

Navigating Online Retail: A Study of Gender-Specific Buying Behaviours

Mr. Manish Kumar Verma¹, Dr. Shrutikeerti Kaushal², Dr. Neera Pal³

¹Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute for Technology, Patna, Bihar, India. mkverma076@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, University of Lucknow, India. shrutikeertik@gmail.com

³Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, University of Lucknow, India. drneerapallu@gmail.com
(Corresponding Author)

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Abstract

This research paper examines the distinct buying behaviours of men and women in the context of online shopping, revealing significant differences shaped by social influences, convenience, product exploration, and functionality. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study integrates existing literature with primary data collected from a representative sample of online shoppers. The findings highlight that women are more likely to rely on social factors, including peer recommendations and influencer marketing, whereas men tend to prioritize functional aspects such as pricing and product availability. Through statistical analysis, including t-tests, the study identifies notable differences in attitudes towards various factors influencing online purchasing decisions. The results underscore the importance of understanding these gender-specific behaviours, suggesting that businesses can enhance their marketing strategies and customer engagement by tailoring experiences to meet the diverse needs of male and female consumers. Ultimately, the paper emphasizes the necessity for e-commerce platforms to adopt a multifaceted approach, leveraging insights into gender differences to foster stronger customer relationships and drive growth in the competitive online marketplace.

Keyword: Online Shopping, Gender Differences, Buying behaviour, E-Commerce.

Introduction:

The rise of e-commerce has significantly transformed consumer shopping behaviour across genders. Both men and women have embraced the convenience and variety of online shopping, but recent studies show that their motivations and decision-making processes often diverge. Research suggests that female consumers are more influenced by social factors and personal recommendations, while men focus on functionality, such as price, speed of delivery, and product availability (Ahuja et al., 2003). Additionally, demographic factors, including age and lifestyle, play a critical role in shaping online shopping behaviour. Millennials, for example, are more likely to engage in online shopping compared to older generations (Ibrahim et al., 2023). The rise of social media and influencer marketing has further amplified the impact of peer recommendations, particularly among women (Al-Juboori et al., 2021). To cater effectively to both genders, businesses need a multifaceted approach, integrating personalized recommendations, targeted marketing, and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence to enhance the overall online shopping experience.

Review Literature:

The existing literature reveals several key factors that influence online shopping behaviour across genders. Studies consistently find that female consumers are more influenced by social factors, such as recommendations from friends, family, and online reviews. For instance, **Seock and Bailey (2007)** found that women tend to prioritize product variety, the ability to compare options, and convenience, while male consumers are more goal-oriented, focusing on practical aspects like price and fast delivery. This aligns with the theoretical framework proposed by **Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavetz (2014)**, which suggests that female shoppers are more emotionally driven, whereas male shoppers are more functional and utilitarian.

- **Social Influence:** Social influence plays a significant role in shaping women's online shopping behaviors. **Ameena and Sheeja (2022)** emphasize that social factors, particularly recommendations from friends and influencers, impact women's purchasing decisions more than men. The rise of social media platforms like Instagram and Pinterest has only increased this effect, making women more susceptible to trends and influencer-driven marketing. In contrast, men are generally more independent in their shopping decisions.
- **Convenience vs. Functionality:** According to **Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2002)**, women often prioritize convenience when shopping online, enjoying the ease of browsing, comparing products, and making purchases from the comfort of their homes. Men, while also valuing convenience, tend to focus more on functional aspects such as competitive pricing, product availability, and fast shipping.
- **Product Exploration and Comparison:** Female shoppers are generally more inclined to spend time exploring and comparing products before making a purchase decision, according to **Gender Difference Online Shopping (n.d.)**. In contrast, men tend to be more efficient and goal-oriented in their approach to online shopping, aiming to find the desired product quickly and proceed to checkout.
- **Demographic and Lifestyle Factors:** **Ibrahim et al. (2023)** discuss the influence of age and generational differences in online shopping behaviour. Younger consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, are more likely to engage with e-commerce platforms due to their comfort with digital technologies. Older generations, while adopting e-commerce at a slower pace, still show growth in online shopping behaviour, albeit with different motivations and preferences.

Research Objective:

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the online shopping behaviour of male and female consumers. The study aims to explore key factors such as social influence, convenience, product exploration, and functionality, and to examine if there are statistically significant differences between genders in their online shopping behaviours.

Research Methodology:

Examine existing research on gender differences in online shopping behaviour, including factors such as social influence, convenience, product selection, and functional aspects. (Hasan, 2010) (Gender Difference Online Shopping, n.d) (Sebastianelli et al., 2008) (Kumar & Singh, 2014). Gather primary data through a survey of a representative sample of online shoppers, capturing their attitudes, preferences, and behaviours. Employ t-tests (statistical technique), to identify statistically significant differences in the online shopping behaviours of women and men.

“Hypothesis: Male and Female consumers differ significantly in their attitude based on various factors involved in online shopping.”

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table: 1
Respondent Classification Based on Gender

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	75	50
Female	75	50
Total	150	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The data represents an equal distribution of male and female respondents, which ensures a balanced comparison between genders in online shopping behaviour.

Table: 2
Respondent Classification Based on Income

Income	Gender		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-3 Lakh	14	16	18.67	21.33
3-6lakh	32	28	42.67	37.33
6-9lakh	18	17	24	22.67
More than 9Lakh	11	14	14.67	18.67
Total	75	75	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The distribution across income levels shows that both men and women participate actively in online shopping across various income brackets. There is a slight tendency for higher-income females (earning more than 9 lakh) to be more engaged in online shopping than their male counterparts.

Table: 3
Factors Influencing Online Shopping

Variable	Male Mean	Male SD	Female Mean	Female SD	t-Value
Social Influence	15.42	3.171	15.46	2.790	1.81
Convenience	14.92	3.356	15.24	3.371	2.81
Functionality	30.60	5.360	30.43	4.760	2.73
Product Exploration and Comparison	23.10	4.149	24.03	4.384	2.89
Total	83.04	13.743	66.96	12.187	2.60

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: Male respondents scored higher on most factors, with a total mean score of 83.04 compared to 66.96 for females. The t-values for product exploration ($t = 2.89$), convenience ($t = 2.81$), social influence ($t = 1.81$), and functionality ($t = 2.73$) suggest that significant differences exist between men and women in their online shopping behaviour. The null hypothesis, which assumes no difference in online shopping attitudes based on gender, is rejected due to the higher computed t-values than the critical value at a 0.01 significance level.

Conclusion:

This study confirms that while both men and women engage in online shopping, their motivations, behaviors, and decision-making processes differ significantly. Female consumers tend to prioritize convenience, product variety, and social influence, often influenced by recommendations from peers and social media. In contrast, male consumers are more focused on functionality, competitive pricing, and efficiency in product selection. Businesses can leverage these insights by adopting tailored marketing strategies, personalized shopping experiences, and gender-specific promotional activities to better cater to their customer base. The integration of technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning can further enhance the personalization of the shopping experience, driving customer satisfaction and business growth.

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