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## A Study on Gender Differences in Online Shopping Behaviour

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**Introduction:** With rapid economic growth and increase in prosperity in the last more than a decade, Indian consumer markets have seen unprecedented expansion in interest and activity across all product and services\ categories. Advent of internet, telecommunication and media has further intensified this growth, closing many gaps between urban and up---country tastes and preferences as well as consumption patterns (IAMAI, 2011). Internet has generated a tremendous level of excitement through its involvement with all kinds of electronic businesses and procedures ranging from e-Commerce, e-Business, e-CRM, e-Supply Chain, e-Marketplace, e-Payment, e-Entertainment, e-Ticketing, e-Learning, to e-Citizen and e-Governance. Internet has revolutionized marketing, which is often termed as the exchanges between individuals and firms. Internet shopping is gradually becoming a well-accepted way to purchase various kinds of products and services including computer products, automobiles, travel products, investment products, clothing, flowers, books, music, and homes. (Donthu and Garcia, 1999). Internet has been widely used in many sales and marketing activities, from the collection of valuable data to the dissemination of information to different stakeholders, for example, information retrieval, product communication, sales tool, distribution channel, and as a customer support tool (Singh, Jayashankar and Singh, 2001; Cales, 2000; Sandberg, 1998; Peterson, Balasubramanian and Bronnenberg, 1997). Internet has opened a window of opportunities to almost everyone because of its ability to make viable the conduct of business in cyberspace, or by connecting people worldwide without geographical limitations.

Online shopping is the process where consumers enter in transactions to purchase products or services through Internet. Consumers can order goods and services virtually anywhere, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week without worrying about store hours, time zones, or traffic jams (Li and Gery, 2000; Waldo, 2000). Internet has also provided new opportunities for marketers by offering them innovative ways to promote and distribute products and information to their target consumers. With a tremendous

increase in number of internet user in India and across the globe, there is ample potential for marketers to offer their products and services through this virtual channel. According to report of Internet Worldstats(2012), there were 7.1 billion internet users in the world till mid-year 2012 and India stands at 3<sup>rd</sup> rank with more than 13 crore internet users (source: www.internet worldstats.com).

Internet retailing or e- tailing in India or business via Internet has experienced considerable growth since its origin. The volume of the business in terms of consumer transactions is increasing annually at a very high rate. According to IMRB Report (2013), e commerce market has grown and reached to the level of INR 47,349 crores by 2012. This growth is primarily driven by online travel industry, which contributes 76% to total net commerce industry in India. E-tailing comprising of buying consumer items such as cameras, computers, home and kitchen appliances, flowers and toys, online takes second position with 7.82% share. In 2013 trends of online shopping have witnessed a significant change recorded 85% rise in online trends over the regular shopping than last year (65%), reveals ASSOCHAM latest paper. The survey highlights that 35% of regular shoppers are in 18-25 age group, 55% in 26-35, 8% in 36-45 and 2% in the age group of 45-60. 65% of Online Shoppers are male as against 35% female.

### Literature Review:

There have been intensive studies of online shopping attitudes and behavior in recent past. Most of these studies have attempted to identify factors influencing or contributing to online shopping attitude and behavior. The researchers seem to take different perspectives and focus on different factors in different ways. For example, Case et.al. (2001) suggested that internet knowledge, income and education level are especially powerful predictors of Internet purchases among university students. Bellman and colleagues (1999) reported that the online population is relatively younger, more educated, wealthier, although the gaps are gradually closing. They argued that demographics appear to play an important role in determining whether people use the internet,

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however they also concluded that once people are online, demographics do not seem to be key factors affecting purchase decision or shopping behaviour. Mishra S. (2009) also suggested that age and income shows a significant association with purchasing attitude. Banerjee *et al*(2010) revealed that online shopping is significantly related with family income and frequency of internet usages and internet users with high disposable monthly income are more likely to engage in online shopping. Thus various demographic variables like age and income have preliminary positive impact on online shopping behavior of individuals. Gender also plays important role in online shopping. Females have more interest and confidence while using the internet as compared to male internet users.(Gupta et. al. 1995). It was also found that females use e-mail more than did males .(Jackson et. al.,2001).Usages of internet also differ on the basis of gender. Male internet users were more likely to engage in downloading and purchasing activities while female internet users were more likely to engage in messaging activities.(Teo, 2001). At the time of online shopping it was observed that women tend to be affected by more factors than are men. Males take risk for money where as females seemed less inclined to take moral risk for money.

**Objective of the Study:** The basic objective is to study the effect of gender on online shopping behavior.

**Research Hypothesis:**

The following hypotheses were formulated for the research study:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between male and female online shopping behavior.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is significant difference between male and female online shopping behavior.

**Research Methodology:**

This study is exploratory in nature and the main objective is to study the effect on gender on online shopping behavior.

**Population and Sample:** Participants of this study were consumers who have purchased products online in Indore. A self administered questionnaire was developed and distributed to 325 consumers during July to October 2012. Sampling technique can be best described as convenient cum purposive sampling. Among 325 questionnaires that were distributed approximately 315 were returned, with conversion rate approximating 90%. Only 310 completely answered questionnaires have been considered for the purpose of this study.

**Development of the Instrument:** The data for the study was gathered through self structured questionnaire Most

of the questions in the instrument were adapted from previous research. However, a number of questions were self-developed solely for the purpose of this research to address important concept which were not addressed in previous studies.

The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A requested the respondents to complete information related to demographic profile. The questions in this section are developed on categorical basis. The respondents are asked to complete their gender, age, monthly salary, job designation and marital status. Section B requested the respondents to provide information related to their experience on online shopping. All the variables were required to be marked on likert scale in the range of 1-5, where 1 represented strongly disagree and 5 represented strongly agree.

The questionnaire was pre tested among group of customers.. Their suggestions were incorporated and the questionnaire was revised accordingly. The revised questionnaire was then floated for pilot testing during July to December 2012. Reliability test was conducted

**Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents**

Variables and categories	N=310	%
<b>Age</b>		
18-30	204	65%
31-50	91	29%
Above 50	15	4.8%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	153	49% <sup>00</sup>
Female	157	50%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	158	50.9%
Unmarried	152	49%
<b>Income</b>		
No income but pocket money	48	15%
Less than Rs. 3 lacs	153	49%
Rs.3 lacs to 5 lacs	163	52%
Rs. 5 lacs to 10 lacs	36	11%
More than Rs. 10 lacs	10	3%
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
School Level	66	21%
Graduate and Post graduate	275	88%
Professional	26	8%
Other(specify)	43	13.8%
<b>Time spend on internet daily</b>		
Less than 1 hour	148	47%
1-2 hour	89	28%
More than 2 hour	73	23%

(Source : Primary Data)

thereafter. Cronpach alpha of the same was found to be more than .7, representing a reasonable level of reliability.

**Data Analysis:** The survey results are organized as follows. In the first section, the demographic profile of the respondents is presented. The second section presents the results of data analysis and concludes with discussion and recommendation of respondent consumers in Indore regarding online shopping.

**Demographic Characteristics:** The table 1 exhibits the demographic traits associated with the respondents considered for the purpose of this study:

As seen from the table 1, majority of respondents were males (49%) and aged between 18 to 30 years (65%).Majority of the respondents (51%) were married and 49% of the respondents had less than Rs. 3 lacs income. A maximum of 88% of respondents were graduate and only 8% were having professional degrees.

**Effect of Gender on Online Shopping Behavior:** The basic objective of the study was to study the effect of gender on online shopping behavior. The independent sample t test was applied to test the hypothesis.

Table2 presents the results of the hypothesis in this study. Table 2.1 provides the descriptive statistics of the effect of gender on online shopping behavior. The results show that the male respondents have a higher rate of online shopping (mean score: 80.17) compared to the female respondents.

**Table 2.1: Respondents' Gender and their Online Shopping Behavior**

**Group Statistics**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total Score	Male	153	80.1765	6.11095	.49404
	Female	157	78.4140	8.24236	.65781

The results indicate that the male respondents seem to prefer shopping online more than the female respondents. The results of Table 2.2 indicate that the online shopping

behavior between the male and female respondents is significantly different (p=0.000). The results indicate that the male respondents' attitude are more positive compared to the female respondents' attitude. This is not surprising since studies have shown that female tends to be more skeptical compared to male (Hashim et al., 2009) Therefore, hypothesis H<sub>0</sub> is not accepted.

**Discussion and Recommendation:** This study examines the role of gender in online shopping behavior. The findings of this study reveal that males prefer online shopping more than females. The results in this study support the findings in previous studies that show male shoppers tend to become more online shopper compared to female shoppers. This study supports the belief that male shoppers tend to be convenience shoppers due to the high commitment on work and study. It was also found by the Teo, 2001 that male online shoppers are more likely to engage in internet usage activities such as downloading and purchasing activities as compared to females.

The results showing gender plays an important role in influencing attitude towards online shopping behavior is consistent to previous studies that found significant influence of gender on attitude (Gupta et al., 1995; Haque et al., 2007). On the other hand, female shoppers tend to be recreational shoppers and would prefer to do their shopping using the conventional way. Females find conventional way of shopping more enjoyable and sociable. They find traditional way of shopping more interesting and associate it with a leisure frame. In contrast males frequently depicted shopping trips as a difficult and distasteful task, best carried out as quickly as possible that has to be endured as a means to achieve the main goal of buying: getting the goods.(Amin and Amin 2010). Females hesitate to do online shopping as because they are concerned about trust, security and confidentiality, specially they are concern about payment security. Females take precautions while using credit cards. Feamles perceived more risk in online shopping than males. Therefore marketers and retailers must realize that Internet is not a neutral channel but one that a priori is seen by consumers as more risky. So, e-tailors of

**Independent Samples Test**

total score	Equal variances assumed	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	Equal variances assumed	13.755	0.00						Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed			2.134	308	.034	1.76246	.82577	.13758	3.38733
				2.142	287.681	.033	1.76246	.82267	.14323	3.38168

today and tomorrow must attempt to reduce, if not eliminate, the perception of risk and the probability of risk at each and every possible opportunity. Providing an information navigation facility based on such risk-reduction strategies as money-back guarantee, desirable purchasing experience, .payment security, money back guarantees, exchange options, cheaper price, reputation of web pages, and the consumer's experience of the service provider etc. decreases consumers' perceived risk and increases their purchasing in the Internet (Cases, A.S., 2002).

E-marketers should also set up user friendly online shopping system which can help female consumers to overcome hurdles and barriers of accepting online shopping. (Amin and Amin, 2010). E- Marketers can use virtual reality and design their home page specially for female consumers to stimulate positive attitude towards online shopping and increase online shopping intention.

**Conclusion:** Commerce via the internet or e-commerce has experienced rapid growth since its early years. The use of the Internet for purchasing goods and services has enormous potential. The demography of population plays significant role in consumer behavior. In this way study of gender differences in online shopping behavior is significant. Previously studies also found that males and females differ in their shopping behavior. Females show some resistance towards online shopping as it is new medium and involving monetary and physical risk as compared to males. Loss of social interaction was also major concern for females. Therefore e-tailors must improve the hedonic benefits to create positive attitude towards online shopping.

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