

Online Shopping Practices Among Women – W.R.T. Apparels And Lingerie (Empirical Study Of Impact Of Age On Purchase Pattern In Gautam Buddha Nagar, Up)**Roli Wadhwa¹ and Dr. Swati Jain²**Assistant Professor¹ and Associate Professor², DME, Noida**INTRODUCTION**

In the era of Digitalisation, technology has invaded over our minds and hearts. Inevitably, technology has encroached upon our major part of our day. According to a report by Nielson, Global Data Analytics company, an average Indian smartphone user spends 4X time on online activities as compared to offline activities. Apart from increased time spent on smartphones, the data usage has increased from erstwhile 4 GB to a whopping 1GB per day. People are spending more and more time in the virtual space. This advent of Digital media has impacted businesses as well and India has emerged as one of the countries with fastest growth in e-commerce.

Nowadays, people prefer buying products at a click, to avoid spending time and energy in purchasing a product at a store. Along with the comfort it offers, online shopping gives customers a wider variety of products and an easy way to make a comparison between prices. Whether, it is hotel rooms, gadgets or apparels, online shopping gives detailed information about product and services making the customer's way more easier. In fact, there is an emergence of product comparison websites like Tripoto, Policy Bazaar, GSM Arena etc which offer points of difference for products on a single click, which implies that we do not even need to make comparisons by visiting websites also. The statistics also boast of a strong e-commerce presence in the country. According to India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), India has grown as a fastest growing market for the E-commerce sector as the revenue from the sector is expected to reach to USD 120 Billion in 2020 from USD 39 million in 2017, which translates to a 51 percent rise, which is highest in the world. The rising number of smartphone users and rampant internet penetration has spurred this growth.

One of the fastest growing segments within the E-Commerce sector is the Apparel industry with a market volume of USD 9,931 million in 2019 and this revenue is expected to grow at an annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20.8 percent during 2019-2023, resulting in a market volume of USD 26,723 million by 2023, as per Statista. Out of all the sub markets, the women apparel market is less organized with lower brand penetration than menswear market. Within this industry, a fast growing category is the online lingerie market that is a key driver of growth for the entire segment, according to a report by International Brand Equity Foundation Report.

In general the stores, have not been able to offer Indian women a wide choice of products or a comfortable shopping experience. This is where the online players are stepping in, offering a wide variety of products, new categories like shapewear and the privacy to shop without human contact. Companies like Zivame, Clovia are trying to bridge the existing gap in the lingerie shopping experience. Through this paper, an attempt is being made to understand this exponentially growing demand for lingerie shopping and the relationship between age groups and demand patterns.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study on online shopping by Sandy and Minjeong in 2010, suggested the factors that encourage impulse buying for apparel websites included shipping discounts or free shipping, purchase ideas and promotional offers. This study suggested online players to provide more offers, new styles, gift ideas and more return options.

According to a study on Critical Review on in store and online impulse behaviour by Amna Sirhindi in Oklahoma State University in 2010, online shoppers get more privacy than in store buyers. In addition to that impulse shopping online can be facilitated due to availability of internet connection and a wider variety of choices online. Moreover, internet provides more of direct and personalized marketing offers, prices are relatively lesser than in store and internet has become easier source to compare products on different websites.

As per a study by Varsha (2014), the quality, style, fit and exclusivity among product attributes were important among both the genders. It was found that male consumers wanted to be associated to established brands while female consumers focused on aesthetic appeal, colour, shades and wider collection. The study also said that the sources of information to Generation Z was by watching movies, YouTube videos and award function to learn about latest fashions, along with reading fashion blogs, Twitter and fashion related articles.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the impact of age on purchase behavior and demand pattern of women shoppers towards online apparel shopping
2. To understand the impact of age on purchase behavior and demand pattern of women shoppers towards online lingerie shopping
3. To provide insights about the factors that hold consumers back from indulging in online lingerie shopping

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is an empirical study to understand the purchase behavior and demand pattern of women online shoppers in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Noida, UP. Sampling method used is convenience sampling and respondents were chosen as available. The study has been conducted among women of different age groups who go for online shopping and a sample size of 120 has been taken. The questionnaire contained open and closed ended questions giving specific choices to respondents and simultaneously digging deeper information about decisions. The study has been conducted over a period of 2 months. Chi Square test has been used to test the hypothesis and rejection or acceptance of the null hypothesis. In the current study age has been taken as independent variable and online shopping has been taken as dependent variable.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research data has been collected questionnaire, which has its own drawbacks as a tool. Lack of interest of respondents or the fear of exposing their personal choices is another limitation which was felt by the researchers. Though utmost care was taken while collecting the data not to offend the respondents and not to dig into areas where their privacy was being invaded while simultaneously getting correct information, but still a few respondents were reluctant in answering. The sampling method used here was convenience sampling which has its own shortcomings, but due to the limitations of the researchers, as far as mobility was concerned, this method of sampling was taken up.

HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis for the current study are as under.

For online apparel purchase:

H₀ - Online apparel purchase amongst women is not affected by age of the shopper

H₁ - Online apparel purchase amongst women is affected by age of the shopper

For online lingerie purchase:

H₀ - Online lingerie purchase amongst women is not affected by age of the shopper

H₁ - Online lingerie purchase amongst women is affected by age of the shopper

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS (FOR ONLINE APPAREL PURCHASE)

The data collected through questionnaires for online apparel purchase has been compiled in table as under:

Table-1: Online Apparels Purchase Behaviour			
Apparel Shopping	Age Group		Total
	Below 35	35 and above	
Purchasing Online	42	31	C = 73
Not purchasing online	28	19	D = 47
Total	A = 70	B = 50	N = 120

Chi-Square test has been used for data analysis and testing of hypothesis. For the data given in Table No.1 above, the chi-square test has been calculated as under.

Table-2: Chi Square test for Online Apparels Purchase Behaviour				
Observed Frequency fo	Expected Frequency fe	fo-fe	fo-fe ^2	fo-fe ^2/ fe
42	42.58	-0.58	0.34	0.0080
28	27.42	0.58	0.34	0.0124
31	30.42	0.58	0.34	0.0112
19	19.58	-0.58	0.34	0.0174
			Total	0.0490

Expected frequency for each observed frequency has been calculated by multiplying the corresponding column total with row total and dividing it by the total number of respondents. Thus the first expected frequency in the table has been calculated as $(A * C) / N$.

Degree of Freedom = $(r-1)(c-1) = (2-1) * (2-1) = 1$

Tabulated value of Chi- square for degree of freedom 1 at 5% of significance level = 3.84

Tabulated value of Chi- square for degree of freedom 1 at 1% of significance level = 6.63

Calculated value (p) of Chi- square for degree of freedom 1 at 5% of significance level = 0.0490

As Chi calculated is less than Chi tabulated, Ho is accepted ie online apparel purchase is not affected by age of a person and females from all age groups are reflecting more or less same purchasing pattern in online apparel purchase with not much difference.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS (FOR ONLINE LINGERIE PURCHASE)

The data collected through questionnaires for online lingerie purchase has been compiled in table as under:

Table-3: Online Lingerie Purchase Behaviour			
Lingerie Shopping	Age Group		Total
	Below 35	35 and above	
Purchasing Online	27	5	32
Not purchasing online	43	45	88
Total	70	50	120

For the data given in Table No.3 above, the chi-square test has been calculated as under for lingerie purchase pattern.

Table-4: Chi Square test for Online Lingerie Purchase Behaviour				
Observed Frequency Fo	Expected Frequency fe	fo-fe	fo-fe ^2	fo-fe ^2/ fe
27	18.67	8.33	69.44	3.72
43	51.33	-8.33	69.44	1.35
5	13.33	-8.33	69.44	5.21
45	36.67	8.33	69.44	1.89
			Total	12.18

Degree of Freedom = $(r-1)(c-1) = (2-1) * (2-1) = 1$

Tabulated value of Chi- square for degree of freedom 1 at 5% of significance level = 3.84

Tabulated value of Chi- square for degree of freedom 1 at 1% of significance level = 6.63

Calculated value (p) of Chi- square for degree of freedom 1 at 5% of significance level = 12.18

As Chi calculated is more than Chi tabulated, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. ie online lingerie purchase is affected by age of a shopper and females from different age groups are reflecting different purchasing pattern in online lingerie purchase.

CONCLUSION

Online shopping industry is a fast growing industry and new entrants are entering into the market at a fast pace. Advent of the smart phone industry and the high speed internet has made this industry even more lucrative. Every customer who has a smart phone is a potential customer and women fashion has always been a fast seller. The availability of huge range of designs and patterns on just one click has led to huge growth in the online purchases. The apparel industry is enjoying this privilege and cashing upon the increasing interest of the consumer. Irrespective of the age group, women shoppers are making huge amount of purchases online.

The other category of apparels, lingerie, is yet another market which is picking up with the Indian customers. Though this category is witnessing varied purchase patterns as per agegroup, people are increasingly becoming curious about the sites offering these products. Though the comparatively younger generation is purchasing these more often, there is difference in the purchase pattern reflected by the shoppers more than 35 years of age. Some of the reasons that were highlighted by customers for their decisions have been discussed subsequently.

The younger generations being more experimental are trying different types of products available. Particularly at the time of marriage, the customers are trying out different products from different sites and availing the huge range available. While the retail stores have limitation of colours designs and styles, the smart phone carrying shopper is scanning the products properly and broadening the horizon. Though in routine purchases even such customers are preferring brick and mortar stores where fixed brands and styles are trusted. The easy return policies also are promoting the decision but this is also seen as botheration by other shoppers. While some people find it easy to deal with the return policies, others find it very problematic and to avoid these problems, prefer purchasing tried and tested products from the tried and tested retail stores. While in cases where customers became convinced about the product specifications, there has been a remarkable positive change in their purchase pattern, one or two failed purchases have made the customers even more reluctant in going in for online lingerie purchase.

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