Research Article

STUDENTS' RESPONSE TOWARDS ON-LINE SHOPPING- A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY UHF, SOLAN AND HPU, SHIMLA (H.P.)

D.D.Sharma[1], Rohnit Sani[2] and Ankita Thakur[3]

[1]Department of Social Sciences, Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry, Solan (H.P)
[2]Department of Business Management, Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry, Solan (H.P)
[3]Department of Business Management, APG Shimla University, Shimla (H.P)

A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

The study conducted on a random sample of 100 students selected from two universities viz; Dr. Y.S. Parmar university of Horticulture & Forestry, Solan and Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla (H.P.) revealed that a majority of the respondents had Internet access, and used on-line shopping for purchasing books, clothes, mobile/camera and software. Economic, convenience in use and coupon/discount facilities etc. were the main reasons for on-line shopping. Insecurity/unsafety of payment, slow delivery of products, high shipping costs and low level of trust in the products were the main problems faced by them in on-line shopping. Though overall 54 percent of respondents were satisfied with the on-line shopping yet only 30 percent of them were found satisfied with warranty policies of the companies engaged in on-line shopping for the customers. Hence, the study implies that the companies concerned should ensure safety of payment and timely delivery of their products besides quality assurance for further promoting On-line shopping among the customers.

INTRODUCTION

The study was conducted in purposively selected two Universities viz; Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry (UHF), Solan and Himachal Pradesh University (HPU), Shimla (H.P.), because maximum educational institutions are located in these two districts. A list of all the final year under-graduate and post-graduate students was taken from the Registrar office of the respective university. From this list, 100 students were randomly selected from Under-graduate and Post-graduate classes of the selected universities. The respondents' perception was measured with the help of a scale developed for the purpose. The scale consisted of fourteen statements, which were formulated and edited as per the criteria laid down by Edwards and Kilpatrick (1948). It was also ensured that the scale should contain both positive and negative statements. The response of respondents was taken on five point continuum scale viz; Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided/neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree with respective scoring of 5,4,3,2 and 1 for positive statements. However, in case of negative statements, the scoring was reversed. The respondents' frequency under each continuum/column was calculated and multiplied with its respective score to determine the total score on each statement. Thus, total score on all the 14 statements was computed. On the basis of total score and standard deviation, the respondents were classified into the following three categories:-

Corresponding author: **D.D.Sharma**
Department of Social Sciences, Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry, Solan (H.P)

- High Perception: $>(\overline{X} + SD)$
- Medium Perception: $(\overline{X} \pm SD)$
- Low Perception: $< (\overline{X} - SD)$

Some of the main problems of On-line shoppers were also identified. The data were collected with the help of well-structured and pre-tested questionnaire by personally interviewing the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main findings of the study are given as under

Respondents' profile

It is clear from the Table-1 that a majority of On-line buyers were female (55%) and the remaining 45 percent were male shoppers.

Table 1 Respondents' Profile

Sr. No.	Gender	Percentage frequency
1.	Male	45
2.	Female	55
Sr. No.	Educational Status	Percentage frequency
1.	Graduate	27
2.	Post graduate	73

So far as educational status was concerned, a majority of them (73%) were Post-graduates and the remaining 27 percent were Graduates. Thus, it implies that a majority of the On-line shoppers were well-qualified females.

Response regarding Internet access and On-line shopping

On asking whether the respondents had Internet access and go for On-line shopping- the response is given in table-2

Table 2 Response pertaining to Internet access and On-line shopping.

Aspects	Response	
	Yes	No
Internet access	100	NIL
On-line shopping	84	16

It is clear from the data that all the respondents had Internet access and a majority of them (84%) were found to go for On-line shopping.

Type of Internet connection, purpose of using Internet connection and products purchased On-line

The respondents were asked about the type of Internet connection they had, the purpose of using it and what type of products are purchased by them, the response has been presented in Table-3

Table 3 Respondents' Response (n=100)

Aspects	Frequency Percentage
Type of Internet Connection	
• Broadband	24
• Mobile device	56
• Wi-Fi	20
Purpose of using Internet	
• Education	39
• Tele-communication	18
• Shopping	35
• Any other	08
Products purchased On-line	
• Books	34
• Clothes	42
• Mobile/camera	14
• Music systems/software	10

It has been observed from the table that a majority of the respondents had mobile as device for On-line shopping (56%). Education, Tele-communication and Shopping were the main purpose of using Internet (92%). More than three-fourths of them (76%) purchased books, clothes through On-line shopping. These findings were in agreement with those of Khatibi (2010) who reported that electronic products were more preferred On-line by the consumers.

Response regarding preferred method of shopping and visit at the retail store before On-line shopping

On probing which method of shopping they preferred; and whether they made a visit at retail store before deciding to go for On-line shopping, the response is given in Table-4

Table 4 Respondents' response

Sr. No.	Aspects	Response Frequency Percentage	
1.	Preferred shopping method:		
	• E-retailing	68	
	• Retailing	32	
2.	Visited retail store before On-line shopping	Yes	No
		54	46

The data revealed that more than two-thirds (68%) had preferred e-retailing method of shopping where as the remaining 32 percent had still followed the retailing method of shopping. A simple majority of them (54%) had visited the retail store before deciding to go for On-line shopping.

Reasons for On-line shopping and the main problems faced by them in On-line shopping

On enquiring why they decided to go for On-line shopping and what were the main problems/difficulties encountered by the respondents in using On-line shopping, the response has been depicted in Table-5.

Table 5 Respondents' response

Sr. No.	Aspects	Response Frequency Percentage
1.	**Reasons for On-line shopping:**	
	• Convenience	50
	• Economic	40
	• Coupon/discount facility	08
	• Trust/faith	02
2.	**Main problems/Difficulties**	
	• Insecurity	31
	• Slow delivery of products	19
	• High shipping costs	30
	• Low level of trust	20

A perusal of the data revealed that convenient in use and economic were the main reasons for on-line shopping as reported by 90 percent of the respondents. However, coupon and discount facility as a reason for On-line shopping was also reported by only 8 percent of them. A significant majority of the respondents (80%) reported unsafety of payment, high shipping costs and slow delivery of products as the main problems faced by them in On-line shopping.

Peterson *et al*. (1997) also reported that consumer's attitude towards On-line shopping was a prominent factor in affecting his actual buying behaviour. These findings were in consonance with those of Korgaokar and Wolin (1999) who observed that a person would buy the things according to his age group and according to gender. Jarvanpaa *et al*. (2002) also found that store's reputation and size were assumed to affect consumer trust of retailer and the level of trust was found to be positively related with the attitude towards the store and inversely related to perception of the risks involved in buying from that store. Alsmadi (2002) also observed that the companies need to have a better understanding of electronic buying behaviour and should create interest of on-line shopping with improved security of electronic transactions among the consumers. Burke (2002)in a study also suggested that the companies should ensure appropriate security means for On-line shoppers' safety in order to stimulate customers for promoting On-line shopping. Similar findings were also reported by Schlosser *et al*. (2006) that trust between consumers and On-line merchants was the key factor, since the transactions take place in a virtual market and customers do not physically interact with sellers ,so it was important that the customers should exude confidence in sellers.

Satisfaction regarding product warranty policies; and overall satisfaction with On-line shopping

The opinion of respondents was taken on whether they were satisfied with the products warranty policies and On-line shopping as a whole, the response has been depicted in Table6

Table 6 Respondents' response (n=100)

Sr. No.	Aspects	Response (%)				
		SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
1.	Satisfaction with product warranty policies	4	26	52	16	02
2.	Overall satisfaction with on-line shopping	03	51	16	12	18

It has been observed from the data that 30 percent of the respondents were agree to strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the product warranty policies of On-line shopping companies whereas 52 percent of them were neutral i.e. not in a position to express their opinion. However, overall 54 percent of the respondents were found to be satisfied with On-line shopping. About one third of them were still not satisfied with On-line shopping. Hence, efforts should be made by the companies concerned to identify the reasons for customers' dissatisfaction with product warranty policies and On-line shopping; and accordingly appropriate steps should be taken to change their attitude in order to further promote On-line shopping among the customers. Shu (2003) also reported that perceived security and service of quality products affected the consumer's willingness to do internet shopping.

CONCLUSION

It has been concluded from the study that a majority of the respondents were satisfied with On-line shopping because of its convenient and economic nature. Payment insecurity/unsafety followed by high shipping costs and slow delivery of products were the main problems faced by them in On-line shopping. Hence, the study implies that sincere efforts should be taken by the concerned companies to ensure safety of payment and trust in their products for further promoting On-line shopping among the customers.

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