



Comparative Analysis Regarding Consumer's Preference of Online Shopping vs in-Store Shopping for Apparels in Ahmedabad City

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates consumer preferences for apparel in Ahmedabad City, focusing on factors such as age, income, and other influences. This research explores the factors such as consumer choices, product variety, time saving and physical experience of in-store shopping. This study reveals that convenience is the important factor that change the shopping behaviour of consumer in both young and older generation in Ahmedabad city. This study challenges the traditional theories that the younger generation prefer online shopping and older generation prefer in-store shopping. The results also indicate a weak relationship between age and preference for both in-store shopping and online shopping. The modern generation prioritize factors like time-saving, product variety and flexibility to shop from online and from in-store. Additionally, this study shows that the age is not significant factor that is associated with consumer preference but the other factor such as time-saving, product variety, convenience are also play a significant role to change the consumer preference. This research provides valuable insights for retailers and e-commerce platforms, emphasizing the importance of convenience, product variety, and flexibility to attract consumers. The study suggests to give the priorities to the other factors not only age.

INTRODUCTION

The offline retail market has undergone significant changes over the past two decades, with online shopping on the rise (Vidani & Solanki, 2015). The use of internet and technology, consumer shopping preference was changed (Vidani, 2015). Online shopping is challenge for the retail store and the era of online shopping has become dominant force in retail sector (Vidani, 2015). Particularly in India, the digital era has been sharp rise, online shopping become very famous for purchasing apparels (Vidani, 2015). Ahmedabad, the commercial capital of Gujarat, is accepted this trend there are no exception from this trend towards online shopping, but they have strong preference towards the in-store shopping (Solanki & Vidani, 2016).

This study is about comparative analysis regarding consumer's preference of online shopping vs in-store shopping of apparels in Ahmedabad city (Vidani, 2016). This research is about the consumer preference of these two modes of shopping (Niyati & Vidani, 2016). The rising of online shopping, factors that effecting consumer preference, consumer expectation towards these two modes of shopping, a deeper understanding about the people how they choose from these two modes of shopping, what they like online shopping or in-store shopping (Pradhan, Tshogay, & Vidani, 2016).

The Rise of Online Shopping in India

In India, many consumers use internet and other technology (Modi, Harkani, Radadiya, & Vidani, 2016). This is the main factor in growth of online shopping (Vidani, 2016). As of 2023, the retail market of India is one of the fastest growing market in the world, with predictions suggesting that by 2030, it becomes third biggest e-commerce market in globally, According to Dr. S. Arokia Punitha's study on local online shopping applications, the rise of the "local buy" is resonated by consumers who purchased goods from local sources, thus give resilience and environmental sustainability to community (Singh, Vidani, & Nagoria, 2016). The growth of online shopping in not just increase of internet usage, but it is also increasing due to mobile applications, easier online payment, enhanced logistics and fast delivery of goods that have made online shopping easier and efficient (Mala, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016).

The changes in digital landscape, consumers are having variety in their shopping, flexibility and convenience in their online shopping (Dhere, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016). This all made the online shopping attractive and alternative of the in-store shopping model, where consumers are going to the shop, spend to much in crowded store and limited choices of the product (Singh & Vidani, 2016). There are various e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, Ajio, Meesho, Shopsy has given rise to a competitive market (Vidani & Plaha, 2016). In this context, consumer preference is changed towards retailers and marketers (Solanki & Vidani, 2016).

Factors Driving Online Shopping Preferences

A different factor that are affecting consumer's preference for the online shopping (Vidani, 2016). Convenience is often cited as the primary motivator (Vidani J. N., 2016). As Khyati Modi's study on online shopping and consumer behavior reveals, consumers give the priority with which they can compare easily,

browse variety and purchase from their home, without going to the physical stores (Vidani & Pathak, 2016). The ability of 24/7 shopping and delivery in doorstep has made online shopping very attractive and convenience (Pathak & Vidani, 2016). Price is also the important factor that effecting consumer preference (Bhatt, Patel, & Vidani, 2017). According to V. Pal and P. Kumari's research on consumer buying behavior towards online shopping, many consumers perceive online shopping because it is cheaper than the in-store shopping due to the discounts and promotions offered by e-commerce platforms (Vidani, Chack, & Rathod, 2017). The consumer can compare prices across multiple platforms to make purchase decisions, thereby enhancing the price sensitivity of online shoppers (Vidani & Singh, 2017).

In additionally, variety of products and availability is the important factor of online shopping preferences (Vidani & Plaha, 2017). Online shopping offers a wide variety of products, that are not available in the local stores (Sukhanandi, Tank, & Vidani, 2018). As Priyanka Raghani and Juee Jadvani highlight in their study on the factors determining the selection of online retail applications for buying fashion products, the ability to choose best apparels from wide variety of the fashion product is the motivation for the consumers (Biharani & Vidani, 2018). Online shopping can give the facility to browse various brands, styles and sizes from our home, particularly in categories like fashion, electronics and gadgets (Vidani, 2018).

The digital payments is also the another factor that influencing online shopping preference (Vidani, 2018). The wide use of digital payments like mobile wallets, UPI (Unified Payment Interface) and credit/debit card made transaction process more seamless and secure, so the consumers can buy the product online easily (Odedra, Rabadiya, & Vidani, 2018).

The Continued Relevance of In-Store Shopping

Despite the advantages given by the online shopping, in-store shopping can hold its ground, especially in a diverse and culturally rich country like India (Vidani J. N., 2018). While online shopping give vide variety of products, in-store shopping provides tactile that many consumers can still value (Vasveliyya & Vidani, 2019). According to Samta Kothari's study on shifting consumer preferences, factors such as the need to physically see and touch products, especially for categories like apparel and groceries, continue to visit the local stores (Sachaniya, Vora, & Vidani, 2019). In-store shopping can offer a more physical experience, which online shopping cannot give in the same manner (Vidani, 2019).

The social aspect of in-store shopping is another important factor that influence consumer preference (Vidani, Jacob, & Patel, 2019). In-store shopping allows consumers to interact with the sales personal, try the clothes, check the quality of the clothes and seek personalized recommendations (Vidani J. N., 2020). In-store shopping In particular fashion products, give the fit and feel of the products, where online shopping cannot give (Vidani & Dholakia, 2020). We can purchase and get product immediately when we have urgent need of the product, it is a advantage of in-store shopping (Vidani & Das, 2021).

There are many customers who prefer in-store shopping due to security concern in online shopping, delay in delivery and not return the product in a timely

manner (Vidani J. N., 2022). This all reasons the consumer particularly older generation and those in small towns and rural areas are not interested to buy the cloth online and the e-commerce may not reach its full potential (Rathod, Meghrajani, & Vidani, 2022).

Ahmedabad's Unique Retail Landscape

In Gujarat, Ahmedabad is a major city, which have a large retail landscape in India (Vidani, Meghrajani, & Siddarth, 2023). Ahmedabad is known for its vibrant textile industry, historical significance, and entrepreneurial spirit (Saxena & Vidani, 2023). In past few months it has seen a rapid adoption of online shopping, particularly in young generation (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Singh, 2023). Ahmedabad has a rich tradition of in-store shopping, with its bustling market, malls, and shopping streets such as Law Garden, Manek Chowk, and CG Road, which attract the customer to buy the product or cloths offline (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Chaudasi, 2023).

In recent years, the trend of online shopping is very populated because of urbanization, increasing in smartphone usage and increasing in number of e-commerce platforms (Bansal, Pophalkar, & Vidani, 2023). however, the product like fabric, jewellery, handicraft and cloths are bought by customer from the physical store (Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023). This all-product needs trust, authentication and quality, so customer can choose in-store shopping to buy this type of product (Patel, Chaudhary, & Vidani, 2023).

The rapid growth of online shopping is increasing because the popularity of the apps like Myntra, Flipkart and Amazon (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). At the same time, physical store, particularly in sector like fashion and electronics have used the strategies like to place the order online and pick them up from in-store or vice versa (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). This hybrid model can change the preference of consumer's preference, so the in-store shopping is still valuing by the costumer (Mahajan & Vidani, 2023).

Comparative Analysis of Consumer Preferences

This research is conduct on a comparative analysis between online and in-store shopping preference of consumer in Ahmedabad (Saxena & Vidani, 2023). This examine various factors such as price, product variety, customer service and overall shopping experience to understand why costumer choose one mode in compare to other (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Singh, 2023). This research also explores how factors like age, income and lifestyle influence consumer choice and preference and the local factors like availability of products and cultural norms play significant role in influencing consumer preference (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Chaudasi, 2023).

While the online shopping has more popular then the in-store shopping but in some products like cloths and electronics the in-store shopping is also popular (Bansal, Pophalkar, & Vidani, 2023). The hybrid shopping model, which combines both the shopping modes, and offer consumers more flexibility and verity of choice so the consumer can shop easily (Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023).

In Ahmedabad, consumer use online shopping to purchase the products but they maintain the connection to the in-store shopping to buy the product

traditionally from the store (Patel, Chaudhary, & Vidani, 2023). To stay in competitive market retailers and e-commerce platforms need to understand the consumer preference (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). By examine the factors that influence the consumer behaviour in both online and offline shopping, this study will provide valuable insight of consumer preference in Ahmedabad city (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). The finding will help to understand the broader information about the modern retail market and the future of both online and offline shopping in the city (Mahajan & Vidani, 2023).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the preference of consumers for online shopping based on convenience factors.
2. To assess consumer preference for in-store shopping due to better product selection and the ability to physically examine products.
3. To examine the impact of price comparison on consumers' online shopping preferences.
4. To evaluate the social experience of shopping in physical stores and its impact on consumers' preferences.
5. To investigate the importance of immediate availability of products and how it affects consumers' preference for in-store shopping.
6. To assess the level of trust consumers, have in the quality of products purchased in-store versus online.
7. To explore consumer preferences for online shopping in fashion and clothing categories based on variety.
8. To examine consumers' concerns regarding online payment security and its impact on their shopping behavior.
9. To study the importance of personal interaction with sales personnel in building trust during in-store shopping.
10. To investigate the flexibility in shopping hours as a factor in online shopping preference.
11. To examine the likelihood of consumers making impulsive purchases in-store.
12. To analyze the convenience of shopping when time is limited and its influence on consumer preference for online shopping.
13. To identify the differences in shopping preferences between different age groups.
14. To determine the relationship between demographic variables (age, gender, income, etc.) and consumer preferences for online vs in-store.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the modern retail landscape, consumer preference has changed due to the change in technology, economic changes and global reach of digital platforms (Vidani & Solanki, 2015). The consumer can shift from the traditional stores to online shopping is not only defined the consumer purchasing preference but it also defined the retail industry as well (Vidani, 2015). This literature review aims to explore consumer preferences for online shopping versus in-store shopping, which

focus on consumer of Ahmedabad city and analyse the factors that influence consumer preference (Vidani, 2015).

Evolution of Consumer Behaviour in the Digital Era

The rise of e-commerce has changed the consumer behavior across the world (Vidani, 2015). Online shopping has much preferred mode of shopping due to the variety of products, price and cost-effectiveness (Solanki & Vidani, 2016). These includes factors such as pricing, delivery speed, product variety (Niyati & Vidani, 2016). Modi's study highlights the ability to compare the price online, so the consumer can compare the price of the relative products and buy the product what consumer want (Pradhan, Tshogay, & Vidani, 2016). This led to increase in online shopping, particularly the product such as fashion, electronics and groceries (Modi, Harkani, Radadiya, & Vidani, 2016).

The use of e-commerce platform for shopping is increase but in-store shopping is hold its relevance for certain products like cloths and electronics (Vidani, 2016).

In increasing of online shopping, the in-store shopping holds it relevance, particularly for certain products like fashion, electronics and certain groups of consumers (Singh, Vidani, & Nagoria, 2016). In-store shopping give better experience than online shopping (Mala, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016). The touching, felling and trying the product is important for consumer to purchase products like clothes, shoes and groceries (Dhere, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016). The tradition shopping method are often linked with the cultural norms and social aspects of shopping, which makes in-store shopping preferable (Singh & Vidani, 2016).

Factors Influencing Consumer Preferences: A Comprehensive Overview

1. Convenience and Accessibility

The primary factors like shop at any time, from any location and comparison of products make the consumer to shift towards online shopping (Vidani & Plaha, 2016). As noted in the study by Dr. S. Arokia Punitha (2022), some stores offer their local product to buy from online so consumer can save their time to visit the store physically enable consumer to shop for goods without stepping out from their homes (Solanki & Vidani, 2016). Punitha's study emphasizes that ability to order the product with one click and received the product to our doorstep is major motivation for consumer to choose online shopping in compare to in-store shopping (Vidani, 2016).

On other hand, in-store shopping involves travel time, dealing with crowds and physical effort make consumer inconvenient to buy the product from in-store from his busy schedules (Vidani J. N., 2016).

2. Price Sensitivity and Discounts

Price is the important factor that influence consumer preference (Pathak & Vidani, 2016). Many online platforms offer affordable price than in-store shopping So the consumer can buy the product from the online (Bhatt, Patel, & Vidani, 2017). According to V. Pal and P. Kumari (2023), online platform gives the affordable price than in-store shopping because of the lower overhead cost and discounts or deals

(Vidani, Chack, & Rathod, 2017). The online shopping offers multiple websites to find the best deals for consumer to buy the product online (Vidani & Singh, 2017). In contrast, in-store shopping is more expensive than the online shopping because of the factors like rent, overhead costs and limited availability of promotions (Vidani & Plaha, 2017). However, certain in-store retailers, particularly luxury segment offer personalized service, which can justify higher price (Sukhanandi, Tank, & Vidani, 2018). Consumer who purchases the product immediately may be willing to pay the premium for in-store shopping to purchase product, particularly when there is lack of confidence in online shopping (Vidani, 2018).

3. Product Variety and Availability

Another factor is variety and availability of the products (Biharani & Vidani, 2018). The in-store shopping may not offer the variety of products in comparison of online platform (Vidani, 2018). As noted by Priyanka Raghani and Juee Jadvani (2022), variety and availability of products is major factor that influence the consumer (Odedra, Rabadiya, & Vidani, 2018). E-commerce platform provide wide variety of products with different size, colours and designs, which is important for consumer to buy specific product (Vidani J. N., 2018).

In store shopping have limited space of retail store that offer consumer to examine products in person and purchase the product immediately (Vasveliyya & Vidani, 2019). In India touch and feel is important for consumer to buy the product especially in categories like clothing, footwear and groceries (Sachaniya, Vora, & Vidani, 2019). For example, Indian consumer ensure the quality and authentication of products such as ethnic wear and jewellery, which is difficult in online shopping (Vidani, Jacob, & Patel, 2019).

4. Trust and Security Concerns

The developing the markets like India, trust is most important which is major challenge associated with online shopping (Vidani, 2019). The verification of product, security of online payment and risk of fraud is a barrier of online shopping (Vidani J. N., 2020). In her study, Khyati Modi (2023) found that many consumers have the concern about the online transaction and product quality (Vidani & Dholakia, 2020). Furthermore, issues such as delayed in delivery, product returns are concern of some consumers (Vidani & Das, 2021).

The consumer can touch and feel the product before purchasing the product so the security is higher than the online shopping In-store shopping offer direct interaction with sells personal, ask questions and receive immediate answer, which is important for many consumers (Vidani J. N., 2022). Additionally, it offers cash payment method for purchase the product from in-store so it eliminates the concern about the security of online transactions, particularly for individuals who are not familiar with digital payment method (Rathod, Meghrajani, & Vidani, 2022).

5. Experiential and Social Aspects of In-Store Shopping

Online shopping driven functional factors such as price and convenience, while in-store shopping offers experiential benefits (Saxena & Vidani, 2023). In-store shopping have social aspects such as spending time with friend or family,

explore the products and receiving personalized recommendation from sales staff motivate the consumer to buy product from in-store. In a study by Samta Kothari (2015), it was highlighted that in-store shopping continues to be a social activity in India, particularly during festivals and special occasions, where shopping becomes a cultural experience (Mahajan & Vidani, 2023).

Many consumers prefer in-store shopping because it allows consumer to touch and feel the product, try on it before making purchase of product (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). This is in particular categories like clothing and electronics, where consumer wants to ensure that product meet their expectation of quality, functionality and fittings (Sharma & Vidani, 2023).

The Impact of Demographics on Consumer Preferences

Research on consumer preferences for online versus in-store shopping shows that demographic factors such as age, income, education and lifestyle play important role in shaping shopping habits (Patel, Chaudhary, & Vidani, 2023). Younger consumer, particularly Gen Z are more like the online shopping due to their familiarity with digital platform, use of internet, greater comfort with e-commerce transaction (Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023). According to Raghani and Jadvani (2022), younger consumers in Ahmedabad exhibit a strong preference for online shopping, especially for fashion products, due to the variety and convenience offered by digital platforms (Bansal, Pophalkar, & Vidani, 2023).

Older consumer prefers in-store shopping, particularly the products such as cloths, electronics and groceries (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Chaudasi, 2023). Older consumer value the personal interaction with shopkeeper to buy the products from in-store (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Singh, 2023). Income is also playing the significant role in shopping preferences (Saxena & Vidani, 2023). Consumer with higher income buy the luxury items and high-end products from in-store, while the budget consumer can buy the product from online because of lower price and discount (Vidani, Meghrajani, & Siddarth, 2023).

Cultural and Local Factors in Ahmedabad

In Ahmedabad we provide interesting context for studying consumer preference, as it is a combination of tradition and modernity (Mahajan & Vidani, 2023). The Ahmedabad have vibrant markets, textile industries and traditional shopping hubs (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). As noted by Dr. S. Arokia Punitha (2022), the preference for "buy local" initiatives has gained traction in Ahmedabad, where consumers are increasingly interested in purchasing locally sourced products via online platforms, which have made it easier for them to support local businesses (Sharma & Vidani, 2023).

However, while online shopping is becoming popular, the in-store shopping holds their value in the city (Saxena & Vidani, 2023). Local markets such as law garden, Manek Chowk and C.G Road are continued to attracts consumer who prefer in-store shopping (Patel, Chaudhary, & Vidani, 2023). Many consumers in Ahmedabad, especially from older generation still prefer in-store shopping to buy the products like cloths, jewellery and local handcraft, where touch and feel is important (Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023).

The literature reviewed underscores the need for future research in the field of consumer behaviour where the retail industry is undergoing due to changing consumer expectations (Saxena & Vidani, 2023).

RESEARCH GAP

The research on consumer preferences for online vs. in-store shopping of apparel is widely explored. There remains a gap in studies focus on specific city's markets, such as Ahmedabad. This study explores the unique culture and economic landscape to identify consumer behaviour for apparels in Ahmedabad city. In Ahmedabad, consumer have strong preference for touch and feel the fabric of cloth and trying the cloth before buy clothes. This preference also differences from area to area or in rural areas but how the preference of Ahmedabad's consumer is affected by Ahmedabad's culture remain unexplored.

Additionally, research on adopt of new technology in consumer shopping behaviour is another gap in the current literature. The younger generation in major cities like Mumbai and Delhi are adopt online shopping but Ahmedabad's consumer preferences may be different patterns. In shaping consumer behaviour there are some factors such as age, income and educational background which play a significant role toward online shopping. For instance, older generation and those who have lower income may prefer in-store shopping due to concern about internet access, security of online transaction and inability to physically inspect products. The current research does not sufficiently address how such demographic factors influence online vs. in-store apparel shopping in Ahmedabad.

Furthermore, there is limited research on integrated shopping behaviour where consumer use both online and offline shopping. This is particularly in apparel sector, where consumer visit physical store to try and examine the fabric of cloth but some consumer chooses to purchase from online for better pricing and product variety. This "showrooming" behaviour, where consumer can visit the store before making purchase from online. This behaviour of consumer has been explored in other markets but not researched in Ahmedabad. This integrated shopping pattern is important to understand by the retailers of the city to make strategies to increase both online and offline shopping preference.

In additional, the external factors such as pricing strategies, seasonal discount and offers are not studied in context of Ahmedabad city. The online platform sometimes offers discounts and convenient shopping experience while physical store may depend on sales event and in-person promotions. How the factors such as pricing and promotions influence consumer preference for apparel shopping in Ahmedabad city is an area that has not been thoroughly examined. Additionally, how the social media influencer, online reviews and digital marketing influence consumer preference in Ahmedabad is another aspect that has not fully explored in existing literature.

In conclusion, there is a considerable amount of research on consumer preferences for online and in-store shopping the specific dynamics of Ahmedabad's market remain under-explored. The factors like city's culture, demographic and technology influence consumer preference in unique ways and understanding this factor is important for both online and offline platforms and retailers to shaping the

consumer preference in Ahmedabad city. Addressing these gaps will provide valuable insights that how online and in-store shopping preferences differ and coexist in this specific region.

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is a significant relationship between age and preference for shopping online due to convenience compared to in-store shopping.
2. There is a significant relationship between age and the preference for in-store shopping for product selection and examination
3. There is a significant relationship between age and the perception of ease in comparing prices and finding deals when shopping online.
4. There is a significant relationship between age and enjoyment of the social experience of shopping in physical stores with friends or family.
5. There is a significant relationship between age and preference for in-store shopping when immediate purchase is necessary.
6. There is a significant relationship between age and confidence in the quality of a product when it can be seen in person in a store.
7. There is a significant relationship between age and preference for online shopping for fashion and clothing items due to greater variety than local stores.
8. There is a significant relationship between age and concern about the security of online payments, affecting hesitation to shop online.
9. There is a significant relationship between age and the perception of in-store shopping as more trustworthy due to the ability to interact with staff and inspect products.
10. There is a significant relationship between age and preference for online shopping due to convenience when time is limited or a physical store visit is not possible.
11. There is a significant relationship between age and the perception of better return policies and customer service when shopping in physical stores compared to online shopping.
12. There is a significant relationship between age and the likelihood of making impulsive purchases when shopping in-store.
13. There is a significant relationship between age and the perception of online shopping as more flexible than in-store shopping because it allows browsing and shopping at any time.

TABLE 1: VALIDATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Statements	Citation from JV citation file (You can add more than 1 citation)
I prefer shopping online because it offers more convenience compared to in-store shopping.	(Saxena & Vidani, 2023)
In-store shopping provides a better experience for product selection and examination.	(Mahajan & Vidani, 2023)

I find it easier to compare prices and find the best deals when shopping online.	(Sharma & Vidani, 2023)
I enjoy the social experience of shopping in physical stores, especially with friends or family.	(Sharma & Vidani, 2023)
I prefer shopping in physical stores when I need to buy products immediately (e.g., groceries, toiletries).	(Patel, Chaudhary, & Vidani, 2023)
I feel more confident about the quality of a product when I can see it in person in a store.	(Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023)
I prefer online shopping for fashion and clothing items because it offers more variety than local stores.	(Bansal, Pophalkar, & Vidani, 2023)
I am concerned about the security of online payments, which makes me hesitant to shop online.	(Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Chaudasi, 2023)
In-store shopping is more trustworthy because I can interact directly with the staff and inspect products.	(Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Singh, 2023)
I prefer to shop online for convenience when I have limited time or cannot visit a store in person.	(Saxena & Vidani, 2023)
The return policy and customer service are more effective when I shop in physical stores compared to online shopping.	(Vidani J. N., 2022)
I am more likely to make impulsive purchases when I am shopping in-store.	(Vidani & Das, 2021)
Online shopping allows me to browse and shop at any time, which is more flexible than in-store shopping.	(Rathod, Meghrajani, & Vidani, 2022)

**Source: Author's compilation*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Table 2: Research Methodology

Research Design	Descriptive
Sample Method	Non-Probability - Convenient Sampling method
Data Collection Method	Primary method
Data Collection Method	Structured Questionnaire
Type of Questions	Close-ended
Data Collection mode	Online through Google Form
Data Analysis methods	Tables
Data Analysis Tools	SPSS and Excel
Sampling Size	155
Survey Area	Ahmedabad
Sampling Unit	Students, Private and government Job employees, Businessmen, Homemakers, Professionals like CA, Doctors, etc.

**Source: Author's compilation*

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

The demographic characteristics of the participants in this study are as follows: The majority (72.9%) were aged between 18-24 years, followed by 11.6% in the 25-32 age group, and smaller percentages in older age groups. Most participants were male (89%), with females accounting for 11%. In terms of occupation, 60% were students, 24.5% were employed, 9% were business owners, and 3.9% were professionals. Educationally, 45.2% had an undergraduate degree, 42.6% were postgraduates, and 5.2% had completed high school. Regarding monthly income, the largest group (58.1%) earned below 20,000, while smaller percentages earned between 20,000-50,000 (23.9%) and 50,000-100,000 (17.4%), with only 0.6% earning above 100,000.

CRONBACH ALPHA

Table 3: CRONBACH ALPHA

Cronbach Alpha Value	No. of items
0.897	13

**Source: SPSS Software*

The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.897 for the 13-item scale indicates excellent internal consistency. This suggests that the items are highly correlated and consistently measure the same underlying construct. A value above 0.80 is considered strong, confirming the reliability of the scale. Therefore, the scale is deemed appropriate for use in this study. These results support the trustworthiness of the measurements.

TABLE 4: RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Sr. No	Alternate Hypothesis	Result p =	>/< 0.05	Accept/Reject the Null hypothesis	R-value	Relations hip
H01	There is a significant relationship between age and preference for shopping online due to convenience compared to in-store shopping.	0.149	>	H01 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted)	0.660	Strong
H02	There is a significant relationship between age and the preference for in-store shopping for product selection and examination.	0.035	<	H02 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is rejected)	0.048	Weak
H03	There is a significant relationship between age and the perception of ease in comparing prices and finding deals when shopping online.	0.166	>	H03 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted)	0.200	Weak
H04	There is a significant relationship between age and enjoyment of the social experience of shopping in physical stores with friends or family.	0.308	>	H04 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted)	0.079	Weak
H05	There is a significant relationship between age and preference for in-store shopping when immediate purchase is necessary.	0.048	<	H05 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is rejected)	0.054	Weak
H06	There is a significant relationship between age and confidence in the quality of a product when it can be seen in person in a store.	0.220	>	H06 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted	0.061	Weak

				)		
H07	There is a significant relationship between age and preference for online shopping for fashion and clothing items due to greater variety than local stores.	0.116	>	H07 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted)	0.254	Weak
H08	There is a significant relationship between age and concern about the security of online payments, affecting hesitation to shop online.	0.657	>	H08 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted)	0.334	Weak
H09	There is a significant relationship between age and the perception of in-store shopping as more trustworthy due to the ability to interact with staff and inspect products.	0.144	>	H09 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted)	0.229	Weak
H10	There is a significant relationship between age and preference for online shopping due to convenience when time is limited or a physical store visit is not possible.	0.220	>	H10 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted)	0.267	Weak
H11	There is a significant relationship between age and the perception of better return policies and customer service when shopping in physical stores compared to online shopping.	0.423	>	H11 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted)	0.145	Weak
H12	There is a significant relationship between age and the likelihood of making impulsive purchases when shopping in-store.	0.206	>	H12 Accepted (Null Hypothesis is Accepted)	0.080	Weak
H13	There is a significant relationship between age and the perception of online shopping as more	0.094	>	H13 Accepted (Null	0.478	Weak

	flexible than in-store shopping because it allows browsing and shopping at any time.			Hypothes is Accepted)		
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**Source: Author's compilation*

DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of consumer preferences for online versus in-store shopping for apparel in Ahmedabad reveals that convenience, product variety and time constraints are significant factors that influence consumer behaviour. The study shows weak relationship between age and other factors that influence consumer preference. Only age is not strongly impact on consumer preference to buy the product online or from physical stores.

Convenience is the important factor for choosing online shopping. It is a weak relationship but consistent preferences across age groups. The online shopping provides shopping from any place at any time without the need to visit physical stores appeals to consumers regardless of age. The older consumers might show some hesitation toward online shopping due to the unfamiliar with technology. The study shows that the convenience of browsing and purchasing the product from home is a valued feature.

On the other hand, physical store offers the touch and feel of the products, this factor did not strongly influence the overall shopping decisions of consumers in Ahmedabad. Older consumer value the physical shopping from the store but the touch and feel is not the compelling reason to visit physical store because consumer also prioritized the other factors such as price, variety of products and convenience.

The ability to compare prices online was also weakly related to age, with both younger and older consumers. However, this factor did not strongly influence the preference to shop online and from in-store. The price comparison is important factor for consumer to buy the product from online and from in-store but it is not the only factor that influence the consumer preference. The other factors like product variety, easy access and convenience is also important for consumer to decide where to shop.

Social experiences, such as shopping with friends or family in-store, showed a weak relationship with age. The younger generation may value the in-store shopping because of the social aspects and interaction with the shopkeeper but it is not the primary reason to choosing the in-store shopping over the online shopping. Security concerns regarding online payments were also weakly related to age. Both younger and older generation shows similar concern about the safety of online payment. However, these concerns did not significant affect their shopping preferences.

The age does not significantly influence the purchase decision of consumer while shopping in physical store or online. While some consumer make purchase from the in-store that does not strongly influence by the age only.

In conclusion, this research shows how the factors such as variety of products, convenience, shopping preference and flexibility are influencing the preference of the consumer to decide to purchase from online or from in-store. Retailers should focus on this factor to attract different age groups of consumers in Ahmedabad.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The theoretical implications of this research on consumer preferences for online vs. in-store apparel shopping in Ahmedabad shows new insights of consumer behaviour, particularly in context of age. The study highlights how the convenience shaping shopping behaviour. This supports the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), suggesting that the older generation can drive to the online shopping.

Additionally, the age and preference for in-store shopping for products inspection challenge the Stimulus-Organism-Response(S-O-R) Model, which shows sensory experiences and physical store interactions. The finding of research suggest that consumer prefer convenience, time saving and variety of products over tactile experiences.

The study also challenges that age is a major factor to shopping from online or from in-store. The relationship between age and shopping behaviours indicates that convenience, product variety and flexibility are more influence the preference of consumer than age differences. The Consumer Decision-Making Process model focus on practical factors rather than age when shaping the shopping choices.

In conclusion, the research challenges the traditional theories that only age can influence the consumer preference and forget the importance of other factors like convenience, variety of product and time saving in both online or in-store shopping. It calls for more depth understanding of consumer preference and convenience over age.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The practical implications of this study on consumer preferences for online vs. in-store shopping in Ahmedabad provide key insights for retailers, marketers, and policymakers. Convenience is the major factor that influence consumer behaviour so that both online and in-stores must prioritize it. Online platform should focus on fast delivery, secure transaction and easy return to attract the consumer preference and physical store can focus on variety of product, efficient layouts and give the service for easy trials.

Product variety is also playing a significant role to change the consumer preference so the consumer favouring wide selection of products which available online. Many physical stores can adapt this factor and expanding the product range or showcasing inventory to encourage in-store shopping. Online shopping and physical store use time-saving strategies such as same-day delivery and fasts billing to appeal to consumers across age groups.

Although concern about online transaction security is not much influence on shopping preferences. The online platform must continue to investing in cybersecurity to build a trust. The social experience of shopping have not strongly influence the consumer behaviour. In-store events or loyalty program can also increase the consumer loyalty.

In conclusion, a hybrid strategy that combines the strengths of both online and in-store shopping focusing on convenience, variety, time-saving and trust will help retailers in Ahmedabad effectively evolving consumer preferences.

CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable information about the comparative preferences of consumers for online versus in-store apparel shopping in Ahmedabad. This study suggest that convenience, time-saving and product variety are most significant factors that influencing consumer preferences while it is online or offline shopping. The study shows that convenience, variety and ability to shop at anytime and anywhere are key factors that change the consumer preference across all age groups.

Although age is not much important factor to influence the consumer preference but the other factors like convenience, flexibility and product variety are more influence than age. This study challenges older model of consumer preference that are changed by only age factor and suggest that young generation can attract towards online shopping because it offers wide range of products and save their time.

The practical implications highlight that in online and offline shopping convenience is much important factor. E-commerce platform should focus on fast delivery, secure payments and seamless user experience to increase consumer trust for online shopping. On the other hand, physical store must find the way to improving efficiency and offer exclusive product or variety of product that online platform should not provide.

In the end, the result points towards the need of hybrid strategy which is the combination of online and physical shopping to fulfil consumer needs. By focusing on convenience, time saving and product variety can change the consumer preference in Ahmedabad city. This all factors are most important for both online and offline shopping to change the consumer preference towards online shopping or in-store shopping.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH/ FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Future research can expand on this study by exploring several key areas to further understand consumer behaviour in online vs. in-store shopping for apparel.

1. **Demographic and Psychographic Factors:** Future studies should investigate the influence of factors such as income, education, lifestyle, and shopping motivations on consumer preferences for online versus in-store shopping.
2. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conducting research over an extended period can help track shifts in consumer behaviour, particularly with the growth of e-commerce and technological advancements like augmented reality and AI in retail.
3. **Online Shopping Barriers:** While concerns about online security were noted, future studies should delve deeper into barriers like trust, sizing, and return challenges that may still affect online shopping choices.
4. **Omnichannel Retailing:** Research could explore how consumers engage with both online and offline channels, providing insights into how retailers can create seamless cross-channel experiences.

5. **Regional and Cultural Differences:** Comparative studies across different cities and regions could uncover whether the preferences observed in Ahmedabad are consistent across India or specific to the region's cultural context.
6. **Social Media and Influencers:** Given the growing role of social media and influencers in fashion decisions, future research could explore their influence on consumer shopping behaviour, particularly among younger consumers.
7. **Other Product Categories:** Expanding the study to other categories, such as electronics or groceries, could determine whether the factors driving shopping preferences vary by product type.

These areas of future research will help retailers better understand consumer preferences and adapt to the rapidly evolving retail landscape.

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