Impacts and Changing Customer Preferences

through Technological Advancements towards

Online Shopping and In-Store Shopping

Srisongruk Prohmvitak[1][*]

[1] Rangsit University International College, Rangsit University, Thailand

[*] Corresponding author: E-mail: srisongruk.p@rsu.ac.th

Abstract

Shopping as an activity and as part of a purchasing behaviour in the marketing sphere has been used to describe human actions for many years, and it has evolved tremendously with the development of the internet. Due to the internet and technological changes, coupled with technological improvements, online shopping has become a popular approach for everyone. Online purchasing has increased considerably in recent years as it allows sellers to reach customers more

quickly, easily, and affordably. According to several previous researches, certain high-touch items, those items which need customers to physically connect with them by touch, scent, or experiencing them, still require offline purchasing since these experiences cannot be created online.

Keywords: Online Shopping, In-Store Shopping, Customer Purchasing Behaviour, Shopping Behaviour, Customer Preferences

Introduction

The digital age's fast technology breakthroughs have caused a substantial shift in the way customers interact with the retail sector. Online shopping is rapidly expanding in order to compete with traditional purchasing. Consumers now value the convenience of buying online from the comfort of their homes, and appreciate the expansion of e-commerce platforms, while conventional brick-and-mortar establishments continue to provide a tactile shopping experience. Furthermore, an unexpected epidemic of COVID-19 occurred in year 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial influence on people's lives and behaviour, resulting in worldwide health and economic issues owing to decreased economic activity and increased unemployment. Consumers have adapted their habits to social separation in order to protect themselves from the disease resulting in a significant reliance on digital platforms. As a result of the epidemic, many people have reconsidered their purchasing habits and begun to experiment with alternative methods. Customers who formerly rejected online retail, home delivery, and

cashless payments, for instance, have now accepted these activities. Through these developments, retail managers and marketers must constantly observe the evolving consumer behaviour to evaluate whether or not to modify their business strategies. People are utilizing the internet to purchase and do business more often than ever before. Online purchasing has grown in popularity in the twenty-first century where thousands of possibilities will be offered if only one word is clicked. Then customers can simply choose your selection and press a key on the keyboard to obtain the items immediately.   It has a lot of appeal since convenience is highly valued in today's culture. On the other hand, many purchasers prefer to make offline transactions so they may inspect the item in person and take ownership of it immediately.

Online Shopping and In-Store Shopping Purchasing Behaviour

Whereby investigating the linkage between gender, age and customer behaviour in various retail categories, we may get useful and essential insights that can assist businesses in shaping their marketing strategies, optimizing their offers, and closing the gap between in-store and online purchasing experiences.

Females purchase online more frequently than men, thus online businesses should pay greater attention to the female market, making certain that the customer is never prompted for personal information can assist to improve the perceived privacy of customer information.

Age has a significant impact on customers' purchasing behaviors and preferences. Younger generations, such as Millennials and Gen Z, who grew up

during the digital revolution, have a stronger preference for online shopping. Their tech-savvy lifestyles complement the ease, wide selection of products, and tailored suggestions offered by online platforms. Older generations, such as Baby Boomers and Generation X, may favour in-store shopping owing to their familiarity with conventional retail and a need for a hands-on experience before making a purchase.

Consumer preferences might vary depending on the product type. Electronics, for example, may witness increased online sales due to the convenience of comparing product characteristics and costs. Fashion consumers, on the other hand, may prefer in-store encounters to physically try on clothes products and obtain individualized style guidance. Groceries, as a distinct category, have seen an increase in online purchasing, driven by the convenience of home delivery and time-saving benefits. Understanding the interaction between age, nationality, and segment-specific purchase behavior is critical for firms looking to successfully personalize their marketing strategy. Retailers may fine-tune their online and in-store services to satisfy the wants and expectations of their broad client base by identifying the intricacies that affect consumer choices.

Changing Customer Preferences towards Online Shopping

Consumers may explore and buy a variety of items with only a few clicks, decreasing the need to visit physical stores. The primary advantage of internet purchasing is its unparalleled ease (Jiang, et.al., 2013). Online shopping caters to those who are busy or have restricted mobility, providing them access to items that

they may not be able to find locally. Purchasing in-store, on the other hand, delivers a more tactile experience than internet purchasing. Many customers appreciate the chance to physically see, touch, and sample the product before making a purchase. When it comes to products such as fashion, furniture, or electronics, where personal preferences are essential, the sensory experience may be quite significant.

Online retailers, as opposed to traditional stores where sales people may exert pressure on shoppers to make a purchase, allow customers to explore and shop without feeling pressured. Customers may shop without having to leave their homes or offices. Moreover, online shopping allows you to purchase products while being at home or at work; whereas, transactions can be easily cancelled. In addition, online shopping saves time by eliminating the need to stand in line at cash registers. Customers may compare different models based on features, finish products and pricing at online stores. Online price comparisons are also frequently available and accessible, stores are always open, easing time limits for both sellers and buyers. Furthermore, online shops frequently offer significant discounts to entice customers since they may save on maintenance and rental costs as compared to conventional storefronts. Most importantly, on certain large internet shopping sites, you may even compare stores.

Due to the ease of adding products to the shopping cart and the speed with which transactions are completed may encourage more impulse purchases while buying online (Jiang, et.al., 2013). To urge customers to make an immediate purchase, retailers commonly use persuasive methods such as time-limited promotions or product suggestions. Shopping in-store; vice versa, may encourage shoppers to engage in more thoughtful purchases. While impulsive purchases are

still possible, selecting products and carrying them around the store offers you more time to consider for purchase.

Shipment delays caused by poor inventory management and extended durations might have an impact on online buying. While the process of selecting and purchasing a product online may take approximately 50 minutes, delivery to the customer's residence may take one to three weeks, causing dissatisfaction and deterring future online purchases. Unlike traditional businesses, which give discounts to entice customers, online companies may find it difficult to compete with these offline platforms in terms of offering large amounts of discounts. However, customers who purchase online are unable to touch, feel, or try on the products, creating reluctance towards the product's quality prior to purchase. Customers cannot try on the desired product before purchasing, which is obvious while shopping for garments. Furthermore, physical storefronts allow for pricing negotiations and customized attention from sales staff, which are not always accessible when purchasing online. Some online buying platforms allow you to connect with a sales professional, although it may not be as interactive as it is in physical stores. Traditional shopping delivers a more immersive experience with a showroom environment, attentive sales associates, and sensory components such as odours and noises that cannot be recreated online.

Shopping is a pleasurable obsession for many individuals. Customers who shop online must make purchases without personally inspecting and inspecting the products. This may lead to the acquisition of products that are neither acceptable nor required. Photographs of products can be deceptive since the actual look may differ from the photos provided online. Therefore, customers prefer to visit physical establishments to extensively examine products by themselves, despite the fact that

it takes more time, in order to prevent mismatches between pictures online and reality while making purchasing decisions.

Changing Customer Preferences towards In-Store Shopping

One of the primary advantages of in-store shopping is the rapid availability of the products or services purchased. There is less to no waiting period when purchasing straight from a physical store. Customers immediately hold the products in their hands, allowing customers to inspect the quality and offer direct feedback at the moment of purchase. Furthermore, acquiring after-sales services is more efficient and quicker with offline buying since customers can speak directly with the salesperson at the store. Furthermore, customers can obtain an immediate reaction and resolution from the seller when addressing product difficulties, such as broken components, or when considering returns or exchanges.

When opposed to online shopping, in-stores have less alternatives and choices for products or services. Physical stores have limited space, resulting in a limited assortment of merchandise. Physically visiting numerous businesses might take time and can be tiresome for the customer. Finding a certain product might be difficult, and the purchasing experience may end with empty hands if the desired product is unavailable. In addition, physically purchased products may be more expensive than those acquired online. Lower pricing, discounts, and other tempting offers are frequently available for online purchases, making it a more cost-effective alternative. When opposed to online purchase, offline shopping offers less promotional alternatives. Additionally, due to its competitive pricing, consumers with a primary focus on cost-saving and budget-consciousness may favour online

shopping. Those that value after-sales services, on the other hand, may prefer to purchase offline rather than online. When compared to online purchase, in-store shopping may have fewer alternatives, are less cost-effective, and provide fewer promotions. However, it may appeal more to customers who prioritize in-person service and support. Online shopping, for instance, frequently provides customers with higher convenience, cost savings, and vast options for purchase selection.

Changing Customer Preferences towards Online Shopping versus In-Store Shopping

Customers may browse various products several times without making any immediate purchase so purchasing online, can provide customers with varieties of options. There are substantial differences between online and physical purchase, as evidenced by online shopping, as the name implies, takes place over the internet, so customers do not have to leave the house or wait in line to make a purchase (Yan, 2020). Offline shopping, on the other hand, necessitates physically visiting a nearby mall or shop to purchase the desired products. In contrast, offline shopping offers fewer options, requiring customers to buy the only product accessible in the store, and if that item is unavailable, they must either settle for an alternative or wait for the desired product to become available.

Customers who purchase shoes or garments online cannot try them on before placing an order, increasing the possibility that the real product would differ from what they perceive. However, because purchasers may personally inspect the items before purchasing them, this is not a possibility when buying offline. Online

buying is, however, transparent since shoppers can compare product prices across numerous websites to guarantee they get the best deal. In contrary, purchasers do not have this luxury while purchasing offline and must acquire the product at the price indicated by the seller with no easy means to verify its fairness. When purchasing online, thousands of different products are available in a single area on the website. In addition, offline shopping necessitates visiting many stores for different products, which wastes time, especially when looking for products from different categories. As a result, several researches may conclude that online purchasing outperforms physical or in-store purchasing in terms of time savings.

Technological Advancements Impact on Online Shopping and In-Store Shopping

The internet has fundamentally transformed the way people purchase, eradicating the barrier between online and physical purchasing. With so many alternatives available to them, consumers' shopping patterns have undergone significant changes as a result of their freedom of choice. Impacts on technological advancements towards online shopping and in-store shopping as mentioned in this article attempts to explore the insights acquired and gathered from earlier research on consumers' behaviours in both online and offline purchasing environments in order to explore the multiple components that impact consumers' purchasing considerations. Consumer preferences for online versus in-store purchase varies and are influenced by a range of factors, including convenience, product tangibility, social connections, customization, and trust. Coupled with continuous technology advancements, changes in retail business strategies, and growing customer tastes

will continue to revolutionize the retail positioning, guaranteeing that both online and in-store purchasing will be significant in the future. Consumers must react to changing customer preferences by offering seamless omni-channel experiences that cater to a diverse spectrum of consumer demands and interests.

Online shopping platforms utilize advanced algorithms to tailor the purchasing experience for each customer based on their preferences (Lindecrantz, et. al., 2020). Personalizations are determined by prior purchases, browsing behaviour, and demographic information. As a result, customers receive individualized product recommendations, which can enhance their shopping experience. While in-store purchase might not offer the same level of data-driven customization, it does offer a unique form of human involvement. Knowledgeable salespeople can provide specialized suggestions, answer questions, and guide customers through their purchase decisions.

Customer service has a significant impact on consumer trust and satisfaction with companies. Consumer trust is essential in both online and in-store purchases. Customers must have trust in the security of their transactions as well as the merchants' dependability. Secure payment methods, strict privacy rules, and reliable customer reviews are routinely utilized to build confidence. Face-to-face interactions, coupled with quick and ease access to items can aid to build trust while purchasing in-store (Moramarco, et.al, 2013). Customers may inspect the quality of products prior to purchase, while reducing the possibility of disappointment. Customers who purchase online typically have flexible return policies, making it easier for them to return products with which they are dissatisfied. However, some customers still prefer to purchase in-store, especially

for critical products, because they can interact with and question the products directly with the salesperson.

Conclusion

Customers place the highest emphasis on security and privacy in order to build trust. Therefore, businesses should adopt strategies and plans in the future to attract more customers from this market. In addition, online companies should focus on and reduce online scammers by efficiently utilizing website characteristics such as information design, features, communication, privacy, and security as a marketing strategy to enhance customer confidence in the website and ultimately improve buying intent. Due to the generation gaps, younger and older generations, there is a possibility for more people to go shopping in stores.

As a result, the in-store department should be improved using artificial intelligence and digital data together with learning about shopping trends, where a person may buy products such as food, electronics, fashion products, health and beauty products, by utilizing the internet or searching in a store or a mall. Furthermore, a regulatory framework for mitigating internet fraud should be developed. Moreover, companies in the online purchasing market can increase consumer perceptions of product value and minimize consumer perceived risk by offering quality items, on-time delivery, and satisfying their expectations.

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