

Antecedents of Online Shopping: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The objective of undertaking this review is to identify the core factors which have an impact on the Online shopping behaviour of the customers. Current review is built on identifying the gaps and studying the findings of the research papers based on Online shopping. A body of 60 research papers was reviewed which investigated a plethora of antecedents of online shopping. Based on the review, we identify and propose six themes, pertaining to the concepts, methodologies and findings.

The current study throws light on various determinants of consumer behaviour towards online shopping. A list of variables in the form of themes is studied and suggestions are made. It has also considered the customers' behaviour towards the upcoming technologies like Virtual reality and Augmented Reality. The study will not only enhance the literature about the subject but will also provide cues to the marketers to build new strategies which can enhance the online shopping experience of the customers.

KEY WORDS-Online shopping, Consumer behaviour, Online reviews, Purchase intention

INTRODUCTION

Online shopping is a process in which consumers directly buy goods or services over internet, with or without an intermediary. Online shopping is based on e-commerce to buy products or services directly from the seller through the Internet. Traditional brick and mortar business model has been replaced by internet-based or Click and Order business model (Mohammad Anisur Rahman, Md. Aminul Islam, Bushra Humyra Esha, Nahida Sultana & Sujana Chakravorty, 2018). Internet or web platform has been used extensively by people to shop for a wide variety of items from tiny household items to properties to airplane tickets. Now people get multiple options to select the products and services of their choice, while they are shopping online (Mohammad Anisur Rahman et al.).

Worldwide increase in the usage of internet has shifted consumers' attention towards online shopping. The increased confidence in technology and online payment sectors are causing a change in consumer behaviour, away from traditional methods (Khoulood, 2020). Statista (2018) reported an estimated amount of 1.8 billion people worldwide now purchase

their goods online. According to the Internet World Statistics (2020), there are over 3 billion internet users globally, thus representing a 577% increase in growth when compared to the global population of internet users in 2000. This trend indicates that online shopping has a lot of potential and benefits to societies and businesses worldwide. With the development of e-commerce, the number of online shoppers has increased worldwide. The number of digital buyers in 2021 is 2.14 billion, which makes 27.6 percent of 7.74 billion people in the world (Source: Statista).

The e-commerce industry in India has seen an exponential growth in the last few years. This fillip is due to the factors like rapid adoption of technology, improved standard of living, increasing young population, better access to internet and

economically strong middleclass. Investors have also been aggressively funding the e-commerce sector. Use of smart phones and tablets has further facilitated online shopping.

The entry of global giants has led to an intense competition among online retailers. E-retailers are working diligently to stand in the fierce competition. Various variables like customers' trust, purchase intention, online reviews, convenience, perceived usefulness, web atmospherics, web cues etc. are studied intensively to enhance the online experience of the customers while shopping online.

Nowadays, online reviews gain as much trust as personal recommendations for the majority of consumers (Murphy 2017). More and more these reviews are read, written and evaluated online (Lipsman et al. 2019) and a glowing review motivates behavior more than discounts and other offers (in the domains of durable goods and electronics; Kats 2018). The review helpfulness reflects the subjectivity and quality experienced by the readers (Filieri et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2017). Online review sites, e.g., Yelp, Amazon, etc., host millions of customer reviews that influence the purchasing decisions of many prospective customers (Guo et al., 2020). Earlier studies have shown that online customer reviews have a significant impact on the performance of every business (Li et al., 2019). More than 214 million reviews have been published on Yelp at the moment and the figure is growing by 12% per year (Yelp, 2020).

Consumers seem to want product reviews (www.iperceptions.com), and firms seem happy to offer such reviews on their websites, in their advertising, and elsewhere (Arcillo 2011; Dellarocas 2003; Harper 2014; Rawlins 2011). Indeed, firms are increasingly engaging in efforts around "review solicitation" and "online reputation management," incentivizing previous purchasers to write reviews in exchange for discounted or free products. As firms invest in, and consumers trust, online reviews, their management has come to occupy a more prominent role in marketing practice.

The purpose of this review is to better understand the factors that act as drivers of online shopping. The research papers under review throw light on the intensity with which various factors (Hedonic or Utilitarian) influence each other in the context of online shopping. Product reviews have gained much trust for majority of the consumers (85%; Murphy 2017), and a glowing review motivates behavior more than discounts and other offers (in the domains of durable goods and electronics; Kats 2018).

The paper is related to three research streams: consumers' choice between offline and online retailers, pricing equilibrium under duopoly competition, and the impact of dynamic pricing and price matching strategy on competition and heterogeneous consumer behavior.

Consumer Research

Information search is an important activity performed by the consumers as they try to reduce uncertainty and perceived risk before an actual purchase. They generally use multiple channels (online and offline) to retrieve information before making their purchase decisions (Degeratu, Rangaswamy, & Wu, 2000; Jang, Prasad, & Ratchford, 2017). Recent studies have shown that consumers usually prefer to search products through online platforms. Some of the popular commercial and non-commercial online sources for the products like automobiles and travel are bulletin boards, travel websites, and manufacturer and dealer websites (Haridasan, Fernando and Saju, 2021). If compared to offline sources, the range of search is comparatively greater for online sources, which, in turn, results in efficiency gains for experienced consumers who go back to online sources (Ho, Lin, & Chen, 2012a; Klein & Ford, 2003; Kulkarni, Ratchford, & Kannan, 2012; Xiang, Magnini, & Fesenmaier, 2015).

The augment of rapid globalization has created the notion of 'borderless' world, which is a world without any boundary, nevertheless cultural influences have an impact on many facets of consumer buying behaviour (Banerjee, 2008). In a cross-cultural study, across the nations, with environmental friendly products, Bhate (2002) posited that UK respondents generally exhibited non-committal attitude and behaviour; however, the Indian respondents displayed greater attitude of involvement, which was further reflected in their purchasing behaviour. Singh, Fassott, Zhao, and Boughton (2006) observed and concluded that online shoppers belonging to three different nations, namely Germany, China, and India, favoured web portals which are according to their local cultures. Authors also posited that values, principles, and beliefs definitely influence shoppers' purchase intention on the Internet through an online shopping portal. It was observed that e-commerce portals that were consistent in portraying cultural aspects were rated more positively on factors such as ease of

navigation, appearance, buying intention, and attitude towards the portal. In another study, it was depicted that in comparison to the US consumers, Indian consumers were less apprehensive to reveal private information on the Internet (Gupta, Iyer and Weisskirch, 2010).

Online Shopping Values

The existing literature on retailing suggests that experience of a consumer, while shopping, is an amalgamation of hedonic shopping value (HSV) and utilitarian shopping value (USV; Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Liu & Forsythe 2010; To, Liao, & Lin, 2007). Latent entertainment and emotional values underlying in a shopping are reflected by a hedonic tendency, which is manifested through enlarged arousal and involvement, besides perceived freedom, escapism, fantasy, and emotive facets of the buying experience (Babin et al., 1994; Sorce, Perotti, & Widrick, 2005).

The study proposes a perspective on the indirect influence of the stimuli (internal and external influencers) on shoppers' behavioural outcome. In an Indian context, Website Satisfaction plays an 'intervening role' in the relationship between online shopping values and website atmospheric cues (inputs) and purchase intention (Sanjeev Prashar et al., 2017).

With the rapid but sporadic increase in the literature related to online shopping, the corpus now has a mature critical data that can be reviewed in order to shed an overview to help understand a) What are the drivers for adopting online shopping? b) How to identify the potential segment of consumers adopting online shopping? c) what is the most important dimension of e service quality which can predict consumer behaviour towards online purchase? d) how to effectively rank products for a consumer's purchase decision through online reviews?

To address the above mentioned questions, the aim of this study is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the current state of literature and knowledge on how online shopping has so far taken place, what are the recent developments in online shopping in terms of technology, its advantages and disadvantages, the contexts in which it has been used, what effects it has on consumers' shopping psychology and further behavior, and what future avenues of research are presented.

Advantages of online shopping

Advantages	Description
Time effective	In online shopping customers can buy instantly with just a few clicks of mouse from the site.
Saves energy	Customer is not required to go to the physical store for purchase, hence online shopping saves energy.
Price comparison	Comparing prices is effortless and straightforward during online shopping as it requires just a few clicks to switch the site and compare prices.
24*7 availability	Customer can purchase according to his own convenience throughout the day as online shopping is available for 24 hours a day.
Reduces waiting time	In physical stores customers have to stand in long ques for making payments but in online shopping payments can be made in a few clicks.
Overcomes geographical barriers	Any product across the borders could be purchased easily without any geographical limitations through online shopping.
Saves fuel	Since there is no need to cover a distance for online shopping, thus it saves fuel.

Source: eBay (2013) and Jain (2016)

Disadvantages of online shopping

Despite of the success story of online shopping, there are certain difficulties which are faced by online customers, that can be explained under the following table:

Disadvantages	Description
Lack of touch and feel	Most of the online stores show pictures and description of the products, there is always a lack of touch , feel and testing of the products.
Security concerns and fraud	Customers face high risk of fraud on the part of merchants as they lack inability to inspect the product before purchase. There are certain security issues faced by customer while making online purchase.
Privacy	Privacy has been a big issue for most of the customers. Most consumers try to avoid spam and telemarketing which could be from supplying contact information to an online merchant. Several websites along with Brick and Mortar's store, keep a record of consumer shopping habits to suggest an item or another site to visit. Although different jurisdictions have different laws concerning consumer privacy and different level of enforcements, still online shopping causes privacy concern.
Lack of full cost disclosure	It is easy for the customers to compare the best price of an item online, but it is not easy for them to identify the total cost (including additional fees, shipping, tax, etc.) of an item online. Lack of full disclosure of the total cost is one of the major concerns about online shopping. This problem is much evident in cross-border purchasing.
Diminished Instant Satisfaction	Customers can buy and use the product instantly in case of offline purchase, which is very satisfying. However, online shopping needs patience to wait for the product to arrive (about 6/7 hours or even more), which usually diminishes the satisfaction level.

Source: eBay (2013) and Hub pages (2015)

Identification and collection of literature

Systematic reviews focus on the “identification, evaluation and interpretation of relevant research questions or phenomenon of interest on a particular area” (Busalim & Hussin, 2016). The application of systematic methods in reviewing articles can minimize bias and provide reliable results (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Snyder, 2019; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

The study identifies, retrieves and reviews the existing research papers that are related to online shopping (N=60). A systematic and structured approach is used to identify the major themes of online and offline information search from the existing literature. The process of review includes various recommended stages, viz, research questions formulation, identification of studies from prominent databases, search strategy definition, data extraction and results (Han, Xu, & Chen, 2018; Nguyen, Leeuw, & Dullaert, 2018). which includes the steps of defining the question, carrying out the literature search, screening the identified literature, assessing the eligibility of remaining studies, data extraction, critical appraisal and finally a synthesis of the literature.

The synthesis of the literature

The literature review was carried out by studying 60 research papers. The literature was derived from peer-reviewed articles in journals, conferences and book chapters. About 70% of the papers reviewed were published between 2017 and 2021, which suggests that the current study has tried to cover most of the latest developments in context of online shopping like technological advancements, antecedents of shopping, virtual reality and augmented reality.

Research gaps

Despite of its importance, very little research has focused on how consumers respond to various channel mix initiatives during a shopping experience. Very little quantitative research has been done in the field of traditional and online sales,

which are considered as widely researched areas in retail and consumer analytics (Ganesh et al., 2010; Kirby-Hawkins et al., 2018). There is a knowledge gap in context of grocery click & collect patronage and the factors which are likely to govern the channels performance.

Online consumer search is an under-studied area compared to offline consumer search. More importantly, very few studies have put the spotlight on the predictors of online information search. Furthermore, there is a lack of literature that compares the antecedents of online and offline information search. Hence, the objective of this study is to perform a systematic review of consumer information search in the context of both.

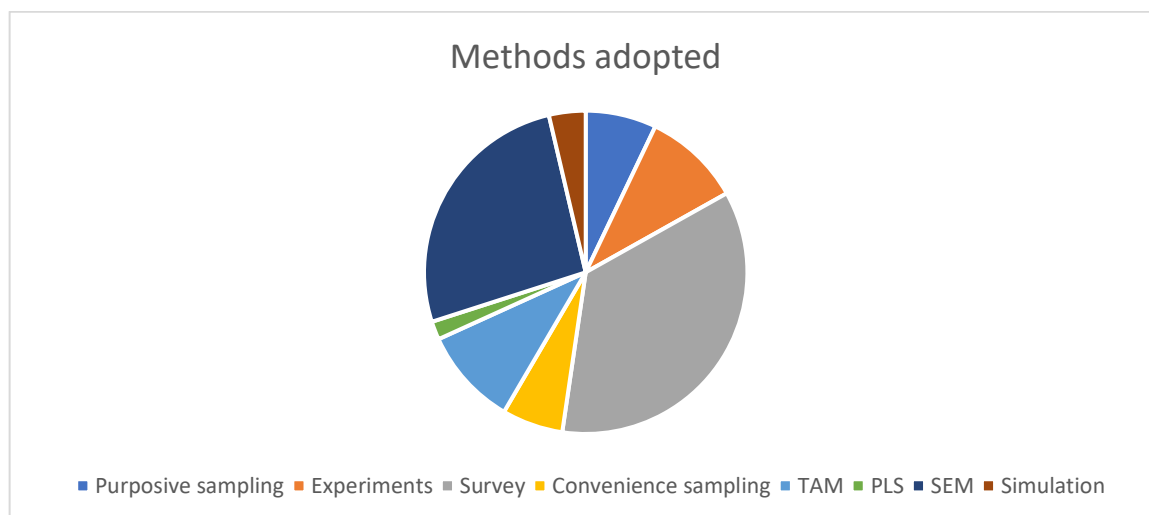
In spite of such a growing interest in the new digital technologies, most of the existing marketing studies are either conceptual or descriptive in nature, with barely any attempt to empirically examine the consumer perceptions, attitudes and behaviors towards all these new digital technologies and also the influence of the unique attributes of these technologies on different stages in the consumer decision-making process are not yet explored (Sharma et al., 2021). For example, many articles have documented the growing popularity of AI among a wide range of applications, such as customer service, retailing, healthcare, and transportation (e.g., Davenport and Kirby 2016; Davenport and Ronanki 2018). More recently, Davenport et al. (2020) have introduced a framework to organize AI applications using their task automation timeframe and form (digital vs. robot) and suggest future research agenda to test the predictive ability of AI applications and the challenges in their adoption and usage by consumers (e.g., loss of autonomy, privacy, bias and ethics). There has been a scarcity of pervasive adoption of virtual reality by retail companies while the potential affordances of VR for and the comparative benefits and disadvantages of brick-and-mortar versus web based settings are still not clear on a subjective level.

New Digital Technologies and Shopping

Research on online shopping indicates a wonderful courting among every degree of purchaser choice making technique and quantity of online purchase. For example, customers who used web services, bought more extensively online (Comegys et al. 2006). Customers' satisfaction with the purchase can be determined by the comparison of his expectations with the perceived performance of the product. When the perceived overall performance of the product does not meet the expectations, then, the customer is dissatisfied, and which at times may result in cognitive dissonance. However, due to advancement of technologies, customers are now able to examine a product before buying. It makes the customer more satisfied and confident, reducing cognitive dissonance (Hilken et al. 2017).

Methods

In terms of the methods used in the body of literature on online shopping, both quantitative and qualitative methods are extensively used.



Major gaps identified and findings

Themes	Gaps	Findings	Authors	Year
Online Reviews	little is known about which particular positive reviews companies should leverage to optimize sales. There exists a gap in context of neutral sentiment orientation and multidimensional complex sentiment orientation. Existing studies have also ignored the discrete random dynamic characteristics and dynamic information preferences of consumers.	Reviews providing any negative information may direct the customers towards their potential losses as compared to their potential gains prompting them to accept the advice of the reviewer.	Taly Reich and Sam J. Maglio	2019
		A novel method based on DDIFWA operators for decision-level sentiment analysis is provided by the research.	Zaoli Yang 1 et al.	2019
		SO-ILES TODIM method is proposed which can rank the reviews according to their helpfulness. A new language evaluation set is constructed, based on emotional and ontological features (SO-ILES), which can easily extract the characteristic information of research objects and is more applicable in the field.	Huifang Dong et al	2021
Perceived risk, and online shopping intention	Previous studies still have many conflicting conclusions regarding the impacts of perceived risks on consumers' online shopping intention.	There is a large statistically significant difference between the two segments (adopters and non adopters of online shopping), in terms of perceived compatibility, perceived social norm and perceived	Darius-Aurel Frank & Anne Odile Peschel	2020

		relative advantage. Perceived risk and perceived complexity are found to be statistically significant The shopping intention of online customers is positively affected by their attitude, subjective norms, perception of behavioral control, perception of usefulness and trust. While online shopping intention is inversely related to perceived risks. Among all factors, perceived risk is considered to have the strongest impact on online shopping intention. The slope for the relationship between trust in online shopping and purchase intention is moderated by perceived risk, showing that the relationship becomes stronger when perceived risk is high. Trust significantly mediates the relationship between perceived service quality, website quality reputation, and online purchase intention	NgocThangHA1 et al. Sikandar Ali Qalati, Esthela Galvan Vela, Wenyan Li, Sarfraz Ahmed Dakhan, Truong Thi Hong Thuy & Sajid Hussain Merani Shewa Yasin Ahmed1, Bayad Jamal Ali2, Cemil Top3	2021 2021 2021
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1543

		returning experience are motivated by monetary costs, convenience, stress and guilt.		
Customer satisfaction	There is a lack of studies which investigates the influence of customer satisfaction on online shopping behaviour. Both theory and practice need sharper insights to foster consumer satisfaction, but such knowledge remains sparse in the literature	Customer satisfaction has a great impact on repurchase intention and WOM. Customer satisfaction is enhanced by information quality, savings and product quality but is worsened by product return in context of online shopping holiday. Customer behavior is significantly as well as positively related to customer satisfaction. customers with online shopping experience have a strong effect on the relationship between service convenience and customer satisfaction. It is also found that satisfied customers have a desire to stay longer and are willing to pay more.	Paulo Rita a , Tiago Oliveira a and Almira Farisa b Shian-Yang Tzeng Felicita Davis and Manoj Britto Francis Gnanasekar Swapan Kumar Saha1 · Paulo Duarte2 · Susana C. Silva3 · Guijun Zhuang1	2019 2020 2021 2020
Hedonic and Utilitarian shopping value	Very little is known about the impact of shopping values on behavioural outcomes in	A major role is played by telepresence components in	Savvas Papagiannidis et al. Sanjeev Prashar, T. Sai Vijay, and Chandan Parsad	2016 2017

	context of online shopping.	simulated experience and the critical role of that experience, along with hedonic and utilitarian values, in engagement. In an Indian context, Web Satisfaction plays an ‘intervening role’ in the relationship between online shopping values and website atmospheric cues (inputs) and purchase intention (response). A further analysis of the empirical results revealed that the Hedonic Shopping Value and Web Experience are the strongest predictors of WS in the Indian online shopping market. The modern retail environment should enhance the hedonic shopping experience in terms of fun, fantasy, moods, and emotions. One of the key findings is the moderating role of product type (utilitarian and hedonic), which shows that consumer responses to an interface (multisensory or	Petruzzellis, L., Fronzetti Colladon, A., Visentin, M., & Chebat, J.-C. Anubhav Mishra, Anuja Shukla, Nripendra P. Rana, and Yogesh K. Dwivedi	2017 2020
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		haptic) in a purchase process are also influenced by the product they are purchasing. Moreover, consumers prefer a purchase environment where product and interface characteristics are similar and complementary.		
Virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality in online shopping	It is not fully explained as why the VR store environment results in positive behavioral intentions. Previous VR studies have not considered the potential impact of consumers' level of familiarity with the store in question. There is a dearth in our understanding of how VR technology has been investigated in retail-related literature.	VR technology is found effective regardless of consumers' familiarity with a store, which implies the effectiveness of VR over website in enhancing store attractiveness, which is an understudied area. Online retailers are widely using augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies for resolving mental and physical intangibility issues in a product evaluation. Internet is found to be the most popular technology with highest scores on information search, purchase behavior, familiarity, past usage and utilitarian attribute. On the other hand, augmented reality	Byoungho Jin¹ , Gwia Kim², Marguerite Moore³ and Lori Rothenberg⁴ Anubhav Mishra¹ Anuja Shukla² Nripendra P. Rana³ Yogesh K. Dwivedi⁴ Sharma, P. and Ueno, A. and Dennis, C. and Turan, C.P.	2021 2020 2021

		shows highest scores on virtualization and human-like attributes.		
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Conclusions

The current study makes various important key contributions to understand the antecedents and technological developments in online shopping. It also summarises the research methodologies, theories, models and technologies which are prevalent in today's shopping environment. The study can inspire the researchers to conduct more interdisciplinary studies in the field of information science and retail management. More significantly, this study refines the antecedents and technological developments in the context of online shopping. The study further provides an insight into six themes which were found most relevant in explaining the reasons behind online shopping. Online reviews, perceived risk, convenience, hedonic and utilitarian values, customer satisfaction and latest developments in technology play a significant role in influencing the customers to purchase online. The study provides the future avenues in terms of concepts, themes, methods and technologies, which can eventually guide the researchers to understand the current scenario of online shopping, retail phenomena, select suitable research questions, design experiments, and use different tracking technologies. The study follows the advantages and disadvantages given by eBay (2013) and Hub pages (2015) which further add to the antecedents of online shopping. It explains the reasons behind the emergence of online shopping. Thus, this study provides insights into several aspects of online shopping.

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