

## SHIFT FROM PHYSICAL SHOPPING TO ONLINE SHOPPING: A SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** *The advancement in internet technology has brought the paradigm shift in ways of shopping. The technology is rapidly changing the system, structure and style of the Indian consumers. The technology has displaced the traditional method of shopping and Electronic shopping is getting popularity among Indian consumers. As a result, there has been paradigm shift in buying behaviour among Indian consumers. In the present study, I address the integration of social and cultural factors that affects online shopping. This paper investigates how the socio cultural factors influence the buying behaviour and this study will help the marketers to formulate marketing strategies to attract potential consumers towards electronic shopping. The research methodology was exploratory and descriptive in nature. In the study the sample was based on purposive, judgement and convenience sampling. The sample in the study was restricted to 800 respondents keeping in mind the research objectives and constraints. This paper aims in analyzing the socio-cultural shift and its impact on the changing buying behaviour.*

**Key words:** *hybrid shopping, brick and mortar, brick and click, NUF (Nuclear Urban families), Hofstede's*

### INTRODUCTION

Electronic Shopping, web Shopping, internet shopping, m-Shopping, online shopping are the synonymous used for buying and selling of products and services through internet i.e. world wide web. The advent of E-Commerce has revolutionized the marketing practices and poses a great challenge in front of the unorganized sectors to attract the customers for shopping. Amazon and E-bay were the first movers and the major players in the segment of online shopping. Due to the adoption of technology among Indian consumers, now numbers of companies are into the race of attracting the customers through online shopping. Some of the companies are Flipkart, Myantra, Yebhi, Alibaba, Snapdeal, Zivame, Jabong, OLX are competing with each other to woo the potential customers. These companies are using different strategies to woo the potential customers by offering choice, availability, cheap prices, discounts, convenience, ease etc. India is a

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developing economy having the features of 3'D i.e. Demography, Demand and Democracy. With the increase in purchasing power, more than 65% population is less than 35 years and the growing standard of living, now a day's online shopping is one of the most emerging and preferred shopping channels among the baby boomers and Generation X and Y population in India. Many of the marketers have realized to understand the psychology of a consumer to know the answer i.e. What they buy, How they buy, Where they buy, Why they buy. This is called consumer behaviour. The study of consumer behaviour guides the marketer to formulate marketing strategies. As a result many emerging trends in marketing has come like experiential marketing, trust marketing, ambush marketing, surrogate marketing, e-marketing etc. Now a days with the increasing pace of technology, e-marketing is a growing phenomenon. As a result, marketers have realized the importance to explore more and more regarding buying behaviour and e-marketing perspectives. Schiffman defines the consumer behaviour as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products, services, and ideas." Consumer Behavior explores how the examination and application of consumer behavior is central to the planning, development, and implementation of marketing strategies. In order to formulate the right marketing strategy, the buying behaviour is important. As Peter Drucker said, "Marketing is to understand the customer so well that the product sells itself. In order to understand, the marketer must explore the factors that influence the buying behaviour. Among these factors, one of the important component is socio-cultural factors which influence the buying decisions.

There are socio-cultural factors which also influence the decision making of the consumer towards online shopping. In a diversified country like India cultural factors exert the broadest and deepest influence on consumer behaviour. Culture influences consumers through the norms and values established by the society in which they live. The impact of culture is automatic and almost invisible. Culture not only influences consumer behaviour but also reflects it. It is the mirror of both the values and possessions. Marketing strategies are unlikely to change cultural values, but marketing does influence culture. Culture influences what people wear, what and how they eat, where they live, etc. It has a broad influence on their buying and usage behaviour of products and services, and the extent of their satisfaction. There are socio-cultural factors which also influence the decision making of the consumer towards online shopping. In a diversified country like India cultural factors exert the broadest and deepest influence on consumer behaviour. Culture influences consumers through the norms and values established by the society in which they live. The impact of culture is automatic and almost invisible. Culture not only influences consumer behaviour but also reflects it. It is the mirror of both the values and possessions. Marketing strategies are unlikely to change cultural values, but marketing does influence culture. Culture influences what people wear, what and how they eat, where they live, etc. It has a broad

influence on their buying and usage behaviour of products and services, and the extent of their satisfaction. The social factors include reference groups (buyer reference group, such as family members, friends), family, social status and role too have influence on buying behaviour.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

According to Hofstede's model of culture, culture is divided into six dimensions. i.e. Power distance Index, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation, Indulgence versus Restraint. The study of consumer behaviour reveals that all aspects of consumer behavior are culture-bound; there is an increased need to identify and understand the integration of culture and online shopping behaviour and its impact on global marketing and advertising. The deep insights of Professor Hofstede's cultural dimensions can be used to explain the differences in consumer behaviour across culture and can be a guide to increase efficiency in global marketing practices. The present study intends to evaluate the impact of social and cultural factors on consumer's intention towards online shopping. To study the cultural influence, I have tried to study the impact of two dimensions of Hofstede's model i.e. uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity on online shopping buying behaviour.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Anastasi (1982)** studied on the "Role of Cultural values on online business: An empirical study" and the study found that importance of online businesses has been increased, and one should consider cultural difference accordingly in online business. The cultural difference may impact consumer behaviour and the people belong to different culture perceive the same situation differently as far as online shopping is concerned.

**Barber and Badre (1998)** in used another model in which culture and interface elements are used and found that cultural markers and web design elements have direct relationship.

**Pavlou and Chai (2002)** conducted the study on the impact of culture on online buying behaviour by using Hofstede's dimension i.e. Individualism and collectivism, power distance and long term orientation. The study concludes that these dimensions have significant impact on online buying behaviour.

**Tan et al. (2006)** conducted the study on understanding the online shopping behaviour across culture. In his study, he used the two dimensions of Hofstede's i.e. long term orientation vs. short term orientation, individualism vs. collectivism. The study was concludes that both the dimension play an important role and

have a varied effect on both intended and actual shopping behaviour across cultures.

**Jamal and Ahmed (2007)** conducted the study on impact of culture and sub culture on online shopping buying behaviour. The findings of the study reveals that cultural factors and sub culture factors i.e. religious beliefs, language, preferences play a key role and having a great influence on the choice among the consumers regarding online buying decisions.

**An and Kim (2008)** conducted study is to examine the effects of cultural values on customer trust in internet shopping. The study revealed that culture play a dynamic and key intervening role in predicting consumer trust in online shopping.

**Rambo et al. (2009)** conducted the study to identify the impact of socio-cultural factors and technological factors on the adoption of online shopping among the females of Saudi Arabia. The study was concluded with the finding that socio-cultural factors and technical factors influence the adoption of online shopping among female consumers in Saudi Arabia.

**Hwang and Lee (2012)** conducted the study to know the role of one of the dimension in Hofsted's model i.e. uncertainty avoidance on online buying behaviour. The study concludes that uncertainty avoidance (adoption of technology and the ability) has significant impact to take decisions for online shopping.

**Ruiz-Mafe et al. (2013) reveals** in the study that national cultures do play an important role in using the internet. The study found that the decision to buy through online shopping depends upon the attitude, behaviour of the person which is shaped by the culture of the nation in which he or she belongs. The findings show that national culture affects the use of internet to conduct the online shopping.

## NEED OF THE STUDY

The study of online shopping is very important for the unorganized sector. Potential and existing customers are shifting from traditional shopping channels to online shopping channels due to the change in likings, preference and lifestyle. Despite being a developing country, India has shown a commendable increase in the ecommerce industry in the last couple of years, thereby hitting the market with a boom. Though the Indian online market is far behind the US and the UK, it has been growing at a fast pace. The recent report given by Google and Forrester reveals that the e-commerce market in this country was worth around US\$2.5 billion, in 2011 it was US\$6.3 billion and in 2012, \$14 billion. This number is expected to reach \$15 billion by 2016, up from \$35 million in 2014.No doubt, the millions of

Indians shopping online and the e-commerce industry is witnessing a massive boom and will continue to see exponential growth. The number of online shoppers in India is expected to reach 100 million by the end of 2016. Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi has initiated many steps to bring technology in the department. For example, the Government of India has taken many steps to plan to rebuild and modernize the Indian postal infrastructure and plan to implement Digital India which is expected to boost the e-commerce sector. In the study sincere efforts are made to find the impact of socio-cultural factors on buying decisions and the reasons for shifting from offline to online shopping.

This study intends to evaluate the impact of culture on consumer's intention towards online shopping. To study the cultural influence, I have used an innovation adoption perspective and gender role characterizing culture (masculinity vs. femininity) and sub culture that include gender to investigate whether culture impacts the online shopping.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To examine the impact of cultural dimension on the adoption of online shopping among Indian consumers.
2. To study the impact of social factors on the online shopping buying decisions.
3. To examine the mean differences in online buying behaviour.
4. To study the level of satisfaction and experience about online shopping.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

- Research Design: Exploratory and Descriptive study
- Sampling design: Non-probability sampling in which judgement, convenience and quota sampling technique was used in this study.
- Sample size- 800 respondents belongs to Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh
- Data collection: Data has collected through close ended, structured questionnaire which was drafted on the 5 point likert scale.
- Data Analysis: SPSS was used to analyze the data in which chi-square, cross tab and mean, S.D, Annova statistical tools were used.

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**H0 : There is no association between gender and online shopping.**

**Extent of Agreement of Impact of Masculinity or femininity in online shopping**

**Table 1**  
**Cultural aspect \* Gender Cross tabulation**

		<i>Gender</i>		<i>Total</i>	
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>		
cultural aspect	Strongly disagree	Count	11	4	15
		Expected Count	7.5	7.5	15.0
	Disagree	Count	39	87	126
		Expected Count	63.0	63.0	126.0
	Not sure	Count	49	42	91
		Expected Count	45.5	45.5	91.0
	Agree	Count	212	195	407
		Expected Count	203.5	203.5	407.0
	Strongly agree	Count	89	72	161
		Expected Count	80.5	80.5	161.0
Total		Count	400	400	800
		Expected Count	400.0	400.0	800.0

#### Chi Square Tests

	<i>Frequency of online shopping</i>	<i>Gender</i>
Chi-Square	788.810 <sup>a</sup>	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Df	3	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	1.000

0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 200.0.  
 b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 400.0.

**Interpretation:-**The perusal of table depicts that the culture is one of the important factor in online shopping. Several past studies reveal that the culture influences online shopping. The role of gender in particular region decides the type of culture whether it is male dominating culture or female dominating culture. As India is a male dominating country but the study has produced a new thought in this dimension that now in our culture, both females and males are equivalent in making decision in buying. The table explained the value of chi-square is .000 with 3 degree of freedom. It is insignificant ( $P > .05$ ). Therefore we accept the null hypothesis  $H_0$  (b) and reject the alternative hypothesis  $H_1$ (b). It is concluded that gender has no association with online shopping. The study found that both the males and females are showing interest in preferring online shopping. Gone are the days when females were not allowed to do the job and take important decisions in the family. But now a days, the nuclear urban families are mushrooming up and females play an active role in decision making.

**H2 : There is an association between modern culture and online shopping.**

Extent of Agreement on Influence of Shift in Modern Culture on Online Shopping

**Table 2**  
**Online shopping is preferred due to shift in modern culture \* Gender Cross tabulation**

		<i>Gender</i>			
			<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Online shopping is preferred due to shift in modern culture	Strongly disagree	Count	11	7	18
		Expected Count	9.0	9.0	18.0
	Disagree	Count	8	5	13
		Expected Count	6.5	6.5	13.0
	Not sure	Count	23	26	49
		Expected Count	24.5	24.5	49.0
	Agree	Count	320	359	679
		Expected Count	339.5	339.5	679.0
	Strongly agree	Count	38	3	41
		Expected Count	20.5	20.5	41.0
Total	Count	400	400	800	
	Expected Count	400.0	400.0	800.0	

**Chi-Square Tests**

	<i>Value</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</i>
Pearson Chi-Square	33.883 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	39.393	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.357	1	.244
N of Valid Cases	800		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.50.

**Symmetric Measures**

		<i>Value</i>	<i>Approx. Sig.</i>
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	.202	.000
N of Valid Cases		800	

**Interpretation-** The above table reveals online shopping is preferred due to shift in modern culture. The contingent coefficient value i.e. .202 shows that there is a positive response by the respondents that shows that online shopping is widely accepted in Indian culture. Moreover there has been paradigm change in culture because of the cross-culture influence and hence changes the attitude and likings of the people. Also, there has been shift in the culture and the innovative technology adoption is more found in Indian culture. Hence online shopping is compatible with the values and belief of the present generation. The modern culture people

put an overwhelming emphasis on materialistic things and so the shift in culture puts significant impact on online shopping.

**Table 3**  
**Extent of Agreement on the Acceptance of New Innovations in Indian Culture**  
**H3 : Uncertainty avoidance dimension is significantly related to online shopping buying behaviour**

			Crosstab		
			Gender		Total
		Count	Male	Female	
Indian culture accepts new innovations like online shopping	Strongly disagree	Count	113	50	163
		Expected Count	81.5	81.5	163.0
	Disagree	Count	79	72	151
		Expected Count	75.5	75.5	151.0
	Not sure	Count	24	79	103
		Expected Count	51.5	51.5	103.0
	Agree	Count	134	142	276
		Expected Count	138.0	138.0	276.0
	Strongly agree	Count	50	57	107
		Expected Count	53.5	53.5	107.0
Total	Count	400	400	800	
	Expected Count	400.0	400.0	800.0	

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	218.495 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	245.560	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	22.900	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	800		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.98.

#### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal byNominal	Contingency coefficient	.463	.000
N of Valid Cases		800	

**Interpretation:** The above table depicts that respondents agree that Indian culture accept new innovations. The value of contingent coefficient is .463 so it is concluded that with the passage of time, influence of modern technology, globalization and the trend of imitation of western culture, Indian consumers who were used to laggards are now shifting towards and early adopters in the diffusion process. Hence, it is concluded new innovations are acceptable to the certain extent in Indian culture.



**Table 4**  
**Extent of Agreement on Influence of Experience and Opinion of Friends in Online Shopping**

**H3 : Uncertainty avoidance dimension is significantly related to online shopping buying behaviour.**

**H4: There is association between social influence and online shopping.**

**Table 4: Extent of Agreement on Influence of Experience and Opinion of Friends in**

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	strongly disagree	15	1.9	1.9	1.9
	Disagree	154	19.2	19.3	21.1
	Not sure	101	12.6	12.6	33.8
	Agree	513	63.8	64.1	97.9
	strongly agree	17	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	800	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	4	.5		
Total		804	100.0		

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>
The experience and opinion of my friends influence me for online shopping	800	3.4537
		Criterion value=3
<i>S.D</i>	<i>Coefficient of variance</i>	<i>S.E</i>
1.076	31.15	0.0536

**Interpretation:** The table reveals that 75.9% respondents agreed that the experience and opinion of their friends influence for online shopping. Moreover the statistical value in the table like mean =3.4537, S.D=1.076, coefficient of variance=31.15, S.E=0.0536 which supports that there is positive response that friends influence the decision making more for online shopping and the value of standard error is close to 1 which reveals the uniformity and reliability on this aspect Indian consumer are emotional decision makers and they receive the recommendations from friends experience and opinion regarding decision for purchase of new products and services. Indian consumers rely on word of mouth instead of any other marketing offerings.

**Table 5**  
**Extent of Agreement on Influence of Experience and Opinion of Family on the Decision Making for Online Shopping**

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	strongly disagree	12	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	186	23.1	23.3	24.8
	Not sure	152	18.9	19.0	43.8
	Agree	184	22.9	23.0	66.8
	strongly agree	266	33.1	33.3	100.0
Total		800	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	4	.5		
Total		804	100.0		

The experience and opinion of my family influence me for online shopping.	<i>N</i>	800	<i>Mean</i>	3.6325
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<i>S.D</i>	<i>Coefficient of variance</i>	<i>S.E</i>
0.9504	26.436	0.0475

**Interpretation:** The table values Mean=3.6325, S.D=0.9504, COV=26.436 and S.E=0.0475 denotes that 56% respondents either strongly agree or agree on the variable that family influence online shopping in India. The coefficient of variation is 26.436 which clearly tells that the family has an influence on the decision making towards online shopping. As the previous study also revealed that the impact of family is very important determinant in consumer buying behaviour. In Indian culture, family has had a special place in the purchasing behaviour. The mean value i.e. 3.6325 shows the family has positive effect on online shopping.

#### Extent of Agreement on Online Buying Behavior

**H6: There is significant difference in online shopping buying behaviour in different regions.**

**Table 6**  
**Extent of Agreement on Online Buying Behavior**  
**ONE WAY ANNOVA**

Frequency of online shopping					
	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	9.604	2	4.802	15.885	.000
Within Groups	240.934	797	.302		
Total	250.539	799			

POST HOC TEST

Multiple Comparisons

Frequency of online shopping

Tukey HSD

(I) State	(J) State	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	.241*	.043	.000	.14	.34
	3	.069	.053	.400	-.06	.19
2	1	-.241*	.043	.000	-.34	-.14
	3	-.172*	.053	.004	-.30	-.05
3	1	-.069	.053	.400	-.19	.06
	2	.172*	.053	.004	.05	.30

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

FREQUENCY OF ONLINE SHOPPING

Tukey HSD<sup>a,b</sup>

State	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
2	320	1.48	
3	160		1.65
1	320		1.72
Sig.		1.000	.357

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 240.000.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

**Interpretation:** The perusal of table shows that the value of F is 15.885 which is significant at .05 level. Hence it is concluded that online shopping behavior is different in three regions i.e. Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh. The post hoc test/multiple comparison test reveals that there is no significant difference between Punjab and Chandigarh as the value of  $P > .05$  while state Haryana behaves differently from Punjab and Chandigarh as  $P < .05$ . It is evident from the studies also as Punjab being the developed state, people are educated, their standard of living is high, they are innovators in using the latest technology so the adoption of online shopping is relatively more than Haryana. Whereas Chandigarh is the cosmopolitan city, more advanced in imitating culture, high per capital income so here the people are more preferring online shopping. The present study concludes that people show different buying behavior towards online shopping except the population living in advanced cities like Gurgaon etc.

**Table 7**  
**Respondents Response on Providing the Most Satisfying and Unique Experience in Online Shopping**

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	strongly disagree	3	.4	.4	.4
	Disagree	96	11.9	12.0	12.4
	Not sure	133	16.5	16.6	29.0
	Agree	257	32.0	32.1	61.1
	strongly agree	311	38.7	38.9	100.0
	Total	800	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	4	.5		
Total		804	100.0		

Online shopping provides most satisfying and unique shopping experience	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>
	800	3.9712

<i>S.D</i>	<i>VARIANCE</i>	<i>SKEWNESS</i>	<i>STD. ERROR</i>
1.034	1.069	-.678	.086

**Interpretation:** The table reveals that 70.7 percent either strongly agree or agree that online shopping provides the most satisfying experience and provides unique shopping experience. The mean value 3.9712 which reveals that people perceive that online shopping provides most satisfying and unique shopping experience than traditional shopping. The value of standard error is .086 which shows the uniformity and reliability of this statement. The online shopping is a new experience for the Indian consumers. Hence it provides them the most satisfying and unique experience.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Online shopping is growing in Indian culture because of the shift in modern culture. Now in the Indian culture, no male dominating tendency is found in the present study. This is because of awareness, dual spousal income and increasing role of females in the society. In Indian culture, Youngers whether it is male or female do prefer more online shopping than others. They do not hesitate in placing the order of products through online shopping

Online shopping provides the most satisfying experience and provides unique shopping experience. The reason being the online shopping sites offer attractive offers, free cash on delivery, free gifts, ease of use in comparing the prices and features of the products etc. That is why people are shifting from traditional shopping to online shopping channels.

In the present study, the online buying behaviour in Punjab and Chandigarh is same whereas it is different in Haryana. So people have different buying behaviour in different geographical location. The reason being that in Punjab and Chandigarh, there is high literacy rate and modern life-style is found here.

The consumer behavior of Indian consumer is changing dramatically. Online shopping has truly revolutionized and influenced our society as a whole. This use of technology has opened new doors and opportunities that enable for a more convenient lifestyle today. Anytime anywhere, 24x7 availability, variety, choice, availability, convenience, quick and better services, schemes, offers and discounts, value for money are some of the significant reasons in online shopping that influenced Indian consumers to prefer online shopping.

## CONCLUSION

Online shopping is a new experience and has greatly impacted the lives of consumers in its short time of existence. It is expected to grow constantly in years to come with advancements in technology. Online shopping has made consumers more effective and efficient in their shopping behaviour and has driven businesses to a new level, forcing many to make the necessary adjustments and changes to reach the new market of knowledgeable consumers. The result of this survey clearly indicates that socio-cultural factor play an important role in buying behaviour. It has been found that the online shopping is widely acceptable in Indian culture. Gone are the days when India was a male dominating country. The findings of this study clearly indicate that both males and females do have influence in buying behaviour and females do prefer online shopping. The study underscores the need of understanding socio-cultural factors of consumers to formulate the marketing strategy to attract the customers.

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