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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ONLINE SHOPPING PRACTICES OF WOMEN IN LUDHIANA CITY

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ABSTRACT

The pervasion of internet technology in every nook and corner of urban as well as rural areas has lead to advent of online shopping stores. The on-line shopping is very popular these days in India because of comfort, availability of wider choice, discounted rates, easy mode of payment, easy delivery and return facilities. The present study was undertaken with the objectives to assess the online shopping practices of selected women of Ludhiana city, to gain an insight into the factors contributing to online shopping and preferred products for online purchase. The study was conducted in Ludhiana district of Punjab. Five localities viz; Punjab Agricultural University Campus, Sarabha Nagar, Kitchlu Nagar, Bhai Randhir Singh Nagar and Model town were selected purposively. The findings of the study revealed that the most influencing factor for online shopping was convenience, followed by discount/offers, wider choice, easy delivery of products and easy return system. Respondents mainly purchased small items of their personal use but they were still hesitant to shop online for major household items. Thus, total 175 women constituted the sample for the study. From each of selected locality, 35 households having internet connection and experience of online shopping were selected through snow ball sampling technique.

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, electronic market is a great revolution. The rise in technology gives good opportunities to the retailers to reach the consumers in much faster, easier and in economic way. Buying a product or a service over internet rather than going to a local market is called online shopping. Almost anything and everything can be purchased online from our home or workplace. There are many online retail websites like Flipcart.com, E-bay.com, Amazon.com, Snapdeal.com, Jabong and Myntra.com etc. which provide variety of products, brands and deliver the product at customer's door step (Topbullets 2013). The key drivers of growth of Indian e-commerce have been; increasing standard of living and purchasing power of middle class families, busy life styles and lack of time for in-store shopping, increased fuel charges, increased use of credit and debit cards, social net-working sites, increasing accessibility of internet, cash on delivery facility, discounted rates of internet, guarantee on faulty/damaged goods. Delafroozet *et al* (2009) found that convenience, low prices and wider choice of products are significant determinant of consumer's attitude toward online shopping. Michal (2012) said that logistics, financial security and privacy of their personal information, timeliness, convenience, availability and customer service were the criteria used by customers while online shopping. This paper intends to understand the online purchase practices of women in Ludhiana. As Ludhiana is a metropolitan city and is called Machaster of India. It has economically prosperous and educated population as compared to other districts of Punjab. So, the present study was focused on women of Ludhiana with the following specific objectives:

- To study the online shopping practices of selected respondents.
- To gain an insight into the factors contributing to online shopping and preferred products for online purchase.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to meet the objectives of the study, respondents were selected using purposive and snow ball sampling method. In the first stage of sample selection, five localities of Ludhiana City namely; Punjab Agricultural University Campus, Sarabha Nagar, Kitchlu Nagar, Bhai Randhir Singh Nagar and Model town were selected purposively as these were easily approachable and people of these areas are well educated, financially sound and had internet connection. From each of the selected locality, 35 households having internet connection and experience of online shopping were selected through snow ball sampling technique. Snow ball sampling was started with

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a small group required for the study, who then identified other appropriate members for the study. Further from the selected 35 households from each locality one female member who was actually doing online shopping was taken as the respondent for the study. Thus the total sample was comprised of 175 women respondents. For data collection, an interview schedule was prepared and pre-tested. The data were collected through personal interview technique and were analyzed using frequencies, percentage and correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads:

Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic profile included: age, education, status of the respondent, annual family income, type of family. The findings in this regard have been given below.

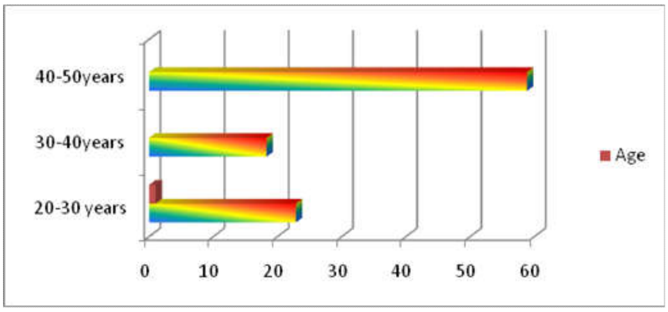

Fig. 1. Age of the respondents

As far as the age of the respondents is concerned, the data indicate that majority of respondents (58.85%) were in the age group of 40 to 50 years, followed by 22.86 per cent respondents who were in the age group of 20 to 30 years whereas only 18.29 per cent respondents belonged to the age group of 30 to 40 years.

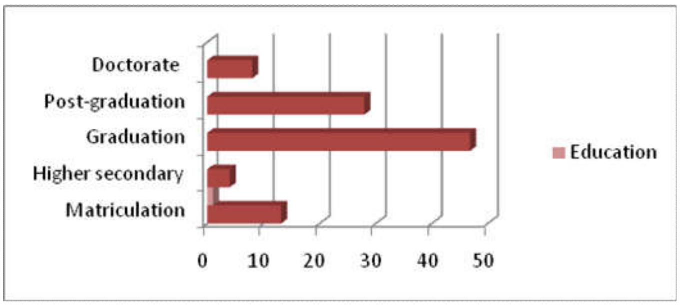

Fig. 2. Education of the respondents

Education is the important variable which affects the knowledge regarding new technology, shopping mode and decision making. The data enclosed in Fig 2 indicate that majority of respondents i.e. 46.85 per cent were graduates, however 28.00 per cent were post graduates, 13.15 per cent respondents were matriculates, whereas 8.00 per cent were doctorates and only 4.00 per cent were higher secondary pass. The result in Fig 3 depict that majority of online shoppers were housewives comprising of 57.15 per cent of the respondents, whereas 36.00 per cent were doing jobs and only 6.85 per cent of the respondents were entrepreneurs.

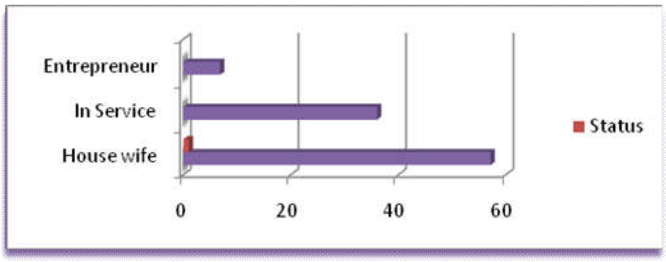

Fig. 3. Status of the respondents

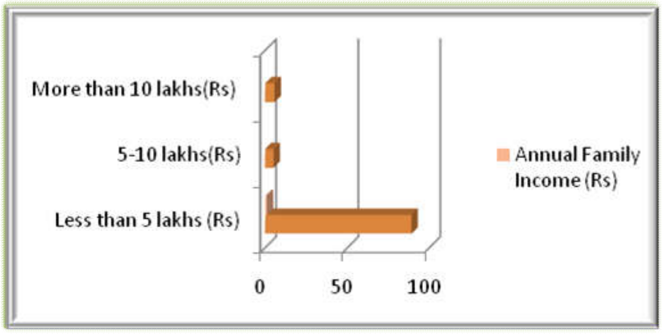

Fig 4. Annual Family Income of the respondents

Family income has been worked out by totaling yearly income from all sources i.e annual income of head of the household and other members of family. Fig 4 indicate that 89.14 per cent of the respondents were earning less than 5 lakhs, 5.71 per cent of the respondents were earning more than 10 lakhs and only 5.15 per cent of the respondents were earning 5 to 10 lakhs per year.

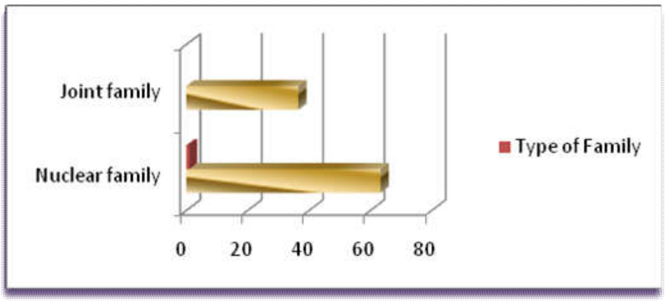

Fig. 5. Type of Family of the respondents

The results in Fig 5 depict that majority of the respondents (63.42%) were having nuclear family and 36.58 per cent of respondents had joint family. The above findings reveal that online shopping trend was more prevalent in nuclear and small families. It is concluded that maximum respondents were in the age group of 40-50 years and majority of them were graduates and post graduates. Nearly 60% of respondents were housewives and annual family income of vast majority of respondents was less than 5 lakhs. Maximum number of respondents had nuclear families.

Purchase pattern of the respondents for online shopping

Purchase pattern was studied in terms of frequency of online shopping. In this part respondents were asked about their purchase frequency for online shopping and data have been enfolded in Table 2.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their online purchase pattern

(n=175)

Purchase pattern Purchase;	Frequency	Percentage
Regularly	27	15.43
Occasionally	74	42.29
During discount	72	41.14
During non-availability of products in market/during festivals	2	1.14

The data in Table 1 reveal that 42.29 per cent respondents were occasional online shoppers, whereas 41.14 per cent respondents did online shopping during discount. However 15.43 per cent of respondents were regular online shoppers. Only 1.14 per cent of respondents purchased online when product was not available locally and during festivals.

Frequency of purchase during last six months

The data regarding the frequency of online purchase of the respondents was also collected to know the type of online buyers in the present study. The results have been shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to frequency of purchase during last six months

(n=175)

Frequency of purchase during last 6months	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 times	98	56.00
4-6times	37	21.14
7-9 times	27	15.43
More than 10 times	13	7.43

The data in Table 2 indicate the frequency of online purchase by the respondents during last 6 months. The results reveal that more than half of the respondents i.e 56.00 per cent purchased 1 to 3 times through online shopping during last 6months, followed by 21.14 per cent and 15.43 per cent of respondents who purchased 4 to 6 times and 7 to 9 times respectively during last 6months, whereas only a small percentage of respondents (7.43%) shopped online more than 10 times during last 6months. From the above results it is clear that very few (7.43%) respondents of the present study were regular online shoppers, nearly 1/4th were occasional and 1/6th were frequent shoppers, according to Rekhi and Sihra (2012) who categorized online buyers in four types: trial buyers, who had bought products online once in the last year; occasional buyers, who had bought products or services online two to four times in the last year; frequent buyers as those who had bought products five to ten times in the last year; regular buyers, who had bought products more than ten times in the last year.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to money spent during last six months

(n=175)

Money spent (Rs)	Frequency	Percentage
3000-4000	100	57.14
4000-5000	34	19.43
5000-6000	22	12.58
More than 6000	19	10.85

The results regarding money spent on online shopping during last six months are shown in Table 3. From the data it is clear that majority of the respondents i.e 57.14 per cent spent Rs 3000 to 4000 during last 6months, followed by 19.43 per cent respondents who spent Rs 4000 to 5000 during last 6months. Whereas 12.58 per cent of respondents spent an amount ranging from Rs 5000 to 6000 during last 6 months. Only 10.85 per cent of respondents had spent more than Rs 6000 for online shopping during last 6 months. The reason for spending less on online shopping might be the limited budget of the respondents for overall shopping during the year as majority of the respondents were earning less 5 lakhs in year.

Relationship between money spent and selected demographic variables of the respondents

The results regarding the Correlation between money spent on online shopping and demographic profile of the respondents are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation between money spent on online shopping and demographic profile of the respondents

(n=175)

Independent variable	'r' value
Education	0.19*
Age	0.15*
Status	0.15*
Type of Family	-0.12 NS
Annual Family Income	-0.09 NS

*Significant at 5% level of significance
NS= Non- significant at 5% level

An effort was also made to find out the relationship between the demographic profile of respondents and money spent by them on online shopping. From the results enclosed in Table 4 it is clear that there was a significant positive correlation between education and money spent by them, the 'r' value of (r = 0.19*, sig at 5% level) indicating there by that the educated respondents spent more money on online shopping. Similarly, there was significant positive correlation between age/ status and money spent by the respondents 'r' value was (0.15*) at the 5 per cent level of significance, indicating elder women spent more money on online shopping because they want to make hassle free purchases sitting at home without facing traffic problems, wasting their time and energy in visiting the market. However, there was a non- significant correlation between type of family and money spent by the respondents. The results pertaining to association between income and money spent also came out to be non- significant.

Factors contributing to online shopping

There are several factors that contribute to online shopping. The respondents were asked to rank various factors influencing online shopping namely convenience of online shopping, wider choice of products, discounts/ offers, easy delivery of products, easy return. They were asked to rank these factors from 1 to 5. Score of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 was assigned for rank 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 respectively. Then the mean score was worked out for each factor. The data regarding factors contributing to online shopping is presented in Table 5. It is clear from the data in Table 5 that the convenience to make purchase online was ranked I with the mean rank score of 2.17. The wider choice of products was accorded rank II by the respondents with the mean rank score (1.96), followed by discounts/ offers was placed at rank III with mean rank score 1.87, easy delivery of products at door steps attained rank IV with the mean rank score 1.68, whereas easy return system was placed at rank V with the mean rank score 0.87.

It is clear from the above findings that the most influencing factor of online shopping for the respondents of the present study was the convenience, followed by wider choice of products, discounts and offers, easy delivery of products however easy return had lesser influence on online shopping. The above finding are in line with that of Kumari (2013) who also reported that convenience, variety of products and reduced prices are the three significant factors, which influenced consumers for online shopping in India.

and beauty products through online, followed by 16.00 per cent of respondents who most often purchased these products through online shopping. The same percent of respondents i.e 16.00 per cent sometimes purchased these items through online shopping, whereas 59.42 per cent of respondents rarely purchased health care and beauty products through online shopping. It is clear from the data that more than half of the respondents were hesitant to make online purchase of health care and beauty products.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to ranking of various factors influencing online purchase

(n=175)

Factors influencing online shopping	Rank 1		Rank 2		Rank 3		Rank 4		Rank 5		Mean Rank score	Rank
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Convenience of online shopping	68	38.85	47	26.85	24	13.72	30	17.15	6	3.43	2.17	I
Wider choice of products	37	21.15	53	30.28	43	24.57	33	18.86	9	5.14	1.96	II
Discounts/ offers	39	22.28	33	18.85	48	27.42	47	26.85	8	4.50	1.87	III
Easy delivery of products	23	13.15	37	21.15	41	23.42	56	32.00	18	10.28	1.68	IV
Easy return	8	4.58	5	2.85	19	10.85	9	5.15	134	76.57	0.87	V

Table 6. Distribution of respondents according to the frequency of online purchase of their preferred products

Products	Always		Most often		Sometimes		Rarely		Mean Score	Mean Rank
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Apparel and Accessories	85	48.58	13	7.43	32	18.28	45	25.71	2.78	I
Electronic items/ Appliances	41	23.43	19	10.85	45	25.72	70	40.00	2.17	II
Books and Stationary	23	13.14	20	11.43	21	12.00	111	63.43	1.74	III
Health care and Beauty products	15	8.58	28	16.00	28	16.00	104	59.42	1.73	IV
Kitchen tools/ Utensil	15	8.60	20	11.45	34	19.45	106	60.50	1.68	V
Home care products	15	8.58	22	12.59	15	8.59	123	70.2	1.59	VI
Jewellery	16	9.14	6	3.43	24	13.73	129	73.70	1.48	VII
Toys and Games	9	5.14	8	4.57	29	16.57	129	73.72	1.42	VIII
Software items	7	4.00	13	7.43	22	12.57	133	76.00	1.39	IX
Gift Items	6	3.42	5	2.85	26	14.85	138	78.85	1.30	X
Music items	6	3.42	5	2.84	10	5.74	154	88.00	1.21	XI
Furniture items	1	0.57	0	0.00	13	7.43	161	92.00	1.09	XII

The data in Table 6 also depict the frequency of purchase of different household items. It is clear from the data that in case of apparel and accessories majority of respondents (48.58%) always purchased apparel and accessories through online shopping, whereas 7.43 per cent of respondents most often purchased apparel and accessories through online shopping, however 18.28 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased these through online shopping, whereas 25.71 per cent of respondents rarely purchased apparel and accessories through online shopping. So far as electronic items/appliances, are concerned only 23.43 per cent of respondents always purchased electronic items/appliances through online shopping, followed by 10.85 per cent of respondents who most often purchased electronic items/appliances online, however 25.72 per cent of respondents sometimes made online purchase of electronic items/appliances, whereas 40.00 per cent of the respondents rarely purchased electronic items/appliances through online shopping.

The data enfolded in Table 6 reveal that less than 15.00 per cent of respondents (13.14%) always made online purchase of books and stationary items, followed by 11.43 per cent of respondents who most often purchased books and stationary items through online shopping and 12.00 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased books and stationary items through online shopping, whereas a vast majority (63.43%) of respondents rarely made online purchase of books and stationary items. In case of health care and beauty products, only 8.58 per cent of respondents always purchased health care

Similarly, the data regarding purchase of kitchen tools/utensils reveal that only 8.60 per cent of respondents always purchased kitchen tools/utensils through online shopping, followed by 11.45 per cent of respondents who most often purchased kitchen tools/utensils through online shopping, whereas 19.45 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased kitchen tools/utensils through online shopping, whereas majority of the respondents i.e 60.50 rarely made online purchase of these items. So, the Kitchen tools/utensils were also less preferred household items for online purchase. So far as home care products are concerned less than 10.00 percent (8.58%) of the respondents always purchased these products online, whereas 12.59 per cent of respondents most often purchased home care products through online shopping, only 8.59 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased home care products online, whereas more than seventy percent (70.20%) rarely purchased home care products through online shopping. Table 6 further reveal that only 9.14 per cent of respondents always purchased jewellery through online shopping, as small as 3.43 per cent of respondents most often purchased jewellery through online shopping, whereas 13.73 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased jewellery through online shopping and majority of respondents i.e 73.70 per cent rarely purchased jewellery through online shopping. The data regarding toys and games reveal that only 5.14 per cent of respondents always purchased toys and games through online shopping, very few percent of respondents i.e 4.57 per cent most often purchased toys and games online, whereas 16.57 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased toys and games through online shopping and 73.72 per cent rarely purchased toys and games through online shopping. The data regarding software items reveal that a small percentage of respondents (4.00%) always made online purchase of software items, very few (7.43%) of respondents most often purchased software items through online shopping, only 12.57 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased software items through online shopping and majority of respondents (76.00%) rarely made online purchase of software items. The results regarding purchase of gifts items show that a small number of respondents 3.42 per cent always purchased gift items online, only 2.85 per cent of respondents most often purchased gift items through online shopping, only 14.85 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased gift items through online shopping and 78.85 per cent of respondents rarely purchased gift items through online shopping. In case of music items only 3.42 per cent of respondents always purchased music items through online shopping, a very few respondents (2.84%) most often purchased music items through online shopping, whereas 5.74 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased music items online and 88.00 per cent of respondents rarely made online purchase of music items.

So far as online purchase of furniture items is concerned it was the least preferred item for online purchase as in case of furniture items a negligible percentage of respondents (0.57%) always made online purchase of furniture items, only 7.42 per cent of respondents sometimes purchased furniture items online and majority of respondents (92.00%) rarely opted for online purchase of furniture items. From the data in Table 6 it is clear that apparel and accessories were the most preferred products for online purchase followed by electronic items/appliances, books and stationary items, health care and beauty products, kitchen tools/utensil, home care products, jewellery, toys and games, software items, gift items, music items and furniture items respectively. It can be concluded from the above findings that consumers mainly purchase small items of their personal use but they are still hesitant to shop online for major household items such as furniture, electronics, software items, jewellary, music items etc as they still feel the need to check quality of costly items before purchase. Another reason for low purchase of these items may be that these items are not frequently purchased items by the middle class people.

The above findings are supported by the findings of Kanwal (2012) who also reported that the psychology of Indian consumer is still the same i.e checking the product physically before purchasing it, which create mental hurdle for online shopping.

Conclusion

Online shopping is becoming an integral part of today's life style. This is due to the factors such as; comfort, wider choice of products, lesser price, easy delivery and return of products. The findings and analysis of data collected during the present study show that internet is being used by the respondents mostly for online shopping. It is clear that more respondents doing online shopping because of its convenience. Respendents preferred online purchase of mostly small items and did not like furniture, electronics, software items, jewellery and music items because they need to check the quality of costly items before purchase. So, the marketers need to prepare strategies for online marketing of costly items.

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