



Shoppers' Behaviour in Omnichannel Retailing in India

Dr. Pashupati Nath Verma

Institute of Engineering Technology, Lucknow-226021, India

ABSTRACT :

The retail landscape in India is undergoing a significant transformation due to the growing adoption of omnichannel retailing. This study explores consumer behaviour in this new retail era by analyzing shoppers' channel preferences, demographic profiles, and attitudes toward various formats. Using a structured survey of 450 respondents, we analyze shopping behaviour across traditional and digital platforms, identify multichannel usage patterns, and assess how socio-economic variables influence channel choice. The findings provide valuable implications for retailers to develop seamless, integrated omnichannel experiences.

Keywords: Omnichannel Retail, Customer Experience, Seamless Shopping, Retail Technology, Online-Offline Integration, Smart Shopping.

1. Introduction

Omnichannel retailing enables shoppers to interact with retailers across physical and digital platforms in a seamless, integrated manner. Today's Indian consumers research products online, visit stores for trials, or complete purchases on mobile apps. Understanding these patterns and the demographic factors influencing them is critical for retailers aiming to deliver an optimized omnichannel experience.

The relevance of the study has emerged from the following factors:

Consumer Empowerment: With access to information, reviews, and price comparisons, today's consumers are more informed and in control of their purchase journeys. They often use multiple channels before making a final purchase decision.

Shift in Consumer Behaviour: Shoppers no longer rely solely on one channel. For instance, a customer might research a product online and purchase it in-store or vice versa. Understanding this behaviour is crucial for retail success.

Need for Integration: As the number of shopping channels increases, the challenge for retailers lies in delivering a consistent and frictionless experience. Omnichannel strategies help eliminate silos between physical and digital touchpoints.

Changing Retail Landscape: The Indian retail industry is experiencing a shift from traditional brick-and-mortar stores to hybrid retail models. Consumers now expect a unified experience across online and offline platforms.

Emergence of Omnichannel Retailing: Omnichannel retailing refers to a strategy where businesses integrate various channels — physical stores, online websites, mobile apps, social media, and direct marketing — to provide a consistent customer experience.

1.1 Significance of the Study

Given the increasing importance of omnichannel retailing in India, it is essential to understand how Indian shoppers behave in this context — specifically, which channels they use, how frequently, and what factors influence their purchasing decisions.

1.2 Research Focus

This study aims to explore the demographic profile of Indian shoppers, the retail channels they use, their attitudes toward online and in-store formats, and how socioeconomic variables influence multichannel behaviour.

1.3 Practical Relevance

The findings are expected to provide practical insights for retailers, marketers, and policymakers to design more effective customer-centric strategies that enhance engagement and foster loyalty in an omnichannel environment.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To profile Indian shoppers and analyze their channel usage patterns.
- To examine the association between multichannel usage and socio-economic variables.
- To understand the motivations for preferring online and in-store channels.
- To assess shopper attitudes toward omnichannel features and services.

2. Research Methodology

This descriptive study is based on primary data collected through structured questionnaires administered to 450 shoppers across India. Convenience sampling was used to select the respondents. The data was analyzed using frequency distribution and chi-square tests to examine associations between categorical variables. Microsoft Excel was used for computation and visualization.

2.1 Research Design

Descriptive research design

2.2 Sampling Design

Convenience sampling

2.3 Data Collection Design

Structured Questionnaires

2.4 Statistical Analysis Design

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequency and percentage analysis were used to profile respondents based on gender, age, income, occupation, education, and shopping habits.
- **Chi-Square Test of Independence:** Applied to test the association between the number of retail channels used by shoppers and categorical socio-economic variables such as gender, marital status, residence type, income, and age. The test was conducted using **Microsoft Excel** and **significance was considered at $p < 0.05$** .
- **Cross-tabulation (Bivariate Frequency Tables):** Used to visually represent relationships between variables.

3. Findings & Conclusions

3.1 Respondent Profile

The sample consisted of 450 respondents. The demographic breakdown is as follows:

Demographic Variable	Dominant Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	69.56%
Age Group	22–37 Years	54.22%
Marital Status	Single	56.00%
Education	Postgraduate	62.00%
Occupation	Students	41.56%
Annual Household Income	Rs. 72001-2.75 Lakhs	26.67%
Online Shopping Adoption	Yes	90.44%

3.2 Retail Channels Used

Respondents reported using the following channels:

- 100% used physical stores.
- 82.67% used online sites/apps.
- 40.22% used online brand stores.
- 23.56% used direct marketing.
- 13.78% used social media platforms.
- 7.33% used teleshopping.

3.3. Number of Channels Used

- Majority (43.78%) used 2 channels.
- 28.22% used 3 channels.
- 10% used 4 channels.
- 3.56% used all 6 channels.

3.4. Multichannel Usage & Socioeconomic Variables

Chi-square tests were applied to determine if the number of channels used is associated with socioeconomic factors:

Variable	p-value	Interpretation
Gender	0.921	Independent
Marital Status	0.028	Dependent
Residential Location	0.077	Independent
Age	0.004	Dependent
Frequency of Shopping	0.063	Independent
Online Spending	0.085	Independent
Household Income	0.000001	Dependent

Interpretation: Marital status, age, and household income significantly influence the number of channels used. Other variables, such as gender or location, do not.

Apart from the above,

- It has been found that the frequency of shopping in a multichannel scenario is independent of Gender, Marital Status, Residential Location, and age.
- Online shopping Expenditure is found to be independent of residential location but dependent on Gender, Marital Status, and Age.

3.5. Channel Preference by Product Type

- **In-Store Preference:** Grocery, Homeware.
- **Indifferent Channel Use:** Electronics, Clothing, etc.

Insight: Product type influences channel preference, but shoppers are increasingly indifferent, signaling channel-agnostic behaviour. Consumers show an omnichannel preference except for grocery and home furnishings, which are mainly bought in-store. For electronics, clothing, and accessories, most respondents were comfortable with either mode, showing a shift toward channel neutrality.

3.6. Drivers of Online Shopping

- Convenient & Time Saving (Top Reason)
- Easy Search & Product Knowledge
- More Variety
- Easy Product Comparison
- No Crowds or Physical Fatigue

Implication: Physical stores should adopt features like in-store digital tools, product comparison kiosks, and click-and-collect options.

3.7. Factors Influencing Online Shopping Decisions

- **Very Important Factors:**
 1. Secure Payment
 2. Easy Return Policy
 3. In-depth Product Information

3.8. Reasons for In-store Shopping

- Touch and Feel Products (80%)
- Trustworthiness (51%)
- Bargaining Opportunity (43%)
- Shopping Experience (42%)
- Ease of Use for Non-Tech Savvy Users (20%)

3.9. Barriers to Online Shopping

- Inability to Try Products (42%)
- Complex Return Processes (38%)
- High Shipping Costs (37%)
- Trust Concerns (37%)
- Delivery Delays (29%)
- Privacy Issues (25%)

3.10. Attitude Towards Omnichannel Services

Shoppers expressed favorable attitudes toward features like:

- Unified pricing
- In-store pickup of online orders
- In-store returns for online purchases

3.11. Implications for Retailers

- Retailers must offer seamless integration across platforms.
- Personalization and consistent experience are crucial.
- Brick-and-mortar stores should adopt digital features (AR/VR product trials).
- Logistics and customer service are key differentiators.

3.12. Conclusion: Indian shoppers are increasingly embracing multichannel retailing. Their behaviour is significantly influenced by age, income, and marital status. While online shopping is favored for convenience and variety, in-store shopping remains relevant due to sensory and trust-related reasons. Retailers must address consumer concerns and bridge gaps to offer a superior omnichannel experience.

4. Limitations of the Study & Future Research Direction

4.1 Limitations

- **Sample Representativeness:** The study is limited to a sample size of 450 shoppers. Though diversified, the findings may not fully represent the entire Indian population, especially rural and remote areas.
- **Cross-sectional Design:** The study captures responses at a single point in time and may not account for seasonal or long-term behavioral shifts.
- **Self-reported Data:** Data collected through surveys are subject to biases such as social desirability or recall error.
- **Limited Scope of Variables:** The study considers only a few socioeconomic variables; other factors such as psychographics, personality traits, and digital literacy were not included.
- **Technological Bias:** Respondents who participated in the survey may already be more inclined to use digital channels, skewing the findings in favor of online shopping.

4.2 Future Research Directions

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Future research should track consumer behavior over time to identify emerging trends and evolving preferences.
- **Inclusion of Psychographics:** Integrating values, attitudes, lifestyles, and personality variables could offer deeper insights into shopper decision-making.
- **Geographic Expansion:** Expanding the study to include tier-3 cities, small towns, and rural India would enhance the generalizability of the findings.
- **Experimental Designs:** Conducting experiments or A/B testing on shopping experiences across channels could reveal causal relationships.
- **Technology Adoption Models:** Exploring consumer readiness and resistance to technology using models like TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) can refine omnichannel strategy implementation.

Appendix A.

Retail Customers' Survey-1: Questionnaire

This survey is intended to collect data from retail Indian customers. It is assured that your information shall not be shared with any third party neither it will be used for any marketing purpose. Information shall be used for research purpose only.

Section-1

1. **Please Indicate your gender.** (कृपया अपना लिंग बताएं)(
☐ Male
☐ Female
2. **Please Indicate your Marital Status.** (कृपया अपनी वैवाहिक स्थिति बताएं)(
☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ Widow
☐ Divorced
3. **Please indicate the place in which you are living presently.** (कृपया उस स्थान को इंगित करें जहाँ आप वर्तमान में रह रहे हैं। (
☐ Metropolitan City
☐ Non-metro City
☐ Suburban Area
☐ Rural Area
4. **Please indicate your age group.** (कृपया अपना आयु वर्ग बताएं)(
☐ 18 to 21 Years
☐ 22 to 37 Years
☐ 38 to 53 Years
☐ 53 to 72 Years`
5. **Please indicate your highest level of education.** (कृपया अपनी उच्चतम शिक्षा इंगित करें)(
☐ Primary Level
☐ Secondary Level
☐ Undergraduate Level
☐ Postgraduate Level
6. **Indicate your present occupation.** (अपना वर्तमान व्यवसाय को इंगित करें)(
☐ Business
☐ Professionals

- ☐ Semi-professionals
☐ Salaried
☐ Skilled worker
☐ Agriculture
☐ Labourer
☐ Student
☐ Other (Please Specify)

7. Do you shop Online? (क्या आप ऑनलाइन खरीदारी करते हैं?)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
 (If 'No' go to Section3 else go to Section-2)

Section-2

8. Indicate the channels that you have ever used for shopping. (उन चैनलों को इंगित करें, जिन्हें आपने कभी खरीदारी के लिए उपयोग किया है।)

- ☐ Physical Store/In-store shopping
☐ Direct Marketing
☐ Teleshopping
☐ Online shopping sites/apps
☐ Social media network
☐ Online Brand Store/Apps
☐ Other (Please Specify)

9. As a shopper where do you prefer to do window shopping and buying? (एक ग्राहक के रूप में आप विंडो शॉपिंग और खरीदारी कहाँ पे करना पसंद करते हैं?)

	Online	In-Store	Both Online & Instore
Window Shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Where do you prefer shop for following products? (आप निम्नलिखित उत्पादों को कहाँ से खरीदना पसंद करते हैं?)

	Online	In-Store	Both Online & Instore
Groceries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consumer electronics and appliances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consumer electronics and appliances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Apparel, footwear, and sports equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housewares and home furnishings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal accessories and eyewear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do-it-yourself and home improvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Beauty and personal care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Media products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. How much generally you spend on online shopping in every two months? (आम तौर पर आप हर दो महीने में ऑनलाइन शॉपिंग पर कितना खर्च करते हैं?)

- ☐ Up to Rs.1000
☐ Rs.1001 to Rs.2000
☐ Rs.2001 to Rs.5000
☐ More than Rs.5000

12. How often do you shop online? (आप कितनी बार ऑनलाइन खरीदारी करते हैं?)

- ☐ Never or rarely
☐ Once or twice in six months
☐ Once or twice a month
☐ Once or twice a week

13. What are the main reasons for you to shop online? (आपके ऑनलाइन खरीदारी करने के मुख्य कारण क्या हैं?)

- ☐ Convenient and time saving
☐ Health related reasons or disability
☐ Easy to compare the products
☐ Easy search, I know what I want to buy
☐ More variety of Product
☐ No Crowd, no sweating
☐ Any Other (Please Specify)

14. How important are the following factors to you when you shop online? (ऑनलाइन खरीदारी करते समय आपके लिए निम्न कारक कितने महत्वपूर्ण हैं?)

Factors	Not Important	Slightly Important	Very Important
Free delivery & returns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fast Shipping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cash on Delivery option	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Secure Payment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reputation of Site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In depth product information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Return Policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Order Status Visibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easy Navigation & User Experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section-3

15. What are the main reasons for you to shop In-Store? (आपके लिए स्टोर में खरीदारी करने के मुख्य कारण क्या हैं?)

- ☐ More Trustworthy
☐ Facility of touch, try and buy
☐ Bargaining
☐ No technological clutches

- ☐ Shopping experience
☐ Any Other(Please Specify).....
16. **What are the things that stop you for shopping online?** (वह कौन सी चीजें हैं जो आपको ऑनलाइन खरीदारी करने से रोकती हैं?)
☐ Shipping Cost
☐ Waiting for delivery
☐ Not being able to try the product
☐ Difficult Return Process
☐ Privacy concerns
☐ Doubts about quality
☐ Unavailability of Cash on cash-on-delivery option
☐ Less Trustworthy
☐ Other(Please Specify).....
17. **Please mention your yearly household income.** (कृपया अपनी वार्षिक आय का उल्लेख करें)
☐ Up to Rs.72000
☐ Rs. 72001 to 275000
☐ Rs. 275001 to 850000
☐ More than Rs.850000
☐ Don't want to disclose
18. **Would you like to participate in one more survey for in-depth information after few days?** (क्या आप कुछ दिनों के बाद और अधिक जानकारी के लिए एक और सर्वेक्षण में भाग लेना चाहेंगे?)
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ May be

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