

A COMPARISON ON CONSUMER EXPERIENCES WITH ONLINE AND OFFLINE SHOPPING TOWARDS FASHION AND APPAREL

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Abstract

The emergence of e-commerce has brought about a dynamic shift in consumer shopping experiences, altering how consumers interact with fashion and apparel. The purpose of this study is to compare how customers shop for clothing and fashion through these two channels. It examines important elements including convenience, affordability, product variety, shopping experiences, and the return and exchange policy. The study also looks at how age, gender, and income level affect people's shopping preferences. The survey was administered through a structured Questionnaire. Analyzing the data collected using statistical tools like chi square, regression.

Keywords:

Consumer Experiences, Online Shopping, Offline Shopping, Convenience, Affordability, Product Variety, Shopping Experiences

1. INTRODUCTION

The fashion and apparel industry has witnessed significant changes in the way consumers shop due to the rapid growth of e-commerce. Online shopping offers the convenience of browsing through a wide variety of products from the comfort of home, often at competitive prices. In contrast, offline shopping provides a tangible experience where consumers can physically inspect products, try them on, and benefit from personalized service. Both online and offline shopping present unique advantages and challenges, and consumer preferences vary based on individual needs, expectations, and demographic factors such as age, gender, and income.

This study seeks to identify how often respondents shop for fashion and apparel in online and offline settings and explore the aspects they value most, such as convenience, affordability, product variety, and return policies. Furthermore, it aims to understand the role of demographic factors such as age, gender, and income in shaping overall shopping preferences between online and offline channels. Finally, the study investigates whether there is a significant relationship between the affordability of fashion products and their perceived quality in both shopping environments, offering insights into consumer expectations and satisfaction levels.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

Wakefield and Baker [1] explored how the physical mall environment influences consumer excitement and shopping behavior. Their study highlighted the importance of mall characteristics such as variety, involvement, and environmental factors in enhancing consumer excitement. Factors like mall size, geographic location, and niche mall types further contribute to this excitement. This study emphasizes that the sensory-rich, physical environment is key to engaging consumers, offering a

comparison point when examining offline versus online shopping experiences.

Levin et al. [2] examined consumer preferences for online and offline shopping features, noting that preferences vary depending on the product category. They argued that certain product categories, such as fashion and apparel, benefit more from offline experiences due to the ability to touch, try, and feel the products, while online shopping is preferred for features like large selection and quick access to information. Their findings suggest that consumers' decision-making process is driven by the unique advantages of each channel, often leading to a multichannel approach where consumers browse in one channel and purchase in another.

Levin [3] conducted a study to understand how product attributes influence consumer preferences for online versus offline shopping across different stages of the shopping journey. The study showed that online shopping is preferred when attributes such as a large selection and quick shopping are prioritized, while offline shopping is favored for attributes like personal service and the ability to see, touch, or handle products. This finding is highly relevant to understanding consumer behavior in the fashion and apparel segment, where tactile attributes and personal service play a significant role in shaping offline preferences.

Lee and Kim [4] investigated how consumers' shopping orientations influence their satisfaction with product search and purchase in multi-channel environments. Their findings revealed that confident and fashion-conscious consumers were more satisfied with store-based retail channels, particularly for apparel purchases, while catalog and internet shoppers were more satisfied with non-store-based channels. The study underscores the importance of aligning retail strategies with consumer shopping preferences to maximize satisfaction, particularly in the apparel sector, where the tactile experience of in-store shopping plays a significant role for many customers.

Hahn and Kim [5] examined the role of trust and perceived internet confidence in shaping online shopping intentions within a multi-channel context. The study revealed that consumer trust in an offline retailer and perceived confidence in shopping online significantly affect behavioral intentions toward online purchases. In the apparel sector, the consistency of product information and customer service across channels is critical for encouraging consumers to engage in online shopping. This study provides important insights into how trust in offline stores can enhance consumers' willingness to shop online, a crucial factor for retailers looking to integrate both channels seamlessly.

Ha and Stoel [6] focused on online apparel shopping, investigating the relationship between e-shopping quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Using Oliver's (1997) quality-satisfaction-behavioral intention model, they identified that atmospheric and experiential dimensions, such as

excitement and fun, are critical to online shopping quality in the apparel industry. Consumers' desire for an engaging, pleasurable online experience parallels the excitement-driven experiences in offline environments. This study highlights the importance of creating a high-quality, experiential e-shopping environment to meet customer expectations in the fashion industry.

Huang et al. [7] explored the impact of brand experiences on brand resonance in multi-channel fashion retailing. The study highlights how sensory, cognitive, and affective experiences across online and offline channels influence consumers' relational brand experience, which in turn impacts brand awareness and loyalty. Interestingly, the study found that while relational brand experiences are important across all channels, the type of channel—whether online or in-store—moderates the relationship between sensory and affective experiences and brand resonance.

Mathew [8] studied the evolving trends in online apparel shopping among Indian consumers. The research indicated that factors such as time efficiency, offers, price, services, and the ability to adapt to new technologies significantly impact online apparel shopping behavior. The findings suggest that online retailers must continuously innovate and offer flexible shopping experiences to cater to the growing demands of Indian consumers. This study underscores the dynamic nature of online shopping in India's apparel market, where convenience, affordability, and technological advancements drive consumer engagement.

Rahman [9] examined fashion innovativeness in Indian consumers, focusing on shopping behavior, clothing evaluation, and fashion information sources. The study found that fashion innovators—those who frequently seek out new fashion trends—spent more money on clothes and shopped more frequently (both online and offline) than fashion non-innovators. Garment fit and comfort were key evaluative cues for both groups. This study provides important insights into the behavior of fashion innovators, a key demographic for online and offline apparel retailers. Understanding the distinct preferences and information sources of fashion innovators versus non-innovators can help retailers tailor their marketing strategies to different consumer segments.

Lee and Jung [10] examined the phenomenon of channel-hopping among fashion consumers, which refers to shoppers moving between different retail channels during their shopping journey. The findings revealed that some consumers place greater emphasis on hedonic shopping values, such as enjoyment and excitement, while others focus more on utilitarian values, such as convenience and efficiency. These insights are valuable for fashion retailers aiming to optimize omni-channel strategies by catering to the distinct needs of different consumer segments. Channel-hopping has become an essential aspect of consumer decision-making in fashion retail, and understanding these behaviors can lead to more effective marketing and customer service efforts across multiple platforms.

Rathee and Rajain [11] investigated the influence of the Need for Touch (NFT) on consumers' shopping preferences in online environments. Their research found that gender significantly affects NFT, with women demonstrating a higher need to physically interact with products before purchasing, particularly in categories like apparel. This study emphasizes the challenge for online retailers in replicating the tactile experience of physical stores. However, the authors suggest that advanced technologies,

such as virtual touch, could help bridge this sensory gap, making online shopping more appealing to high-NFT individuals. This insight is crucial in understanding the limitations of online shopping in the apparel sector, where touch and feel are often critical to purchase decisions.

Wei Yin and Bugao Xu [12] explored how different dimensions of online shopping experiences influence customer loyalty in the apparel industry. Their study found that product experience, including accurate product information and quality, has the strongest effect on customer loyalty, followed by brand, service, emotional, and website experience. This research highlights that in the apparel segment, maintaining a strong product experience is essential for retaining loyal customers. As online shopping lacks the sensory engagement of offline shopping, ensuring accurate product information and a smooth return/exchange process is paramount for enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Kautish, Guru and Sinha [13] explored how hedonic and utilitarian values influence customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions when shopping for fashion apparel online. The study, conducted in the context of the Indian market, revealed that utilitarian values, such as product usefulness and convenience, had a stronger impact on customer satisfaction and purchase intentions than hedonic values, which are related to the pleasure and enjoyment of shopping. This suggests that, for online fashion retailers, ensuring ease of use, reliability, and efficient service may be more critical for driving customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study emphasizes the need for online fashion retailers to balance hedonic and utilitarian aspects of their offerings to appeal to a broad range of consumers.

Sensory marketing, particularly the role of touch, has become an important aspect of consumer behavior research. Kalender Özcan Atilgan and Murat Bayindir [14] noted that sensory marketing strategies, especially those involving touch, are often overlooked in the literature. Their study highlighted the significance of incorporating sensory stimuli into marketing strategies to enhance customer experiences in both online and offline retail environments.

Frasquet [15] advanced the discussion by examining customer inspiration in an omnichannel retailing context. They explored how perceived novelty and customer loyalty across offline and online channels affect shopper behavior. Their findings reveal that channel novelty drives customer inspiration, influencing purchase behavior across channels. By adopting a channel-specific perspective, the study underlines how retailers can leverage synergies between online and offline platforms to inspire customers. This research is particularly relevant to understanding how retailers can align their strategies across channels to maximize consumer engagement and inspiration in the fashion and apparel sectors.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify how often respondent shop for fashion and apparel in online and offline.
2. To identify the aspects respondents really look for while buying fashion and apparel in online and offline.

3. To identify the Demographic factors and the respondent's overall preference between online and offline shopping experience.
4. To know whether there is significant relationship between the affordability of fashion products and the overall quality of fashion products available online and offline.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research followed Descriptive in nature. This research includes the respondents who are retailers who purchase pipes. Sample Size is 200. Type of data used is Primary and Secondary data. Through, structured questionnaire we could collect the primary data. Data is collected through survey. Convenient sampling was chosen. Statistical Tools Used for this research are Chi-Square Test, Regression is used for analysis of data.

4.1 LIMITATIONS

- The demographic profile indicates a primarily young and educated group, mainly consisting of students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other age groups with different shopping preferences.
- The views expressed by respondents may be biased due to individual differences in opinions, preferences, and experiences.
- The Study faced time limitations, which restricted the depth and detail of the research.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

4.2.1 Demographic Factors:

Table.1. Demographic Factors

Factors	Particulars	Respondents
Gender	Female	133
	Male	67
Age	15 – 24	150
	25 – 34	23
	35 – 44	21
	45 – 54	6
Educational Qualification	SSLC	3
	HSC	8
	UG	95
	PG	88
	Diploma	6
Occupation	Students	116
	Employed	57
	Self-employed	10
	Unemployed	17

The demographics of the respondents are presented in Table.1. The respondents consist primarily of younger, well-educated females, with most being students.

4.2.2 Frequency of Online Shopping for Fashion Products:

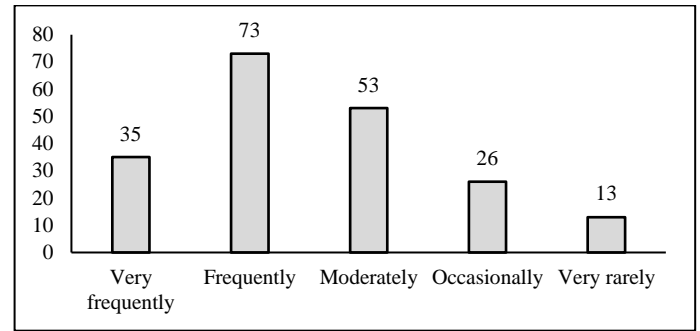


Fig.1. Frequency of shopping for fashion products online

From the Fig.1, it is inferred that most people shop for fashion and apparel online frequently, with 73 respondents indicating this. Following that, 53 respondents said they shop moderately, 35 respondents shop very frequently, 26 respondents shop occasionally, and 13 respondents shop very rarely.

4.2.3 Frequency of Offline Shopping for Fashion Products:

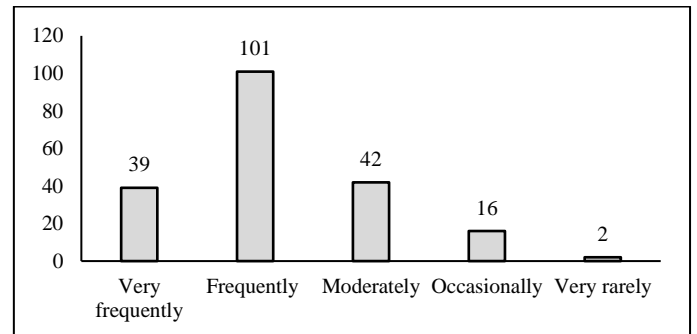


Fig.2. Frequency of shopping for fashion products offline

From the Fig.2, it is inferred that the majority of people shop for fashion and apparel offline frequently, with 101 respondents indicating this. Following that, 42 respondents said they shop moderately, 39 respondents shop very frequently, 16 respondents shop occasionally, and 2 respondents shop very rarely.

4.2.4 Preference for Shopping Channels:

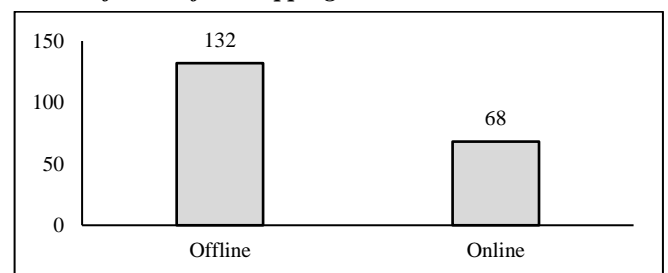


Fig.3. Preference for shopping channels

From the Fig.3, it is inferred that the majority, with 132 respondents, prefer offline shopping overall. On the other hand, 68 respondents indicated a preference for online shopping. This suggests that a significant number of people still enjoy the traditional experience of shopping in physical stores.

4.2.5 Key Factors Influencing Online Fashion Purchases:

Table.2. Aspects respondents really look for while buying fashion and apparel in online.

S. No	Aspects	Average
1	Product variety	4.220
2	Accessibility and convenience	4.175
3	Affordability of fashion products	3.935
4	Return and exchange policies	3.869
5	Quality	3.720

From the Table.2, respondents prioritize product variety (4.220) the most when shopping for fashion and apparel online, accessibility and convenience (4.175) is also highly valued. While affordability (3.935) is still a significant factor, Return and exchange policies (3.869) are moderately important. Lastly, quality (3.720) is the least prioritized of the listed aspects, although still important.

4.2.6 Key Factors Influencing Offline Fashion Purchases:

Table.3. Aspects respondents really look for while buying fashion and apparel in offline.

S. No	Aspects	Average
1	Quality	4.275
2	Accessibility and convenience	4.090
3	Return and exchange policies	3.905
4	Product variety	3.825
5	Affordability of fashion products	3.615

From the Table.3, respondents place the highest importance on quality (4.275), Accessibility and convenience (4.090) also rank high, indicating that easy access to stores, Return and exchange policies (3.905) are moderately important, product variety (3.825) is less prioritized compared to online shopping. Lastly, affordability (3.615) is the least important aspect.

4.2.7 Chi-Square Test for Shopping Preferences:

- Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between demographic factors and shopping preferences.
- Alternate Hypothesis: There is a relationship between demographic factors and shopping preferences.

Table.4. Chi-Square test for shopping preferences

Demographic Factors	Asymptotic Significance	Null Hypothesis
Gender	0.014	Rejected
Monthly Income	0.227	Accepted

While observing the results of the chi-square test, the asymptotic significance values indicate the relationship between demographic factors and shopping preferences. For gender, the significance level is 0.014, which is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant relationship between gender and shopping preferences. For monthly income, the significance level is 0.227, which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted,

suggesting that there is no significant relationship between monthly income and shopping preferences.

4.2.8 Chi-Square Test for Frequency of Shopping

- Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between how often respondent shop for fashion and apparel and Demographic factors.
- Alternate Hypothesis: There is a relationship between how often respondent shop for fashion and apparel and Demographic factors.

Table.5. Chi-Square test for frequency of shopping

Demographic Factors	Asymptotic Significance	Null Hypothesis
Age	0.039	Rejected
Monthly Income	0.258	Accepted

While observing the results of the chi-square test, the asymptotic significance values reflect the relationship between how often respondents shop for fashion and apparel and demographic factors. For age, the significance level is 0.039, which is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant relationship between age and how often respondents shop for fashion and apparel. For monthly income, the significance level is 0.258, which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, suggesting that there is no significant relationship between monthly income and how often respondents shop for fashion and apparel.

4.2.9 Regression Analysis of Affordability and Quality of Fashion Products Available Online:

Table.6. Relationship between affordability of fashion products and overall quality of fashion products available online

Model	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
		F Change	Sig. F Change
1	0.8073	11.145	0.001

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B		
1	Constant	2.837	10.480	0.000
	Affordability of fashion products.	0.224	3.338	0.001

In this analysis the regression result is,

$$Y = 0.224x + 2.837 \quad (1)$$

where, X = The affordability of fashion products. Y = The overall quality of fashion products available online.

Observing the above tables, it is evident that the value of the hypothesis is 0.001 which is lesser than 0.05. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. ($F = 11.145$). It is found that there is significant relationship between the independent variable (the affordability of fashion products) and the dependent variable (the overall quality of fashion products available online). This implies a positive relationship between affordability and the quality of fashion products available online.

4.2.10 Regression Analysis of Affordability and Quality of Fashion Products Available Offline:

Table.7. Relationship between affordability of fashion products and overall quality of fashion products available offline

Model	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
		F Change	Sig. F Change
1	0.6287	19.281	0.000

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B		
1	Constant	3.534	20.250	0.000
	Affordability of fashion products	0.205	4.391	0.000

In this analysis the regression result is,

$$Y = 0.205x + 3.534 \quad (2)$$

where, X = The affordability of fashion products and Y = The overall quality of fashion products available offline

Observing the above tables, it is evident that the value of the hypothesis is 0.000 which is lesser than 0.05. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. ($F = 19.281$). It is found that there is significant relationship between the independent variable (the affordability of fashion products) and the dependent variable (the overall quality of fashion products available offline). This implies a positive relationship between affordability and the quality of fashion products available offline.

4.2.11 Regression Analysis of Online Shopping Behavior and Convenience:

Table.8. Relationship between online shopping behavior and convenience.

Model	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
		F Change	Sig. F Change
1	0.7873	19.607	0.000

Model		Un standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B		
1	Constant	3.413	18.860	0.000
	Online shopping behavior	0.221	4.428	0.000

In this analysis the regression result is,

$$Y = 0.221x + 3.413 \quad (3)$$

where, X = Online shopping behavior and Y = Convenience

Observing the above tables, it is evident that the significance value (Sig. F Change) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. With an F-value of 19.607, it is found that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable (convenience) and the dependent variable (online shopping behavior). The positive unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.221$) indicates that as convenience increases, online shopping behavior also increases. This implies a positive relationship between the

ease of shopping online and how often respondents engage in online shopping.

4.2.12 Regression Analysis of Offline Shopping Behavior and Convenience:

Table.9. Relationship between offline shopping behavior and convenience.

Model	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
		F Change	Sig. F Change
1	0.8210	19.166	0.000

Model		Un standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B		
1	Constant	2.993	11.636	0.000
	Offline shopping behavior	0.289	4.378	0.000

In this analysis the regression result is,

$$Y = 0.289x + 2.993 \quad (4)$$

where, X = Offline shopping behavior and Y = Convenience

Observing the above tables, it is evident that the significance value (Sig. F Change) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. With an F-value of 19.166, it is found that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable (convenience) and the dependent variable (offline shopping behavior). The positive unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.289$) indicates that as convenience increases, offline shopping behavior also increases. This implies a positive relationship between the ease of shopping offline and the frequency of respondents engaging in offline shopping.

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This study focused on understanding the relationship between various factors and shopping preferences for fashion and apparel, comparing online and offline shopping experiences.

- The study primarily includes younger, well-educated respondents, with a majority being female students and they prefer to shop fashion products offline.
- Demographic factor like gender influences the respondent's overall preference between online and offline shopping experience and age influences the frequency of shopping while monthly income had no significant effect.
- There is a significant positive relationship between the affordability of fashion products and their perceived quality in online and offline shopping.
- Convenience plays a crucial role in both online and offline shopping behavior, with increased convenience leading to more frequent shopping.

6. CONCLUSION

Retailers can create focused strategies for online and offline channels by utilizing these insights. Online platforms can greatly increase customer satisfaction and shopping behavior by

concentrating on increasing product variety, improving convenience, and keeping prices moderate. In physical retail spaces, placing a strong emphasis on product quality and facilitating easy shopping can boost foot traffic and foster customer loyalty. In order to maximize customer engagement across all channels, this study also suggests that retailers using an omni-channel approach should align their strategies with the distinct values consumers place on different aspects of the shopping experience, such as quality offline and convenience online.

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