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Understanding young adults' online shopping experiences and satisfaction

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Abstract

The study conducted in Maharashtra's Parbhani district examined online shopping behavior among 150 college students, equally divided by gender and aged 20 to over 25 years. Using structured questionnaires and personal interviews, data were statistically analysed to understand patterns and satisfaction levels. Most respondents demonstrated a high level of online shopping awareness, indicating widespread digital literacy and adoption of online shopping practices. Data from interviews showed 46% had over three years of shopping experience, with most (76.67%) making only one purchase per month and spending ₹501-₹2000 per transaction, mainly on clothing and accessories (32.53%). Recommendations from friends, family, and co-workers influenced 27.80% of purchases, while buying agricultural products was low (6.13%) due to limited delivery coverage. Cash on Delivery was preferred by 59.33%, indicating reliance on traditional payment methods. Overall, 62% reported high satisfaction especially males, nuclear family members, undergraduates, and those earning ₹10,000-₹50,000. Satisfaction was linked to longer experience, regular purchases, moderate spending, preference for fashion items, use of Cash on Delivery, and familiarity with digital technologies. Chi-Square analysis found age as the only significant personal factor, with shopping experience, spending, and payment method also influencing satisfaction. The study highlights that while online shopping is well-established among youth in Parbhani, satisfaction and engagement depend largely on experience, convenience, and digital confidence, with opportunities to expand accessibility in sectors like agriculture.

Keywords: Online shopping, awareness, experience, online purchase, businesses, frequency, satisfaction

1. Introduction

The consumer online shopping experience among young adults is an increasingly important area of research, reflecting the rapid development of digital technologies, widespread internet adoption, and the prevalence of smartphones. Young adults, typically between 18 and 30 years, are early adopters of e-commerce platforms and exhibit distinctive purchasing behaviors influenced by convenience, product variety, price transparency, and personalization (Teo, 2002; Pal & Kumari, 2023) ^[17, 9]. Their shopping patterns are shaped not only by technological familiarity but also by social media usage, peer recommendations, and online reviews (Sengupta & Pandey, 2022; Sharma, 2020) ^[14, 15]. Studies have shown that factors such as user-friendly website interfaces, secure payment mechanisms, and fast delivery enhance satisfaction and brand loyalty, particularly within youth-focused markets (Ganapathi, 2015; Geetha & Elayaraja, 2019; Mishra *et al.*, 2023) ^[4, 5, 8]. Furthermore, demographic aspects such as education level, income, gender balance, and family background also contribute to consumer behavior in the online space (Kapoor *et al.*, 2022; Vidya & Selvamani, 2019; Rajeswari, 2015) ^[7, 18, 12]. Recent literature underscores the role of trust, digital literacy, and engaging content in fostering repeat purchases (Antony, 2022;

Sharma, 2020) ^[1, 15]. As e-commerce continues to evolve, understanding young adults' online shopping preferences is crucial for businesses aiming to design seamless, secure, and personalized experiences that cater to this highly influential consumer segment.

Study on consumer online shopping experience with reference to young adults is essential because this demographic constitutes a significant and growing segment of e-commerce users, whose behaviors and preferences are shaped by unique social, technological, and psychological factors. Young adults prioritize convenience, diverse product selection, and flexible payment and delivery options, integrating online shopping seamlessly into their busy lifestyles (Sreekanth, 2024) ^[16]. Social media and peer recommendations heavily influence their purchasing decisions, underscoring the importance of personalized marketing and interactive digital touchpoints (Pal & Kumari, 2023; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2023) ^[9, 6]. Moreover, challenges such as data security concerns, product quality uncertainties, and return policies impact their trust and satisfaction, making it crucial for businesses to address these issues to foster loyalty (St. Thomas' College study, 2023). Understanding these factors allows companies to tailor user-centric platforms, enhance digital engagement, and remain competitive in the ever-evolving online retail space where

young adults are prominent consumers (Antony, 2022; Kapoor *et al.*, 2022)^[1, 7].

2. Materials and Methods

Location of the study

The present examination was conducted in the Parbhani district of Marathwada region in Maharashtra state

Target group

A purposive random sampling method was employed in accordance with the researcher's area of study. The sample comprised 150 college-going students, equally divided between males (75) and females (75), within the age range of 20 to above 25 years. All selected participants were active users of online applications for purchasing products.

Data Collection

Primary data was collected through personal interviews using a structured questionnaire.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and sample variance were used to summarize data.

Inferential statistical analysis was carried out using the Chi-square test, a non-parametric method employed to examine the association or relationship between categorical variables. This test was applied to determine whether there were statistically significant differences or associations in the observed frequencies among the study variables compared to the frequencies expected under the null hypothesis. The Chi-square test was particularly appropriate for this research as it allowed the researcher to assess patterns, trends, and potential correlations within the demographic and behavioral data of respondents, thereby supporting the interpretation of findings with respect to the study objectives.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1: Personal Characteristics of consumers

Table 1: Distribution of Personal Characteristics of the respondents

Sl. No.	Personal Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (100%)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Variance
1.	Age					
	20-22 years	69	46.00%	22.76	2.02	4.06
	23-25 years	69	46.00%			
	Above 25 years	12	8.00%			
2.	Gender					
	Male	75	50%	1.5	0.50	0.25
	Female	75	50%			
3.	Marital status					
	Single	136	90.67%	1.09	0.29	0.09
	Married	14	9.33%			
4.	Family structure					
	Nuclear	79	52.67%	1.47	0.50	0.25
	Joint	71	47.33%			
5.	Educational level					
	Undergraduate	89	59.33%	1.47	0.62	0.39
	Post Graduate	51	34.00%			
	Doctorate	10	6.67%			
	Other	0	0.00%			
6.	Household monthly Income:					
	Below 10,000	29	19.33%	2.45	1.11	1.23
	10,000 to 35,000	59	39.33%			
	35,000 to 85,000	38	25.33%			
	85,000 to 1,00,000	14	9.33%			
	More than 1 lakh	10	6.67%			
7.	Familiarity with computers and mobile systems					
	Yes	139	92.67%	0.93	0.26	0.07
	No	11	7.33%			

According to Table 1, the study shows that out of 150 respondents, 75 (50%) were male and 75 (50%) were female, ensuring a balanced gender representation to minimize potential biases related to sex in statistical analyses. It was further found that 136 (90.67%) respondents were single and 14 (9.33%) were married, aligning with the findings of Kapoor *et al.* (2022)^[7], who also reported a majority of single respondents in their study. Regarding family type, 79 (52.67%) respondents belonged to nuclear families, while 71 (47.33%) belonged to joint families. The educational qualification distribution revealed that 89 (59.33%) respondents were undergraduates, 51

(34%) were postgraduates, and 10 (6.67%) were doctorates, supporting the findings of Ganapathi (2015)^[4]. In terms of household income, 59 (39.33%) respondents earned between ₹10,000 and ₹35,000 per month, 38 (25.33%) earned between ₹35,000 and ₹85,000, 29 (19.33%) earned below ₹10,000, 14 (9.33%) earned between ₹85,000 and ₹1,00,000, and 10 (6.67%) earned more than ₹1,00,000, which is consistent with the observations of Vidya and Selvamani (2019)^[18]. Lastly, it was observed that 139 (92.67%) respondents were familiar with computer and mobile systems, while 11 (7.33%) were unfamiliar.

3.2 Awareness on online shopping

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on awareness

SI. No.	Statements to identify the awareness level of the respondents	Awareness	
		Frequency (n)	Percentage (100%)
1	Do you know how to purchase online?	140	93.3%
2	Do you know what an online shopping app is?	128	85.3%
3	Are you familiar with online payment methods like credit card or digital wallets?	128	85.3%
4	Do you know how to search for products online?	131	87.3%
5	Do you know how to check credibility of an online seller?	102	68%
6	Do you understand the concept of online shopping carts?	121	80.6%
7	Have you ever returned an item purchased online?	118	78.6%
8	Have you ever used any online coupons codes or discount offers?	117	78%
9	Are you aware of online security measures like strong passwords and two-factor authentication?	110	73.3%
10	Have you ever compared prices of products on different online stores?	125	83.3%

As examined, the results in table 2 revealed that, most respondents possessed a high level of online shopping awareness, with 93.3% knowing how to purchase online, 87.3% knowing how to search for products, and 85.3% familiar with both online payment methods and shopping apps. Additionally, 83.3% compared prices across stores, 80.6% understood shopping carts, 78.6% knew about returning items, 78% used discount offers, 73.3% were aware of online security measures, and 68% knew how to check sellers' credibility. These findings indicate an overall well-informed group of respondents, reflecting the growing digital literacy and widespread adoption of online shopping practices among consumers.

3.3 Online Shopping Experience

3.3.1 Duration of online shopping experience

As per Fig. 1, 69 (46.00%) of respondents had been involved in online shopping for more than 3 years. 27 (18.00%) had less than 6 months of experience. 25 (16.67%) had 2-3 years of experience and 16 (10.67%) had 1-2 years of experience in online shopping. As per the mean value of 3.64, it can be said that the maximum respondents have more than three years' experience with online shopping.

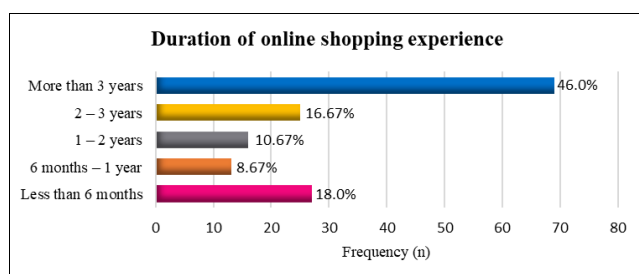


Fig 1: Distribution of respondents according to their duration of online experience

3.3.2 Frequency of online shopping

Fig. 2 indicated that, none of the respondents engage in daily online shopping; just 2 (1.33%) shop online weekly, 33 (22.00%) shop online once a week and 113 (76.67%) shop online once a month. From this, we can conclude that the frequency of online shopping is poor.

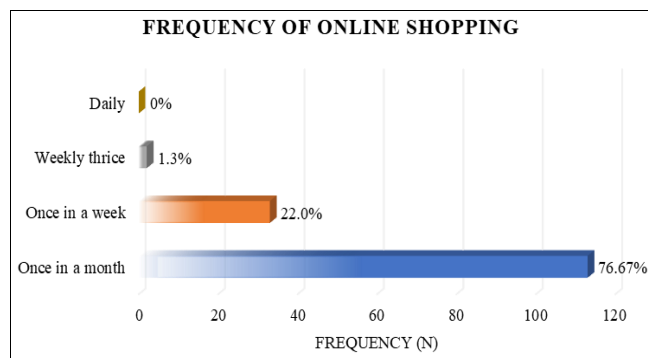


Fig 2: Distribution of respondents according to their frequency of online shopping

3.3.3 Amount spent on a single online purchase

The Fig. 3 shows that, majority of the respondents 41 (27.33%) are likely to spent 501₹ to 2000₹ on a single online purchase, followed by 40 (26.67%) of respondents spent 251₹ to 500₹ per purchase, 26 (17.33%) of respondents spent less than 250₹ per purchase, 25 (16.67%) of respondents spent 1001₹ to 2000₹ rupees per purchase, 18 (12.00%) of respondents spent more than 2000₹ per purchase.

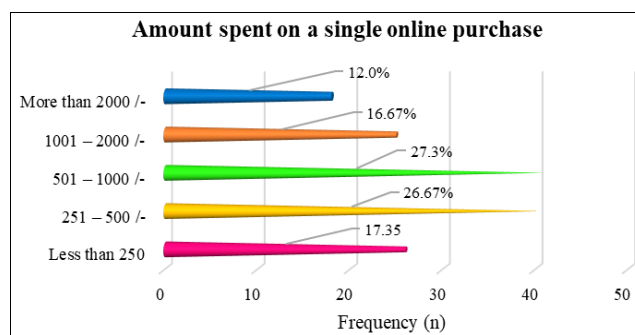


Fig 3: Distribution of respondents according to their amount spent on a single online purchase

3.3.4 Products often purchased online

Product preferences offer crucial insights for businesses to enhance product development, marketing strategies, and

design, which ultimately drive sales and foster customer loyalty. According to Figure 4, the majority of respondents frequently purchase clothes and accessories (32.53%), followed by shoes and footwear (20.27%), beauty and personal care products (13.07%), and books or online magazines/newspapers (12.80%). Home furnishings and furniture are purchased often by 9.07%, fruits and vegetables by 6.13%, and computer hardware or electronics by only 1.60% of respondents. This distribution highlights consumer priorities and can guide businesses in tailoring their offerings to match prevalent buying behaviors effectively. We can interpret from the table that apparel and footwear are the most preferred products for online

shopping. The infrequent online purchasing of agricultural products in the Parbhani region may be attributed to the limited reach of delivery services. The limitation is believed to be addressable through enhanced agricultural extension efforts, which are recognized as playing a crucial role in bridging gaps between farmers, markets, and service availability. Extension services, including technology transfer and market linkage programs facilitated by agencies such as Krishi Vigyan Kendras and State Agricultural Universities, are considered capable of improving local delivery infrastructure and increasing awareness and adoption of online purchasing options among farmers and consumers in the region.

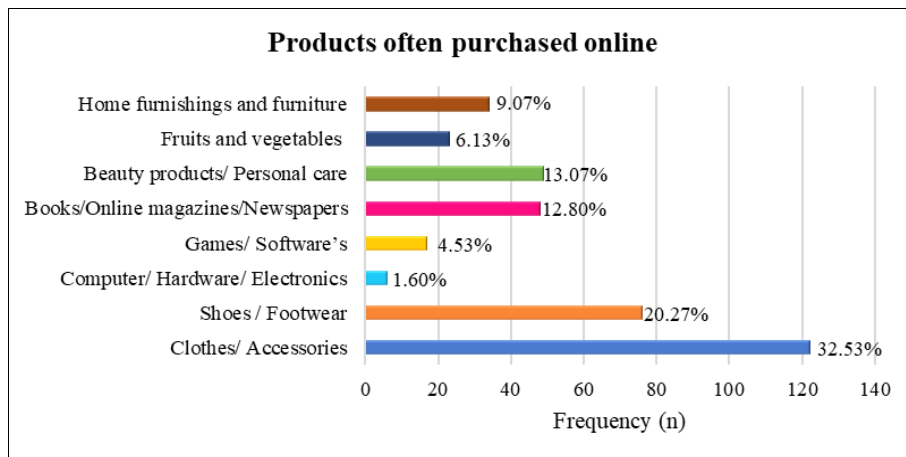


Fig 4: Distribution of respondents based on products often purchased online

3.3.5 Mode of acquiring information about online products

Source of information is collected from the respondents to understand how consumers discover and evaluate products before purchase. As shown in the Fig. 5, most of the consumers 77(27.80%) get the information from Family or friends or colleagues, 71 (27.80%) of consumers acquire information from social networking sites, 67 (24.19%) of consumers acquire information from Shopping websites. 43 (15.52%) of consumers acquire information from TV advertisements and infomercials, 19 (6.86%) of consumers acquire information from Print media.

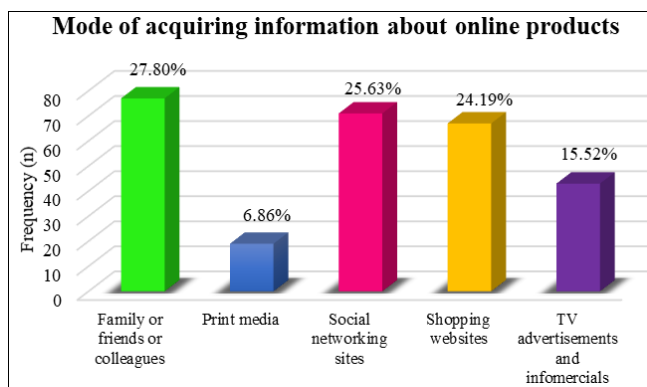


Fig 5: Distribution of respondents according to their mode of acquiring information

3.3.6 Mode of payment

As similar to the findings of Rajeswari (2015) ^[12], Fig. 6 showed that, most preferred payment mode of cash on delivery 89 (59.33%), 22 (14.67%) of respondents preferred other payment modes like UPI, digital wallets, gift cards. 16 (10.67%) of respondents preferred third party payments like Phone Pay, Google Pay and Paytm. 15 (10.00%) of respondents prefer internet banking as their payment mode, 8 (5.33%) of respondents preferred credit card/ debit card.

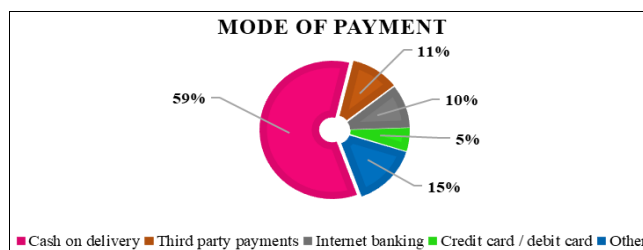


Fig. 6: Distribution of respondents according to their mode of payment

3.4 Level of Satisfaction with online shopping

Consumers level of satisfaction with online shopping is crucial to understand as it directly impacts the business outcomes and provides insights into consumer behavior. It helps in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the businesses and provide valuable insights for businesses seeking to thrive the digital marketplace.

Table 3: Level of satisfaction

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Highly satisfied	21	14.00%
2	Satisfied	72	48.00%
3	Undescribed	50	33.33%
4	Dissatisfied	4	2.67%
5	Highly dissatisfied	3	2.00%
Total		150	100%
Mean = 3.73		Standard Deviation = 0.80	

According to the table 3, 72 (48.00%) respondents are satisfied with online shopping, 50 (33.33%) of respondent can't describe their satisfaction with online shopping, 21 (14.00%) are highly satisfied, 4 (2.67%) are dissatisfied, while only 3 (2%) are highly dissatisfied with the online shopping.

Table 4: Overall level of satisfaction

S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	High	93	62.00%
2	Moderate	50	33.33%
3	Low	7	4.67%
Total		150	100%
Mean = 2.61		Standard Deviation = 0.58	

The data from table 4, disclosed that majority of respondents 93 (62.00%) showed high level of satisfaction with online shopping, where as 50 (33.33%) showed moderate level of satisfaction and only 7 (4.67%) of respondents showed low level of satisfaction.

3.5 Personal Characteristics and Level of Satisfaction

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Personal characteristics and the level of satisfaction towards online shopping.

H_a: There is a significant relationship between Personal characteristics and the level of satisfaction towards online shopping.

Table 5: Chi-Square analysis results for personal characteristics and the level of satisfaction during online shopping

Factors	Calculated χ^2 Value	Table Value	D.F	p-value (Sig.)	Significant (S) / Not Significant (NS)
Age	10.51	9.49	4	0.03*	S
Gender	1.13	5.99	2	0.57	NS
Marital status	3.45	5.99	2	0.18	NS
Family structure	5.66	5.99	2	0.06	NS
Educational level	5.16	9.49	4	0.27	NS
Household monthly Income:	10.32	15.51	8	0.24	NS
Familiarity with computer and mobile systems	1.61	5.99	2	0.45	NS

Note: S - Significant at 5% level of significance (p value ≤ 0.05); NS - Not Significant at 5% level (p value > 0.05); Dependent variable is level of satisfaction.

The data from Table 5 indicates that among personal characteristics, only age has a statistically significant relationship with satisfaction levels towards online shopping, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.03, which is below the 0.05 significance threshold. Additionally, the calculated Chi-square value of 10.50 surpasses the critical value of 9.49 at 4 degrees of freedom, confirming statistical significance. This suggests that satisfaction with online shopping varies across age groups, possibly due to differing digital literacy, preferences, or adaptability to online platforms. In contrast, variables such as gender, marital status, family structure, educational level, household monthly income, and familiarity with computer and mobile systems show p-values exceeding 0.05, indicating no

significant relationship with satisfaction. This lack of significance implies that these factors do not decisively influence satisfaction in the study context. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating no relationship between the personal characteristics and satisfaction was rejected specifically for age, while accepted for the other variables.

3.6 Shopping experience and level of satisfaction

H₀: There is no significant relationship between shopping experience and the level of satisfaction during online shopping.

H_a: There is a significant relationship between shopping experience and the level of satisfaction during online shopping.

Table 6: Chi-Square analysis results for online shopping experience and the level of satisfaction during online shopping

Factors	Calculated χ^2 Value	Table Value	D.F	p-value (Sig.)	Significant (S) / Not Significant (NS)
Duration of online shopping experience	22.70	15.51	8	0.00*	S
Frequency of Online shopping	3.39	12.59	6	0.80	NS
Amount spent on a single online purchase	15.56	15.51	8	0.05*	S
Product often purchased online	16.09	23.69	14	0.31	NS
Mode of acquiring information about online products	10.26	15.51	8	0.25	NS
Mode of payment	39.57	15.51	8	0.00*	S

Note: S - Significant at 5% level of significance (p value ≤ 0.05); NS - Not Significant at 5% level (p value > 0.05); Dependent variable is level of satisfaction.

The table 6 presented the results of Chi Square analysis examined the relationship between various factors of online shopping experience and the level of satisfaction during online shopping duration of online shopping. Variables like duration of online shopping experience, amount spent on a single purchase and mode of payment showed a statistically significant relationship with the level of satisfaction $p=0.00$, $p=0.05$, $p=0.00$ respectively. This suggested that length of time a consumer have been shopping online influenced their satisfaction. The amount spent in a single transaction is associated with satisfaction. The payment method used can impact consumer satisfaction. Other factors including frequency of online shopping, product purchased online and mode of acquiring information about online products do not show statistically significant relationship with satisfaction. This means these aspects do not have a notable impact on the level of satisfaction experienced by online shoppers.

4. Conclusion

The study conducted among college going students in Maharashtra's Parbhani district reveals that online shopping behavior has become well-established and is characterized by high levels of digital literacy, particularly in the purchase of fashion and accessories, reflecting wider trends in the growing e-commerce sector in India. The preference for cash on delivery payments was observed, indicating that traditional payment methods are still widely relied upon, and suggesting that greater emphasis on improving digital payment infrastructure and user education is needed to build consumer trust. Limited purchases of agricultural products were identified, which points to logistical and infrastructural challenges in e-commerce delivery systems for rural and semi-urban areas, highlighting potential for growth especially if aligned with initiatives such as Maharashtra's One District One Product program aimed at promoting local agricultural goods. It is recommended that delivery logistics be strengthened, consumer education on digital payment security be enhanced, and targeted digital marketing campaigns be employed by trusted local agencies to broaden engagement and satisfaction. Such measures are expected to increase accessibility and bolster online shopping adoption across diverse product categories and demographics in semi-urban contexts like Parbhani. Young adults have been identified as a vital segment for the success of online shopping businesses, given their active involvement and distinct shopping habits. This group is generally experienced with online purchasing, regularly buying products such as clothing and accessories, and relying significantly on recommendations from friends and family. Despite embracing digital platforms, many still favor traditional payment methods like cash on delivery, reflecting a blend of trust and convenience. Their satisfaction tends to be higher when longer online shopping experience, monthly shopping frequency, moderate spending levels, and digital comfort are present. Leading businesses such as Amazon, Myntra, Flipkart, Nykaa, and Meesho focus strategically on young consumers by offering trendy products, mobile-friendly interfaces, flexible payment options, and social-commerce features, underscoring the influence of youth in shaping and driving e-commerce growth.

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