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Comparative Analysis of Consumers Preference for Online and Offline Channel

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ABSTRACT: As we know that there are options for shopping like online and offline shopping channels in this age of digital India, but what is the preference of consumers. In this study we see A Comparative Analysis of Consumer Preference for Online and Offline Channels in Digital India. This study aims to determine the preference of consumers towards online shopping and offline shopping channels and to find out the ways in which they can be attracted to online shopping.

The methodology used in this study is descriptive quantitative, analytic and a survey design was employed. Data were collected from respondents using a structured questionnaire consisting of 27 items. The collected data were analyzed using software like SPSS and excel. Statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation. Finding of the study is Most respondents prefer a combination of both online and offline channels rather than relying on only one mode.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Preferences, Online Shopping, Offline Shopping, online/offline shopping preferences, online vs offline retail.

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an introduction to a comparative analysis of consumer preferences for online and offline shopping channels in Digital India. It examines the types of channels consumers choose for their daily shopping and explores their overall channel preferences. The study also highlights how consumers' lifestyles have changed following the Digital India initiative launched by the Government of India.

India is going through a major digital transformation due to the fast growth of the internet, smart mobile phones, and government programs like Digital India initiative. This digital change has influenced almost every aspect of daily life of people, including the way people shop, communicate, and access services. Today both online and offline channels are important for meeting consumer needs. Online platforms are convenient and offer a lot of choices. Can be accessed from anywhere. On the other hand offline channels still attract customers who value personal interaction, trust and seeing and feeling a product before buying.

As technology keeps growing it's interesting to see how people choose between offline options. Some consumers have quickly gotten used to platforms while others still prefer traditional offline shopping. The choice between offline channels may depend on things like age, income, location, how comfortable someone is, with technology and their shopping habits. Online channels offer convenience. Offline channels offer trust. People choose offline channels based on their needs Concept of Online and Offline Channels

People buy things on channels like websites and apps. You can also buy things on media. This is really convenient because you can stay at home and pay without using cash. They have lots of things to choose from. They bring the things you buy to your home.

Online channels are not the way to buy things. There are also channels like stores where you can go and see things for yourself. People like going to stores because they like to see things before they buy them and they like talking to people who work there. They trust the stores. They can get what they want right away.

Retail

Retail is the sale of goods and services to consumers, in contrast to wholesaling, which is the sale to business or institutional customers. A retailer purchases goods in large quantities from manufacturers, directly or through a wholesaler, and then sells in smaller quantities to consumers for a profit. Retailers are the final link in the supply chain from producers to consumers.

The definition of retail by some researcher are as follows:

Philip Kotler defines retailing as “all the activities involved in selling goods or services directly to final consumers for their personal, nonbusiness use” (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

E-TAIL (Electronic-Tail or online retail)

With the evolution of liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) the dynamic business is expanding at domestic and international levels both. With the expansion of the business market internationally, information technology is also expanding with new ideas and innovations that are providing multiple gains to the business as well as consumers. Over the past two decades after LPG, the business growth has expanded the consumption power of users also. With the influx of information technologies and business activities in the global market, the needs of consumers have also enhanced. The Indian organized retail sector majorly captures categories such as: Electronics, Cosmetics, Kids, Jewellery, Furnishing, Apparels and many more. With the enhanced consumption and working population, e-tailing is coming into existence with rapid growth because it provides variety, discount offers, fast delivery, different brands, saves time, distinguished products, easy payments etc.

E-tail, also known as electronic retailing or e-tailing, refers to the sale of goods and services to consumers directly through the internet using online platforms such as websites, mobile apps, or digital marketplaces. It is essentially the online version of traditional brick-and-mortar retailing, but without physical stores. Customers browse virtual catalogs, add items to digital shopping carts, and complete purchases via electronic payment systems.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature shows that Online retail preferences are driven by convenience, efficient delivery, product quality, and security. Shoppers value e-retailing for time savings, product variety, and easy price comparison. Trust, usefulness, and information quality boost satisfaction and loyalty. Negative factors, such as incorrect orders, high shipping costs, and quantity errors, harm purchase intention, highlighting the need for better inventory and delivery management (Prabha & Natarajan, 2025).

The study by Agarwal and Kandpal (2025) reviewed that Online shopping behavior, especially among students, is influenced by factors like price, quality, convenience, and security (Agarwal & Kandpal, 2025). Benefits include time-saving and wider product selection, but risks like privacy concerns and uncertain quality affect trust (Kaur & Kochar, 2018; Dani, 2017). Trust is built through satisfaction, which relies on perceived value, secure payment, and good website design. Demographics like age and education also play a role. Despite convenience, trust, security, and product quality are key drivers of online preference (Agarwal & Kandpal, 2025).

Bandyopadhyay and Ray (2025) examined how consumer preferences differ between online and offline shopping in the digital era. The literature review highlighted that Online shopping is popular for being super easy, available all the time, and a huge time-saver. But, people still worry about things like trusting the seller, the actual product quality, and delivery issues. Offline shopping is still loved because you can actually touch the item and get it right away. Basically, whether online or in a store, people choose based on what's convenient, the price, what they can experience (like touching a product), and security. The best way for businesses to keep customers happy is by blending the best parts of both online and in-store shopping.

Fanny and Felicitas (2025) examined how People are going back to physical stores after COVID. While online shopping was convenient during lockdowns, shoppers now want things like trust, comfort, and being able to touch products. They also value social interaction and talking to staff. Basically, traditional shopping still offers an emotional and in-person experience that digital stores can't fully match (Fanny & Felicitas, 2025).

Othman and Zeebaree (2025) find that how e-commerce uses "omnichannel strategies"—basically, making the online and in-store shopping experience feel seamless. Modern shoppers want convenience and personalized service, so businesses are integrating physical stores, apps, and websites using AI, IoT, and big data. Services like "buy online,

pick up in store" (BOPIS) really boost customer satisfaction. While implementing this is tough due to costs and data issues, the study confirms that blending online and offline is key to keeping up with today's consumers and improving business (Othman & Zeebaree, 2025).

Gap of the study

- Most research looked at either online or offline shopping separately, not both in one study.
- Many papers focused only on behavior during the pandemic, not how habits changed after it.
- Many papers mainly studied young or urban shoppers and ignored others.

Objective of the study

1. To find ways in which consumers can be attracted to online shopping.
2. To compare online and offline channel preference among various segments of customers based on age, education and income group.

Hypothesis

H₀₁ (Null Hypothesis): Factors such as discounts, convenience, delivery speed, and trust do not significantly influence consumers toward online shopping.

H₁₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Factors such as discounts, convenience, delivery speed, and trust significantly influence consumers toward online shopping.

H₀₂(Null Hypothesis): There is no significant difference in shopping channel preference based on age, education, and income.

H₁₂(Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant difference in shopping channel preference based on age, education, and income.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on a descriptive research design. And Data was collected using primary sources. Primary data was gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, and circulated through social media. Data like literature review was collected using secondary data from books, journals, and online sources. A sample size of (150) was selected using convenience sampling. The data was processed under SPSS and excel.

Data Analysis

The data was collected through the questionnaire and carefully organized, coded, entered and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to calculate the data.

To test the hypotheses and understand relationships between variables, statistical techniques like Chi-square test, correlation test are done. A demographic finding was also conducted to ensure the consistency of the data.

Analysis and interpretation**Demographic Findings**

Table demographic characteristics and the proportion of respondents classified as High Digital Overload within each subgroup.

Demographic Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	109	72.7	72.7
	Female	41	27.3	100

Age Respondent	of Less than 18 years	11	7.3	7.3
	Between 18-25 years	114	76	83.3
	Between 26-35 years	21	14	97.3
	Between 36-45 years	4	2.7	100
Qualification Respondent	Matriculation	2	1.3	1.3
	Intermediate	20	13.3	14.7
	Undergruade	67	44.7	59.3
	Graduate	49	32.7	92
	Postgraduate	12	8	100
Occupation Respondent	Student	108	72	72
	Employee	32	21.3	93.3
	Housewife	5	3.3	96.7
	Business Man	5	3.3	100

The study looked at one hundred and fifty people. Most of them were men. A big part of the people in the study were young with seventy six percent of them being between eighteen and twenty five years old. This makes sense because seventy two percent of the people in the study are students. When we look at what they're studying we see that most of them are either Undergraduates or Graduates. This means that the people, in the study are mostly men who are students and have a good education. So what we found out is mostly what young men think, the ones who are students.

H₀₁ (Null Hypothesis):

People do not really care about things like prices how easy it is to shop how fast they get their stuff and shopping without having to talk to anyone when they decide to shop

This table shows a special kind of test called a Chi-Square Test of Independence which looks at whether the things that people think're important, about online shopping are connected to the way they like to shop the most. we are looking at the p-value (Asymptotic Significance) against a standard alpha of 0.05.

Factor	Chi-Square Value	p-value	Interpretation
Price	20.668	0.008	Highly Significant
Contactless Shopping	19.444	0.013	Significant
Return/Exchange Policies	8.119	0.422	Not Significant
Fast Delivery	6.642	0.566	Not Significant
Convenience	12.686	0.123	Not Significant

Key Insights

1. The "Big Two": Price and Contactless Shopping

When we look at the numbers for Price and Contactless Shopping we see that they are important because the p-value of these two are 0.008 and 0.013 respectively which show these factor are significant. The numbers are low which means that people who like to shop think about Price and Contactless Shopping differently than people who like to shop in stores.

This is what we found out: people who like shopping and people who like in-store shopping have different ideas about what is important. The two things that really matter are Price and Contactless Shopping. People who shop online probably think about Price and Contactless Shopping in a way, than people who shop in stores.

2. The Factors That Don't Discriminate

When you look at Return and Exchange policies, Fast delivery and Convenience you see that they all have high numbers. These numbers tell us that people think these things are much equally important no matter what kind of shopper they are. For instance everybody wants it to be easy to shop and to get their things quickly whether they are shopping on the internet or in a store. So these things do not really help us figure out if someone likes to shop in a store. The things that really make a difference in how people choose to shop are factors. The other things like Delivery and Convenience and Returns are things that people expect so they do not really make someone choose one way of shopping, over another. People just want these things no matter how they shop so they are not a part of the decision.

H₀₂(Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant difference in shopping channel preference based on age, education, and income.

The analysis of the Chi-Square test results regarding shopping channel preferences of the consumers. The test was conducted to determine the demographic factors (Gender, Age, Qualification, and Occupation) and have a statistically significant relationship with a consumer's preferred shopping channels.

To find significance relation, we look at the Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) value, known as the p-value. Using the standard alpha level of 0.05:

- **p < 0.05:** Significant (The demographic factor influences shopping preference).
- **p > 0.05:** Not Significant (No clear relationship).

Variable	Chi-Square Value	df	p-value	Result
Gender	3.711	2	0.156	Not Significant
Age	15.328	6	0.018	Statistically Significant
Qualification	10.477	8	0.233	Not Significant
Occupation	12.14	6	0.059	Not Significant

Testing the Null Hypothesis H_0

Null hypothesis states: "There is no significant difference in shopping channel preference based on age, education, and income."

Based on the data provided for $N=150$

1. Age: Since the p-value (0.018) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis for this variable. Age does play a significant role in how consumer prefer to shop.
 2. Education (Qualification): Since the p-value (0.233) is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Education level does not appear to significantly impact shopping preference.
 3. Occupation: The table measures occupation. For occupation, the p-value is 0.059. While this is very close to the cutoff (sometimes called "marginally significant"), it technically remains not significant at the 95% confidence level.
- The null hypothesis H_0 is partially rejected. While education and occupation do not show a significant link to shopping preferences, age is a significant factor. This suggests that different age groups have distinct preferences for how consumer choose to shop online or in-store(offline).

Key Findings

- The Age Factor: Age is the only demographic variable that significantly influences shopping channel preference ($p = 0.018$). Other factors like gender, education, and occupation do not create a statistically significant divide in how consumer choose to shop.
- The "Price" Driver: When it comes to online shopping, Price ($p = 0.008$) and Contactless Shopping ($p = 0.013$) are the primary motivators. These are the "deciding factors" that push a consumer toward one method over another.
- Universal Expectations: Factors like Fast Delivery, Convenience, and Return Policies showed no significant difference across shopping methods. This indicates these are "baseline expectations"- everyone wants them regardless of whether they shop online or in store.
- The Demographic Neutrality of Education/Income: Interestingly, a person's level of education or their specific job (occupation) does not dictate their shopping method as much as their age and perceived value (price) do.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study shows that people do not all prefer the shopping channel. It also shows that a persons social status like their education or job does not play as big of a role as you might think. The study finds that what channel people prefer to shop on depends on what stage of life they're in and what they think is a good value. The only demographic that really matters is age. This means that businesses should focus on marketing, to people based on their generation, not their gender or job.

Convenience and fast delivery are things that everyone expects now. They do not make people switch to a shopping channel. What does make a difference is if a business offers prices and the option to shop without having to touch anything. To get people to change their shopping habits need to offer price advantages and make transactions safe. These are the factor that makes people to choose one shopping platform over another.

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