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# Internet Marketing and Women's Online Purchasing Behaviour

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In recent years, the usage and access to computers have increased all over the world. With the development of new technology and worldwide web network, the E-commerce has become one of the most popular internet activities. India has also shown tremendous growth in E-commerce. There is growing awareness among the consumer about the various offerings through the E-commerce. The recent studies have shown that the male customer are more frequent online shoppers than the female shoppers. However, the female demographic group can be the profitable target for the marketers. The paper strives to identify factors influencing the online purchasing behaviour of women in India. It also attempts to unearth the obstacles which resist the target group to shop online.*

**KEY WORDS:** *E-Commerce, Online Purchasing behaviour, Women's Attitudes*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Internet has a huge potential as a shopping channel, since it allows interaction with consumers offering them a totally different shopping experience as compared to traditional shopping. The growth of Internet has surpassed every other technical communication since it was made available for commercial use in 1993 (Georgiades, 2000). The number of internet users in India is expected to be more than 230 million by 2015, almost 20 percent of the population. Despite such a large number of online users, marketers are still confronted with various challenges. One of the main challenges for which the average Indian consumer still shows little interest in online shopping, is due to their desire to see and touch products before making purchases (India B2C E-Commerce Report 2011). The demographic profile of online shoppers is also constantly changing.

However, the typical profile of an online shopper is more likely to be the male well educated, married, with a high economic status (Yorgey, 2000). Cooper et al (2000) reported that online purchases were most likely to be made by women under the age of 35 years though information regarding the attitudes, behaviour and reasons for women online buying still remains to be explored. It is worth mentioning that knowledge about the online consumer behaviour is crucial for

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companies intending to enter the E-commerce market. The consumers ranging from 20-49 years of age are the demographic group, most attracted towards online shopping. Men purchase products through the Internet more often than women do, 55 percent of men bought a product online in 2006 versus 46 percent of women. The reason for this difference might be that the focus of the most Internet business, has been on men as their target group (HUI, 2006). Belanger et al (2002) supported the notion of men as more frequent online buyers than women. They further reported that use of computer, email, web and access to a credit card are the significant determinants of online purchasing. Harris and Rodgers (2003) also supported the gender issue, which revealed women to be less content with online shopping than men. One reason for less satisfaction among women concerning E-commerce might be that they purchase more emotionally charged products, such as clothing, perfume and makeup, whereas men primary shop books, magazines and CD's, which is perceived as practical rather than emotional products (Harris & Rodgers, 2003). For women, more than men, shopping is a social activity, and shopping through the web is done unaccompanied, which might increase women's discontent with the purchasing channel. Moreover, women might not be ready to leave their usual way of shopping quite yet (Belanger et al, 2002). Women perceive online shopping as more hazardous than men do, and are more affected by word of mouth to decide on a purchase. It is a great concern of marketers to reduce women's perception of risk with online purchases for increasing their online purchasing (Garbarino & Strahilevitz, 2004).

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to investigate online purchasing behaviour of women. The study might be useful for marketing managers since it could provide them the information about the target group behaviour concerning Internet shopping and help them to analyse factors influencing online purchasing behaviour of women.

### **OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES**

The main objectives of the study are as follows-

1. To evaluate the accessibility of internet by women in Punjab.
2. To analyse the factors influencing online purchasing behaviour of women.
3. To find out the obstacles resisting women to purchase online.

In order to fulfil the stated objectives, the following working hypotheses have been framed.

- $H_0^1$ : "There is no significant relationship between age and women's online purchasing behaviour".
- $H_0^2$ : "There is no significant relationship between employment status and women's online purchasing behaviour".

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in five most populated towns of Punjab- Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala and Bathinda. The stratified random sampling design had been used for selecting the respondents. Total numbers of 500 urban female respondents were surveyed for the purpose of the study. Both primary and secondary data were collected for carrying out the study. Primary data through structured questionnaire on information pertaining to age, employment status etc. were collected in terms of a five point likert scale (1 for Great extent, 2 for Good extent, 3 for some extent, 4 for little extent and 5 for no extent). Data collected through the sample respondents were analysed on the basis of simple percentage analysis, chi square test and average mean of responses for ascertaining the perception of respondents in respect of factors influencing women's online purchasing.

### **RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

The objectives of the study were to analyse the factors influencing online purchasing behaviour of women. In order to find out the respondents perception about factors influencing online purchasing behaviour, the female respondents are classified according to age and status of employment.

**Table 1 : CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS (Age wise/ Employment status)**

	25-45 years	> 45 years old	Total	Percentage
Working Women	306	89	395	79%
Non-working Women	79	26	105	21%

Source: survey

It is evident from table 1, that total of 395 (79%) respondents belongs to working women group whereas, the rest of 105 (21%) respondents are from non-working women group. As afr as age wsie

classification of respondents is concerned, a total of 385( %) respondents are of age group between 25-45 years, while 115( %) respondents are of over 45 years.

**Table 2: WOMEN'S INTERNET ACCESSIBILITY (Age wise/ Employment status)**

Employment Status	Age	Yes (No. of Respondents)	No (No. of Respondents)
Working Women's Group	25-45 years	312	59
	Over 45 years old	16	8
	Total	328	67
	Percentage	83%	17%
Non- working Women's Group	25-45 years	30	11
	Over 45 years old	9	55
	Total	39	66
	Percentage	37%	63%

Source: survey

It has been drawn out from table 2 that the total of 367 respondents belonging to both working and non working women group has the access to internet for online shopping. Out of these 367 respondents, 342

respondents belong to the age group between 25-45 years and rest of 25 respondents belong to the age group of over 45 years.

**Table 3: FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR**

Factors	Mean	Great Extent	Good Extent	Some Extent	Little Extent	No Extent
Product quality and Price	1.14	316	51	0	0	0
After sale services	1.29	299	28	40	0	0
Saving of time	1.69	249	90	20	8	0
All time shopping accessibility	1.44	247	98	9	7	6
Promotion and advertisement	2.02	147	126	53	29	12
Shorter delivery period	3.21	102	24	33	110	98
Ease in comparison of various products with their quality and price	2.05	170	123	33	21	20
Variety of global products	2.18	100	180	29	36	22
Availability of customer review	2.00	115	175	32	27	18
Sufficient product information and explanation.	1.34	245	116	6	0	0

Source: Survey

Table 3 presents the analysis of factors influencing the online purchasing behaviour of women, which shows that majority of respondents claim, product price and quality (Mean 1.14), sufficient product information and explanation (Mean 1.34), saving of time (Mean 1.69), and after sales services (Mean 1.29), all time shopping accessibility (Mean 1.44) as the factors influence them to purchase online.

Furthermore, the availability of customer review (Mean 2.00), variety of global products (Mean 2.18), ease in comparison of various products with their quality and price (Mean 2.05), promotion and advertisement (Mean 2.02), shorter delivery period (Mean 3.21) also affects online purchasing behaviour of women.

The relationship between age and online purchasing behaviour of women was analysed using chi-square test (table 4).

**Table 4:  $H_0^1$ : There is no significant relation between age and online purchasing behaviour.**

Chi Square Test (Age Vs. Online Purchasing Behaviour)	Age	Online Shopping Behaviour		Total
		Frequent online shoppers	Non online shoppers	
Observed frequency	25-45 years	342	70	412
	Over 45 years	25	63	88
	Total	367	133	500
Expected frequency	25-45 years	302	110	412
	Over 45 years	65	23	88
	Total	367	133	500

Source: Survey

The calculated value of  $X^2$  (115.3) is greater than the table value (3.841), therefore hypothesis is rejected. Hence there exists significant relation between age and online shopping behaviour.

The relationship between employment status and online purchasing behaviour of women was analysed using chi-square test (table 5).

The relationship between age and online purchasing behaviour of women was analysed using chi-square test (table 5).

**Table 5:  $H_0^1$ : There is no significant relation between age and online purchasing behaviour.**

Chi Square Test (Employment Status Vs. Online Purchasing Behaviour)	Employment Status	Online Shopping Behaviour		Total
		Frequent online shoppers	Non online shoppers	
Observed frequency	Working Women	328	67	395
	Non working Women	39	66	105
	Total	367	133	500
Expected frequency	Working women	290	105	395
	Non working women	77	28	105
	Total	367	133	500

Source: Survey

The calculated value of  $X^2$  (89.04) is greater than the table value (3.841), therefore hypothesis is

rejected. Hence there exists significant relation between employment status and online shopping behaviour.

**Table 6 : OBSTACLES IN ONLINE PURCHASING**

OBSTACLES	Mean	Great Extent	Good Extent	Extend Some	Little Extend	No
Danger to personal information	1.37	315	185	0	0	0
Transaction security	1.55	299	128	73	0	0
Trust on physical retail houses	1.42	349	110	21	20	0
Difference in quality and price	3.66	5	17	247	102	129
Knowledge about operations of computer	2.69	49	95	326	20	10
Knowledge about commercial websites.	3.01	55	102	195	78	70
longer delivery period	2.21	100	124	133	108	35

Source: Survey

It has been clear from table 6 that the danger to personal information (Mean 1.37), trust on physical retail houses (Mean 1.42), transaction security (Mean 1.55) are the major obstacles in the online purchasing. In addition to this, delivery period (Mean 2.21), knowledge about operations of computer (Mean 2.69), knowledge about commercial websites (Mean 3.01) and difference in quality and price (mean 3.66) also resist women to purchase online.

#### FINDINGS

1. Majority of the respondents like to shop online as there are many factors like product price, all time shopping accessibility, comparison of

different products, availability of globally produced products, time saving etc. influence them to shop on internet.

2. Though the shopping scenario has been changed and people have switched to online shopping, yet shoppers hesitate for online transactions as they feel a danger for their personal privacy and security.
3. There exists a significant relationship between age and online shopping behaviour, as young women are more frequent shoppers as compared to old women.

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## SUGGESTIONS

1. Most of women are reluctant to disclose their personal information due to frequent cyber crimes. Therefore, the marketers must make the transactions more transparent and secure. The shopper must be assured that her personal and transactional information will not be disclosed anywhere.
2. Web shops must make the people aware about the arrival of new collection and related discount offers.
3. Marketers must organise huge advertising and promotional campaigns to attract more online shoppers.
4. Marketers must make the customers to rate the products. This would help the other customers to decide what to purchase.
5. Web shops must make valid purchase return policies, which will induce the women for online purchasing.
6. E-commerce websites must highlight the benefits of purchasing online. They must provide the product at a lower price to the customer in comparison to the same product in regular market.

## CONCLUSION

E-commerce is an emerging concept in shopping scenario. It not only provides global products, but also passes the benefits of time saving and convenience to reach the market. However, the women as a demographic segment remained neglected by the marketers, which otherwise, could be fruitful for the marketers to have edge on the market. The marketers need to be aware of the factors influencing the online purchasing behaviour of women. It is evident from the results of the study that the product quality and price has a significant effect on women's online purchasing behaviour. The study examined the relationship of age and employment status of women's towards online purchasing. The findings suggest that there are significant different in online purchase behaviour among different groups of women as well as women of different employment status. The

marketers need to keep check on the obstacles in online purchasing like danger to personal information and transaction security, which make the women reluctant to purchase from the web shops. At last, we conclude, that the marketers can redefine their marketing strategies considering women's to be the shopping lovers.

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