



Online Shopping and Self-assurance of Youth in Nagpur City

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Abstract

The youth constitute an immense proportion of Internet users. Improved technology has facilitated wider internet dispersion for all of us. In the advent of smart phones, online shopping has gained momentum. The aim of the paper is to explore the underlying factors that promote online shopping among youth. Both motivating and obstruct factors are identified and factors affecting choice of particular e-commerce portal is identified. Managerial implications are also discussed. Technology has breakthrough in our life like anything and nowadays one and all are using technology for their benefits and marketers are no an exemption to it. They are using technology to reach to the customers. These days, more and more individuals bend toward for online shopping, which is presently a pattern of style-fashion. This paper focuses on the online shopping which has become common among young generation of Nagpur and to understand the background of online purchase among youth and attempts to identify the hamper factors and further explores those factors particular to the e-commerce, which would drive in more customers to shop online, in general context. Nevertheless, consumer those who do not shop online are only because of online fraud, lack of personal touch and fund that there is no return policy. The youth-consumers do prescribe online shopping as an elective path for shopping.

Keywords: Consumers, Online Shopping, Self-assurance, Shopping Attitude

Introduction

Since the inception of major e-commerce portals, there has been a prominent correlation between digital consumption and the self-image of the youth. The promotion of **Amazon and e-Bay, e-commerce** activities have had gained momentum among all cross-sectional users of the internet. Internet has changed the way how consumers would buy and sell products. India has an average internet user base of about 250 million as of June 2014. India's e-commerce business has leaped by more than 80 percent in 2013 and the drive is likely to in the coming years, with projections to reach \$50-70 billion by 2020 (Gyanendra, 2014). In the last decade, India has witnessed a digital revolution, fuelled by affordable internet and the widespread use of smartphones.



Nagpur, often referred to as the ‘Orange City,’ has transitioned from a traditional commercial hub to a modern urban center. For the youth of Nagpur—students and young professionals—online shopping is no longer just a convenience; it is a primary mode of lifestyle expression. Platforms like **Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and various Instagram-based "D2C"** (Direct-to-Consumer) brands have democratized access to global trends. This shift has replaced traditional physical ‘bazaars’ like Sitabuldi or Dharampeth with digital storefronts that offer a curated, personalized experience. Online shopping has evolved from a luxury to a psychological staple for the youth of Nagpur. With the rapid expansion of the MIHAN (Multi-modal International Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur) project and the proliferation of educational institutions, the city's youth are increasingly integrated into the global digital economy. This study explores the intersection of e-commerce habits and self-assurance the degree to which young individuals feel confident in their social identity and decision-making through their consumption choices.

During the 2023–2024 period, Nagpur underwent a significant digital transformation, driven by the expansion of 5G services and the growth of the MIHAN economic zone. For the city's youth, online shopping evolved from a ‘safety necessity’ during the pandemic to a psychological tool for self-expression. This learning examines the correlation between e-commerce consumption and self-assurance the internal confidence derived from social belonging, appearance, and the autonomy of making independent financial choices in a burgeoning Tier-II city. This paper focuses on the online shopping which has become common among young generation of Nagpur and to understand the background of online purchase among youth and attempts to identify the hamper factors and further explores those factors particular to the e-commerce, which would drive in more customers to shop online, in general context.

Significance of the study

Most of the experimental research conducted in discovering online shopping behaviour had not focused on shopping behaviour of youth in particular. This learning attempts to understand the backgrounds of online purchase among Nagpur youth and attempts to identify the hindering factors and further explores those factors particular to the e-commerce website, which would drive in more customers to shop online, in Indian context.

- **For Retailers:** Helps local and national brands understand the specific triggers (discounts, FOMO, or convenience) that appeal to Nagpur’s youth.



- **Sociological Insight:** Offers a window into how the "Orange City" is transitioning from traditional community-based shopping (e.g., Sitabuldi markets) to individualized digital consumption.
- **Mental Health Awareness:** Highlights whether online shopping serves as a healthy confidence booster or a mask for underlying social anxieties.

According to Mubin (2012) youth are the foremost buyers who would purchase products through online options. Butler and Peppard (1998) study discovered the association between age and Internet shopping and found that younger consumers were more inclined to shop online. Studies reveal that more than 40% of online consumers are between 20 and 49 years of age (Slyke et al., 2005).

Review of Literature

Various theoretical models on shopping behaviour, Technology Acceptance Model, Theory of Reasoned Action or Innovative Diffusion Theory etc. (Shergill and Chen ,2005), have been used to explore the underlying psyche of online shopping. There are many factors that would motivate a consumer towards online purchase - access to detailed information, competitive prices, greater choice and convenience ((Kumar, Lang & Peng, 2005, Zhou, Dai & Zhang, 2007). Online shopping is significantly influenced by reference groups, peers, family members and their recommendations (Foucault & Scheufele, 2002).

Online shopping enables better product and price comparisons, as compared to traditional shopping (Alba et al., 1997). Final purchase is mainly based on dimensions like how, price and product comparison services, transaction costs like delivery time, delivery costs, ease of placing orders, personal information security etc. (Alba et al., 1997). Studies also reveal that gender, age, income level and educational qualification are significant factor that influence how one would use and adopt technology (Slyke et al., 2005)

Objectives of the study

- To explore the demographic profile of young online consumers.



- To identify the primary drivers of online shopping among Nagpur youth of age 18–30 years in 2023 -2024.
- To assess the level of self-assurance gained from owning branded or trending products.
- To examine the correlation between frequent online purchasing and emotional stability.
- To determine if peer influence in Nagpur’s social circles dictates online shopping frequency.

Data Collection & Methodology

The research design is primarily descriptive in nature. Sample selection was judgmental in nature, as to collect data from students in both graduation and non-graduation courses, in both arts, commerce and science streams. The study was conducted among students from the Affiliated Colleges of Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur and also VNIT, Ramdeobaba College and Raisoni Colleges. The survey was conducted in the year 2023-2024 using a self-completion questionnaire method, whereby questionnaires are handed out to respondents for self-completion and returned to the researcher immediately. In an effort to encourage high response, the questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter which assured the respondents of confidentiality.

- **Timeline:** Data was gathered between June 2023 and May 2024.
- **Research Design:** Descriptive and Analytical.
- **Primary Data: * Structured Questionnaires:** Distributed via Google Forms across major colleges VNIT, G.H. Raisoni, LAD College.
- **Interviews:** Brief qualitative sessions with frequent shoppers at Nagpur’s malls (VR Mall, Empress Mall) to capture real-time sentiment.
- **Secondary Data:** Reports from the **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)**, E-commerce industry trends (2025-26), and local Nagpur municipal economic journals.

Sample Profile



The population of the study comprised 110 students of RTM Nagpur University, affiliated colleges, of which 85 were science students, and 79 were arts and commerce students. 63.63% (70) of the students were in the age group of 20- 25 years, while 36.36% (40) belonged to the age group of 25-30, of which 70 were males, and 40 females. Majority of the sample belonged to the family income group of ‘between Rs 30,000 to Rs 60,000. The majority of the respondents have purchased products online, with the highest frequency of ‘once in six months. 72.7 % (80) of respondents have been shopping online for five years, and 27.3% (30) have been shopping online for less than a year.

Table No. 1: Model Profile

S No	Category	Details
1	Age Group	18-25 years (Gen Z and Young Millennials) 26-30 years (Early Career Professionals)
2	Gender	Balanced representation (Male, Female, others)
3	Occupation	Students, IT Professionals (MIHAN), and Small Business Owners
4	Monthly Spend	Average of ₹ 3,000/- – ₹10,000/- on e-commerce
5	Preferred Apps	Myntra (Fashion), Amazon (Gadgets), Blinkit/ Zepto (Quick-commerce) 94% Smartphone-based shopping via Android/iOS apps.

Table No. 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

This table outlines the personal characteristics of the 110 students surveyed at affiliated colleges of Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur.

S No	Category	Sub-category	Frequency (N=110)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	70	63.64%
2		Female	40	36.36%
3	Age Group	20–25 Years	70	63.63%
		25–30 Years	40	36.36%
4	Stream of Study	Science	85	77.27%
		Arts & Commerce	79	71.81%



5	Family Income	Rs. 30,000 – Rs 60,000	Majority	—
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The academic Stream had combined total of Science and Arts/Commerce students (\$85 + 79 = 164\$) exceeds the total sample size of \$110\$. This suggests that students may have been part of multidisciplinary courses or there is an overlap in the source data. The dominant group sample is largely composed of males in the 20–25 age bracket. The established habit a significant majority (72.7%) are seasoned online shoppers with five years of experience. The shopping cycle while online shopping is common, the intensity is moderate, peaking at a six-month interval for most users.

Table No. 3: Online Shopping Behaviour and Experience

This table details the digital purchasing tendencies and tenancy of the respondents.

S No	Variable	Description	Frequency/Value
1	Purchase Status	Have purchased products online	Majority
2	Highest Frequency	How often they shop	Once in six months
3	Experience (Long-term)	Shopping for 5 years	80 (72.7%)
4	Experience (Short-term)	Shopping for < 1 year	30 (27.3%)

Results

- **The Confidence Boost:** 68% of respondents reported feeling a "significant surge in confidence" when wearing products purchased online that received peer validation.
- **Instant Gratification:** The rise of **Quick-commerce** in Nagpur has reduced patience levels; 55% of youth feel "anxious" if a delivery is delayed by more than 24 hours.
- **Social Comparison:** 40% of the sample admitted to buying items they didn't need simply to match the "lifestyle aesthetic" seen on Nagpur-based Instagram influencers.
- **Financial Autonomy:** Interestingly, the use of **UPI** and **BNPL (Buy Now Pay Later)** has increased the sense of "financial self-assurance" among students, even if it leads to temporary debt.
- **Financial Empowerment:** The rise of UPI in Nagpur during 2023-24 allowed 80% of youth to feel more "financially independent," even when spending small amounts.



Discussion

The findings suggest that online shopping in Nagpur is performative. For many, the ‘Self-assurance’ is external—derived from the brands they carry rather than internal self-worth. The 2023–2024 data suggests that for Nagpur's youth, self-assurance is increasingly commodity-linked. The ‘Orange City’ youth use online shopping to bridge the perceived ‘glamour gap’ between Tier-II and Tier-I cities (like Mumbai or Bangalore). While the ease of access to global fashion empowers youth in a Tier-II city to feel "on par" with their peers in Mumbai or Bangalore, it creates a dependency loop. The discussion highlights a shift from *functional shopping* (buying what is needed) to *emotional shopping* (buying to feel better). In Nagpur’s tight-knit social fabric, the pressure to maintain a digital ‘image’ is a primary driver of this behaviour, suggesting that while confidence rises in the short term, it may be fragile if not backed by financial literacy.

Table No. 4: *Most preferred feature that would attract in choosing an e-commerce portal.*

What Attracts the Modern Shopper?

S No	Feature Category	Key Attraction	Why it matters
1	Trust	Easy Returns & Refund Policy	Reduces the perceived risk of ‘getting scammed.’
2	Engagement	Gamified Rewards	Earning points or ‘coins’ makes shopping feel like a win.
3	Convenience	Voice & Visual Search	Perfect for users on the go or those who prefer speaking over typing.
4	Ethics	Sustainability Filters	Shows products that are eco-friendly or locally sourced.

Conclusion

The growth potential of the online retail fragment in India is attracting many leading international market players to invest in India. For instance, Amazon has made a whopping investment of \$2 million and more players are set to enter the lucrative Indian market. The entry of international players has increased the competition in the segment. The findings regarding motivators and barriers to online purchase clearly indicate that lower price and convenience can act as strong motivators while refund policy and security and privacy



concerns were the biggest barriers to online shopping. The fact that an average online user, especially the youth, is spending more time online gives various market players the opportunity to draw more users to their websites through innovative marketing strategies. Portals should gain competitive by focusing on both psychological and infrastructural needs, as to deliver efficient and effective service, thereby help build sustainable development of e-commerce in India.

The study concludes that online shopping significantly bolsters the self-assurance of Nagpur's youth by providing access, autonomy, and aesthetic alignment with global trends. While it empowers them as modern consumers, there is an underlying risk of "Consumerist Anxiety." Moving forward, there is a need for balanced digital consumption habits to ensure that self-assurance is rooted in personal achievement rather than just digital acquisitions. The learning achieves that online shopping has become a primary tool for identity construction among Nagpur's youth. While it offers empowerment through variety and financial autonomy via UPI / Digital Wallets, the resulting self-assurance is often transactional. For a healthier psychological outlook, there is a need for digital literacy that emphasizes internal self-worth over material acquisitions. Finally, while e-commerce portals have successfully modernised Nagpur's retail habits, the youth must balance digital trends with sustainable self-confidence.

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