

ON LINE SHOPPING: BOON OR BANE FOR THE SOCIETY

Dr. Surinder kaur

Associate Professor

Post Graduate Govt. College

Sector-46, Chandigarh

Abstract

The growth in the sector of Information Technology paved the way for electronic commerce, commonly known as e-commerce. It is a type of industry where the buying and selling of goods or services is conducted over electronic systems such as the internet and other computer networks. It has been noticed over the past few years, that the business houses have gained a lot by marketing the products through e-commerce. E-commerce facilitates click and mortar to brick and mortar. Instead of visiting the shops, rehriwalas and mandis, goods reach the door step just on one click. The online shopping is very beneficial to all those who are not capable to visit the market due to one or the other reason but at the same time it has been noticed that sometimes on-line shopping appeals the visitors to the site to place order for the items not necessarily required and results in unnecessary spending. In this paper titled, "On line shopping: Boon or Bane for the society" an effort has been made with the help of primary data and secondary data find out whether online shopping to be considered as a boon or bane in the society.

Keywords: *Giant Players, Internet, Abhi Nahi Toh Kabhi Nahi, Yeh Diwali, Dil ki Deal Wali*

INTRODUCTION

The growth in the sector of Information Technology paved the way for Electronic commerce, commonly known as e-commerce. It is a type of industry where the buying and selling of goods and services is conducted over electronic systems such as the internet and other computer networks. Electronic commerce draws on technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, internet marketing, online transaction processing, electronic data interchange, inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems. Modern electronic commerce typically uses the World Wide Web at least at one point of the transaction's life cycle. Electronic commerce is one of the most effective and useful ways of conducting business and generally considered to be the sales aspect of e-business. It consists of the exchange of data among producer, supplier, distributor, and customer and sometimes banks also when payment is to be made online to facilitate the financing and payment aspects of business transactions. This is an effective and efficient way of communicating within and outside an organisation.



Online shopping is a form of electronic commerce which allows consumers to buy goods or services directly from a seller over the Internet using a web browser. Alternative names are: e-web-store, e-shop, e-store, Internet shop, web-shop, web-store, online store, online storefront and virtual store. An online shopping has replaced the physical analogy of buying products or services at a bricks-and-mortar retailer or a shopping center. The online shopping is also referred to as business-to-consumer (B2C) online shopping. In the case where a business buys from another business, the process is called business-to-business (B2B) online shopping.

Online shopping was invented by an English entrepreneur Michael Aldrich in 1979. The system connected a modified domestic TV to a real-time transaction processing computer via a domestic telephone line. Michael Aldrich believed that videotex, the modified domestic TV technology with a simple menu-driven human-computer interface, was a 'new, universally applicable, participative communication medium — the first since the invention of the telephone.' This enabled 'closed' corporate information systems to be opened to 'outside' correspondents not just for transaction processing but also for e-messaging and information retrieval and dissemination, later known as e-business. In March 1980 Michael Aldrich launched Redifon's Office Revolution, which allowed consumers, customers, agents, distributors, suppliers and service companies to be connected on-line to the corporate systems and allow business transactions to be completed electronically in real-time.

During the 1980s many online shopping systems, using videotex technology were designed, manufactured, sold, installed, maintained and supported by Michael Aldrich. The first World Wide Web server and browser was created by Tim Berners-Lee in 1990, and it was opened for commercial use in 1991. Thereafter, subsequent technological innovations emerged in 1994: online banking, the opening of an online pizza shop by Pizza Hut Netscape's SSL v2 encryption standard for secure data transfer, and Intershop's first online shopping system. The first secure retail transaction over the Web was either by NetMarket or Internet Shopping Network in 1994. Immediately after, Amazon.com launched its online shopping site in 1995 and eBay was also introduced in 1995. Alibaba's sites Taobao and Tmall were launched in 2003 and 2008, respectively.

According to Wikipedia, India ranks at position number three for shopping online and using credit card for online transaction. Indian citizens are now third biggest users of credit cards for making online purchases globally and they are next only to the citizens of Turkey and Ireland. According to Wikipedia, India ranks at position number three for shopping online and using credit card for online transaction. Indian citizens are now third biggest users of credit cards for making online purchases globally and they are next only to the citizens of Turkey and Ireland.

Though there are thousands of online shopping sites, people prefer to shop only through credible and popular websites. After a long research through the popular sites, www.alltechguide.net have concluded few top 10 online shopping sites that people love to shop. They are listed out below.

1. Flipkart.com: Undoubtedly Flipkart is ranked as the topmost online shopping website in the country among other sites. The reason for this is, the range of products they offer, quality of the products, services they provide etc. The service is really awesome and trustworthy. It sells almost everything in their site from gift vouchers to electronic appliances. As per the statistics, flipkart is having more items than the mall. So, people prefer it mostly.
2. Amazon.in: This website is almost near to the flipkart in ranking. Though it is a US ecommerce company, it gained the trust of the customers in very short time because of its wide range of products and even more than what flipkart is having. Both Amazon and Flipkart always competes each other in this ecommerce war.
3. Snapdeal.com: It is fully an Indian website. It is preferred for shopping by masses as it sells its products at very reasonable rates. It offers everything from daily local deals to online product deals. They even offer the products with free shipping facility.
4. ebay.in: eBay is a popular shopping site that stood at top 10 online shopping sites list. It is an Indian version website of ebay.com. It operates from USA. It offers diverse and wide variety of products with international shipping facility. It even helps the third party to sell their items in their website from old to new. It is one of the oldest and popular ecommerce websites of the world.
5. Jabong.com: Though it is an American brand it seems to be working well in India. This site offers variety of clothes and other accessories. But it has stood as a paradise site for shopping clothes.
6. Myntra.com: As equal to Jabong, women shoppers like shopping in myntra too. It is a leading retailer of fashion and lifestyle products such as shoes, T-shirts, watches and many more at discounts. It even had many categories that one can choose to buy.
7. Shopclues.com: It is one of the famous online shopping sites for its more discount deals. It is one of the best online stores that offer variety of products such as computer accessories, jewellery, toys, clothes, books, cosmetics and gifts etc. It is known for its warehousing and good products. It is mostly famous among the youth.
8. Homeshop18: People who don't mind spending small on shipping charges and with low price products can prefer this website. It has equal importance as other online shopping sites



among the users. This site has loyal customers to find the cheapest and remotest products from the site as it offers it.

9. Infibeam.com: This site offers those products that are not found anywhere else and it was the specialty of the site. The rare things of electronics, books and other things can be found on this site.

10. Firstcry.com: It has been one of the largest online stores for kids. It sells nearly 70000+ products from international as well as the Indian brands. So, people prefer this website for shopping for their kids.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Various scholars from the field of e-commerce have examined and conducted various studies in order to understand the meaning, purpose, role and the significance as well as drawbacks of e-shopping.

According to a study conducted on Consumer Motivations for Online Shopping by Mary Wolfenbarger, California State University Long Beach, website design and strategy issues should be based on motivations and satisfiers for online buyers. For example, online buyers largely do not expect or desire "high touch" service unless they have questions or problems with customer service, in which case they expect relatively speedy answers (within 24 hours) responsive to their individual problems. Any features that increase the sense of user control and freedom, including order tracking, purchase histories, saving information to facilitate speed in future sessions, and opt-in email notification of new products and special deals, increase the satisfaction of goal-oriented users. The importance of posting accurate, relevant and (when requested) comprehensive information about products cannot be overemphasized by e-commerce sites.

The research titled Online Shopper Behaviour: Influences of Online Shopping Decision by Chayapa Katawetawaraks SCG Trading Services Co. Ltd Cheng Lu Wang University of New Haven in Asian Journal of Business Research Volume 1 Number 2, 2011 reveals that the factors contributing to the increase in on line shopping are convenience, detailed information, variety of products and services, cost and time efficiency. On the other hand it has been stated that security concerns, intangibility of online products, lack of social contacts, dissatisfactory reviews, and further expectations are some of the factors that impede Consumers from online Shopping.

A study has been conducted by Barbara Thau published in Forbes Retail October 2013 in which it has been revealed that

- Shoppers surveyed (24%) cited “lower prices” as the primary motivating factor to purchase “vanguard” products — books, consumer electronics and entertainment – the study revealed.
- Meanwhile, 18% of respondents said “lower prices” was the main reason they bought “new frontier” items such as health and beauty products, toys/sports/hobby related merchandise, as well as clothing and furniture.
- However, when it came to buying food and beverages, shoppers surveyed ranked “better selection” as the leading impetus driving their purchase, the survey said.
- And “free shipping” was the leading motivation among shoppers (16%) buying commodity products like cleaning and paper products.

Another study conducted by Mohammad Harisur Rahman Howladar, Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Chittagong University, Bangladesh, Prof. Madya Dr. Md Golam Mohiuddin, Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development, University Technology Malaysia, Johor, Malaysia, Mohammad Muzahidul Islam, Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Patuakhali Science and Technology University, Bangladesh on Developing Online Shopping Intention among People: Bangladesh Perspective reveals that Business organizations put preference to build the customers purchase intentions by focusing target customers who are young, educated, earn sufficient , interest in use of computers and internet and give more time online and then motivating them by ensuring the positive experience, security and privacy of online transaction that will enhance the trust on online shopping. The trust or belief on online shopping will develop the positive attitude and then purchase intention to shop online.

Another attempt was made by Li Guo School of Management, Xi’an University of Science and Technology Xi’an 710054, China in a Research on Influencing Factors of Consumer Purchasing Behaviours in Cyberspace which shows that the security and privacy factor, among all influencing factors at the level B, is the key influencing online consumers’ purchasing behaviours. And the personal characteristics and consumers’ psychological factors have an insignificant effect on online consumption. Among the influencing factors at the level C, the security of online transaction, network privacy, prices of products, and service quality affect online purchasing significantly, while genders of consumers, design of online stores, and education of consumers affect online consumers’ purchasing behaviours slightly.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To study the significance of e-shopping
2. To find out if e-shopping is boon or bane



METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The important part of any research paper is its objectives and these objectives can be achieved by the methodology used by the researcher in the paper. The methodology of a project must be in corresponding with the objectives of the research paper. The data for the purpose of achieving the objectives may be collected from two ways, primary and secondary. For the purpose of this paper primary data has been collected through informal direct interview and the secondary data has been collected from reference books, journals and internet.

FINDINGS

The marketing strategies adopted by the online shoppers has tremendously increased the turnover during the festive season in 2015 and it has been reported in the Indian express that Amazon's 'Great Indian Festive Sale', Flipkart's 'The Big Billion Days Sale' and Snapdeal's '5 Day Diwali Sale' determined the tonality of big bang offers for consumers this festive season. The overall key topics of concern for the players were in terms of products, logistics, pricing and delivery.

Instead of a single day, the flipkart has spread out its offer over five days, from October 13-17. A category was added each subsequent day, starting with only lifestyle and apparels on Day One. Electronics was added on the next day when a record-breaking 500,000 mobile phone handsets were sold in 10 hours. Sales were also promoted in a much more balanced way using a 360-degree approach—ensuring best consumer experiences, including non-metro consumers, moving away from conventional advertising and investing in innovation.

In preparation for the big billion sale in 2015, the horizontal e-commerce player increased its logistics footprint and added four more warehouses. To ensure efficient delivery, Flipkart put in place close to 20,000 additional delivery boys. It also ramped up the number of fulfillment centres from 13 to 16 in order to cater also to customers from smaller cities. In order to empower and prepare sellers better for the peak festive demand season, Flipkart launched, two months in advance, a special training schedule for over 6000 sellers on managing demand spikes called 'Flipkart Seller Campus' and a manpower ecosystem programme, 'Flipkart Helping Hands'.

The result was that Flipkart's Big Billion Days Sale, in its second edition, saw a business turnover of over \$300 million in gross merchandise volume (GMV), which was three times higher than last year with the participation of 40,000 sellers and millions of visitors.

Snapdeal, not to be left behind, innovated by extending its festive sales to every Monday till Diwali in a bid to grow business by seven times sequentially this season over the preceding period. Other players who participated in the festive offers, also having learnt from Flipkart's

mistakes last year, were better prepared in their first year of ‘festival offers’, having invested significantly in both logistics and backend over the past few months leading up to the festive season.

In terms of advertising, though spends by the players were huge, there was no clear differentiation between their communication. It was more in the space of ‘textile type’ advertising where the consumer goes to all the platforms before making a choice.

Flipkart took up the ‘Abhi Nahi Toh Kabhi Nahi’ theme of building the urgency of the offer. Amazon worked on the ‘Great Indian Festival Sale’ campaign of ‘Try Toh Kar, Hoke Befikar’, focusing on purchase of all the festival needs—appliances, apparels, electronic and gifts—at one place. Snapdeal highlighted the ‘Dil ki Deal’ thematic campaign with Aamir Khan talking of “Yeh Diwali, Dil ki Deal Wali” and the route taken was ‘Sale-o-shayari’. The campaign focused on buying gifts for loved ones this Diwali.

Is online shopping boon or bane for the society?

There are always two sides of a coin and whether online shopping is boon or bane for the society, it totally depends on its usage and view point of the end users. There is no doubt that online shopping also promotes Swatch Bharat Abhiyaan by facilitating the buyers to place order on a click rather than creating traffic jams on the roads. Thus it saves time, saves money, relaxing and promotes easier shopping. Customers get an opportunity to compare the price of the products by having access to the various websites and places order with the site, providing the product at a reasonable price with different offers. One of the most important advantage is of availability of products 24x7 and working women as well as employees with long working hours find e-shopping convenient for accessing websites and placing orders in their leisure time from home itself. The different payment options provided by the online e-retailers adds further feather to the cap as there is no requirement to keep more than required liquid cash at home, the payment can be made through debit card/credit card/internet banking/cash on delivery. Customer’s reviews on the websites are also very helpful in taking buy or not to buy decision. A study has revealed that giant players in this field, flipkart, snapdeal, amazon increased their workforce to cater the growing market and to ensure timely delivery of products ordered, thus, resulting in increase in employment opportunities. It could not be denied from the above discussion that online shopping is boon for the society, but as it has been said that there are two sides of a coin, an informal interview conducted in tricity has listed the following grounds on the basis of which it can be said that it is also bane for the society:

1. Buying unnecessary items during festival offers



2. Extravaganza spending during festival seasons resulting in blockage of funds
3. The colour, size, pattern are sometimes not the same as shown on the web sites
4. Customers have reported that timely delivery is assured only when cash on delivery option is selected.
5. Customers feel insecure in sharing their personal details on the web sites.
6. Negotiation is not possible in e-shopping
7. Customers not able to understand English language, reported that the websites are not user friendly

The variety of services offered by the giant players in the cyber market, is boon or bane for the society, depends on how these services are actually availed by the customers. The benefits of e-shopping from the point of manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, consumers and general public will be having a far reaching impact on the economy of any country so the benefits could not be ignored in the presence of some its drawbacks.

SUGGESTIONS

1. There is a need on the part of the online retailers to protect the consumers' privacy by applying reliable network security software.
2. Honesty and credit are the precondition of developing business, and also the cornerstone and platform of online purchasing. The retailers must ensure the quality and competitive prices of products, improve the service quality and fulfil commitments.
3. Efficient shipping is the key for developing online purchasing. E-retailers must strive to enhance the timeliness of logistics, improve the efficiency of distribution, and realize fast, high- quality, and low-cost shipping services.
4. Sufficient time must be provided for replacement and returns.
5. Promptness in supplying supportive service like multiple payments, providing interesting information for consumers, recommending relevant products, easy refund and returns etc.
6. User friendly website must be designed so that the interest of the visitor to the sight could be prolonged.

CONCLUSION

The internet assisted e-shopping is revolutionizing the way companies conduct their business and it is becoming an increasingly critical tool for marketing success. E-shopping enables companies to obtain several competitive advantages over the competitors. E-shopping has changed the way marketing strategies are formulated and executed by the business organisations. Although the benefits of online shopping are considerable, a few problems that shoppers potentially face include identity theft, faulty products, and the accumulation of

spyware. If users are required to put in their credit card information and billing/shipping address and the website is not secure, customer information can be accessible to anyone who knows how to obtain it. So the customers must check the authenticity of the websites prior to the sharing of any personal information. Whether online shopping is boon or bane , it totally depends on how this facility has been used.

REFERENCES

Bharat Bhaskar, 2006, Electronic Commerce Framework, Technologies and Application, McGraw Hill Companies, New Delhi.

Daniel Amor, 2000, The E-business Revolution, Pearson Education, New Delhi

Ravi Kalakota, Andrew B Whinston, 2009, Electronic Commerce-A Managerial Guide, Pearson Education, New Delhi.

www.zovi.com

<http://www.elitify.com>

www.shopify.com

www.junglee.com

www.flipcart.com

www.snapdeal.com

www.beadsnfashion.com

www.mynta.com

<http://www.alltechguide.net/top-10-online-shopping-sites-india-2015.html> dated 07.02.2016

<http://www.financialexpress.com/article/industry/companies/the-great-indian-festive-war/163719/> dated 07.02.2016

<http://indiafreestuff.in/top-10-online-shopping-sites-in-india-html/dated> 10.12.2015

<http://www.anblik.com/list-of-top-30-online-ecommerce-shopping-sites-in-india/> dated 10.12.2015