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A STUDY OF CUSTOMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING IN PATHANAMTHITTA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Now a days, Customer has changed due to constant change in business environment. This change in the environment, demands more and more optimization of the time. Consumer buying behavior has changed from convenience to comfort and from buying in stores to buying online even buying from big screen to buying small screen i.e. shift from windows PC to Android/Device. Consumers now prefer to shop products online over conventional methods of shopping in stores. According to UCLA Center for communication policy (2001), online shopping has become the third most popular internet activity, immediately following e-mail Using/instant messaging and web browsing. Hence this study aims to know the customer preference towards online shopping in Pathanamthitta District. This research also aims to find out the key factors that influence online shopping behaviours of consumers and to identify the determinants of online purchase intention among customers.

Key words: Online shopping, Customer preference, Time saving, Security and privacy

INTRODUCTION

In present scenario, consumers and organizations are carrying out extensive and rapidly increasing volumes of business on the internet. The online shopping/ E shopping is method of electronic commerce for conducting businesses it is shifted from real market to digital market. At present all businesses are doing business over the internet. It allows consumers to directly buy goods/sell/get services over the internet by using the web browser. Michael Aldrich made invention and introduced online shopping in 1979. Day by day internet usage is increasing, so also the prospect of online marketing is increasing in Bahrain as well. For example, e web-store, e store, Internet shop, web shop, web store, online store and virtual stores evokes the physical analogy of buying products/ services at a bricks and mortar retailer/shopping centre. This process is known as business to consumer [B2C] online shopping. When a business buys from another business it is known as [B2B] online shopping. In the present world largest online retailing corporations are Amazon.com, E Bay and Flipcart. Now companies are released and using effective marketing strategies analyze various factors to convert their potential consumers into active ones. The factors such as Information about the product,

A rapid change in technology and increase in internet usage made stimulation in the daily life of humans. It also creates changes in business and trading sector and results the concept Electronic shopping. Nowadays, online shopping is a fast growing phenomenon. Online shopping environments are playing an increasing role in the overall relationship between marketers and their consumers. The effect of introduction of Electronic buying will reflect in different areas of business, that is marketing, retailing etc. It suspends the intermediaries such as retailers in the course of trading. It also makes a change in concept of physical shops, leads to the introduction of virtual shops. Not along with entrepreneurs, it also makes an influence in the mind of consumers. It creates a different approach to the buying process. It reduces the whole efforts of a consumer from the buying process.

E-Commerce changes real world markets to virtual markets. Online shop, e-shop, e-store, internet shop, web shop evokes the physical buying progress. Online shopping provides a boon for many small and medium enterprises in India. Customer behavior towards online shopping is the complicated socio – technical phenomenon that involves many factor like customer individuality, situational factor, product distinctness and purchasing experience. Thus the present attempts to study the customer behavior towards online shopping.

However, many customers go for purchasing offline, so as to examine the products and hold the possession of the product just after the payment of the product. In this contemporary world customer loyalty depends upon many of the factors such as privacy, quality versus price, levels of services, brand loyalty, distribution channels, security etc. Customer preference is the measure of how the needs and responses are collaborated and delivered to customer

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expectation. It can only be attained if the customer has an overall good relationship with the supplier. In today's competitive business marketplace, customer preference is an important performance component and basic differentiator of business strategies. Hence, the more is customer preference; more is the business and the bonding with customer.

Kerala is among the top five states if tele density is concerned (95.70 persons with telephone connections for every 100 individuals). The other e-statistics are as follows: 34.71 Internet subscriptions per 100 populations, 12.31 million Internet subscriptions, 2.68 million wire line subscriber base of which 65 per cent is rural and 31.13 million wireless subscribers. Most of them are using internet facilities to buy product and services. There arises a wider scope in studying this topic in a state like Kerala because studies state that e-literacy in this state is comparatively not bad.

Customer preference towards a trading process is influenced by many different factors; it may affect by the demographic characters also. This study focused on factors which determine customer preference, and level of satisfaction of consumers towards online shopping in Pathanamthitta district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the factors influencing the consumer preferences towards online shopping.
2. To study the satisfaction level of consumers towards online shopping.
3. To study the reasons for job stress in the organization.
4. To analyze the stress management strategies adopted by the firm to reduce stress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

Research design used for this study is descriptive

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Data collection

Both primary data and secondary data are used in this study

Primary data

Primary data is collected using unstructured questionnaire which cover entire objective of the study, closed ended questions are used for the study because all possible answers were given to respondents and scaling here used was Likertscale

Secondary data

Secondary data are collected from text book, journals, Websites and also refer previous research studies

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

E-Business has a greater influence in the mind of consumers as compared to traditional buying. This study is aimed to understand the level of satisfaction of consumer's towards Electronic buying. This study conducted in Pathanamthitta district and is focused on respondents. Study also cover factors determine customer preference.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Customer preference may vary based on consumers perception in different geographical areas, this study is focused on Pathanamthitta district only.
2. There is a chance for biased response so the accuracy may not be true.
3. Study will not concern about any inconvenience faced by trader's facilities to buyers.

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HISTORY OF ONLINE SHOPPING

In 1990, Tim Berners-Lee created the first World Wide Web server and browser in UK. It opened for commercial use in 1991. In 1994 other advances took place, such as online banking and the opening of an online pizza shop by Pizza Hut. During that same year, Netscape introduced SSL encryption of data transferred online, which has become essential for secure online shopping. Also in1994, the German company Inter shop introduced its first online shopping system. In 1995, Amazon launched its online shopping site, and in 1996, eBay appeared. Originally, electronic commerce was identified as the facilitation of commercial transactions electronically, using technology such as Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). These were both introduced in the late 1970s, allowing businesses to send commercial documents like purchase orders or invoices electronically. The growth and acceptance of credit cards, automated teller machines (ATM) and telephone banking in the 1980s were also forms of electronic commerce. Another form of e-commerce was the airline reservation system typified by Sabre in the USA and Travicomin the UK. From the 1990s onwards, electronic commerce would additionally include enterprise resource planning systems (ERP), data mining and data warehousing. In 1990, Tim Berners- Lee invented the World Wide Web browser and transformed an academic telecommunication network into a worldwide everyman everyday communication system called internet/www. Commercial enterprise on the Internet was strictly prohibited by NSF until 1995.2 although the Internet became popular worldwide around 1994 with the adoption of Mosaic web 4 browser, it took about five years to introduce security protocols and DSL allowing continual connection to the Internet. By the end of 2000, many European and American business companies offered their services through the World Wide Web. Since then people began to associate a word "ecommerce" with the ability of purchasing various goods through the Internet using secure protocols and electronic payment services. Timeline 1979: Michael Aldrich invented online shopping in UK3 1981: Thomson Holidays, UK is first B2B online shopping 1982: Minitel was introduced nationwide in France by France Telecom and used for online ordering. 1984: Tesco is first B2C online shopping and Mrs. Snowball, 72, is the first online home shopper 1985: Nissan UK sells cars and finance with credit checking to customers online from dealers'

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lots. 1987: Swreg, an online payment processor that is the best Paypal alternative for global businesses begins to provide software 1990: Tim Berners-Lee writes the first web browser, World Wide Web, using a NeXT computer in UK. 1992: Terry Brownell launches first fully graphical, iconic navigated

Bulletin board system online shopping using RoboBOARD 1994: Netscape, US Computer Services Company releases the Navigator browser in October under the code name Mozilla. Pizza Hut offers online ordering on its Web page. Netscape 1.0 is introduced in late 1994 SSL encryption that made transactions secure. 1995: Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon Inc., USA launches Amazon.com and the first commercial-free 24 hours. Internet-only radio stations, Radio HK and Net Radio in US start broadcasting. E-bay is founded by computer programmer Pierre Omidyar as Auction Web in US. 5 1998: Electronic postal stamps for people residing in US can be purchased and downloaded for printing from the Web. 1998: Alibaba Group is established in China. Alibaba Group is a family of Internet-based businesses which makes it easy for anyone to buy or sell online anywhere in the world 1999: Business.com sold for US $7.5 million to e-Companies, which was purchased in 1997 for US $149,000. Business.com helps small-to-medium enterprises discover, compare and purchase products and services to run their businesses. 2000: The dot-com bust. 2001: Alibaba.com achieved profitability in December 2001. 2002: eBay acquires PayPal for $1.5Billion. 4PayPal is the faster, safer way to send money, make an online payment, receive money or set up a merchant account. 2003: Amazon.com posts first yearly profit. 2004: DHgate.com, China's first online b2b transaction platform, is established, forcing other b2b sites to move away from the "yellow pages" model.5 2007: Business.com acquired by R.H. Donnelley for

$345 million.6 2009: Zappos.com, an online shoe and apparel store acquired by Amazon.com for $928 million.7 Retail Convergence, operator of private sale website RueLaLa.com, acquired by GSI Commerce for $180 million, plus up to $170 million in earn-out payments based on performance through 2012.8 GSI Commerce is an eBay company specializing in creating, developing and running online shopping sites for brick and mortar brands and retailers. 2010: Group on reportedly rejects a $6 billion offer from Google. Instead, the group buying websites plans to go ahead with an IPO in mid-2011.9 Group on, is a deal-of-the-day website that features discounted gift certificates or discount coupons usable at local or national companies. 6 2011: US E-Commerce and Online Retail sales projected to reach $197 billion, an increase of 12 percent over 2010.10 Quidsi.com, parent company of Diapers.com, acquired by Amazon.com for $500 million in cash plus $45 million in debt and other obligations.11 GSI Commerce, a company specializing in creating, developing and running online shopping sites for brick and mortar businesses, acquired by eBay for $2.4billion.12

TIME LINE

1979 – It all began when Michael Aldrich 'invented' online shopping. Using videotex, a two way message service, it revolutionized businesses. We now know this as e-commerce. **1981** – Saw the first business to business transaction by UK based Thomson holidays. **1982** – Mintel, a videotex online service accessible by telephone lines, could be used to make online purchases, train reservations, check stock prices, chat and search a telephone directory.

It is considered the most successful pre WWW online service.

1984 – The first ever shopper buys online at a Tesco store.

1985 – Nissan carries out the first online credit check.

1987 – SWREG was founded. This offered businesses a chance to sell products online. As it is today, SWREG offers many payment options, as well as customization and distribution into international markets. Users can purchase items with their currency of preference using all major debit and credit cards.

1989 – In the USA the first online grocery store starts trading. Peapod.com

1990 – Tim Berners-Lee created the first WWW server and browser. This started a whole new revolution. Nearly 25 years on, he is today still working hard at guiding the development and spread of the web, using the mantra 'If it isn't on the web then it isn't happening'.

1991 – The internet is commercialized and we saw the birth of e-commerce.

1994 – Netscape launches the first commercial browser, which was once the dominant browser in terms of 'visitors.' It lost out in the first browser war.

1995 – Amazon started selling books online; currently it sells almost anything. Companies Cisco started using the internet for all their transactions. EBay is founded by Pierre Omidyar, though it was originally called Auction web.

1997 – Began the era of comparison sites.

1998 – PayPal is founded. This enabled transactions of money without sharing financial information and gave customers the flexibility to pay using their PayPal account balances, bank accounts, PayPal Credit and other credit cards. Today, people can now pay across their favorite apps in a single touch (one touch) on any platform, eliminating the need for usernames and passwords each time you pay.

1999 – The first online-only shop began, 'Zappos' although it was later bought by Amazon for $1.2 bn.

2001 – Amazon launches mobile services.

2003 – US online shopping hit $50 billion, in the same year Amazon posted their first year profit of $35.3m.

2005 – Social commerce emerges. Consumers begin to recommend items to friends via Facebook and Twitter

2007 – A Pew Internet research study found that 81% of the Americans they survey had reached online for a product they intended to buy, with 15% doing so almost every single day. 66% of online users said they had actually bought something online.

2008 – Increase in growth of online shopping by 17% from the last year in the US, with ecommerce sales figures around $204 billion. In the same year Group on is launched as is Magneto – so anyone could have a go at creating their own online store.

2013 – UK shoppers spent a whopping £91bn online.

2014 – In 2014, 198 million U.S. consumers bought something online in the first quarter along, (com Score)which is 78% of the U.S. population age 15 and above.

2015 – Today's shoppers combine online shopping with real life shopping, using access to WiFi and the show rooming trend. They often make purchases in a retail stores at the same time as using mobile devices to buy something online. In fact, this Forbes report tells us that 74 per cent of people use their mobile phone to help them while shopping, with 79 per cent making a purchase as a result.

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ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE SHOPPING

Advantages

1. **Availability of all brands and models at one place**:

Branded shops and showrooms are available in all the metro cites and also few big towns and cities. But it will be difficult to buy branded item for those stays in small towns and villages, but online shopping has changed the scenario.

2. **Buying from home comfortably:**

Online shopping help consumers to buy products from home comfortably and thereby helping them to rush and rush and traffic while travelling

3. **No pressure shopping:**

Generally, in physical stores, the sales representatives try to influence the buyers to buy the product. There can be some kind of pressure, whereas the customers are not pressurized in any way in online stores.

4. **Online shopping saves time**

Customers do not have to stand in queues in cash counters to pay for the products that have been purchased by them. They can shop from their home or work place and do not have to spend time travelling. The customers can also look for the products that are required by them by entering the key words or using search engines. The mall is open on 365 x 24 x 7. So, time does not act as a barrier, wherever the vendor and buyers are.

5. **Comparisons**

Companies display the whole range of products offered by them to attract customers with different tastes and needs. This enables the buyers to choose from a variety of models after comparing the finish, features and price of the products on display, Sometimes, price comparisons are also available online.

6. **Online tracking**

Online consumers can track the order status and delivery status tracking of shipping is also available.

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7. Online shopping saves money

To attract customers to shop online e-tailers and marketers offer discounts to the customers. Due to elimination of maintenance, real-estate cost, the retailers are able to sell the product with attractive discounts through online. Sometimes, large online shopping sites offer store comparison.

Disadvantages

The major disadvantages of online shopping are as follows.

1. Delay in delivery

Long duration and lack of proper inventory management result in delays in shipment. Though the duration of selecting, buying and paying for an online product may not take more than 15 minutes; the delivery of the product to customer’ s doorstep takes about 1-3 weeks. This frustrates the customer and prevents them from shopping online.

2. Lack of interactivity

Physical stores allow price negotiations between buyers and the seller. The show room sales attendant representatives provide personal attention to customers and help them in purchasing goods. Certain online shopping mart offers service to talk to a sales representative.

3. Lack of shopping experience

The traditional shopping exercise provides lot of fun in the form of show-room atmosphere, smart sales attendants, scent and sounds that cannot be experienced through a website. Indians generally enjoy shopping. Consumers look forward to it as an opportunity to go out and shop.

4. Lack of close examination

A customer has to buy a product without seeing actually how it looks like. Customers may click and buy some product that is not really required by them. The electronic images of a product are sometimes misleading. The colour, appearance in real may not match with the electronic images. Lack of touch-feel-try creates concerns over the quality of the product on offer. Online shopping is not quite suitable for clothes as the customers cannot try them on.

People like to visit physical stores and prefer to have close examination of good, though it consumes time. The electronic images vary from physical appearance when people buy goods based on electronic images.

5. Frauds in online shopping

Sometimes, there is disappearance of shopping site itself. In addition to above, the online payments are not much secured. So, it is essential for e-marketers and retailers to pay attention to this issue to boost the growth of e-commerce. The rate of cybercrimes has been increasing and customers' credit card details and bank details have been misused which raise privacy issues. Customers have to be careful in revealing their personal information. Some of the etailers are unreliable.

FINDINGS

Study investigate the preference of consumers towards online purchase through analyzing the level of convenience, trust worth and shopping experience. The following are the findings from the analysis

1. Most of the respondents were using online shopping frequently and regularly.
2. Most of the respondents usually prefer to buy electronic gadgets through online.
3. All the respondents were satisfied with the privacy in purchase of personal products.
4. Only a few is not trusted with the access control system, all the other respondents trust access control system.

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CONCLUSION

Online Shopping in India is ever expanding and there exists huge market potential to tap untapped areas by online stores. Hence, E Retailers have to constantly ascertain their customers expectations, initiate necessary actions at the earliest to contain problems faced by their customers on online shopping and to offer full-fledge service like quality goods at cheaper price, immediate replacement of damaged goods, shortening of delivery time, thereby customers satisfaction may be increased and be loyal, which assists to retain existing customers and to attract new ones.

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