

A Comparative Analysis of Selected Online Shopping Websites in Chennai from the Customer's Perspective

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Abstract

Due to the dramatic increase in the number of individuals utilising the internet, the trend of online shopping in India has also increased sharply. Educated individuals, particularly those who work in the private sector and are time-constrained, prefer to purchase online for a variety of reasons. According to a research conducted by BCG, of India's 1,220 million inhabitants in 2013, 169 million were active internet users. The research shows that by 2018, the number of internet users would skyrocket and reach 583 million.

The popularity of online shopping gave rise to the idea of conducting this research to determine which of three popular shopping websites, Amazon.com, Flipkart.com, and Snapdeal.com, consumers prefer to shop from; one global company and two Indian companies. Wherein a convenience sample of 100 Internet users between the ages of 18 and 40 from the city of Chennai was selected. In addition to the personal interviews, a systematic questionnaire was administered to each participant to determine their website choice in Chennai.

The preferences were determined by descriptive study. The majority of male and female internet users favoured Amazon.com (55%) over Flipkart.com (32%), based on the numerous characteristics, factors, or services provided by these websites. Amazon ranked first among the three based on factors such as the best payment choices for all purchases, the widest range of products, the quality of the products, and the variety of products. Of the three, Flipkart was deemed to have the best customer service, while Snapdeal was deemed to have the best packaging.

Respondents said that all companies should display authentic products, offer improved return policies, and provide complete and accurate product descriptions.

I. Introduction:-

Due to the dramatic increase in the number of individuals utilising the internet, the trend of online shopping in India has also increased sharply. Educated individuals, especially those who work in the private sector and have limited time, as well as teenagers and young adults, prefer to purchase online for a variety of reasons. According to a research conducted by BCG, of India's 1,220 million inhabitants in 2013, 169 million were active internet users. The research shows that by 2018, the number of internet users would skyrocket and reach 583 million.

The popularity of online shopping prompted us to conduct this study to determine which of three popular shopping websites, Amazon.com (Global Corporation), Flipkart.com, and Snapdeal.com, Chennai residents prefer to use (Indian Companies).

II. Literature review:-

About online buying, numerous scholars conduct a variety of distinct investigations. Ann Schlosser (2005) did a study titled "Source Perceptions and the Influence of Online Word-of-Mouth Communication." The goal of the study was to evaluate how individuals utilise the content of consumer product reviews to form assumptions about the reviewers, such as whether they are speaking the truth, and how this affects their level of persuasion. Beyond clear information regarding the source's qualifications, there is some evidence that message content can influence source impressions, according to the study. Others have demonstrated that the persuasiveness of two-sided communications is contingent on whether the positive and negative aspects are negatively associated (such as price and quality or flavour and calories) or uncorrelated (Pechmann 1992). In their 2009 study, "Consumer Motivations for Internet Buying," Mary Wolfinbarger and Mary Gilly discovered that consumers shop online for goal-oriented, instrumental, and experiential motives. Yet, goal-oriented reasons are more prevalent than experience motives among internet purchasers. Accessibility/convenience, selection, information availability, control of sociality, low commitment to the experience, and, more generally, a sense of freedom and control are all characteristics of goal-directed purchasing, whereas offline shopping is more likely to be associated with experiential benefits. Experiential shoppers enjoy the thrill of scouring the web for the best deals. Before designing the mix of experiential vs. goal-focused features offered on a site, the authors suggested

that a company should understand both its products and its users; average time spent on the sites by users is correlated with goal vs. experiential orientation; therefore, using click stream data, companies should be able to estimate the proportion of shoppers and buyers who are goal-oriented vs. experiential. Sumeet Gupta and Hee-Woong Kim conducted a study entitled "Value-Driven Online Purchasing: The Mental Accounting Theory Viewpoint" (2009). In addition to monetary variables (i.e. perceived price), non-monetary, intrinsic elements (time, effort savings, risk and uncertainty, and pleasure from prior transactions) influence online customers' views of the value of a product or service. In addition, the study discovered that customers' value perception of Internet shopping influences their decision to purchase from an Internet vendor based on three determinants (convenience, pleasure, and perceived price) of transaction utility when they make purchase decisions using segregated evaluation. In addition to the comprehensive evaluation of attributes through perceived value, online shoppers also consider specific value determinants when making purchasing decisions from an online vendor. However, the study indicated that perceived risk had no significant effect on purchase intent. A study conducted by and Willemijn van Dolen (2010) on the topic "The influence of online store beliefs on consumer online impulse buying: A model and empirical application"; based on the cognitive emotion theory revealed significant effects of merchandise attractiveness, enjoyment, and online store communication style, all of which were mediated by consumers' emotions. In addition, the study gave the first evidence that online retailers offering hedonic products should concentrate on enhancing happy impact rather than minimising negative effect. By making the shopping experience interesting, enthusiastic, and motivating, good feelings are elicited, which may lead to impulsive purchases. According to the findings of Shih-Ming PiandJirapaSangruang's (2011) study, the perceived risk factors that have the biggest impact on Taiwanese consumers' attitudes regarding online buying are physical, performance, and social concerns. Another study conducted by J. Gao, C. Zhang, K. Wang, and Sulin B(2012) demonstrated that, given the limited information processing capacity of consumers, unconscious thought moderates the relationship between information quality and consumer satisfaction with regard to their decision-making when shopping for experience products online. Additionally, the study contributes to both unconscious thought theory and information processing theory by investigating the interaction effect of the quantity and quality of information with thought mode on the quality of purchasing decisions. Youg Liu, Hongxiu Li, and Feng Hu's (2012) article "Website attributes in urging online impulse purchase" based on Structural Equation Modelling Technologies suggested that personality factors of instant gratification, normative evaluation, and impulsiveness are key determinants of urge to buy impulsively, while perceived website cues of visual appeal, website ease of use, and product availability are significant precursors. Numerous studies examine online shoppers' motivations for shopping online and their preferences for particular shopping sites, such as Na Wang, Dongchang Liu, and Jun Cheng's Study on the Influencing Factors of Online Shopping (2008) and Adil Bashir's Consumer Behaviour Towards Online Shopping of Electronics in Pakistan (2013).

III. Research methodology:-

Research Objectives:-

Many research have been conducted on the various features of online purchasing and e-commerce websites. Due to the popularity of the internet and the shortage of time, many educated and young people are now buying online. The following goals were in mind when designing this study:

- To understand why people shop online.
- To understand the types of things purchased through internet retailers.
- Determine the number of respondents who prefer to shop on Amazon, Flipkart, or Snapdeal websites and the reasons why.
- To understand the various characteristics of the aforementioned websites.
- To investigate the effect of demographic characteristics on shopping website choices

Research Design:-

To determine the consumer preferences of online shopping websites, a descriptive study was deemed appropriate. Using a single cross-sectional study design, a survey was conducted to determine the preferences of respondents about the three websites on various criteria.

Sampling Strategy and Information Collection:

This study is based on the replies of 100 internet users between the ages of 18 and 40 who reside in Chennai. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was used to choose the sample. A self-administered questionnaire was selected as the major data collection instrument because it addresses the issue of information dependability by minimising and eliminating discrepancies in the way questions are asked and presented (Fowler, 2002). Taking this into account, the questionnaire primarily consisted of closed-ended questions.

Statistics Instruments:

To achieve the goals, simple data analysis approaches such as frequency counts and percentages were employed. Descriptive and Inferential Measurements were utilised to analyse the data and achieve the study's objectives.

Synthesis of the Data: -

The first step was to code the questionnaires and examine the data for errors. Following data washed, tables were made and descriptive research was done. We calculated frequencies and percentages.

Here is a breakdown of the respondent's demographics:

Table -1: Gender v/s Age

GENDER	AGE				TOTAL NO. OF RESPONDENTS
	18-25 yrs.	26-30 yrs.	31-35 yrs.	36-40 yrs.	
MALE	45	11	7	2	65
FEMALE	20	4	5	6	35
TOTAL	65	15	12	8	100

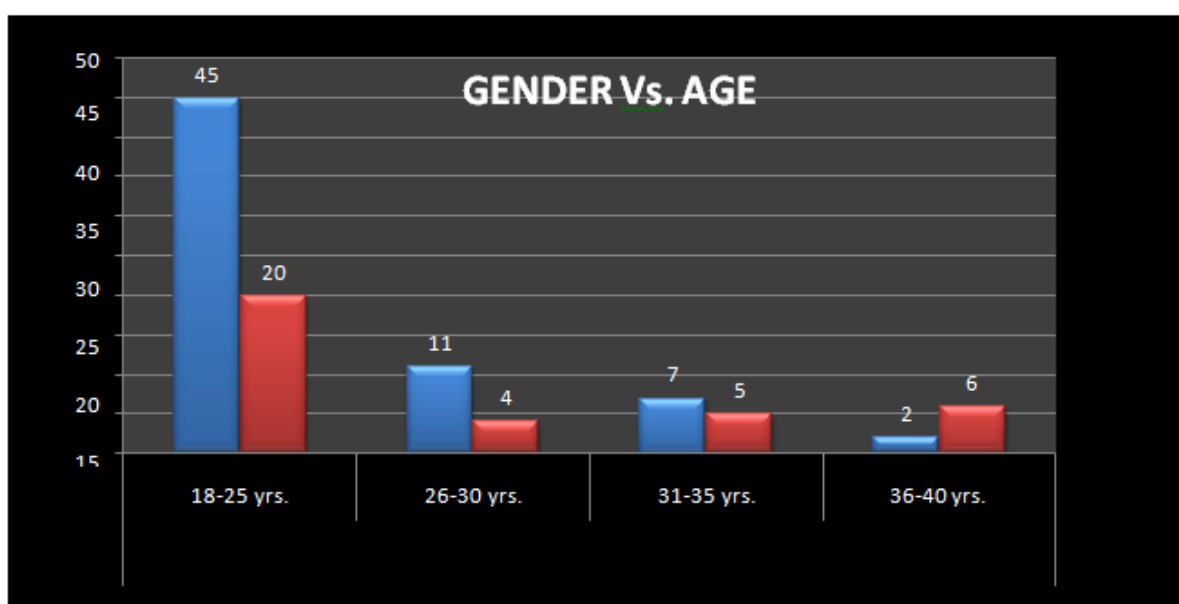


Figure-1: Gender v/s Age

The influence of demographic characteristics on website preferences was examined using a Chi-square test applied to a cross-tabulation.

Table 2: Age v/s Preference.

AGE	PREFERECE					G.T.
	GENDER	AMAZON	FLIPKART	SNAPDEAL	TOTAL NO. OF RESPONDENTS	
18 yrs. to 25 yrs.	MALE	25	16	4	45	65
	FEMALE	11	6	3	20	
26 yrs. to 30 yrs.	MALE	3	7	1	11	15
	FEMALE	2	2	0	4	
31 yrs. to 35 yrs.	MALE	3	4	0	7	12
	FEMALE	2	2	1	5	
36 yrs. to 40 yrs.	MALE	1	1	0	2	8
	FEMALE	3	2	1	6	
TOTAL		50	40	10		100

Chi-square statistics was computed as follows to test the aforementioned hypothesis:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^m \sum_{j=1}^n \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}}$$

Where $E_{ij} = \frac{R_i \times C_j}{G}$

Where O_{ij} = observed frequency in the i - j th cell
 E_{ij} = expected frequency of the i - j th cell R_i = Row Total of i th Row
 C_j = Column Total of the j th Column

G= Grand Total

Using $(3-1) \times (8-1) = 14$ degrees of freedom and a 5% threshold of significance, the chi-square statistic for H_0 was determined to be 7.1221, which is less than the comparable value of 23.68 in the chi-square table. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no correlation between age and shoppers' preferences for specific e-commerce sites, and the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2:-

- (H0).Online shopping preferences are unaffected by socioeconomic status, it seems.
- (H1).Online shopping website preference is income-dependent .

Table 3:-Income v/s Preference.

INCOME	PREFERECE			TOTAL NO. OF RESPONDENTS
	AMAZON	FLIPKART	SNAPDEAL	
Below Rs. 10,000	35	13	2	50
Rs. 10,000 – 20,000	12	12	10	34
Rs. 20,000 – 35,000	6	4	1	11
Rs. 35000 and Above	2	3	0	5
TOTAL	55	32	13	100

Using $(3-1) \times (4-1) = 6$ degrees of freedom and a 5% level of significance, the chi-square statistic for H_2 was determined to be 17.5572, which is larger than the equivalent table value of 12.59. Hence, the alternative hypothesis, that income has no effect on online shoppers' choice of websites, is rejected.

Table 4:-Attributes vs. Choice preference.

SR. No.	ATTRIBUTE	AMAZON	FLIPKART	SNAPDEAL	BEST WEBSITE
1	Best Payment options for products	1 (50)	2(40)	3 (10)	AMAZON.COM
2	Wide range of products	1 (60)	2 (30)	3 (10)	AMAZON.COM
3	Product Delivery Services	1 (50)	2 (40)	3 (10)	AMAZON.COM
4	Best quality products	1 (55)	2 (35)	3 (10)	AMAZON.COM
5	Best product return policy	1 (50)	2 (35)	3 (15)	AMAZON.COM
6	Honest and ethical	1 (50)	2 (40)	3 (10)	AMAZON.COM
7	Best Filters	1 (40)	1(40)	2(20)	AMAZON.COM FLIPKART.COM
8	Best Navigation	1 (45)	2 (35)	3 (20)	AMAZON.COM
9	Variety of Products	1 (54)	2 (38)	3 (8)	AMAZON.COM
10	Best Customer Care Services	2 (35)	1(60)	3 (5)	FLIPKART.COM
11	Wide Variety of Brands	1 (65)	2 (30)	3 (5)	AMAZON.COM

12	Best Website Appealing or Graphics	3 (20)	2 (30)	1(50)	SNAPDEAL.COM
13	Best Brand Image	1 (45)	2 (40)	3 (15)	AMAZON.COM
14	Reputation of not Selling Defective, Fake or Low Quality Products	1 (10)	3(30)	2(20)	AMAZON.COM
15	True Offers / Not out of Stock Offers	2 (35)	1(55)	3 (10)	FLIPKART.COM
16	Best Packaging	2 (35)	3 (25)	1 (40)	SNAPDEAL.COM

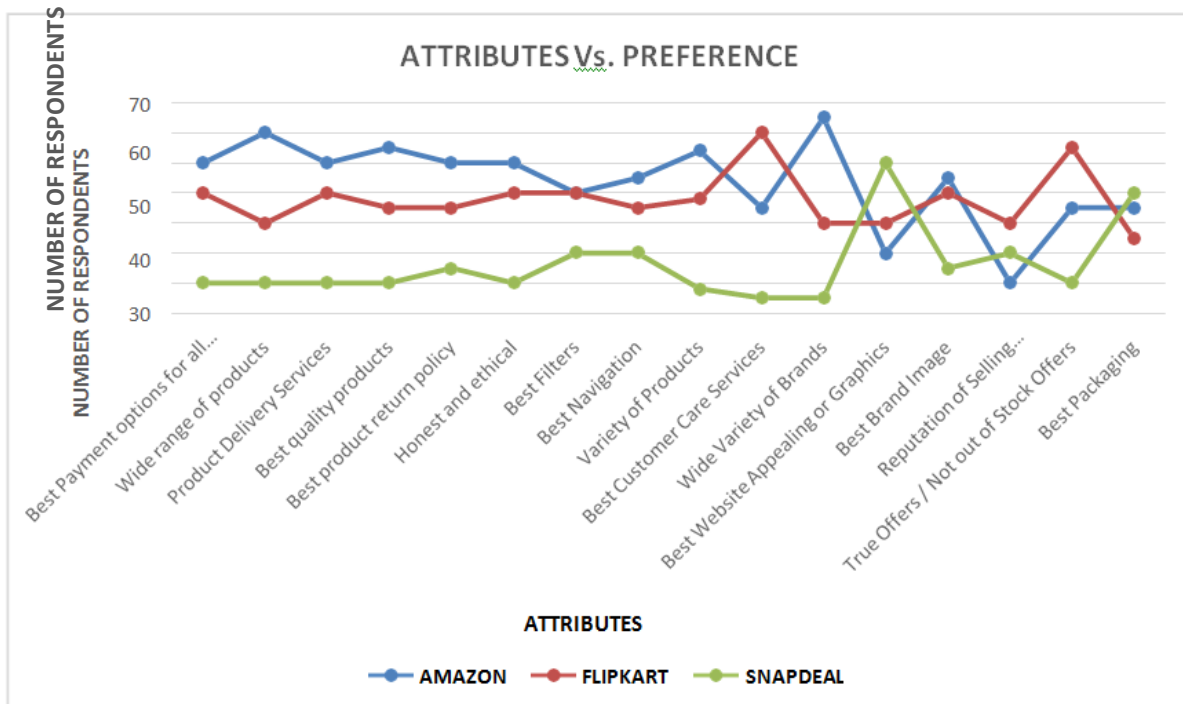


Figure2:- Attributes vs. Choice preference.

Takeaways from the Research:-

The study's main takeaways are as follows:

From a sample of 35 women, 18 say Amazon is their go-to, 12 say Flipkart, and only 5 say Snapdeal.

- Men followed a similar trend. The largest proportion (38%) chose to shop on Amazon.com, followed by Flipkart (22%), and Snapdeal (5%).

While respondents' choices for online shopping sites are not considerably influenced by their age, they are significantly influenced by their income.

Customers with annual incomes of less than Rs. 10,000 were more likely to say that they shopped at Amazon.com. Amazon.com is well-liked and widely used, reaching consumers all the way down to the lowest income bracket.

- After the initial screening question of "do you shop online? ", respondents were asked why they like online shopping. Respondents mentioned that they like the time savings, the flexibility to shop whenever they want, the wide selection of goods available, the ease of having those goods delivered right to their doorstep, and the excellent discounts and deals that can be found on such sites.

The majority of respondents use these sites to shop for clothing, electronics, accessories, shoes, groceries, jewellery, and books.

- When asked which of three websites offered the greatest payment options, product selection, product quality, delivery services, honest and ethical business practises, site navigation, and brand image, customers ranked Amazon.com first, Flipkart.com second, and Snapdeal.com third.

As for who provides the best packing and who has the most visually pleasing websites, Snapdeal.com came out on top among the respondents.

According to many, Flipkart.com has the best customer service because they provide customers with authentic deals and the most useful filters.

Customers recommended that businesses only show genuine items, have more generous return policies, and give more detailed descriptions of their wares.

Come up with solutions

The proliferation of internet facilities has led to an increase in the number of people shopping online in India. The respondents' average monthly income is the most important demographic aspect that goes into determining which online shopping website they use. Amazon.com was judged to be superior to the other two websites that were chosen to participate in this online shopping comparison in eleven of the sixteen categories that were taken into account for this investigation. It offers the widest selection of high-quality products, each of which comes in a number of various kinds, and it also offers a selection of pricing points that are tailored to the preferences of individual customers. According to consumer feedback, Snapdeal.com provides the best packaging and has the most appealing website, whereas Flipkart.com is regarded as having the best customer service, giving true and genuine offers, and having the best filters on their website. Snapdeal.com offers the best packaging and has the most appealing website. Customers that purchase online have suggested to businesses that they could enhance some aspects of their operations, including the display of original products, product return policies, and product descriptions.

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