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Determinants of Online Shopping Behaviour Among Young Consumers in The Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

Consumer's preference towards online shopping is increasing day by day as evolution of smartphone and internet connectivity. This trend will continue in upcoming time. This research paper examines the factors influencing online shopping behaviour among youth, with particular attention to convenience, product variety, price comparisons, social media marketing, online reviews, personalized recommendations, and technological advancements. It also explores how digital advertising, influencer promotions, and special offers shape young consumers' purchasing preferences and buying decisions. The study highlights the growing importance of mobile shopping applications and digital payment systems in enhancing the online shopping experience. Alongside these benefits, it considers concerns related to data privacy, online fraud, payment security, and the reliability of e-commerce platforms. The discussion indicates that youth represent an important consumer segment in the expanding digital marketplace because of their familiarity with technology and willingness to explore online purchasing options.

Keywords: *Online Shopping, Consumer, Digital Marketing, Technology.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to maintain their dominant position in the market, organisations must adapt to new possibilities and threats brought about by globalization. In this light, the development of a robust infrastructure for online marketing has contributed to the meteoric rise of online shopping in India. These days, the internet serves as both a networking medium and a universal method of payment for buyers. Internet use has skyrocketed in India over the last several decades, making it a ubiquitous platform for communication, commerce, and the dissemination of knowledge. In a similar vein, the Internet has revolutionized international trade by connecting buyers and sellers around the world and facilitating instantaneous electronic transactions. In terms of online purchasing, the state of Maharashtra reportedly ranked second in India, behind only Delhi, according to the 'India Census 2014'. The other top states in this regard were Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.' India Census 2014', e-commerce company eBay found that Karnataka was the fifth most active Indian state in

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terms of online sales, behind only Delhi, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan. More than 80% of online consumers in India used their cellphones to access the portals via mobile sites or apps, according to two of the country's rapidly growing domestic e-commerce giants, Snapdeal and Flipkart. Mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and other electronic items were the most popular purchases in 2016, according to Flipkart and Snapdeal. Many Indians were seen purchasing valuable and motivational stuff, including high-quality phones, consumer gadgets, and appliances.

In addition to this, research has shown that, due in part to cultural and demographic factors, males in India are more likely to shop than women. Worldwide mobile industry watchdog GSMA reports that there are 114 million more males than women in India who own mobile phones, and that in 2011 the country's 29 states had more boys than girls. Rather of owning a phone, the majority of Indian women "borrow" one from a friend or relative. In addition, the majority of online purchases were made in metro areas with populations exceeding 100,000, such as Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi. Online sales were more prevalent in areas with lower population densities. Cities with populations below 100,000 and 50,000 accounted for about 60% and 40% of Snapdeal's purchases, respectively. Along with a rise in the proportion of the population living in areas with a population of fewer than 100,000 and 50,000, respectively, Flipkart saw a surge in sales of branded items across all categories. People in Indian towns started buying things online. Additionally, a surprising percentage of individuals over the age of 35 purchased online in 2016, even though this demographic is most represented on e-commerce sites.

Also, the number of Indians using the Internet continues to rise; in 2014, around 243 million people did so. Reasons for this include budget-friendly internet tariff plans and smartphones. As a result of these justifications, people began to move their purchasing habits online. The yearly growth rate of e-commerce was 38%. Online sales were worth 90,000 crores Indian rupees in 2014, and experts expect that number would rise to six lakh crores in the next five years. Rumor has it that the younger generation makes up about 70% of internet users and online buyers. When it comes to customers, young people are making a big splash, especially when it comes to internet purchasing. Online merchants in India have a lot to look forward to since the younger generation uses the internet a lot.

II. YOUTH AND ONLINE SHOPPING

There is a disproportionate number of young people who shop online. The reason for this is that younger generations, especially millennials and Generation Z, have grown up with digital technology and the internet, thus they are more prone to purchasing online. A nationwide study in India revealed that 60% of youths ranging from 9 to 17 years old spend more than three hours each day on gaming or social media websites (TNN / Updated: Sep 23). As is often the case, young people are quick to get on board new technology, and social media sites are no exception. Teens and young adults make up a disproportionate share of internet shoppers for the reasons listed below.

More and more, younger generations are at ease using cellphones, laptops, and the internet for a range of tasks, including purchasing. Online shopping is perfect for young people since it enables them to shop whenever and whenever they choose, which is perfect for their busy lives. The wide variety of goods offered by online companies caters to the many interests and preferences of today's

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young. From fashion and technology to speciality and niche items, there is something for everyone. Millennials and Gen Z are particularly drawn to online platforms because of the convenience they provide when it comes to pricing and product comparisons. Products from all around the globe are available to young customers, who may find unique and fashionable things.

Online shopping platforms often provide user evaluations and ratings that young people utilise to make smart purchase judgements. Instagram and TikTok are only two of the many channels where celebrities and influencers promote products and trends, which greatly affects the buying patterns of young consumers. There are a lot of young people who use their phones to shop; they research products, make purchases, and even keep tabs on their packages. Digital wallets, credit cards, and other online payment options are often used by the young, which makes the checkout process fast and easy.

Free delivery, access to special content, and discounts are just a few of the perks that young people get as users of membership programs offered by many online retailers like Amazon Prime. Because of their heightened awareness of environmental issues, younger generations may choose to purchase online rather than at brick-and-mortar stores, therefore lowering their carbon footprint. Young people are increasingly influenced by fads in style, tech, and lifestyle, and they can easily keep up with these trends via internet shopping. Many individuals, particularly younger ones, buy things on the spur of the moment while shopping online because of how easy it is.

III. FACTORS MOTIVATING THE YOUTH TO PURCHASE ONLINE

The young of a nation are its strongest asset and primary source of economic growth. Young people are often called innovators since they are the first to embrace any new concept or change. There are a lot of elements that impact consumer buying behaviour, and these aspects vary from person to person. A study by Hoot Suite in 2019 found that daily internet use averages 6 hours and 42 minutes.

The rise of e-commerce platforms, especially among younger customers, has altered the retail scene. If businesses want to create targeted marketing efforts for young people, they need to know what motivates them to shop online. There are many compelling reasons why young people prefer to purchase online, and these aspects all contribute to the attractiveness of e-commerce.

Convenience and Accessibility

The convenience and accessibility offered by e-commerce platforms is the main reason why young people choose to shop online. The convenience of being able to purchase online at any time and from any location is highly prized by younger consumers. This availability at all hours is perfect for their often busy and active lives.

Variety and Choice

Online marketplaces provide a significantly wider selection of goods than traditional brick-and-mortar stores. Customers under the age of 35 have more selections to peruse, which increases the likelihood that they will discover what they're searching for. Examples of websites that appeal to youthful clients' diverse preferences include Etsy and eBay, which provide a wide range of unique things, from handcrafted crafts to popular brands.

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Competitive Rates and Rebates

Because most young people don't have a lot of disposable income, price sensitivity is an important factor for them. Because of their competitive pricing, regular deals, and special online discounts, e-commerce platforms are a popular choice for consumers. Sites like Groupon and Honey let customers save money on their purchases by providing them with coupons and offers. Young buyers are able to make frugal choices since it is easy for them to compare costs from different vendors.

Social Media Presence and Evaluations

You can't put a price on the influence that online reviews and social media have on millennials' spending habits. Peers and popular figures they follow on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have a significant effect on young consumers. They are more likely to purchase anything if they have positive reviews and suggestions from reputable sources. Take cosmetic products as an example. When YouTubers suggest them, retailers like Sephora or Ultra may see a surge in sales.

A Tailored Purchasing Trial

Personalized purchasing experiences offered by data-driven e-commerce platforms are well-received by younger consumers. Based on a user's browsing history and transactions, suggestions provide a personalized shopping experience that seems unique to each individual. After Spotify's success with personalized playlists, similar algorithms were applied in online purchase by services like Netflix for movie recommendations and Amazon for goods suggestions.

Technology Integration

Being born and nurtured in the digital era, today's youth are used to integrating technology into their shopping experiences. Innovative features, such as augmented reality (AR) try-ons, together with secure payment methods and seamless integration of mobile applications have made online shopping more engaging and user-friendly. Retailers in the fashion industry are already using augmented reality to give consumers a better idea of what they're getting before they buy. Zara and IKEA are just two examples.

Reliable and Speedy Shipping

A big motivator for people to buy things online is efficient delivery techniques. Online retailers who can satisfy the impatience of young people with reliable, fast, and often even same-day shipping are sure to be a hit. There is a lot of pressure on other online retailers to enhance their logistics systems so they can compete with Amazon Prime's lightning-fast shipping.

IV. IMPACT OF ECOMMERCE PLATFORMS IN SHAPING THE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF YOUTH

Among the many areas of daily life that have been transformed by the rapid advancement of technology and the ubiquitous usage of the internet is the act of shopping. The Indian e-commerce sector has grown substantially throughout the last two decades. An increasing number of individuals are using mobile phones and the internet, which explains this. The combination of unfavorable demographics and the rising popularity of online purchasing has transformed the way companies

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connect with their consumers and the e-commerce market in India has seen a fundamental revolution. Marketplaces that have embraced online services are in high demand, particularly in regions where e-commerce is still in its infancy, due to the Internet's enduring significance in facilitating interpersonal interactions and information sharing. According to Prveen Kumar (T M Kumar), P Divyashree (2023). Online marketplaces have risen to the top of the retail food chain due to their unparalleled accessibility, selection, and ease of use. Among all demographics, young people are the most engaged and active on these sites. Knowing how e-commerce platforms influence the shopping habits of this tech-savvy group is vital since they are significantly influenced by the online environment.

Online shopping has been more popular among millennials and Gen Z because of the technological revolution that has empowered this generation to rely on technology for personal benefits. Among young people, Flipkart and Amazon are the two most popular online marketplaces. A surge in demand for online shopping may be attributed to the plethora of alternatives offered to customers at reasonable rates. Online shopping for apparel and accessories is more popular than for things like technology, banking, and weddings. The younger generation has several reasons why they like internet shopping (S. Kumar Hemanth Dr., S. Umakanth Dr., 2018). The convenience of being able to shop whenever and wherever you choose, the wide variety of items available, and the ease of comparing costs are the main factors contributing to this choice. For instance, young consumers may get what they need without leaving the house thanks to the extensive product catalogues offered by websites like ASOS and Amazon, which include everything from clothes to technology. The accessibility of user reviews, ratings, and comprehensive product information also helps young customers make better purchase selections. Thanks to their convenient return policies, speedy shipping, and several payment options, these platforms are hard to resist. One of the most common ways to buy in current modern era is online, and this is true not just in India but all throughout the world. Uttarakhand is just one of several Indian states where online commerce is booming. The many advantages, ease, and time savings it provides have made it an addiction for many, especially those living in the plain region. Consumers' propensity to shop online is unaffected by demographic variables such as gender, household size, marital status, annual income, and annual expenditures. Everyone, in any circumstance, makes purchases online. Buying things online has become into a fun and easy pastime.

The web and online marketing have a significant impact on the purchasing habits of young people when they use e-commerce platforms. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok expose younger customers to advertisements, sponsored content, and endorsements from prominent figures on a daily basis. An Instagram fashion influencer, for instance, may invite their followers to peruse a forthcoming clothing line available for purchase on an online shop by sharing a link to the line. These mediums not only shape trends but also affect customers' perceptions of businesses and introduce them to new products. Particularly powerful people have considerable influence over others because their admirers see them as trustworthy and approachable. Influencers play a crucial role in digital marketing campaigns due to their influence on the purchase choices of younger customers as a result of the material they post.

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Another major factor that impacts the purchasing habits of young people is sales and discounts. Sales, discount codes, and loyalty programs are standard ways for internet retailers to attract and retain young consumers. Companies like Sephora use loyalty programs to reward customers for shopping with exclusive deals and early access to promotions in the hopes that they would make more purchases. The promise of a great price often leads people to make impulsive purchases, which in turn increases their total spending. Because they are often frugal and have little disposable income, these marketing strategies resonate well with young people.

Online marketplaces have also adapted their offerings to appeal to a younger demographic. Personalized suggestions, easy-to-navigate user interfaces, and fun mobile applications all contribute to a better shopping experience. Examples of similar recommendation algorithms include Spotify's curated playlists for online retailers and the way services like Netflix tailor movie suggestions to individual users based on their watching habits. The ability to create wish lists, see the status of purchases in real time, and talk to customer service representatives via chatbots or live chat further improves the user experience. Not only do these features increase consumer happiness, but they also foster brand loyalty among the younger demographic. As people spend more time online, they are more likely to use social media. In both developed and developing countries, consumers are becoming used to accessing many social media sites. There has been a noticeable increase in the difficulty of internet marketing and online shopping. A brand's success hinges on its ability to build connections with consumers on social media and effectively manage these channels.

V. WAYS TO SAFEGUARD THE YOUNGSTERS WHILE E-SHOPPING

They should only buy from reputable online businesses and use review and rating systems to evaluate the site's reliability. They should verify that the website they are accessing is safe by looking for the "https://" prefix in the URL. It is recommended that users refrain from entering personal information on unprotected websites.

People should exercise caution when they receive emails or websites requesting them to make a transaction. Perpetrators of identity theft and financial fraud often employ phishing emails to trick victims into divulging sensitive information. Passwords for online shopping accounts should be complex, unique, and include a combination of letters, numbers, and special characters. To make online purchases securely, turn on two-factor authentication wherever it's an option. It is recommended that they stick to private and secure networks while shopping online, rather than using public Wi-Fi networks, which are sometimes unsecure. A person should always use the most current version of antivirus and anti-malware software on their computer or mobile device. Maintain an up-to-date operating system and software installation. When compared to other payment methods, such as direct bank transfers or debit cards, credit cards often provide better security against fraudulent charges. Online purchases made using a credit card should be seriously considered by them. A virtual credit card number, linked to a physical card but only used once, is offered by certain financial institutions. An extra safeguard may be offered by this. Scammers sometimes use absurdly cheap prices to lure in unsuspecting victims. Deals that seem too good to be true usually are. When they shop online, be sure to save all of the relevant paperwork, including receipts, confirmation emails, and shipment details.

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Regular inspection of bank and credit card statements is necessary to detect and prevent any suspicious or illegal activity. Instead of giving the seller your credit card number over the phone, you may use a known payment method like PayPal, which provides an additional layer of protection.

VI. CONCLUSION

Due to advancements in information and communication technology (ICT), online payment methods, and widespread Internet access, online shopping is becoming more popular. Research has shown that factors such as internet speed, website design, customer experience, age, learning curve, security, and customer experience all play a role in online purchasing behaviour, in contrast to physical and store shopping. Tech entrepreneurs and lawmakers would do well to study these specific features of online buying and the habits of online buyers so that they may develop market-appropriate solutions. Like consumers everywhere else in the globe, internet buyers tend to be rather young, with the average age being less than 40. They choose to purchase online rather than at physical shops because it saves them time, has more choice in clothing, accessories, and tickets, and enables home delivery. While shopping online, people largely use price and personal experience to determine an item's quality, and they prefer to pay with cash on delivery. Most consumers rely on Facebook ads, which they see via "word of mouth" recommendations from friends and family. Nevertheless, internet buyers are most turned off by concerns about privacy and the lack of a tactile experience. Theoretically and pragmatically, these research results are significant.

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