



ONLINE SHOPPING AND BUYING BEHAVIOR OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN ARIYALUR DISTRICT

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of e-commerce has significantly influenced consumer purchasing behavior, particularly among college students who are tech-savvy and highly engaged with digital platforms. This study examines the online shopping behavior of college students in Ariyalur district, focusing on the factors that drive their purchasing decisions, the challenges they face, and the role of digital platforms in shaping their shopping habits.

The research explores key aspects such as convenience, pricing strategies, product quality concerns, payment preferences, and the impact of social media and digital marketing. The findings indicate that affordability, ease of use, and discounts are the primary motivators for online shopping, while concerns about product authenticity, return policies, and digital payment security remain significant barriers.

KEYWORDS: Online, Shopping, Factors, Influencing, College, Students, Behaviour, and internet.

Introduction

In the digital era, online shopping has revolutionized the way consumers purchase goods and services. The increasing penetration of the internet, affordability of smart phones, and convenience of e-commerce platforms has significantly influenced purchasing behaviors, particularly among young consumers. College students, being technologically adept and highly engaged in online activities, represent a crucial demographic for e-commerce businesses.

India has witnessed exponential growth in online shopping, driven by factors such as digital payment solutions, attractive discounts, and a wide range of product availability (Chauhan & Gupta, 2020¹). The trend is even more pronounced in semi-urban and rural areas, where improved internet accessibility has bridged the digital divide (Kumar & Rani, 2021²). Ariyalur district, a region with a mix of urban and rural characteristics, presents an interesting case for studying the online shopping behaviors of college students.

Understanding the factors that influence students' online purchasing decisions such as brand perception, pricing strategies, peer influence, and digital literacy can provide valuable insights

for businesses, policymakers, and educational institutions. This study aims to analyze the key determinants of online shopping preferences among college students in Ariyalur district, shedding light on their motivations, challenges, and evolving consumption patterns.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the factors influencing online shopping behavior among college students, such as price sensitivity, convenience, product variety, and brand perception.
2. To assess the preferred online shopping platforms and payment methods used by college students in Ariyalur district.
3. To analyze the impact of demographic variables (such as age, gender, income, and educational background) on online purchasing decisions.
4. To evaluate the role of social media and digital marketing in shaping the online shopping preferences of college students.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid growth of e-commerce has transformed consumer purchasing behavior, particularly among young and tech-savvy individuals like college students. With the increasing availability of smart phones, internet access, and digital payment options, online shopping has become a preferred mode of purchase for many students. However, despite the convenience and accessibility of online shopping, several factors influence their purchasing decisions, including trust issues, financial constraints, product quality concerns, and marketing strategies.

In regions like Ariyalur district, which has a mix of urban and rural characteristics, online shopping behavior may differ due to factors such as internet penetration, digital literacy, socio-economic conditions, and cultural influences. There is limited research on how these factors shape the online shopping patterns of college students in semi-urban and rural areas.

This study seeks to explore the key determinants of online shopping behavior among college students in Ariyalur district. It aims to identify their preferences, challenges, and overall satisfaction with online shopping experiences. By understanding these aspects, the study will provide valuable insights for e-commerce platforms, policymakers, and businesses to enhance digital shopping experiences and bridge any existing gaps in the online retail market.

Need for the Study

The increasing penetration of digital technology and e-commerce has significantly influenced consumer behavior, particularly among young individuals such as college students. While urban areas have witnessed a rapid adoption of online shopping, semi-urban and rural regions like Ariyalur district are still undergoing a digital transformation. Understanding the online shopping behavior of college students in this region is essential for several reasons:

1. Growing Online Shopping Trends.
2. Digital Literacy and Internet Accessibility.
3. Trust and Security Concerns.
4. Influence of Marketing Strategies.
5. Economic and Social Impact.

Review of Literature

The study of online shopping behavior among college students has gained significant attention in recent years due to the rapid growth of e-commerce. Various researchers have examined the factors influencing online purchasing decisions, the role of digital platforms, and the challenges

faced by consumers. This review presents key findings from previous studies relevant to the online shopping behavior of college students, particularly in semi-urban and rural contexts.

1. Online Shopping Behavior and Consumer Preferences

According to Dr. T. Selvam (2018³) The purpose of this study is to analyze the consumer buying behavior towards online shopping sites in ariyalur district. Online shopping give many advantages over the traditional market, it saves time, money and energy etc., to the online shoppers. The large number of internet users provides a good foundation for the expansion of the online shopping market.

According to Chauhan and Gupta (2020⁴), online shopping behavior among youth is largely influenced by factors such as convenience, availability of multiple options, and price discounts. Their study highlighted that college students prefer online shopping due to ease of use and time-saving benefits. However, concerns about product quality and trust in sellers remain significant barriers.

Similarly, Kumar and Rani (2021⁵) examined the increasing adoption of e-commerce in semi-urban and rural areas of India. Their findings suggest that while internet penetration has improved, factors such as digital literacy and trust in online transactions still affect purchasing behavior.

2. Role of Digital Literacy and Internet Penetration

Sharma et al. (2019⁶) explored the impact of digital literacy on online shopping preferences. The study found that college students with better internet knowledge and financial awareness were more likely to engage in frequent online purchases. It also noted that rural students faced challenges in accessing secure digital payment methods.

In a related study, Mehta and Patel (2022⁷) investigated how mobile internet penetration has shaped e-commerce behavior in small towns and rural areas. Their research showed that affordable mobile internet has significantly contributed to online shopping growth, particularly among young consumers.

3. Influence of Social Media and Digital Marketing

Social media plays a crucial role in shaping online shopping behavior. Agarwal and Verma (2020⁸) found that influencer marketing and social media advertisements heavily impact the purchasing decisions of college students. Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube serve as primary sources for product discovery and recommendations.

Additionally, Singh and Kaur (2021⁹) highlighted that online reviews and peer recommendations play a critical role in determining whether students trust a particular e-commerce platform. They found that students are more likely to purchase from platforms with strong social proof and customer feedback.

4. Security Concerns and Challenges in Online Shopping

One of the significant barriers to online shopping adoption is security concerns. Raj and Nair (2018¹⁰) studied the hesitation of young consumers in using online payment systems. Their study found that fear of fraud, cyber security threats, and dissatisfaction with return policies were the major concerns that prevented students from shopping online frequently.

Dr. T. Selvam (2018¹¹) online shopping has promoted significant changes in many aspects of human life and society as well as the shopping culture. Respondents have been taken by applying convenient random sampling method used. This study purpose is to analyze the consumer buying behaviour towards online shopping sites in Ariyalur district.

Sampling design and methodology

“The present study has an experimental research situated on analysis method. The research is confined of Ariyalur. This paper is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data composed through regularized Interview schedule from 100 respondents in Ariyalur District. The respondents for the study were depicted by means of simple random sampling method. SPSS collections were used for analysis. In order to find out the College Students online shopping behaviour in Ariyalur”. Simple Percentage analysis and chi – square analysis has been used to discover any variances about College Student’s behaviour among the sample respondents.

Data Collection:

Primary Data:

The present study has used the both Primary and Secondary data. The pre-tested and well-structured interview questionnaire has used to collect Primary data.

Secondary data

The required secondary data were collected from various Journals and Websites, magazines and articles.

Analysis:

In achieve the objectives of the study an analysis is made to understand the College Student’s online shopping behaviour. The statistical tools used are percentage analysis and Chi-square test. The socio Economic profile of the respondent are shown in the following figures.

Percentage Analysis:

1. Gender:

The table 1 described the gender wise classification of the respondents selected for the study. The gender is classified as male and female.

S. No	Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	65	65.0
2	Female	35	35.0
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

The table explains that out of 100 respondents, were 65 respondents (65.0 per cent) of the male and the remaining 35 respondents (35.0 per cent) are female. It is concluded that the majority (65.0 per cent) of the respondents selected for the study is male.

2. Factors Induced to buy ONLINE Products.

S. No.	Factors induced	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Quality	16	16.0
2.	Influenced by offers	21	21.0
3.	Brand image	30	30.0
4.	Impact of advertisement	22	22.0
5.	Brand loyalty	11	11.0

	Total	100	100
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Source: Primary Data.

Table 2 shows the Factors induced to buy the Online Products, out of 100 respondents, 30 respondents (30.0 per cent) opinion Brand image, 22 respondents (22.0 per cent) say impact of advertisement to influenced, 21 respondents (21.0 per cent) influenced by offers has influenced to buy, 16 respondents (16.0 per cent) opinion that Quality and 11 respondents (11.0 per cent) are Brand loyalty. Hence it is concluded that a considerable percentage (30.0 per cent) of sample is in the Brand image is most influenced to buy Online Products.

3. ASSOCIATION BETWEEN GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS AND FACTORS INDUCED TO BUY ONLINE PRODUCTS

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant association between gender of the respondents and factors induced to buy online products

Factors induced	Gender		Total	Statistical inference
	Male	Female		
Quality	10	6	16	$\chi^2 = 3.84$ $v = 4$ $\chi^2_{0.05} = 9.488$ $3.84 < 9.488$ H_0 : Accepted Not Significant
Influenced by offers	13	8	21	
Brand image	20	10	30	
Impact of advertisement	16	6	22	
Brand loyalty	6	5	11	
Total	65	35	100	

Table 3 shows the association between gender of the respondents and factors induced to buy online products. Applying chi-square test, Null hypothesis accepted. It shows that, “**There is no significant association between gender of the respondents and factors induced to buy online products.**”

Findings of the Study

The study on the online shopping purchasing behavior of college students in Ariyalur district has revealed several key insights. These findings highlight the factors influencing students' purchasing decisions, their preferences, challenges faced, and the impact of digital advancements on e-commerce adoption.

1. Factors Influencing Online Shopping Behavior

- The primary motivators for online shopping among college students include convenience, affordability, discounts, and a wider variety of products compared to local stores.
- Price sensitivity plays a major role in decision-making, with students frequently waiting for sales and discount offers before making purchases.
- Brand trust and product reviews significantly impact purchase decisions, as students rely on ratings and customer feedback before ordering.

2. Preferred Online Shopping Platforms and Payment Methods

- Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra are the most preferred e-commerce platforms among students due to their extensive product range and frequent promotional offers.
- Cash on delivery (COD) remains a popular payment method, especially among students from rural areas, due to concerns about online fraud.
- UPI payments and digital wallets like Google Pay and Paytm are gaining popularity, reflecting an increasing trust in digital transactions.

3. Impact of Social Media and Digital Marketing

- Social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook play a crucial role in influencing purchase decisions through advertisements, influencer marketing, and peer recommendations.
- College students are highly responsive to influencer marketing, with many purchasing products based on recommendations from social media personalities.
- Flash sales, limited-time discounts, and personalized recommendations based on browsing history encourage impulse buying behavior.

4. Challenges Faced by Students in Online Shopping

- Product quality issues and discrepancies between displayed and received items are major concerns. Many students express dissatisfaction with misleading product images.
- Delayed deliveries and return process difficulties negatively impact the shopping experience, particularly for students in rural areas.
- Lack of trust in online payment security remains a barrier, with fears of fraud, scams, and failed transactions.
- Internet connectivity issues in rural areas affect the accessibility of e-commerce platforms, making browsing and ordering difficult.

Suggestions of the Study

Based on the findings, the study provides several recommendations to improve the online shopping experience for college students in Ariyalur district. These suggestions aim to address key challenges, enhance digital trust, and increase e-commerce adoption among students.

1. Enhancing Trust and Security in Online Shopping

- E-commerce platforms should implement stronger fraud prevention measures to increase students' confidence in digital transactions.
- Awareness campaigns on safe online shopping practices, including secure payment methods and identifying fraudulent sellers, should be conducted.
- Providing clear refund and return policies with easy-to-follow procedures will help build trust among students, especially those from rural areas.

2. Improving Product Quality and Delivery Services

- Online retailers must ensure better quality control and accurate product descriptions to minimize customer dissatisfaction.
- Strengthening logistics and supply chain management will help in reducing delivery delays, especially in rural areas.
- Introducing local collection points or partnerships with local stores could improve accessibility for students in remote areas.

3. Promoting Digital Payment Adoption

- E-commerce companies should provide incentives for digital payments, such as discounts on UPI transactions, to encourage students to shift from cash-on-delivery (COD) to online payment methods.
- Financial literacy programs should be introduced to educate students on secure online transactions and digital banking.
- Enhancing customer support for payment-related issues will help address concerns about transaction failures and refunds.

Conclusion of the Study

The study on the online shopping purchasing behavior of college students in Ariyalur district provides valuable insights into the factors influencing their buying decisions, preferences, challenges, and future trends in e-commerce adoption. The findings highlight that convenience, affordability, social media influence, and digital payment advancements are driving the growing popularity of online shopping among students. However, concerns related to product quality, trust in online payments, delivery delays, and digital literacy gaps continue to affect the overall shopping experience.

The study also reveals key differences between urban and rural students, with urban students showing higher adoption rates of online shopping and digital payments, while rural students remain more cautious and dependent on cash-on-delivery options. Despite these challenges, the increasing penetration of smart phones, internet access, and government initiatives for digital empowerment indicate a promising future for e-commerce growth in semi-urban and rural regions like Ariyalur district.

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