

Customer Buying Preferences and Post-Purchase Behavior towards Online Shopping with special Reference to Tiruchirappalli District

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Abstract

Understanding consumer behavior has been a central focus for researchers, especially with the rapid evolution of shopping dynamics in recent years. This research paper aims to gain a deeper understanding of customer buying preferences and post-purchase behavior in the context of online shopping within the Tiruchirappalli district of Tamil Nadu. The study explores the key factors that influence consumer decision-making and satisfaction in the online shopping environment. Stratified sampling was used to collect data from a sample of 384 online shoppers in the region. The findings reveal that perceived convenience and product variety were positively associated and only competitive pricing is negatively associated with the primary online shopping behaviour. Additionally, the study highlights the significance of post-purchase factors such as delivery reliability, return policies, and

customer service in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty. The implications of these findings for online retailers and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: Online shopping, consumer behavior, customer satisfaction, Tiruchirappalli, India

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of the internet and e-commerce has transformed the retail landscape in India, particularly in urban areas (Nittala, 2015). Consumers are increasingly shifting their shopping preferences towards online platforms, driven by the convenience, product selection, and competitive pricing offered by e-retailers (Kumar & Kashyap, 2018). This trend is especially pronounced in Tier-II cities like Tiruchirappalli, which have witnessed a surge in internet penetration and the adoption of online shopping (Natarajan, 2020). As more people embrace online shopping, retailers are stepping up their game by refining digital platforms and making technology easier to use. To craft effective marketing strategies, businesses need a deep understanding of the many layers of online shopping behavior. While marketers invest a lot of energy in executing strategies, they're also keenly focused on the post-purchase phase, where customers share their thoughts and experiences about products and services (Rina et al., 2024). Understanding the key drivers of online shopping behavior and post-purchase experiences is crucial for e-retailers to effectively cater to the needs of this growing customer segment. Previous studies have examined the factors influencing online shopping in the Indian context, but limited research has focused on the specific preferences and behavior of consumers in Tiruchirappalli district. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the key factors that shape customer buying preferences and post-purchase behavior towards online shopping in the Tiruchirappalli region. Understanding the key drivers of online shopping behavior and post-purchase experiences is crucial for e-retailers to effectively cater to the needs of this growing customer segment. Previous studies have examined the factors influencing online shopping in the Indian context, but limited research has focused on the specific preferences and behavior of consumers in Tiruchirappalli district. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the key factors that shape customer buying preferences and post-purchase behavior towards online shopping in the Tiruchirappalli region.

Review of Literature

Anderson and Srinivasan (2003) explore in their study how traditional concepts of satisfaction and loyalty apply in the rapidly growing world of e-commerce. They redefine e-satisfaction as the fulfillment customers feel with their online shopping experiences, influenced by website functionality, product quality, and service reliability. Similarly, e-loyalty is described as a customer's willingness to continue shopping with a particular online retailer, even when switching to competitors is easy and convenient. The review highlights key factors

that shape this relationship, such as trust—a critical element in overcoming the inherent risks of online transactions and switching costs, which are often lower in digital environments. The authors also address how market competition amplifies these dynamics, making it harder for businesses to retain loyal customers. To better understand these challenges, they propose a contingency framework that shows how specific factors, like trust and competition, influence the link between e-satisfaction and e-loyalty. This approach provides valuable insights into building stronger customer relationships in the fast-paced and competitive world of online shopping.

Khan and Khan (2018) investigates how the ease of accessing and using online retail services affects customer satisfaction and their actions after making a purchase. The research focuses on the Indian e-retailing market, where convenience is an increasingly critical factor in customer decision-making. The authors anchor their analysis in transaction cost theory, which emphasizes that minimizing the time, effort, and resources customers spend during transactions leads to higher satisfaction. They explore how these reductions in perceived "costs" contribute to positive outcomes, such as greater loyalty and favorable post-purchase behaviors. This study enriches our understanding of service convenience by tying it directly to utilitarian satisfaction—how practical and efficient a service feels to a customer—and behavioral intentions like repeat purchases and recommendations. By offering these insights, Khan and Khan shed light on the importance of streamlining online shopping experiences to cultivate lasting relationships with customers, especially in fast-evolving markets like India.

Prashar and Parsad (2021) investigate the factors shaping consumer behavior after online purchases. The authors draw upon two key theoretical frameworks: the Expectancy–Confirmation Model (ECM) and regret theory. The Expectancy–Confirmation Model emphasizes the role of expectations in shaping consumer satisfaction. According to the model, when a shopper's experience meets their initial expectations, it results in positive confirmation and greater satisfaction. Conversely, when the experience falls short of expectations, it leads to disconfirmation and dissatisfaction. This framework has been widely used to understand satisfaction across various consumer contexts, including e-commerce. Regret theory focuses on the emotional reaction consumers feel when they believe a different decision could have led to a better outcome. In online shopping, regret may stem from a perception that an alternative product or retailer would have offered superior value or a better experience. These feelings of regret can influence future purchase decisions, loyalty, and engagement. By combining these perspectives, the study explores how key e-retailer attributes—such as price transparency, service quality, product variety, personalization, and the perceived sincerity of the seller—affect consumers' post-purchase emotions. Specifically, it examines how the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations shapes satisfaction and how the experience of regret impacts behaviors like writing reviews, repurchasing, or switching to competitors.

This integrated approach provides a nuanced understanding of the emotional drivers behind online shoppers' post-purchase actions, offering valuable insights for businesses aiming to enhance customer retention and loyalty.

Kumar et al. (2021) explore the phenomenon of impulse buying in the context of grocery shopping. Their study identifies emotional and situational triggers that lead to unplanned purchases and examines the subsequent feelings of regret among consumers. The research highlights how factors such as time pressure, in-store promotions, and emotional states influence the decision-making process. The findings underscore the dual role of emotions, acting both as catalysts for impulse buying and as precursors to regret when purchases do not align with rational expectations. The study's contribution lies in its granular focus on grocery products, which differ from high-involvement goods in purchase patterns and buyer psychology. The authors suggest that educating consumers about mindful shopping practices and implementing strategies such as shopping lists could mitigate impulsive tendencies and associated regrets.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research design, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from online shoppers in Tiruchirappalli district. To ensure a representative sample, the researchers used a stratified sampling approach, where the target population was divided into various strata based on demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, and income level.

$$n = Z^2 * p * (1-p) / e^2$$
$$n = 1.96^2 * 0.5 * 0.5 / 0.05^2 \approx 384$$

A total of 384 respondents were selected for the survey, with equal representation from the three major strata (Trichy East, Trichy West, Srirangam) within the district. The questionnaire was designed to gather insights into the respondents' online shopping behavior, including their preferences, motivations, and post-purchase experiences, such as satisfaction with delivery, returns, and customer service. The collected data was then analyzed using a combination of descriptive statistics and multiple regression techniques to identify the key determinants of online shopping behavior and their impact on customer satisfaction. The variables that have been utilized in this study are of two types: Independent and dependent variables. The independent variables are: 1. perceived convenience 2. Product variety 3. Competitive pricing, on the contrary there was only one dependent variable which is: 1. online buying behaviour.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the key factors that influence customer buying preferences towards online shopping in Tiruchirappalli district.
2. To investigate the impact of post-purchase factors on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the context of online shopping.

Limitations

This study is subject to the following limitations:

1. The study was conducted within the Tiruchirappalli district, and the findings may not be fully generalizable to other regions of India.
2. The sample size, although representative, may not capture the diverse perspectives of all online shoppers in the region.

Data Analysis

Table 1 – Demographic Profile of the Sample Respondents

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage
Age	16 to 20 years	60	15.6
	21-25 years	224	58.3
	26-30 years	100	26.0
Educational Qualification	Graduate	194	50.5
	Post Graduate	160	41.7
	Others	30	7.8
Occupation	Student	188	48.9
	Self employed	115	29.9
	Business	50	13.2
	Others	31	8.0
Gender	Male	180	46.9
	Female	204	53.1
Total		384	100

Source: Primary data

Table 1 illustrates that the predominant proportion of respondents fell within the age bracket of 21-25 years, comprising 58.3% of the sample, while a significant majority held under graduate qualifications, accounting for 50.5%. The majority of respondents identified themselves as students, constituting around 49% of the total, with females representing 53.1% of the sample.

Correlation and Hypothesis Testing

H1: Perceived convenience of online shopping is positively associated with online buying behaviour of consumers.

Table 2 – Correlation between Perceived Convenience & Online Buying Behaviour

Correlations		PC	OBB
Perceived convenience	Pearson Correlation	1	.836**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	384
Online Buying Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.836**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	384	384
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The above Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between perceived convenience and online buying behaviour. They are strongly positively correlated as the values shown in the table are 0.836 (quite close to 1). The p-value is 0.000 which is less than the benchmark i.e. 0.05 hence, accept the hypothesis 1.

H2: Competitive Pricing of online shopping is negatively associated with online buying behaviour of consumers.

Table 3 – Correlation between Competitive Pricing & Online Buying Behaviour

Correlations		CP	OBB
Competitive Pricing	Pearson Correlation	1	.154
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012
	N	384	384
Online Buying Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.154	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	
	N	384	384
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The above Table 3 shows correlation between competitive pricing and online buying behaviour and with the help of the results we can analyze that these two variables are poorly correlated with each other as the result is 0.154. However, the p-value is above than 0.05 (i.e. 0.012) hence this hypothesis is rejected.

Regression Analysis

Table 4 – Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.057 ^a	.083	.001	.774

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Education, Occupation
- b. Dependent Variable : Post Purchasing Behaviour

The Table 4 indicates R and values. The simple R over here represents the correlation between the dependent and independent variables. It is 0.57 or 57% which is very strongly correlated. The adjusted R² determines that how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (i.e. Post Purchasing Behavior) can be illustrated by the independent variables (i.e. Perceived convenience, Product variety, competitive pricing and Social Influence). Here, in this study is: 0.083 or 83%. This means that 83% times post buying behavior is influenced by the factors mentioned in this study and the remaining 17% times it is influenced by factors other than those demonstrated by this model.

Major Findings

- Out of the 384 sample respondents, Majority 48.9% were identified themselves as student, followed by self- employed around 30%.
- Male ratio was 46.9% (180 respondents) and female 53.1% (204 respondents) which means the majority were female respondents.
- Regarding educational qualification the majority were bachelor's degree holders, which resulted as 50.5 % of the sample size, 41.7% were master's degree holders and only 7.8% were completed higher secondary.
- The majority 58.3% of the respondents were from the 21-25 age group, 14% from 25 or less, 6% were 46 or above and the least were from 36-45.
- 58% of respondents had incomes between RM2001-4000, 24% had their income between 6001-8000, 16% had between 4001- 6000 and only 2% had 10000 or above.
- The most chosen category for online shopping was buying clothes, accessories, apparels which was 34%, then 22% people chose others in which respondents wrote travel/hotel booking etc., 20% respondents bought gadgets and electronics online, 14% respondents

tended to purchase daily use items online, 2% bought cinema tickets online and the remaining 2% bought books and magazines online.

- The online shopping monthly expenditure was as follows; 58% of respondents spent RM0-500 monthly, 20% spent RM501-100, 20% spent 1501 and above whereas, 2% spent 1001-1500.

Factors influencing online shopping preferences

The Study revealed four key factors that drive customer buying preferences towards online shopping in Tiruchirappalli district namely:

1. Perceived Convenience: Consumers value the ease of access, time savings, and flexibility offered by online shopping platforms.
2. Product Variety: A wide range of product options and the ability to compare alternatives are important considerations for online shoppers.
3. Competitive Pricing: Competitive pricing, discounts, and the ability to find better deals online are significant motivators for customers to shop online.
4. Social Influence: Recommendations from friends, family, and online reviews also play a role in shaping customer preferences for online shopping.

These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted in the Indian context, which have also identified convenience, product selection, and pricing as key drivers of online shopping adoption (Jukariya & Singhvi, 2018) (Nittala, 2015) (Kumar & Kashyap, 2018).

Impact of post-purchase factors on customer satisfaction

The Linear regression analysis highlighted the significant impact of post-purchase factors on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the online shopping context. The key post-purchase factors identified include: Delivery Reliability (Timely and accurate delivery of orders is a crucial determinant of customer satisfaction), Return Policies (Flexible and hassle-free return policies are important for building trust and loyalty among online shoppers) and Customer Service (Responsive and effective customer support, both during and after the purchase, strongly influences customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions). These findings underscore the importance of not only attracting customers to online platforms but also ensuring a positive post-purchase experience to foster long-term customer loyalty.

Key recommendations for e-retailers based on the study's findings:

1. E-retailers should focus on improving the perceived convenience of the online shopping experience by enhancing the usability and intuitiveness of their websites and mobile applications, offering flexible delivery options that cater to customers' preferences, and streamlining the entire purchase process to make it more seamless and efficient for shoppers.

2. Expanding the product range and enabling effective product comparison tools can help e-retailers capitalize on the growing demand for product variety among online shoppers in the region.
3. Maintaining competitive pricing strategies, offering discounts and promotional offers, and ensuring price transparency can help e-retailers attract and retain price-conscious customers in Tiruchirappalli.

II. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping online shopping behavior and the pivotal role of post-purchase experiences in driving customer satisfaction and loyalty within the Tiruchirappalli district of India. The insights from this research can help e-retailers in the region to better align their strategies and offerings with the preferences and expectations of their target customers, ultimately enhancing their competitive position and driving long-term business success. Ensuring a seamless payment process, convenient return policies, and reliable shipping experiences further solidifies consumer trust, thereby reducing the likelihood of cognitive dissonance negatively affecting purchasing decisions. Moreover, marketers must acknowledge the dynamic nature of the online shopping landscape and continuously adapt their strategies, services, and technologies to meet evolving consumer preferences. By prioritizing these strategies, marketers can effectively manage cognitive dissonance, enhance consumer satisfaction, and foster long-term customer loyalty in the competitive online marketplace.

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