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## RURAL CUSTOMERS' AWARENESS AND SATISFACTION ON ONLINE SHOPPING

### Article Particulars

Received: 30.9.2017

Accepted: 25.10.2017

Published: 30.10.2017

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### Abstract

*The act of purchasing products or services over the Internet is called online shopping. In this generation of fast moving lifestyle, customers are busier than what they were few years back. Today both urban and rural areas enjoy internet facilities. It is precisely for this reason customers are also purchasing the products or services online. Online shopping has grown in popularity over the years, mainly because people find it convenient and easy to bargain shop from the comfort of their home or office. Dahiya Richa, (2012) an online shop evokes the physical analogy of buying products or services at a bricks-and-mortar retailer or shopping center; the process is called business-to-consumer (B2C) online shopping. In the case where a business buys from another business, the process is called business-to-business (B2B) online shopping. The study was carried out to measure the extent of satisfaction on online shopping, factors influencing buying behavior and preferred online websites. The outcome of the study was based on 250 respondents selected from pollachi town of Tamilnadu. The data required for the study have been collected through questionnaires and analyzed by using statistical techniques as tools, such as Simple Percentage, Chi-Square test, Weighted Average Rank Method, Factor analysis, Friedman Rank test. The study is focused on awareness and satisfaction on online shopping towards rural customers.*

**Keywords:** Online Shopping, Awareness, Satisfaction, Problems

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### Introduction

Online shopping is the process whereby consumers directly buy goods or services from a seller interactively in real-time without an intermediary service over the internet. Since the emergence of the World Wide Web, merchants have sought to sell their products to people who surf the internet. Shoppers can visit web stores from the comfort of their homes and shop as they sit in front of the computer. Consumers buy a variety of items from online stores. The wide use of internet and the rapid growth of technology have created a new market for both the customers and business. Now-a-

day's internet is not just another medium to get in touch with customers, but it is an important channel to find potential customers as well as channel to continue relationship with existing customers.

The growing use of internet provides a developing prospect for online shopping. Online shopping has become an advanced type of retail shopping. It is the process of buying goods and services from merchants who sell on the internet. Online shopping has become a popular way for consumers. This innovative pattern of online shopping not only brings a great number and wide range of merchandise to consumers; it also offers a huge market and numerous selling opportunities. Online shopping has been growing because of the technological advancement, convenience, better purchasing capacity and the availability of different search engines and easier payment procedure. The accessibility of the quality of the information, availability of various brands and products facilitate the customers to make a choice from a wider market. Customers use the internet not only to buy the product online, but also to compare prices and product features.

### **Literature Review**

According to Chayapa Katawetawaraks and Cheng Lu Wang (2011), in their article entitled, 'Online shopper's behaviour: Influences of online shopping decision'. The aim of the study is to compare the offline and online decision making of customers. The primary data are collected from 119 respondents through well structured questionnaire with the help of convenience sampling method. Tools used in this study are simple percentage and ANNOVA. The findings of the study reveals that marketing communication process differs between offline and online consumer.

Ruchi Nayyar and Gupta (2011), carried out a study entitled, 'Determinants of Internet buying behaviour in India'. The aim of the study is to provide a view of the various demographic and psychological factors influencing consumer's willingness to purchase online. The primary data were collected from 500 respondents with the help convenience sampling method. Multiple regression has been used to analyze the data. The findings of the study reveals that there are higher number of male internet shoppers than females, easy to use and prompt delivery of products influence customers to shop online.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In this digital era consumers prefer online shopping instead of traditional shopping due to many facilities available in online shopping. Today both urban and rural areas enjoy internet facilities. In this generation of technological up-gradation the consumer buying behaviour has changed to a great extent. Companies are also well aware of these fact and that's why they are also giving greater importance to online consumer behaviour. Many websites are available like Flipkart, Amazon, Snapdeal, EBay, etc.

They are marketing their products through online. The main problem of a traditional shop is that they have only limited choices of a product and are having a limitation of shelf space. But online shopping overcomes these problems.

Online shopping has been growing because of the technological advancement, convenience, better purchasing capacity and the availability of different search engines and easier payment procedure. The accessibility of the quality information, availability of various brands and products facilitate the customers to make a choice from the wider market. Customers use the internet not only to buy the product online, but also to compare prices and product features. The level of awareness and satisfaction may vary from person to person depending on their usage. Unlike traditional marketing, online shopping has many advantages like global reach, availability of wide variety and cheaper products, 24x7 timing etc. If online retailers know the factors affecting Indian consumer's buying behaviour they can further develop their marketing strategies to convert potential customers into active ones.

This arises several questions like: What is the socio-economic profile of the online rural customers? What is their level of awareness towards online shopping? What are the various factors influencing the buying behaviour of rural customer? and What are the various problem faced while shopping online?

### **Objectives of the Study**

To find out the solutions for the questions raised above, the following objectives are framed.

- To identify the rural customers' awareness on various factors considered while making online purchase.
- To find out the attributes that influence to purchase products through online.
- To ascertain the rural customers' level of satisfaction and the variables associated with their level of satisfaction.
- To find out the problems faced by the online rural customers'.

### **Research Methodology**

The methodology adopted in carrying out the research work is explained in the following paragraphs.

### **Source of Data**

The present study is mainly based on primary data which is collected through issuing questionnaire. The questionnaire contains questions relating to socio-economic profile of online rural customer, details of online purchase, awareness on online shopping, factors influencing online purchase, satisfaction on online shopping, problems faced while making online purchase and suggestions to improve the online shopping of rural customers.

## Sampling

The data required for the study have been collected by issuing questionnaire to 260 online rural customers, of the total 260 questionnaires issued, 254 questionnaires have been collected and out of 254 questionnaires collected, 250 questionnaires has been taken for analysis because of incomplete information found in four questionnaires. Convenient sampling method has been adopted to select the sample online rural customers.

## Framework of Analysis

The data collected have been analyzed by using Simple percentage, Chi-square Test, Factor Analysis , Weighted average method and Friedman rank test.

## Significance of the Study

The present study focus on the awareness, factors influencing to shop online, level of satisfaction and problems faced by online rural customers in Pollachi. The results of the study will be of immense use to the consumers who are doing online shopping. It helps the online entrepreneurs to know about the existing as well as the future expectations of online rural customers. It also helps the new entrepreneurs who are willing to start online business.

## Findings of the Study

The findings of the study are divided in to five sections namely, socio-economic profile of customers, preference, source of awareness, buying behaviour and factors affecting buying behaviour while purchasing apparels.

**Table 1 Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents**

Socio-Economic Profile	Number of Respondents (N=207)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	136	54.40
Female	114	45.60
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 25 years	180	72.00
26 to 40 years	44	17.60
Above 40 years	26	10.40
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	75	30.00
Unmarried	175	70.00
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Illiterate	15	6.00
SSLC	32	12.80
HSC	45	18.00
Under Graduate	98	39.20
Post Graduate	60	24.00

Socio-Economic Profile	Number of Respondents (N=207)	Percentage (%)
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	124	49.60
Agriculture	20	8.00
Business	20	8.00
Employee	61	24.40
House Wife	25	10.00
<b>Type of Family</b>		
Joint	80	32.00
Nuclear	170	68.00
<b>Number of Earning members in the family</b>		
One	45	18.00
Two	105	42.00
Above Two	100	40.00
<b>Number of Non-Earning members in the family</b>		
Nil	78	31.20
One	49	19.60
Two and Above	123	49.20
<b>Number of members in the family</b>		
Up to Three	78	31.20
Four	112	44.80
Above four	60	24.00
<b>Monthly Family Income</b>		
Up to Rs.10,000	55	22.00
Rs.10,001 to Rs.20,000	97	38.80
Rs.20,001 to Rs.40,000	70	28.00
Above Rs.40,000	28	11.20

From the Table-1, it is noted that Out of 250 respondents, majority 136 (54.40%) are male. Most of the rural customers, 9 (20.50%) belong to the age group of 26-40 years. Majority of the rural customers, 175 (70.00%) are unmarried. Majority of the rural customers, 98 (39.20%) are under-graduates. Most of the rural customers 124 (49.60%) are students. Majority of the respondents 170 (68%) are from nuclear family. Most of rural customers 105 (42.00%) have two earning member in their family. Majority 123 (49.20%) respondents have above two non-earning members in their family. Majority 112 (44.80%) of the rural customers have four members in their family. Most of the rural customers' 97 (38.80%) earnings per month is between Rs.10,001 and Rs.20,000.

**Table 2 Details of Online Purchase**

Preference	Number of Respondents (N=207)	Percentage (%)
<b>Period of Shopping through Online</b>		
Below One year	112	44.80
One to Two years	91	36.40
Three to Four years	33	13.20
Above Four years	14	5.60

Preference	Number of Respondents (N=207)	Percentage (%)
<b>Source of Information</b>		
Friends	71	28.40
Relatives	91	36.40
Colleagues	32	12.80
Neighbours	56	22.40
<b>Amount Spend on Online Purchase Per Month</b>		
Up to Rs.1000	131	52.40
Rs.1001 to Rs.2000	56	22.40
Rs.2001 to Rs.4000	32	12.80
Above Rs.4000	31	12.40
<b>Preferred Online Site for Purchase</b>		
Flipkart	110	44.00
Snapdeal	76	30.40
Amazon	32	12.80
Ebay	32	12.80
<b>Frequency of Visiting Online Website</b>		
Daily	45	18.00
Weekly once	66	26.40
Once in a month	77	30.80
Occasionally	62	24.80
<b>Frequency of Online Purchase</b>		
Once in a month	65	26.00
Once in three months	78	31.20
Once in six months	20	8.00
Occasionally	87	34.80
<b>Type of Product Purchased through Online</b>		
Apparels	60	24.00
Electricals and Electronics	109	43.60
Sports and Games	27	10.80
Cosmetics	29	11.60
Household	25	10.00
<b>Factors Influencing to Purchase through Online</b>		
Design / Varieties	35	14.00
Quality product	79	31.60
Saves time	78	31.20
Services	5	2.00
Others	53	21.20
<b>Type of device Preferred to Shop Online</b>		
Personal Computer	25	10.00
Laptop	49	19.60
Smartphone	164	65.60
Tablet	12	4.80
<b>Mode of Payment</b>		
Credit Card	39	15.60

Preference	Number of Respondents (N=207)	Percentage (%)
Debit Card	29	11.60
Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)	5	2.00
Cash on Delivery (COD)	177	70.80
Delivery of Product On Time		
Yes	221	88.40
No	29	11.60

From the above table-2 it is noted that Most of the rural customers' 112(44.80%) period of shopping is below one year. Most of the respondents, 91(36.40%) source of information is through relatives. Most of the rural customers, 131(52.40%) spend Rs.1, 000 per month for online shopping. Most of the rural customers,110(44.00%) prefer flipkart. Most of the rural customers,77(30.80%) visits online website once in a month. Majority of the respondents, 87(34.80%) purchase occasionally. Most of the rural customers, 109(43.60) purchase electricals and electronics. Majority of the rural customers, 79(31.60%) are influenced by the quality of the product. Majority of the rural customers, 164(65.60%) prefer smart phone for making online purchase. Majority of the rural customers, 177(70.80%) prefer Cash on Delivery (COD) for making payment. Majority of the customers, 221 (88.40%) receives the product on time.

**Table 3 Factors Influencing Online Purchase Attributes that influenced most while purchasing products through online – Weighted Average Ranking**

Attributes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	Weighted Average Rank
Design / Varieties	29	36	40	49	33	34	18	11	250	III
Price	22	50	47	40	42	23	14	12	250	II
Brand	45	54	38	32	28	19	17	17	250	I
Offers / Discounts	46	39	22	25	29	36	29	24	250	IV
Mode of payment	33	9	33	38	29	35	34	39	250	VI
Saves Time	26	25	32	30	31	36	42	28	250	V
Easy buying process	19	13	16	15	28	45	46	68	250	VIII
Quality	30	24	22	21	30	22	50	51	250	VII

From the above table-3 it is noted that among the eight variables considered, the rural customers have ranked Brand as first factor which influence to purchase through online followed by Price, Design / Varieties, Offers / Discounts, Saves time, Mode of payment, Quality and easy buying process..

**Table 4 Awareness on Online Shopping Customers Awareness on Online Shopping - Friedman Rank Test**

Awareness on Various Factors		Mean Value	Rank
Discount / Offers		7.16	1
Brands		5.97	2
Design / Varieties		5.42	5
Websites for online purchase		5.50	4
Procedure to make purchase		5.08	8
Aware about the terms & Conditions of online purchasing		5.32	6
Mode of payment		5.66	3
Guarantee & Warranty		5.32	6
Procedure for cancelling the order		4.91	9
Procedure for returning the products		4.68	10
Test Statistics			
N	Chi-Square Value	d.f.	Significance
250	171.922	9	.000

From the above table-5 it is noted that Majority of the rural customers are aware of the various factors considered, "Discount / Offers", is ranked as first followed by "Brands", "Mode of Payment", "Website for online purchase", "Design/ Varieties", "Aware about the terms & Conditions of online purchasing", "Guarantee & Warranty", "Procedure to make purchase", "Procedure for cancelling the Order", and "Procedure for returning the products".

**Table-6: Problems of Online Shopping Problems faced while using Online Shopping – Factor Analysis**

Problems faced while using Online Shopping	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communality (h <sup>2</sup> )
Expensive	<b>0.640</b>	0.025	0.068	0.415
Poor Quality	<b>0.677</b>	0.232	-0.139	0.531
Lengthy procedure to make order	<b>0.599</b>	-0.039	0.217	0.407
Delay in delivery	<b>0.674</b>	-0.009	0.069	0.459
Products are not delivered to right place	<b>0.598</b>	-0.028	0.142	0.379
Lack of product information	0.098	-0.179	<b>0.846</b>	0.757
Products are not worthy	<b>0.541</b>	0.360	-0.022	0.423
Supply of wrong product	0.415	0.188	<b>0.422</b>	0.386
Additional service charges	0.024	0.376	<b>0.548</b>	0.442
Delivery of damaged products	0.256	<b>0.555</b>	0.039	0.375
Difficult to have after sales service	-0.068	<b>0.701</b>	0.043	0.498
Difficulty to change the defective products	0.014	<b>0.674</b>	0.013	0.455
<b>Eigen Values</b>	2.946	1.445	1.135	
<b>% of Variance Explained</b>	21.536	13.742	10.777	
<b>Cumulative % of Variance</b>	21.536	35.278	46.055	

From the above table-6 it is noted that Majority of the rural customers feels that online shopping is expensive, poor in quality, lengthy procedure to make order, delay in delivery, products are not delivered to right place, lack of product information,



products are not worthy, supply of wrong product, additional service charges, delivery of damaged products, difficult to have after sales service, and difficulty to change the defective products.

**Table 7 Satisfaction on Online Shopping Factors leading to satisfaction while making online purchase – Friedman Rank Test**

Factors	Mean Value	Rank	
More choice / varieties of products	9.37	1	
Cost of the product	6.82	8	
Quality of the products	7.22	4	
Discount / offers	7.64	2	
Availability of updated product	6.65	9	
Safe packing and delivery	7.61	3	
Getting the correct product offered	6.64	10	
Payment procedure	7.21	6	
Security for payment	7.18	7	
Shipping charges	5.54	13	
On-time delivery	7.22	4	
Customer service	6.32	11	
Procedure for cancelling the order and to return the goods	5.57	12	
Test Statistics			
N	Chi-Square Value	d.f.	Significance
250	257.524	12	0.000

From the above table, the mean value which is calculated based on factors leading to satisfaction of online rural customers' depicts that among the various factors considered, "More choice / varieties of products", is ranked as first followed by "Discount / offers", "Safe packing and delivery", "Quality of the products", "On-time delivery", "Payment procedure", "Security for payment", "Cost of the product", "Availability of updated product", "Getting the correct product offered", "Customer service", and "Procedure for cancelling the order and to return the goods"

### Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study and opinion given by the rural customers' at the time of data collection a few measures have been suggested to improve the level of satisfaction on online shopping.

- Quality, Price, Varieties are the various attributes which influences while purchasing through online. So, it would be better if the e-entrepreneurs concentrate more on these attributes.
- Good customer service provides positive shopping experience to the customers. It will help to increase sales volume and to retain the customers.

- E-entrepreneurs have to concentrate on the promotional strategies like offers, discounts, gift coupons etc to attract new online shoppers.
- Entrepreneurs should know about the future expectations of the rural customers to increase the sales volume.
- The products are not delivered to the exact place. So, the e-entrepreneurs should take necessary measures to overcome this problem.

### Scope for Further Research

The present study is confined to apparel choice and buying behavior among college girls alone, it provides a scope for further research in the following areas:

- Apparel choice and buying behaviour among college boys
- Apparel choice and buying behaviour among college students – A comparative study between college boys and girls.

### Conclusions

Online shopping has many advantages like global reach, availability of wide variety and cheaper products, 24x7 timing etc. The needs of the online customers change day by day. In this context, the present study is undertaken to analyze the rural customers' level of awareness and satisfaction towards online shopping in Pollachi Taluk. It is identified that relatives and friends are the important sources for seeking information about online shopping. It is also found that the rural customers prefer flipkart. Most of the rural customers are aware on the various factors in online shopping. The respondents are satisfied with the timely delivery of the products, discounts and offers, choice of product, safe packing, customer service, payment procedure, procedure for cancelling the order etc.

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