

# Online and In-Store Apparel Retailing- a Study

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## ***Abstract:***

*The basic objective of this paper is to explore common factors that retailer should consider while doing in-store as well as online retailing as nowadays majority of retailers use bricks and clicks model in their business.. The objective is also to analyze the variations in importance of these factors between in-store and online retail formats as well as across different demographic characteristics of respondents. This research brings unique contribution in terms of identifying common criteria for effectiveness in both in-store and online retailing.*

**Key Words:** retailing, in-store, online, internet

## **Introduction**

Consumer behavior research is the scientific study of the processes consumers use to select, secure, use and dispose of products and services that satisfy their needs. The distinct needs and wants of consumers is due to their consumption pattern, demographics (like age profile, working patterns, income and expenditure, occupation), lifestyle changes, buying process, shopping behavior, shopping motivations and objectives, and changing consumer etc. Consumer behavior knowledge directly affects marketing strategy (Anderson et al, 2005). Although various consumer decision making models and consumer behavior models with an apparel perspective have been developed in the past, the usefulness of consumer models in marketing management context is hampered by certain limitations (Preez, 2003).

The literature reveals different consumer decision making models with an apparel perspective have been developed in the past (Preez, 2003). Olsena and Skallerud (2011) found that retail shopping experience is associated with utilitarian and hedonic values. The modern consumer behavior model examined utilitarian and hedonic consumer motives. In addition to that, the modern consumer behavior models include the impact of personal and social factors influencing actual shopping motives (Kaur and Singh, 2007). But, these models were not specific to a particular context. The apparel purchase decision making is complex. The complexity of decision making is depended upon the consumers' level of involvement with a product category as well as the impact of other situational variables. Some individuals are highly involved when purchasing apparel items, while others may experience it as a routine process. Consumer purchase decision-making models should reflect the variables influencing the shopping behavior.

The apparel shopping decision making is different to decision-making with regard to other products. Apparel shopping behavior is influenced by a very large number of variables (Krishna, 2011). These variables can be classified as conscious and subconscious, market dominated and consumer dominated or a fusion of the two, thus increasing the complexity thereof. Preez (2003) mentioned that the majority of previous studies lack the identification of variables affecting

consumer purchase decision making for apparel products. Market-dominated, consumer-dominated and market and consumer interaction variables should be considered to find their impact on purchase decision making of apparel products.

Today, brick and mortar firms have included the use of internet in their channel mix. The evidences showed that the retailers are using the internet as a supplement to traditional bricks and mortar purchasing. Recent trends advocate using click and brick, multi-channel approach to retailing. A large amount of literature is available on adoption of click and mortar retailing, but a study on consumer behavior toward traditional brick and mortar retailing and click and mortar retailing has been missing. This has been condemned by many researchers in their study (Yoh et al., 2003). The evidences admits that the marketers often meet difficulty in understanding and managing dynamics of consumer behavior, which necessitates a study of behavioral issues in in-store and online retail shopping.

A large amount of literature is available on attributes of in-store as well as online apparel shopping environments, but those attributes are vast and fragmented. The selection criteria for online and in-store shopping are retail category (Sinha and Benerjee, 2004) as well as product category specific (Lee and Kim, 2008). In-store and non-store buying is different in certain manner. Both types of shopping generate different shopping experiences for consumers. In addition to this, the evidences suggest that buying experiences of consumers differ between in-store and online shopping (Rajamma et al., 2007). So, this study includes studying variables affecting in-store and non-store apparel shopping.

A large amount of literature confirms that demographic factors influence consumers' decision to shop apparel products (Dennis et al., 2009) both traditional physical store (Kuruville and Joshi, 2010) and online store (Sahney et al., 2008). So, this study also includes a framework to study the effects of the demographic characteristics on consumers' apparel shopping behavior.

Based on above discussion, the following questions are developed:

- Are there any diversity in preferences towards in-store and non-store shopping?
- What are the factors influencing consumers' decision making to shop apparel products both from in-store and non-store retail?
- What is the impact of consumer demographics on their apparel shopping behavior in both in-store and non-store context?

## **Literature Review**

### **In-store (Bricks and Mortar) Retailing**

Rajamma et al. (2007) mentioned that physical products shopping like apparel, grocery items, durables, etc. are more effective through traditional retailing than modern non-store retailing. Bricks and mortar outlets are perceived as more tangible, since they typically have a physical location, a building that shoppers can visit, and have all the attached sensory cues as well. Consumers tend to touch it, feel it and often wear it to make the final purchase decision. Bricks and mortar stores have traditionally enjoyed an advantageous position on the merchandise dimension, i.e. products and services are available for immediate possession, and consumers can easily see the quality and variety of merchandise on display (Menon and Kahn, 2002). Bricks

and mortar stores do fulfill the pragmatic expectations of consumers like quality, price, comparisons, convenience and promotional offers (Rajamma et al. 2007).

### **Non-store (Click and Mortar) Retailing**

Non-store retailing can be in the form of click and mortar, electronic commerce, bricks and clicks, surf and turf, cyber-enhanced retailing, e-retailing and hybrid e-commerce (Steinfeld, n.d.). The basic characteristic of non-store retailers is that they do not have any physical stores and market directly to consumers through internet (Kennedy and Coughlan, 2006). In literature, online stores are defined as those that sell goods and services, where the buyer places an order over the internet, intranet, electronic data interchange network, electronic mail or other online system. Clark (1997) defined click and mortar retailers as those who respond to consumer demand through offline and online stores. Meuter et al. (2000) have defined e-retailing in terms of the internet market as, “a virtual realm where products and services exist as digital information and can be delivered through information-based channels. Sahney et al. (2008) defined online-retailing as use of an electronic media through which the customer and the marketer may enter into a transaction for sale and purchase, so as to benefit both the parties in the long run.

### **Benefits of Click and Mortar over Brick and Mortar**

Several Researchers have mentioned the benefits of Click and Mortar practice over traditional Brick and Mortar business. Kim and Forsythe (2009) and Demangoet and Broderick (2007) mentioned that decisions to shop through online or offline channels are influenced by both functional and hedonic motives. Hedonism in context of online shopping experiences can be termed as experience, enjoyment and entertainment. Because many apparel shoppers still hesitate to make purchases online and typically prefer shopping in traditional stores, online retailers are utilizing product virtualization technologies to enhance the online environment in order to attract consumers and encourage online purchases. Product virtualization technologies that allow online shoppers to view the product interactively not only deliver product information but also deliver a more entertaining shopping experience than can be obtained by static product images. The interactivity and customer involvement created by product virtualization technologies increases the entertainment value of the online shopping experience. E-shopping experience is based on e-interactivity with retail site. E-interactivity includes the interaction between customer and sales person, visual merchandising and impact of all senses on consumer behavior (Dennis et al., 2009). Richard and Chandra (2005) found that e-interactivity is a major determinant of formation of consumer attitude towards e-retailing

The major advantages of online retailing are that it is cheaper, more convenient, provides larger selection, quicker transactions, reduces processing errors, protects consumer anonymity, and results in savings for consumers. Likewise, some of the major disadvantages of e-tailing are security fears, delayed gratification, lack of return policies, lower rate of order placement, impersonalization of shopping, and lack of customer service (Rajamma et al., 2007). Kim and Park (2005) emphasized the need of studying consumer behavior towards shifting from traditional offline retail purchase to modern online retail purchase.

Table 1 below list the benefits that consumers seek while purchasing from click and mortar retail outlets

(Table 1 about here)

**Table 1: Benefits of Click and Mortar Retailing**

Usability	Functionality (Interactivity)	Psychological (Trust)	Content Factors	
			Aesthetics	Marketing Mix
Convenience	Customer service	Transaction security	Design	Communication
Site Navigation	Interaction with company personnel	Customer data safety	Presentation quality	Product
Information Architecture	Customization	Uncertainty reducing elements	Design elements	Fulfillment
Ordering process	Network effects	Guarantees/ returns policy	Style/ atmosphere	Fulfillment
Search facilities				Price
Site speed				Promotion
Accessibility				Characteristics

(Adapted from Constantinides, 2004).

### **In-store (Bricks) and Non-store (Clicks) Retailing**

Brick and Mortar and Click and Mortar retail formats can be studied in terms of in-store and non-store retail formats respectively. Weeks et al. (1997) defined non-store retailing as venues through which consumers can use media to shop without any face-to-face communication with other human being. In contrast, in-store retailing relies upon consumers' direct interaction with other human being to process transactions in store. Sahney et al. (2008) explained in their study that current retailing trends show a shift from the traditional store-based retailing to an increased use of the internet based retailing. The shift from physical retail stores to traditional retail stores can be analyzed at two levels: catalog shopping and computer shopping (Kim and Park, 2005). Catalog firms present their print catalogs on the web. Catalog shopping is different from in-store shopping (Dholakia and Uusitalo, 2002). At second level, the shift within non-store or in-home shopping methods, i.e. from catalog shopping to computer or internet shopping require fewer changes in consumer behavior (Dholakia and Uusitalo, 2002). In computer or internet purchasing consumers get the response from e-retailers quickly (Kim and Park, 2005). Catalog shopping is suitable for time compressed consumers, consumers having high disposable income and consumers having high confidence in their purchase decision without any physical inspection of the product.

Today, multi channel retailing has been recognized as a new key marketing program for several retailers. The multi channel retail format includes not only physical stores and catalogs, but also online stores, kiosks and wireless channels (Kim and Park, 2005). The simultaneous use of store and non-store retailing is termed as bricks and clicks approach (Kennedy and Coughlan, 2006). Based on the study of several researches, Kim and Park (2005) concluded that those customers who purchased the products both online and offline, showed greater loyalty to the retailer. Earlier, Dennis et al. (2009) also concurred that the future of shopping lies in multi-channel retailing where, rather than competing with the internet, retailers should adopt a hybrid strategy

merging online and offline activities through a bricks and clicks approach. Later, Shankar et al. (2003) found that the consumers who have frequent and satisfactory experience with the retailer were likely to receive greater satisfaction with the retailer in both offline and online shopping contexts. Balabanis and Reynolds (2001) mentioned the positive impact of positive attitude towards traditional retailing on creating positive attitude towards online retailing.

Earlier, Calkins et al. (2000) explained that store-based retailers have a number of advantages over their Internet-only competitors, which can offer personalized search tools and links to related products and services but not the ability to see, touch, and try merchandise and to walk out with it. More generally, store-based retailers can leverage their multichannel advantage to give customers what they want, how and when they want it. So if store-based retailers make their sites as innovative and adaptable as those of their pure-play Internet rivals and at the same time realize synergies with their brick-and-mortar facilities, they may yet come in first after all.

Selling through existing physical stores and through internet channels allows retailers to leverage the strengths of each channel with stores and web sites working well together and so increasing sales at both. Additional advantages from integrating online and offline channels include increased shopping convenience, easier product return, and ability to offer information that may motivate a consumer to buy offline. Integrating online and offline operations may provide advantages such as broader distribution, reputation, management skills, and capital". Bricks and clicks businesses can also augment their land-based businesses by offering customers extended selections online (Kennedy and Coughlan, 2006).

### **Consumer Demographics and Shopping Behavior**

Several studies have shown the impact of consumer demographics on consumer purchase decision in traditional brick and mortar context as well as modern click and mortar context. Kuruville and Joshi (2010) mentioned that the study on the impact of consumer demographic and psychographic characteristics on traditional bricks and mortar retailing business is missing in literature. Krishna (2011) has mentioned the impact of consumer demographic characteristics on their buying behavior in traditional in-store retail environment. Several researchers have shown the impact of demographic factors on shifting from traditional offline purchase to modern online purchase. O'Cass and Fenech (2003) showed the importance of role played by consumer demographic and psychographic characteristics on consumer e-retailing purchase decision. Later, Venkatesh et al. (2003) have explained the connections between consumer demographics and e-shopping behavior. But, they further mentioned that the majority of technology acceptance and e-shopping behavior studies lacks to study the impact of consumer demographic characteristics on it.

Demographic characteristics have been found to be useful to differentiate between sub segments that could have unique demographic and socioeconomic profiles and helped explain patronage decisions (Kuruville and Joshi, 2010). The literature concentrates on four of the most commonly examined consumer demographics, i.e. gender, education, income and age (Hernandez et al., 2011). Psychology research over many years has identified numerous gender differences that are potentially relevant to e-shopping context (Dennis et al., 2009). Dennis and McCall (2005) mentioned the important role of gender in bricks and mortar shopping as well as clicks and mortar shopping. Dholakia and Uusitalo (2002) mentioned that in-store and non-store shopping

is a gendered activity. The social role theory says that the men and women tend to behave in different manner. The decision criteria to purchase products offline and online differs among different gender.

The role of education in shopping behavior has been given little research attention (Dennis et al., 2009). Eastlick and Feinberg (1999) showed the importance of considering education level of consumer in determining their shopping behavior. Few previous studies have found a positive relationship between e-shopping behavior and education (Dholakia and Uusitalo, 2002). Highly educated consumers have high consumer literacy than less educated consumers. Highly educated customers engage more in information gathering and processing and use more information prior to decision making, whereas less well educated people rely more on fewer information cues (Homburg and Giering, 2001).

Dholakia and Uusitalo (2002) explained that consumers at high age are more likely to purchase from traditional retail in-store retail outlets than youngsters. Older consumers are less likely to seek new information, relying on fewer decision criteria, whereas younger consumers seek alternative information (Homburg and Giering, 2001). The young consumers have more positive intention towards non-store shopping than older consumers because young consumers tend to have high computer literacy than older consumers (Dholakia and Uusitalo, 2002).

### **Apparel Shopping Behavior**

Several researchers have emphasized on studying consumer behavior in apparel products' context (Preez, 2003). Apparel, termed "high touch" merchandise, varies by size, texture, and color; these variables lead to high consumer involvement in purchase of apparel products (Yoh et al., 2003). Since many apparel consumers' purchasing decisions are motivated by their senses (e.g., touching, feeling, trying on or observing the product first-hand), being unable to get highly involved with apparel purchasing increases consumers' purchase risks (Kim and Forsythe, 2009). Furthermore, since apparel is visible, worn in public, and subject to changing fashion trends, the concern of the inappropriate selection of apparel may lead to a high level of purchase risk. High purchase risks may lead apparel consumers to spend more time searching for product information and to demand a more interactive shopping experience than they would from other product categories.

### **In-store apparel Shopping Behavior**

Carpenter et al. (2005) mentioned that the traditional stores provide unique consumer shopping experiences, both in terms of utilitarian and hedonic values. They further mentioned that traditional retailing results in more favorable consumer perceptions towards a particular brand than competitive brands. Rajamma et al. (2007) mentioned that in an era of online store, still, consumers prefer to purchase from traditional bricks and mortar stores. A large amount of literature is available on traditional in-store consumer shopping behavior. Earlier, Hirschman (1979) suggested that socio-economic (race, sex, etc.), interpersonal (social activities) and intrapersonal (merchandise pricing, quality and assortment, etc.) dimensions influence store-choice behavior. Later, Kim and Kim (2004) considered following variables as important for in-store retailing: convenience, price, merchandise assortment, value for money, fashionability, merchandising and sales service. Slowly and gradually consumers are shifting from traditional

in-store buying to modern online buying. Kim and Kim (2004), in their study, found that consumers tend to focus more on utilitarian functions than hedonic functions while purchasing apparel products from a retail store. Later, Krishna (2011) found that brand awareness and image of the store, price perception, promotional offers, convenience, durability, ambience and visual merchandising create significant influence on consumer buying behavior in apparel shopping context. Khare (2011) studies traditional mall shopping behavior of consumers and found factors influencing consumers' shopping behavior towards traditional store retail format, namely, aesthetics, escape, flow, exploration, role enactment, social and convenience.

### **Non-store (Click and Mortar) Apparel Retailing**

Consumers derive several different outcomes such as products, information, and pleasure from the shopping process (Ha and Stoel, 2004). In other words, shopping includes both information searching behavior and purchasing behavior. Menon and Kahn (2002) investigated differences among Internet apparel purchasers, browsers, and non-purchasers. They found that purchasers were significantly different from browsers and non-purchasers in terms of perceptions of relative advantages and ease of Internet shopping. In addition, compared to browsers and non-purchasers; Internet apparel purchasers tended to perceive Internet shopping as safe for using credit cards. Browsers and non-purchasers showed similar attitudes toward internet apparel shopping. Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2002) found that consumers who have previous experience of internet shopping have a higher tendency to purchase apparel products online and more frequently as well. Yoh et al. (2003) explained apparel online shopping behavior in terms of theory of reasoned action (TRA). They concluded that customers who had more positive beliefs about Internet apparel shopping had more positive attitudes toward Internet apparel shopping. People who had more positive attitudes toward Internet apparel shopping had greater intention to purchase apparel through the Internet.

A large amount of literature is available regarding the components of apparel retail websites. Then and DeLong (1999), based on their study, derived recommendations for Web site design by surveying consumer response to apparel shopping on the Web sites and categorized into five basic areas: products, information, visual design, online ordering, and name brand recognition. Szymanski and Hise (2000) examined the effect of online convenience, merchandising, site design, and financial security on e-satisfaction assessments. Park and Stoel (2002) explored the availability of product, customer service information and Web site quality on apparel shopping experience. Jang and Burns (2004) included three important aspect of apparel shopping website, namely, merchandise, promotion and customer service.

The success of online retailing depends to a large extent on the underlying characteristics of the products and services being marketed. With the advent of advanced technology, the apparel products has gain wider acceptance through online retailing. The recent integration of apparel manufacturers into direct Web selling, as well as the continuing incursion of traditional retailers into the online channel, has fueled the clothing surge (Kim and Kim, 2004).

Ha and Stoel (2004) mentioned that the concept of online apparel shopping is not well accepted among consumers. While shopping apparel products, consumers like to physically examine the products to assess color, size, design, and fabric. Due to the sensory and interactive nature of the apparel purchase process, apparel products are categorized as high-risk and high involvement

products and apparel shopping has been associated with high perceived risk (Bhatnagar et al., 2000). The non-catalog shoppers tended to have higher risk perceptions related to catalog apparel purchases than catalog shoppers. For Internet shopping, consumers consider apparel products to be risky to purchase on the Internet because of uncertainty about color, fabrics, and fit (Bhatnagar et al., 2000). So, it becomes imperative to find the most effective attributes that a apparel website should have to gain wider acceptability and success among consumers.

### **Attributes of Apparel Shopping Websites**

A large amount of literature is available on attributes of online apparel shopping. According to Taylor and Cosenza (2000), when shopping online for clothing, consumers rated the functional attributes such as price, ease of movement and ease of return as important. Shim et al. (2001) reported that attitudes toward online shopping were stronger for cognitive products such as books and computer software than for sensory experiential products such as apparel or accessories. Kim and Kim (2004) found four attributes for non-store apparel retail, namely, transaction/cost, incentive program, site design and interactivity. Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2002) found important characteristics of online apparel shopping experience, namely, fun, shop, safe, confidential, cheap and quick.

### **Objectives**

1. To explore the common criteria for effective clicks & bricks retailing
2. To understand the difference in perception of consumers about the effectiveness criteria based on their demographic profiles

### **Research Methodology**

The exploratory and descriptive designs were used to conduct this study. In the first phase, exploratory study was conducted to explore the common criteria of effectiveness in both online and in-store retailing. Later, descriptive study was undertaken to find the variations in preferences towards this criteria among different demographic characteristics of respondents. The non-probability convenient sampling method was used to select the sample. The personal contact method was used to collect the data. In total, 229 respondents were contacted out of which 201 completely filled questionnaires were received. So, the final sample size consisted of 201 respondents. The sample consists of respondents who have experience of both offline and online apparel purchasing. Structured questionnaire was used having closed-ended questions. The criteria for effectiveness of online and in-store apparel purchasing were identified based on literature survey. In total, 14 variables were rated using Likert scale with 1 = least important, 2 = unimportant, 3 = neutral, 4 = important and 5 = most important. The respondents were asked to rate each variable in terms of the amount of important they attach respectively.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

Factor analysis was conducted for analyzing the structure of the interrelationships among a set of variables by defining a set of common underlying dimensions. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to assess the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable. Mean analysis was conducted to measure the emotional competence of employees during selling encounters in organized retail. Anova test was conducted to find out the variations in importance of criteria for

effectiveness of online and in-store apparel purchasing on the basis of various demographic variables. (Malhotra and Dash, 2010)

## Factor Analysis

(Table 2 about here)

**Table 2: Factor Analysis, Reliability Analysis and Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Factor 1 (Accuracy)</b>	<b>Factor 2 (Responsiveness)</b>	<b>Factor 3 (Cost Effectiveness)</b>	<b>Factor 4 (Merchandising)</b>	<b>Communality</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
<b>Time Savings</b>	0.941				0.924	3.56	0.45
<b>Convenience</b>	0.884				0.788	3.76	0.34
<b>Safety / Security</b>	0.874				0.746	4.33	0.23
<b>Ease of Decision Making</b>	0.850				0.824	3.34	1.02
<b>Customization</b>		0.915			0.834	3.40	1.04
<b>Interactiveness</b>		0.900			0.885	3.25	0.46
<b>Better Overall Experience</b>		0.860			0.859	3.70	0.56
<b>Better Service Quality</b>		0.845			0.837	3.86	0.85
<b>Better Deal</b>			0.925		0.978	3.34	0.76
<b>Better Promotional Offers</b>			0.930		0.958	3.90	0.98
<b>Ease in Returns</b>			0.909		0.758	3.25	1.05
<b>Variety of Products</b>				0.905	0.831	4.22	0.67
<b>Better Merchandising</b>				0.895	0.866	3.25	0.56

<b>Better Branding</b>				0.962	0.824	3.56	0.68
<b>Eigen value</b>	5.964	3.433	2.299	1.049			
<b>% of Variance</b>	32.061	24.520	16.419	7.491			
<b>Cumulative %</b>	32.061	56.681	73.000	80.491			
<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>	<b>0.889</b>	<b>0.873</b>	<b>0.923</b>	<b>0.875</b>			

The objective of this research is to explore the various components of criteria for effectiveness of online and in-store apparel purchasing. The 14 statements have been subjected to multivariate data analysis tool – factor analysis – to reduce them to a few uncorrelated factors. In order to test the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the correlation matrix was computed and examined. This revealed that there were enough correlations to go ahead with factor analysis. Anti image correlation were computed. These showed that partial correlations were low, indicating that true factors existed in the data. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) was calculated both for the entire correlation matrix and each individual variable evaluating the appropriateness of applying factor analysis. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was calculated to find whether the number of correlations among the variables is statistically significant or not. The value of MSA was found to be 0.702, which is much higher than the minimum cut off rate of 0.50. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity showed the value of Chi-Square at 1344.235 with 116 degrees of freedom, which was significant at 0.05 level, indicating the suitability of data for factor analysis. Thus, all of these examinations revealed that data was fit for factor analysis.

Principle component analysis was employed for extracting factors. The number of factors to be extracted was finalized on the basis of latent Root Criterion. Orthogonal rotation with Varimax method was used for factor analysis. Rotations converged into 6 iterations. In orthogonal rotation, each factor is independent of or orthogonal from all other factors. The correlation between the factors is determined to be zero. As, the sample size taken for data analysis was 201 respondents, all factor loadings greater than 0.40 were considered for the analysis.

Table 1 shows the communality values of all variables. Communality is the amount of variance an original variable shares with all other variables included with analysis. Large communality indicates that a large amount of variance in the variable has been accounted for by the factor solution. As shown in the table 2, all the variables are having the communality values above cut off value of 0.40, which indicate that all the variables should be considered for further analysis. The results of Principle Component Analysis with Varimax rotation for sample are shown in table 2. It shows that 4 factors have been extracted which together accounted for 80.491% of the variance. Eigenvalues for the factors 1 to 4 are 5.964, 3.433, 2.299 and 1.049 as revealed in table 2. The percentage of the variance explained by individual factors is shown in the penultimate row of the table. It is observed that the percentages of variance explained by factors 1 to 4 are 32.061, 24.520, 16.419 and 7.491.

### **Test of Mean Difference**

(Table 3 about here)

Table 3: t-test and Anova test

Variable	No. of Samples	Overall Mean	Accuracy	Cost Effectiveness	Merchandising	Responsiveness
<b>Format</b>						
Offline	105	3.75	t = 4.042	t = 3.421	t = 1.023	t = 4.15
Online	95	3.45	0.019	0.034	0.435	0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>3.60</b>				
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	105	3.50	t = 2.033	t = 11.234	t = 14.962	t = 3.145
Female	95	3.70	0.765	0.023	0.003	0.221
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>3.60</b>				
<b>Age</b>						
18-30 Years	102	3.78	F = 8.913	F = 0.320	F = 0.027	F = 6.881
31-45 Years	58	3.56	0.000*	0.727	0.974	0.001*
More than 45 Years	40	3.45				
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>3.60</b>				
<b>Experience</b>						
0 – 3 years	92	3.25	F = 6.332	F = 1.664	F = 2.299	F = 0.220
3 – 5 years	65	3.65	0.002*	0.192	0.103	0.802
5 years & above	23	3.9				
<b>Total</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>3.60</b>				

The t-test and anova test were conducted to find out difference in importance of effectiveness criteria for online and in-store retailing on the basis of various demographic variables (table 3).

1. **Retail Format wise:** The t-test was conducted to find out the differences in importance of effectiveness criteria based on online and in-store retail format. The results showed that the results showed that type of retail format affects the importance of effectiveness criteria. The mean analysis showed that consumers give more importance to these criteria of effectiveness while purchasing in-store than online. The difference was also found for the factors, namely, accuracy ( $t = 4.042$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ), cost effectiveness ( $F = 3.421$ ,  $p = 0.034$ ) and responsiveness ( $t = 4.150$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).
2. **Gender wise:** The t-test was conducted to find out the differences in importance of effectiveness criteria for online and in-store retailing between different genders. The results showed that the results showed that gender affects the importance of effectiveness criteria for online and in-store retailing up to certain extent. The mean analysis showed that females attached more importance (3.70) than male (3.50) with respect to effectiveness criteria. The difference was also found for the factors, namely, Cost effectiveness ( $t = 11.234$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ) and Merchandising ( $F = 14.962$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ).
3. **Age wise:** The anova test was conducted to find out the differences in importance of effectiveness criteria for in-store and online retailing, with different age groups. The mean analysis showed that respondents in age group 18 to 30 were the most emotional competent people (3.78), followed by employees in age group 31 to 55 (3.56) and employees in age group 45 and above (3.45). The difference was also found for the factors, namely, accuracy ( $F = 8.913$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and responsiveness ( $F = 6.881$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ).
4. **Experience wise:** The anova test was conducted to find out the differences in importance of effectiveness criteria for in-store and online retailing, with different experience groups. The mean analysis showed that respondents in experience group of more than 5 years were the most emotional competent people (3.90), followed by respondents in experience group of 3-5 years (3.65) and respondents in age group of 0-3 years (3.25). The difference was also found for the factor, namely, accuracy ( $F = 6.332$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ).

## Discussion

Accuracy is defined in terms of time savings from purchase efforts, convenience during pre-purchase, in-purchase and post-purchase stages, safety of financial transactions and security of personal information and ease of decision making. In today's era of competition, it is essential to enhance the customer value through providing greater customer benefits. Literature reveals that accuracy leads to impart the feeling of trust in retailers in long term. Again, safety and security of personal financial information is a major concern for consumers sharing this information to online or in-store retailers. The results of t-test and anova tests show that the importance about accuracy dimensions differs among different formats of retailing, age of consumers and experience of customers in purchasing through online as well as offline retail stores. Consumers feel more accuracy while purchasing in-store than online store, due to lack of touch of the product in online purchasing. Again, lack of conversation between online retailer and customers can also be a reason for lack of accuracy in purchasing. A large amount of literature reveals the

same results as in case of this research that youngsters are more accurate while purchasing in-store and online retail stores than old age consumers. Again, as the experience with respect to purchasing through offline and online stores increases, it brings more accuracy in purchasing efforts due to learning curve effects.

Responsiveness includes the ability of retailers to customize the products, enhance Interactiveness with customers, enhance the overall service and purchase experience. Apparel product categories are lifestyle products and shopping or specialty goods, for which customers need to do some special purchasing efforts. In today's era of competition, tailoring the products as per the need of customers can create competitive advantage over competitors. Customization is more critical in online business due to lack of touch with respect to products. Again, the ability of retailers to enhance the Interactiveness between them and customers leads to better responsiveness to customers. Interactiveness is both critical in in-store physical as well as online environment. In growing era of experiential marketing, it is critical for both in-store and online retailers to enhance the customer experience during pre-purchasing, in-process and post-purchasing stages. The results of t-test and anova test also reveal that responsiveness differs between in-store and online retailing. The responsiveness seems to be more critical in case of online retailing where there are no or less face-to-face communication between retailer and customers. Age is also an important factor affecting the importance of responsiveness to customers. Youngsters are more technology friendly and require less consultation from retailers. While, old age people require a greater amount of assistance from in-store and more importantly online retail store.

Cost effectiveness has remained an important aspect across the retailing literature. Recent literature also reveals that the margins of in-store and online retailers are shrinking day-by-day. Consumers who shop apparel products especially from online retail store have the foremost preference for better deal in terms of lowest price advantage. Both in-store and online retailers have come up with innovative promotional schemes to attract more and more customers to purchase from their stores. A few amount of research has been done on returns of goods from customers to retailers. But, this is an important function especially in case of online retailing, where no physical store is available. Many online retailers have started with return policy as well as other alternative strategies like cash on delivery. The results of t-test and anova test reveal that the importance cost effectiveness differ between in-store and online retailing. As previously discussed in literature, the first and foremost motivation for consumers to go for online purchasing is cost advantage. In case of in-store retailing, still the quality and merchandising remain more or equally preferred criteria for consumer purchasing. Based on gender, the results reveal that female attach more importance to cost effectiveness than male.

Merchandising is a retail strategy that maximizes the aesthetics of a product with the intent to increase sales. Merchandising plays an important role in the look, feel and culture of a brand. Merchandising can be the reason to engage and inspire shoppers to buy more of the products. It provides experience the brands to customers. The "wow" factor through merchandising and branding enriches the customer experience, leading to a positive shopping experience and increased sales. The results of t-test and anova test show that the importance of merchandising differs among different genders, where female attaché more importance to merchandising than males.

## Conclusion

This research reveals the common factors that bricks and clicks retailers should consider while shifting from in-store retailing to online retailing. Four factors, namely, accuracy, cost effectiveness, merchandising and responsiveness, found to be the most significant factors, both for in-store as well as online retailing. The results of t-test and anova test reveal that the importance of all these four criteria differ between in-store and online retailing as well as across different demographic characteristics of target consumers. This research also brings important implications for academicians and research scholars in terms of exploring unique as well as common characteristics that brick and click retail firms should maintain. Based on these factors, more retail environment specific factors can be developed to enhance the effectiveness. Retail managers can also use this research to understand the commonality between in-store and online retailing that brings synergy between two different formats. They can also use these results to customize strategy as per customers they are targeting based on demographic profiling.

In future, research can be done that explores the effectiveness criteria customized to different retail environment/formats. Research can also be extended in terms of effects of factors, namely, accuracy, cost effectiveness, merchandising and responsiveness, on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty in different retail environment/formats.

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