

A Study on Online Shopping Behaviour of Gen Z Students: Insights from Consumer Behaviour Perspective

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Abstract- E-commerce platforms have fundamentally transformed the purchasing routines of contemporary youth, particularly student consumers belonging to Generation Z. Widespread smartphone adoption, enhanced internet connectivity, and user-friendly retail applications have fundamentally altered how this cohort explores, evaluates, and acquires merchandise. This study investigates the behavioral tendencies of Gen Z students in digital marketplaces and identifies the primary determinants driving their transactional choices. Utilizing a structured questionnaire, empirical data were gathered from a sample of 220 university students. The analysis specifically investigates the impact of operational convenience, social media engagement, online peer reviews, digital trust, and spontaneous purchasing tendencies. The empirical outcomes indicate that platform convenience and social media marketing serve as dominant catalysts for student purchasing decisions. Furthermore, customer feedback mechanisms and digital platform credibility significantly shape buying patterns. These findings offer strategic implications for e-commerce vendors and digital marketers aiming to engage the youth demographic effectively.

Keywords: Generation Z, Purchase Dynamics, E-Retail, Student Consumers, Digital Marketing, Impulse Buying.

I. INTRODUCTION

The global expansion of digital infrastructure has radically restructured consumer transactional habits across demographic segments. Web-based retail channels have experienced unprecedented adoption among younger demographics due to optimized processing speeds, transactional flexibility, and effortless merchandise accessibility. Modern buyers can seamlessly audit merchandise, execute rate comparisons, read historical feedback, and complete acquisitions remotely without visiting a brick-and-mortar storefront. This behavioral evolution is uniquely prominent among Generation Z cohorts.

Generally encompassing individuals born between the late 1990s and the early 2000s, Generation Z represents the first demographic to experience ubiquitous cellular device access, high-speed internet, and social networking ecosystems from early childhood. This deep-seated technological immersion ensures they exhibit high proficiency and comfort when utilizing digital utilities for commerce, remote communications, leisure, and financial transactions.

Within this cohort, university students frequently buy items such as attire, electronics, literature, cosmetics, and lifestyle accessories via digital channels. Their consumption choices are closely tied to considerations of convenience, discount offers, social media marketing, digital influencer advocacy, user reviews, and delivery efficiencies. For most students, virtual marketplaces are favoured because they optimize time usage and unlock access to an expanded inventory of goods.

Consumer behaviour fundamentally addresses how individuals assess, select, secure, and utilize goods or services to satisfy distinct requirements. Deconstructing the virtual shopping dynamics of Generation Z students is vital for contemporary enterprises, as this valuation represents an expanding and highly lucrative segment of the digital economy. The aggressive scaling of major e-commerce venues like Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and Meesho has significantly elevated market competition. Consequently, corporate firms are dedicating substantial capital toward targeted digital advertising, influencer alliances, algorithmically tailored recommendations, and interactive customer relations to capture the loyalty of young buyers.

While existing literature extensively explores general e-commerce behaviors, field focus regarding student cohorts residing in Tier-2 urban zones and

educational hubs within Karnataka remains scarce. To address this academic gap, this research examines the critical factors that dictate the digital shopping choices of Gen Z students.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Due to the accelerating adoption of digital retail systems, global scholars have extensively investigated consumer actions in virtual environments. Kotler and Keller (2016) noted that general consumer buying choices stem from an intersection of personal, cultural, social, and psychological determinants. When applied to digital landscapes, system usability and immediate information access further steer consumer selections.

Research by Lim et al. (2016) demonstrated that convenience stands out as a core driver for choosing online channels over traditional avenues. Web venues reduce the physical exertion and time investment needed to visit physical outlets while simplifying merchandise comparison tasks. Similarly, Duffett (2017) highlighted the profound capacity of social networks to guide young audiences. Targeted digital promotions, content created by online influencers, and fellow-to-fellow feedback distributed across social utilities heavily steer the buying tendencies of young academic crowds.

Furthermore, Filieri (2015) observed that digital fellow critiques and user scores serve as essential pre-buy evaluation metrics. Favorable customer evaluations strengthen consumer buy confidence and raise transactional conversion rates. Transaction security and system integrity are also fundamental to successful electronic commerce operations. According to Kim et al. (2008), buyers demonstrate a higher willingness to transact on websites that guarantee secured financial architectures and dependable logistics fulfillment.

Virtual ecosystems are also highly conducive to spontaneous consumption. Verhagen and van Dolen (2011) discovered that continuous exposure to flash sales, markdown campaigns, and tailored recommendations directly triggers impulse buying tendencies. In the Indian context, studies by Jain et al. (2021) and Kumar and Anjaly (2017) confirmed that student engagement with e-commerce has

grown exponentially, fueled by cheap mobile data plans and high cellular device utilization. Despite these existing insights, dedicated studies addressing Generation Z students from emerging towns and regional educational institutions remain underdeveloped, a deficit this study seeks to mitigate.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the online shopping behaviour of Gen Z students.
- To identify the major factors influencing online buy decisions.
- To examine the brunt of convenience, social media, customer reviews, trust, and impulse buying on online shopping behaviour.

IV. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H1: Convenience has a positive influence on online shopping behaviour among Gen Z students.

H2: Social media exposure positively affects online buy decisions.

H3: Online reviews positively influence online shopping behaviour.

H4: Trust positively affects online buying behaviour.

H5: Impulse buying tendency positively influences online shopping decisions.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design to analyse the behaviour of Gen Z students towards online shopping.

5.2 Sample and Data Collection

Real-world data were collected from 220 college students using a structured questionnaire. Convenience selection methods were used for choosing respondents. The participants included undergraduate and postgraduate students studying in colleges located in Karnataka.

5.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section collected demographic information such as age, gender, education level, and shopping frequency. The second section measured consumer behaviour variables using a five-point Likert scale.

5.4 Tools for Analysis

The collected responses were analysed with the assistance of statistical software. Technical tools such as percentage analysis, mean analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used to interpret the data.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Details of Respondents (n = 220)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	118	53.60%
	Female	102	46.40%
Age	18–21 years	124	56.40%
	22–25 years	96	43.60%
Education	Undergraduate	140	63.60%
	Postgraduate	80	36.40%

The demographic findings indicate that most respondents belonged to the 18–21 age category. The results also show that students actively engage in online shopping activities.

6.2 Factors Influencing Online Shopping Behaviour.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Influencing Factors

Factor	Mean Score
Convenience	4.28
Social Media Influence	4.12
Online Reviews	4.06
Trust and Security	3.94
Impulse Buying	3.88

The findings suggest that convenience is the most important factor influencing online shopping among Gen Z students. Social media influence and online reviews also received high mean scores.

6.3 Regression Analysis

Table 3: Regression Results

Variable	Beta Value	t-value	Significance
Convenience	0.34	5.42	Significant
Social Media Influence	0.29	4.86	Significant
Online Reviews	0.25	4.11	Significant
Trust	0.19	3.25	Significant
Impulse Buying	0.16	2.87	Significant

The regression analysis reveals that all selected variables have a positive influence on the online shopping behaviour of Gen Z students.

VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study shows that convenience is the strongest factor affecting online shopping behaviour among students. Most respondents prefer online shopping because it helps them save time and provides access to a large variety of merchandise.

Social media also has a noticeable influence on buying decisions. Students are often influenced by advertisements, influencer promotions, and recommendations shared through social networking venues.

Customer reviews and ratings execute an important role in tracking buy decisions. Before buying merchandise, students generally compare alternatives and read feedback from previous customers.

Trust and security are also important factors influencing online shopping behaviour. Students are more likely to buy merchandise from venues that provide safe payment options and reliable delivery services.

The study additionally found that impulse buying behaviour is common among Gen Z students. Flash sales, discount offers, and tailored recommendations encourage spontaneous buys.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Online shopping has become an important branch of the lifestyle of Gen Z students. The study clearly shows that students prefer digital shopping venues mainly because they are convenient, quick, and easily accessible. Social media venues, customer opinions, online reviews, and attractive promotional offers also influence their buying decisions to a large extent.

Another important observation from the study is that students tend to compare merchandise and depend heavily on online information before making buys. Secure payment systems, reliable delivery services, and positive customer experiences increase their confidence towards online shopping venues.

The research further indicates that impulse buying behaviour is common among young consumers, especially when they are exposed to discounts, limited-time offers, and influencer-based alerts.

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