



Original Research Article

A Comparative Analysis of Consumer Purchasing Behavior for Online Shopping Based Among Different Age Groups in Hyderabad

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Abstract: This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of consumer purchasing behavior among different age groups in Hyderabad, India. By categorizing respondents into key demographic cohorts—Generation Z (18-25 years), Millennials (26-35 years), Generation X (36-50 years), and Baby Boomers (51 years and above)—the research investigates preferences, motivations, frequency of online purchases, product categories, and decision-making factors such as price, brand loyalty, convenience, and digital literacy. Data was collected through structured questionnaires distributed both online and offline, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The findings reveal significant differences in online shopping behavior across age groups, with younger consumers exhibiting higher frequency of purchases and preference for fashion and electronics, while older consumers prioritize utility, trust, and ease of navigation. This study offers valuable insights for e-commerce platforms and marketers to tailor strategies according to age-specific preferences, ultimately enhancing customer engagement and satisfaction in a diverse urban market like Hyderabad.

Keywords: Online Shopping, Consumer Behavior, Age Groups, E-commerce, Hyderabad, Purchasing Patterns, Digital Marketing, Gen Z, Millennials, Shopping Preferences.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, online shopping has emerged as a dominant mode of retail consumption, reshaping traditional buying patterns and consumer behavior. With increasing internet penetration, smartphone accessibility, and the proliferation of e-commerce platforms, consumers across the globe are transitioning from brick-and-mortar stores to virtual marketplaces. Hyderabad, one of India's major metropolitan cities and a thriving hub of technology and commerce, has witnessed a significant surge in online shopping activities. This shift has been driven by various factors including convenience, competitive pricing, diverse product offerings, and time-saving benefits. However, the preferences, motivations, and behavior of consumers vary significantly across different age groups, necessitating a deeper understanding of these demographic segments for businesses aiming to tailor their marketing strategies effectively.

Age plays a critical role in shaping online purchasing decisions, influencing everything from product preferences and brand loyalty to trust in digital platforms and payment method choices. Younger consumers, particularly those in the 18-25 age bracket, are typically more tech-savvy and open to exploring new digital experiences. They are often driven by trends, peer influence, and social media

engagement. Their purchasing decisions tend to be more spontaneous and influenced by visual appeal, influencer marketing, and online reviews. In contrast, middle-aged consumers (26-45 years) often display a more calculated approach, weighing the benefits and risks before making a purchase. They value quality, reliability, and customer service, and are likely to balance both offline and online shopping depending on the nature of the product or service. Older adults, particularly those above 45 years, may exhibit hesitancy toward online shopping due to concerns related to security, unfamiliarity with digital interfaces, and preference for physical verification of products.

The city of Hyderabad presents a unique demographic composition where traditional cultural values coexist with rapid urbanization and technological adoption. This blend creates a diverse consumer base with varying levels of digital literacy, disposable income, and lifestyle preferences. Understanding how these demographic variables intersect with age to influence online shopping behavior is crucial for marketers, e-commerce platforms, and policy makers alike. For example, the rising trend of mobile-first e-commerce and the integration of vernacular languages into apps have significantly lowered the entry barriers for older and less tech-savvy populations. Meanwhile, the younger



demographic continues to drive demand for fast fashion, electronics, and subscription-based services through online platforms.

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of consumer purchasing behavior across different age groups in Hyderabad with respect to online shopping. By identifying key behavioral patterns, motivations, and deterrents among these groups, the study will provide actionable insights into how businesses can better segment their target audience, design user-centric digital experiences, and develop age-specific marketing strategies. Furthermore, it will shed light on the broader implications for consumer trust, digital literacy, and the future of e-commerce in a culturally diverse and rapidly modernizing city like Hyderabad. Through both qualitative and quantitative analysis, this research seeks to bridge the gap between consumer expectations and e-commerce delivery mechanisms in the context of age-based preferences and behavior.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of studying consumer behavior in the online context cannot be overstated. As the e-commerce industry becomes increasingly competitive, businesses must understand the motivations, preferences, and deterrents influencing consumer behavior. A one-size-fits-all approach is no longer viable, especially in a diverse market like India where cultural, economic, and generational factors significantly impact consumer decisions.

By focusing on Hyderabad, this study leverages the city's unique socio-economic fabric. Hyderabad is home to a large population of young professionals, students, middle-aged employees, and retirees. Each of these segments engages with online shopping differently. For example, while younger consumers may prioritize convenience and speed, older individuals might value trust, security, and personal recommendations more. Understanding these nuances is essential for developing targeted marketing strategies and user experiences.

Moreover, this research holds significance for academic scholars and practitioners alike. It contributes to the body of knowledge on consumer behavior, providing empirical evidence on generational shopping patterns in an emerging economy. For marketers and businesses, it offers actionable insights into segment-specific preferences and challenges, enabling better customer retention and satisfaction.

Evolution of Online Shopping in India

Online shopping in India has evolved through various phases. In the early 2000s, it was limited to urban elites with access to the internet and credit cards. The entry of giants like Flipkart and Amazon revolutionized the market by introducing features such as cash on delivery, easy returns, and deep discounts. These innovations addressed major concerns around trust and usability, drawing more people into the online shopping ecosystem.

The period post-2010 saw a rapid expansion of e-commerce, driven by increased internet penetration and smartphone usage. Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities began to emerge as new markets. Hyderabad, with its blend of urban infrastructure and semi-urban outskirts, represented both the modern digital consumer and the traditional buyer.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 served as an inflection point, compelling even the most hesitant consumers to turn to online platforms. The crisis accelerated digital adoption across age groups, including senior citizens and middle-aged users who had previously relied on traditional retail. However, even within this overarching trend, generational differences in online behavior persisted and, in some cases, became more pronounced.

Consumer Behavior: A Multidimensional Concept

Consumer behavior is the study of how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources—time, money, effort—on consumption-related items. It includes the processes and actions involved in the acquisition, use, and disposal of goods and services. Online consumer behavior, while rooted in traditional consumer behavior theories, adds layers of complexity due to the virtual nature of the transactions.

In the context of online shopping, factors such as website usability, trustworthiness, peer reviews, product visualization, delivery timelines, and return policies heavily influence behavior. Moreover, psychological factors such as fear of fraud, perceived risk, and brand loyalty play a significant role. These factors often vary significantly across age groups. For instance, digital natives (younger users) may exhibit high levels of trust in digital interfaces and make impulse purchases. In contrast, older users may rely more on familiarity and may prefer platforms with a track record of reliable service.

Generational cohorts often demonstrate distinct behavioral patterns. These differences can be attributed to varying life stages, technological exposure, income levels, and cultural values. Understanding these cohorts—commonly segmented as Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, and Baby

Boomers—helps in mapping out age-specific online behaviors.

Age as a Determinant of Online Shopping Behavior

Age is one of the most influential demographic variables affecting consumer behavior. It influences not only product preference but also decision-making processes, information sources, and shopping frequency. In the online realm, age correlates with digital literacy, openness to change, and risk tolerance.

- **Young Adults (18-25 years):** Often students or early professionals, this group is highly influenced by peer recommendations, social media, and trends. They value convenience, variety, and price sensitivity. Their high engagement with mobile apps and social commerce makes them a critical segment for online retailers.
- **Middle-aged Adults (26-45 years):** Typically employed and financially stable, they are strategic shoppers who balance price with quality and brand reliability. They often shop for families and are drawn to value-driven propositions, loyalty programs, and efficiency.
- **Older Adults (46 years and above):** This group may show slower adoption of digital platforms. Their concerns often revolve around security, fraud, and trust. However, once accustomed to a platform, they exhibit brand loyalty and are less likely to switch providers frequently.

These age-related distinctions are particularly visible in urban centers like Hyderabad, where digital literacy and income levels vary across age groups but converge in shared cultural experiences.

Socio-Cultural Context of Hyderabad

Hyderabad, the capital city of Telangana, is a unique amalgamation of tradition and modernity. As one of India's major IT hubs, it attracts a large influx of young professionals from across the country. The city is also home to a culturally diverse population, including students, working professionals, business owners, and retirees.

Hyderabad's socio-economic diversity provides a fertile ground for studying consumer behavior across generational lines. Shopping habits are influenced not just by age but also by regional language preferences, lifestyle aspirations, and family dynamics. For instance, the joint family structure in many households might influence shopping behavior differently than nuclear family settings.

Additionally, Hyderabad's well-developed infrastructure—ranging from metro connectivity to widespread broadband access—supports a thriving online retail ecosystem. Local businesses are also increasingly moving online, creating a hybrid shopping environment where consumers toggle between digital and physical channels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive and comparative research design to examine differences in online shopping behavior among various age groups in Hyderabad. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through surveys to gain deeper insights into consumer behavior.

The population for the study includes residents of Hyderabad who shop online. A **stratified random sampling** method was used to categorize respondents into five age groups:

- Group A: 18-25 years
- Group B: 26-35 years
- Group C: 36-50 years
- Group D: 51 years and above

Sample Size

A total of **400 respondents** were surveyed, with 100 individuals from each age group.

Data Collection Method

Primary data was collected using a **structured questionnaire** distributed through Google Forms and in-person surveys in malls, cafes, and residential areas.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Frequency of Online Shopping by Age Group

Age Group	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely
18-25	10%	40%	35%	15%
26-35	8%	42%	40%	10%
36-50	2%	28%	45%	25%
51+	1%	10%	40%	49%

Younger groups (18-35) tend to shop online more frequently. Daily or weekly shopping is rare in the 51+ group, showing a generational gap in digital adoption.

Table 2: Preferred Product Categories by Age Group

Product Category	18–25	26–35	36–50	51+
Fashion & Apparel	40%	35%	20%	10%
Electronics	25%	30%	30%	20%
Groceries	15%	20%	30%	40%
Health & Wellness	10%	10%	10%	20%
Books & Education	10%	5%	10%	10%

Fashion and electronics dominate among youth. Older consumers prioritize essentials like groceries and health products.

Table 3: Device Used for Online Shopping

Age Group	Smartphone	Laptop/Desktop	Tablet
18–25	80%	18%	2%
26–35	75%	20%	5%
36–50	60%	35%	5%
51+	40%	50%	10%

Younger groups rely more on mobile devices, while older groups prefer desktops, indicating comfort with traditional interfaces.

Table 4: Payment Method Preference

Payment Method	18–25	26–35	36–50	51+
UPI/Wallets	55%	60%	40%	20%
Credit/Debit Card	35%	30%	45%	50%
Cash on Delivery	10%	10%	15%	30%

Digital wallets dominate among younger groups. Older individuals still prefer cards or COD, suggesting trust and tech-savviness influence payment choices.

Table 5: Factors Influencing Online Purchase Decision

Factor	18–25	26–35	36–50	51+
Discounts/Offers	40%	35%	30%	20%
Brand Trust	20%	25%	30%	40%
User Reviews	30%	25%	25%	20%
Ease of Use	10%	15%	15%	20%

Younger shoppers are more influenced by discounts and reviews, while older consumers prioritize brand trust and ease of use, showing a more cautious approach.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the diverse patterns of online shopping behavior across different age groups in Hyderabad. The findings indicate that while younger consumers (18–25 years) are the most active participants in online shopping due to their digital fluency, convenience-seeking attitudes, and promotional responsiveness, middle-aged consumers (26–35 years) exhibit more calculated and needs-based purchasing behaviors, often influenced by product utility and family needs. Older consumers (above 51 years), though increasingly adopting online shopping, remain the least engaged due to concerns over security, lack of digital literacy, and preference for traditional retail experiences.

The analysis underscores that consumer behavior is not uniform across age groups and is shaped by a combination of technological comfort, lifestyle preferences, trust in digital platforms, and social influence. These insights are valuable for e-commerce businesses and marketers who aim to tailor their strategies—such as user interface design, targeted advertising, payment options, and customer support—to effectively engage different demographic segments. Ultimately, understanding these behavioral differences is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction and driving online retail growth in Hyderabad’s evolving digital marketplace.

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