

**An Exploratory Study Of Consumer Motives Towards Online  
And Offline Shopping Behaviour**

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research paper was to discover motives to shop through online and physical retail stores. The researchers conducted interviews for the collection of data. The sampling strategy used was purposive sampling. A sample size of 65 was used for interviews using self-administered structured questionnaires where Participants were questioned about their motives to shop online and offline. A total of 57 different motives were found in total through a compilation of interviews, out of which most frequent top 20 motives were analyzed in this paper. According to the literature review done by the researchers, this is the first of its kind study. Research to study both online and offline shopping motivations together in a paper that, too, from the Indian marketplace context using a qualitative approach. This study can benefit both academicians as well as practitioners.

**KEYWORDS:** Shopping behaviour, hedonic shopping motives, utilitarian shopping motives, online shopping, offline shopping.

**INTRODUCTION**

E-commerce is the conduct of business among online enterprises and consumers (Anderson Consulting, 1999). Whereas e-retailing is the process of electronic commerce where consumers directly contact with online retailers, and thereby they can buy services or goods from an online store (Chaffey, 2009). Online retailing has several benefits over offline retailing. Such as the global reach of the online market allows buyers and sellers to transact without being restricted to a specific geographical area, with the convenience of shopping 24X7 (Azar, Khan & Shavaid, 2015).

Retailing is one of the essential components of India's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP of USD 2.26 trillion, having a share of around 29 % of it, i.e., around USD 672 billion, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.45% since 2000, and is expected to reach USD 1.3 trillion by 2020 at the CAGR of 17.94% (International Monetary Fund, 2016 April; IBEF, 2017, January). In this period of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) advancements, usage of the internet and mobile phones are increasing. The total number of internet users in India has crossed 462 million, which is second only to China (Statista, 2017). Mobile phone handlers have reached the mark of 1170.18 million (TRAI, 2017). India has also become the world's second-largest smartphone market and is expected to reach almost one billion unique smartphone subscribers by 2020 (IBEF, 2017, March). With the effect of this, online commerce (e-commerce) and online retail (e-retail) have also started high growth in India. As per the Indian Brand Equity Foundation (2017, January) and IAMAI & IMRB (2015, March), the Indian online retail industry is growing at the fastest pace in the world. It will cross USD 60 billion in 2017 at an AGR of 63.4% between 2016 and 2017. It is strengthened by the frameworks issued by the 'Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion' in which they have allowed 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the B2C e-Commerce marketplace model (Chaturvedi, 2016, March 29). Online retail is emerging at a faster rate than its offline counterparts (Laudon & Traver, 2014). This can be because of numerous reasons such as a rapid increase in the smartphone and internet users; government initiatives such as Skill India and Digital India; rapid technological innovations happening these days; increase in the middle-class population; cash crunch caused due to demonetization; or, due to free or relatively very inexpensive internet services provided by Reliance Jio, which is followed by other service providers. Due to such an increase in its importance and spread, it has become imperative to study e-commerce and e-retail in India.

Consumer shopping behavior is a very complex and dynamic process, and its complexity makes it even more difficult but crucial to study. It is essential to find motives influencing people to go for online and offline shopping and to explore how their motives vary between them.

A significant portion of the studies that have been done in the past is in traditional retail settings, and only a minor part was done in online retail settings. The researches done in traditional retail environments, studying consumers' offline shopping behavior, cannot be applied to online settings suitably well. As found by the researchers Liang, Chen, & Wang (2008), the behavior and perceptions of consumers towards retail will be different in both online and offline settings. Henceforth a separate study in online settings is required. Furthermore, a study studying both the settings together would be even better as both kinds of firms are moving towards Omni-channel retail format; Future group and Wal-Mart entering into virtual space and Amazon opening physical outlets.

Few prominent studies done in the online retail settings related to our objectives are done by Shin (2009); Scarpi (2012); Ozen, & Engizek, (2014); Fang, Wen, George, & Prybutok (2016). They studied motives influencing consumers to shop online. In addition to the problem of unavailability of research information in online retail settings or both the settings together, there are only a few studies done on this subject, which are from Indian consumer's perspectives. Mostly are there from the perspectives of consumers in Western countries. Which are not suitable in Indian contexts as found by the studies done by researchers Mahi and Eckhardt (2007); Gupta, Iyer, and Weisskirch (2010); who proved through their studies that research which is done in the Western world could not be used as such in the developing country like India. Few of the researches done on shopping orientations of Indian consumers were done by Gehrt, Rajan, Shainesh, Czerwinski, & O'Brien (2012); Sahney, Ghosh, & Shrivastava (2013); Thamizhvanan & Xavier (2013); Ahmed & Sathish (2015).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In today's world with increasing globalization and Information and Communication Technologies revolution, the competition is rising at a very high pace, especially in the online retail sector as here switching cost and effort of the consumer from one retailer to another is very low, in fact, it's nil in comparison to the one in the traditional retail settings. Hence to maintain sustainability in business and to manage the long-term relationship with the

customers, it's very crucial to understand and study the factors that influence or motivate customers' shopping and switching behaviors.

Motivation is one of the essential components of the aspects which define a person's behavior. They develop from unmet needs and represent, through concrete actions or the benefits which people hope to achieve (Schiffman, 2010). Motivation describes all the processes that cause individuals to behave in a particular manner (Solomon and Rabolt, 2006). It can also be defined as a driving force behind consumer perceptions and it involves all-natural, emotional, social, and cognitive forces that activate a person's behavior.

It is crucial for marketers to find the motives influencing consumer's buying decision processes. Motives not only influence behavior but also have an impact on consumers' preferences, expectations, and attitudes. Studying motives can help marketers in better framing and implementation of their marketing strategies. Motivation has such a significant influence on consumption patterns, which leads to a rise in the need to study. But it is tough to understand the motivations as they happen to be non-static and keeps on varying from person to person and from situation to situation, especially in India where the population is very diverse, Sass (1989) mentioned in their study that motivation is an abstract concept. This study will try to differentiate between motivations for in-store and online consumption behavior.

Motivation is majorly divided into hedonic and utilitarian motivations, whose concepts were adapted from the scale given by Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994). Both of them usually characterize shopping but with different weights, depending upon the shopper, products, shopping situations, and their interactions in total. As also observed by To, Liao, & Lin (2007), and Carpenter and Moore (2009), that both hedonic and utilitarian shopping motives coexist among consumers simultaneously, although one of them may tend to dominate some consumers over than others to influence their actions.

Mostly all the studies conducted in the past were done to explore utilitarian shopping values as they were considered playing a more significant role in influencing the consumers' actions. As Bridges and Florsheim (2008), suggested that utilitarian motives are more relevant to online consumption behaviors than hedonic motives, and online vendors who endorse the utilitarian values of their sites achieve higher levels of satisfaction for their users and higher volumes of sales. Wolfenbarger & Gilly (2001), through their large-scale studies, also indicated that utilitarian value is more intensely related than the hedonic value to

influence consumer's preference towards the Internet retailer. Consumers who are motivated by utilitarian values online may seek the convenience by saving their time (Kwon and Jain, 2009) or the ease of accessing information (To, Liao, & Lin, 2007). Utilitarian Shopping Values reflect the value received from the cognitive, task-oriented, and non-emotional outcomes of the shopping experience (Jones, Reynolds, & Arnold, 2006.).

There are only a few studies which found that Hedonic shopping values play a more significant role in influencing the consumer's actions as indicated by Jeff Bezos of Amazon.com that "one secret to his success is thinking of ways to make the online shopping experience more fun" (Tribune, 1999). Tauber (1972) proposed that people also shop to make themselves feel better, to gain acceptance with their peers, and to divert themselves from life's daily routine. Hedonic shopping values reflect the value received from the multisensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of the shopping experience (Jones, Reynolds, Arnold, 2006.).

Most of the studies done to study motivations were from traditional retail settings in western countries. Few of the studies done in online retail settings are done by Childers, Carr, Peck, and Carson (2001); Rohm and Swaminathan (2004); and Laudon & Traver (2015), who studied the utilitarian, hedonic, intrinsic, extrinsic and other shopping motivation aspects, particularly in online retail settings.

Few significant studies done in Indian retail settings are done by Gehrt, Rajan, Shainesh, Czerwinski, & O'Brien (2012), who explored Indian online shopping via the concept of shopping orientations and identified three segments: 'quality at any price, value singularity, and reputation/recreation. Mehta, Sharma, & Swam (2013) distinguished the Indian shoppers into – Utilitarian- who are high on functional motivation, Maximizers- who are high on functional and recreational motivation, Browsers- who are high on social motivation (which is not prevalent in western countries), and Enthusiasts- who are high on all dimensions of shopping motivations, they also found that no Apathetic shopper group- who are low on all dimensions of shopping motivation was detected, which is otherwise very common in studies on shopping motivation in western countries (Ganesh, Kristy, and Luckett, 2007), the result indicates that Indians are mainly motivated shoppers; Ganesh, Kristy, and Luckett (2007) identified the existence of five buyer types using store intercept surveys; Apathetic- which are low on all dimensions of motivation, Enthusiasts- who are high on all dimensions of motivation, Destination- whose primary motive to patronize a store is to obtain new, branded and fashionable products, Basic- who come to store just to buy what

they need, and Bargain seekers, whose primary motive is just to negotiate prices and offers. Kaur & Singh (2007), studied Indian students (youth) and came to the conclusion that eight primary factors form the motives towards shopping; Hedonic shopping motive, Peer group association, Market Maven, Utilitarian shopping motive, Status conscious personal shopper, Recreational shopping motive, Impulse shopping motive, and economical shopper.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this research was to explore motives to shop through online and offline shopping mediums and doing a comparative analysis of both of them.

### **METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

Researchers found this area relatively less explored from the Indian context. Therefore the researchers used an exploratory research design by inductive reasoning using qualitative methods for analysis (Neuendorf, 2002). The researchers conducted short interviews and reviewed secondary sources for the collection of data. The study was cross-sectional and applied in nature.

A sample size of 65, selected through a purposive sampling method was used for interviews using a self-administered structured questionnaire where participants were questioned about various motivations to shop online and offline. Participants consisted of 15 Research Scholars and 50 Post Graduate Students from the Management Department of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh, and only those people were selected who had online retail experience. Researchers approached students randomly during their free lectures and lunch hours. A total of 76 students were contacted, out of which 65 students readily agreed to give their time — leading to the response rate of 85.5%. The average age of the participants was 23 years, ranging from 21-31, and the male-female ratio of 50 male vs. 15 females. The average experience of Participants with the internet was seven years, and online retailing was three years. All the participants were guaranteed the anonymity of their identities and participation was kept voluntary to make the results more useful. The research was carried between the months of August 2017 and November 2017.

A coding list was prepared during the due course of analysis for convenience. Coding was done manually without using any computer software. The same concepts and tools, such as descriptive statistics of the quantitative study, were used for the analysis of the data after

performing content analysis (Long & Johnson, 2000; Krippendorff, 2004). For bringing clarity, the data was quantified in terms of frequencies (Berg, 2004). Out of the all, five primary hedonic and utilitarian motives each of shopping online (e-retailing) and offline (physical Retailing) were extracted from the data and are presented in this paper, lesscritical motives were not mentioned or analyzed.

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Sampling strategy used was purposive sampling, with a sample size of 65 was used for interviews using a self-administered structured questionnaire where Participants were questioned about various motivations to shop online and offline. The demographic details of the participants are given in Table: 1.

**Table: 1 Demographic details of the Participants:**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	50	76.9%
Female	15	23.1%
<b>Age (Years)</b>		
20-22	31	47.7%
23-25	25	38.5%
26-28	5	7.7%
29-31	4	6.2%
<b>Education Qualification</b>		
Graduate	50	76.9%
Post Graduate	15	23.1%
<b>Family Monthly Income (INR)</b>		
0-25,000	26	40%
25,001-50,000	31	47.7%
50,001-75,000	4	6.2%
75,001-1,00,000	4	6.2%
Total (n)	65	100

The researchers, after content analysis, came up with a total of 57 different motives, which they refined and came up with five of the most common motives each of hedonic and utilitarian shopping through the online and offline medium — mentioned in Table: 2 and Table: 3 below.

**Table 2: Utilitarian and Hedonic Motives to Shop Online (e-retail)**

<b>Motivation to shop Online- Utilitarian</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>
Online shopping allows me to shop 24X7	59
Online shopping saves the effort of visiting different stores to complete shopping and provides one-stop shopping	58
I get lower or more competitive prices online	57
I get the latest products more easily online	57
I have a broader selection of products/brands available on line	57
<b>Motivation to shop Online- Hedonic</b>	
I enjoy looking for discounts offered online	58
I enjoy surfing online as get good ideas for future purchases	56
It is always exciting to receive packages while sitting at home	55
It makes me feel happy as I get to know about new products and ideas	53
Surfing and buying products online make me happy	53

*(Source: Data collected through personal interviews)*

**Table 3: Utilitarian and Hedonic Motives to Shop Offline (Physical retail)**

<b>Motivation to shop Traditional- Utilitarian</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>
I can touch and feel/examine the product before buying	60
Delivery/procession of goods is immediate and don't have to wait	54
In a physicalstore, I know whom I have to contact when a problem arises	51
It's easier to exchange the product with the offline physical store	50
I can do bargaining offline and negotiate prices	50
<b>Motivation to shop Traditional- Hedonic</b>	
To me, shopping offline with friends and family is an excellent way to outing, trip or get together.	50
I enjoy getting out of the house	49
I find shopping offline truly a joy/fun	45
I like to enjoy the ambiance of the store	44
I enjoy watching other people, meeting new people and socialize with them during the shopping	43

*(Source: Data collected through personal interviews)*

**Utilitarian Motives to Shop Online (e-retail)**

Most of the participants, i.e., 59 out of 65, had consensus over the most critical utilitarian motive for shopping online was that it offers the convenience to shop 24X7 whenever and where ever they want, which was also the most crucial overall factor for consumers to shop online. Followed by the motive opted by 58 of the 65 Participants, i.e., their ability to save the effort of visiting different stores to complete shopping and provides one-stop shopping while shopping online. This could be due to the lack of any prominent shopping malls in the area of research, unlike in the big cities where everything can be brought under the same roof. Rest all three other motives were opted by 57 of the 65 Participants. Which were their ability to get lower or more competitive prices online, the ability to get the latest products more easily online, and the ability to have a broader selection of products/brands available online. These motives lead to the understanding that all convenience, cost, and variety were almost equally important for the youth. The online retailers must be able to achieve this due to lower operating costs.

*“I am not bothered much about the price, but online get more variety of products and brands which I usually don’t find in local stores, which are even scarce. There are even a few products that are impossible to source locally.” (Participant’s details: Age 26, Female, and Research Scholar).*

**Hedonic Motives to Shop Online (e-retail)**

When it came to hedonic aspects of shopping online, Participants felt happy, and they enjoyed looking for the discounts offered online as mentioned by 58 of the 65 Participants, although it was a hedonic aspect of a utilitarian motive only; whereas 56 and 53 Participants believed that they enjoy surfing online as they get good ideas for future purchases and it makes them feel happy as they get to know about new products and ideas. 53 Participants enjoyed and found it fun in surfing and buying products online, whereas 55 Participants found it exciting to receive packages while sitting at home. Unlike in the utilitarian motives, here, researchers found people had vast views, and it was challenging to find ultimate motives. Researchers found that, like past studies mentioned in the literature review section, most of the people had majorly utilitarian motives, which were functional, cognitive, and task-oriented for shopping online.

*“Mainly I buy online, just for better variety available and offers, but, surfing is also a fun even if I am not buying I enjoy the process of just sitting on the internet and keep*

*surfing online, it seems that it fulfills my need to have that product even without spending any money” (Participant’s details: Age 23, Male, and Post Graduate Student).*

**Utilitarian Motives to Shop Offline (Physical-retail)**

While analysis, the researchers came to a significant finding that motive which was selected as most important, i.e., 60 out of total 65 Participants, was the one where Participants told that they buy through physical retail because there they can touch and feel/examine the product before buying over there. Followed by the motive determined by 54 Participants who believed they buy through physical retail outlet because over there, a delivery/procession of goods is immediate, and they don’t have to wait. Next was mentioned by 51 Participants, which is in the physical store they know whom they have to contact when a problem arises, followed by 50 Participants who believed it’s easier to exchange the product at an offline physical store in case of any problem. The fifth motive found to be an important influencing factor to shop offline was that there the consumers could do bargaining and negotiate prices with the salesman, as mentioned by 50 Participants.

*“Although the delivery time is shortened, still the wait is difficult, and most of the time, there is no one at home, hence buying through physical retail outlets is better. More to that, I feel more confident about the product when I buy them physically.” (Participant’s details: Age 25, Female, and Research Scholar).*

**Hedonic Motives to Shop Offline (Physical-retail)**

When it came to hedonic aspects of shopping offline, 50 of the 65 Participants believed shopping offline with friends and family is an excellent way of outing, trip, or get together. 49 Participants believed they shop offline as they enjoy getting out of the house, and 45 found shopping offline indeed a joy. 44 participants believed that they shop offline as they enjoy the ambiance of the store, whereas 43 Participants shop through physical retail stores because they enjoy watching other people, meeting new people, and socialize with them during shopping. Researchers also found that just like past studies mentioned in the literature review section and the motives found in shopping online settings in the study, most of the people had majorly utilitarian motives, which were functional, cognitive, and task-oriented for shopping through physical retail.

*“I enjoy shopping offline as it happens to be a good hangout with my friends, but in my place, there are very few of the good markets.” (Participant’s details: Age 22, Male, and Post Graduate Student).*

**CONCLUSION AND BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS**

This is the first of its kind study to study both online and offline shopping motivations together in a paper that, too, from the Indian marketplace context. With the increase in internet spread, online retail is proliferating, leading to a severe competition to the existing offline retail model. This research will help the retailers to understand the customer's motives for shopping through their mediums, which in turn can help them to cope with the competition. The findings can also help future researchers in framing their hypotheses. This study can benefit both academicians as well as practitioners by offering essential theoretical and practical suggestions, as motives happen to be the critical determinant of decision making. Consumer prefers both online and offline shopping, depending on the kind of product and mood. In addition, most of the companies are moving towards omnichannel retail; it becomes imperative for those firms to find the factors which influence consumers to buy online and offline, which could help them in policies and promotional planning. Moreover, by knowing it, the firms can spend their budgets on the right places, which are essential for the consumers and not on the points which are nonessential for the consumers.

Customers like online because of its 24X7 service, physical retailers can equalize this advantage by extended opening hours, but of course, it will add operating costs, which everyone could not bear. Physical retailers can increase the variety of products which will attract more customers, this they can do only by opening multiple stores of different brands and products at a single location. Consumers believe that online, they get better offers and more competitive prices, which the physical retailers can curb by offering regular sales and providing gift cards and offers. Physical retailers should hire more knowledgeable and skilled salespersons who can provide better knowledge about the products and their features as consumers to believe that online they get better ideas about new products. The physical retailers should also start free home delivery as consumers love to receive goods while sitting at homes. Researchers also found that just like past studies mentioned in the literature review section and the motives found in shopping online settings, most of the people had majorly utilitarian motives, which were functional, cognitive, and task-oriented for shopping through physical retail. Hence they should consider that while framing policies and promotions.

During the research, it was found that the motive which was selected as most important and shared by 60 out of total 65 Participants, was the one where Participants told that they buy through physical retail because there they can touch and feel/examine the product before buying. Therefore, online retailers should enter into Omni-channel retail so that consumers

can physically examine the products before purchasing online. People also worry about whom they would contact at the time of the problem, so online retailers should make communication easier to influence the consumers to buy confidently. The online retailers must have easy return and exchange policies to imbibe more confidence in the customers. All the e-retailers should add the feature of the negotiation of prices. Online retailers should also engage social media sites on their websites so that consumers can engage socially. By adding a few engaging, interacting, and entertaining features on the sites, online retailers would be able to attract more customers. Researchers found that, like past studies mentioned in the literature review section, most of the people had majorly utilitarian motives, which were functional, cognitive and task-oriented for shopping online. Hence they should consider that while framing policies and promotions.

### **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF RESEARCH**

The sample was restricted to university students that, too, just in the state of Himachal Pradesh and not covering people in other domains or cities can limit its results from generalization. In the future, a study with more diverse Participants is suggested, especially in some metropolitan cities where people have good availability of a good physical retail outlet, i.e., the opportunity for both. As in the areas where this study was based, they were scarce. And online also, many of the e-retailers started delivery to their locations very recently, limiting their experience. Being exploratory in nature, the sample size was quite small. Researchers also suggest a longitudinal study with a larger sample size in the future to check how motives get modifies with time. Future researches with more variables such as expectations and perceptions are also suggested.

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