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ONLINE SHOPPING DURING COVID-19: A STUDY ON PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMERS OF UDAIPUR CITY

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 introduced a long lock down which increased the dependency of customers on online purchase. But this was not easy for everyone, lots of hurdles were faced by lots of people so keeping this in view this research has been conducted to study the challenges faced by customers in using online shopping platforms during Covid-19 period. The data has been collected from 317 customers with the help of semi structured questionnaire and it has been concluded that delay in delivery followed by insufficient description, high delivery charges and color variation were the major challenges faced by customers.

KEYWORDS

Covid-19, online shopping.

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INTRODUCTION

Shopping experience has changed a lot in the 10 years. The needs of consumers' today are different. They are looking for an all-round experience. Consumers' today no longer want to be limited to their local store's limits and the availability of a single product class. They want to buy anything, anytime, from any channel and from anywhere. This has therefore led to online shopping and subsequent development. An increasing number of global companies are eyeing the rapidly growing online shopping market in India as improvements in infrastructure have been made and India's economy has grown.

Now a day's current retailing trends are showing complete shift from traditional store-based retailing to an increased use of the Internet leading to inclination towards online shopping (Keen et al., 2002). In the past years, many businesses are facing the challenge of incorporating e-commerce into their repertoire of services with the aim to serve their customers 24/7. However, in order to establish an online presence next to their existing physical store, retailers face the difficulty of not being able to use the same Performa for both the online and traditional stores. Although e-shopping incorporates many characteristics as "real world shopping" (Chen and Leteney, 2000; Lohse and Spiller, 1999), most of the time consumers are in a different frame of mind and have different informational needs while shopping on the Internet or the traditional way (Burke, 2002). Therefore, it is utmost important to first identify the analogies and differences among traditional shopping features and features of online shopping before setting up a proper format. Second, retailers have to be aware of all the advantages and disadvantages of online shopping compared to traditional shopping for better understanding of consumers' motives to choose one channel over the other.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced everyone to change the way they shop. As shoppers grew accustomed to waiting in lines, online shopping and curbside pickup also became the norm. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about an increase in online shopping because of government-imposed restrictions and consumer anxiety over the potential health risk associated with in-store shopping.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chang, and Meyerhoefer (2020) mentioned in their study that need for cereal, fruits, fresh vegetables and precooked foods have risen, benefiting small-scale farmers in agronomy. As per latest Nielsen report, there is a rapidly increase in online demand of India's FMCG goods that increased nearly 50% year-on-year in the March quarter due to shoppers increasingly purchased from e-grocers. Hand sanitizer sales reported a speedy growth of 1425 percent via online and 144 percent via a neighborhood store. The purchase of facemasks, hand sanitizer, face shield mask are more preferred products during this critical situation. There is a rapid rise in the Indulgence Food segment with the increase in the sales of cooking oil, soft drinks, pulses, snacks etc. Demands for laptops in India also increased due to work from home, online classes, teaching etc. The market for online courses is also on the rise. In its live courses, Topper is seeing a 100 percent rise in attendance. UpGrad enquiries have increased by 50 percent. There is also increase in BYJU user base. Inquiries into health plans are also growing, which would be good for the health insurance industry. In addition to grocery, these are the following products that are also preferred by shoppers.

Bhatti et al. (2020) discussed in the study that there is an influence of Corona virus on the whole online business of the world. The nature of business has changed due to this pandemic. According to the research more than 50%, shoppers are avoiding to go for offline shopping and crowded places.

Charumathi and Rani (2017) mentioned that online buying or E-buying is a kind of electronic business that provide services to shoppers to purchase goods or services from an e-retailer by using Internet technology with the help of web browser directly.

Saravanan and Devi (2015) specified that due to increasing use of Internet, the purchasing behavior of customers is changing and their attraction towards Ebuying is increasing day by day. Due to changing pattern in buying and selling of goods and services leads to tremendous hike in the count of online buyers. Now a day's electronic shopping has become increasingly popular, due to this dangerous corona virus. This panic has turned the life of people in various ways like work, shop, communication, purchasing habits, behavior, preference of products etc. Online buying behavior in India Saravanan and Devi (2015) found that with the improvement in the Internet, a technology of internet buying has also developed. It is a helpful way of buying products and services that provides shoppers the options for different varieties of products. Internet purchasing behavior is a kind of behavior of customers at the time of browsing websites or apps in order to search, select and buy goods and services for fulfill their needs and wants.

Rastogi (2010) found in the study that due to increasing utilization of internet, purchasers can purchase anything, from anywhere they want to shop with timely and protected price payment options. Purchasers can compare different products as well as websites or mobile apps to make better shopping. There are various reasons or drivers of online shopping like different types of products, convenient buying, reasonable prices and different options for payments.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this research paper is to study the challenges faced by customers in using online shopping platforms during Covid-19 period.

HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant difference in the challenges faced by customers in online shopping with respect to their demographic variables.

H_a: There is a significant difference in the challenges faced by customers in online shopping with respect to their demographic variables.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

To have a better understanding about the issue descriptive research design was used. To get the primary data close ended questionnaire was administrated.

SAMPLE DESIGN

317 online shoppers were selected through stratified purposive sampling from Udaipur City

ANALYSIS

The data collected was analyzed with the help of Arithmetic mean, t-test and ANOVA.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CUSTOMERS

The table 1 is presenting the demographic profile of customers, it can be observed that 66.88% respondents (N=212) were male and 77.92% customers were aged between 20 to 40 years. Majority of respondents (N=282, Percentage=88.96) were residing in urban area and maximum number of respondents (N=288, Percentage=90.85) belonged to middle class. Highest number of customers (N=233, Percentage=73.50) were married. 53% customers (N=168) were postgraduate and 72.24% respondents (N=229) were working in private companies.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CUSTOMERS

Gender	N	Percentage	Marital Status	N	Percentage
Male	212	66.88	Unmarried	81	25.55
Female	105	33.12	Married	233	73.50
Total	317	100	Divorced	2	0.63
Age	N	Percentage	Widow	1	0.32
Below 20 Years	12	3.79	Total	317	100
20-40 Years	247	77.92	Qualification	N	Percentage
40-60 Years	48	15.14	Undergraduate	16	5.05
Above 60 Years	10	3.15	Graduate	122	38.49
Total	317	100	Postgraduate	168	53.00
Area	N	Percentage	Other	11	3.47
Urban	282	88.96	Total	317	100
Rural	35	11.04	Occupation	N	Percentage
Total	317	100	Govt. Employee	11	3.47
Social Class	N	Percentage	Pvt. Employee	229	72.24
Upper	15	4.73	Businessman	21	6.62
Middle	288	90.85	Housewife	26	8.20
Lower	14	4.42	Student	17	5.36
Total	317	100	Other	13	4.10
			Total	317	100

CHALLENGES FACED BY CUSTOMERS IN USING FINTECH BANKING

To investigate the problems faced by customers in using Online Shopping during COVID -19 Pandemic, respondents were given a list of problems and they were asked to indicate the level of problem faced by them during online shopping on 5 point scale ranging from 5 (Always) to 1 (Never). According to results the major challenge faced by customers in online shopping during Covid-19 was delay in delivery (Mean=3.19) followed by insufficient description (Mean=3.18), high delivery charges (Mean=3.13) and color variation (Mean=3.07). The challenges which were often faced by Customers were Poor Response of Customer Care (Mean=3.00), Lack of Personalized Services (Mean=2.92), Hidden Terms & Conditions (Mean=2.89) and Poor Replacement procedure (Mean=2.86). The challenges which were sometimes faced by Customers were Poor Packaging (Mean=2.84), Damaged Product (Mean=2.78) and Difficulty in payment options (Mean=2.72).

TABLE 2: PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMER IN ONLINE SHOPPING DURING COVID-19

Problems	Mean	S.D.	C.V.	Rank
Insufficient Description	3.18	1.03	0.32	2
Delay in delivery	3.19	1.04	0.33	1
Damaged Product	2.78	1.12	0.40	10
Poor Replacement procedure	2.86	1.13	0.40	8
Difficulty in payment options	2.72	1.23	0.45	11
Color Variation	3.07	1.10	0.36	4
High delivery charges	3.13	1.20	0.38	3
Hidden Terms & Conditions	2.89	1.21	0.42	7
Poor Response of Customer Care	3.00	1.12	0.37	5
Poor Packaging	2.84	1.10	0.39	9
Lack of Personalized Services	2.92	1.18	0.40	6

Table 3 is presenting the respondents' status of overall problems faced by customers in online shopping. It was found that 51.42% respondents (N=163) have not faced problems whereas 48.58% customers (N=154) faced problems in online shopping during Covid-19 Pandemic. The mean score (32.56) indicated that respondents have not faced any problems in online shopping.

TABLE 3: OVERALL PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMER IN ONLINE SHOPPING DURING COVID-19

Overall Problem Faced	N	Percentage
No	163	51.42
Yes	154	48.58
Total	317	100
Mean Score	32.56	
Result	No	

Further to measure difference in problems faced by respondents with respect to their demographic variables, t-test and ANOVA test was applied and results received are presented in table 4 and 5. According to t-test results of table 4 there is no significant difference in the problems faced by male and female customers, but the rural customers (Mean=36.14) faced more problems in online shopping as compared to the urban customers (Mean=32.11).

The table 5 is presenting the ANOVA results to measure significant difference in problems faced by respondents with respect to their age, social class, marital status, qualification, occupation and monthly income. It can be observed that the F-statistic is not significant for age, social class, marital status and occupation whereas it is significant for qualification and monthly income of respondents. It can be concluded that qualification and monthly income wise significant difference exist in the problems faced by respondents during online shopping.

The table 6 is presenting the mean scores of problems faced by respondents with respect to their qualification and monthly income. It can be seen that under-graduate respondents (Mean=40.62) have faced highest level of problems. In the monthly income category respondents earning more than Rs 75000 per month (Mean=30.45) have faced least problems whereas highest problem was faced by the respondents who were earning less than Rs. 25000 (Mean=35.02).

TABLE 4: t-TEST RESULTS TO MEASURE DIFFERENCE IN PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMER IN ONLINE SHOPPING WITH RESPECT TO THEIR DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic Variable	Overall Problem Faced		t-value	p-value	Result
	Mean	S.D.			
Gender	Male	32.47	0.211	0.833	Not Significant
	Female	32.73			
Area of Residence	Urban	32.11	2.177	0.03	Significant
	Rural	36.14			

Level of Significance=5%

TABLE 5: ANOVA TEST RESULTS TO MEASURE DIFFERENCE IN PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMER IN ONLINE SHOPPING WITH RESPECT TO THEIR DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F-Ratio	p-value	Result
Age	Between Samples	381.199	3	127.066	1.180	0.317	Not Significant
	Within Samples	33708.97	313	107.696			
	Total	34090.2	316				
Social Class	Between Samples	66.213	2	33.107	0.306	0.737	Not Significant
	Within Samples	34024	314	108.357			
	Total	34090.2	316				
Marital Status	Between Samples	647.324	3	215.775	2.019	0.111	Not Significant
	Within Samples	33442.8	313	106.846			
	Total	34090.2	316				
Qualification	Between Samples	1208.6	3	402.868	3.835	0.010	Significant
	Within Samples	32881.6	313	105.053			
	Total	34090.2	316				
Occupation	Between Samples	545.647	5	109.129	1.012	0.411	Not Significant
	Within Samples	33544.5	311	107.860			
	Total	34090.2	316				
Monthly Income	Between Samples	1208.6	3	402.868	3.835	0.010	Significant
	Within Samples	32881.6	313	105.053			
	Total	34090.2	316				

Level of Significance=5%

TABLE 6: MEAN SCORES OF PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMER IN ONLINE SHOPPING

Demographic Profile		Mean Score
Qualification	Undergraduate	40.62
	Graduate	31.45
	Postgraduate	32.51
	Other	33.82
Monthly Income	Less than Rs. 25000	35.02
	Rs. 25001 to 50000	34.19
	Rs. 50001 to 75000	32.98
	More than Rs. 75000	30.45

CONCLUSION

From this research following conclusions have been drawn:

- The major challenges faced by customers in online shopping were delay in delivery followed by insufficient description, high delivery charges and color variation.
- The challenges faced by customers in using online shopping platforms were significantly different with respect to their area of residence, qualification and monthly income.

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