

ANALYSIS OF SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN MADURAI CITY

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Abstract

The rapid growth of the digital market has influenced buying behaviour among college students, especially in Madurai City. A large number of students come from all over India for their UG and PG studies. This study investigates the factors influencing students to shop online, including brand awareness, unplanned buying, AI chatbot, and social media influences. Standardised questionnaires were used to collect primary data. This research analyses virtual and physical shopping preferences, purchase frequency, and budget considerations. The results provide better suggestions for virtual stores and retailers to strengthen their marketing plans for better market penetration.

Keywords: Online & offline shopping, Brand Fame, AI chatbot, Discounts & gift cards, peer suggestions, social media persuasion.

Introduction

Due to digital marketing, there was a flourish in past decades. During the COVID period, the online market played a vital role. Now, it retains the same position for the generation-changing college students. This study focuses on residential students' buying behaviour. The components influencing them to shop include peer suggestions, trends, brand reputation, price, budget, convenience, and social media.

In Madurai, a city well known for its a treasure trove of cultural practices and educational institutions, virtual shopping patterns induce youngsters to buy nowadays. Are they shopping frequently or rarely? In addition to this, retailers have the same relevance in shopping for apparel, electronics, and food. Students need references before purchasing a product. Finally, students' buying behaviour, whether online or offline, will provide essential information to both digital and physical retailers.

Need & importance of the study:

It's a big challenge for digital and in-person retailers to identify the taste and preference of college students by using chatbots to drive customer choice to the marketer. Additionally, this study provides in-depth knowledge of digital marketing and discount strategies to attract customers

Scope for the study

The study focuses on demographic buying behavior among college students. It examines the frequency of purchases through online and offline stores. Factors influencing purchases include discounts and offers, brand reputation, social media trends, and peer recommendations. Likert scale-type questions are asked to arrange their preferences in order.

Literature review

Online shopping behaviour

While traditional retail shopping has remained relatively unchanged, digital shopping trends have emerged in Madurai, a tier-2 city in Tamil Nadu. A study by Rajan and Venkatesh (2023) on college consumers in Madurai indicated that 65% of students prefer online shopping for clothing and accessories, whereas 35% still visit local markets for personalized experiences and price negotiations.

Analysis of Online Shopping Behaviour of Consumers in Madurai City (Hema Malani, 2019, INFLIBNET): This study analyses consumer buying behaviour through online shopping, using a convenience sampling technique and examining the problems customers face.

Madurai College Students Prefer Online Shopping (ISSN 0975-217X, S. Balaganapathy, Dr. Shourini Banerjee, 2019): The researchers focused on factors such as time-saving, free shipping, cash on delivery, and the option to return products if not satisfied. This study mainly discusses communication and message passing through digital platforms.

A Study on Customer's Online Purchasing Behaviour with Reference to Madurai City (V. Sheela Selva Kumari, 2023): This research analyses online purchases and provides necessary information for retailers to meet customer needs and preferences.

A Study on Women's Buying Behaviour Towards Dresses in Online Shopping in Madurai District (V. Ganga Sruthi, E. Sowndharya, Dr. M. Dinesh Kumar, 2023): This research highlights common issues faced by consumers, including low-quality and damaged products.

Objectives

- To analyze the factors influencing shopping behavior among college students.
- To examine the impact of digital consumerism.
- To evaluate customer unplanned buying behavior.
- To provide guidance for retailers to increase customer satisfaction.
- To compare digital and physical shopping preferences.
- To identify whether brand loyalty, discounts, peer influence, and social media reviews induce them to buy.
- To identify frequent buying habits and budget.

Research Methodology

For primary data, structured questionnaires were prepared. Descriptive and analytical interpretations were gathered. The questionnaires were distributed via Google Forms and in-person interviews. A total of 17 questions were framed, including Likert scale-type questions. Secondary data was collected from journals, research papers, e-commerce reports, and conference proceedings.

Sampling Design: random sampling Design

Sample Size: 150 college students from various institutions

Data Analysis: Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, factor analysis, chi-square test, and the weighted average method were used for data interpretation.

Results

Table -1
(Percentage Analysis of Consumer Shopping Behaviour and AI Interaction)

Factors	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	18-21	30	20
	21-25	105	70
	Above 25	15	10
Gender	Male	56	42
	female	94	68
Shopping Frequency (Every 2 Months)	once	60	40
	2-3 times	60	40
	4-5 times	15	10
	More than 5 times	15	10
Shopping Preference	Online	75	50
	Offline	45	30
	Both	30	20
AI Chatbot Helpfulness	Helpful	100	66.7
	Not helpful	50	33.3

The majority of the consumers (70%) belong to the 21-25 age bracket, and hence the e-commerce websites need to promote to this age bracket. Female students (68%) are busy consumers, and hence the businesses need to target female dominated campaigns. E-shopping is the preference of 50% of the students, and hence the demand for online marketing, increased AI support, and smooth e-commerce experience is even higher. Chatbots are easy for the majority of the students(66.7%), but chatbot customization and personalization might even increase take-up.

Weighted average method

Table-2
(Impact of Discounts, Impulse Buying, and Reviews on Shopping Behaviour)

Variables	Strongly Agree(5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree(1)	Average	Rank
Discounts and promotional offers strongly influence my shopping decisions.	22	56	65	3	4	3.59	3

I tend to buy products impulsively without prior planning	14	55	49	19	13	3.28	4
I trust online reviews and ratings before making a purchase decision	15	45	61	13	16	3.20	5
Quality of product	51	63	29	2	5	4.02	1
advertisements on social media	20	43	47	23	17	3.17	
Good customer service	37	46	49	11	7	3.63	2

Table 3 shows that the first preference is given to product quality, followed by customer service and discounts & promotions. The least importance is given to impulsive buying and trust in online reviews.

Factor Analysis :

Table -3

(Rotated Factor Loading Table (using Principal Component Analysis - PCA with Varimax Rotation) Repeat shopping behaviour

Factors	Factor 1 (Service & Trust)	Factor 2 (Convenience & Offers)	Factor 3 (Product & Price)
Product Quality	0.32	0.21	0.78
Affordable Prices	0.18	0.25	0.80
Discounts & Promotional Offers	0.12	0.26	0.32
Convenience & Ease of Shopping	0.21	0.79	0.27
Fast & Reliable Delivery	0.28	0.81	0.23
Good Customer Service	0.84	0.30	0.18
Trust & Brand Reputation	0.86	0.21	0.22
Peer Recommendations & Offers	0.72	0.25	0.30
Easy Return & Refund Policies	0.78	0.41	0.22

Factor 1: Service & Trust

Key Influencing Factors: Good Customer Service (0.84), Trust & Brand Reputation (0.86), Peer Recommendations (0.72), and Easy Return & Refund Policies (0.78).

Insight: Consumers who prioritize trust, reputation, and service quality are more likely to return to the same store.

Factor 2: Convenience & Offers

Key Influencing Factors: Discounts & Promotional Offers (0.76), Convenience & Ease of Shopping (0.79), and Fast & Reliable Delivery (0.81).

Insight: Consumers who value convenience, fast delivery, and promotional offers exhibit repeat shopping behavior.

Factor 3: Product & Price

Key Influencing Factors: Product Quality (0.78) and Affordable Prices (0.80).

Insight: Consumers who focus on quality and price competitiveness prefer to return to the same store for consistent product reliability.

Hypothesis Formulation

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant association between gender and shopping budget every two months.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant association between gender and shopping budget every two months.

A Chi-square test is conducted to determine the relationship between gender and shopping budget.

Table-4

Chi-square test for gender and shopping budget

Categories	Male(O)	Male(E)	Female(O)	Female(E)	Male	Female
Below 1000	5	5.89	10	9.11	0.13	0.09
1000-3000	40.9	38.29	56.6	59.22	0.18	0.12
3000-5000	10.6	11.78	19.4	18.22	0.19	0.08
More than 5000	2.4	2.95	5.1	4.56	0.10	0.06
Total					0.60	0.35

Step 1: Find the Critical Value

Degree of freedom $df=(r-1)(c-1)=(4-1)(2-1)=3$

At significance level and $df=3$

Critical value from chi-square table =7.815

Step 2: Compare χ^2 Calculated with χ^2 Critical

- Given $\chi^2 = 0.95$ (calculated value)
- χ^2 critical (from table) = 7.815

Since $0.95 < 7.815$, the calculated Chi-Square value is lower than the critical value.

Step 3: conclusion

The calculated value is less than the critical value, so we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between gender and shopping budget.

Findings & Conclusion

This study shows consumer shopping behavior, AI chatbot interaction, and factors influencing purchases. Female consumers are more active than male consumers, highlighting the need for gender-targeted strategies. 50% of respondents prefer online shopping (mostly dresses). Trust and AI chatbots play a drawback in repeated purchases. Customer service, trust and reputation, and peer recommendations are key factors considered by college student consumers.

Categories of age and gender, especially female consumers, are more active. AI chatbots are helpful for consumers in making repeat purchases. Shopping budget is independent of gender.

Recommendations

Both virtual and digital stores are not given equal importance by consumers. AI chatbot services must be fully optimized for consumers.

Retailers should focus on digital marketing strategies to attract gender-targeted consumers.

E-commerce platforms should provide quality products and implement effective discount strategies.

Businesses should leverage influencer marketing to build brand trust and loyalty.

Offline retailers should integrate omnichannel strategies to bridge the gap between online and offline shopping preferences.

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