

## PROS AND CONS OF ONLINE SHOPPING

**\*Vineeta Yadav**

### **ABSTRACT**

Online shopping or e-shopping is a form of electronic commerce which allows consumers to directly buy goods or services from a seller over the internet using a web browser. Alternative names are e-web-store, e-shop, e-store, internet shop, web-shop, web-store, online store, virtual store, etc.

Simply put, it is any form of sale that is done over the internet. Shopping has certainly gotten a new definition since the arrival of the internet. Because of what the internet has to offer, that is, person or company from any part of the world who is able to post and sell goods on the via a website is able to sell. What's more, any consumer does not have to worry about having to find means to exchange monetary papers because online banking is available which has given a consumer several options to pay through different online and digital payment methods.

**Keywords:** Online shopping, pros and cons, features, factors, traditional shopping, consumers' perception.

### **Introduction**

Online shopping is becoming increasingly popular for variety of reasons. There are certainly outside factors such as increasing gas prices, difficulty in getting to traditional stores and hassles often associated with shopping malls and other traditional stores to contribute to the increased interest in online shopping.

Consumers can get full information about the product with its reviews being passed by the existing users. If one wants to buy a product he/she is no longer limited to asking the friends and families because there are many products reviews on the web which gives opinions of the existing users of the product.

Online shopping sites contain wide variety of goods both high quality and mild quality keeping in mind the level of people.

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### SPECIFIC FEATURES OF ONLINE SHOPPING

Online shopping consist of various features which also highlight the benefits of e-shopping. These features are described as:

- 24x7 Service available.
- Easy Access with multiple devices.
- Single click to navigate multiple sites.
- Comparison can be made in real time.
- Flexible payment methods.
- Cashback offers.
- Casual shopping.
- Availability of much more variety.
- Reliable information provided.
- Less time consumption.
- Convenient prices.
- Give feedback about the product.

### FACTORS AFFECTING ONLINE SHOPPING

Following are the main factors affecting the online shopping:

1. **Product Information:** Enough information given about the products and services on the internet. The description of products shown on the web sites are accurate and describe completely about each product. Product information should be simple and straight forward so that shopping website should be easily navigated during purchase process. Product information is considered as the most important dimension in online shopping.
2. **Online Payment:** Most people prefer to purchase online due to easy payment methods of online buying. It is easier to pay online through credit card or direct bank transfer. Online payment is one of the major criteria used by customers in evaluating online shopping websites.
3. **Convenience and Variety:** The information given about products and services on the internet is available continuously and can be viewed whenever required. Convenience and variety are web-based customer support which requires special attention. It shows that users find it easy to use online mode of shopping because it provides the latest and wide variety contents. Therefore,

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convenience and variety are more reliable, accountable, adequate, faster and transparent in comparison to brick and mortar shopping malls and traditional shops.

4. **Easy Accessibility:** It is a great advantage that shopping is possible round the clock on the internet. Shopping online allows to have better item selection with easy accessibility on screen of computer or mobile phone with menu driven web sites.
5. **Flexibility:** Internet reduces the monetary costs of traditional shopping to a great extent, shopping on the internet saves time. Therefore, queries of customers should be settled quickly to provide quick service to the customers. Moreover, customers will shift to other online shopping websites in case of absence of settlement of queries.
6. **Price Consciousness:** Prefer to purchase online due to heavy discounts availability. The quality of products purchased online from trusted sites is very good and are available at economical prices can read the reviews also before purchasing online which helps to select the right product at economical prices.

#### **A BRIEF COMPARISON BETWEEN TRADITIONAL & ONLINE SHOPPING**

Shopping is an activity in which a consumer browses the available goods or services presented by one or more retailers with the intent to purchase a suitable selection of them. In traditional shopping, the consumer has to struggle through crowd of nudging people, wait in queues to make the purchase and go from one store to another to find the choices, he/she might be looking for. In other words, people should have sufficient time to visit a store, purchase and carry products. With the advancement in technology and new lifestyle choices, online shopping is looking more attractive specially to computer friendly generation.

The main difference between online shopping and traditional shopping is that online shopping is very convenient as one can shop anytime, anywhere while traditional shopping can be time-consuming, but allows to actually see and touch the buying products.

Although shopping is usually associated with going to a shop and making a purchase (traditional shopping), online shopping is rapidly becoming popular all over the world. However, each has its own pros and cons.

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The following Table 1 shows comparison between traditional and onlineshopping:

**Table 1 Comparison between Traditional and Online Shopping**

<b>Traditional Shopping</b>	<b>Online Shopping</b>
Traditional shopping is the activity of visiting a shop and making purchases.	Online shopping is the activity of purchasing goods and services over the internet.
It is time consuming and less convenient.	It tends to be more convenient as shopping is possible from anywhere and anytime.
Customers are actually able to see what they are buying before they make the payment.	Customers don't have the facility to physically touch or see the items they order.
It is comparatively safer.	There is a risk factor of online fraud and some online security issues during online purchasing and payment, etc.
It doesn't allow customers the chance to compare price easily.	It allows customers compare to prices and cheapest find the products.

Many people wonder where they can find the better deal, online or in the nearby stores. These are people who prefer to do their shopping online and then there are those that do not so when it comes to online shopping vs traditional shopping, both sides have their advantages and disadvantages.

When compared to online shopping, traditional shopping is a secure option to shop. One knows from where does the things come, no body can steal your personal data, even the desired quality can be checked and cansee the product as simply seeing pictures doesn't work every time.

These things make over online shopping. Also there is disadvantage that online stores ship within a certain area for free but many times if a customer is located outside of city or area, he/she needs to pay hefty shippingprices. Advantage of online shopping is that finding things are pretty easy as they are available just at a click but then quality becomes biggest issue.

#### **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF E-COMMERCE**

##### **Advantages of E-Commerce**

1. Every product is at the tip of fingers on the internet for customers, literally. One has to type in the product he/she is looking for into his/her favorite search engine and every option will appear in a well-organized list in a matter of seconds.
2. Side by side comparisons are readily available and easy to do. When products are placed online,

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they come with all the specifications and they want that customers can compare them with others.

3. With every online business require customers, more and more coupons and deals can't be avoided, which are totally great for customers. With major sites that act as departmental store, one can find items on heavy discount. Customers can take advantage of the competition and find the best product and price combination available.
4. With e-commerce, there is no driving in circles while looking and digging in hopes of finding what a customer needs. Stores online offer their full line as well as use warehouses instead of store fronts, products are easy to locate and can be delivered to customer's door within specified time.
5. Without driving from store to store, a customer can easily compare and contrast products. The customer can see who offers the best pricing and have more options to choose from. While a physical store has limited space, the same store on the internet will have full stock.

#### **Disadvantages of E-Commerce**

1. Before making instant transactions online, be sure to check the sites certificates of security. While it may be easy and convenient to shop, no one wants their personal information to be stolen. While many sites are reputed, always necessary to research for those with less than sufficient security.
2. When making purchases, the customer is aware of the product cost, shipping, handling and possible taxes. There may be hidden fees that won't show up on a purchasing bill but will show up on the form of payment. Extra handling fees may occur, especially with international purchases.
3. Although delivery of products is often quicker than expected, be prepared for delays. A snow storm in one place may throw off the shipping system across the board.
4. While e-commerce makes everything easily accessible, a customer cannot actually touch products until they are delivered to the door. It is important to view the return policy before buying.
5. While the rules and regulations of each e-commerce business is laid out for customers to read, there is a lot to read and it may be confusing when it comes to the legalities.

#### **CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING**

Consumers' perception can be described as the evident behaviour of consumers at the time of searching a product, during the process of making a purchase and the behaviour after having made the purchase or having used the services acquired through shopping online. In other words, the consumers' perception can be defined as the attitude people carry out when they want to purchase and use the products or services. Consumer behaviour is the intent or the attitude shown by the consumers while shopping online. Consumers' behaviour includes various practices, for instance, how people usually buy, what things they prefer buying, when or at what time are they comfortable

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in buying, why they buy the products or how they decide on the products that they buy.

Online shoppers browse various websites to fulfill consumers requirements for the products or services they desire. The consumers can look at all possible options and alternatives that are available for the product, they want. From there, consumers can select the product best fits their need. Finally, the consumers buy the product that is needed.



**Fig. 1. Factors Influencing Consumer's Perception**

Consumer perception plays an important role in online shopping. Most important factors that influence online buying are attitude, motivation, trust, risk, demographics, websites etc. The perception of consumers is based on the services provided by the e-retailers in terms of quality of products, customized delivery options, wide range of payment options including cash on delivery and after sales services offered by the website. The factors like ease of use, website design and trust built in the websites make the consumers shop online frequently. The various factors determining buying perception are trust (which is being built in the website), website features, payment methods and convenience to shop etc.

Consumers' perception towards online shopping and purchase intention for shopping online depends

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predominantly on the perceived risk and the perceived apparel quality associated with the online purchase. These relationships are controlled and driven by factors, such as consumer traits, situational factors, product characteristics and previous online shopping experiences. Consumers perception towards online shopping is a prominent factor affecting actual buying behaviour.

The consumers who enjoy their online shopping experience, have a more positive attitude towards online shopping, and are more likely to adopt the Internet as a shopping medium.

#### CONCLUSION

There are a number of factors which affect shopping perception of consumers. Consumer buying behaviour is influenced by the five major factors: psychological, social, cultural, personal and economic factors. A strong, healthy economy brings purchasing confidence while a weak economy reveals a strained market, marked by a weakened purchasing power and unemployment.

Consumers undertake purchase decisions nearly every day, be it big or small. For every buying decision made, they think of fulfilling a need. This need can be steered by a range of factors, and fulfilment of it can be influenced by a number of factors mentioned here. Each of these factors can be leveraged as a weapon by businesses for marketing and enhancing their sale prospects.

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