growth over the past two decades, primarily driven by the increased use of internet access and widespread mobile phone penetration. Additionally, the growing acceptance of online purchases and favorable demographic trends have transformed the way businesses interact, engage, and conduct transactions with consumers. This shift has fundamentally changed the operation of India's e-commerce industry. As the internet continues to serve as a critical link for information and connectivity, the demand on markets that have already embraced online services, particularly those where selling goods online is still a relatively new practice, has intensified.

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