ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOR IN FASHION APPAREL

AT CHENNAI (INDIA): A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Online shopping, merchandise sold through online using internet - either through their own network or by various shopping sites – includes, a market place which has been proven to be cost effective and less time consuming, providing a major advantage to the consumer of having all in one platform. In this study, an attempt has been made to study the online shopping behavior in fashion apparels at Chennai.

About 175 questionnaires were distributed among the consumers of fashion malls – both Exclusive Brand Outlets (EBOs) and Multi Brand Outlets (MBOs) that has been conveniently selected through online, of which 143 (81.7%) were responded. Out of 143 respondents, 38 (26.6%) were male and 105 (73.4%) were female. 112 (78.3%) respondents were students. 127 (88.8%) respondents were single and 16 (11.2%) were married. 106 (74.1%) respondents were hailing from urban and 30 (21%) were from semi urban.

Online shopping perceptions among the respondents were ascertained based on 19 variables in a five point scale. In order to identify the reliability of these 19 variables, Cronbach alpha (α) analysis has been carried out. The Cronbach value is 0.7516 which indicates that all the variables taken for study are reliable in nature. The component matrix on perception of online shopping has been employed in order to identify the nature of respondents. The rotated component matrix has identified three components and the components were named as “tech savvy”, conservationist and orthodox. The first three preferences of online shopping perception in fashion apparel were “Product options - comparison easy”; “Saves time in net purchase” and “Access to more products in net”. The least three perceptions were “Insufficient access to the net”; “Insufficient info over net purchase” and “No need to buy over net”.

In this study, the criteria for apparel purchases have been analysed based on five variables such as design, brand plus material, quality, price, comfort plus fit and all features put together. The preferences of apparel purchases were “preferred design of the apparel”, “comfort+fit” and “brand+material”. The “price” has been considered as the least preference on online fashion apparel purchase. In the case of shopping pattern, casual shopping has been more preferred followed by discounts and occasions. Least preferences were seen on “Festival purchase” and “Change in trends”. Majority of the fashion apparel shopping has been carried out “every month”. The mode of payment preferred by the respondents are “cash on delivery” followed by “online payments”. This study finds that the online shopping has the added advantage of viewing people’s reviews and to be able to compare more products, and helps the consumer to take informed decisions.

KEYWORDS: Online Shopping, Digital Shopping, E-Tailing, Consumer Shopping Behavior, Fashion Apparel & Consumer Behavior

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INTRODUCTION

India's online shoppers will continue to buy products online even without discounts, which is the current trend among e-tailers. The report also predicted a fivefold growth in number of women shoppers. Keeping in mind the internet penetration in metro cities like Chennai, an attempt has been made to study the online shopping behaviour of youth in Chennai perhaps drive the next phase of e-tailing.

Online influence refers to the role that the digital medium plays in influencing purchases, irrespective of whether the purchase is made online or offline. This means merchandise sold through online using internet, either through their own network or by various shopping sites and also includes online market place. Online shopping has proven to be cost effective and less time consuming, providing a major advantage to the consumer of having an all in one platform, with more choice and a better access with the click of a button, reducing the time and effort involved in offline shopping.

E-commerce has paved the way for the new online retail only companies/organisations, giving a wider horizon for buyers to choose from and even in major metropolitan cities like Chennai, with the influx of huge malls, fail to provide a vast variety in terms of choice of brands.

Go online and latest changing information technology are playing a vital role in improvising root of e-tailing and has mushroomed in India, at present contributes about 15% of the organized retail and is expected to reach 25% by 2020 and can even increase manifold in next ten years as online network would spread in the rural areas with economy driven middle class (The Hindu).

OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the study were

- To identify the online purchasing atmosphere among customers of fashion apparels.
- To categorise the customers based on online shopping attitude
- To identify the shopping pattern and mode of shopping among fashion apparel customers
- To find out the preferred payment mode among fashion apparel customers.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses related to objective were formulated. They were

- There exist healthy trend on online purchasing of fashion apparels.
- There exist attitudinal differences on online shopping among fashion apparel customers.
- There exist differences on shopping pattern and mode of shopping among fashion apparel customers.
- There exist differences on payment mode among fashion apparel customers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Online retailing is seen as revolutionary in the world of retail industry and is giving a threatening competition to traditional retail. Online retailing is like money making from the wallets of the customers to the bank statements of the

retailers. (Poonia, 2015) where a retail atmosphere is believed to exert significant cognitive, attitudinal and emotional impacts on purchasing (Das, 2014; Levy & Weitz, 2001) by “drawing consumers in, keeping them engaged and enhancing their experience” (Elliot & Maier, 2014, p.109)

Digital shopping primarily influenced by four factors such as popularity, preferences, factors and constraints, (Mohanraj & Gopalakrishnan, 2017). In other words, the E-tailing website is like the entrance door of the online store where the online seller and the consumer can interact and make transaction without too much time. In India, consumers are increasingly tilting towards online to shop. Consumers are always craving for modern ways of shopping and to retain an e-customer, e-tailers must attract through innovative means. (Mankar & Muley, 2016)

The concept of shopping confidence reflects consumers’ belief in their ability to shop for clothing and select the right products for themselves. Brand or store loyalty describes a consumer’s tendency to continue to patronize the brand and /or online store they prefer, which also suggests self confidence in the consumer’s ability to evaluate alternatives. In this study, convenience consciousness refers to consumers’ preference to put minimal effort into the clothing purchase process. Convenience therefore implies concern for ease-of-use issues such as accessibility and simplicity of navigation (Gehrt et al., 2007; Workman & Cho, 2012).

SAMPLE

About 175 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents that has been conveniently selected, of which 143 (81.7%) were responded.

Demographic Data

The demographic details of respondents such as gender, age, education, occupation, annual income, marital status and nativity are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Data

S. No	Description	Frequency	%	Cum %
GENDER				
1	Male	38	26.6	26.6
2	Female	105	73.4	100.0
AGE				
1	Under 21	59	41.3	41.3
2	21-30	74	51.7	93.0
3	31-40	7	4.9	97.9
4	Above 40	3	2.1	100.0
EDUCATION				
1	School level	84	58.7	58.7
2	Graduate	37	25.9	84.6
3	PG	22	15.4	100.0
OCCUPATION				
1	Student or/and not working	112	78.3	78.3
2	Student or/and part time working	8	5.6	83.9
3	Self employed	6	4.2	88.1
4	Professional	11	9.8	97.9
5	Others	3	2.1	100.0
ANNUAL INCOME				

Table 1: Contd.,				
1	Up to 2 lakhs	101	70.6	70.6
2	Lakhs 2-4	26	18.2	88.8
3	Above 4 Lakhs	16	11.2	100.0
MARITAL STATUS				
1	Single	127	88.8	88.8
2	Married	16	11.2	100.0
NATIVITY				
1	Urban	106	74.1	74.1
2	Semi urban	30	21.0	95.1
3	Rural	7	4.9	100.0

Out of 143 respondents, 38 (26.6%) were male and 105 (73.4%) were female. 59 (41.3%) respondents were in the age group of under 21, 74 (51.7%) respondents were in the age group of 21-30. 84 (58.7%) respondents were +2 qualifies, 37 (25.9%) were graduates and 22 (15.4%) were post graduates. 112(78.3%) respondents were students. 101(70.6%) respondents' annual income were less than rupees two lakhs and 26 (18.2%) respondents' annual income were between rupees 2 and 4 lakhs. 127 (88.8%) respondents were single and 16 (11.2%) were married. 106 (74.1%) respondents were hailing from urban and 30 (21%) were from semi urban.

Data Reliability

Reliability is concerned with consistency of a variable. There are two identifiable aspects of this issue: external and internal reliability. Nowadays, the most common method of estimating internal reliability is Cronbach alpha (α). The formula used for internal reliability is

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^K \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

A commonly accepted rules for describing internal consistency using Cronbach alpha (Cronbach, Lee and Shavelson 2004) are $\alpha \geq 0.9$ (Excellent), $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ (Good), $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$ (Acceptable), $0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$ (Questionable), $0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$ (Poor) and $0.5 > \alpha$ (Unacceptable).

In order to identify the reliability of the variables, Cronbach alpha (α) analysis has been carried out for 19 variables on online shopping perception which is shown in Table 2. The Alpha value for online shopping, which are calculated and the same are shown in Table 2, which indicates that all the variables are acceptable for further studies.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis Scale (ALPHA)

Reliability Coefficients 19 items	
Alpha = .7516	Standardized item alpha = .7550

Data Analysis

Online shopping perception have been analysed based on 19 variables. Further online shopping behaviour were also analysed based on the following parameters:

- Apparel purchases
- Shopping pattern

- Frequency of shopping
- Budget
- Mode of shopping
- Payment mode

Respondents' opinions on 19 variables were obtained on a 5 point-scale on online shopping perception and the same is shown in table 3. The mean and standard deviation were calculated and the rank order based on mean value was drawn and the same is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Online Shopping

S. No	Description	Strongly agree		Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	Std	Rank
1	Online is safe	20	14.0%	44	30.8%	56	39.2%	19	13.3%	4	2.8%	2.60	0.980	12
2	Risk not seeing real product	27	18.9%	60	42.0%	40	28.0%	16	11.2%	0	.0%	2.59	0.921	10
3	Different delivery	18	12.6%	58	40.6%	41	28.7%	23	16.1%	3	2.1%	2.55	0.977	9
4	Non Delivery	8	5.6%	56	39.2%	39	27.3%	33	23.1%	7	4.9%	2.83	1.009	16
5	Longer delivery time	17	11.9%	54	37.8%	44	30.8%	24	16.8%	4	2.8%	2.61	0.993	14
6	Insufficient info over net purchase	15	10.5%	31	21.7%	47	32.9%	40	28.0%	10	7.0%	3.20	0.739	18
7	Prefer shopping with someone	38	26.6%	40	28.0%	35	24.5%	16	11.2%	14	9.8%	2.71	0.848	15
8	Insufficient access to net	15	10.5%	26	18.2%	29	20.3%	46	32.2%	27	18.9%	3.31	1.263	19
9	No need to buy over net	21	14.7%	29	20.3%	54	37.8%	29	20.3%	10	7.0%	2.85	1.122	17
10	Don't want to wait for the product	27	18.9%	53	37.1%	47	32.9%	11	7.7%	5	3.5%	2.40	0.994	6
11	Saves time in net purchase	43	30.1%	46	32.2%	35	24.5%	17	11.9%	2	1.4%	2.22	1.051	2
12	Net purchase is cheaper	33	23.1%	56	39.2%	34	23.8%	16	11.2%	4	2.8%	2.31	1.037	4
13	More info about products in net	24	16.8%	49	34.3%	50	35.0%	13	9.1%	7	4.9%	2.51	1.034	7
14	Difficulty in returning	25	17.5%	47	32.9%	46	32.2%	19	13.3%	6	4.2%	2.54	1.060	8
15	Love shopping in offline	38	26.6%	39	27.3%	46	32.2%	18	12.6%	2	1.4%	2.35	1.050	5
16	Product options, comparison easy	44	30.8%	55	38.5%	28	19.6%	15	10.5%	1	.7%	2.12	0.989	1
17	Access to more products in net	36	25.2%	57	39.9%	36	25.2%	10	7.0%	4	2.8%	2.22	0.996	3
18	Delivery fees is high	20	14.0%	48	33.6%	50	35.0%	19	13.3%	6	4.2%	2.60	1.022	11

Table 3: Contd.,														
19	Risk to give credit card and identity info	29	20.3%	40	28.0%	40	28.0%	26	18.2%	8	5.6%	2.61	1.163	13

The first 3 online shopping perceptions are

- Product options, comparison easy
- Saves time in net purchase
- Access to more products in net

The least 3 perceptions are:

- Insufficient access to net
- Insufficient information over net purchase
- No need to buy over net

The mean value ranges between 2.12 and 3.31. The mean values are less than 3 except insufficient access to net and insufficient information over net purchase which indicates that all the 17 variables are agreed by the respondents.

Data Reduction

To ensure that the research produces reliable findings and results, a reliable tool would need to be employed. Moreover, the exploratory nature of this study necessitated the need to conduct some form of test to check whether items used in the measures are tapping into the same construct (variables) or not. Such test was accomplished through the use of factor analysis. According to Coakes and Steed (2003), the factor analysis is a data reduction technique used to reduce a large number of variables to a smaller set of underlying factors that summarize the essential information contained in the variables. Two widely used methods in factor analysis are Principal Components and Principal Axis Factoring. However, this study adopted the former and applied it to all variables that employed multi-items measures. Accordingly, the rotated component matrix was analyzed and the same is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Online Shopping - Rotated Component Matrix

S. No.	V. No.	Description	Tech savvy	Conservationist	Orthodoxy
1	11	Saves time in net purchase	675		
2	12	Net purchase is cheaper	776		
3	13	More info about products in net	722		
4	16	Product options, comparison easy	681		
5	17	Access to more products in net	640		
6	1	Online is safe		685	
7	2	Risk not seeing real product		484	
8	3	Different delivery		549	
9	4	Non Delivery		620	

Table 4: Contd.,					
10	5	Longer delivery time		455	
11	6	Insufficient info over net purchase		461	
12	18	Delivery fees is high		359	
13	8	Insufficient access to net		550	
14	7	Prefer shopping with someone			648
15	9	No need to buy over net			436
16	10	Don't want to wait for the product			398
17	14	Difficulty in returning			486
18	15	Love shopping in offline			750
19	19	Risk to give credit card and identity info			643

Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Three components were extracted based on the rotated component matrix. It can be inferred from the results that the online shopping respondents can be grouped as Tech savvy, Conservationist and Orthodoxy.

Table 5: Online Shopping Vs Gender

S. No.	Description	Male			Female		
		Mean	Std.	Rank	Mean	Std.	Rank
1	Online is safe	2.53	1.033	14	2.63	.963	10
2	Risk not seeing real product	2.11	.924	4	2.77	4.156	14
3	Different delivery	2.32	.904	7	2.63	.993	11
4	Non Delivery	2.47	1.006	13	2.95	.984	17
5	Longer delivery time	2.16	.855	5	2.77	.993	15
6	Insufficient info over net purchase	2.95	1.161	18	3.30	3.119	18
7	Prefer shopping with someone	2.61	1.152	15	2.74	3.255	13
8	Insufficient access to net	3.13	1.277	19	3.37	1.258	19
9	No need to buy over net	2.82	1.182	17	2.86	1.104	16
10	Don't want to wait for the product	2.34	.966	10	2.42	1.007	5
11	Saves time in net purchase	1.74	.795	1	2.40	1.080	4
12	Net purchase is cheaper	1.92	.912	2	2.46	1.047	6
13	More info about products in net	2.24	1.025	6	2.61	1.024	7
14	Difficulty in returning	2.32	.962	8	2.62	1.086	9
15	Love shopping in offline	2.42	1.030	11	2.32	1.061	3
16	Product options, comparison easy	2.03	.972	3	2.15	.998	1
17	Access to more products in net	2.32	1.093	9	2.19	.962	2
18	Delivery fees is high	2.42	.858	12	2.67	1.071	12
19	Risk to give credit card and identity info	2.61	1.104	16	2.61	1.189	8

Table 5 shows that as per male category, the first 3 top preferences are

- Saves time in net purchase
- Net purchase is cheaper
- Product options, comparison easy

The female respondents order of preferences on online shopping are Product options, comparison easy, Access to more products in net and Love shopping in offline. However, irrespective of the gender, the least preferences are same and they are insufficient access to net and insufficient info over net purchase.

Apparel Purchases

In this study, the criteria for apparel purchases have been analysed based on five variables such as design, brand plus material, quality, price, comfort plus fit and all features put together. The opinions of the respondents were given in Table 6.

Table 6: Purchasing Apparel

S. No	Description	Frequency	Percent	Order of Preference
1	Design	55	38.5	1
2	Brand + material	18	12.6	3
3	Quality	17	11.9	4
4	Price	5	3.5	6
5	Comfort + fit	35	24.5	2
6	All	13	9.1	5

Generally it is seen that 38.5% of the total respondents preferred design of the apparels and 24.5% preferred comfort plus fit. The least preferences were indicated for price (3.5%) and all the features.

Shopping pattern

In general, apparel shopping were primarily need based. However, it also depends upon financial constraints and sometimes time bound. In this study, the criteria for general shopping pattern have been analysed based on five variables such as discounts, festivals, occasions, change in trends and casual shopping. The opinions of the respondents were given in Table 7.

Table 7: Shopping Pattern

S. No.	Description	Frequency	Percent	Order of Preference
1	Discounts	30	21.0	2
2	Festivals	17	11.9	4
3	Occasions	27	18.9	3
4	Change in trends	17	11.9	4
5	Casual shopping	52	36.4	1

Casual shopping (36.4%) are more preferred by the respondents followed by discounts (21%) and occasions (18.9%). Least preferences were seen on Festival purchase and Change in trends.

Frequency of Shopping

The shopping frequencies of the respondents were ascertained and the same is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Frequency of Shopping

S. No.	Description	Frequency	Percent	Order of Preference
1	Once a month	57	39.9	1
2	Once in 2 months	31	21.7	2
3	Quarterly	22	15.4	3
4	Once in 6 months	13	9.1	5
5	During the sale	20	14.0	4

It is seen that 39.9% of the total respondents were shopping once in a month and 21.7% were shopping once in two months. The least preferences were indicated as during the sale period (14%) and once in six months (9.1%). Normally traders provide sale period for the purpose of increasing their sale. But it seems, sale seems to be a least impact on purchase preference.

Budget

The budgets on apparels by the respondents are given in Table 9.

Table 9: Budget

S. No.	Description	Frequency	Percent	Order of Preference
1	Less than 2000	52	36.4	2
2	2000-4000	63	44.1	1
3	Between 4000 and 6000	20	14.0	3
4	6000-10000	5	3.4	4
5	Above 10000	3	2.1	5
	Total	143	100.1	

It is observed from Table 9 that 63 (44.1%) respondents spent in the range of Rs.2000-4000/- followed by 52 (36.4%) respondents spent less than Rs.2000/- on apparels. The least spent was above Rs.10000/- by 3 (2.1%) respondents.

Mode of Shopping

In this study, an attempt has been made to analyse whether the respondents preferred online or offline shopping or both and the opinions of the same were given in Table 10.

Table 10: Preference of Shopping

S. No.	Description	Frequency	Percent	Order of Preference
1	Online	40	28.0	2
2	Offline	94	65.7	1
3	Both	9	6.3	3

It is seen from Table 10 that out of 143 respondents, 94 (65.7%) preferred offline shopping and 40 (28%) respondents preferred online shopping and 9 (6.3%) respondents preferred both.

Payment Mode

The preferred payment modes of the respondents were analysed and the opinions of the respondents were given in Table 11.

Table 11: Payment Mode

S. No.	Description	Frequency	Percent	Order of Preference
1	Cash on delivery	89	62.2	1
2	Credit card	24	16.8	3
3	Debit card	25	17.5	2
4	Net banking	1	.7	5
5	All	4	2.8	4

It is noted from Table 11 that out of 143 respondents, 89 (62.2%) respondents mostly preferred cash on delivery followed by 25 (17.5%) respondents for debit card and 24 (16.8%) respondents for credit card. The least preferred payment mode by the respondents was net banking.

FINDINGS

- About 175 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents that has been conveniently selected, of which 143 (81.7%) were responded.
- Out of 143 respondents, 38 (26.6%) were male and 105 (73.4%) were female. 112 (78.3%) respondents were students. 127 (88.8%) respondents were single and 16 (11.2%) were married.
- 106 (74.1%) respondents were hailing from urban and 30 (21%) were from semi urban.
- In order to identify the reliability of 19 variables, Cronbach alpha (α) analysis has been carried out. The Cronbach value is 0.7516 which indicates that all the variables taken for study are reliable in nature. The component matrix on these 19 variables enables to identify the respondents into 3 groups such as Tech savvy, Conservationist and Orthodox.
- The first three preferences of online shopping were product options, comparison easy; saves time in net purchase and access to more products in net.
- The least 3 perceptions were Insufficient access to net; insufficient info over net purchase and no need to buy over net.
- Online shopping behaviors were extended based on shopping pattern, frequency of shopping, budget, mode of shopping and payment mode.
- 38.5% of the total respondents' preferred design of the apparels on online shopping and 24.5% preferred comfort plus fit. The least preferences were indicated for price (3.5%).
- Casual shopping (36.4%) are more preferred by the respondents followed by discounts (21%) and occasions (18.9%). Least preferences were seen on Festival purchase and Change in trends.
- 39.9% of the total respondents were shopping once in a month and 21.7% were shopping once in two months.
- 44.1% respondents spent in the range of Rs.2000-4000/- on apparel. Similarly 36.4% respondents spent less than Rs.2000/- on apparels.
- However, 65.7% of the respondents preferred off-line shopping.

- 62.2% of the respondents mostly preferred cash on delivery.
- Online shopping has the added advantage of viewing people's reviews and to be able to compare two or more products, and helps the consumer to take informed decisions.
- Our data reveals that majority of the buyers will continue to purchase online even if there are no discounts.

CONCLUSIONS

Online shopping attitude has been ascertained among 143 among the fashion apparel customers of fashion malls – both Exclusive Brand Outlets (EBOs) and Multi Brand Outlets (MBOs). The study has been carried out with the objective to identify the online purchasing atmosphere among customers of fashion apparels. In order to categorise the customers based on online shopping attitude using 19 variables in a five point scale, the rotated component matrix thus employed facilitates to identify three category of users such as “tech savvy”, “conservationist” and “orthodox”. The preferences of apparel purchases were “*preferred design of the apparel*”, “*comfort+fit*” and “*brand+material*”. The “price” has been considered as the least preference on online fashion apparel purchase. In the case of shopping pattern, *casual shopping* has been more preferred followed by *discounts* and *occasions*. Majority of the fashion apparel shopping has been carried out “*every month*”. The mode of payment preferred by the respondents are “*cash on delivery*” followed by “*online payments*”.

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