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A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUDUKKOTTAI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The rise of online shopping has transformed consumer behaviour at both domestic and international levels, yet customer satisfaction remains a critical factor influencing continued engagement. This study examines how demographic factors impact consumer preferences, expectations, and satisfaction in online shopping, focusing specifically on the Pudukkottai District. By identifying key drivers of customer satisfaction and online buying behaviour, the research aims to provide actionable insights for marketers to develop effective, targeted e-commerce strategies that enhance consumer experience and loyalty.

KEYWORDS: Online Shopping, Customer Satisfaction, Online Buying Behaviour.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Online shopping, particularly within the business-to-consumer (B2C) sector, has revolutionized traditional retail by offering unparalleled convenience, speed, and accessibility. Major platforms such as Amazon, Alibaba, and eBay have set new standards for how consumers purchase goods, with factors such as timely delivery, competitive pricing, and diverse payment options driving consumer expectations. This shift is especially notable in developing regions, where technological advancements and increased internet penetration have encouraged the adoption of e-commerce. In the Pudukkottai District, rising digital literacy and a growing youth population are fuelling this transition. This study explores how demographic variables—including age, gender, and education—shape online shopping satisfaction and behaviour, providing a localized understanding of consumer preferences and highlighting opportunities for businesses to better meet customer needs.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Buying and selling involve various traits and patterns. Different dynamics operate within the process, and there are multiple categories of consumers. Online buying has emerged as an important tool that supports financial growth, empowerment, and economic progress. A functioning and secure market plays a crucial role in sustaining steady economic growth in any country. The financial market acts as a bridge between major savers and final consumers, helping to circulate funds efficiently.

The growth and development of the securities market influence both the quantity and nature of household consumption. The availability of income-generating investment options leads people to reduce immediate consumption and allocate resources to liquid and flexible financial assets. Similarly, a stable online shopping environment encourages customer confidence and supports the development of the digital marketplace. This, in turn, leads to enhanced consumer engagement and market success, especially in web-based business ventures.

Understanding Management by Objectives (MBO)

Management by Objectives is a management philosophy that emphasizes setting clear objectives collaboratively between managers and employees. These objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), aligning individual and team goals with organizational objectives. The process typically involves defining objectives, setting performance standards, and regularly reviewing progress towards these goals.

3. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significance due to the changing patterns of consumer behaviour. There is a noticeable shift from traditional shopping methods to modern online platforms, reflecting changes in social relationships and individual preferences. Since the late 1970s, purchasing habits have evolved, leading to a new phase of post-modern consumer behaviour. These changes reflect the ongoing transformation in how people seek satisfaction and meet their shopping needs.

Online shopping introduces risks and choices not present in conventional retail. In traditional shopping, environmental factors influence the consumer's experience and decision-making. According to Sherman et al. (1997), the surroundings play a key role in shaping customer satisfaction. In contrast, online shopping limits the use of sensory feedback and relies heavily on technological navigation.

Understanding online consumer behaviour, especially in smaller towns like Pudukkottai, is essential. Many factors influence these buying patterns, including access, risk perception, and income level. This study focuses on analyzing the economic patterns of online shoppers in Pudukkottai District. The goal is to provide a comprehensive evaluation of how consumers behave, what influences their choices, and how the online market may expand further in similar semi-urban regions.

4. RESEARCH GAP

Previous studies have examined various aspects of the online shopping market, especially in Pudukkottai District. However, most focused broadly on buying patterns and overlooked specific areas such as consumer awareness, perceptions, satisfaction, and changes in pre- and post-purchase behaviour.

This study addresses that gap by incorporating these overlooked factors with relevant variables. Notably, earlier research did not explore post-purchase behaviour in relation to consumer perceptions. The present study also concentrates on Pudukkottai District in southern India—an emerging hub for online commerce—to generate region-specific insights that support comparative analysis and informed policy-making.

5. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Online commerce has expanded rapidly in recent years due to widespread internet access. Businesses increasingly rely on digital platforms for marketing, product promotion, customer service, and engagement. Online shopping offers convenience, value, and wider choices, driving its popularity across demographics. Despite its growth, the online market faces challenges. Consumer trust and interest may decline due to dissatisfaction or unmet expectations. This study explores how demographic factors influence consumer behaviour, perceptions, and preferences in online shopping. The aim is to understand customer satisfaction and attitudes, and to identify the key drivers behind online purchase decisions. These insights will support marketers in designing effective strategies for online engagement and growth.

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6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To examine the relationship between consumer characteristics and their purchasing avenues.
To assess the perception and awareness levels of online shoppers regarding e-commerce.
To identify the key factors influencing product choice and expected return on purchase.

7. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between consumer characteristics and purchasing avenues.

H_{11}: There is a significant relationship between consumer characteristics and purchasing avenues.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between consumer satisfaction and buying patterns.

H_{12}: There is a significant relationship between consumer satisfaction and buying patterns.

Table 2 presents the regression analysis aimed at understanding the influence of employee perception on employee satisfaction. The model reveals a significant positive relationship, with a beta coefficient of 0.653 for employee perception ($p < 0.01$), indicating that employee perception is a strong predictor of employee satisfaction. This finding is in line with previous studies that suggest the role of perception in shaping job satisfaction (Agarwal & Singh, 2016; Bhat & Joshi, 2019). The result highlights the importance of addressing employees' perceptions to enhance their overall satisfaction within the organization. The significant t-value of 9.544 further supports the strength of this relationship.

Table 1: The Demographic Factors of respondent

	Demographic Factors	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Gender	Male	396	66.0	66.0
	Female	204	34.0	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	
Age	Up to 25 years	83	13.8	13.8
	25-35 years	162	27.0	40.8
	35-45 years	173	28.8	69.7
	45-55 years	120	20.0	89.7
	more than 55 years	62	10.3	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	
Marital status	Single	209	34.8	34.8
	Married	391	65.2	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	
Family size	2	59	9.8	9.8
	3	172	28.7	38.5
	4	186	31.0	69.5
	5	111	18.5	88.0
	more than 5	72	12.0	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	
Educational	professional degree	60	10.0	10.0
	Post-graduation	141	23.5	33.5
	under graduation	226	37.7	71.2
	Diploma	116	19.3	90.5
	Schooling	57	9.5	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	
Occupation status	Govt. Employees	55	9.2	9.2
	Private employee	230	38.3	47.5
	self-employee	168	28.0	75.5
	Business	93	15.5	91.0
	home maker	54	9.0	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	
Annual income	less than 1 lakh	85	14.2	14.2

	between 1 to 2 lakhs	223	37.2	51.3
	between 2 to 3 lakhs	146	24.3	75.7
	between 3 to 4 lakhs	97	16.2	91.8
	more than 4 lakhs	49	8.2	100.0
	Total	600	100.0	

Table 1 provides a comprehensive demographic profile of the 600 respondents surveyed. Among them, 396 (66%) are male and 204 (34%) are female, indicating that males show a stronger inclination toward online shopping. In terms of age, the largest group comprises individuals aged 35–45 years (28.8%), followed by those aged 25–35 years (27.0%), 45–55 years (20.0%), up to 25 years (13.8%), and above 55 years (10.3%), showing that online shoppers are predominantly from the 35–45 age bracket. Regarding marital status, 391 respondents (65.2%) are married, while 209 (34.8%) are single, suggesting that married individuals are more active in online purchasing. Family size data reveals that 186 respondents (31.0%) belong to families with four members, 172 (28.7%) with three members, 111 (18.5%) with five members, 72 (12.0%) with more than five, and 59 (9.8%) with two members, indicating that medium-sized families are the most common among online consumers. As for educational qualification, the majority of respondents are undergraduates (37.7%), followed by postgraduates (23.5%), diploma holders (19.3%), professional degree holders (10.0%), and those with only school education (9.5%), highlighting that most online buyers are educated at least to the undergraduate level. Occupationally, 230 (38.3%) are private-sector employees, 168 (28.0%) are self-employed, 93 (15.5%) are business owners, 55 (9.2%) work in the government sector, and 54 (9.0%) are homemakers, showing a significant representation from the private sector. In terms of annual household income, the largest segment (37.2%) falls in the ₹1–2 lakh range, followed by ₹2–3 lakh (24.3%), ₹3–4 lakh (16.2%), below ₹1 lakh (14.2%), and above ₹4 lakh (8.2%), suggesting that the majority of online shoppers belong to low-to-moderate income households.

Table 2: Internet access of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Home	203	33.8	33.8
working place / office	225	37.5	71.3
cyber café	112	18.7	90.0
school//college/university	60	10.0	100.0
Total	600	100.0	

Table 2 presents information about the respondents’ internet access points. Among the 600 respondents, 225 (37.5%) use the internet primarily from their workplace or office, 203 (33.8%) access it from home, 112 (18.7%) use cyber cafes, and 60 (10.0%) access the internet from schools, colleges, or universities. This data clearly shows that the majority of respondents access the internet from their workplace or office.

Table: 3: Time spent on internet per day

	Frequency	**Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
less than 1 hour	112	18.7	18.7
1-2 hours	171	28.5	47.2
2-3 hours	160	26.7	73.8
3-4 hours	98	16.3	90.2
more than 4 hours	59	9.8	100.0
Total	600	100.0	

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Table 3 provides details about the average daily time respondents spend accessing the internet. Among the respondents, 171 (28.5%) spend 1 to 2 hours per day online, 160 (26.7%) spend 2 to 3 hours, 112 (18.7%) spend less than 1 hour, and 59 (9.8%) spend more than 4 hours daily accessing the internet.

Table 4: Influence to purchase products and services of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Self	188	31.3	31.3
Husband	135	22.5	53.8
Wife	133	22.2	76.0
Children	88	14.7	90.7
Friends & Relatives	56	9.3	100.0
Total	600	100.0	

Table 4 shows details about the influence on respondents when purchasing products and services online. Among them, 188 (31.3%) make purchases based on their own decision, 135 (22.5%) are influenced by their husbands, 133 (22.2%) by their wives, 88 (14.7%) by their children, and 56 (9.3%) by friends and relatives. Thus, most respondents decide to purchase products on their own.

Table- 5: Relationship between gender and products often buy by the respondents

Particulars	Mean	SD	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F value
Garments						
Between Groups			2.187	1	2.187	F = .853 P > 0.05 Not Significant
Male	3.5000	1.59667				
Female	3.6275	1.60922				
Within Groups			1532.686	598	2.563	
Jewelleries						
Between Groups			8.286	1	8.286	F = 3.655 P > 0.05 Not Significant
Male	4.7677	1.52832				
Female	4.5196	1.46035				
Within Groups			1355.548	598	2.267	
Books						
Between Groups			.050	1	.050	F =.019 P > 0.05 Significant
Male	4.2601	1.65675				
Female	4.2794	1.55534				
Within Groups			1575.283	598	2.634	
Software's						
Between Groups			.813	1	.813	F =.450 P > 0.05 Not Significant
Male	4.8081	1.33446				
Female	4.7304	1.36127				
Within Groups			1079.586	98	1.805	
Groceries						
Between Groups			8.395		8.395	F = 2.888 P > 0.05 Not Significant
Male	3.9268	1.72317				
Female	4.1765	1.66926				
Within Groups			1738.523	98	2.907	
Travel packages						
Between Groups			.145		.145	F =.065 P > 0.05 Not Significant
Male	4.6995	1.51719				
Female	4.6667	1.44409				
Within Groups			1332.573	98	2.228	
Train tickets/Flight tickets						
Between Groups			1.031		1.031	F =.556 P > 0.05 Not Significant
Male	4.8586	1.40711				
Female	4.9461	1.26804				

Within Groups			1108.488	98	1.854	
Cinema/Entertainment						
Between Groups			5.224		5.224	F = 2.245 P > 0.05 Not Significant
Male	4.2803	1.52439				
Female	4.0833	1.52739				
Within Groups			1391.470	98	2.327	

The relationship between gender and the types of products respondents often buy was tested using one-way ANOVA (Table 4.12). The results show the highest mean scores and F-values as follows: males purchase garments more often (mean = 3.6275, F = 0.853), males buy jewellery more often (mean = 4.7677, F = 3.655), females buy books more frequently (mean = 4.2794, F = 0.019), males buy software more often (mean = 4.8081, F = 0.450), females purchase groceries more frequently (mean = 4.1765, F = 2.888), males buy travel packages more often (mean = 4.6995, F = 0.065), females buy train or flight tickets more frequently (mean = 4.9461, F = 1.031), and males book cinema tickets online more than females (mean = 4.2803, F = 5.224). However, the ANOVA results indicate no significant relationship between gender and the products often purchased, as all significance values (p-values) are greater than 0.05 except for books (p = 0.019). Still, since the calculated F values are generally lower than the critical values, the overall conclusion is that gender does not significantly affect the types of products bought online.

Table 6: Test statistics

	Span of delivery	Security of payment	Privacy of individual information	Charges from home delivery	Low cost
Chi-Square	9.971	2.356	2.393	2.305	4.491
Df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.041	.671	.664	.680	.344

a. Kruskal wallis test

b. Grouping variable: educational qualification

The relationships between educational qualification and purchase decisions of the respondents were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis test, as shown in Table 6. The highest mean scores indicate that respondents with a diploma place the greatest importance on the span of product delivery (mean = 319.72) and expect low transaction costs (mean = 325.44) compared to other groups. Respondents with a professional degree prioritize security of payment (mean = 322.23), privacy of personal information (mean = 319.35), and charges for home delivery (mean = 321.85) more than other respondents. Despite these differences in mean scores, the test results reveal no significant relationship between educational qualification and purchase decisions overall, as significance values for security of payment (p = 0.671), privacy of personal information (p = 0.664), charges for home delivery (p = 0.680), and low transaction cost (p = 0.344) are greater than 0.05. Although the span of delivery shows a significance value less than 0.05 (p = 0.041), the overall conclusion is that educational qualification does not significantly influence purchase decisions, as the calculated test values exceed the critical values.

8. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS SUGGESTION

The data reveals that among 600 respondents, a majority of 396 (66%) are male and 204 (34%) are female, indicating that males tend to have a stronger inclination towards online shopping. The largest age group is 35-45 years (28.8%), followed by 25-35 years (27%), and 45-55 years (20%), showing that most online shoppers fall within the middle-aged category. Marital status data shows 391 (65.2%) respondents are married, while 209 (34.8%) are single, suggesting that married individuals are more active online shoppers. Regarding family size, 186 (31%) respondents have four members, followed by 172 (28.7%) with three members, indicating most respondents come from moderate-sized families. Educationally, the majority hold an undergraduate degree (37.7%), followed by postgraduates (23.5%), diplomas (19.3%), professional degrees (10%), and schooling (9.5%), showing that undergraduates dominate online purchasing. Occupationally, most respondents are private employees (38.3%), self-employed (28%), or in business (15.5%), with fewer government employees (9.2%) and homemakers (9%). Family income data reveals that 223 (37.2%) respondents have an annual income between 1 to 2 lakhs, with smaller percentages in other income brackets, indicating a middle-income majority. Most respondents access the internet from their workplace (37.5%), followed by home (33.8%), cyber cafes (18.7%), and educational institutions (10%), highlighting workplace internet access as predominant. Daily internet usage averages 1-2 hours for 171 (28.5%) respondents, with 160 spending 2-3 hours, and fewer respondents spending less than 1 hour or more than 4 hours. When purchasing products and services, 188 (31.3%) respondents decide independently, while others are influenced by spouses, children, friends, or relatives. Payment methods show that 183 (30.5%) respondents prefer online bank transfers, followed by credit/debit cards (27.7%), cash on delivery, and online money transfers. Overall, the findings suggest that online shopping is more prevalent among middle-aged, married, educated males who are private sector employees with moderate incomes, primarily accessing the internet at work and preferring independent purchase decisions with online bank transfers as the favored payment method.

ANOVA Analysis

The relationship between gender and the frequency of purchasing various products was examined using one-way ANOVA. The highest mean score of 3.6275 ($F = 0.853$) indicates that male respondents purchase garments more regularly than female respondents. For jewellery, the highest mean score of 4.7677 ($F = 3.655$) also corresponds to males buying more frequently. Conversely, females buy books more regularly, with a mean score of 4.2794 ($F = 0.019$). Software purchases are higher among males (mean = 4.8081, $F = 0.450$), while females buy groceries more frequently (mean = 4.1765, $F = 2.888$). Males also tend to purchase travel packages more often (mean = 4.6995, $F = 0.152$), whereas females buy train or flight tickets more frequently (mean = 4.9461, $F = 1.031$). For cinema or entertainment tickets, males have a higher mean score (4.2803, $F = 5.224$).

However, the ANOVA results indicate no significant relationship between gender and the frequency of purchasing most products, except for books where $p = 0.019 < 0.05$, showing significance. Other product categories have p-values greater than 0.05 (Garments = 0.356, Jewellery = 0.056, Software = 0.503, Groceries = 0.090, Travel packages = 0.799, Train tickets = 0.456, Cinema = 0.135). Thus, gender does not significantly affect purchasing frequency for most product types.

The relationship between age and frequency of product purchases was also tested with one-way ANOVA. Respondents aged up to 25 years purchase garments (mean = 4.1325, $F = 12.720$) and jewellery (mean = 4.6747, $F = 1.783$) more frequently than other age groups. Those aged 45-55 years purchase books (mean = 4.4333, $F = 2.551$) and software (mean = 4.8833, $F = 7.352$) more regularly. Respondents aged 35-45 years buy groceries most frequently (mean = 4.1561, $F = 1.660$), and those above 55 years purchase travel packages online more often (mean = 4.8548, $F = 1.812$). For train or flight tickets, the up to 25 years group leads (mean = 4.9880, $F = 0.917$), while cinema tickets are most often purchased by the 45-55 years group (mean = 4.5583, $F = 2.570$).

The p-values show significant relationships only for garments ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) and cinema/entertainment tickets ($p = 0.037 < 0.05$). Other product categories show no significant age-related differences (Jewellery = 0.131, Books = 0.424, Software = 0.397, Groceries = 0.149, Travel packages =

0.125, Train tickets = 0.453). Hence, age affects purchase frequency significantly only for garments and cinema tickets.

Kruskal-Wallis Test

The relationship between educational qualification and purchase decisions was tested using the Kruskal-Wallis test. The highest mean ranks indicate that respondents with a diploma expect quicker delivery times (mean rank = 319.72), while those with professional degrees pay more attention to payment security (322.23) and privacy of personal information (319.35). Respondents with professional diplomas are more concerned about home delivery charges (321.85), and diploma holders expect lower transaction costs (325.44).

The significance values reveal no substantial relationship between educational qualification and purchase decisions for most variables (Security of payment = 0.671, Privacy = 0.664, Home delivery charges = 0.680, Transaction cost = 0.344), except for the span of delivery, where $p = 0.041 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference based on qualification. Overall, educational qualification does not significantly affect most purchase decision factors.

9. CONCLUSION

Shopping behaviours have evolved dramatically with the growth of digital technology, shifting from lengthy in-person visits to fast, seamless online transactions. This study highlights that demographic factors such as age and education influence customer satisfaction and purchasing patterns in Pudukkottai. The district's tech-savvy population, supported by educational institutions and diverse industries, is well-positioned to embrace e-commerce. Additionally, the increasing number of young consumers is likely to accelerate online shopping growth. With enhanced transaction security and improved service quality, online retail in Pudukkottai has strong potential to expand significantly. Marketers and businesses can leverage these insights to develop targeted strategies that cater to the evolving expectations of local consumers, ultimately contributing to the district's economic and social development.

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