



Review Paper

The changing perception of today's women towards online shopping

Savita Dubey^{1*} and Daljeet Singh Wadhwa²

¹Bhilai Institute of Technology, Bhilai, CG, India

²Department of Management, Bhilai Institute of Technology, Bhilai, CG, India
savita2308@gmail.com

Available online at: www.isca.in, www.isca.me

Received 10th April 2017, revised 18th July 2017, accepted 2nd August 2017

Abstract

Internet marketing provides abundance of opportunities to the marketer. It is growing at a phenomenal pace worldwide and India is also witnessing the same. All these have paved the way for marketer to work in new type of market i.e. online line. It has compelled the marketers to understand and target the customers in more efficient way by changing their marketing strategy. Marketers are now very much involved in understanding online buying behavior. The parameters on which they are working are identification of online customers, what they buy, when they buy, why they buy, what are the other factors affecting their online buying behaviour (like social media). Both working and non-working women play a key role in buying decision. Understanding online market will help in exploring buying behaviour of women customers from the age of brick to click. Now women have opened a new avenue for marketer to design their marketing strategy to entice them. Women's role as the family purchasing agent is now changing as number of working women are increasing day by day. By this article different strategies adopted by the marketer will be known and what other strategies they can adopt to serve very important segment of society in a better way. Women perception towards online buying will examine the various factors that influence the working and non-working female shoppers' attitude towards online shopping. Marketers should consider them very seriously and give them utmost importance for framing marketing strategies.

Keywords: Changing perception, Women, Online Shopping.

Introduction

Overview: From last more than a decade India is witnessing economic growth and prosperity. Customers of India have shown unprecedented changes in buying behaviour, their consumption pattern have changed drastically. All these have forced marketer for intensive research in online shopping and understanding consumer behavior and attitude towards online shopping in recent past.

The majority of retail businesses started their journey towards virtual world. All are interested in moving to online from conventional one. This has become a matter of research for marketer to analyze who are target customers, their education, income levels and which social networking websites have created much impact on them. Marketer wants to find ways to take leverage of this opportunity. All are now busy in conversion of this opportunity in to profitable business.

Online stores like Amazon, Flipkart, Snapdeal, Shopclues, Jabong, Tatacliq, and many more have provided a platform to the customers to chose from wide range of products by sitting at their own place. Technological advancement in Smartphone, broadband services with that increment in disposable income has motivated customers to go for online. Online shopping helps customers in finding solution for unfavourable factors like parking issues, traffic, long waiting queues at billing points.

Influence of social media on current market cannot be ignored in understanding online buying behavior¹.

Online shopping: Online shopping has numerous advantages over traditional retail store like price, feature comparison, 24x7 open, convenience but all these factors cannot completely replace shopping experience and leisure value of going to mall or traditional retail market. Online shopping is good for those who are well aware of product but those who are not aware would always prefer retail store. There are many added advantages which now also traditional retailers have over online store and they are store ambience, décor, music, arrangement of products, touch and feel factors. These factors have created a major hindrance in online shopping as above factors are missing in online shopping, but these factors will give them a platform for adding several features in making online more popular.

Indian scenario: India is witnessing tremendous growth in online market due to greater internet diffusion, reduction in hardware prices, fall in price of broadband services, more advancement in technologies and increase in awareness as education level is improving, economic growth, double income in family etc. All these have changed the whole scenario of Indian market. Now customers are more inclined towards online shopping. Both the genders have shown their remarkable interest in online shopping. Their present busy schedules have forced them to move online. Online also provide very important

facility which cannot be ignored i.e. gifting to friend or family member who are far away on their birthday's or in special occasion. Men and women both have their own reasons to purchase product online. Women both working and non-working women have their own reason for inclination towards online shopping. Non-working women finds more discount as major reason and working women finds quality and variety as a matter of major concern for going online.

Literature Review

Emotions play a vital role in marketing. Positive and negative emotions of customers affect online business a lot. Ilias O. Pappas, Panos E. Kourouthanassis, Michail N. Giannakos and Vassilios Chrissikopoulos² found in their research that suggestion and customized services neither irritate customers nor create any negative impact on buying behavior. In their study they found additional services enhance customers' positive emotions. They have said that personalization is one of the best marketing tools for online business. This will be an add-on benefit for e-marketer to make their customers delighted. They have recommended that personalization method will lead to more purchases if marketer spends more money on it. Their findings indicate that personalized services provided by marketer partly influence emotions of customers. Positive emotions get influenced by personalization or customization but it does not create any impact on negative emotions. Their research also suggested that personalization or customization is a major market forecaster for online purchase. In their study they also found that customers' positive emotions play a vital role in online product purchase. Personalization is an appropriate tool for finding customers need and providing those right services or products which is the ultimate objective of marketing. Among both the positive emotions and negative emotions, positive emotions significantly create major impact on customers purchase intention. They have emphasized that personalized services make customers feel happy and happier customers' means more purchases.

Success in selling groceries in India can be achieved only when online retailers work in cooperation with Kirana stores as per Piyush Kumar Sinha, Srikant Gokhale and Saurabh Rawal³. These strategies will not only strengthen online business but also help to overcome from weakness. Traditional Kirana stores provide convenience shopping but their product assortment is not large and wide. E-business can help traditional Kirana stores by collaborating with other brands and by providing them effective distribution channel for serving customers more competently. This model will help in offering merchandise at lower price and faster distribution. Organized retailers are not able to create their strong presence, which is positive sign for online marketers.

Increments in internet users' have increased online shopping preferences. Now customers give preference to either internet or do shopping from nearby traditional stores.

Internet usage is increasing at a faster pace in rural areas and also due to smart phone dominance which provide both opportunities and challenges to online as well as traditional store. Small retailers are still dominating rural retailing market; online retailers can derive a maximum benefit by associating with rural retailers. A joint venture among online and traditional retailers will surely get the benefit to exploit upcoming trend in the market.

Indian online apparel industry has lots of opportunities but for tapping these opportunities and converting those in to profitable business necessitate a complete understanding of the apparel industry concluded by Binoy Mathew's¹. He suggested that Indian apparel industry need to realign and restructure their models continuously to cater customers effectively in this constantly changing marketing environment. Enormous opportunities are available in online industry but for those who can visualize the future and constantly change themselves to confront this dynamic industry. Those who want to play in long run need to be more innovative than others. He has also suggested to online retailers to focus more on untouched market of rural areas as these markets are still unaware of online marketing.

Mohammad Bakher Naseri and Greg Elliott⁴ had developed a frame work oriented towards demographic variables. Their study was to find the role of demographic variable in solving business problem. They found alone demographic variable take 22.6 percent share in online shopping. In their study they found that different demographic variables like age, gender, income, family size etc. help in predicting online purchases. Purchase of apparel and groceries can be better predicted by age and gender whereas online purchase of toys can be predicted with variable like household size and income.

In their study they found that online customers were more educated, young, and professionals despite of the types of the products they purchase. Gender has shown major difference in purchase pattern. They found that women are more inclined for online shopping for groceries, household item, clothing and shoes as compare to men. Men were interested in purchase of sporting products, financial services, computer hardware and software online⁴.

There is significant difference in cost awareness behavior of both sex concluded by Sapna Rakesh and Arpita Khare⁵. In their study they found that female shows variety seeking buying behavior during purchase and takes more time in product comparison as compared to male. Male go with functional attributes of products. Female are equally aware of brands as compare to male but they look and also wait for chance to buy popular brand at the finest price options. Online marketers are more interested in projecting themselves as low price venue for all products but their study had shown that buyers are not inclined only for lower prices of products during online shopping. Most retailers are interested in impulsive purchase

and for that they adopt strategy of offering product with low prices or discounts to draw more attention on their websites. They believe that during surfing customer may go for various products without any logical reason. However, this may not lead to actual purchase as there are several factors other than low price which influence purchases. They further emphasized that cost and concession are not the only motive for online shopping. Numerous online marketers have concentrated more on discounts. Finally they have suggested, concentrating only on price factor will not give fruitful result, marketer should focus more on quality, variety and safety concerns.

Heavy discounts promotional schemes for shorter duration increases retail store sales as compare to low discounts for longer duration as per Sudipt Roy and Tat Chan and Amar Cheema⁶. Their research work will help seller in taking thoughtful decision regarding pricing and promotion strategies. They have also explained that deep discounts helps in switching class of those customers' whose purchase is mainly dominated by the price to another higher level. It is also suggested that to maximize the sales it is quite essential for retailers to maintain consumers 'database i.e. behavior during huge promotional discounts which will help them in framing different promotional strategies.

S. Saravanan and K. Brindha Devi⁷ have observed that majority of youth have access to internet on regular basis due to which their buying patterns had been changed drastically. Online shopping provides access to vast range of products at the fingertips of customers. Only problem which marketers are facing is fraudulent use of internet and it has become a major concern for customers to do online shopping. Cyber thieves steals identities of online buyers and this creates lots of fraudulent problems. It has become a matter of serious concern for e-marketer. Higher education will lead to smart internet shopping. A well-educated customer will be aware of products and services and will be able to take decisions appropriately.

The major hindrance in growth of online shopping is absence of touch and feel factor before purchasing, is concluded by Neil Luis Pinto⁸. In his study he found that the major barriers in online shopping of electronic equipments are customers doubt regarding fitting, warranty and safeguarding as the seller are from different places. Touch and feel is very important factor which is missing in online shopping. Few respondents in his research have said that they hesitate in online purchase as they cannot judge product from the image and customer's review, touch and feel plays very important role in purchase. In online purchase of products like clothes and shoes major problem is related with size and fitting.

In online shopping major risk related with purchase are financial and non-delivery as per Moshrefjavadi, Mohammad Hossein, Hossein Rezaie Dolatabadi, Mojtaba Nourbakhsh, Amir Poursaedi, and Ahmadreza Asadollahi⁹. They also emphasized e-retailers should assure customers by providing them safer

websites, timely and appropriate delivery of products. This will create positive impact for online shopping. This will not only start repurchase but also help in positive word of mouth publicity. Existing customer will suggest e-buying to others and they themselves can assure others regarding safety, and slowly it will become more popular among people.

Online shopping is getting very good response and people have taken it positively is conclusion of Gagandeep Nagra and R. Gopal¹⁰. They have found in during their study that online shopping's future is very bright but frequency of online shopping is less in our country. With the help of their research, e-retailers can easily identify inherent and unambiguous requirements of customers during online shopping. They have also said that their findings can also be useful for various online marketers to recognize their target customer. Their suggestion is that online marketer should provide a platform of interaction with seller to the customers this will help in getting untapped market.

Online shopping is influencing now a days because it provides several benefits like time saving, relaxed shopping, comprehensive information about product and price comparison facility had been concluded by Agift Aimol, Rekha Verma and Nisha Chacko¹¹. In their study they found that respondents access internet not only for their daily activities but also for online shopping. Online shopping not only saves time but it also helps customers in their daily struggling activities. Now customers can purchase their product anytime and anywhere without waiting in long queues and long traffic jams.

Men and women want different products due to the difference in physical and psychological attributes and they have a different way of thinking while shopping by W. Siddiqui¹². The genders are completely different in decision making, the females get pleasure while shopping and it is not so with the male. Both the genders are different in their perspectives, motives, rationales and actions. One finds shopping as mood relaxing activity while other opinion is entirely different. Author has attempted find the differences at every stage of purchase decision due to gender difference. He concluded that the gender is very significant aspect which plays a crucial task in purchase decision, author also states that the males are more externally focused while females tends to be more internally focused, women are more subjective as compare to men, men are found to be more analytical. The male purchases products based on immediate need while female look at purchase as a long-term decision. The marketer should make the strategies by keeping gender as very important factor, to get success in online shopping.

Changing role of women in the country, both working women and non-working are now playing dominating role marketing strategy, due to their increasing role in family buying had been concluded by Semila Fernandes and B. R. Londhe¹³. Women are now playing major role in buying decisions of family due to increase in their self-dependency and independent spending

power. Marketers have considered a fact that majority of the women are entering workforce area and this has made a major concern for marketers. Now marketers are devising major strategies to entice this upcoming market segment.

In this dynamic business arena all the marketer wants to search new avenues to increase the contact with customers in other words they don't want to let any stone unturned Seema Agarwal¹⁴. Due to this now there is heavy inclination towards online marketing. She has also said that online shopping is increasing due to increase in computer education. Younger generation is more inclined towards online shopping and they are emerging prospect for online retailers. Her study also discloses that in India various demographic factors affects online shopping considerably. Her study outcome is that understanding and assessing online consumer shopping behavior can contribute to a better online marketing future. She has also said that e-stores are frequently visited by the consumers as it is open for 24x7 and 365 days.

Findings

Factors which keep online shopping ahead are facilities, time factor, offers, advertisement, price, services and flexibility to adapt to new changes. Online retailers those who are operating in India must be updating their customers with the latest innovation in the market. Usage of credit cards and Internet accessibility is less in India as compared to developed nation which is also major factor in online purchase activity. Previously a large number of customers were not comfortable with online transaction either through credit or debit card. But presently this is not the main obstacle in online shopping, as latest payment options like cash on delivery has paved the way for reaching maximum customers.

Income level, education and profession decide internet usage. Online shopping provides lots of ease to customers that they can shop anywhere, anything and anytime with convenient and safe payment options¹⁴.

Factors in favor of online Shopping

Price and feature comparison: No need to move from one retailer to another, one can compare price and product features on different websites and order as per their own choice.

No traffic jam, no long time waiting in queue: Customers need not to wait for long time at billing counter during shopping. Products can be easily purchased in online.

Delivery: Products can be delivered at any place at any time. Through online one can give gift to their near and dear one on special occasion without facing any single problem.

Payment option: Different types of payment options like credit card, debit card, internet payment and cash on delivery are

available in online shopping. One can choose options as per their own convenience.

Variety: A traditional retailer deals with few specific ranges of products which raise difficulties for customers who want to choose from wide range which is possible through online.

Factors not in favor of online shopping

Touch and feel: This is the major drawback of online shopping, people want to purchase products which they can touch and feel and get quality assurance. Products like apparel, electronic items, shoes and many other are purchased only by touch and feel.

Security: Customers hesitate while sharing their personal information like debit or credit card details during online shopping. It is very important for marketer to assure customers regarding security issue.

Delivery: This is very important issue as customers are not assured that products delivered will be same which they have ordered and will be in proper condition. If delivered product is not appropriate what they should do, these should be made clearer to them by marketers.

Installation and warranty: Customers generally do not purchase electronic items or home appliances online due to uncertainty regarding installation and warranty as generally sellers are located in different places.

Size: It is a major problem in apparel segment as buyers are not sure regarding size. So they avoid online shopping, as they not interested in taking headache for exchange.

Conclusion

With the advancement in technology and economic growth in India, it has opened a market for online business. Online shopping has a vast scope in future. As both literacy rate and economic condition is growing at faster pace. Houses have now double income which is opportunity for marketer to grow more. Internet is penetrating very fast in India. People attitude are changing towards online shopping.

They find it more convenient and time saving options. Marketers have taken lots of steps in assuring customers regarding safety and security issues. They are trying to add more and more benefits to get more and more customers. Men and women have different reason for online shopping so marketers should make different strategies to attract them. Single strategy will not give expected result.

Future of online shopping is very bright if marketer take valuable steps like getting confidence in customers mind that online shopping is very safe, convenience, time saving etc.

References

1. Mathew B. (2015). A study on changing trends in online shopping of Indian consumers in Apparel segments. *International Journal of applied research*, 1(9), 207-214.
2. Pappas I.O., Kourouthanassis P.E., Michail G.N. and Chrissikopoulos V. (2014). Shiny happy people buying: the role of emotions on personalized e-shopping. *Electronic Markets*, 24(3), 193-206.
3. Sinha P.K., Gokhale S. and Rawal S. (2015). Online Retailing Paired with Kirana- A Formidable Combination for Emerging Markets. *Customer Need and Solutions*, 2(4), 317-324.
4. Naseri M.B. and Elliott G. (2011). Role of demographics, social connectedness and prior internet experience in adoption of online shopping: Applications for direct marketing. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, 19(2), 69-84.
5. Rakesh S. and Khare A. (2012). Impact of promotions and value consciousness in online shopping behaviour in India. *Database Marketing and Customer Strategy Management*, 19(4), 311-320.
6. Roy S., Chan T. and Cheema A. (2014). Price Expectations and Purchase Decisions: Evidence from an Online Store Experiment. *Customer Need and Solution*, 1(2), 117-130.
7. Saravanan S. and Devi B.K. (2015). A study on online buying behavior with special reference to Coimbatore city. *IRACST – International Journal of Commerce, Business and Management*, 4(1), 988-995.
8. Pinto N.L. (2013). Understanding the barriers to online shopping among Indian consumers. *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature*, 1(3), 35-44.
9. Hossein M., Javadi M., Dolatabadi H.R, Nourbakhsh M., Poursaeedi A. and Asadollahi A.R. (2012). An Analysis of Factors affecting on Online Shopping Behavior of Consumers. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 4(5), 81-98.
10. Nagra G. and Gopal R. (2013). A study of factor affecting online shopping behavior of consumers. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 3(6). ISSN 2250-3153
11. Aimol A., Verma R. and Chacko N. (2014). Consumer attitude towards online shopping. *Research Journal of Family, Community and Consumer Sciences*, 2(8), 4-7.
12. Siddiqui W. (2016). Study on Buying Behaviour of Men and Women. *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research (IJIR)*, 2(4), 664-667.
13. Fernandes S. and Londhe B.R. (2014). Working women and non-working women buying behavior: influence of social references groups on the purchase of products – review. *Indian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies*, 5(2), 91-98.
14. Agarwal S. (2013). A study of factors affecting online shopping behavior of consumers in Mumbai region. *Tactful Management Research Journal*, 4(10), 1-11.