



**CUSTOMERS AWARENESS AND USEFULNESS OF ONLINE SHOPPING
PLATFORMS**

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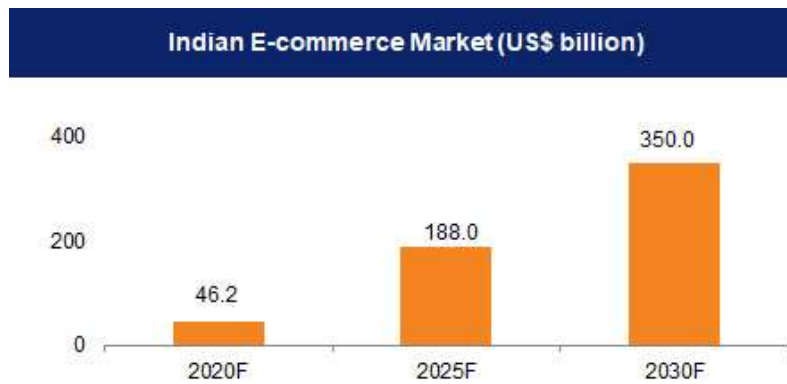
ABSTRACT: The present study aims to analyze the customer's awareness level towards online shopping and their usability of online shopping portal. This study will be helpful for the e-commerce platforms to understand the customers' awareness towards the online shopping and their requirements, so that they can focus more on those moot points to improve their service quality and efficiency. For the investigation of framed objectives, the study used an exploratory research approach. The study's primary goal was to learn about customers' perceptions of the online platform's features and usability. The study used the most convenient sampling strategy and collected data via questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to obtain primary data for the investigation. The author handed out 150 surveys and received 120 completed responses. For the analysis of stated objectives, the study used statistical tools such as Neural Network and Exploratory Factor Analysis. Customers are aware, according to the study's findings, that clear photos of objects and product colours will persuade them to acquire those items online. The study also observed, that the customers had an easier time selecting different products or brands while using online shopping platforms rather than visiting to traditional storefronts. More and more consumers are stating that they prefer internet purchasing over traditional buying methods, citing its many advantages. There has been a significant shift in how consumers make purchases. Customers nowadays do a lot of research online before talking to a salesperson. More and more people are making their purchases online or via their mobile devices rather than visiting physical stores. The internet has greatly simplified and expedited corporate operations.

Keywords: *Attributes, Awareness, Customers, E-Commerce, Online Shopping, and Usability.*

INTRODUCTION

Online shopping, often known as online retailing, is a type of electronic commerce that enables customers to make direct purchases from sellers using a computer browser and the Internet. Alternative titles include: web store, online store, web shop, virtual store, and Internet shop. Business-to-consumer (B2C) online shopping is the act of purchasing goods or services from an online store in a manner physically similar to visiting a brick-and-mortar store or shopping mall.

Business-to-business (B2B) internet buying occurs when a business purchases something from another business. It is anticipated that the market for online grocery shopping in India would grow at a (Compound Annual Growth rate) CAGR of 33% between the years FY21 and 2027, reaching a total value of US\$ 26.93 billion and India's consumer digital economy would develop to a market size of one trillion dollars by the year 2030, up from a market size of 537.5 billion dollars in 2020. This growth will be driven by the robust adoption of online services such as e-commerce and ed-tech in the country. According to Grant Thornton's projections, the value of online commerce in India will reach 188 billion dollars in the year 2025. India overtook Canada to become the eighth largest market for e-commerce in 2020, with a total revenue of \$50 billion, placing it in ninth place overall and two spots behind France.



It is also expected that the Indian e-commerce market would increase to US\$ 200 billion by 2026, up from US\$ 38.5 billion in 2017. This growth will be driven by expanding smartphone penetration, the rollout of 4G network, and increasing consumer income. India had the third-largest base of online shoppers in FY2021, with 150 million, behind only China and the United States. This number is predicted to rise to 350 million by FY2026. Even though the introduction of the next-generation mobile broadband technology has not yet occurred in India, an increasing number of Indian consumers are purchasing 5G devices. The number of smart phones shipped reached 169 million in 2021, while the number of 5G smart phones shipped saw a surge of 555% year on year 2021. As a result of increased customer demand following the smart phone market closure, smart phone shipments surpassed 150 million units in 2020, with 5G smart phone shipments surpassing 4 million. The number of internet users in India is projected to increase to 900 million by 2025, up from 622 million internet users in 2020, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 45% till 2025, as stated in a report that was jointly produced by IAMAI and Kantar Research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nagendrababu K, Girisha M C and Vedamurthy M B (2020) stated that the origination of the internet created an entire new experience for consumers regarding gathering information, comparing products or prices and the possibility of purchasing on the internet. Therefore, consumer behavior on the internet is an important factor for marketers. To predict consumer behavior on the internet marketers, need to understand how, where and why consumers behave online. Internet is latest technology that brings the world market in the hands of every consumer through digital marketing. But Indian customers are very rational in buying decision because if the goods value higher then they must feel to touch and feel about product before they decide about whether to buy or not. But from 2006 the online shopping hobbies increased drastically in India and global competitors increasing distribution of goods as Indians preferred. Sanath Kumar S

(2019) *The present study has been initiated with the objective of economic analysis on online shopping and its impact of socio-economic factors on buying behavior. The main objectives of the study the consumer behavior and awareness and satisfaction and research also helps to assess the ability of online shopping sites in order to attract and retain the customer, to analyze the buying behavior and to explore the reasons why potential customers do not prefer online shopping. The research methodology was exploratory and descriptive. In the study the sample was based on purposive, judgment and convenience sampling. The research is in favor that there is a socio-cultural environment in the purchase decision-making process. Hence the present study directs the companies they should focus on these aspects in order to attract the customers towards electronic-shopping.*

Vidyashree(2018): According to this research, online buying is easy and helpful, but there are certain possible issues that may emerge, influencing the customer's impression of online purchasing. Customers' purchasing habits vary when they purchase online than when they shop in physical shops. Perceptions are influenced by internal variables such as ease of use, usefulness, and pleasure. Customer attributes, situational variables, product qualities, previous online buying experiences, and confidence in online shopping are examples of external influences. Muhammad Shafeeque (2017): In their study titled "Risk Perception in E-Commerce: A Holistic Review of Emerging Online Shopping in India," researchers sought to identify the kind and degree of risk perception in online shopping. The majority of consumers perceive the existence of risk associated with online shopping, such as product risk, time risk, financial risk, and so on, according to the study's findings. For a variety of factors, including convenience of access, a broad range of choices, rate comparisons, the availability of product evaluations, and so on, it was decided that online shopping had a bright future in India.

Saravanan and SajithaS (2016): They attempted to examine customers' attitudes about online advertisements and its impact on their purchasing behaviour pattern in their research paper titled "Consumer Perception towards Online Advertisement." According to the study's findings, the majority of respondents believe that the price of a product in an online advertising is affordable, saves time, and influences respondents to purchase a product. The research found that internet advertising plays a significant part in an individual's purchasing decision process, and providing a high degree of security would attract more consumers. AishahArshad et al (2015): Their research sought to ascertain how four types of perceived risks, namely money risk, security risk, time and convenience risk, and psychological risk, affect a consumer's online behavior. The study comprised 100 Karachi-based hedonic and utilitarian online consumers ranging in age from teenagers to adults. Regression and the correlation technique were the two statistical methods used in the research. Furthermore, psychological risk revealed that the greater the internet experience, the more favorable the response from online consumers was expected. The study concluded that there was a link between perceived risk and online buying behavior.

Jenyo Gabriel (2015): According to the research, consumers' perceptions of online purchasing are divided into four categories: perceived danger, perceived pleasure, perceived utility, and perceived ease of use. According to the study's findings, the primary factor influencing Delhi consumers' online purchasing behavior is risk. This demonstrates a lack of confidence in E-retailers and an uneasy sense of being duped, as well as worse product quality and a non-returnable policy. Yagmur and Ipek (2014): According to the research, e-commerce was a new sector in India in 2011. With

the increased use of the internet and the mobile revolution, online commerce will see exponential development. The capacity to assess and minimize risk would help Indian internet merchants maximize revenue and customer satisfaction. If the perceived danger decreases, it will be extremely simple for internet merchants to enter the Indian market. Rashed Al Karim (2013): According to the survey, the majority of respondents are between the ages of 21 and 25. More respondents stated that they approach internet buying favorably, and they acknowledged that they are affected by different variables that are responsible for online shopping. Customers are influenced by reasons such as lower prices, convenience, free delivery, offers; return policies, time savings and simplicity of access, and the availability of a broad variety of goods in one location. KanwalGurleen (2012): According to the study, the majority of internet purchasers are between the ages of 20 and 25. This demonstrates that the responders are mostly young people who are more computer savvy and internet aware. According to the findings of this study, the steep discounts provided by e-retailers are putting malls and outlets under intense competition. COD, simple return policy, and free delivery are some of the reasons that make online buying convenient. It is well known that internet shopping is quickly expanding in India, and there is no question that it will soon capture the majority of the market share.

Chen Hui (2011): The study has conducted research on the "Personality's Influence on the Relationship between Online Word-of-Mouth and Consumers' Trust in Shopping Websites." The researcher's goal was to determine the influence of customer personality in their confidence in the website in terms of online word-of-mouth. The findings revealed a substantial difference between introverted and extroverted customers when it came to their attitudes about internet word-of-mouth. Kuo-Kuang Chu (2008): They attempted to investigate the differences in perceived risks and risk-reduction strategies by product type, as well as the effects of online shopping experiences and consumer innovation on perceived risk in their study titled "A Study of the Effect of Risk-Reduction Strategies on Purchase Intentions in Online Shopping." Customers perceive similar risks regardless of product kind, according to research. Furthermore, the amount of money spent by consumers has little bearing on the perceived risks.

NEED OF THE STUDY

As online stores offer a variety of products and services to the consumer, they are more likely than local retailers to compare prices from various websites and find the lower price of products. Millions of people are online at all times, and all of them are potential consumers with new demands, it becomes more important and valuable for e-commerce platforms to meet consumer needs and timely respond. In this context to meet the growing demand from the e-commerce platforms, consumer awareness and usability of online shopping platforms to help producers and online sellers to develop market expansion strategies need to be studied thoroughly to improve their service quality and efficiency.

RESEARCH GAP

It turns out from the above review of existing literature, it is clear that online platforms play an important role in delivering goods and services to consumers' doorsteps. According to the study's literature review, the majority of studies have focused on understanding consumer behavior towards online platforms, as well as the strategies used by e-retailers to attract customers. Few studies have conducted research on how online platforms constantly upgrading their portal with new features and services for the benefit of their customers and to make them more users friendly.

For these reasons, present study attempted to address the research gap by examining the proposed title "Customers Awareness and Usefulness of Online Shopping Platforms,"

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to realize the following objectives:

1. To know the awareness levels of customers towards online shopping attributes; and
2. To analyze the customers' usefulness with the online shopping platforms.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

To realize the above objectives, the following two hypotheses are set in order to draw the meaningful conclusions related to customers' awareness level towards online shopping attributes.

H0: There is no significant difference between the customers awareness level towards online shopping.

H1: There is a significant difference between the customers awareness level towards online shopping.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study primarily focused to know the customers' awareness level on the online platform attributes and usability of online shopping platforms. The selected customers are using various online platforms for shopping and located in Hyderabad Region of Telangana State and the study conducted in January-March, 2024. In this study the customers are examined in general and not focused on any particular ecommerce portal users.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on primary and secondary data analysis and adopted exploratory research approach for the examination of framed objectives and mainly focused to know the customers awareness on the online platform attributes and its usability.

Sampling Area: Primary data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire from the target sample respondents (online customers) of Hyderabad city of Telangana state. Based on the Retail association of India report of 2022 indicated that Hyderabad consists of higher number of e-commerce customers in comparison with other districts of Telangana.

Sampling Method: Customers were selected through convenient sampling method. The data is gathered by distributing 150 questionnaires sample and received 120 useable responses.

Tools for Analysis: Significantly, the obtained data has been categorized, collated and examined. For data analysis, study considered the statistical tools such as Neural Network and Exploratory Factor Analysis for the examination of framed objectives.

Reliability Test: The study employed Cranach's Alpha to check the primary data reliability, which were framed on likert scale structure. The questionnaire consists of two segments i.e., awareness of customers on the online shopping attributes and usability of online shopping from customers perspective. The following is the reliability of the considered segments.

Table – 1: Reliability

S. No	Segment Name	Reliability
1	Customers Awareness	0.904
2	Usability of online Platform	0.868
	Average	0.886

Source: Primary data

According to the results, the primary data used in the investigation was deemed to be reliable for (reliability = 0.886 > 0.7) for further application of statistical methods.

TABULATION OF DATA ANALYSIS

Objective -1: To know the awareness levels of customers towards online shopping attributes.

The study made an attempt to know the customers' awareness levels towards the online shopping platforms attributes and try to find out the significant awareness levels by applying the neural network statistical method for the examination of the objective. The study framed the following hypothesis.

H0: There is no customer's awareness level towards online shopping attributes.

H1: There is a customer's awareness level towards online shopping attributes.

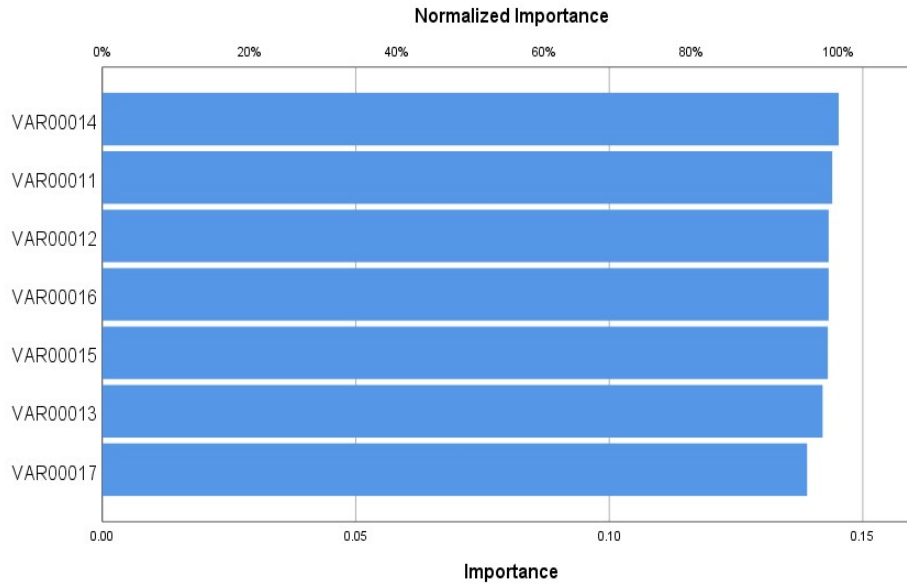
Table -2: Case Processing Summary

		N	Percent
Sample	Training	81	67.5%
	Testing	39	32.5%
Valid		120	100.0%
Total		120	

The study implies that there are 67.5% with the training set and 32.5% with the testing set. The study results indicate that this model is fit to apply neural network statistical tool for further analysis.

Table- 3: Customers Awareness Level toward online shopping portal

	Importance	Normalized Importance
"I found myself checking prices while shopping for even small items"	.144	99.1%
"I would be more likely to shop on the Internet or online if the Web site is user freindly"	.143	98.6%
"I like to shop on the Internet where it is easy to compare many products and screen them in order to choose the one I like"	.142	97.8%
"When shopping on the Internet pictures and colours are clear and representative of the product"	.145	100.0%
"Internet shopping provides more variety of products"	.143	98.5%
"The primary computer I use for Internet shopping is too slow"	.143	98.6%
"Online shopping service provider apprise you of the new scheme, it starts through communication"	.139	95.7%



The above figure shows the normalized importance level of Customers Awareness level towards online shopping portal. It is observed that the customers are having high awareness level with regard to the statement “When shopping on the Internet, pictures and colors of the product are clear and representative ” and they create the impression that product is fair and attractive which will make customer to purchase the product and increase the online shopping. The study has implied the next importance level with 99.1% for the statement “I found myself checking prices when shopping even for small items”. The least importance level is observed with the statement “Online shopping service provider apprises the customers with new scheme, it starts through communication”. Hence, from the above analysis it is found that the customers are having high awareness levels towards online shopping with regard to pictures and colors of the product and they create the impression that product is fair and attractive which will make them to purchase the product and increase in online shopping.

Objective -2: To identify the customers’ usefulness with the online shopping platform .

The study considered the few questions relating to usefulness of the online platform to know the purchase intention of customers. To examine the same, study applied the exploratory factor analysis tool to extract the high loading factors, which will be useful factors from the perspective of customers’ point of view.

Table- 4: Sample Adequacy Test

“Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy” .	.771	
“Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity”	“Approx. Chi-Square”	40.820
	“df”	45
	“Sig” .	.006

Source: Primary Data

The above table explains regarding the KMO and Barlett’s test implies there is a chi-square value as 40.820 more than the critical value and the p-value is tend to be less than 0.05. It also implies there is Kaiser-meyer-olkin measure of sampling adequacy is tend to be 0.771. Hence, it defines that the model is fit and recommended for the further analysis.

Table- 5: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.415	14.154	14.154	1.415	14.154	14.154
2	1.285	12.849	27.004	1.285	12.849	27.004
3	1.233	12.335	39.338	1.233	12.335	39.338
4	1.124	11.238	50.576	1.124	11.238	50.576
5	1.077	10.765	61.341	1.077	10.765	61.341
6	.994	9.944	71.285			
7	.829	8.287	79.572			
8	.724	7.241	86.813			
9	.704	7.036	93.849			
10	.615	6.151	100.000			

Source: Primary Data

The above table describes regarding the total principal variances explained. The study results that there are 5 components extracted out of which the component 1, component 2 and component 3 are observed to be having 1.415, 1.285 and 1.233. The variances are determined to be more than 10%. The other components 4 and 5 are tend to be more than “1” with the variances of 11.2335 and 10.765. The cumulative percentage is determined to be 61.341%.

Table – 6: Consumer Usability of Online Platform

	1	2	3
Online shopping is as secured as traditional shopping”	0.638		
The information given about the products and services is sufficient”	0.461		
Selection of goods available on the online is very broad”	0.591		
The description of products shown on the websites as very accurate”		0.418	
Price of the product is less in online shopping as compared with traditional shopping”		0.593	
Safety for doing money transaction for shopping”		0.447	
Comparison of product/brands are relatively easy”			0.527
Products are delivered to my doorsteps”			0.418
Better services offered and compared traditional retail stores”			0.522
Delivery system (return policy) is good”			0.409

Source: Primary Data

The above table represents regarding the component matrix with respect to the customer's usability level with regard to the online shopping. The result indicates that with the high loading factor with respect to the statement "Online shopping is as secure as traditional shopping" (0.638). The outcome derives that maximum of the statements have obtained more than 50% that implies online shopping gives the higher usability levels because of its security and the price of a product is less when compared to the offline shopping. It has been observed that "Selection of goods available on the online is very broad" (0.591) observed to be having the high loading factor. Price of the product is less in online shopping as compared with traditional shopping (0.593) having the high loading factor, which implies that E-Commerce platforms are providing lower prices compared to traditional markets. Hence, it implies there is a need for the system of delivery is not comparable as sometimes there may be lack of product quality when returned it may be take more time to get the other product or delay in getting the paid amount.

FINDING

1. The study found that, the customers who are shopping online have clear idea about the prices of the product shown on website and while shopping on internet, they observed that the pictures and colors of the product are clear and they have maximum awareness.
2. The study have identified that Online shopping is as secured as traditional shopping with the beta value as 0.196 and the next is observed with 0.144 this implies that online shopping is the safe as per the perception of the customers.
3. The results of the study reveals that "Selection of goods available on the online is very broad" (0.591), which states that customer can observe many options in online when compared with traditional markets.
4. It is synchronized that Comparison of product/brands are relatively easy while shopping online (0.527) has been observed as higher usability. It indicates that traditional markets provides the opportunities but customer should move from shop to shop but whereas online platform provide easy access for the customers to compare the products with other online options which facilitates foreasy selection of products/brands.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

It is clearly determined from the above study that the customers who are shopping online have clear idea about the prices of the product and the pictures and colors of the product are clearly shown and more attractive on website while shopping on internet. The study observed that the customers have maximum awareness towards online shopping. The customers feel that the online shopping is as safe & secured as traditional shopping. The study reveals that customers feel safe & secure while they are doing online transactions. It is concluded from the above study that the customers are having maximum awareness levels towards online shopping features like description of the product details, Prices of the product and color of the products. Customers are satisfied with the services provided by online shopping portals. For a variety of factors, including convenience of access, a broad range of choices, rate comparisons, the availability of product evaluations, and so on, the customers are more attracted towards online shopping and the awareness also increased.

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