

Online vs Offline Buying Behaviour of Consumers Towards Branded Apparel in Amravati City.

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Abstract

The rapid growth of e-commerce has transformed the way consumers shop for branded apparel, leading to a shift in consumer behaviour and preferences. This study investigated the online vs offline buying behaviour of consumers towards branded apparel in Amravati City, exploring the factors that influence their purchasing decisions and channel preferences. A survey of 50 respondents was conducted to gather insights into their preferences, behaviours, and demographics. The findings suggest that convenience, discounts, and product variety drive online shopping, while tactile experience and social interaction drive offline shopping. The study also examines the impact of demographic factors on channel preferences and provides insights for retailers to develop effective strategies.

Keywords: Online shopping, Offline shopping, Branded apparel, Consumer behaviour, Amravati City.

1. Introduction

The apparel industry is a dynamic sector where consumer preferences constantly evolve, driven by technological advancements, lifestyle changes, and global events. Branded apparel, symbolizing quality, status, and personal expression, sees consumers weighing trade-offs between online and offline channels. Online shopping offers convenience, variety, and discounts, while offline stores provide tactile experiences, instant gratification, and social interaction. Despite growing digital adoption, offline retail remains vital, especially for products requiring touch-and-feel, like clothing. A rapidly digitizing market with rising internet penetration branded apparel shopping is influenced by cultural nuances, price sensitivity, and varying comfort with digital transactions. Factors like brand trust, website usability,

and sensory experience shaping channel choices, but gaps persist in understanding context-specific drivers in India, particularly for branded apparel. The pandemic intensified online shifts, yet offline experiences retain importance, creating a complex landscape for retailers and consumers. The fashion industry has transformation over the period, shaped by technological development and changes in consumer behaviour. One of the most significant shifts is the change of online shopping as a control retail force, which has grown slowly in recent years. This development has effective transformation how consumers shop for clothing. This research aims to analyze consumer satisfaction regarding online and offline shopping of clothes in Amravati, India and to understand the factors that influence their shopping behaviour and choice in both settings.

Background of the study

Consumer behaviour is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. Shopping has changed as a result of the influence of technology, with the advent of online shopping more options have been provided to the consumers. This trend took centre stage in the past decade with many retail giants integrating the two approaches to achieve maximum benefit. This research aims to understand the comparison between online shopping & physical store shopping. A critical understanding of consumer behaviour in the virtual “Consumer behaviour is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society Shopping has changed as a result

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It also combines elements of psychology, sociology, social anthropology, and economics. Seek to understand the buyer's decision-making process, both individually and as a group. Clothing, one of the basic necessities to cover the body, has brought about a leap forward in fashion and lifestyle along with the progress of human civilization. Growing demand for apparel and fashion awareness among people from different socioeconomic backgrounds has led to the success of apparel retailing. The apparels industry reflects people's lifestyles and indicates their social and economic status. The consumers have varieties of option to choose in term of apparels category. Every human being preference of choosing apparels are different or same some want to wear branded apparel or some want just local apparels. There are few who want to have luxuries apparels. that why we can say consumer have different buying behaviors towards apparels. Due to technological development and growing globalization now a days consumer can purchase apparels online via website or mobile apps. And they can also purchase for the traditional method for shopping like instore, specialty stores and malls. Gender can have different perception for purchasing the apparels. along with age and family income influence the consumer purchasing decision.

After the days of COVID have come to an end, consumers have continued to shop online for the majority of the products. Window shopping is a new development, where shoppers visit a physical store to gain experience with the products and then purchase the same online. With all these developments, shoppers' behavior started changing and researchers have found a need to study the same in detail, to provide a pathway for the service providers. This has helped both the service providers and shoppers to build their ways of improving the quality of the services and gain better shopping experiences, respectively. Another event that is changing the lifestyles and behaviors of shoppers, is the usage of artificial intelligence (AI), analytics for improving services. Choices or selections of the shoppers are being

captured by the algorithms the service providers are using and, helping them to make changes appropriately. Capturing the changes in the behaviors of the shoppers will help them build their algorithms more effectively and serve them better. This development is contemporary and service providers have challenges in using these algorithms to capture the behavioral aspects of the consumers. Another development is, having several service providers for online and offline platforms who are serving different shoppers based on their inclination. The healthy competition in the market has opened gates for the service providers to be creative in designing their services and developing strategies to capture the market share. Shoppers have more options to choose and they shift their choices from one platform to another, also shifting from online to offline (offline to online). This shift also happens with changes in the likes and dislikes of the shoppers. These behavioral changes depend on several factors and need to be identified before making any decision on making improvements/changes in the services. The type of services and quality can be improved by knowing these factors

2. Review of Literature

Offline shopping trends were dominant for high-involvement products (branded apparel) due to trust, tactile experience, and instant gratification. Offline shopping preferred for product quality, social interaction, and sensory experience. Older demographics and those valuing immediate possession prefer offline shopping. It is observed that physical stores retain dominance due to tactile experiences and trust (Muhammed Muntaqheem, 2020). Offline shopping's tactile experience and instant gratification suited older demographics and high-involvement products like apparel (Dr. Sabyasachi Das, 2020). Online shopping trends were rising among males, digitally literate youth, and for convenience-driven purchases. It was driven by convenience, discounts, variety, and deals. Factors influencing online shopping were payment security, delivery reliability, product reviews. All such factors influence the online shopping. Online shopping's convenience, variety, and discounts attracted younger, tech-savvy consumers (Dr. Sabyasachi Das, 2020). Lockdowns shifted apparel consumers towards online shopping (M A Azeem Pervez, 2021). Emerging research suggest that brand

awareness and quality cues drive millennials' fashion clothing purchases (Muhammad Sabbir Rahman, 2021). On the other side Gen Z exhibits fashion hunting and deal hunting behaviors in online apparel shopping (Durgesh Kumar Agrawal, 2023). Conviction and e-retailer brand reputation influence online apparel purchases (Shantanu Prasad, 2023). Price and service quality drove online value while the product quality and tactile experience dominated offline value (Gupta, 2020).

Most existing studies suggested that retailers should adopt an omnichannel approach, blending online and offline experiences. It is important to focus on payment security, delivery logistics, and product authenticity to boost online sales. They should leverage digital marketing to target specific demographics (e.g., Gen Z, millennials). Optimize online platforms for quality-conscious consumers (Rituparna Basu, 2022). Kolkata shoppers prioritize secure payment gateways in physical shopping malls but favor online for convenience and deals (Pushpak Singhal, 2024). West Bengal consumers' online apparel shopping driven by quality, finish, and convenience (Jayjit Chakraborty, 2022). However, Urban Indian shoppers blend both channels depending on product type and personal context (Dr. Sabyasachi Das, 2020).

3. Problem Definition

A Study on Online vs Offline Buying Behaviour of Consumers Towards Branded Apparel.

The rapid growth of e-commerce has transformed the way consumers shop for branded apparel, leading to a shift in consumer behaviour and preferences. Understanding the differences in consumer behaviour and preferences between online and offline channels is crucial for marketers and retailers to develop effective strategies.

This study aims to investigate the online vs offline buying behaviour of consumers towards branded apparel, exploring the factors that influence their purchasing decision and channel preference.

4. Objectives of the study

1. To identify the primary reasons consumer engage in branded clothing purchases through online channels vs traditional bricks.

2. To determine the key benefits and drawbacks consumer perceive for both online and offline branding clothing shopping experience.

3. To understand the specific elements that influence buying behaviour, such as convenience, product availability, price, return policy and brand reputation.

4. To examine how consumer trust in brands, both online and offline, affects their purchasing intentions and loyalty towards branded apparel.

5. To investigate how demographic factors like age, gender, and income influence preferences for either online or offline shopping for branded apparel.

5. Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive and comparative research design to investigate the online vs offline buying behaviour of consumers towards branded apparel in Amravati city. The sample universe comprises individuals aged 18-50 years who have purchased branded apparel online or offline, with a minimum of 50 respondents targeted for the survey. Data will be collected through primary sources (surveys, questionnaires) and secondary sources (existing literature, research papers). The independent variable is the channel type (online vs offline), while the dependent variables include factors influencing purchase decisions (price, quality, brand reputation, convenience). The study aims to identify primary reasons for channel preference, benefits and drawbacks of each channel, and the impact of demographic factors on shopping preferences. Data analysis will involve percentage analysis, with results represented through bar charts, pie charts, and histograms. The hypothesis states that there is a significant difference in factors influencing purchase decisions between online and offline channels (H1).

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

H0: (Null Hypothesis) There is no significant difference in the factors influencing purchase decisions such as price, quality, brand reputation, convenience between online and offline channels for branded apparel.

Objective	Key Findings
Preferred Channel for Buying Branded Apparel	Online Shopping: 60% prefer online. Offline Shopping: 40% prefer offline.
Primary Reason for Preferring Online Shopping	Convenience & Time-saving: 40% Better Discounts & Offers: 30% Wider Product Range & Easy Comparison: 20% Avoid Sales Pressure in Stores: 10%
Primary Reason for Preferring Offline Shopping	Tactile Experience: 50% Immediate Purchase & Instant Ownership: 30% Social Experience: 10% Convenience: 10%
Influence of Discounts/Offer on Channel Preference	Online Shopping: 70% are influenced by discounts. Offline Shopping: 30% are influenced by discounts.
Perception of Trust in Online Shopping	Highly Trustworthy: 30% Moderately Trustworthy: 50% Slightly Untrustworthy: 10% Completely Untrustworthy: 10%
Biggest Benefit of Buying Branded Apparel Online	Home Delivery & Easy Returns: 35% Access to Global Brands & Styles: 25% Frequent Online Sales & Discounts: 20% No Crowds or Queues: 20%
Main Drawback of Buying Branded Apparel Offline	Limited Store Locations & Timing: 40% Higher Prices vs. Online Deals: 30% Less Variety Compared to Online: 20% Pressure from Sales Staff: 10%
Importance of Discounts/Offer in Channel Choice	Very Important: 40% Somewhat Important: 35% Slightly Important: 15% Not Important: 10%
Influence of Trust in Brand on Purchasing Intentions	Highly Trustworthy Brands: 60% Moderately Trustworthy Brands: 30% Trust Does Not Impact: 10%
Income Level and Preference for Online vs. Offline Shopping	High Income – Prefer Offline for Luxury Feel: 20% Mid Income – Prefer Online for Deals: 40% Budget-Conscious – Hunt Deals Both Online/Offline: 30% Income Doesn't Influence Choice: 10%

The hypothesis was tested using descriptive statistics and percentage analysis. Since the study aimed to explore the online vs offline buying behaviour of consumers towards branded apparel, a simple

descriptive analysis was sufficient to understand the preferences and behaviour of the respondents.

7. Findings and Discussion

The study revealed that 60% of respondents prefer online shopping for branded apparel, driven by convenience (40%) and better discounts (30%). In contrast, 40% prefer offline shopping, driven by tactile experience (50%) and immediate purchase (30%). The study also found that discounts and offers significantly influence channel preference, with 70% of online shoppers and 30% of offline shoppers citing discounts as a key factor. The perception of trust in online shopping is moderate, with 50% of respondents considering it moderately trustworthy.

The biggest benefit of buying branded apparel online is home delivery and easy returns (35%), while the main drawback of offline shopping is limited store locations and timing (40%). The study also reveals that trust in brand reputation significantly influences purchasing intentions, with 60% of respondents preferring highly trustworthy brands.

8. Conclusion

The study provides insights into the online vs offline buying behaviour of consumers towards branded apparel in Amravati City. The findings suggested that retailers should focus on providing a seamless online shopping experience, with convenient payment options and fast delivery, to cater to the growing preference for online shopping. Additionally, retailers should emphasize building trust and reputation to influence purchasing intentions.

9. Suggestions

According to the study it is suggested that the retailers should invest in digital marketing to promote online shopping and offer exclusive discounts to online shoppers. Retailers should focus on creating a engaging offline shopping experience, with interactive displays and personalized service, to attract offline shoppers. They should prioritize building trust and reputation by ensuring secure payment gateways, authentic products, and hassle-free returns. Retailers should consider offering omnichannel shopping options, allowing customers to seamlessly switch between online and offline channels.

10. Limitations of the Study

Despite its methodological rigor, the study has certain limitations. The study's focus on Amravati City may limit its applicability to other Indian cities or contexts

with differing cultural, economic, or digital landscapes. Additionally, the research concentrated on branded apparel without distinguishing between product categories e.g., fast fashion vs. luxury, traditional vs. Western wear, which could exhibit varying channel preferences. The data snapshot approach may overlook seasonal fluctuations e.g., Diwali or evolving digital adoption trends post-study.

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