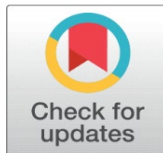
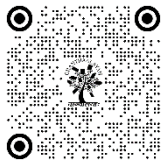


IMPACT ON CYBER SHOPPING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

C. S. Goldie Sheila Jesolit¹✉, Dr. Chithra James²✉

¹Research Scholar (Reg. No: 21113281012001), Department of Commerce, Women's Christian College, Nagercoil - 629001 (Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli - 627012) Tamil Nadu, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Women's Christian College, Nagercoil - 629001 (Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli - 627012) Tamil Nadu, India



Corresponding Author

C. S. Goldie Sheila Jesolit,
goldiesheilajesolit@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

In the pandemic situation around the world caused by COVID-19, cyber shopping plays a crucial role in a customer's life. Cyber shopping is developing and growing due to the increasing usage of technology such as smartphones and the internet. Cyber shopping allows the customers to stay at home and make purchases. It is vital as social distancing is not always maintained when one leaves their house to purchase goods. The objective of this paper is to analyze the impact COVID-19 has on cyber shopping purchases. It also includes recognizing the factors that have influenced the buying patterns during COVID-19. For this research, data collection is from secondary data. In this research, the data collection method is multiple sources. The study conveys that cyber shopping is growing due to COVID-19. The majority of the customers used cyber shopping to purchase clothes and electronics. Customers are giving priority to safety. The concern that the customers have is sharing their personal information on cyber websites. Supply chain management during COVID-19 lockdowns faced issues. Availability of raw material and transportation delays were the crucial cause of issues in supply chain management during the COVID-19 pandemic. During December 2021, Amazon had the highest number of traffic when compared with the previous year.

Keywords: Cyber Shopping, COVID-19, Goods, Business-to-Consumer.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to Topic

Cyber shopping is a dominating area in today's world. COVID-19 is a reason for this. Cyber shopping is known as "the buying and selling, marketing and servicing of products and services via computer networks" (Combe, 2006)ⁱ. COVID-19 is "a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and some types of the common cold. CO stands for Corona, VI stands for Virus, and D stands for Disease"ⁱⁱ. Many customers prefer to purchase from online websites due to lockdowns and social distancing. The process of cyber shopping is convenient and is simple. It saves time as one does not have to wait in queue to get their products due to social distancing. Products that were not available in the traditional stores during the pandemic were available in online shops. The online shops have initiated contactless delivery and payment methods as well.

Customers are getting their awareness about online websites through social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Discounts and offers attract customers towards cyber shopping. Online websites offer products at a higher discounted rate than the traditional stores, even in the COVID-19 pandemic. Through cyber shopping, there are many benefits available to the customers. Consumers can save money due to discounted prices and offers. The customers have constant access to the products as it is available 24x7 throughout the year. They also get regular advertisement and promotion information (The Economic Times, 2021)ⁱⁱⁱ. Customers can compare and review the product and its prices before purchasing it.

1.2. Objectives:

- To analyze the impact COVID-19 has on cyber shopping purchases.
- To recognize the factors which have influenced the buying patterns during COVID-19.

1.3. Research Methodology:

For this research, data collection is from secondary data. There are three types of secondary data collection. Documentary data are data collected through journals, books, databases, transcripts. A collection of information through a survey and available in data forms is known as survey-based secondary data. A combination of documentary and survey-based secondary data is multiple source secondary data^{iv}. In this research, the data collection method is multiple sources.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ankur Kumar Rastogi (2010)^v conducted his research is on “A study of Indian online consumers and their buying behavior”. The objective of the research is to discover the key factors that influence the online buying behavior of consumers in India. The study revealed that employees working in a company are purchasing more goods from cyber shopping when compared to others. The cyber shopping customers feel that it is easier to purchase from the website due to the availability of products, low price, and various payment methods. The online consumers recommend the non-online customers to convert to cyber shopping.

D. Charumathi and Dr. S. Sheela Rani (2017)^{vi} analysed about the following topic “An empirical study on consumer behavior towards cyber shopping”. The research aims to find out the most preferred product, risks involved in cyber shopping, and the online site often used. According to the study, electronic products and clothes are the most purchased products through cyber shopping. The disadvantage in cyber shopping is the lack of ability to judge the quality of the product as the consumers cannot touch or feel the product. Financial risk is also considered crucial by the consumers. The number one ranked online shop is Amazon, followed by Flipkart.

Bharti Aggarwal and Deepa Kapoor (2020)^{vii} researched about “A study on the influence of COVID-19 pandemic on customer’s online buying behavior”. The aim is to explore the drivers of cyber shopping after the COVID-19 pandemic. It also aims to find the most preferred products purchased through cyber shopping during the pandemic. The study found that convenience, time-saving, and transformation are the main drivers to switch to online stores. Essential items such as cereals, fresh fruits, vegetables, groceries, soaps, sanitizers, and masks were the most preferred products during the pandemic. The customers expect the return period to be longer, reasonable price, and contactless delivery.

Anam Bhatti and et al. (2020)^{viii} examined on “E-Commerce trends during COVID-19 pandemic”. The purpose of the article is to determine the cyber shopping trends in the pandemic and how the progress in cyber shopping will affect the customers’ behavior in the future. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, cyber shopping is growing at an increasing rate. The pandemic and lockdowns have forced customers to convert to cyber shopping and to use it daily. The challenges faced in cyber shopping.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Top Ten Countries Ranked by Retail Cyber shopping Sales Share for 2021

Around the world, retail cyber shopping sales are growing at an increasing rate. In the year 2021, it has seen enormous growth. The top ten countries which have contributed to retail cyber shopping sales are listed below.

Table 3.1 – Top Ten Countries Ranked by Retail Cyber Shopping Sales Share for 2021

Country	Percentage in Retail Cyber shopping Sales Share	Rank
China	52.1%	1
US	19%	2
UK	4.8%	3
Japan	3%	4
South Korea	2.5%	5
Germany	2.1%	6
France	1.6%	7
India	1.4%	8
Canada	1.3%	9
Brazil	0.8%	10

Source: Secondary data (Lebow, 2021)^{ix}

The above table is about retail cyber shopping sales share for 2021, and it selected the top 10 countries and ranked them accordingly. China is ranked number one in the worldwide retail cyber shopping sales share, followed by the United States. India is number eight.

3.2. Customers Who Have Tried New Shopping Behaviour Since COVID-19

Imposition of lockdowns by the various government took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. People were not allowed to go out, and if allowed, they had to maintain social distance. Due to this, the process of shopping was time-consuming and tedious. Many customers shifted to cyber shopping during this period. Some customers intended to stay in this new form of shopping behavior, while others responded that they would opt for the traditional stores when the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

Table 3.2 - Customers Who Have Tried New Shopping Behaviour Since COVID-19

Country	Percentage of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents Who Intend to Continue After COVID-19
India	96%	73.5%
Indonesia	92%	82.5%
China	86%	76.5%
Brazil	84%	78%
Mexico	81%	83%
South Africa	79%	82.5%
US	73%	79%
Italy	69%	77.5%
Spain	66%	82%
UK	63%	84.5%
France	56%	72.5%
Germany	50%	73.5%
Japan	30%	87.5%

Source: Secondary data (Charm, 2020)^x

The data revealed that Indian respondents are the highest in trying new shopping behavior since COVID-19. New shopping behavior is purchasing through cyber shopping. India is number one due to lockdown periods imposed along with social distancing. There was panic buying by the Indian customers also. However, only seventy-three percent of the customers are willing to continue after COVID-19. Japan has the least number of customers who have tried new shopping behavior since COVID-19. Since Japan is a developed country, the people would have already opted for cyber shopping. However, Japan has the highest percentage of respondents who intend to continue after COVID-19. In France, only

seventy-two percent of the customers are willing to continue cyber shopping after COVID-19. It has the least number of respondents willing to continue cyber shopping.

3.3 Required Features for Trying a New Shopping Method

Every customer will have some requirements for a new brand or product before investing their money. These features will have a long-lasting impact on the brand.

Table 3.3 – Required Features for Trying a New Shopping Method

Reason	Rank
Value	First
Quality/Organic	Second
Purpose Driven	Third

Source: Secondary data (Charm, 2020)^{xi}

The Indian customers rank the value for the product given by the brand as number one. The quality of the product follows after it. The purpose-driven is in the third rank.

3.4. Factors that a Customer Considers Before Making a Purchase

There are various factors a customer considers before making a purchase. These factors impact how a customer purchases a product.

Table 3.4 - Factors that a Customer Consider Before Making a Purchase

Factors	Percentage	Rank
Strong Company Values	75%	2
Supports Local Community	68%	4
Taking Responsibility for Staff Welfare	68%	4
Aids in Making Healthier Lifestyle Choices	76%	1
Items are Traceable and has a Transparent Origin	65%	6
Produces Biodegradable/Eco-Friendly Products	72%	3

Source: Secondary data^{xii}

The data given reveals that Indian customers consider products and companies that aid in making healthier lifestyle choices. It is followed by company values as strong company values will guarantee the better quality of products. Items traceability and transparent origin are the least ranked.

3.5. Opinion on Online Deliveries after COVID-19

COVID-19 pandemic had a positive impact on the cyber shopping world. There has been an enormous growth in cyber shopping, as mentioned earlier. Some researches even reveal that after the COVID-19 pandemic, the cyber shopping sector will continue to grow.

Table 3.5 - Opinion on Online Deliveries after COVID-19

Opinion	Percentage
Yes	78%
No	18%
Can't say	4%
Total	100%

Source: Secondary data^{xiii}

As per the table above, seventy-eight percent of the customers are willing to permit cyber shopping deliveries even after the pandemic period is over. However, eighteen percent of the customers want only essential supplies through cyber shopping, and the rest of the respondents are not sure about the delivery system.

3.6. Concerns about Cyber shopping in India

As per the research conducted by Deloitte, in India, seventy-eight percent of respondents are hopeful that the financial situation will improve within the next three years. Sixty-seven percent of respondents agree that there is a delay in delivering the product when the purchase is large in number. Around sixty-one percent of the customers are concerned about making the upcoming payment^{xiv}.

Table 3.6 - Concerns of Customers Regarding Online Websites

Ways	Percentage	Rank
Protects Personal Data	54%	1
Meeting Expectations	48%	3
Providing Exceptional Customer Services	43%	5
Shares Relevant Discounts/Recommendations	46%	4
Makes it Easy to Repeat Purchases	49%	2

Source: Secondary data^{xv}

The protection of personal data is the major concern of Indian customers regarding online websites. Online websites collect personal information about individuals and financial information. The information collected should be kept at utmost confidentiality and safety. The slightest concern by the customers is providing exceptional customer services to them.

4. FINDINGS

Cyber shopping sales share is increasing, and China has the highest allocation. India has the eighth rank across the globe. In India, ninety-six percent of the respondents tried new shopping behavior such as cyber shopping during the pandemic. India is at the top about opting for new shopping behavior. However, only around seventy-three percent of the customers are willing to continue this behavior post-pandemic. According to Indian customers, value, quality, and purpose-driven are the required features to try a new shopping method. They are ranked as first, second, and third, respectively. According to the customers, online websites aiding in making healthier lifestyle choices is vital. The Indian customers want online deliveries to continue even after the completion of the pandemic. Protection of personal data is a vital concern of the customers.

5. CONCLUSION

According to Nielsen's Study of the United States (US) market, around forty-seven percent of the internet users avoid the traditional method of shopping due to COVID-19. If the situation worsens further, then seventy-five percent of them avoid traditional stores. (Tadrzak, 2020)^{xvi}. Grocery has also seen an increase in its sales during this period. The purchase of daily groceries increased distinctly during the first lockdown. The sudden shift happened around the globe (Baarsma, B & Groenewegen, 2021)^{xvii}. The retail and FMCG have also decreased their spending in advertising as there was a cease of operations. As per Rakuten Insight in May 2020, social distance, lockdowns, and minimization of spending time outside are the reason for cyber shopping in India. Fifty-nine percent of respondents agreed to this^{xviii}. In India, cyber shopping orders increased by thirty-six percent in the last quarter of 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a decrease in spending along with economic slowdown and uncertainty. However, cyber shopping saw a strong sales growth in 2021. India became the eighth largest market in cyber shopping around the globe^{xix}.

The Government of India has initiated a hundred percent FDI in the cyber shopping marketplace to increase foreign businesses. During November 2021, the Government e-Marketplace (GEM) has served 7.96 million orders. There were about 3.06 million sellers and service providers and 54,962 buyers during this period. The government set National Retail Policy in five areas: ease of doing business, rationalization of the licensing process, digitization of retail, focus on reforms, and an open network for digital commerce. The Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules 2020 revealed that online websites should display the country of origin with the product listing.^{xx}

The cyber shopping sector will grow further even in the post-pandemic period of COVID-19. With the right initiatives from the government and strategies set by the online retailers, the cyber shopping segment can develop all over India. These initiatives and techniques should act as a benefit for the customers as well.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None

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