



A COMPARITIVE STUDYON CUSTOMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPINGAND OFFLINE SHOPPING FOR FASHION PRODUCTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ERODE CITY

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Abstract: The emergence of e-commerce has brought about a dynamic shift in consumer shopping experiences, altering how consumers interact with fashion and apparel. The purpose of this study is to compare how customers shop for clothing and fashion through these two channels. It examines important elements including convenience, affordability, product variety, shopping experiences, and the return and exchange policy. The study also looks at how age, gender, and income level affect people's shopping preferences. The survey was administered through a structured Questionnaire. Analysing the data collected using statistical tools like chi square, regression.

Keywords: Consumer Experiences, Online Shopping, Offline Shopping, Convenience, Affordability, Product Variety, Shopping Experiences.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The rise of digital technology has significantly transformed the way consumers shop for fashion products. With the increasing availability of online shopping platforms, consumers now have the choice between purchasing products online or visiting physical stores. This shift in consumer behavior has sparked debates about the advantages and drawbacks of each purchasing method, making it essential to analyze their impact on consumer preferences, satisfaction, and decision-making.

Online purchasing in the fashion sector has gained popularity due to its convenience, wider product variety, and access to customer reviews. On the other hand, direct (in-store) purchasing offers a tactile shopping experience where consumers can see, feel, and try on clothing before making a purchase.

The comparative analysis of these two purchasing methods is crucial for understanding shifting consumer trends. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each method can help businesses develop effective marketing and sales strategies that cater to evolving consumer expectations.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

- Consumers face challenges in deciding between online and direct purchasing due to differences in convenience, pricing, and product quality.
- Online shopping lacks physical product inspection, leading to issues with size, fit, and fabric accuracy.

- Direct purchasing is time-consuming and limited by store availability, while online shopping offers accessibility but involves delivery delays.
- Trust issues arise in online shopping due to concerns about fraud, counterfeit products, and payment security.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- Convenience and accessibility of shopping anytime (online) vs. immediate product availability (direct purchasing).
- Ability to physically inspect and try on products (direct) vs. reliance on images, reviews, and size charts (online).
- Pricing differences, with online platforms offering discounts and promotions, while physical stores may have higher costs.
- Customer service experience, with personalized in-store assistance vs. digital support in online shopping.

4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

- Examines consumer preferences, behaviour and decision-making in online and direct purchasing of fashion products.
- Analyses factors such as convenience, pricing, product quality and shopping experience in both purchasing methods.
- Evaluates the role of digital technology, customer reviews, and brand trust in online shopping.
- Assesses the impact of physical product inspection, trial, and in-store assistance on direct purchasing.
- Identifies challenges faced by consumers, including delivery delays, return policies, and fraud risks in online shopping.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research uses a mixed-method approach, combining surveys and interviews to gather consumer opinions on online and direct shopping. It also analyzes secondary data from market reports and industry studies. Additionally, case studies of fashion brands help compare shopping trends and behaviours.

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN:

Research design to compare online and offline shopping for fashion products. It uses a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data from surveys and qualitative insights from interviews and observations. This design helps analyze consumer behaviour, preferences, and factors influencing purchasing decisions in both shopping methods.

5.2 SAMPLING METHOD:

The study uses a random sampling method to select participants from both online and direct shoppers. A stratified sampling technique is applied to ensure diversity in age, income, and shopping preferences. This approach helps obtain a balanced and accurate comparison of consumer preference for fashion products.

5.3 RESOURCE OF DATA:

5.3.1 PRIMARY DATA

The first-hand information was collected by the researcher after finalizing the study area. Through well-structured questionnaire primary data was collected. It was collected from 100 respondents.

5.3.2 SECONDARY DATA

The secondary data was collected from the study related websites, journals, and magazines. It was collected through the library to facilitate proper understanding of the conceptual frame work about the study.

5.4 SAMPLE SIZE

Due to the limited period of study, only 100 customers selected as sample unit from the population. The study is conducted on the basis of the responds of the selected sample and findings are drawn based on their responses.

Tools used by Analysis

- Percentage analysis
- Chi square

5.5 LIMITATION OF STUDY

- Selected Sample is limited to 100. Hence findings cannot be generalized.
- Respondents may be biased. So, the collected data may not be reliable.
- Customers' preferences and opinions are supposed to change from time to time.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTREPRETATION:

This chapter analyzes and interprets changes in consumer behavior patterns. A specimen of 100 respondents selected from Erode city is presented. The opinion and relevant information of respondents were collected through a questionnaire consisting of personal and learning factors. The collected data were classified and tabulated and completed according to the research objectives by using statistical tools.

6.1 PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

able No.1 Describes the Socio-economic background of the respondents. Demographic variable frequency Percentage.

Table.1. Demographic Factors

Factors	Particulars	Respondents
Gender	Female	67
	Male	33
Age	15 – 24	75
	25 – 34	11
	35 – 44	14
	45 – 54	6
Educational Qualification	SSLC	3
	HSC	4
	UG	47
	PG	44
	DIPLOMO	2
Occupation	Students	58
	Employed	29
	Self employed	5
	Unemployed	8

6.2 CHI-SQARE:

Chi-square test is the non-parametric test of signification differences between the observed distribution of data among the observed distribution of data among categories and the excepted distribution based on the null hypothesis. The test (pronounced as chi-square test) is one of the simplest and mostwidely used non-parametric test in statistical work.

chi-square formula:

$$X^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 / E$$

• X² = chi square

• O= observed value (actual value)

• E = expected value.

OCCUPATION/ONLINES HOPPINGEXPERIENCE	EXCELLENT	VERYGOOD	GOOD	SATISFIED	POOR	TOTAL
STUDENT	29	29	19	8	1	86
BUSINESS	2	1	2	0	0	5
PROFESSIONAL	1	2	1	1	0	5
SALARIED	0	2	2	0	0	4
TOTAL	32	34	24	9	1	100

CHI-SQAREVALUE:

$$X^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 / E$$

$$= 5.8067$$

$$\text{DEGREEOFFREEDOM} = (\text{ROW} - 1)(\text{COLUMN} - 1)$$

$$=(5-1)(4-1)$$

$$= (4)(3)$$

$$=12$$

$$\text{SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL} = 0.05 \quad \text{TOTAL VALUE} = 21.026 \quad \text{X}^2 \text{ CALCULATED VALUE} > \text{X}^2 \text{ T}$$

H0 – there is no significant relationship between occupation and online shopping.

H1 – there is significant relationship between occupation and online shopping.

Interpretation:

In the above analysis the calculated value (5.8067) is lower than the table value (21.026) at the level of 0.05 significance. Hence, there is no significant relationship between occupation and online shopping.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- This study focused on understanding the relationship between various factors and shopping preferences for fashion products, comparing online and offline shopping experiences.
- The study primarily includes younger, well-educated respondents, with a majority being female students and they prefer to shop fashion products offline.
- Demographic factor like gender influences the respondent's overall preference between online and offline shopping experience and age influences the frequency of shopping while monthly income had no significant effect.
- There is a significant positive relationship between the affordability of fashion products and their perceived quality in online and offline shopping.
- Convenience plays a crucial role in both online and offline shopping behaviour, with increased convenience leading to more frequent shopping.

8. CONCLUSION

Retailers can create focused strategies for online and offline channels by utilizing these insights. Online platforms can greatly increase customer satisfaction and shopping behavior by concentrating on increasing product variety, improving convenience, and keeping prices moderate. In physical retail spaces, placing a strong emphasis on product quality and facilitating easy shopping can boost foot traffic and foster customer loyalty. In order to maximize customer engagement across all channels, this study also suggests that retailers using an omni-channel approach should align their strategies with the distinct values consumers place on different aspects of the shopping experience, such as quality offline and convenience online.

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