

Do We Still Prefer to Touch & Feel the Product Before Purchase?

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Abstract: The e-commerce though sound something high tech business jargon but over last few years has become so common word due to huge growth in online purchases. Through these e-commerce sites, almost anything and everything is being transacted on net. In spite of this humongous growth of e-retail, still it is negligible percentage of the overall retail. The online consumers still have distinct preferences for purchases. For that matter in some cases there is distinct behavioral differences in buying preferences through online mode for male and female consumers.

Keywords: e-commerce, gender-wise behavior, Gen-y, online shopping.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Indian retail sector has seen many transformations in a way it operates. E-commerce though is the latest change it is just crossed introduction phase and is in early growth phase of maturity. It has tremendous potential of growth for various reasons and at same time various factors that can impact the way it grows needs to be monitored and addressed to. Feeling the product before purchase is still the need of Indian buyer and for some products gender-wise this aspect varies. Online retailers required to address this need so that this won't act as hurdle in growth of e-commerce in India.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF POTENTIAL CONSUMERS

According to the 2011 census, the demographic distribution of gender of Indian population is shown below. With majority Gen-y population with high disposable income and growing technology awareness and infrastructure availability, it is going to be hard to stop the growth of e-commerce in India at least for a decade.

Table 1. Demographic Distribution

	Age	Total			Rural			Urban		
		A			B			C		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
I	All Ages %	100%	51%	49%	69%	35%	34%	31%	16%	15%
II	Gen Y %	27%	27%	27%	26%	26%	26%	30%	30%	30%

Source : Based on the Census data of 2011

In **Table 1** above “Gen Y % “ i.e. row II is with reference to “All Ages” i.e. row I respective percentage while “All Ages” i.e. row I “Rural” i.e. column ‘B’ and “Urban” i.e. column ‘C’ percentages are with respect to “Total” i.e. column ‘A’ in “AllAges”

Also looking at the distribution it can be seen

- Almost equal percentage is of male and female population.
- Rural or urban, around 30% is Gen Y population which is huge
- With Digital India initiatives, internet is reaching in all the parts of rural India which is almost 70% of the market which is potential market for e-commerce in near future.

III. BEHAVIOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDIAN MALE & FEMALE POPULATION

Though people are quite used to online purchases now, the basic need of most of the Indians to feel the product before purchase is still there. Though not all but few products are preferred to touch before buying. One more observation has been revealed on the study that there is gender-wise difference of behavior with respect to this need to significant extent.

TABLE2 : Product Category-wise and Gender-wise Need to Feel The Product Before Purchase Also Gender-wise Behavior Difference

Product Category	Female %	Male %	p value	Significance
Grocery, Fruits & Vegetable, Food & Beverages	75	74	0.3203	Not Significant
Health & Beauty, Skin Care, Pharma	47	30	0.0001	Significant
Fashion - Cloths & Accessories	62	68	0.1080	Not Significant
Mobile phone & Accessories	43	41	0.2877	Not Significant
Baby & Kid Care	60	42	0.0001	Significant

Above table TABLE 2 shows that there are product categories like “Grocery, Fruits& Vegetable, Food & Beverages”, “Fashion – Cloths & Accessories” and “Baby & Kid Care” where in majority people still think that product needs to be touched and felt before purchase. In case of “Health & Beauty, Skin Care and Pharma” and “Mobile Phone & Accessories” people are not that bothered / don’t see need to touch / feel the product.

Based on the Z test, since p value is less than 0.05, the level of significance for Baby & Kid care and Health & Beauty, Skin Care and Pharma category there is significant difference of preference with respect to need to feel the product before purchase for male and female. Almost 60% females think it necessary to touch & feel the baby and Kid care products before purchase while only 42% males think it is required. This percentage is reduced for health and beauty / skin care & Pharma products where around 47% females and 30% males think it necessary to feel the product before purchase. For both these categories the p value which is level of significance based on Z test is less than 0.05 which signifies higher difference of behavior / opinion

On other hand if we see other categories in the table above, like “Grocery, Fruits & Vegetable, Food & Beverages” there is almost 75% female and 74% males think it necessary to touch the product before purchase. Here the p values is quite high signifying that there is no difference of opinion between male and female population. Same thing goes with “Fashion - Cloths & Accessories” where in 62% females and 68% males think it necessary to touch and feel the product before purchase with p value of 0.1080 a values greater than 0.05 less difference of opinion. In case of “Mobile phone & Accessories” again variation in opinion is less i.e. p value is 0.2877 which is quite higher than 0.05 but at same time the percentage of people thinking necessary to touch and feel the product is also reduced which is 43% for females and 41% for males.

IV. CONCLUSION

Overall it seems that people still think it necessary to touch and feel the product before purchase. There is certainly some change visible where this need seem to be reducing and people are comfortable purchasing directly based on the picture. The product categories which are luxury / branded or are not necessity seems to be okay for such direct purchases. Also there seems to be product-wise considerable difference of opinion between male proportion over female proportion feeling the need to touch the product before purchase.

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