From Traditional Shopping to Online Shopping

A Study of the Paradigm Shift in Consumer Behaviour

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Abstract

With the internet shopping in India pegged at Rs. 52,000 crores and growing at a phenomenal rate of 100%, it opens up a whole new world of possibilities for both the consumer and the marketers. In a country where mail order/catalogue shopping does not even register its presence what were the factors that have had resulted in this entirely new channel and led to a paradigm shift in consumer behavior from traditional shopping to online shopping? The paper undertakes a factorial study of the behaviour of the urban educated middle class consumers in India with respect to the online marketing sites. To this end, it analyses the data collected from a sample of 400 urban educated middle class consumers selected on a non-probability basis, using purposive sampling technique. We used factorial analysis to analyse the data. The study found that this consumer behaviour is actuated by three main factors such as seller's image, website quality and seller's concern for customer. We find that the perception of privacy protection factor was high for the websites most commonly used by the consumers and emerged as the most important factor leading to online purchases. The study concludes that with the likelihood of the shift in shopping behavior from traditional to virtual continuing and accelerating in the future,

marketers will have to relook at their distribution and promotional models in order to meet the new challenges of changed customer behavior.

Keywords: *Internet Shopping, Online Shopping, Paradigm Shift, Traditional Shopping, Consumer Behavior, Factorial Study*

INTRODUCTION

The development of new technology as well as evolution of existing technology has an immense impact on business and social patterns of society. Technology can be considered to be a disruptive factor which turns products and skills obsolete while changing the rules of how business should be done. It can also result in new product and services for the consumer, reduce prices, increase the product's efficiency and simplify distribution.

One of the biggest phenomena of the recent years, E-commerce has been built on the Internet technology. The development of Internet been compared to the rise of radio industry, television industry and personal computer industry (Kalakota & Whinston, 1997). Originally designed for military and academic use, internet was over the years also used with increasing benefits for business purposes (Hanson, 2000).

The growth of Internet as an agent of facilitating business was rapid; the first online shopping system started functioning within a year of introduction of SSL encryption of data transferred online. Probably no other technology has evolved as rapidly and diffused as profusely as the internet. There were 568 million internet users in China in 2012 which ranked first amongst the nations, while there 254 million internet users in USA and 54 million in UK. In India, as per Telephone Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) the number of internet users stood at 164.81 million on 31st March 2013, with every 7 out of 8 user accessing internet from their mobile phones. India ranks third in the internet usage and is likely to be the first by 2015 (in the number of users).

The Internet retail in India accounts for a market size of Rs. 52,000 crores and growing at a phenomenal rate of 100 % per year as per a report by ASSOCHAM released in August 2013. In countries like USA online retail stood at 8% of the total sales while in UK it accounted for 12% of the total spending.

One of the properties of internet which is highly visible and utilized is that of its ability to function as a communication channel, allowing information to be exchanged between buyers and sellers. A marketing channel needs to function as a communication channel; a transaction channel- generates sales activities between buyers and sellers, and as a physical distribution channel-in the case of internet it gets restricted to certain types of products and services (Stern & El-Ansary, 1996, Peterson et al., 1997, Kiang et al., 2000).

There are similarities as well as differences between Internet shopping and traditional shopping with advantages and disadvantages for both. The advantages of Internet can be categorized into those arising mainly from its communication and transaction functions and to a lesser degree from its distribution functions.

Communication Functions

Information search and organization: customer can search for information on products and services as per their requirement. This can be done very efficiently with minimum inconvenience and effort (Peterson 1997,

Jarvanpaa & Todd, 1997, Krishnamurthy, 2003). Various search engines and web features also allow organization of information as per the requirement of customers, for example a consumer can search for products below a specified price range, by brand or by a specific feature. They can also compare the various products on the basis of features and or price or some other criteria.

Interactivity and consumer evaluation: Various measures like instant messaging and chats supplemented by traditional methods like telephone calls allow a customer to interact with the retailer/seller directly. However what makes the internet especially unique is that it allows customers to interact with other customers as well. Consumer reviews and ratings are a standard feature included in most internet shopping sites which eases the evaluation process for the customers who may be buying the product for the first time. Some sites also provide recommendations about certain products based on the user's browsing history as well as information about what products were bought by other shoppers.

Transaction Functions

Convenience: For some consumers, the biggest advantage of the internet is that it is available 24 by 7 around the year and can be accessed from anywhere in the world. This ability of the internet to be open at all hours saves the customer the hassle of getting to the store at a particular time and day in order to make purchases. It also does away with the hassles of adverse weather, bad traffic and limited parking and saves time as well, all of which adds to the convenience of the customer (Wolhandler, 1999). In order to aid the customer's decision making some online shopping sites also offer a trial period during which the purchase can be returned for a full

refund. Some sites have introduced 'try at home' feature in order to enhance 'touch and feel' factor and as a result convert the trial into purchase.

Geographical spread: The internet circumvents the geographical constraints by making products available to anybody who can access internet and pay for the products/services desired. The consumers of the banking industry for example can undertake several transactions without visiting their branch, which also reduces the need for the banks to open branches in different locations.

Transaction costs: In several instances, internet reduces transaction costs by removing the middle man, booking travel tickets online directly with airlines eliminates the commission payable to agents. Several websites also offer free shipping –some of them with a caveat of purchase of over a certain amount, which reduces the overall cost for the consumer. The ease of comparing different products also reduces the transaction costs.

Distribution Function

Broader assortment / Niche products: Since the online shopping sites are not constrained by physical space, they can offer a wider assortment of product selection to the users including products which are niche or have limited demand, which may make it uneconomical for traditional retailers. Amazon.com in 1990's announced itself to be the 'world's largest bookstore' as it boasted of an unlimited selection of titles, while the books would be shipped from the distributors directly.

Physical distribution: The internet may have limited capabilities when it comes to actual delivery of physical goods but certain products

– music for instance can be delivered over the internet, downloaded and stored in devices if required. Travel details and tickets can also be directly available on the internet and don't have to be physically delivered. Similarly e-books can also be physically transferred over the internet.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the existing literature reveals that there exists a healthy body of work on factors influencing online shopping (Limayem, 2003; Delafrooz, 2001).

One of the approaches used is to look at how consumer personalities affect shopping behavior, two broad categories of orientation being utilitarian and hedonic. Consumers with utilitarian orientation prefer to shop online in order to achieve a specific goal. What they look for in a shopping experience is efficiency and rationality (Babin, 1994, Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001, Monsuwe et al., 2004). Shoppers with hedonic orientation on the other hand are interested not only in information but also seek fun, excitement, escapism, fantasy (Monsuwe et al., 2004). These experiential shoppers are focused more on the shopping experience than the goal of making a purchase (Sorce, 2005). According to Miller (2000), the product and services for Internet shopping could be influenced easily by their type, and he also indicated four sources that could explain the nature of Internet shopping-convenience, technology, security and product and price.

We can look at online shopping from the perceived benefits which can be physiological, psychological, social or material in nature. The earlier research has focused on identifying the reasons why online shopping was beneficial (Liu & Arnett, 2000; Muylle et al., 2004;

Shih, 2004). Similarly Koivumaki (2001) proved that frequency of purchases made was directly dependent on the online shopping benefits. Similar findings were reported by Forsythe (2002), which found that the time spent online was also positively connected with perceived benefits of online shopping. Benefits can also be classified as extrinsic benefits or intrinsic benefits both of which are important in shaping the customer's behavior online (Liu & Arnett, 2000,; Muylle et al., 2004; Shih, 2004)

A study by Shwu-Ing (2003) found that convenience, information, homepage design, company name, freedom selection all added to the benefits of online shopping. The most significant factor that contributed to the motivation of customer's online shopping was convenience.

Studies have also looked at determining the attitude towards online shopping which was defined as a consumer's positive and negative feelings towards online purchasing (Chiu et al., 2005; Schlosser, 2003a, b) and have found that customers with higher positive attitude score should be target market (Shwu-Ing, 2003) Two other factors which are important in determining attitude of customers are existing legal framework and third party recognition (Borchers, 2001). Demographics as a factor has also been examined in several studies and while it plays a role in determining whether people use internet or not, it does not influence which site to visit or how much to spend (Bhatnagar, 2000).

However Bellman (1999) found that those consumers who use internet as a routine tool for various functions tend to see it as a natural channel for shopping as well. Similarly early adaptors of technology also tended to use internet more often for shopping (Koufaris,

2002). Studies which have focused whether specific consumer characteristics influence online shopping found that people who focused more on convenience were more likely to be frequent buyers on internet. They preferred sacrificing the "touch and feel" experience if they could save time by purchasing online (Li, 1999) Perceived security risk was seen to be a major barrier with respect to online shopping (Han, 2001). However, the perceived risk could be reduced with increasing familiarity, skills and experience on internet (Senecal, 2000; Han, 2001). Similarly as per a study by Vellido (2000) risk perception was the main difference between people who bought online and those who did not. Some of the other factors were; convenience, control over shopping process, affordability and customer service. Results from Jarvenpaa (2000) and Culnan (1999) also identified risk perception as being a barrier to online buying.

Another study by Jarvenpaa (2000) found that there was a direct and positive co-relation between the level of trust and attitude towards store while inversely related to the perception of risk involved in online shopping. As per McAllister (1995) trust and risk are interlinked. The customer's concerns regarding online shopping have to do with security of payment details, privacy and product quality. Trust related issues can be categorised into "personal information, product quality and price, customer service and store presence (Kim & Benbasat, 2003). It is more difficult for an online shopper to physically check for product quality and monitor the transmission of financial information as well as personal details to an unknown and untested entity.

In his study Mayer (1995) combined the traditional marketing theory on consumer motivation for buying with a trust model.

As per his model, an important antecedent of trust is the trust propensity – a personality trait of buyers. A person with a higher trust propensity is likely to be a potential buyer as compared to one with lower trust potential. As per this study the main elements of trustworthiness are ability, benevolence and integrity. Sellers have to convince customers of their competence, 'wanting to do good' and adherence to a set of principles which is acceptable to the buyer.

An added feature of internet business is that customers must also trust the transaction medium for online purchases, mere trust in the internet site is not enough (Kini & Choobineh, 1998). Public key encryption infrastructure and certification bodies build trust amongst customers with respect to online shopping (Hoffman, 1999). A high level of trust by buyers has been found to stimulate favourable attitudes and behavior (Schurr & Ozanne, 1985; Anderson & Narus, 1990).

In their study, Ranganathan & Ganapathy (2002) found that purchase intention is dependent on four key dimensions of B2C web sites; information content, design, security and privacy. However the greatest impact on the purchase intention was security and privacy dimension. Studies have also been carried out to examine the role of gender with regard to internet usage in general and online purchase in particular. It has been found that women spend lesser time online, view fewer pages and spend less than men (Allen, 2001; Pastore 2000; Kehoe, 1998). A likely explanation for this could be that women perceive purchasing online to be riskier than men do (Sheehan, 1999).

Besides the trust factor, another key determinant for online shopping is the online shopping experience. An unpleasant

experience with a particular site can result in the customer's refusal to revisit it on the next occasion (Rice, 1997). The social dimension of shopping is a very important factor for several people (Dennis, 2002). Hou & Rego (2002) in their study found that the online shopping still lacks social interactivity and the decision to shop online is dependent on the shopping experience to a great extent. Attitude and intentions towards online shopping impacts the shopping enjoyment in a positive and significant manner (Eighmey, 1997). 'Experience Economy' which is concerned with the 'creation of outstanding and memorable experience' was highlighted by Pine & Gilmore (1999) in their study. They found that consumers buy not only goods and services but experiences as well. The physical aspects of a store such as the layout, colours, music and arrangement of merchandise are collectively called store atmospherics (Engel, 1990). Store atmospherics can directly impact the customer's mood and intentions to purchase (East, 1997) and it can add to or distract from the customer's experiences in shopping at a physical retail store.

Online shopping is, however, a different experience from shopping in a physical retail store. Online shopping is constrained by the web interface which allows consumers to simply read and view products and eliminates the touch, feel and try elements of products limiting their perception of the product (Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2001; Bhatnagar, 2000). Creating a compelling online experience is key to competitive advantage but very little is known about factors which create a compelling online experience (Novak, Hoffman & Yung, 2000). The web cannot stimulate the physical environment but one of the advantages of internet is its property of 'interactivity'. There has been a great deal of excitement over the 'interactivity" potential of the internet however businesses have spent huge amount without understanding what creates interactivity and how it impacts the customer. The consumer's best source of product information is direct product experience (Klein, 2011). Different media which deliver the product information in differing terms of quality and quantity can only partially deliver the product experience to the customer.

Virtual reality stimulates a direct product experience and exploratory studies suggest that it will improve the customer's purchase intention (Jiang & Benbasat, 2002; Li, 2002, Daugherty, 2002). Lohse & Spiller (1998) have found that there is a strong link between a website's interface, volume of traffic and sales achieved. Similarly the virtual store's atmosphere influenced the site's stickiness or the period of time spent on the site (Eroglu, Machleit & Davis, 2001). Part of the virtual store's atmosphere is determined by the design characteristics of the web page and it also affects the consumer's online buying decision. The homepage presentation is a major antecedent of customer satisfaction along with others such as logical support, technical, information and product characteristics (Ho & Wu, 1999). Internet shopping malls adopt virtual reality (Lee, 2001) and 3D techniques (Miller, 2000) to improve the presentation of products.

The popularity of the web pages is also dependent on frequent updates (Dholakia & Rego, 1998) as well as number of links to other websites. Lohse & Spiller (1998) found that adding more products in the store resulted in increase traffic as did a FAQ section. Higher sales also resulted when a feedback section was added for the customers. Customers gain a feeling of increased convenience if they are

provided with customized information while buying repeat or standard items. This leads to quicker purchase decision (Lohse, 2000). Information in fact can be categorized as non-value added and value added, both of which can be used by search mechanism in online sites (Koufaris, 2002). The study by Jarvenpaa & Todd (1997) also demonstrated that value added information to an online shopping site would provide an incentive for people to shop online as well as increase shopping enjoyment.

In order to respond to the customers' desire for control and convenience, web stores have to design an efficient system to enable consumers to easily find what they need, learn more about it and quickly make a purchase decision (Baty & Lee, 1995).

Irrespective of technology and the kind of product, the central issue to retention and gaining new customers is the perceived customer satisfaction of customers. Satisfaction is critical for an individual customer because it fulfills a previous unmet need or the best allocation of scarce resources (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Bearden & Teel, 1983). In online shopping, the quality of the website is a major factor influencing the customer's satisfaction in an online shopping environment.

From the perspective of antecedents and the consequences of satisfaction, Oliver (1980) proposed a model that expresses consumer satisfaction as a function of expectation and expectancy disconfirmation. Moreover, satisfaction significantly affected customer's attitudes and their intention to purchase. Many researchers have found the quality of web retailing sites is a dominant antecedent of customer. Wolfinbarger & Gilly (2002) in their study found that website design quality was a critical factor in customer satisfaction.

This review of empirical studies has embodied different factors which influence online purchasers' behavior. The antecedents of online purchase include many attitudinal components; for example, attitude towards a website and perceived risk of an online purchase. Consumers' online shopping experiences, website design and fulfillment of quality expectations are deemed as the major components to successful online transactions. The review also shows that good customer service leads to customer satisfaction, which in turn results in consumer loyalty to such websites. Many researchers have also conducted studies to measure how online consumers perceive web shop quality.

Problem Statement

An overview of the literature in the area of factors influencing consumer attitude towards online shopping shows that the aspect of major underlying factors influencing the shopping behavior of consumers in India has remained largely unexplored. The review of above studies indicates that there has been no systematic research done in this area in India and the objective of this paper is to fill this gap.

Purpose of Study

For the above identified research problem, the main purpose of this study is to assess and analyse the factors influencing customers to purchase online in India.

Research Questions and Objectives of the Study

For the above problem and purpose, the study seeks to answer the following specific research questions:

1. What is the present pattern of purchase of the urban educated middle class in India?
2. What are the major underlying factors influencing customers to purchase online in India?

Following are the specific objectives of this study:

1. To develop and standardize measures to evaluate customer's behavior towards online shopping.
2. To analyze the present pattern of purchase of the urban educated middle class.
3. To examine the major underlying factors influencing customers to purchase online.
4. To open new areas of research.

Structure of the Paper

The study is organised into five sections. Section one is the introductory section that covers the Concepts and Theoretical Framework: Customer Behavior, Significance of customer behavior, Models of customer behavior. Section two is review of relevant literature, Problem statement, Purpose of the study, Objectives of the study, Research questions and Structure of the research paper. Section three is the research design and methods section. It focuses on the research perspectives, data collection: population, sampling, research instruments, data collection, and tools used for data analysis. It also identifies the hypotheses. Section four is presentation of data and analysis of results and findings. Section five is the conclusion and implications.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study positivism research philosophy (Positivism has to do with the situation where knowledge or the world is thought to exist independent of people's perceptions of it and that science uses objective techniques to discover what exist in the world" (Sullivan, 2001) has been used to analyse the major factors influencing consumer behavior towards online shopping objectively through the use of established theoretical frameworks and structured instruments to assess and analyse it, upon which generalisations can be made from the findings. The study is exploratory in nature as it seeks to find out the major underline factors affecting customers to buy online.

The target population for the study comprises all individual customers purchasing from both traditional and online shop in India. There is no available statistics on the total number of individual customers using both the ways of shopping in India. Keeping the above fact in mind, non probability sampling technique has been used to select the respondent form the target population. The non probability sampling technique used in this study is quota. A sample size of three hundred (300) customers has been used.

The questionnaires had two parts. Part A consists of demographic questions and part B consists of statements having Likert scale and describing various factors influencing customers for shopping online. These questionnaires were distributed among customers who shop online in Delhi and NCR region during Jan-August 2016. To check the consistency of part B of the questionnaire, item to total correlation has been used. To check the reliability of part B of the questionnaire, Cronbach alpha is used. Percentage method and pie charts are used for analyzing part A. Factor analysis has been used to come out with the major underlying factors influencing customer's attitude for online shopping.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability Measure of the Questionnaire

The reliability of items was assessed by calculating the coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951), which measures the internal consistency of the items. Reliability measure was carried out using SPSS Software and the SPSS output is shown in Table 2. For a measure not to be rejected, coefficient value in all the cases should be above .7 (Nunnally. 1978). It can be seen that in the reliability method applied here, reliability value is more than .7, i.e. .877, so it can be said that all the items in the questionnaire are highly reliable.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.877	17

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis (FA) provided enhanced control for assessing the extent to which items on a factor measure one single construct (Ahire, Golhar and Waller, 1996). Factor analysis model was run through SPSS software and the output is shown in Table 2. The factor analysis was undertaken using the principal component extraction method with Varimax rotation. The sorted rotated values of the factor loading with minimum value of 0.5 or more have been considered. The factor analysis resulted in 3 factors. The details about factors, the factor name, Eigen value, and items converged; factor lodgings and variance percentage are shown in the table.

Explanation of the Major Underlying Factors

This section discusses the major underlying factors evolved after applying factor analysis.

Table 2: Factor Analysis Model

Items	Factors (%)		
	1	2	3
The website provides in depth information		1.872	
The Website has adequate security Features		1.460	
I feel safe in my transaction with this website			1.078
It is quick & easy to complete a transaction at this	.986		
I feel that my privacy is protected at this site		.869	
This website has a good selection	.793		
Inquires are answered promptly			.716
The site doesn't waste my time	.674		
When you have a problem, the website shows a sincere interest in solving it			.554
This site has competitive prices	.488		
Company is caring & ready to respond to customer needs	.436		
This website understands my needs			.434
The produced is delivered by the time promised by the company	.360		
I feel comfortable surfing this site	.342		
You get what you order from the website	.313		
The Product that came was represented accurately by the website	.265		
Eigen Values % of variance explained	21.63	15.53	12.86

Factor 1 – Seller's Image

The total variance explained by Factor 1 which we name as 'Seller's Image' is 21.63 %. It includes some 9 diverse sub factors like good selection (variable 7), quick and easy to complete a transaction (variable 5) feel comfortable surfing this site (variable 15) doesn't waste my time (variable 9). This also included competitive prices (variable 11), delivers as promised (variable 14) you get what you order from the website (variable 16) the product that came was represented accurately by the website (variable 17) as well as company is responsive and caring towards my needs (variable 12). We can conclude that this factor comprises of the variable related to the seller's image, his reliability, and convenience offered. This includes product assortment (This site has a good selection, Variable 7), this is similar to the study by Shwu-Ing (2003) who found that convenience and selection to influence online shopping. Similar findings were reported by Delhagen (1997) and Khatibi (2006) who found that ease of search, good price/deal, good selection/availability, fun, impulse and customer service were reasons for people shopping online.

Gefen & Straub (2000) have looked at perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness to be important to online purchasing. This is similar to the ease of purchase (quick and easy to complete a transaction-variable 5 and feel comfortable surfing this site-variable 15 as well as doesn't waste my time-variable 9) that this study finds. Song & Zahedi (2001) have also found that website quality categorized into promotion, service, information influence, self efficacy and resource facilitation are important for online buying. This is revalidated by this study which finds that website quality which is part of the overall seller's image includes ease of transaction and comfortable surfing the site, though self efficacy was not tested in our study. Earlier studies found a high level of trust by buyers to stimulate favourable attitudes and behavior (Schurr & Ozanne, 1985; Anderson & Narus, 1990). Our study also found that promise fulfillment (delivers as promised-variable 14, you get what you order from the website variable 16, the product that came was represented accurately by the website-variable 17) was critical to the consumer buying online.

Factor 2: Website Safety and Security

The total variance explained by this factor is 15.53% and includes sub factors regard to safety and security of the website like privacy protection (variable 6), the website provides in depth information (variable 1), the website has adequate security features (variable 2) and I feel safe in my transaction with this website (variable 4). Privacy protection was the major factor for consumers as represented by variable 6 which had the highest mean value at 2.8145, and this can be interpreted as higher trust in the website/seller will lead to online purchase. This finding is the same as that of Schurr & Ozane (1985) and Anderson & Narus (1990) who found that high level of trust leads to favourable attitude and behavior in the traditional shopping. Maignan & Lukas (1997) research shows that the financial risks have been cited as a main reason to stop internet shopping, and security has become a major concern in online transaction relationships (Rowley, 1999). Another research shows that online trust is lower than the face-to-face interactions in the physical store (Cassell & Bickmore, 2000), and the result from Cheung & Lee (2006) shows that trustworthiness of Internet merchant (perceived integrity, perceived competence,

and perceived security control) and external environment (third-party recognition and legal framework) have considerable impact on consumer trust in Internet shopping. The web merchant can provide third-party verification to E-commerce web site. If the E-commerce web site can provide information about their customer services, location of the office, contact telephone number, and a help button on the web site, customers trust increases as they feel that online retailers truly exist (Lohse & Spiller, 1998).

Similarly safety features of the website (variable 2) and consumer's perception about safety whilst using the website (variable 4) was part of this factor and led to online purchases. While earlier studies like Barcellos (1999, 2000) and Zhang & Dran (2000) have classified web design into hygiene and motivating factors. The hygiene aspects included safety features and technical aspects while information content and its organization was motivating factors. Similar classification was also used by Linag & Li (2000) who included media richness as the third factor. In our study we did not distinguish between the hygiene and motivational aspects of the factors. Variable 1 – this website provides in-depth information is also a part of the factor 'Website Quality' and is in line with earlier studies of Grandon & Ranganathan (2001), Cho et al. (2001) and Koufaris (2002).

Factor 3: Seller's Concern for Customer

This factor comprises of the seller's concern for customer as reflected by the prompt answering of queries (variable 8), the website's understanding of the customer's needs (variable 13) and interest in solving the customer's problems (variable 10). This is in line with the findings of Lohse & Spiller (1998) who found that adding a FAQ section and providing a feedback section for customers led to increase in sales. Similarly Jarvenpaa & Todd (1997) also found that providing value added information adds incentive to people to buy online.

CONCLUSION

In this study we have examined the underlying factors influencing the online shopping of Indian urban middle class. From the results it is clear that (a) seller's image – his reputation, reliability, the convenience provided by internet and its ease of use along with; (b) the website quality which provides for safe transactions and in depth information as well as; (c) the responsiveness of the seller towards his customers are the underlying factors that are driving the urban middle class towards online shopping.

It is interesting to find that the most commonly cited advantages of internet – saves time is not a major factor for Indian shoppers. In our study we can see that privacy concern, commonly associated with being a barrier to internet shopping, can when resolved actually influence people to shop online. The study is also important since it reconfirms the findings that the same reasons which attract a customer to certain retailers like product assortment, company's responsiveness and information availability are common reasons for online shopping as well.

Our study did not take into the account the inter-dependence of the two shopping –online and traditional on each other. For future research it would also be interesting to see the influence of these two channels on each other for example information search on internet but actual physical shopping or actual physical testing of products but purchase online in the Indian context.

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