

**“What do customers prefer? - A Study on online shopping with respect to Apparel”****Dr. Sneha Ravindra Kanade**

Assistant professor – MBA  
Krupanidhi School of Management,  
Varthur Hobli, Bangalore – 560035  
Mail Id – Sneha\_kanade@hotmail.com

**Abstract**

Online shopping is no doubt the current trend. Online shopping on sectors such as fashion and accessories, electronic/electrical goods and books are growing in Bangalore. Many researches claimed that online shopping is still at the early stage of development in Bangalore and the potential for growth is inevitable. However, little is known about the acceptance of online shopping on localized Apparels such factors which influence consumer preference towards online marketing with reference to Apparels. The purpose of this study is to identify the potential of online shopping by investigating consumers' preference towards purchasing Apparels through online shopping as an alternative to visiting the physical shop. It also investigated the influence of factors (demographic profile, previous online shopping experience, perceived benefits, consumers' lifestyles, and perceived merchants' trustworthiness) towards attitude. The results and findings show that consumers exhibited positive intention to make an online purchase in future and preferences positively and strongly correlated with behavioural intention. The study also concluded the perceived benefits of online shopping, perceived merchant's trustworthiness, consumers' lifestyle and consumers' prior e-commerce experience have direct influence on the contrary, demographic profile, online shopping frequency and duration of daily internet usage found to have no impact on preferences. The website should have been improvised with features that consumers prefer such as ease of transaction, security and trustworthiness.

**Key words: Consumer Preference, online shopping, customer profiling, internet usage.**

**Introduction**

Online shopping as defined by Mastercard Worldwide Insights (2008) is the process of purchasing goods and services from merchants who sell over the internet. Generally, it is also known as internet buying, electronic shopping, online purchasing or internet shopping. Kim (2004) further defined internet shopping as examining, searching for, browsing for or looking at a product to get more information with the possible intention of purchase on the Internet. By looking at other perspective, Chiu et al (2009) considered online shopping as an exchange of time, effort and money for receiving products or services. Retailers see it as internet/online retailing, e-commerce or e-store/online store, which refers to “the sale of retail goods via online channels, valued at retail selling price”

Nowadays, online shopping has become the norm and consumers are adopting it as it has many advantages. On consumers' perspective, online shopping provides low and transparent prices, comprehensive assortment of goods and services and a much more convenient shopping alternative that has eliminated such traditional shopping inconveniences of squeezing through

crowds, stuck in long queue at cashier counter, battling for parking spaces at a busy mall. On the other hand, retailers see it as a huge business opportunity to grab.

According to Euromonitor (2012) in Tang & Tong (2013), Bengaluru's Internet retail realized RM842 million in 2011 and will expect to post compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15% to reach RM1.7 billion in 2016 With Bengaluru consumers shifting their shopping needs online, a lot of small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) or even corporation are taking advantage of this opportunity by setting up their alternative e-commerce stores to better serve their customers' needs. For instance, SenHeng Electric, MPH Bookstore, Parkson, Tesco and Isetan all created internet retailing as an additional way for their customers to shop and as a marketing strategy to reach more potential customers (Euromonitor, 2013).

### Review of Literature

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) in Paul Dorresteyn (2007), a consumer's intention to engage in actual behavior is a better predictor of actual behavior than solely their preference towards Apparels. Intention represents a person's conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a behaviour (Early and Chaiken, 1993 in Albarq&Alsughayir, 2013). However, Fisbein and Ajzen (1975) in Paul Dorresteyn (2007) later found that attitudes do in fact influence a consumer's intention, which in turn influences their behaviour. As such, Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) by combining attitudes and intentions in a quest to predict behavioural intentions (the subjective probability that one will perform some behaviour, Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, p.288, in Paul Dorresteyn, 2007). Fishbein and Ajzen's behavioural intention model

According to Chen (2009) in MojtabaNourbakhsh et al (2012), research on consumers' preference and behaviour towards online shopping has been the main focus in e-commerce recently. This may be due to an individual's preference towards consuming Apparels is one of the most important antecedents for predicting and explaining consumers' choices across products and services, including garments etc. In other words, understanding consumer preference would shed lights on preferences and behaviours of individuals. Preference as defined by Jung (1971) in

Voon et al (2011) is a psychological construct which represents an individual's selecting way to act or react in a certain way. All port (1935) in Asiegbu et al (2012) defines attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) in Asiegbu et al (2012), consumer preference is a learned predisposition to respond or react in a consistently favourable (like) or unfavourable (dislike) manner with respect to a given object/situation. In a simpler definition, Pickens (2005) defines attitude as a mind-set or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual's experience and temperament and the reactions/responds include the tri-component of feelings (emotions), thoughts (beliefs) and actions (behaviours).

All port (1935) and Wilson (2005), who theorized that the attitude-behaviour relationship was not uni-dimensional as previously thought, but multi-dimensional. Allport viewed preference as complex systems made up of the person's beliefs about the object, his feelings toward the object, and his action tendencies with respect to the object.

Peter et al. (2002) see attitude as a person's overall evaluation of a concept and it can range anywhere on the continuum from extremely negative to extremely positive. Generally, attitudes are developed from personal experiences and learning with reality, as well as from information, from friends, sales people and news media. They are also derived from both direct and indirect experiences in life. In short, consumers' perceptions of the product and service would determine their readiness to accept and adopt the product and service or otherwise.

Many previous studies have investigated the influence of attitudes in the adoption of online shopping and indicated that attitudes is important in predicting online shopping intentions or behaviours.

### **Research Design**

#### **Problem Statement**

With increasing retail space rental and other operating cost, with declining sales and financial constraints, retailers have no choice but urgently need to find alternative to increase revenue. Online store can be one of the attractive solutions. Sulaiman et al. (2008) highlighted the fact that most companies use the Internet to cut marketing costs and to improve competitiveness. However, before venturing in it, it is important for retailers to understand clearly such online shopping with reference to Apparels Setting up a portal site can be costly, time consuming, lead to wrong direction and a mere waste of many resources. When appropriate Apparels are offered through online channel, only then consumers will purchase them. One of the critical arguments here is there any way that can shed some lights on potential of online sales of a specific Apparels ? How many consumers are ready to buy online? The purpose of this study was to identify the potential of online sales on Apparels. Therefore, it is important to understand the attitudes of our consumers towards internet shopping and what are the factors that influence attitudes towards making an online shopping decision.

#### **Research Design & Method**

The research method used in this study is a descriptive type using quantitative survey method. The main purpose of the study is to find out the relationship between variables, i.e. preference versus online purchase intention, attitude versus chosen factors (demographic, perceived benefits, previous online purchase experiences, consumers' lifestyles, and perceived merchant's trustworthiness). As such, it is also a correlational research in an attempt to determine the extent of a relationship between two or more variables using statistical data and analysis. The scope is to find out the relationships between or among variables by interpreting data, looking for trends and patterns in data. It is not the aim of this study to establish cause and effect for them. As such, there is no manipulation of variables at all. Data, relationships, and distributions of variables are collected, observed and analyzed only in their natural setting.

#### **Sample and Sampling Procedures**

The targeted respondents for this study consists of internet users who may or may not know how to make an online purchase, who possibly have made one recently or are willing to make one in the future. The scope of potential respondents is looking for those who have bought Apparels at any retail store.

This study uses the convenience sampling method, i.e. by using any subjects that are available to participate in the study. In other words, it means surveying friends, consumer preference towards online shopping with reference to Apparels. Although this sampling method adopted has limitations in terms of generalisability, it is assumed that the sample may be able to represents the population of Internet users in Bangalore. This is because the sampling procedure that has been used in this study was also a purposive sampling as this study has chosen respondents who are internet users and who like garments or has experience to purchasing Apparels in online.

#### **Data Collection**

Collection to answer the research questions and objectives pertaining to online shopping on

---

Apparels. The questionnaire is available in English language for flexibility reasons especially to cater for respondents with minimal English proficiency. The questionnaires are carefully selected from previous literatures and also from survey websites (such as [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com); [www.valuedopinions.com](http://www.valuedopinions.com)) related to consumers' preference towards online shopping with reference to Apparels. Some of the questionnaires are adapted to suit the context of this survey so as to meet the requirements and objectives of the research. The survey design, questionnaire format and outline are powered by Survey Monkey. The survey can be taken online where the survey link is generated by SurveyMonkey and participants just need to click the link which will lead them to the survey.

Primary data collection method in the form of self-administrated questionnaire is chosen to collect inputs from respondents. Respondents are required to answer all questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaires are distributed to the target respondents by sending the survey link to respondents through email so that they can take the survey online and their responses will be recorded directly in the database of Survey Monkey website for analysis later. In addition, hardcopy questionnaire is also printed and distributed to potential customers to collect the primary data for analysis. database is useful as it can calculate and generate basic descriptive analysis such as percentage, mean and frequency.

### **Study Objectives**

In general, this study is to identify if there is relationship between attitude and online shopping intentions as well as the factors that influence consumers' attitude towards purchasing online Apparels as an alternative to visiting the physical shop.

The specific objectives are:

1. To examine if there is any relationship between attitude and online shopping intention with reference to Apparels.
2. To examine if demographic profiles influence consumer preference towards online marketing with reference to Apparels.
3. To examine if the perceived benefits (time, cost, conveniences &etc) of online shopping influence consumers' preference towards online shopping with reference to Apparels.
4. To examine if prior e-commerce experience affect consumers' preference towards online shopping with reference to Apparels.
5. To examine if the consumers' lifestyle affect consumers' preference towards online shopping with reference to Apparels.
6. To examine if the perceived merchant trustworthiness influence consumers' preference towards online shopping with reference to Apparels.

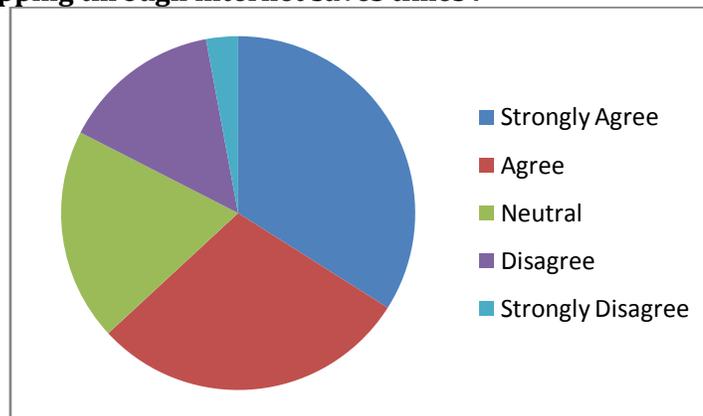
---

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation:**

---

**Response on 'Shopping through internet saves times'.**

S.No.	RESPONSE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
	Strongly Agree	35	33.9%
	Agree	30	29.1%
	Neutral	20	19.4%
	Disagree	15	14.5%
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.91%
	TOTAL	103	100%

**Response on 'Shopping through internet saves times'.****Analysis & Interpretation:**

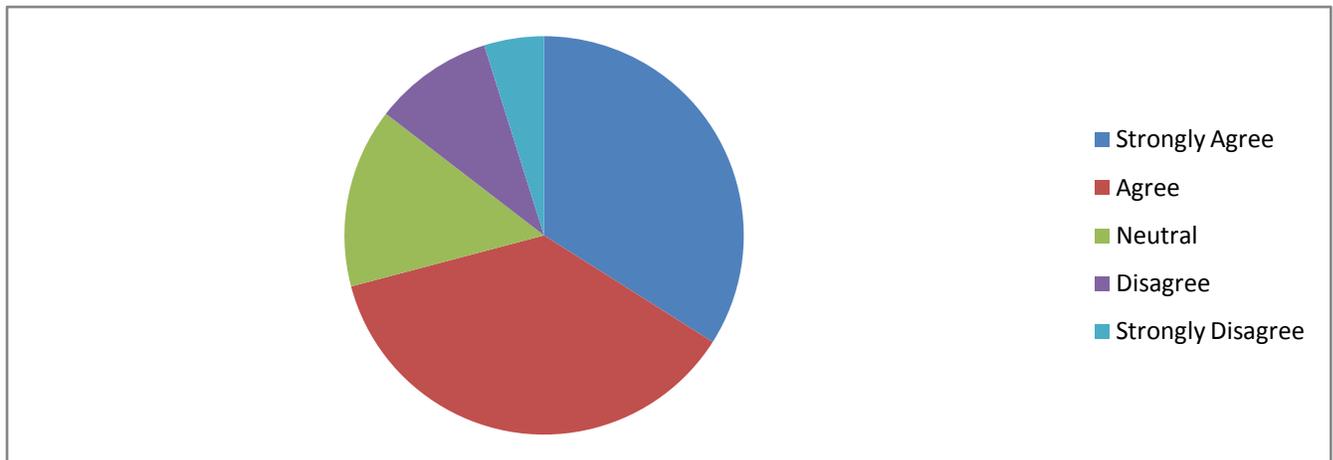
Here the sample of 103 respondents was taken for the analysis of survey. As there are 35 people are strongly agreed, 30 people are agreed, 20 people are neutral with their opinion from the above table it is clear that there are higher responses for the first option that is 35.

From the above table and graph 35% are strongly agreed and we conclude that Shopping through internet saves time

**Response on 'Difficulty in purchasing through online'**

S.No.	RESPONSE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
	Strongly Agree	35	33.9%
	Agree	38	36.9%
	Neutral	15	14.5%
	Disagree	10	9.7%
	Strongly Disagree	5	4.8%
	TOTAL	103	100%

**Response on 'Difficulty in purchasing through online'.**



### Analysis & Interpretation:

Here have taken the sample of 103 respondents for the analysis of survey. As there are 35 people are strongly agreed, 38 people are agreed, 15 people are neutral with their opinion from the above table it is clear that there are higher responses for the second option that is 38.

From the above table and graph 37% are agreed and we conclude that there is difficulty in purchasing through online.

### Findings

- 35% are strongly agreed that Shopping through internet saves time.
- 38% are agreed that Shopping can be done in any day any time.
- 40% are strongly agreed that Purchasing is difficult through online.
- 45% are agreed that On-line shopping eventually traditional shopping.
- 39% are agreed that there is risk in online shopping.
- 39% are agreed and we conclude that there is risk in online shopping.
- 35% are strongly agreed and that Online price is lower than actual prices.
- 34% are agreed that Respondents are aware with Indian casual wears and their usage.
- 37% are agreed that Respondents are aware with Indian formal wears and their usage.
- 44% are agreed that Respondents are aware with Western ethnic wears and their usage.
- 29% are strongly agreed that Respondents are aware with Western formal wears and their usage.
- 39% are strongly agreed that Delivery time can be done in mentioned time.
- 37% are strongly agreed that there is reputation for the company.
- 35% are strongly agreed that there are guarantees and warranties for online products.
- 37% are strongly agreed that there is privacy about the customer is maintained.
- 44% are agreed that products are maintained with good description.
- 37% are strongly agreed that there is security for information and online transactions.
- 39% are strongly agreed that Price is the primary that everyone considers.
- 39% are agreed that Shopping through internet saves time.
- 39% are agreed that Shopping can be done in anywhere any time.

### Suggestions

1. The online stores when presenting the categories for the store should be concise as much as possible with only top-level categories presented, because over categorization can lead to more thinking time and confusion for buyer/ Customer resulting to less sales online.

2. Online retailers can use Email Campaigning to attract new customers and draw the old customers back to the website.

3. Online stores can increase their visibility in search engine results by using SEO techniques, including picking the right keywords and creating keywordrich and search-friendly page URLs, title, content etc.

4. Online Customers confidence and trust can be gained by prominently displaying clear policies, trust certificates, security badges and contact information.

5. Lesser known online brands can instill confidence among its customers by displaying third party certification and affiliations like TRUSTe, Verisign, Trust wave, BBB etc. on their website. 6. The Website owners should enable the online shoppers to quickly find and discover products by offering robust search and navigation in the website.

7. The Online retailers should provide their customers with Live Chat option so that their simple queries can be answered, at the same time it will also promote customer retention.

8. High quality image of products from different angles and in different context along with clear description of the product, if given would increase the likelihood of customers' online purchase. 9. Customers generally look for other customers' reviews and rating before making a purchase so providing a space for customers to share their experience with others can help improve customer's confidence on the website/ e-tailer.

10. Social media can be by the online stores to encourage engagement with the brand beyond the shopping experience.

11. Allow customers to return the product if not satisfied without much hassle and ideally free of cost, communicate the same on the website to encourage online shopping.

12. Help customers to move across channels, as some may browse online but may prefer to buy in store so the online store should give options to the users to reserve online and then collect it from the local stores.

### Conclusion

This study is to identify the potential of consumer preference towards online shopping with reference to Apparels. It also investigated the relationships between attitude and behavioural intention to make a purchase on such product through online shopping. In addition, this study also examines whether demographic profile (gender, age, education level, income, geographical location), previous online shopping experience, perceived benefits, consumer preference towards online marketing with reference to Apparels, perceived merchants' trustworthiness influence consumers' preference in adopting online shopping on Apparels.

It tries to capture the inter-relationship of all the said dependent and independent variables by applying the theory of reasoned action (TRA). The result of this study indicated that consumers showed positive intention on online purchase in future. The results also revealed that attitude and intention are strongly and positively correlated which fitted well in the TRA model. The most significant factor is the perceived benefits of online shopping, followed by perceived merchant's trustworthiness, consumers' lifestyle and lastly consumers' prior e-commerce experience. Although the demographic profiles are variables which have significant effects on the attitudes as evident by various previous researches, this study found otherwise and concluded that demographic profiles are not significant at all in influencing the attitude in the context of this study. The reason for this could be it is not an expensive product and every working adults can afford it regardless of income level, age and gender as long as they like the products

### REFERENCES

---

Ajzen, I. and Fishbein, M. (1975). *Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behaviour: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Albarq, Abbas N. and Alsughayir, Abdulrahman (2013). Examining a theory of reasoned action (TRA) in internet banking using SEM among Saudi consumer. *International Journal of Marketing Practices*, Vol. 1, No. (1), 16-30, 2013. [Online]. Available: <http://www.aabri.com/OC2013Manuscripts/OC13040.pdf>. [2013, July 28].

Alreck, P. and Settle, R. (2002). The hurried consumer: time-saving perceptions of internet and catalogue shopping. *Journal of Database Marketing*, 10(1), pp. 25-35. In *Business Source Complete* (OUM digital collection).

Ana Teresa Machado (2005). *Drivers of Shopping Online: A literature Review*. [Online]. Available: [https://www.academia.edu/1194834/DRIVERS\\_OF\\_SHOPPING\\_ONLINE\\_A\\_LITERATURE](https://www.academia.edu/1194834/DRIVERS_OF_SHOPPING_ONLINE_A_LITERATURE) [2013, August 10].

Chua, P.H (Adeline), Ali.Khatibi&Hishamuddin bin Ismail (2006). *E-Commerce: A Study on Online Shopping in Malaysia*. *J. Soc. Sci.*, 13(3): 231-242 (2006) [Online]. Available: <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JSS/JSS-13-0-000-000-2006-Web/JSS-13-3-000-000-2006-Abst-Text/JSS-13-3-231-242-2006-432-Harn-Adeline-C-P/JSS-13-3-231-242-2006-432-Harn-Adeline-C-P-Text.pdf> [2013, July 30].

ComScore (2009). *State of the Internet with a focus on Asia Pacific*. [Online]. Available: [http://www.comscore.com/Press\\_Events/Presentations\\_Whitepapers/2009/State\\_of\\_the\\_Internet\\_with\\_a\\_focus\\_on\\_Asia\\_Pacific](http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Presentations_Whitepapers/2009/State_of_the_Internet_with_a_focus_on_Asia_Pacific) [2013, July 27].

Datamonitor. (2009). *Internet & Catalog Retail Industry Profile: Global*. Internet & Catalog Retail Industry Profile: Global, 1.

Delafrooz, Narges, Laily H. Paim<sup>1\*</sup>, SharifahAzizah Haron<sup>1</sup>, Samsinar M. Sidin<sup>2</sup> and Ali Khatibi<sup>3</sup> (2009). *Factors Affecting Students' Online Shopping Attitude and Purchase Intention*. PhD thesis, Universiti Putra Malaysia. [Online]. Available: [http://academicjournals.org/article/article1380535988\\_Delafrooz%20et%20al.pdf](http://academicjournals.org/article/article1380535988_Delafrooz%20et%20al.pdf) [2013, July 20].

Delafrooz, Narges (2009). *Factors Affecting Students' Online Shopping Attitude and Purchase Intention*. PhD thesis, Universiti Putra Malaysia. [Online]. Available: [http://psasir.upm.edu.my/5673/1/FEM\\_2009\\_3.pdf](http://psasir.upm.edu.my/5673/1/FEM_2009_3.pdf) [2013, July 20].

Dirk Van den Poel and WouterBuckinx (2004). *Predicting online-purchasing behaviour*; Working Paper, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Ghent University, Belgiu, 03/195. [Online]. Available: [http://econpapers.repec.org/paper/rugrugwps/03\\_2f195.htm](http://econpapers.repec.org/paper/rugrugwps/03_2f195.htm) [2013, Nov 22].

Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). "Chapter 4. The impact of attitude on behavior," in *The Psychology of Attitudes*, Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Co.

Euromonitor (2013). *Internet retailing is spurred across different categories in retailing (executive summary)*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.euromonitor.com/retailing-in-malaysia/report>. [2013, July 20].

Forsythe S, Petee T, Kim JO (2002). *Modeling Consumer Behavior in On-line Environments: Scale Development*: National Textile Center. Annual Report. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ntcresearch.org/pdf-rpts/AnRp05/S02-AC23-A5.pdf> [2013, Aug 22].

Kurnia, Sherah & Jenny Chien, Ai-Wen (2003). *The Acceptance of Online Grocery Shopping*. Department of Information Systems, The University of Melbourne, Australia.

---

[Online]. Available: [http://ecom.fov.uni-mb.si/proceedings.nsf/0/f862f4273a6fb772c1256ea1002c906e/\\$FILE/17Kurnia.pdf](http://ecom.fov.uni-mb.si/proceedings.nsf/0/f862f4273a6fb772c1256ea1002c906e/$FILE/17Kurnia.pdf) [2014, Mar 23].

Mastercard Worldwide Insights (2008). "Online shopping in Asia-Pacific – patterns, trends and future growth" [Online]. Available: [http://www.mastercard.com/us/company/en/insights/pdfs/2008/Asia\\_Pacific\\_Online\\_Shopping.pdf](http://www.mastercard.com/us/company/en/insights/pdfs/2008/Asia_Pacific_Online_Shopping.pdf) [2013, July 20].

MohdSuki, N. (2006). A descriptive investigation of Malaysian Internet user's adoption of online shopping. *Journal of Information Technology & Multimedia*, 3, pp. 127-138. [Online]. Available:

Muhammad Umar Sultan and MD NasirUddin (2011). Consumers' Attitude towards Online Shopping: Factors influencing Gotland consumers to shop online. MBA Thesis. [Online]. Available: <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:420724/FULLTEXT01.pdf> [2014, Feb 16].

- Na Li and Ping Zhang (2002). Consumer Online Shopping Attitudes & Behaviour: An Assessment of Research. Eighth Americas Conference on Information Systems [Online]. Available: