A RESEARCH ON WHY CUSTOMER PREFERS SHOPPING ONLINE INSTEAD OF TRADITIONAL SHOPPING IN THE APPAREL INDUSTRY

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Abstract - *An abstract summarizes, in one paragraph (usually), the major*
Customer is changing the way he shops and where he shops. With the availability of internet a customer tends to buy stuff online rather than in a physical store. Many of the factors which affects consumer behavior are strong in the online shopping perspective. Companies too are shifting online because it has become easier to increase the market and manage the customer relationships easily. The research aims at finding out the reasons for this preference. Every brand needs to realize this preference, as the customer is shifting, they too need to do the same.

***Key Words*: Customer, Online Shopping, Preference, Product, Technology**

1. INTRODUCTION

Technology advancement has provided the opportunity for both the customers and sellers to conduct trade in a much faster and easier way. Online shopping is providing the customers with many benefits which the traditional shopping does not give to the customer. This affects the way a company formulates its strategy and where they decide to put their money. In terms of customers they are happy that they can now shop from home and get any brand in very less time, which 20 years ago would take up the entire day and still sometimes not find what they are looking for.

1.2 Literature Review

One of the key reasons customer prefer to shop online is convenience (Chaing and Dholakia, 2003).Another major reason for preferring online shopping can be to avoid long queues, yet it can be argued that the time needed to shop online is more than traditional shopping as one needs to wait for the product to be delivered. (Poulter, 2013), According to Grewal et al (2002), online shopping is more efficient in meeting the customers' demands. It allows the costumer to easily gain knowledge about the brand's product quality, availability, product specifications and prices, and compare that with those of another brand. This means they can now make more intelligent purchasing decisions in a way which is not possible through traditional shopping (Brown et al., 2003).

1.3 Hypothesis

1. Customer prefer online shopping as it is more convenient a customer can freely sit at home and avoid crowds
2. Customer prefer online shopping as they can easily compare prices and read product review

1.4 Statement of Problem

Nowadays customers are preferring to shop online rather than going to a store, this has changed how a company formulates it strategy, it is now almost compulsory for every brand to have an online platform or make their products available online .This study will find out the reasons behind customer preferring online shopping in the apparel industry

1.5 Research Problem

A study on why customers prefer shopping online instead of traditional shopping in the online industry.

1.6 Purpose of Research

Online shopping is daily affecting the needs of traditional shopping and the stepping out of customers from their home for traditional shopping, therefore we are seeing how consumers are shifting towards online products, different kinds of marketing mix affects the consumer behavior while purchasing products, the purpose of this research is to find out the reason behind choosing online shopping over traditional shopping

1.7 Objectives

1. To study why customer prefer online shopping instead of traditional shopping
2. To study why customer find it convenient to shop online.
3. To analyze how prices products variety and other factory effect customer behavior while shopping online.

1.8 Research Methodology

| Data Source	Primary: Questionnaire Secondary: Online Articles and Journals
Type of Research	Primary Research
Area of Research	Pune
Research Approach	Survey Method
Research Instrument	Questionnaire
Sample Unit	Customers who buy online and traditional product
Sample Method	Convenience Random Sampling
Sample Size	100

Table 1.0

2.0 Data Analysis & Interpretation

Question 1- How often do you shop online?
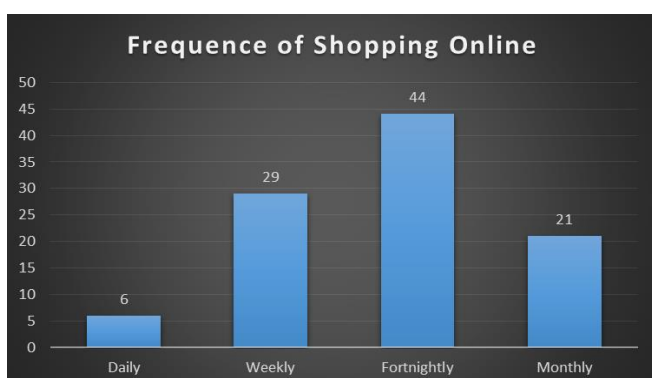
Graph 1.0Interpretation

Interpretation: We can see that around 30 % of the customers shop online at least once a week. It shows of how customers have shifted to buy products online. Around 60 % of the customers buy product 1-2 times a months. Buying apparels twice a month shows how customers are shifting to online shopping.

Question 2-Which online website/portal you prefer?
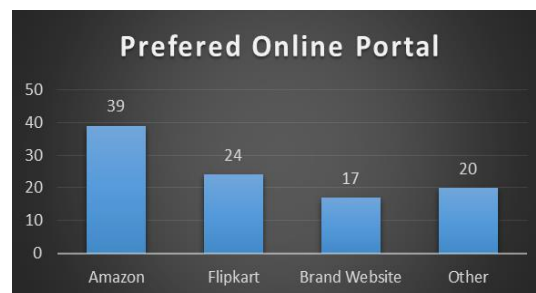
Graph 2.0

Interpretation: Approximately 40% of the customers prefer Amazon and 24% prefer Flipkart, we can interpret that customers like to shop from this portals as they offer regular discounts and it is easy to compare various brands and prices, Brand websites are for those customers that prefer one brand.

Question 3 - Do you consider the following are the advantages of shopping online?

Graph 3.0

Interpretation:

1. It is lesser priced and has more offers- Price is one of the key factors while purchasing a product , less price and more offers is why 62% of the customers are preferring online shopping

- 2. Some brands are easily available online- Approximately 90% of the customers feel that some brands are easily available online.

- 3. It is easier to compare prices and read reviews- Customers like to compare prices and read reviews to be sure of the product and 70 % of the customers find it easy to do so on the internet

- 4. It is easier to return/ replace products- In the apparel industry, size matters a lot, so therefore returning /replacing option should be available and 68% of the customers feel that it is easier to do so online.

- 5. It saves time- One of the key factors involved during shopping is the time taken. 85% of the customers agree that online shopping saves time

- 6. It has a wider variety – In the apparel industry, customers' demands for different style, color etc., 73% of the customers feel that online shopping provided them with more variety.

Question 4 - Do you consider the following are the limitations of online shopping?

Graph 4.0

Interpretation: General assumption that there is some risk of payment and late delivery with online shopping does not hold true with this sample, could be due to the advancement in online money transfer and company policies regarding delivery timings

3.1 Findings

- Customers are frequently purchasing apparels online as it is easily available along with the other advantages that comes along with it.
- Customers prefer amazon/ flikart as it allows them to compare different products and their prices easily.
- Availability of brands which are not easily found in the normal stores is one of the key reasons customers prefer to shop online
- Online shopping saves time which is very valuable to a customer
- Returning or replacing a product has become easier online, in traditional shopping one needs to go back on its own which again involves time.
- A customer can easily find all types of apparels online, in traditional shopping one needs to search many stores to find out what they exactly want.
- Advancement in technology has secured payment options and customers do not consider it a risk.
- Late delivery of products is mostly avoided may be due to proper SCM of the company yet a damage to the product is still considered a limitation.

3.2 SUGGESTIONS
- Companies which do not have an online presence will tend to suffer in the coming days so it is better for them to make their product available online.
- Customers can make an effort to shop apparel in the traditional stores as sometimes the physical touch and the feel of the cloth is more important than the other factors.
- Stores can provide certain offers and discount, or some kind of schemes to pull customers towards them.

Conclusion

After conducting this research on why customers prefer online shopping instead of traditional shopping we can say that the changing business environment, the advancement in technologies and management style plays a huge role in the consumer behavior. Some of the key factors for the preference of online shopping are time involved, availability of different brands, ease of comparing prices, reading different reviews etc.

The assumption which was prevalent in the previous years that online shopping has some risk regarding payments, but cash on delivery systems and advancements in technology has increased the security and made it a safer option. Yet the risk of the product being damaged whilst in the distribution process is still there.

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