

## AN EVALUATION OF E-COMMERCE HABITS AMONG THE RESEARCH SCHOLARS IN UNIVERSITY OF KERALA

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### **Abstract**

*E-commerce plays an important role in the business field. The use of computer networks helps us to improve business activity and organisational performance. Increasing profitability, gaining market share, improving customer service and delivering products faster are some of the organisational performance gains possible with electronic commerce. E-commerce is more than ordering goods from an online catalogue. It covers various aspects of an organisation's electronic interactions with its stakeholders; the people who determine the future of the organisation, such stakeholders include customers, suppliers, Govt regulators, employees, financial institutions, managers and the public at large. In this article, the authors have made an attempt to examine the ecommerce habits of research scholars in University of Kerala. The data have been collected with the help of a pretested structured interview schedule. For this purpose, 50 research scholars have been selected by following simple random method and surveyed.*

**Key –Words: E-commerce, Habits, Consumer, Attitude, Time, Cost, Security.**

### **1.INTRODUCTION**

The concept of internet was introduced in India in the 1980's. Introduction of internet allows people from all over the world to get connected inexpensively and reliably. As a technical infrastructure, it is a global collection of networks, connected to share information using a common set of protocols. Also, as a vast network of people and information, the internet is an enabler for e-commerce as it allows businesses to showcase and sell their products and services through online and gives potential customers, prospects, and business partners access to information about these businesses and their products and services that would lead to purchase.

E-commerce means buying, selling and exchanging of products, services, and information via computer networks, primarily through the internet. Most the business firms in India sell their products and services through internet. Amazon, eBay, chem. connect, flip cart are most common ecommerce web sites. Before the Internet was utilized for commercial purposes, companies used private networks-such as the EDI or Electronic Data Interchange-to transact business with each other. That was the early form of e-commerce. However, installing and maintaining private networks was very expensive. With the Internet, e-commerce spread rapidly because of the lower costs involved and also the Internet is based on open standards.

E-commerce provides more benefits to business firms, consumers and the society at large. The important benefits of ecommerce can be summarised as follows:-

- Expands the market place of business to national and international markets. With minimum capital outlay, a company quickly locate more customers, the best suppliers, and the most suitable business partners worldwide.
- Eliminates the marketing distribution channel, making products cheaper and increasing the profits of vendors'.
- Enables customers to shop or make other transactions 24 hours a day, from almost any location.
- Allows consumers to interact in electronic communities and to exchange ideas and compare experiences.
- Facilitates delivery of public services, such as government entitlements, reducing the cost of distribution and chance of fraud, and increasing the quality of social services, police work, health care, and education.

## **2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The important studies relevant to the present paper are reviewed briefly below.

Limayem et al. (2000) analysed the impact of different social factors on consumer's online shopping intentions and behaviour based on the theory of planned behaviour. They revealed the different effects of social factors on consumer online shopping behaviour and pointed out that for subjective norms, while media and family influences were significant, friends' influence did not make a difference.

Vijayasathya (2001) conducted a study on the impact of shopping orientations, product types, and shopping Aids on Attitude and Intention to use online shopping and the study concluded that the integrated web specific factors (online shopping aid) in order to better explain consumer online shopping behaviour.

Keen et al (2004) and Miles et al (2000) pointed out that online shopping is just simply facilitating various stages of traditional shopping, particularly decision making and implies that the only difference between online and offline consumers is a desire for convenience and time saving.

Schiffman and Kanut (2007) stated that the term consumer behaviour is concerned with the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. The study analysed that how individuals make decisions to spend their valuable resources of time, money and effort of consumption related items.

Dr. S.G Gupta (2010) analysed the impact of changing demographics profile of Indian customers on their internet shopping behaviour and the study found that demographic profiles of online users; gender, age and education have significant association to web shopping in the current Indian scenario. However, it won't be very late for these differences to evaporate keeping into account fast changing social habits and growing technological developments.

Thus, it is clear that none of the previous studies attempted to examine e-commerce behaviour of research scholars in the University of Kerala and hence the present paper is a novel attempt to fill the lacuna.

## **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER**

The main objective of the study is to examine the behavioural intentions of research scholars in the University of Kerala towards online shopping and a study of the purchase process.

## **4. HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses have been developed and tested with the help of statistical tools.

Ho: Research scholars are not positively inclined to online shopping.

Ho: There is no relationship between scholarship category and ecommerce habits.

## **5. METHODOLOGY AND DATA BASE**

The present work is descriptive and analytical in nature. Both primary and secondary data have been collected and used for the preparation of this article. Primary data are collected from the selected 50 research scholars of Kerala University Thiruvananthapuram through structured interview schedule. Secondary data have been collected from journals, research reports and the relevant text books.

### **5.1. Sampling Method Adopted and Size**

The population of the study is the Research scholars in the various faculties of Kerala University. In order to ensure a large sample size, 50 research scholars have been selected for the purpose. Simple random sampling method has been employed for the selection of sample respondents.

## **6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In order to fulfill the objectives stated above, certain variables are identified and analyzed. The variables analyzed are listed below.

1. Profile of the Research scholars
  - a. Age group
  - b. Gender
  - c. Type of Fellowship
2. Frequency of Usage of Internet per week
3. Frequency of online shopping
4. Purpose of Using Ecommerce
5. Products Purchasing through Ecommerce
6. Response of the Customers about Shopping Experience

These variables are explained below.

### 1. Age group and Gender of the Research scholars

The classification of sample respondents based on age group and gender is shown in Table 1.

**Table.1 Age Group and Gender of the Research Scholars**

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Up to 25	3	12	2	8	5	10
25-30	13	52	12	48	25	50
30-35	5	20	6	24	11	22
35-40	2	8	4	16	6	12
Above 40	2	8	1	4	3	6
Total	25	100	25	100	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The table shows that 50% of the total respondents are in the age group of 25-30 years, 22% are in the age group of 30-35 years. Only 10% of the research scholars fall below the age group of 25 years. Further 12% of the research scholars are in the age group of 35-40 years and 6% are above 40 years. The data revealed that young research scholars have more ecommerce habits as compared to other age groups.

### 2. Type of Fellowship

Fellowship category influences the ecommerce buying habits of the research scholars. The data on this variable is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Classification of Sample Respondents showing fellowship Category**

Fellowship Category	Respondents	
	No.	Percentage
University JRF	12	24
University SRF	8	16
UGC JRF	22	44
UGC SRF	3	6
Others	5	10
Total	50	100

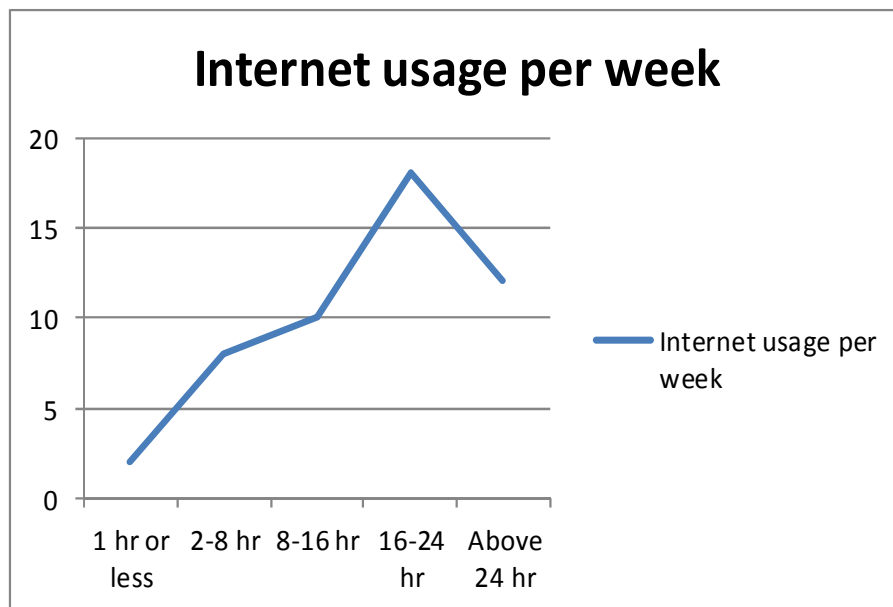
Source: Primary Data

It is clear that majority of the research scholars have UGC fellowship i.e., 50% of the respondents (44% have UGC JRF and 6% have UGC SRF), 40% of the respondents have University fellowship. Further 10% of the

research scholars have other fellowships such as Rajiv Gandhi fellowship, Moulana azad fellowship etc.

### 3. Frequency of Internet usage Per week

According to the primary data collected, most of the Research scholars use internet for at least 8 hour per week on an average. Similarly, 36% of the respondents use the internet at 16-24 hours per week, 24% of the research scholars use the internet more than 24 hours per week. The data shows that research scholars spent more time for using internet.



Source: Primary Data

The Pearson Chi- square Tests for frequency of online shopping is calculated and is shown in table 3.

Variables			Type of Fellowship				
			Uty JRF	Uty SRF	UGC JRF	UGC SRF	Others
Frequency of online shopping	Hardly ever	Number	2	3	1	-	1
		Percentage	16.7	37.5	4.5	-	20
	Occasionally	Number	8	4	8	1	2
		Percentage	66.7	50	36.4	33.3	40
	Regularly	Number	2	1	13	2	2
		Percentage	16.7	12.5	59.1	66.7	40
Total		Number	12	8	22	3	5
		Percentage	100	100	100	100	100
Pearson Chi-Square			8.680				
P value			0.013				
Result			Significant				

Source: Primary Data

As per the Chi-Square Test, CVTS (Computed Variable Test Statistics) is 8.680 and p value is 0.013( $p < 0.05$ ),  $H_0$  is rejected that is there is relationship between type of fellowship and ecommerce habit i.e., online hopping. That is frequency of online shopping and type of fellowship of research scholars is dependent.

Independent Sample t-test for intention of online shopping is given below.

**Group Statistics**

Gender of the research scholars	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std Error Mean
Intention of the research scholars to shop online	25	4.0000	1.11803	0.22361
Male	25	3.5200	1.47535	0.29507
Female				
Sig. .037				

Source: Primary Data

As per the test statistics p value less than 0.05(p=0.037), Ho is rejected i.e., research scholars are positively inclined to online shopping.

**4. Products Purchasing through Ecommerce**

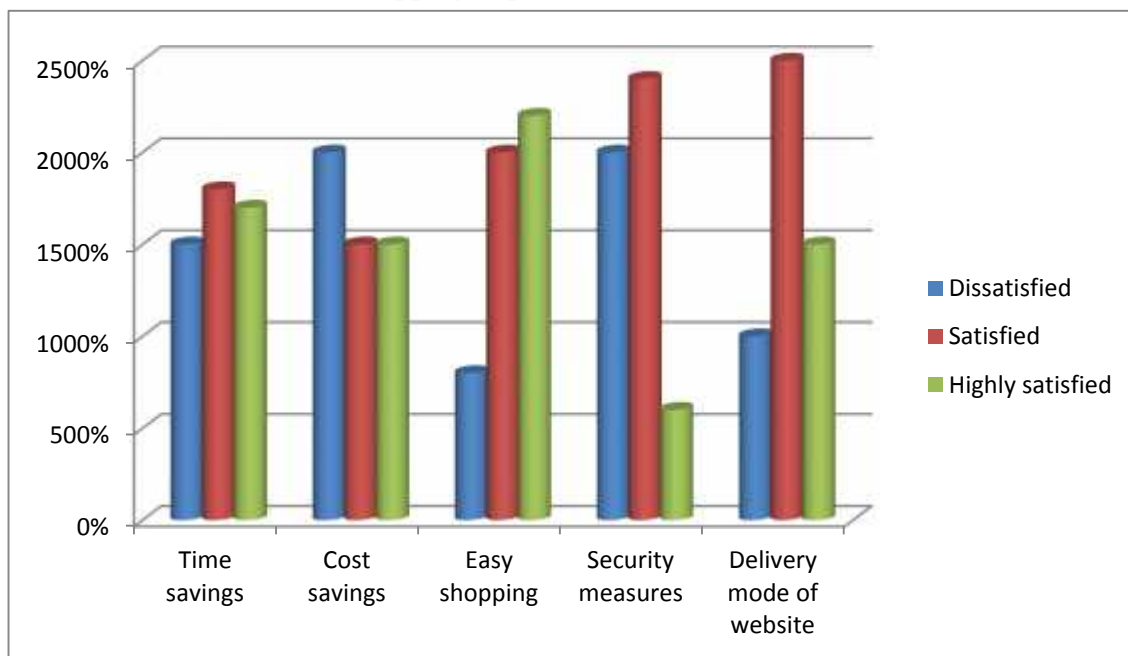
The products purchased through on line are displayed in the following table.

Product category	No.	Percentage
Books, Movies, Music, Games	12	24
Apparel, Shoes, Jewellery	6	12
Travel Ticket	15	30
Mobile software, Mobile	5	10
Food, Hotel booking	2	4
Health, Beauty	2	4
Electronics, Hardware, Software	6	12
Others	2	4

Source: Primary Data

According to the descriptive statistics travel tickets (30%) are frequently purchased by research scholars through online shopping followed by books, movies, music, games (24%), electronics, hardware, software (12%) etc.

**5. Response of the Customers about Shopping Experience**



Source: Primary Data



As per the statistic 36% of the research scholars are satisfied with online shopping for saving their time, 34% are highly satisfied and 30% are dissatisfied. 30% of the research scholars are satisfied with the cost savings features of the ecommerce website, 40% are dissatisfied and 30% are highly satisfied. 16% of the research scholars feel difficult to shop online, 40% are dissatisfied with security measures and 20% are dissatisfied with product delivery features of the ecommerce website.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Ecommerce is the internet enabled buying and selling activity that facilitates customers to shop easy from almost any location; it increases organisational performance through increased profitability and high market shares. Most (50%) of the research scholars are in the age group of 25-30 years, young research scholars have more ecommerce habits than other groups. The study shows that 44% of the research scholars have UGC JRF fellowship (As per the Chi-Square Test, CVTS (Computed Variable Test Statistics) is 8.680 and p value is 0.013( $p < 0.05$ )), type of research fellowship influence the ecommerce habits of the research scholars.

Majority of the research scholars use the internet at least 8 hour per week on an average. Travel tickets are frequently purchased item by the scholars followed by books, movies, music, games and electronics, hardware, software etc. Most (50%) of the research scholars are satisfied with the delivery mode of the ecommerce website. 48% of the respondents are satisfied with the security measures of ecommerce, 40% of the scholars face online security problem and 40% of the scholars have dissatisfaction with the cost savings, they opined that some ecommerce websites incurred high service charge.

Nowadays customer satisfaction is the important objectives of the business, for satisfying the online customer's ecommerce website adopt adequate security measures. These security measures prevent online hackers, internet hackers hack many information of the online shoppers, their credit card number, password etc. Cost savings and time savings may be the two of several major determinants to online shopping, for satisfying online customer's ecommerce website reduce their service charge, the layout and information provided in the website make simple for saving their valuable time.

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