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Consumer Preference Towards Online Shopping Platforms

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Abstract

It was a privilege for me to work in a reputed organization. This has given us an opportunity to work in a truly professional environment where team work score over individual effort, where there is a helpful atmosphere. A well planned, properly executed and evaluated training helps a lot in inoculating good work culture. The project on Consumer Preference Towards Online Shopping Platforms has been made to facilitate effective understanding about the marketing aspects. The project research has provided me an opportunity to gain practical experience, which has helped me to increase my sphere of knowledge to a greater extent. I have tried to summarize all our experience and knowledge acquired up till now, in this report. This project is a keen effort to obtain the expected results and fulfill all the information required.

Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technology and internet connectivity has significantly transformed the way consumers purchase goods and services. Online shopping platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, Meesho, Ajio, and others have revolutionised the traditional retail system by offering convenience, variety, competitive pricing, and doorstep delivery. In recent years, online shopping has become an integral part of consumers' daily lives, especially with the widespread use of smartphones, digital payment systems, and high-speed internet. As a result, understanding consumer preference towards online shopping platforms has gained considerable importance for businesses, marketers, and researchers.

Consumer preference refers to the choice, liking, or inclination of consumers towards particular products, brands, or platforms over others. In the context of online shopping, consumer preference is influenced by several factors such as price, product variety, website usability, delivery speed, return policies, customer service, trust, and security. Online platforms compete aggressively to attract and retain customers by offering personalised recommendations, discounts, loyalty programmes, and seamless user experiences. This intense competition has made it essential for companies to analyse consumer expectations and preferences to gain a competitive advantage in the digital marketplace.

The increasing acceptance of e-commerce is also driven by changing lifestyles and time constraints faced by modern consumers. Online shopping platforms provide flexibility by allowing consumers to shop anytime and from anywhere, eliminating the need to visit physical stores. The availability of detailed product descriptions, images, videos, customer reviews, and ratings enables consumers to make informed purchase decisions. These features enhance transparency and reduce perceived risk, thereby positively influencing consumer trust and preference towards online shopping platforms.

Objective of Study

1. **To examine the importance of delivery services, return policies, and after-sales support** in consumer satisfaction.
2. **To assess the level of trust and security concerns** affecting consumer preference towards online shopping platforms.

Literature Review

Kotler and Keller (2016) explained that the rise of digital marketing and e-commerce has significantly altered consumer purchasing behaviour. Their study emphasised that convenience, price comparison, and easy accessibility are major factors influencing consumer preference towards online shopping platforms. The authors highlighted that consumer satisfaction in online shopping depends largely on service quality, trust, and the overall user experience provided by the platform.

Davis (1989) introduced the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding online shopping behaviour. According to the model, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are key determinants of consumers' acceptance of online platforms. The study suggests that user-friendly interfaces and efficient navigation increase consumers' willingness to shop online and influence platform preference.

Gefen, Karahanna, and Straub (2003) examined the role of trust in online shopping environments. Their research found that trust significantly influences consumers' intention to purchase from online

platforms. Factors such as website security, privacy protection, and reliability of transactions were identified as critical elements affecting consumer confidence and preference.

Laudon and Traver (2017) discussed the structure and functioning of e-commerce platforms and highlighted that product variety, payment flexibility, and efficient logistics systems enhance consumer preference towards online shopping. The authors also noted that strong customer support and transparent return policies contribute to higher customer satisfaction and repeat purchases.

Chen and Dubinsky (2003) analysed consumer value perception in e-commerce and found that perceived value, which includes price benefits and service quality, positively affects consumer purchase intention. Their study suggested that consumers prefer platforms that offer competitive pricing along with reliable service performance.

Pavlou (2003) focused on consumer acceptance of electronic commerce and identified perceived risk as a major barrier to online shopping. The study concluded that platforms that effectively reduce risk through secure payment systems, trust signals, and customer assurance policies are more likely to be preferred by consumers.

Koufaris (2002) explored the relationship between website design and consumer behaviour in online shopping. The findings revealed that attractive website design, easy navigation, and quick loading time enhance consumer satisfaction and encourage longer browsing and purchasing behaviour.

Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach adopted to collect, analyse, and interpret data in order to achieve the objectives of a study. In the present research on consumer preference towards online shopping platforms, a structured and scientific methodology has been followed to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. The methodology outlines the research design, sources of data, sampling techniques, data collection tools, and methods of analysis used in the study.

The study is based on a **descriptive research design**, as it aims to describe and analyse consumer preferences, perceptions, and behaviour related to online shopping platforms. Descriptive research is appropriate for understanding existing conditions without manipulating variables. This design helps in identifying key factors such as convenience, pricing, trust, delivery services, and website usability that influence consumer preference.

The nature of the study is **empirical**, relying on both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected directly from respondents to capture real-time consumer opinions and experiences related to online shopping. Secondary data has been used to support the study and provide a theoretical framework.

Secondary sources include textbooks, academic journals, research articles, websites, e-commerce reports, and published studies related to consumer behaviour and online retailing.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

The data collected for the study on consumer preference towards online shopping platforms was analysed using descriptive statistical techniques such as percentage analysis and interpretative evaluation. Responses were obtained from 100 respondents who actively use online shopping platforms. The analysis provides insights into consumer behaviour, preferences, and factors influencing their choice of online platforms.

The analysis reveals that a majority of respondents frequently use online shopping platforms for purchasing a wide range of products, including clothing, electronics, groceries, and household items. This indicates a strong acceptance of e-commerce among consumers. Convenience and time-saving emerged as the primary reasons for preferring online shopping over traditional retail stores. Consumers appreciate the ability to shop anytime and anywhere without physical effort, which has become an important factor in modern lifestyles.

Table 1: Age Group of Respondents

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18–25	40	40%
26–35	30	30%
36–45	20	20%
Above 45	10	10%

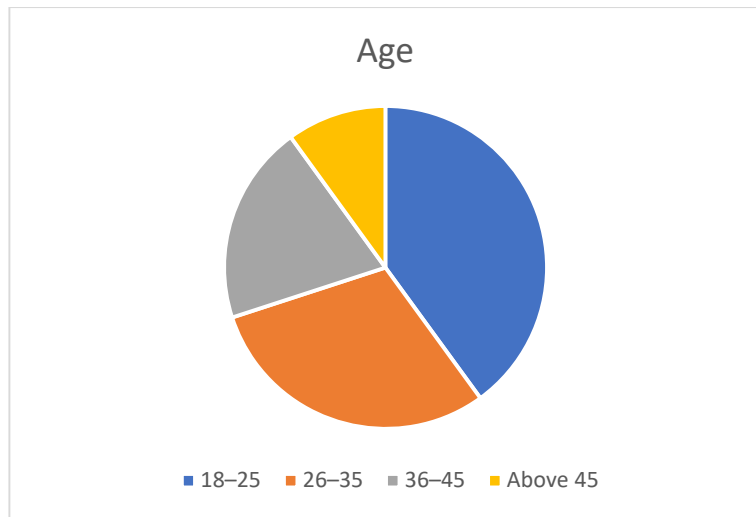


Figure 1.1

Interpretation:

Most online food shoppers are in the age group of 18–25, indicating a younger, tech-savvy consumer base prefers online food shopping.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	55	55%
Female	45	45%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not say	0	0%

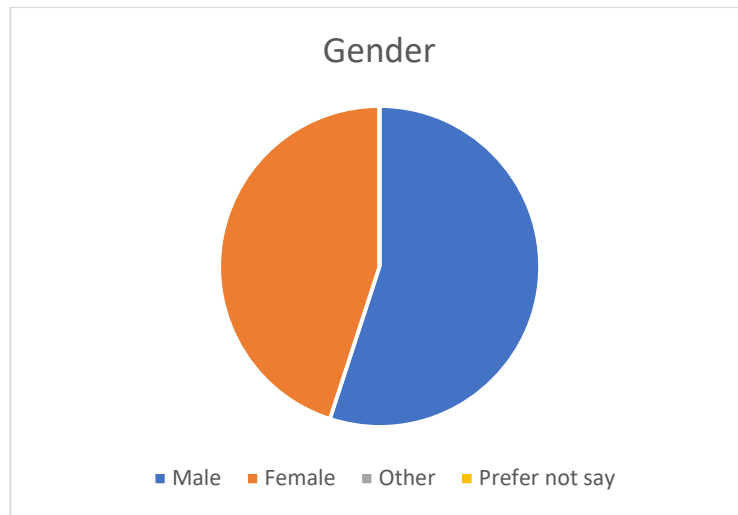


Figure 1.2

Interpretation:

The sample shows a balanced gender distribution with a slightly higher male participation in online food shopping.

Table 3: Frequency of Online Food Purchases

Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Weekly	25	25%
Bi-weekly	30	30%
Monthly	35	35%
Occasionally	10	10%

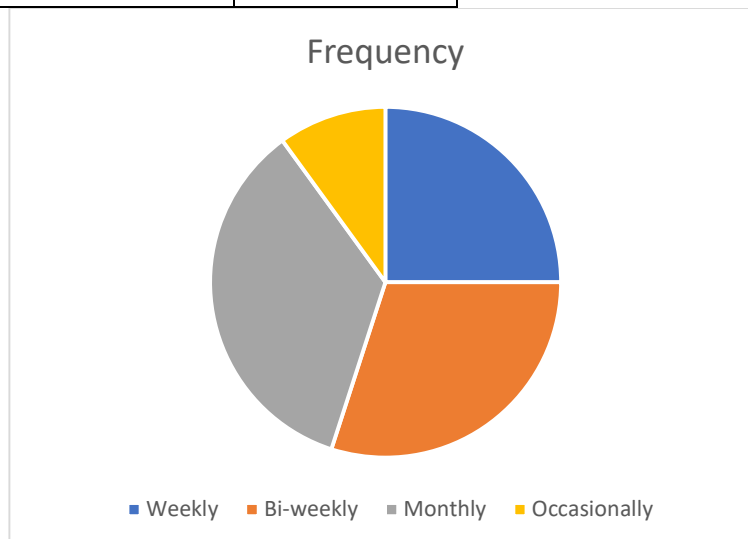


Figure 1.3

Interpretation:

Most consumers prefer to shop for food online either monthly or bi-weekly, suggesting planned and budgeted purchasing habits.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, several suggestions can be made to improve online shopping platforms and enhance consumer preference. Firstly, **online shopping platforms should prioritise convenience and ease of use**. The research indicates that consumers prefer platforms that are simple to navigate, with clear product categorisation, search filters, and smooth checkout processes. Platforms should ensure that both websites and mobile applications are user-friendly, fast-loading, and visually appealing to enhance overall shopping experience and reduce cart abandonment rates.

Secondly, **competitive pricing and attractive promotional offers** are critical to influencing consumer purchase decisions. Respondents highlighted that discounts, cashback, festive deals, and bundled offers strongly affect their buying behaviour. E-commerce platforms should implement dynamic pricing strategies, personalised offers, and loyalty programmes to encourage repeat purchases and retain customers. Providing transparency in pricing and avoiding hidden charges will also improve trust and consumer satisfaction.

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