

Factors Influencing Online Shopping Behavior of Working Women for Apparel and Accessories in Thiruvallur Town

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Abstract

Online shopping has become an integral part of modern life, offering convenience and a wide range of choices to consumers. This study focuses on the online shopping behavior of working women in Thiruvallur Town, analyzing 176 responses collected through a survey. The research aims to identify the determinants of online shopping behavior, particularly for apparel and accessories. The study employs statistical tools to analyze the data and draws conclusions regarding the factors influencing the shopping preferences of working women in the region. Key factors such as convenience, product variety, and social influence are explored to gain insights into the changing dynamics of shopping patterns in this segment.

Keywords: Online shopping, apparel, accessories, working women, consumer behavior.

Introduction

Shopping is an inherent activity in people's lives, and with the rise of e-commerce, the way consumers shop has significantly evolved. Women, in particular, have shown a keen interest in fashion and apparel, and their shopping patterns differ from those of men. Online shopping has gained popularity due to its convenience, variety of choices, and attractive offers. This study aims to understand the pleasure and preferences of working women in Thiruvallur Town when shopping online for apparel and accessories, considering the impact of recent changes in shopping habits, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Literature Review

The study conducted by Sunday C. Eze and Bello Adenike O. Bello in 2016 explored the factors influencing consumer behavior in marketing consumer goods in Nigeria. The research focused on the impact of demographic factors such as age, income, and gender on consumers' decisions when purchasing clothes. Understanding these influences can help businesses and marketers tailor their strategies to better meet the needs and preferences of different consumer segments.

The study conducted by Nethravathi T.S. and Dr. G.S. Vijaya in 2017 highlights the advantages of online purchases over traditional offline retailing. The research emphasizes the various comforts and benefits that consumers experience when shopping online, leading to the rapid growth of online

retailing, especially with the integration of information technology (IT) tools. The findings suggest that online retailing, powered by IT tools, is experiencing significant growth, transforming the way consumers shop and presenting new opportunities for businesses in the digital marketplace.

The study conducted by G. Hari Shankar Prasad in 2014 explored the priorities and purchase behavior of online shopping customers. The research highlights the factors that influence online shopping behavior, including the importance of the latest designs and product options, convenience, catering to the middle-class segment, family shopping convenience, social compliance, discounts, cost consciousness, customer trust, availability of choice, and product durability. Understanding these factors is crucial for e-commerce businesses to meet the preferences and expectations of online shoppers and enhance their overall shopping experience.

The study conducted by Deepali Saluja in 2016 focused on identifying the influencing factors for online purchases, particularly concerning fashion apparels. The research explored the sources of influence that impact consumers' buying behavior when shopping for fashion clothing online. These findings suggest that consumers' online fashion apparel purchase decisions are influenced by their social networks, including friends and family, as well as by aspirational figures like celebrities. Additionally, the quality, comfort, and brand of the clothing items are primary considerations that guide consumers' buying behavior.

The study conducted by Dr. Santhosh M in 2021 explored the significance of fashion accessories in completing a fashion look or outfit. The research particularly focused on men's fashion accessories and identified the major factors that influence their purchase behavior. The findings suggest that men's fashion accessory purchases are influenced by a combination of product-related factors, external stimuli, and social influence. These factors collectively impact their choices and preferences, leading them to select accessories that align with their fashion tastes and the current trends.

The research conducted by Mandarić, Doroteja, Anica Hunjet, and Dijana Vuković in 2022 aimed to determine the percentage of consumers who actively seek information about fashion brand sustainability before making a purchase of their products. The study sought to understand the extent to which consumers consider sustainability as a factor when buying fashion items. However, the study also points out that there is still a gap between consumers' positive attitudes towards sustainability and their purchasing behavior. To bridge this gap and promote sustainable fashion consumption, the industry may need to implement systemic changes, such as adopting more sustainable production processes, transparent supply chains, and offering clear sustainability information to consumers.

The research conducted by Metrigy focuses on customer experience (CX) and reveals the growing significance of technology investments in enhancing customer engagement and satisfaction. According to the findings, 65% of companies are increasing their technology spending, with some organizations raising their outlays by as much as 24%, to improve their CX efforts. Businesses that prioritize CX and invest in the right technology tools are likely to build stronger customer relationships and gain a competitive edge in the market.

Previous studies have explored various aspects of online shopping behavior, including demographic factors, influencing factors, and sustainable fashion choices. The literature review highlights the significance of online shopping in the fashion industry, the factors that influence purchase decisions, and the impact of sustainability concerns on consumer behavior.

Research Gap

While numerous studies have examined online shopping behavior in various cities, Thiruvallur Town remains relatively unexplored in this context. This study aims to fill this research gap by focusing on the online shopping preferences of working women in Thiruvallur Town for apparel and accessories.

Study Area

Thiruvallur Town is an important location situated close to Chennai, and a significant number of women from this town commute to the metropolitan city for work and education. Due to time constraints and limited availability of trendy fashion choices in Thiruvallur, many working women and students in the area have turned to online shopping to fulfill their fashion needs.

Objectives of the Study

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

To identify the factors influencing the purchase behavior of working women for apparel and accessories through online platforms.

To understand the online shopping preferences of working women in Thiruvallur Town.

To analyze the impact of convenience, product variety, and social influence on online shopping decisions.

Research Methodology

A sample size of 176 working women in Thiruvallur Town was collected using a Google form questionnaire. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the participants. The data collected was analyzed using statistical tools, including percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, and exploratory factor analysis. The study was conducted between January 2023 to April 2023

Limitations of the Study

This study has certain limitations, including its focus solely on apparel and accessories purchases through online platforms. The results and conclusions may be applicable only during the data collection period and may not be generalized to other regions.

Justification of the Study Domain

With women and children accounting for a significant share of the consumer market in India, understanding the preferences and needs of working women is crucial for manufacturers and retailers. This study aims to shed light on the shopping behavior of working women, who are financially independent and express their self-reliance through their fashion choices.

By examining the factors that influence online shopping behavior, this research will provide valuable insights for businesses to tailor their offerings and improve the shopping experience for working women in Thiruvallur Town.

Results & Discussions

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

TABLE - 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE WOMEN APPAREL SHOPPER

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE			
Demographic Profile (N = 213)	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 25 years	44	24.7
	25 – 35 years	57	32.6
	Above 35 years	75	42.7
Marital status	Unmarried	67	38.2
	Married	109	61.8
Monthly Family Income	Less than 20,000	58	33.1
	20,000 - 40,000	82	46.1
	40,000 - 60,000	21	12.4
	More than 60,000	15	8.4
Years of using Internet	Below 3 Years	78	43.8
	3 - 5 Years	66	37.6
	Above 5 Years	32	18.6

Based on the data obtained from the study, the following observations were made:

Age Distribution: The highest percentage of working women who participated in the study were aged above 35 years, accounting for 46.5% of the respondents. On the other hand, 23.9% of the women were below 25 years old.

Marital Status: The study included opinions from both married and unmarried women. The majority of respondents (68%) were married, while 31.9% were unmarried.

Income Level: Among the women shoppers surveyed, 42.3% belonged to the income range of 20,000 to 40,000 rupees. This income group showed a higher interest in online shopping for apparel and accessories.

Online Shopping Duration: Of the total 176 respondents, 39% of the women shoppers had been using online platforms for apparel purchases for the past three years.

The findings indicate that the online shopping behavior of working women in Thiruvallur Town is influenced by age, marital status, income level, and the duration of their engagement with online shopping platforms. These factors play a significant role in shaping their preferences and choices when purchasing apparel and accessories online.

REASONS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

TABLE - 2: OPINION OF WOMEN SHOPPERS THE REASONS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

Rotated Component Matrix^a			
Reasons for online shopping	Component		
Information	1	2	3
Browsing for information at leisure time	.761		
Gathered information from friends and relatives through chatting	.742		
Popups, banner and online advertisement from sellers	.740		
Choices			
I shop for the goods available at national and international market		.784	
I can select both traditional as well as fashionable		.626	
I am free to select the seller as well as number of products at different sellers		.663	
Benefits			
I feel comfortable to shopping from home shipping at door step			.807
I am getting more offers, discounts and bonus points etc., for future purchase also			.763
I am getting product at low price because cost reduction to sellers.			.739

Based on the above table, the study identified three main reasons why most working women prefer online shopping to purchase apparel and accessories for themselves and their family members:

Information Accessibility: One of the primary reasons for the preference towards online shopping is the easy accessibility of product information. The majority of shoppers acknowledged that they receive sufficient details about the product, including descriptions and usage information provided by the sellers. Additionally, they rely on reviews posted by other customers, as well as recommendations from friends and relatives to make informed decisions about their purchases.

Wide Range of Choices: Online shopping platforms offer a diverse and extensive range of choices, which is a significant attraction for women shoppers. They are enticed by the variety of products showcased with appealing images and dimensions. Online shopping provides the flexibility to select from both traditional items available in the national market and trendy fashion items from international markets. The convenience of browsing through multiple sellers and having access to numerous products at one click on their mobile devices enhances the overall shopping experience.

Convenience and Cost-Effectiveness: Working women find online shopping more comfortable and cost-effective. They appreciate the convenience of shopping from the comfort of their homes, saving time and effort. The added advantage of doorstep delivery further adds to the appeal. Moreover, online platforms often offer products at lower prices compared to brick-and-mortar stores and frequently provide attractive offers and discounts, making online shopping a more economical option.

In conclusion, working women's preference for online shopping for apparel and accessories is driven by the easy access to product information, the wide range of choices available, and the convenience and cost-effectiveness offered by online platforms. These factors contribute to the increasing popularity of online shopping among this demographic.

REGRESSIONANALYSIS

Multiple regression analysis has been applied to explore the influence of online shopping among the working women in Thiruvallur Town the results are presented in table – 3.

Table - 3

Dependent Variable	Significant Predictors	Mean (SD)	F-Value	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	β (t-Value)	Sig.
Information		31.460 (5.491)	135.834	0.749	0.562	0.558		
	Information	28.014 (4.800)					0.526 (8.706)	0.000*
	Benefits	16.390 (3.021)					0.290 (4.798)	0.000*
P Value of >0.05* - (AF, PF all Factor significantly influencing the BF)								
Notes: *Significant @ 5% Level.								

The results of the multiple regression analysis at a 5 percent level of significance indicate that the independent factor "information" has a positive influence on the dependent factor "choices and benefits" among women shoppers for their online purchases of apparel and accessories. This suggests that providing sufficient information about products positively impacts the choices made by working women when shopping online, leading to greater benefits for them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the increasing independence of Indian women, allowing them to balance their domestic, professional, and social roles. This independence has led to a rise in women shoppers who are passionate about spending on themselves and their family members. With financial autonomy, women are becoming more selective about their purchases, paying attention to factors like price, quality, and brand when shopping for apparel and accessories online.

The study also emphasizes that woman shoppers in Thiruvallur Town are experiencing a similar fashion fascination as those in metropolitan cities, thanks to the convenience of online shopping. The COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted many women to stay home for extended periods, further accelerated the shift towards online shopping to refresh their fashion choices and accessories.

Overall, the study indicates a positive trend in the online shopping behavior of working women, driven by their financial independence, desire for choice and quality, and the convenience offered by online platforms. As technology and e-commerce continue to evolve, online shopping is likely to remain a preferred mode of shopping for women shoppers in Thiruvallur Town and beyond.

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