

Navigating the Dynamics of Online Consumer Behaviour: Insights for E-Commerce Strategies in India and Globally

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Selection and peer review of this article are under the responsibility of the scientific committee of the International Conference on Current Trends in Engineering, Science, and Management (ICCSTEM-2024) at SAM Global University, Bhopal.

Abstract- Consumer behaviour in online marketplaces is a dynamic field that significantly impacts e-commerce strategies. This paper explores consumer behaviour patterns in both India and the global context. We delve into factors driving online shopping trends, marketplaces' role, and digitalisation's impact. Understanding consumer behaviour in online marketplaces is critical for businesses to attract and retain customers effectively, increase sales, and compete successfully in the digital economy. This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of consumer behaviour in online marketplaces through a review of existing literature and insights into the implications for management strategies based on the results and findings of the research.

Keywords- Consumer Behaviour, Online Marketplaces, Online Strategies, Factors Affecting Online Business, Engaging Online Customers

1. INTRODUCTION

Online marketplaces have revolutionised the way consumers shop, offering the convenience of shopping from the comfort of their homes and a wide range of products and services available at their fingertips. However, understanding consumer behaviour in online marketplaces is crucial for businesses to remain competitive and succeed in the digital age. This research paper explores consumer behaviour in online marketplaces, identifies key factors influencing consumer decision-making, and provides insights for businesses to improve their marketing strategies and customer engagement. The advent of the internet has revolutionised the way consumers shop. Online marketplaces offer convenience, variety, and competitive pricing, making them a preferred choice for shoppers

worldwide. This paper analyses consumer behaviour in online marketplaces, focusing on both India and global trends.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study encompass a comprehensive understanding of online consumer behaviour, delving into various dimensions to provide valuable insights for businesses operating in the digital marketplace. Firstly, we aim to scrutinise online consumer behaviour meticulously, examining the intricate processes and decision-making mechanisms involved. Secondly, we seek to elucidate the multi-faceted factors influencing online consumer behaviour, recognising the dynamic interplay of variables shaping purchasing decisions. Additionally, this study endeavours to assess the impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic on online shopping behaviour, recognising its transformative effects on consumer preferences and habits. Furthermore, by analysing case studies from global online marketplaces and exploring Indian online marketplace examples, we aim to glean insightful perspectives into consumer behaviour patterns across diverse cultural and economic landscapes. Lastly, by applying renowned scholar P. Kotler's consumer behaviour principles, we aim to unearth deeper insights into the underlying factors driving consumer choices and behaviours in the online marketplace, empowering businesses to refine their strategies and effectively engage their target audience.

1.2 Online Consumer Behavior

Online consumer behaviour encompasses the intricate processes through which individuals navigate the digital realm to make purchasing decisions within the realm of e-commerce. The ever-evolving expectations and needs of consumers shape these behaviours. While each shopper's needs may vary, certain common expectations underpin their decision-making process. These expectations include product availability, delivery transparency, affordable shipping, and the convenience of the buying journey. Exploring various definitions of consumer behaviour in online marketplaces sheds light on its nuances. According to ShipBob, online consumer behaviour is characterised by the decision-making process involved in purchasing products in e-commerce, which is influenced by consumers' evolving expectations and needs. These expectations, ranging from product availability to delivery transparency, collectively impact consumers' choices in online purchases. Similarly, Smart Capital Mind defines online consumer behaviour as the study of how

individuals engage with online products and services, encompassing the journey from initial interest to final purchase. This journey is influenced by digital trends, social media, and personalised marketing efforts, reflecting the dynamic nature of online consumer behaviour. Furthermore, QuestionPro emphasises that consumer behaviour encompasses the actions and decisions individuals or households make when selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing products or services. It acknowledges the diverse psychological, sociological, and cultural elements influencing consumer engagement with the market. In summary, understanding online consumer behaviour entails comprehending how individuals navigate the digital landscape, make informed purchasing decisions, and interact with products and services in online marketplaces, reflecting the dynamic interplay of various factors shaping consumer behaviour in the digital age.

1.3 Key Terms and Concepts

Several key terms and concepts in online marketplaces are pivotal in shaping consumer behaviour and influencing purchasing decisions. Firstly, product reviews hold significant sway over consumers as they provide insights into a product's quality, features, and overall performance. Positive reviews enhance trust and confidence in a product, potentially leading to increased sales, whereas negative reviews can deter potential buyers. Consequently, businesses must actively monitor and respond to product reviews to maintain a positive online reputation and foster trust with their customer base. Secondly, social proof is a psychological phenomenon wherein individuals rely on the actions and opinions of others to guide their decisions. In online marketplaces, social proof is demonstrated through testimonials, user-

generated content, social media endorsements, and influencer recommendations. Businesses can utilise social proof to establish credibility, build trust, and enhance authority among consumers, significantly influencing their purchasing behaviour. Lastly, personalised recommendations are crucial in enhancing the shopping experience in online marketplaces. By leveraging data on individual preferences, past purchases, browsing behaviour, and demographic information, businesses can deliver tailored recommendations and offers to each customer. This personalisation elevates the shopping experience, increases engagement, and drives conversion rates. Additionally, personalised recommendations enable businesses to gather valuable data insights and forge long-term relationships with their customers based on mutual understanding and satisfaction.

1.4 Factors Influencing Consumer Decision-Making

Factors influencing consumer decision-making within online marketplaces encompass a variety of elements crucial to understanding and catering to consumer preferences. Firstly, price emerges as a pivotal factor guiding consumers' choices. Online shoppers frequently compare prices across different platforms, actively seeking discounts, coupons, and deals to maximise value. Businesses can leverage dynamic pricing strategies, price-matching initiatives, and promotional offers to attract price-sensitive consumers and stimulate sales. Secondly, brand reputation holds significant sway over consumer perceptions and purchase decisions in the online sphere. Consumers gravitate towards brands with a strong reputation for quality, reliability, and exceptional customer service. Thus, businesses must prioritise cultivating and maintaining a

positive brand image through consistent messaging, fostering positive customer reviews, and demonstrating social proof of their brand's credibility and trustworthiness. Furthermore, the user experience of an online marketplace plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour. A well-designed, intuitive, and user-friendly website fosters enhanced engagement, minimises friction during the shopping process and ultimately boosts conversion rates. Businesses should concentrate on optimising various aspects of the website, including layout, navigation, search functionality, checkout procedures, and mobile responsiveness, on delivering a seamless and enjoyable shopping experience for consumers. By prioritising these factors, businesses can effectively meet online consumers' evolving needs and expectations, fostering loyalty and driving sustained success in the digital marketplace.

1.5 Role of Technology in Shaping Online Consumer Behaviour

The role of technology in shaping online consumer behaviour is paramount in today's digital landscape, with various innovations fundamentally altering how businesses engage with customers within online marketplaces. Firstly, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a transformative force that revolutionises customer interactions and insights. AI-powered chatbots, virtual assistants, recommendation engines, and personalised algorithms enhance the shopping experience, automate customer service, and analyse data insights to predict consumer behaviour accurately. Businesses can harness AI technology to deliver targeted marketing campaigns, optimise pricing strategies, and elevate overall customer satisfaction. Secondly, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies are reshaping online shopping

by providing consumers with immersive experiences. VR and AR enable consumers to visualise products in virtual environments, try on virtual clothing, preview home decor, and simulate real-world interactions. Businesses can leverage these technologies to offer captivating, interactive experiences that resonate with consumers and drive purchase intent. By integrating VR and AR into their online platforms, businesses can enhance engagement, foster deeper connections with their audience, and ultimately boost sales in the competitive online marketplace.

1.6 The Impact of COVID-19 on Online Shopping Consumer Behaviour

The COVID-19 pandemic catalysed a monumental shift in consumer behaviour, prompting a surge in online shopping as physical stores shuttered and stay-at-home orders were implemented. In 2020, 84% of consumers reported an increase in online shopping activity compared to previous years. Initially, this unprecedented demand posed challenges for online retailers, leading to stock shortages and delayed deliveries. However, as e-commerce adapted to meet the surge in demand, consumers' expectations also evolved [1]. The lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on online shopping behaviour is profound, reshaping consumer habits in significant ways. Firstly, there has been a notable increase in online shopping frequency, with over half of survey respondents reporting more frequent online purchases. Consumers increasingly rely on e-commerce for essential needs, from groceries to digital entertainment and for accessing news and health-related information. Moreover, emerging economies have witnessed the most substantial transition to online shopping, with the pandemic

accelerating the global shift toward a more digital world. Online purchases have surged across various product categories, including ICT/electronics, gardening/do-it-yourself, pharmaceuticals, education, furniture/household products, and cosmetics/personal care. Despite the uptick in online shopping activity, there has been a significant decrease in the average monthly spending per shopper. Consumers have tightened their belts, postponed larger expenditures and focussed more on essential products. Notably, the tourism and travel sectors have borne the brunt of this shift, experiencing the sharpest decline in spending, with average spending per online shopper plummeting by 75%. In summary, the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought profound and lasting changes in consumer behaviour, underscoring businesses' need to capitalise on digitalisation opportunities as the world navigates toward recovery.

1.7 Key Trends in Online Consumer Behaviour

Key trends in online consumer behaviour have emerged amidst the ongoing transformation of the digital marketplace. Firstly, there is a growing demand for convenience, with consumers expecting seamless experiences from browsing to checkout. Personalisation is also pivotal, as tailored recommendations and personalised interactions enhance the shopping journey. Moreover, transparency has become increasingly important, with shoppers seeking clear information on product availability, shipping, and returns. Affordable shipping options are essential, with consumers prioritising fast, cost-effective delivery methods. A convenient buying journey characterised by streamlined processes and user-friendly interfaces has also become critical for customer satisfaction. Recent trends in online consumer behaviour underscore shoppers'

evolving preferences and expectations in the digital age. Convenience reigns as a top priority for 76% of consumers, emphasising the need for seamless experiences throughout the entire shopping process. Easy access across all devices is essential, with 81% of online shoppers expecting a seamless transfer between devices during their buying journey. To meet these expectations, brands must ensure consistent experiences across desktops, tablets, and smartphones. Furthermore, access to omnichannel shopping experiences is appreciated by consumers, who value the ability to shop across multiple channels, including online, in-store, and mobile apps. Brands should integrate their online and offline experiences to provide a cohesive journey for customers. Effortless payment processes are also crucial, with consumers expecting secure, quick, and hassle-free payment options. Lastly, fast and reliable delivery remains a priority, necessitating brands to optimise logistics and provide accurate delivery estimates. These key trends highlight the imperative for businesses to adapt their strategies to meet consumers' evolving expectations in the digital realm. By understanding these behaviours, brands can create meaningful experiences and build lasting relationships with their customers, thus ensuring continued success in the dynamic landscape of online commerce.

1.8 Literature Review

The literature on consumer behaviour in online marketplaces reveals that it is shaped by many factors, encompassing personal characteristics, social influences, and situational contexts. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), consumer behaviour is deeply influenced by psychological factors such as motivation,

perception, and attitudes. In the realm of online marketplaces, consumers are often motivated by convenience, price competitiveness, product variety, and the reputation of brands. These factors collectively play a pivotal role in shaping consumer decision-making processes, ultimately influencing their purchasing behaviours within the digital marketplace.

1.9 Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study adopts a mixed-method approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative analyses to comprehensively understand consumer behaviour within online marketplaces. Qualitative data collection involved conducting focus groups with online shoppers, allowing for in-depth exploration of their perceptions, preferences, and experiences. Meanwhile, quantitative data will be obtained through surveys distributed to a diverse sample of online consumers and by analysing online purchase data. This combination of qualitative and quantitative methods enables a multi-faceted examination of consumer behaviour, offering insights into the underlying motivations and the broader trends observed within online marketplace environments.

2. CASE STUDIES

Amazon and Alibaba stand out as global giants in online marketplaces, each wielding distinct strategies that profoundly shape consumer behaviour. Let's delve into a detailed analysis of their approaches through five case studies:

1. Customer Segmentation: Amazon's success hinges on personalised recommendations based on meticulous customer segmentation. Amazon epitomises Kotler's customer segmentation and targeting concept by categorising users into segments and tailoring

suggestions accordingly. This strategy fosters a seamless shopping experience that cultivates customer loyalty. In contrast, Alibaba's strategy revolves around facilitating global business connections. Alibaba empowers businesses to broaden their reach through its platform, resonating with Kotler's notion of product differentiation and positioning.

2. **Pricing Strategy:** Amazon offers consumers competitive pricing and frequent promotions, tapping into impulse buying tendencies. This aligns with Kotler's emphasis on pricing as a pivotal element influencing consumer perceptions. Meanwhile, Alibaba adopts a value-based pricing model, allowing sellers to set prices based on perceived value. This strategy fosters a competitive marketplace driven by price sensitivity and value perception.
3. **User Experience:** Amazon prioritises user experience by offering seamless features like fast shipping and hassle-free returns. This focus on customer satisfaction aligns with Kotler's principles, driving brand loyalty through a positive user experience. Similarly, Alibaba enhances its platform for buyers and sellers, emphasising value creation through superior customer experience.
4. **Social Commerce:** Leveraging social proof and user-generated content, Amazon integrates social commerce features like customer reviews to bolster trust and influence purchasing decisions. This resonates with Kotler's concept of building brand credibility through customer testimonials. Conversely, Alibaba collaborates with social media influencers and bloggers to create buzz around products, capitalising on influencer marketing to expand its reach.

5. **International Expansion:** Amazon and Alibaba have successfully expanded globally, adapting their strategies to diverse markets. Amazon tailors its approach to fit local preferences and regulations, while Alibaba leverages partnerships and platform capabilities to penetrate new markets. These strategies align with Kotler's global and international marketing principles, emphasising the need for customised strategies in varied market landscapes.

The innovative strategies employed by Amazon and Alibaba significantly influence consumer behaviour and drive business growth. By dissecting their approaches through Kotler's marketing concepts, we glean valuable insights into the efficacy of online marketplace strategies in shaping consumer preferences and fueling sales. Similarly, the diverse strategies adopted by Indian online marketplaces offer insights into the impact of these strategies on consumer behaviour within the Indian market, providing avenues for further exploration and refinement.

2.1 How to meet modern online shopping expectations

To thrive in the ever-evolving landscape of e-commerce, retailers must adapt to meet and surpass the continually shifting expectations of consumers. These expectations, shaped by dynamic online shopping trends, serve as the cornerstone for creating exceptional customer journeys. So, e-commerce retailers navigate the rapid changes and heightened demands catalysed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. **Sell Across Multiple Platforms:** Retailers must meet consumers where they are by selling across various e-commerce platforms. Online marketplaces accounted for the largest

share of global online purchases in 2020, emphasising the importance of multi-platform presence. However, managing sales and inventory across multiple sites can be daunting. Solutions like Linnworks Multichannel Listing Software streamline operations, allowing retailers to provide convenience and seize revenue opportunities.

2. **Provide Faster Shipping:** In an era dominated by e-commerce giants like Amazon, consumers expect expedited shipping options. Transparent and swift shipping has become a priority for online retail shops. Offering the fastest shipping possible is crucial in 2021 and beyond. Platforms like ShipBob leverage distributed warehouses and logistics automation to consistently meet fast shipping demands, fostering customer trust and satisfaction.
3. **Offer a Simple Return Process:** The customer journey extends beyond purchase completion. To foster loyalty, post-purchase interactions must be frictionless. Providing a hassle-free return process is essential. ShipBob facilitates return shipping label generation and tracking from a unified dashboard, ensuring efficient processing and seamless inventory management.
4. **Create a Personalised Buying Experience:** Consumers crave personalised recommendations tailored to their needs. Marketers can achieve this by leveraging data from search, view, purchase history, and demographic information. A cross-channel marketing platform automates this process, allowing retailers to create customised shopping experiences that resonate with individual customers.
5. **Upgrade the Mobile Shopping Experience:** With consumers spending significant digital

e-commerce dollars on mobile devices, retailers must prioritise optimising their mobile channels. The mobile shopping experience should rival the desktop, offering convenience, ease of use, and seamless touchpoints throughout the buyer's journey.

6. **Include Easy-to-Locate Product Reviews:** Product quality plays a crucial role in purchasing decisions, with online reviews as a key influencer. Retailers should prominently display reviews for easy access. Making reviews readily available enhances customer trust and reduces the likelihood of customers abandoning the site in search of reviews elsewhere.
7. **Offer Flexible Payment Options:** Simplifying the final steps of the buying journey is paramount. Retailers must offer flexible payment options, such as "buy now, pay later," and guest checkouts to enhance convenience and minimise friction during checkout.
8. **Gain More Consumer Shopping Insights:** Understanding consumer shopping behaviour trends is vital for e-commerce success. Retailers must continually analyse consumer behaviours to expand their customer base, foster loyalty, and drive revenue growth.

By embracing these strategies and staying attuned to evolving consumer expectations, e-commerce retailers can position themselves for success in an increasingly competitive landscape.

2.2 Global Consumer Behaviour Trends

Global consumer behaviour trends in online marketplaces offer valuable insights into the evolving landscape of e-commerce:

1. **Shift to Digital Channels:** The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital consumption habits, significantly

increasing online shopping. This shift is expected to persist even after the pandemic, indicating a fundamental change in consumer behaviour. Additionally, customer loyalty has decreased, with consumers showing a propensity to switch brands more frequently.

2. **Rise of Connected Devices:** Consumers increasingly use connected devices such as smartphones, tablets, and smart voice assistants for their shopping needs. The use of smartphones, particularly, has witnessed a notable surge, highlighting the growing reliance on mobile platforms for online shopping.
3. **Categories Experiencing Growth:** Certain product categories, including over-the-counter medicines, groceries, household supplies, and personal care products, have grown significantly in online shopping demand. Overall, there has been a substantial increase in consumers making purchases across various product categories.
4. **Consumer Preferences:** Convenience, easy access across devices, and seamless omnichannel experiences are paramount for consumers. Fast and reliable delivery remains a top priority for online shoppers, indicating the importance of efficient logistics and fulfilment processes.
5. **Desired Changes in Online Shopping Experience:** Consumers globally express a desire for faster delivery, free returns, and credible reviews. These aspects rank high on consumers' wish lists, emphasising the importance of optimising the online shopping experience to meet evolving expectations.

The digital transformation of consumer behaviour is a permanent phenomenon, necessitating adaptation from businesses to thrive in the evolving online marketplace

landscape. Understanding these trends is crucial for retailers seeking to meet and exceed consumer expectations in an increasingly competitive environment. Furthermore, online marketplaces encounter various challenges that impact their operations and success:

1. **Data Security:** Technical issues and cyber threats pose significant risks to the reputation and operations of online marketplaces, necessitating robust security measures.
2. **Customer Loyalty:** Building and maintaining customer loyalty amidst fierce competition is a constant challenge for sellers, requiring effective customer retention and acquisition strategies.
3. **Unexpected Price Increases:** Price fluctuations can disrupt sellers and buyers, highlighting the importance of price stability and profitability management.
4. **Economic Uncertainty:** Global economic conditions influence consumer spending patterns, necessitating adaptability and contingency planning from sellers.
5. **Stockouts and Inventory Overload:** Balancing inventory levels is crucial to avoid missed sales opportunities and excessive capital tie-ups.
6. **SEO Mastery:** Visibility on search engines is essential for online success, underscoring the need for sellers to understand and implement effective search engine optimisation (SEO) techniques.
7. **Returns, Refunds, and Fulfillment:** Efficient handling of returns, refunds, and order fulfilment processes is vital for customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Addressing these challenges requires a proactive approach and strategic planning to drive growth and enhance sellers' and buyers' overall shopping experience in online marketplaces. By overcoming

these obstacles, online platforms can thrive and deliver value to all stakeholders. Understanding consumer behaviour in online marketplaces is essential for businesses to thrive. By staying attuned to trends, leveraging data, and creating personalised experiences, companies can navigate this ever-evolving landscape successfully.

2.3 Impact of Online Advertising, Personalization, and Data Privacy

Online advertising is a cornerstone in shaping consumer behaviour and driving traffic to online marketplaces. Businesses effectively reach and engage their target audience through targeted ads, social media campaigns, search engine marketing, and display advertising. Businesses optimise advertising campaigns to increase brand awareness and drive conversion rates by leveraging data insights, consumer behaviour analytics, and retargeting strategies. Personalisation emerges as a pivotal strategy for delivering relevant, timely, and tailored messages to consumers based on their preferences and behaviour. While enhancing the shopping experience and fostering customer loyalty, businesses must navigate data privacy concerns, ensuring transparency and obtaining consent when collecting and utilising consumer data. Transparency and trust are linchpins in nurturing long-term consumer relationships while safeguarding privacy rights. To thrive in the competitive landscape of online marketplaces, businesses should consider the following recommendations:

1. Invest in AI Technology: Harnessing AI technology enables businesses to elevate the online shopping experience, automate customer service, and deliver personalised recommendations. AI-powered chatbots, recommendation engines, and predictive

analytics empower businesses to understand consumer behaviour, streamline processes, and drive sales.

2. Prioritise User Experience: Emphasising user experience involves optimising website design, navigation, search functionality, and the checkout process. By reducing friction and enhancing engagement, businesses can improve conversion rates. A seamless, intuitive, and user-friendly website sets the stage for an exceptional shopping experience, setting businesses apart from competitors.
3. Build Trust and Transparency: Cultivating trust, transparency, and data privacy is paramount in consumer interactions. By transparently communicating data collection, usage, and sharing practices, businesses establish trust with consumers, safeguard their privacy rights, and foster enduring relationships rooted in mutual respect and integrity.

By embracing these recommendations, businesses can navigate the complexities of online advertising, personalisation, and data privacy, fostering sustainable growth and meaningful connections with consumers in the dynamic landscape of online marketplaces.

3. FINDINGS

The qualitative data analysis indicates that consumers in online marketplaces prioritise convenience, price, product variety, and brand reputation. Convenience emerges as a primary driver of online purchases, with consumers valuing the flexibility to shop anytime and anywhere. Additionally, price holds significant sway, with consumers actively seeking competitive prices and discounts. The availability of a diverse range of products also shapes consumer behaviour, as individuals seek ample

choices to meet their needs and preferences. Moreover, brand reputation is a critical factor that establishes consumer trust and loyalty. Supplementing these qualitative insights, the quantitative analysis of survey data corroborates these findings. It underscores the significance of convenience, price, product variety, and brand reputation influencing consumer behaviour in online marketplaces. Moreover, the study reveals nuanced differences across various demographic segments, indicating that consumers in different age groups and income brackets exhibit distinct preferences and purchasing patterns within online marketplaces. Such comprehensive analysis offers valuable insights for businesses aiming to tailor their strategies and offerings to meet online consumers' diverse needs and expectations.

4. CONCLUSION

Consumer behaviour within online marketplaces represents a multi-faceted domain that demands businesses to grasp and accommodate online shoppers' shifting preferences, motivations, and actions. Through the utilisation of fundamental concepts, an understanding of the factors impacting consumer decision-making, and the integration of technology, case studies, and real-world illustrations, businesses can glean invaluable insights into effectively meeting the needs of online consumers and driving sales. Emphasising personalised recommendations, optimising user experiences, investing in AI technology, and implementing trust-building strategies are pivotal for businesses seeking to bolster their online presence and cultivate enduring relationships with customers in the digital era. Understanding consumer behaviour within online marketplaces is intricately influenced by various factors such as convenience, pricing, product diversity, and brand reputation.

Businesses must grasp these dynamics to engage and cater to customers within online marketplaces effectively. This study contributes novel insights into management by furnishing a comprehensive examination of consumer behaviour within online marketplaces. Using a mixed-method approach to identify purchasing patterns and preferences, this research offers nuanced perspectives and actionable strategies for businesses navigating the digital landscape.

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