Assessment of Factors Affecting Customer Preferences and Customer Satisfaction on Online Shopping Experiences Case of Delhi NCR

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ABSTRACT

This study is on assessment of factors affecting customer preferences and customer satisfaction on online shopping experiences in Delhi NCR. It is mandated to look into the different aspects of e-shopping, from factors that determine the individual preferences, to those that influence satisfaction and some pain points that the customers experience. The objectives of the research are to look into what influences consumers' choice of e-commerce platforms, evaluate and assess the different aspects contributing to customer satisfaction in the online shopping experience, and explore common challenges faced by customers while shopping online. The study offers important insights into the dynamics of e-commerce platforms and consumer preferences through a thorough examination of these goals.

A number of factors, such as frequency of purchases, price competition, app use, return policies, and delivery reliability and speed, affect customers' choice of e-commerce platforms. According to the analysis, the majority of users give priority to platforms that provide easy-to-use payment methods including E-payments and Cash on Delivery (COD) (71%). One important feature that stood out was price competitiveness (58%); consumers favored platforms that provided a large selection of products at competitive prices. Customers also emphasized the importance of the user-friendliness of apps, the return policy, and the dependability and timeliness of delivery while choosing e-commerce platforms.

The majority of consumers (77%) are satisfied with their online purchasing experiences, according to the study. Customer satisfaction is largely influenced by the usability of websites and mobile apps, the reliability and speed of deliveries, and the correctness and quality of the products. Platforms that provide high-quality products, timely and dependable delivery services, and user-friendly interfaces are highly valued by customers. These elements have a big impact on how satisfied consumers are with e-commerce sites overall.

Although consumers are generally satisfied, there are a number of difficulties when they shop online. Common pain points experienced are poor product quality, complicated or nonexistent return processes, worries about payment security, language barriers, and improper item deliveries. These difficulties highlight how critical it is to respond to consumer complaints and improve the online shopping experience by implementing stronger security measures, clear return procedures, and better-quality products.

Several recommendations are put out in light of the findings in order to boost e-commerce platform efficacy and raise customer satisfaction. The study further acknowledges limitations, which could affect how broadly the results can be applied, such as its limited sample size and resource limits. In order to offer more thorough insights into the tastes and behaviours of e-commerce customers, future research projects should address these shortcomings.

The study concludes by highlighting the multifaceted nature of client preferences and issues in the e-commerce sector. E-commerce platforms may promote stronger client loyalty and drive sustainable growth in the cutthroat online marketplace by comprehending the variables impacting platform choice, improving components contributing to customer satisfaction, and addressing frequent issues experienced by customers.

Keywords: Customer Preferences, Customer satisfaction, online-shopping, e-commerce platforms, Delhi NCR.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background of the study
Internet shopping is a major part of modern consumerism since it offers the easiest access to a global marketplace from the convenience of our homes. Online shopping can be simply defined as the buying of good and services over the internet, and they get delivered right at your doorstep. Online shopping is an e-commerce activity which involves purchasing items on a seller's website via credit or debit card, and having the item delivered to your home, it also involves searching for items online via web searches and by conducting online research (Cunningham, 2019).

Customer satisfaction is a broad and subjective concept that encompasses the total fulfilment and happiness resulting from an individual's interaction with a product or service. It is an important indicator of how well a company's goods or services connect with and meet the needs of its customers. Essentially, it measures how well customers' requirements, wishes, and preferences are met throughout the purchasing process, from initial engagement to post-purchase support.

Various theories and approaches for measuring customer happiness have been created to examine and quantify this elusive yet critical component of consumer behavior. These frameworks offer structured techniques to evaluate and analyses several aspects of the customer experience, including as product quality, customer service, delivery efficiency, and overall value proposition.

Furthermore, it is critical to understand that customer satisfaction is a dynamic and everchanging phenomena driven by a variety of factors such as market trends, technical breakthroughs, and increasing consumer preferences. As a result, continual monitoring and analysis of customer satisfaction metrics is critical for staying current with changing market dynamics and proactively addressing emerging challenges and opportunities in Delhi NCR's ever-changing e-commerce environment.

In the most recent years India has been experiencing a boom in both the internet connectivity and smartphone penetration and usage. (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2024) stipulates that, the "Digital India" initiative is the one that has largely driven the notable increase in internet connections to 830 million in 2021. They further assert that, approximately a 55% of all internet connections were made in metropolitan areas, and 97% of those connections were wireless. This helped local digital sector to achieve higher market reach with some expectations to reach up to about US$ 1 trillion by the year 2030. The rapid rise in internet users and smartphone penetration coupled with rising incomes has assisted the growth of India's e-commerce sector. The ((IBEF), 2024) further states that the India's e-commerce sector has changed the way of doing business in India which has significantly unlocked various parts of commerce ranging from business-to-business (B2B), direct-to-consumer (D2C), consumer-to-consumer (C2C) and consumer-to-business (C2B).

The exponential rise of technology and connection has driven a stunning surge in worldwide e-commerce, which has showed no signs of slowing down the next coming years. India, being one of the world's fastest-growing economies, has emerged as a key factor in the digital revolution, with extraordinary uptake and expansion of online shopping platforms across a wide range of categories, including groceries, electronics, and beyond. A number of factors contribute to e-commerce's rapid acceptance, including extensive smartphone penetration, the proliferation of internet connectivity, and the increasing digitization of trade and payment systems. As consumers embrace the convenience and accessibility of online purchasing, India's e-commerce platforms are undergoing a seismic transformation, transitioning from specialized marketplaces to mainstream retail transactions. In this ever-changing landscape, knowing the complexities of consumer behavior and preferences is critical for firms looking to capitalize on India's expanding e-commerce market.

The growth of this sector however, comes with different certain customer expectations that the different companies within the sector has to live up to in order to keep thriving in the mist if the growing competition. There are challenges that the customers encounter in the process that affects their perception of the platforms and their satisfaction with the platforms and consequently affect their preferences of the platforms.

In the context of Delhi NCR, the region has experienced a notable increase in smartphone adoption and internet penetration in recent years, along with a sharp expansion of the e-commerce industry.

The growing virtual market offers sellers and businesses trying to comprehend and serve the varied tastes of Delhi NCR customers with both the good possibilities of great advantages and difficulties. In India, the exponential growth of e-commerce has been especially noticeable in large cities like Delhi NCR. An article that was released by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) states that millions of people in Delhi NCR participated in online purchasing, accounting for a sizeable share of India's e-commerce sector (IAMAI, 2019). This increase in e-commerce activity is a result of shifting customer preferences, rising levels of digital literacy, and the ease of use provided by online marketplaces. The population of Delhi NCR is diverse, with a range of age groups, income levels, educational backgrounds, and cultural preferences among its many demographic characteristics. In order to properly adapt their offers and marketing tactics, sellers and companies must have a thorough understanding of the subtle preferences of these varied consumer categories. Rich shoppers in South Delhi might be distinct from middle-class families in Noida or tech-savvy millennials in Gurgaon in terms of their tastes and shopping habits.

In Delhi NCR, the emergence of e-commerce has brought about a fundamental change in customer behavior and purchasing patterns. Online shopping platforms are becoming a bigger competitor for traditional brick and mortar stores, and this has forced them to change their business models in order to stay relevant in the digital era. Nowadays, shoppers are used to the ease of perusing and acquiring a vast array of goods from the comfort of their homes; the allure of online shopping is further amplified by doorstep delivery and hassle-free returns.

The arrival of e-commerce started a revolution in the retail industry, ushering in a quick change that has had a significant impact on customer behavior. This digital revolution has not only changed the way people purchase, but it has also reshaped the entire retail scene, providing consumers with unprecedented convenience and access. This transition has had a particularly strong impact in Delhi NCR, one of India's most densely populated and commercially vibrant districts. As a thriving hub for e-commerce activity, Delhi NCR reflects and magnifies the national trend of online shopping, demonstrating the region's willin-

ness to accept technology innovations and adapt to changing consumer tastes.

The spread of smartphones and internet connectivity has been a big driver of e-commerce in Delhi-NCR. With a big technologically savvy population, there has been a noticeable move toward digital platforms for purchasing goods and services. This movement is being driven not only by convenience, but also by the availability of various product ranges, appealing bargains, and the ease of comparison shopping that online platforms provide. From electronics and fashion to groceries and services, the e-commerce ecosystem in Delhi NCR meets a wide range of consumer demands and tastes.

Furthermore, the competitive environment of e-shopping in Delhi NCR has grown over time. Local entrepreneurs and established firms have competed for market share, resulting in creative business models, aggressive marketing methods, and improved consumer experiences. This competition has not only helped consumers by improving pricing and service offerings, but it has also compelled e-commerce enterprises to constantly innovate and adapt to shifting market circumstances.

Convenience, product variety, affordability, user experience, delivery reliability, customer service, and trust all have an impact on customer preferences and e-shopping satisfaction in Delhi NCR. E-commerce businesses who understand and efficiently cater to these tastes are more likely to succeed in this competitive industry. Continuously developing to meet changing client demands and expectations is vital for maintaining long-term success in the dynamic e-commerce industry of Delhi, NCR.

The developing regulatory framework and infrastructure upgrades have also had a significant impact on the e-commerce market in Delhi NCR. The Government efforts like Digital India and the push for cashless transactions have helped to drive the rise of internet commerce. Furthermore, investments in logistics and last-mile delivery infrastructure have increased the efficiency and dependability of e-commerce operations, addressing one of the major issues confronting online businesses.

It is safe now to say that E-shopping has become a vital component of the retail landscape in Delhi NCR, providing consumers with unrivaled convenience, choice, and value. As technology advances and consumer preferences shift, the region's e-commerce sector is primed for additional growth and innovation, with exciting potential for both firms and consumers.

1.2 Problem statement

Despite the rapid evolution of the e-commerce industry in India, particularly in the bustling metropolis of Delhi, a significant knowledge gap persists, impeding a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics that shape customer preferences and satisfaction levels throughout their online shopping journeys. This void exists for a variety of reasons, as seen by the numerous benefits and drawbacks associated with the rapid adoption of technology in retail.

The stratospheric expansion of e-commerce platforms has unquestionably democratized access to good as well as the services and that provided customers with extraordinary convenience and choice across demographics. However, this digital transformation has also brought with it a number of new issues, ranging from information overload and privacy concerns to security dangers and the demise of traditional retail models. As such, understanding the intricate interaction between these forces is critical for understanding the changing landscape of customer behavior and attitude in the digital marketplace of Delhi NCR.

With the revolutionization of businesses from brick and mortar to ecommerce, there are also some pitfalls that customers and even business owners encounter while doing the transactions. These may affect the perceptions of the customers and ultimately impact how customers do their day-to-day purchases. There

is therefore a need to have a comprehensive assessment of factors that influence customer choices and levels of satisfaction on the different e-commerce platforms that they use, to also understand what determines their choices of such platforms as well as the pain points of using them. This research seeks to address this gap by examining the key drivers of customer preferences and satisfaction in online shopping experiences within the Delhi National Capital Region.

1.3 Research Objectives

The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To determine the primary factors influencing customers' choice of e-commerce platforms.
2. To assess the various aspects of the online shopping experience that contribute to customer satisfaction.
3. To explore the common challenges and or pain points faced by customers while shopping online.
4. To make offer actionable recommendations to e-commerce platforms, retailers, and policymakers on strategies for improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H1: Product quality and accuracy has a significant positive impact towards customer satisfaction on e-shopping

H2: Website app usability has a significant positive impact towards customer satisfaction on e-shopping

H3: Delivery speed and reliability has a significant positive impact towards customer satisfaction on e-shopping

H4: Customer service responsiveness has a significant positive impact towards customer satisfaction on e-shopping

H5: Return and exchange process has a significant positive impact towards customer satisfaction on e-shopping

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study will cover the geographic of the Delhi National Capital, which covers areas such as Delhi, New Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Faridabad. This will allow for a localized understanding of online shopping behaviors and preferences within this urban conglomerate.

The study will look at a wide range of demographics, including those aged 18 and up, as well as gender identities, educational backgrounds, income levels, and occupational statuses. By including such a wide range of demographic factors, the goal is to gain a full picture of how different sectors of the public interact with and perceive online shopping platforms. This approach understands the complexities of consumer behavior and admits that preferences and attitudes regarding e-commerce might differ dramatically among demographic groupings. The study's inclusive methodology aims to unearth subtle insights that might inform strategies for better catering to the different requirements and preferences of Delhi NCR's population when it comes to online shopping.

The complete examination of customer preferences and satisfaction levels will include a wide range of online shopping platforms operating in the busy metropolis of Delhi NCR. While global e-commerce giants such as Amazon and Flipkart will undoubtedly be studied, the study will also broaden its scope to include local and regional platforms that contribute to the region's thriving e-commerce ecosystem. Furthermore, the examination will cover a wide range of product categories, including electronics, apparel, and consumables. The study's goal is to gain nuanced insights into customer behavior and preferences by

investigating a wide range of platforms and product categories. This multidimensional approach will shed light on the on the precise product categories that are most popular among online consumers in Delhi NCR, providing useful insights into the factors that impact their shopping decisions.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The escalation of online shopping has altered the retail landscape, which now offers an unmatched convenience, variety in terms of choices, and accessibility as well as flexibility to consumers worldwide. In the context of Delhi National Capital Region (NCR), India, where e-commerce adoption is rapidly growing, assessing customer preferences and satisfaction levels on online shopping experiences is essential for understanding consumer behavior and informing business strategies. With Delhi being one of the largest agglomerations of India, it presents a significant market for online retailers. This literature review examines existing research on customer preferences and satisfaction in online shopping experiences, with a focus on studies conducted in Delhi NCR, also drawing some insights from the various industry reports. The review will be subdivided into different major topics that form a very important aspect of this survey.

2.1 Growth of the E-commerce and E-shopping in India:

India's has in the most recent years witnessed a remarkable growth in its e-commerce sector, this has resulted in a rapid growth in e-shopping which are both fueled by factors such as increasing internet penetration, rising smartphone usage, and evolving consumer preferences. According to ((IBEF), 2024) India has experienced a boom in internet and smartphone penetration in recent years this has resulted in a rapid growth in e-shopping which are both fueled by factors such as increasing internet penetration, rising smartphone usage, and evolving consumer preferences. They further assert that the "Digital India" initiative is the one that has largely driven the notable increase in internet connections to 830 million in 2021. It is stated that almost 55% of all internet the connections made were within the metropolitan areas, and 97% of these connections are said to have been wireless connections.

According to (Minhas, 2023) of Statista, with India being one of the largest populations and also having fast-growing economy, the number of online consumers is anticipated to increase to 427 million by 2027 and consequently, the thriving e-commerce industry is estimated to be worth over 350 billion U.S. dollars by 2030.

(Minhas, 2023) further assets that the increase in disposable income, changing lifestyles, and convenience are the primary factors that have resulted in having most consumers preferring online shopping, from groceries to other essentials, with everything being able to be delivered smoothly and flexibly, sometimes even in 8-10 minutes, particularly for consumers living in urban areas.

It is further stated by (Minhas, 2023) that due to digitization in e-commerce sector, and the "Digital India Initiative" by the government, consumers in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are more inclined to make the ultimate choice to buy online due to a great selection of payment options and attractive offers from e-wallets. The adoption of smartphones has also helped to accelerate the transition to mobile shopping, with estimates indicating that one-third of consumers in the Indian market purchase online using a smartphone.

In overall, this shows that the government of India has over the years played a very pivotal role in improving the e-commerce which has beard fruits for the business sector and the general public at large.

2.2 Customer Preference Theory:

The customer preference theories in economics provides valuable insights into the underlying motivations and behaviors that drive consumer decision-making. It is very crucial for businesses and sellers to have a deeper understanding of the consumers mindset and purchase behavior. This theory is based on fundamental assumptions of human behavior, which provides a framework for understanding the customer preferences.

This theory views consumers as rational beings and they therefore have rational preferences. It takes into consideration the three main assumptions of:

Completeness: This theory asserts that a customer is either indifferent or preferential in choices that they make in selecting a product or service. They usually make choices in order to maximize their utility (satisfaction). This theory states that customers preferences are complete when and if at all the customer is able to rank multiple or different buckets of options in order to make a decision.

Transitivity: This assumption states that both the preference and indifference should be transitive. This is to say that if C is preferred to D and F is preferred to G, then C must be strictly preferred to G. On the contrary, this assumption holds that if the customer is indifferent between C and D and between D and F, then they have to be indifferent between C and F. This can be considered intuitively as the consistency requirement in the of the consumer.

Non-Satiation (Monotonic): This assumption holds that a customer's preferences are monotonic if they if a bucket of at least one more is good and no less of any other good is preferred to the original bucket. This implies that according to a customer "more is good". In other words, there is never a point at which consumers may become fully satisfied or satiated with a particular commodity.

This assumption underlies the notion that human wants are insatiable, driving ongoing consumption and economic activity. Lastly according to

(W Nicholson, 2014) non-satiation posits that consumers always seek to increase their overall satisfaction, implying that more is preferred to less in all consumption choices.

2.3 Customer Preferences in Online Shopping:

According to the different studies carried out, a variety of factors influence customer preferences when shopping online. Product assortment and product availability are important considerations according (Gurdip S. Bakshi, 2019). Consumers choose online platforms that offer a diverse choice of products to suit their requirements and personal interests. This is especially important in a metropolitan location like Delhi NCR, where consumers have varying tastes and preferences across demographic groups and different cultural backgrounds. Whether it's electronics, fashion, groceries, or home needs, shoppers in Delhi NCR seek online shops that offer a complete range of products to fulfil their different needs and wants.

Furthermore, customers sensitivity towards prices affects their choices, with consumers frequently seeking competitive rates and discounts as well as any form of promotions available (Sunil Chopra, 2018). Given the socioeconomic diversity of Delhi NCR, price concern is a common attribute among consumers of various income levels. To attract and maintain customers in an e-commerce world characterized by fierce price rivalry, online retailers must implement dynamic pricing strategies and special offers that not only lure customers, but also promotes their loyalty to their brands.

Customer preferences are influenced by service quality, which includes variables like website usability, simplicity of navigation, and payment security (Dwivedi, 2019). The service quality includes the blue print

that the different e-commerce retailers use, which includes among other things, a satisfactory after sales service. In a digitally-driven market like Delhi NCR, where consumers are tech-savvy and time-conscious, providing seamless and secure online shopping experiences is highly critical. To build consumer faith and trust, online retailers must prioritize user interface optimization, effective cybersecurity safeguards, and easy-to-use payment systems.

Furthermore, customers in Delhi NCR prioritize speedy and dependable delivery services (Prajan Pradhan, 2022). Given the region's frenetic lifestyle and traffic congestion, quick delivery is critical to meeting customer expectations. E-commerce platforms must be on their toes in order to provide flexible delivery times, transparent tracking systems, and efficient last-mile logistics to assure customer pleasure and loyalty. Trust and reputation of e-commerce platforms are important elements influencing customer preferences, with consumers preferring well-known and reputable products (Rachna Jain, 2020). Building and sustaining a positive brand image through exceptional service, transparent policies, and timely customer assistance is critical for online retailers seeking a competitive advantage in the extremely competitive Delhi-NCR market.

2.4 Customer Satisfaction Theories:

Customer satisfaction is more than just a transactional outcome; it is a comprehensive evaluation that includes the alignment of consumers' expectations and the actual performance of a product or service. It depicts the culmination of consumers' perceptions, experiences, and emotional reactions to a brand or product. According to (Andreasen, 2013), customer happiness is intrinsically comparative, molded by individuals' perceptions of a product or service in relation to internal or external benchmarks. This comprehensive approach emphasizes the dynamic nature of customer satisfaction and its critical role in determining consumer behavior and brand loyalty.

Customer satisfaction has long been a goal in marketing and consumer behavior, with decades of research and practice behind it. Scholars and practitioners in different fields have both battled with the varied nature of customer satisfaction levels, recognizing its importance in generating repeat purchases, fostering brand advocacy, goodwill and, ultimately, sustaining economic success. However, the complexities of customer pleasure have resulted in the formation of numerous theories and hypotheses, each offering unique insights on the underlying mechanics and drivers of consumer happiness.

This literature review seeks to delve into the rich tapestry of theories surrounding customer satisfaction, offering light on the various conceptual frameworks and empirical discoveries that affect the comprehension of the phenomena. This review aims to illustrate the interconnectedness of factors influencing customer happiness and its implications for marketing strategy and consumer engagement by integrating major contributions from academic literature and industry research. We hope to give significant insights for practitioners and scholars alike by conducting a complete examination of these ideas, allowing for a better understanding of customer satisfaction dynamics and influencing strategic decision-making in the competitive digital era.

Examining the growth of thought and study in this topic allows us to find patterns, gaps, and potential directions for inquiry and application at hand, as far as e-commerce is concerned. From expectancy-disconfirmation theory to the service-profit chain model, each theory provides distinct perspectives on the drivers and results of customer happiness, allowing businesses to optimize their products and improve customer experiences. Finally, by deepening our grasp of customer satisfaction theories, we can discover

new ways to create meaningful customer relationships, drive long-term business growth, and foster beneficial societal influence.

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP):

The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP) is a key framework for analyzing customer satisfaction in the context of online buying experiences. (Oliver R. L., 1980) developed the EDP, which states that customer satisfaction is determined by how well a product or service meets or surpasses pre-existing expectations. This paradigm defines satisfaction as when a product or service's perceived performance exceeds initial expectations, and dissatisfaction happens when performance falls short of expectations. (Oliver R. L., 1980) proposed the concept of disconfirmation, emphasizing that satisfaction depends on the apparent discord or congruence between expected and actual performance.

In the context of online buying, the EDP provides useful insights into the factors that drive client pleasure and dissatisfaction. Before making a purchase, buyers build expectations based on a variety of indications such as product descriptions, reviews, and previous experiences. These expectations serve as a standard against which the actual performance of the product or service is measured upon receipt. Customers are satisfied when the product they receive meets or surpasses their expectations, which fosters positive sentiments toward the online merchant or platform. Customers may be dissatisfied if the product does not match expectations in terms of quality, functionality, or delivery, resulting in negative perceptions and potential disengagement from the brand (Srinivasan, 2003)

The EDP emphasizes the dynamic nature of customer satisfaction in online purchasing, underlining the importance of post-purchase experiences in molding opinions. After obtaining the product, customers engage in cognitive evaluation, comparing their actual experience to their pre-purchase expectations. Positive disconfirmation happens when actual performance exceeds expectations, leading to increased satisfaction and possibly repeat purchases. Conversely, negative disconfirmation occurs when perceived performance falls short of expectations, resulting in discontent and poor word-of-mouth. Thus, by knowing and managing client expectations throughout the online purchasing cycle, businesses can use EDP principles to improve customer satisfaction, encourage brand loyalty, and drive business success.

Value-Precept Theory:

(Zeithaml, 1988) defined perceived value as an important factor in shaping customer happiness in a variety of consumption scenarios, including the online buying experiences. Perceived value refers to the perceived benefits or advantages that consumers gain from a product or service in comparison to the expenses and effort required to acquire it. In essence, it embodies the trade-off between the apparent benefits and the sacrifices made by customers to attain those benefits. When consumers believe that the benefits surpass the expenses and effort involved, they are more likely to be satisfied with the product or service.

Perceived value manifests in several dimensions. Firstly, consumers assess the products or services quality, provided by online retailers in proportion to their pricing points. If consumers believe that the quality of the products matches or surpasses their expectations for the price paid, they are more likely to perceive better value and, as a result, be more satisfied with their purchases. Furthermore, the convenience of online buying, including the simplicity of browsing, ordering, and payment processes, influences the perceived value equation. Consumers in metropolitan environments such as Delhi NCR place a high priority on convenience due to hectic lives and traffic congestion, and online platforms that provide seamless and speedy purchasing experiences are viewed as giving more value, hence increasing consumer satisfaction (Prajan Pradhan, 2022).

Furthermore, intangible elements such as customer service quality and brand reputation influence percep-

tions of value. Online retailers that provide rapid customer support, timely issue resolution, and tailored assistance help to increase the perceived value of their products (Kaur, 2017). Similarly, brands with a strong reputation for dependability, integrity, and ethical business operations create consumer confidence, resulting in increased perceived value and satisfaction (Navaneethakrishnan Kumar, 2001). Understanding and actively controlling the aspects that contribute to perceived value allows online merchants in Delhi NCR to improve customer satisfaction and create long-term loyalty from their customer base.

Attribution Theory:

Attribution theory provides critical insights on how customers perceive and understand the outcomes of how they interact with products or services, which influences their satisfaction levels. Attribution theory, which is based on social psychology, proposes that people attribute different events to either internal or external sources based on their views of causality. When it comes to customer satisfaction, customers may credit positive outcomes, such as successful purchases or delightful encounters, to internal variables like their own efforts, abilities, or judgments. For example, a client who effectively navigates an online purchasing platform and finds the necessary goods may attribute their success to their own browsing or decision-making talents, resulting in higher pleasure (Graham, 2020)

Customers may attribute adverse outcomes or experiences to external elements beyond their control, such as situational conditions, luck, or flaws in the product or service itself. For example, if a consumer sees technical faults or delays during the checkout process on an e-commerce website, they may blame external factors such website performance issues or system errors, lowering their satisfaction levels (Graham, 2020). Attribution theory emphasizes the significance of understanding customers' notions of causality and responsibility in affecting their satisfaction with products or services.

Furthermore, attribution theory highlights the dynamic aspect of consumer happiness, since attributions can shift depending on individual characteristics, contextual circumstances, and situational cues. Customers' attributions, for example, might be influenced by their prior experiences, expectations, and cultural backgrounds, resulting in varying degrees of satisfaction among consumer categories (Oliver R. L., 1980) Marketing strategies, communication methods, and service interventions can also modify or impact attributions in order to shape customers' beliefs of causality and responsibility (Oliver R. L., 1980). Recognizing the role of attribution processes in driving customer satisfaction allows businesses to tailor their offerings, communications, and service delivery to increase positive attributions and reduce negative attributions, resulting in higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Equity Theory:

Also known as equality theory, this theory is based on social psychology, it offers useful insights into the dynamics of customer satisfaction by emphasizing the role of perceived fairness and balance in consumer relationships. According to equity theory, people desire fairness and equity in their dealings with others, including their contacts with businesses as customers (Adams, 1965). In the context of customer satisfaction, customers assess the ratio of their inputs, such as monetary expenditure, time, and effort, to the outputs, such as product quality and service levels. Importantly, clients evaluate this input-output ratio to that of others or their own previous experiences. When customers perceive a fair and equitable exchange of inputs and outputs, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchases and interactions with the company.

In contrast, inequality, which occurs when customers perceive a mismatch between their inputs and outcomes in comparison to others or their own expectations, can result in discontent and dissatisfaction. For example, if a customer believes they are expending more work or paying a higher price for a product

than others while receiving insufficient value or benefits, they may see the trade as unfair and become unhappy (Adams, 1965). Equality theory emphasizes the importance of perceived fairness and balance in customer relationships, underlining the need for businesses to manage customer perceptions of equality by maintaining openness, consistency, and responsiveness in their offers and interactions.

Comparison Level Theory:

The Comparison Level Theory provides useful insights into the dynamics of customer satisfaction by emphasizing the importance of comparison processes in molding people's perceptions of their experiences with the products or services. According to this idea, people evaluate their sense of fulfilment by comparing their current experiences or outcomes to an internal reference level that represents their expectations or norms. Individuals are satisfied if the actual outcomes exceed this comparison level; if the outcomes fall short of the comparison level, they are dissatisfied. When it comes to customer satisfaction, people compare their perceived product quality, service levels, and overall experiences to their pre-existing expectations, previous experiences, or the experiences of others. Customers are more likely to be satisfied if their real experiences match or exceed these comparison levels; otherwise, they may be unhappy or disappointed.

The theory further emphasizes on the subjective and relative character of customer satisfaction, highlighting the necessity of managing consumer expectations and perceptions in generating satisfaction outcomes. Businesses must understand the elements that influence customer comparison levels, such as advertising, word-of-mouth, and previous experiences, and work to align their goods and service performance with these expectations. Businesses that continuously reach or surpass consumers' comparison levels can increase satisfaction, build loyalty, and achieve a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Festiger, 1954). Thus, the Comparison Level Theory provides a framework for organizations to understand and manage customer satisfaction by emphasizing the importance of comparison processes in shaping people's perceptions and evaluations of their experiences.

Evaluation Congruity Theory:

(Oliver R. , 1993) states that Evaluation Congruity Theory is consistent with cognitive consistency theories and sheds light on the factors that influence customer satisfaction. According to this idea, contentment is determined by the alignment or congruence of consumers' pre-existing expectations, perceptions of actual product or service performance, and attributions to results. Customers are more likely to be satisfied when these features are in harmony; nevertheless, discontent occurs when these factors are incongruous or discordant (Oliver R. L., 1980). This idea emphasizes the importance of regulating and coordinating customers' cognitive processes to achieve positive satisfaction outcomes.

The research by (Oliver R. L., 1980) builds on the Evaluation Congruity Theory, highlighting the importance of cognitive dissonance in affecting consumer satisfaction. Cognitive dissonance occurs when people are uncomfortable or tense owing to discrepancies in their beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. Cognitive dissonance can occur in the context of customer satisfaction when customers perceive differences between their expectations and actual experiences. However, (Oliver R. L., 1980) propose that people try to alleviate cognitive dissonance by searching out information that confirms their positive assessments and attributions, so reinforcing their happiness. This study emphasizes the dynamic nature of cognitive processes underlying consumer satisfaction and the need of managing cognitive dissonance to achieve positive satisfaction outcomes.

Person-Situation-Fit Model:

(Caplan, 1987) paradigm, which emphasizes the role of human features and situational variables on enjo-

yment, offers insight on the intricate interplay of personal characteristics and environmental influences in influencing customer happiness. According to this viewpoint, satisfaction is highest when there is compatibility or alignment between the individual's traits, preferences, and needs and the specific characteristics or features of the product or service under consideration. In essence, satisfaction is maximized when the product or service meets the customer's personal wants and preferences while also responding to their distinct needs and expectations.

The study by (Wayne D Hoyer, 2009) underlines the importance of customer interaction in determining satisfaction levels. Customer involvement is the degree to which people are emotionally or cognitively invested in a specific product or service. According to (Wayne D Hoyer, 2009), highly engaged customers have higher expectations and are more discerning when evaluating items or services. As a result, businesses must understand the various levels of customer involvement and modify their goods and marketing tactics accordingly to fulfil the needs of diverse client segments.

Additionally, Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) created the SERVQUAL model, which emphasizes the importance of service quality in promoting customer satisfaction. According to this approach, customer satisfaction is impacted by the difference between their service expectations and their views of the actual service received. (Zeithaml, 1988) proposed that organizations should seek to narrow this gap by continuously providing high-quality service at all stages of the customer experience. Businesses can improve satisfaction levels and develop strong relationships with their customers by achieving or exceeding their service quality standards.

Performance-Importance Model:

The approach that defines satisfaction as the sum of a product or service's performance and of course the significance of its features to the consumer gives insight into the varied nature of customer satisfaction. According to (Gilbert A Churchill, 1982) perspective, satisfaction is decided not only by a product's or service's absolute performance, but also by how well its unique features correspond with the customer's needs, preferences, and expectations. In essence, pleasure is maximized when a product or service not only functions effectively but also have features that are extremely relevant and important to the consumer. This model emphasizes the necessity of understanding consumers' individual preferences and the specific characteristics that generate pleasure in a given situation.

Furthermore, (Vikas Mittal, 2001) build on this model by incorporating the concept of attribute importance as a significant determinant of satisfaction. According to (Vikas Mittal, 2001), customers have different priorities and preferences when it comes to product or service attributes, with some being more important than others. As a result, customer happiness is determined not only by a product's or service's absolute performance, but also by the relative value of its features to them. Businesses must identify and prioritize those features that are mostly relevant and significant to their target customers, ensuring that their offers are closely aligned with their requirements and preferences in order to maximize customer satisfaction. This study emphasizes the dynamic and context-dependent character of a satisfied consumer, emphasizing the importance of tailoring products and services according to customers' individual needs by businesses.

Dissonance and Contrast Theory:

Beliefs about cognitive processes such as cognitive dissonance reduction and contrast effects give light on the psychological principles underlying customer matisfaction. (Festiger, 1954) claimed that cognitive dissonance reduction happens when people feel discomfort or tension as a result of discrepancies in their beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. Cognitive dissonance can occur when customers' expectations and actual

experiences with a product or service differ. To reduce this discomfort, people may change their attitudes or beliefs to match their activities, lowering cognitive dissonance and increasing satisfaction. Furthermore, contrast effects, as defined by (Paulssen, 2007) occur when people's perceptions of a product or service are altered by comparisons to other products or services. These comparisons can cause fluctuations in satisfaction levels, as people's evaluations are influenced by the relative differences between the products or services under consideration.

Customer satisfaction is extremely important for organizations because it is closely related to client loyalty and repeat purchases. Satisfied customers are more likely to form good sentiments regarding a brand or company, resulting in increased loyalty and repeat purchases (Reichheld, 1996). Furthermore, the same satisfied consumers are more likely to provide positive word-of-mouth recommendations and referrals, which helps to acquire new customers and develop the firm. Businesses aim to improve customer satisfaction in a variety of ways, including offering high-quality products or services, providing exceptional customer service, and promoting positive client experiences throughout the purchasing process.

2.5 Customer Satisfaction in Online Shopping Experiences:

Customer satisfaction in online buying experiences is diverse and includes several factors. It can be regarded as a wide range of characteristics that influence consumers' views and evaluations of their interactions with e-commerce sites. One critical component is perceived product quality, in which customers evaluate the quality and correctness of items received in comparison to their expectations (Kostas Stylidis, 2019)

One key factor is perceived product quality, in which customers evaluate the overall quality and accuracy of things received in relation to their expectations (Kostas Stylidis, 2019). This component of pleasure is determined by factors such as product descriptions, photos, and reviews available on online platforms, which influence customers' pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase evaluations. Another important factor is service quality, which includes things like website responsiveness, customer assistance efficacy, and order fulfilment accuracy (Kaur, 2017)
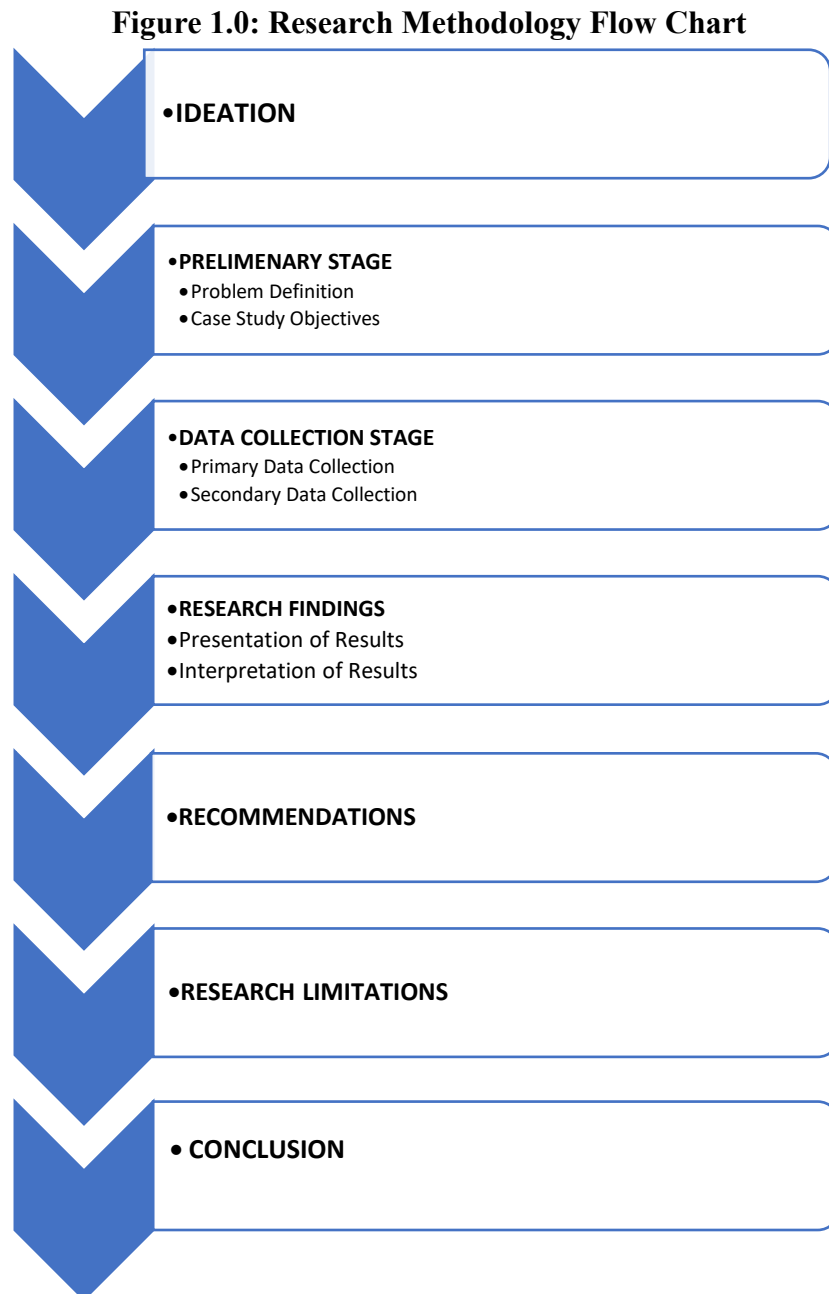
Furthermore, service quality influences customer happiness in online shopping experiences. Service quality includes several facets of the online purchasing experience, such as website responsiveness, simplicity of navigation, customer help efficacy, and order fulfilment accuracy (Kaur, 2017). A fluid and user-friendly website layout, combined with quick customer service methods, helps to higher levels of satisfaction by removing potential pain points and providing a smooth transactional process for customers. The convenience and flexibility given by online purchasing platforms have a considerable impact on client happiness. According to research, the availability of different payment choices (such as Paytm, google pay etc.)., flexible delivery schedules, and hassle-free return policies all lead to higher levels of satisfaction among online customers. These aspects of convenience are consistent with consumers' rising demands for ease and flexibility in their shopping experiences, particularly in urban areas such as Delhi NCR, where time constraints and traffic congestion are common.

In addition to product and service-related aspects, social and environmental considerations influence customer satisfaction during online buying. Consumers, for example, are more interested in ethical and sustainable business practices, which leads them to support firms that demonstrate corporate social responsibility and environmental stewardship (In Lee, 2020). Thus, online shops who stress transparency, sustainability, and ethical sourcing are more likely to build stronger relationships with environmentally

concerned customers, resulting in higher levels of pleasure and loyalty.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following methodology chart gives a summary of the methodology that will be adopted in carrying out this study:

Figure 1.0: Research Methodology Flow Chart

- IDEATION

- PRELIMENARY STAGE
  - Problem Definition
  - Case Study Objectives

- DATA COLLECTION STAGE
  - Primary Data Collection
  - Secondary Data Collection

- RESEARCH FINDINGS
  - Presentation of Results
  - Interpretation of Results

- RECOMMENDATIONS

- RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

- CONCLUSION

Source: Own Analysis

This research approach aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of customer preferences and satisfaction levels with online purchasing experiences in Delhi. By delving into the complexities of consumer behavior and views, this study hopes to uncover significant insights into the problems, accomplishments, and potential for improving the overall online shopping experience for customers in

the bustling metropolis. The research seeks to give practical recommendations based on rigorous data gathering and analysis that may guide strategic decision-making and generate concrete changes in the customer experience across multiple online shopping platforms in Delhi.

This research approach, which follows a case study design, is designed to allow for an in-depth analysis of individual customer preferences and subjective impressions of satisfaction with the services offered during online purchases. Using a qualitative method, the study aims to capture deep and nuanced insights into the complexities of customer interactions with various e-commerce platforms, revealing the elements that influence their purchasing decisions and overall happiness.

The research aims to illuminate the underlying drivers of customer behavior and shed light on areas for improvement through in-depth interviews, surveys, and observational studies, fostering a deeper understanding of the customer experience landscape in Delhi's online shopping ecosystem.

3.1 Data Collection

The data collection involves the use of both the Primary data collection and secondary data sources.

- **Primary Data Collection**

Questionnaire: A questionnaire was flighted to individual respondents who are users of the online shopping platforms, this will be done to get all the information in relation to the topic. The questionnaire was randomly flighted through both WhatsApp and Instagram to some respondents.

The questionnaire is made of 13 questions, and three different sections, where the first section was focused on understanding the demographics of the respondents, their gender, age, monthly income and education level. The other subsequent sections: section 2 is made to capture the customers preferences based on their previous experiences with the different e-shopping platforms. Lastly the customer satisfaction level with the different platforms they tend to use based on different factors.

In order to better capture the respondents' level of satisfaction and their preferences on the shopping platforms, some discussions with individual customers were made in order to better capture their responses on different areas as far as e-shopping is concerned. These were just random customers, who are already known, mostly some students and some other people from the working class.

- **Secondary Data Collection**

Existing documents, such as the previous studies carried out on this same topic were used to gather the data required for completion of this study as well as to gain insight on the direction of the research and what can be done to make the study even more concrete.

3.2 Data Analysis

Exploratory Data Analysis (ADA**)**: With the EDA, we will look into each and every single variable and evaluate them individually, the idea being to evaluate each variable to understand its distribution, relationships, and any potential patterns.

Descriptive Statistics: Calculations of some statistics such as mean, and standard deviation will be used to summarize key variables related to customer preferences and satisfaction levels.

Inferential Statistics: inferential statistical tests will be conducted such as correlation coefficient analysis to examine relationships between variables and test hypotheses derived from the research objectives.

3.2.1 Findings

The findings are drawn from the overall analysis and discussions. This involves a careful and through synthesis of the discussions in order to draw the findings, taking into consideration the objectives of the

study as well as the hypothesis, in order to bring about solution to both of them.

3.2.2 Conclusion

After a thorough analysis is made, some conclusions based on the overall discussions and analysis as well as the research findings. This includes a summary of the entire research procedure.

3.2.3 Recommendations

The recommendations are made based on the research findings for improving the e-shopping platforms in Delhi NCR. These are the recommendations to the e-commerce platforms that they should take into consideration in order to improve on customer satisfaction.

3.4 Research Design

A case Study Approach was undertaken for this research, this was done since a case study design enables an in-depth investigation of the case at hand, and also allows for multiple variables to be studied at the same time.

Sampling Design

Simple Random Sampling: The research tool (Questionnaire) was randomly distributed to the different prospective respondents through different social media platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp.

Sample Size

Since a Random sampling method is being used, a sample size of 100 was selected and provided with the questionnaire. This sample was chosen in order to have statistically relevant results.

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS
4.1 Demographics Discussions

The study was conducted on 100 respondents who use online shopping in Delhi NCR, these respondents were randomly selected since the questionnaire was randomly sent out to individuals through social media so that they can respond at their own convenience.

Of the 100 responses gotten, 58% are men and the 42% are female, this implies that there were more responses from the male gender than the other gender. This has also been noted from the different studies that were conducted previously on the same line of thought by different authors.

Fig 1.2 Summary of Respondents Gender
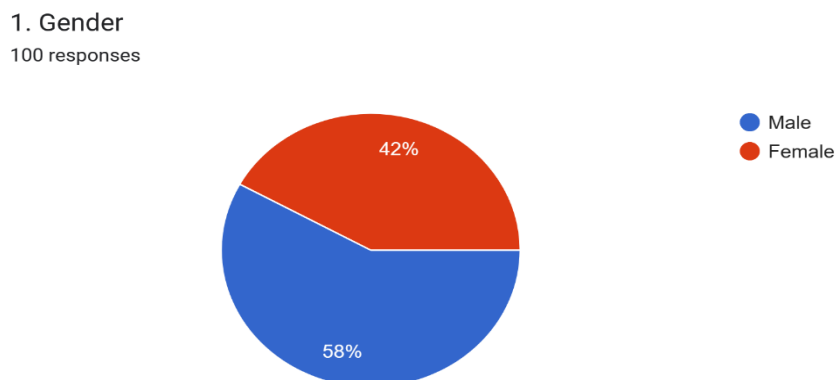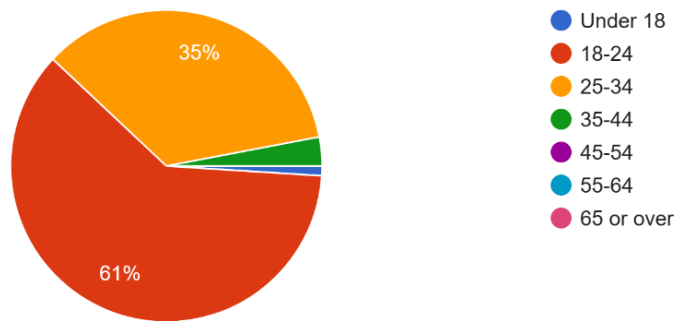

Source: Own Analysis

Of the responses the data collected, different age groups have been recorded from the responses, with the age group of 18-24 giving a higher response rate, followed by 25-35 age group and a few people from 35-44 age group. Only person responded who is within the category of 18 and below. This is happened because the majority of the respondents that were targeted are the students within the DTU, who are mostly undergraduates or pursuing the master's degree, as well as those who are at PhD level.

The other respondents were just members of the public and other employees such as diplomats from different countries, who resides within the Delhi NCR.

Figure 1.3 Summary of Respondents Age groups

Source: Own Analysis

As it has already been discussed earlier on the respondent's education level, 60% of the respondents are bachelor's degree holders, who are the majority respondents from the survey. The master's degree holders are only 31%, followed by 9 who are currently holding the high school certification.

**Figure 1.4 Summary of Respondents Education Level**
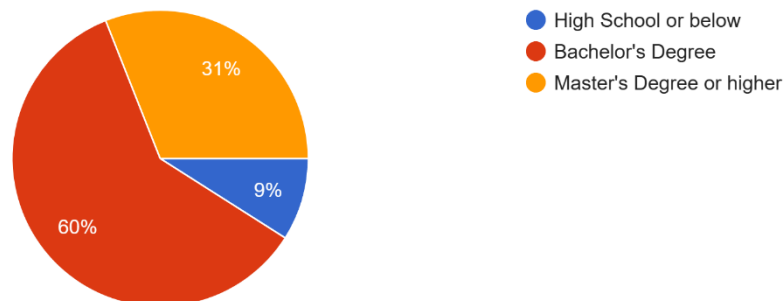
Source: Own Analysis

The respondent's income on a monthly basis is also recorded, majority of the respondents earn below Rs20 000, this is exactly 50% of the respondents, only 35 of the respondents have a monthly earning of over Rs 20 001- 40 000. It is important to note that the responses have been diversified by the respondents who

have monthly of over Rs 60 000.

**Figure 1.5 Summary of Respondents Monthly Income**
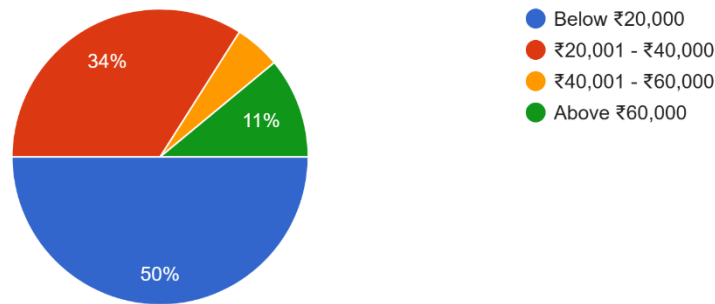
Source: Own Analysis

The last part of the demographics sheds light on the current employment status of the respondents. This part of the analysis shows that the majority of responses id gotten from students, 81 out of the 100 respondents are currently still students, while only 12 are fully employed. Just of the respondents are freelancers and one is a business owner.

Figure 1.6 Summary of Respondents Education Level
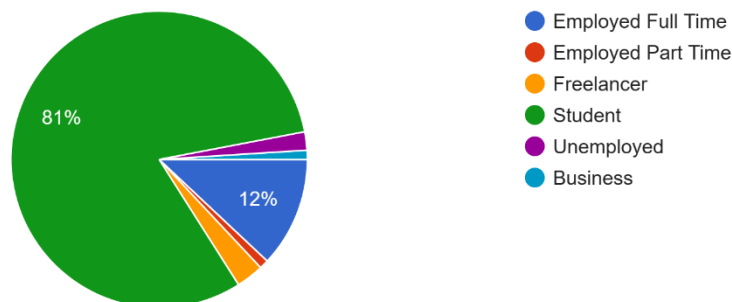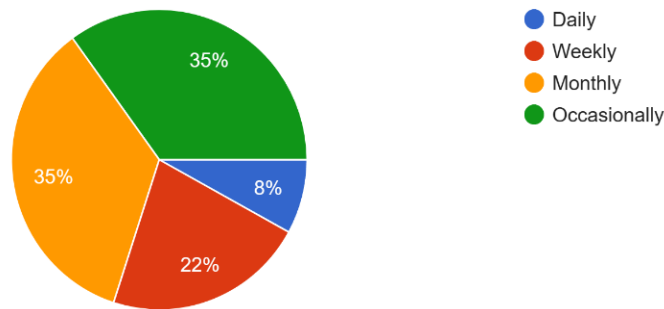

Source: Own Analysis

4.2 Discussion on Customer Preferences

Customer preferences often vary based on demographics and other factors such as cultural background, beliefs and ethics. This part of the research looks into the different factors that influences the individual preferences when purchasing online, or when making a decision to purchase online. The factors will be individually evaluated.

The following chart shows the frequency of purchases done by different respondents; this shows the level of preference of online shopping by different consumers. Out of the 100 participants in the study, 35 %

of the respondents do their shopping on a monthly basis, and the same number does the shopping occasionally. Only 22% of the sample do their online purchases on a weekly basis. Lastly only 8 % of the sample do their shopping on a daily basis.

**Figure 1.7 Summary of Respondents frequency of Purchases.**

Source: Own Analysis

The respondents were provided with a list of items that they tend to purchase online, and they had to tick all that which applies to them. The following figure shows the summary of the items purchased online by different customers. Of all the respondents, majority of the respondents prefer to purchase groceries online, which accounts for 70% of the sample. This is followed by the purchase of the of clothing that takes 64%. The purchase of shoes registered only 49%.

Beauty and Personal Care products follows up with 40%, which has a very slight difference from the Electronics which registered 39%.

The home appliances purchases registered a very low percentage, which implies that, only 17 respondents prefer buying such online, while majority of the sample does not. The purchase of the ready-made food the least preferred of the online purchases.

Figure 1.7 Summary of Respondents Preferred items purchased online.
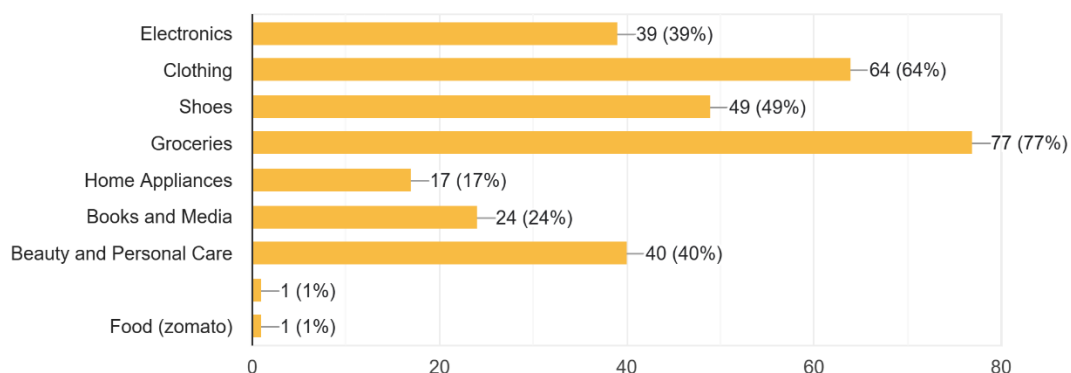
Source: Own Analysis

Choosing an online platform is a very crucial stage in online shopping decision making. It is often determined by the customers expectation from the platform. There are multiple factors that are very important for customers when selecting the platform to use while purchasing online.

This discussion follows the responses gotten from the sample with regards to the factors of importance that they consider when selecting an e-shopping platform.

Majority of the respondents from the sample prefer to make their choice of an online purchase platform based on price competitiveness, this is backed by the 45% response for price competitiveness being important factor for choosing a platform.

A good number of respondents, which is 27% do no regard price competitiveness as an important factor for selecting the platform to use for their purchases online. In aggregating the numbers 58% of the sample regard the price competitiveness as an important factor, with 45% considering it mostly important and 13% considering it just an important factor, as seen from the Likert scale.

The user-friendly website/ mobile app follows as the most important factor for the respondents'' selection of an online shopping platform as an aggregate of 57% of the respondents have selected it with 37% considering it very important and 20% just important. It is also important to note that only 11% of the respondents do not consider web user friendliness as an important factor. User friendly website friendly websites are meant specifically to provide users with maximum convenience, and ease of use.

The above factor is then followed by the easy returns policy and after customer service quality, these factors both aggregate to 56% of respondents who believe that they are very important factors in selecting the platform to purchase from. On the easy returns factor, 37% of respondents believe that it is very important, while only 19% believe it is important, hence aggregating to 56%. It is also noted that 21%, which is a very notable number, believe that while selecting the platform to purchase from online, the easy returns policy is the least important. With regards to customer service quality, 32% believe that it is very important, with 24% believing that it is important, while only 14% believes it is the least important factor

It is important to note that, 35% of the respondent believe that delivery speed and reliably is the most important factor when selecting the platform to purchase from. This is a significantly high number that comes after the 45% that selects the price competitiveness as the most important factor to consider when selecting a platform to buy from online. In aggregating the numbers, the respondents who regard this factor as important are 54% of the sample, with 35% of very important and 15% who believe it is just important. Only 17% of the sample regard the delivery speed and reliability as least important factor.

The next factor that ranks 5, in terms of preferences of factors that decides the respondents' choices of the online shopping platform is Product assortment and variety. This factor has an aggregate score of 50% respondent who believe that this factor of product assortment and variety is important, this is made up of 29% of respondent who consider it very important and the 21% who regard it as just important, hence aggregating to the 50%. Of the other 50%, only 17% of the respondents regard this factor the least important in choosing an online platform to buy from.

Lastly, looking at the factors that determine the respondents' choices of the online platform to purchase from is the two, that both aggregate to 47%, as being important factors, these are the only factors that had to score below 50%. These factors are the after sales service and the mode of payment used for online purchase. In terms of very important aspect, they both recorded 26% and 21% for just important.

This implies that for both the factors, most of the respondents feel that they are either least important or just neutral about them, hence the graphs there being bigger in between.

The following figure shows the summary of the analysis as made above.

Figure 1.7 Summary of Respondent's Important Factors when Choosing an online Platform.
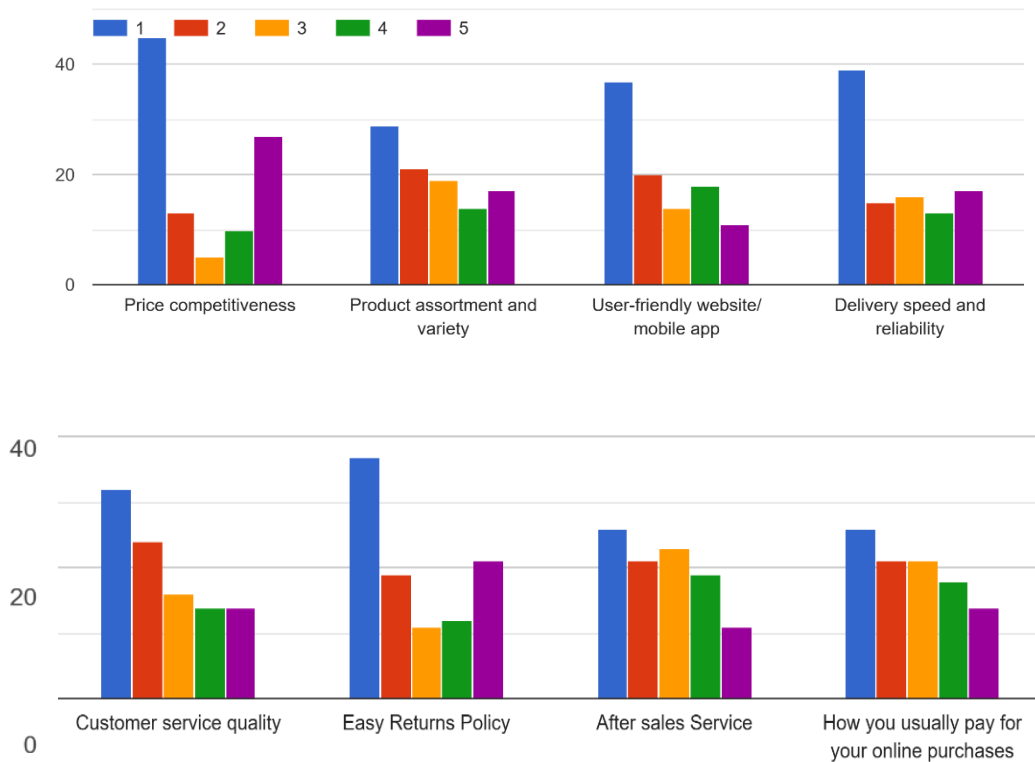
Source: Own Analysis

On a different aspect and factor altogether, the vast majority of the respondents shows their preference of mode of purchase to be Cash on Delivery (COD). This could be due to security concerns or many other reasons that will be discussed later on this discussion and analysis. The respondents prefer cash on delivery, with the total scorer of 77%, followed by E-wallets at 68%. This could be due the convenience that comes with these two modes of payment. Only a small number of the sample prefer using credit cards and net banking, as they recorded 20% and 10% respectively, way below majority.

**Figure 1.7 Summary of Respondent's Preference of Mode of Payment.**
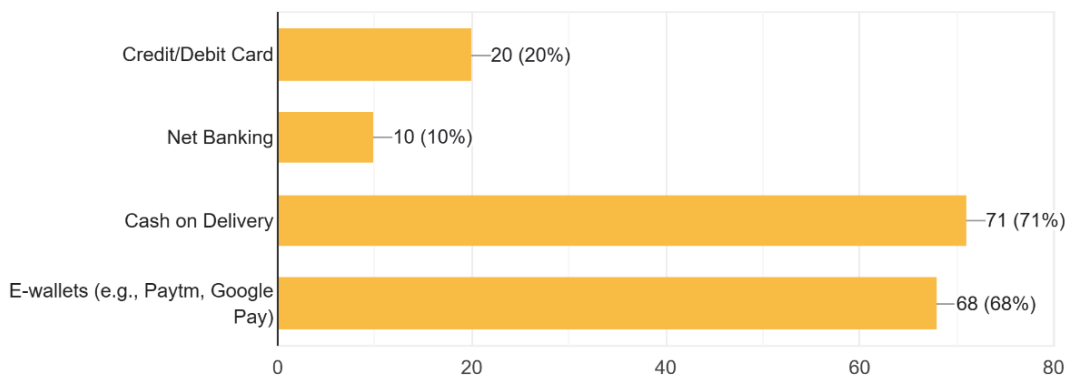
Source: Own Analysis

4.3 Discussion on Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is usually very subjective. It is dependent on the prior experience one had with the brand or object. In this section we will look into the different aspects of the online shopping that could define the level of satisfaction that the different consumers have with the different online platforms.

The respondents shows that they are satisfied with the overall shopping experience in the different platforms that they use for e-shopping. In the pie chart below, a very high number of respondents, at 62% shows that they are satisfied with their overall online shopping experiences. The numbers of the respondents who are very satisfied with their overall experience with the online shopping is at 15%. This gives an aggregate value of 77% of overall satisfaction with the online shopping platforms. This value is highly significant to the e-commerce retailers, as it shows that they are to certain extent providing customers a good e-shopping experience. It is just a very small number of respondents who are just neutral about their shopping experience. Lastly it is important to note that no respondent is very dissatisfied with the overall shopping and 2% of the respondents are dissatisfied.

Figure 1.8 Summary of Respondent's Overall Satisfaction with E-Shopping Experience
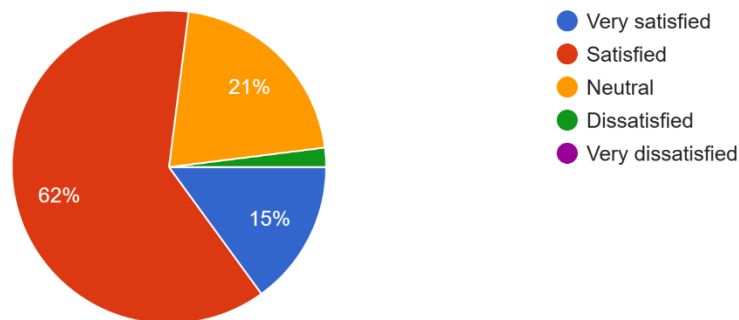
Source: Own Analysis

The respondents were provided with the different aspects of the online shopping experiences and asked to decide on their level of satisfaction with each one of the aspects on a likers scale of 1 to 5, with one being very dissatisfied, being satisfied, 3, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (neutral), 4 being satisfied and 5 being very satisfied.

In terms of website/ mobile app usability, majority of the respondents, which is 64% of the sample are satisfied with the platforms they use. With 33% very satisfied and 31% just satisfied, aggregating to 64% of satisfied respondents. Only a small number of respondents are dissatisfied with the website usability. This is made of 11% who are just dissatisfied and 14% who are very dissatisfied. This may be due to different post experiences with the different applications or sites.

The delivery speed and reliability of a platform is one of the important features to look into, especially depending on the urgency of the orders being placed. After the web app usability, most respondents are satisfied with the delivery speed and reliability of the online platforms that they use, with an aggregate of 55% of the respondents being satisfied. Out of this 29% is very satisfied and 26% is just satisfied, bringing it to the above sum of 55%.

A good number of respondents, at 19% are just neutral in terms of satisfaction with the online shopping experience in terms of delivery speed and reliability. An aggregate of 26%, which is quite a high number of the sample, are not satisfied with the delivery speed and reliability.

With a good number of respondents at 52%, believes that they are satisfied with the product quality and accuracy. This is made up of the 20% who are very satisfied and the 32% that is just satisfied. It is also important to note that 21% of the respondents are dissatisfied with the product quality and accuracy, while 9% is very dissatisfied, bringing the numbers all to 30%. The is a very significant number in terms of dissatisfaction of customers that leaves a lot to be desired. There is need to look into this matter as the online platforms in order to figure out what could be the problem in order to deal with this issue abruptly.

A considerable number of respondents are satisfied with the returns and exchange policies of the platforms they deal with, this has registered an aggregate of 51% responses with 21% highly satisfied and only 29% just satisfied. Though the number is still lower than that of some of the factors, it is safe to say the majority of the respondents are satisfied, slightly above half. It is also important to note that a good number of the respondent are not satisfied with this factor. These are made of 14% who are not satisfied at all and 11% who are very dissatisfied, aggregating the numbers to 25%.

Customer Service Responsiveness factor took a unique turn in turns of responses. Majority of the respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The number of these majority stands at a good 38%, which is comparably very high. This implies that more than a third of the sample is neutral when it comes to this factor. The number of satisfied respondents also stands at an aggregate of 38%, with 21% being just satisfied and 17% being very satisfied. It is important to note that 25% of the respondents are dissatisfied with the customer service responsiveness.

Figure 1.9 Summary of Respondent's Overall Satisfaction with different aspects of online Shopping.
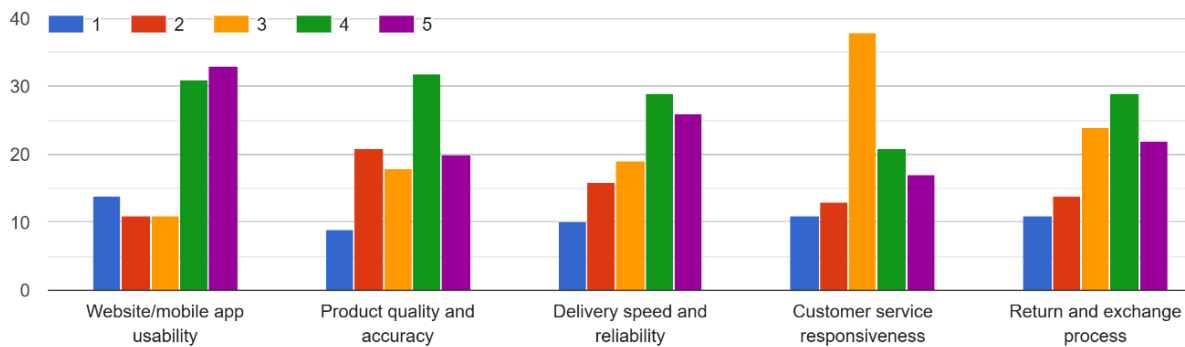
Source: Own Analysis

Despite the beautiful things that are experienced by the customer during their purchases online at their own convenience, there are also some pain points that they experience that affects their overall experience in the online shopping.

It is therefore very important to look into these challenges while analyzing this study, as they one way or the other affect the customer satisfaction and skew their preferences.

The one major challenge that is experienced by the vast majority of the respondents is the one for poor product quality, toping the chats at 54%. This implies that the respondents get to experience this problem of being supplied products that do not match their quality expectations, or as seen on the website.

It is also important to notice that, according to the graph below, quite a number of experiences then problems of wrong items being delivered, instead of the actual products that have ordered. This is even made more painful by the fact that the same number of respondents still get to experience some

complicated to no return policies. This therefore implies that they get to be stuck with either the wrong product or even worse, the poor-quality products, The number of respondents who experience these challenges stands at 42%.

There is a substantial number of respondents who get to experience the challenge of long delivery times. It is important to note that, though the number standing at 34%, it still shows that there are some customers who still struggle with having to wait longer for their goods to be delivered. This may affect the consumers satisfaction and result in them changing their perspective and preferences of the web application that is not more flexible and responsive to their needs.

The other problem that is experienced by 28% of the respondents is that of security concerns when it comes to payment. With the changes and advancement in technology, a lot of customers may be scammed of their hard-earned cash by some online vultures who look out for unsuspecting clients. Though the numbers may not seem significant compared to other major challenges, it reveals some vulnerabilities that most unsuspecting customers may be subjected to.

A small number, which stands at only 8% still face difficulties of navigating between the applications. This may be due to different problems that are not explained in their response. In one of the responses provided by the respondent, they face problems of scammers advertising on different platforms, with websites that seem genuine, and then in turn deliver to them dirty clothing from the trash, while the customer has lost money to those scammers.

It is also important to bring to light the case of poor communication at stated by one of the respondents, that there are some e commerce platforms that do not provide good communication for the clients, and take long to respond to their queries which in turns results in the customer having to resort to the legal route in order to sort the problem out. This becomes so tiresome for the clients, and may lose interest on the concept on online shopping altogether.

Figure 2.0 Summary of Respondent's Challenges when Shopping online.
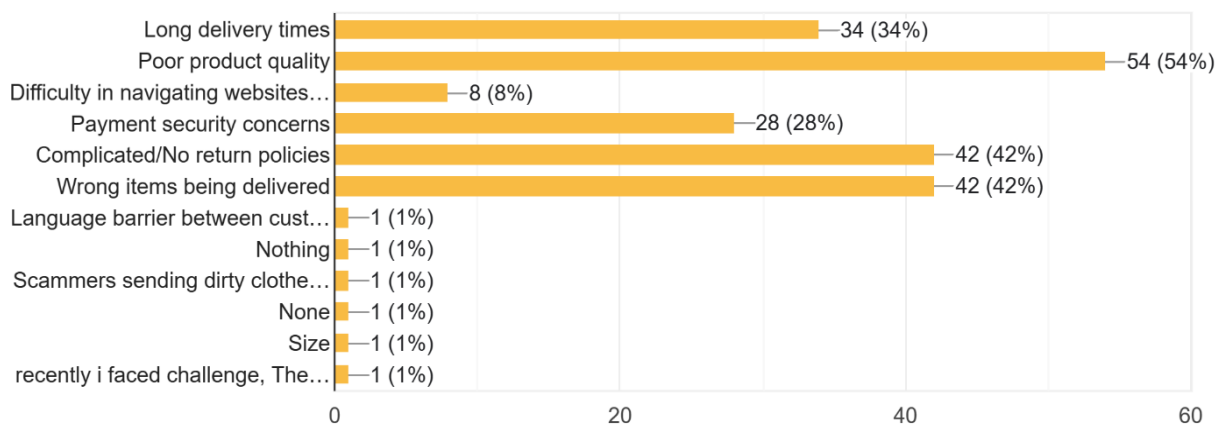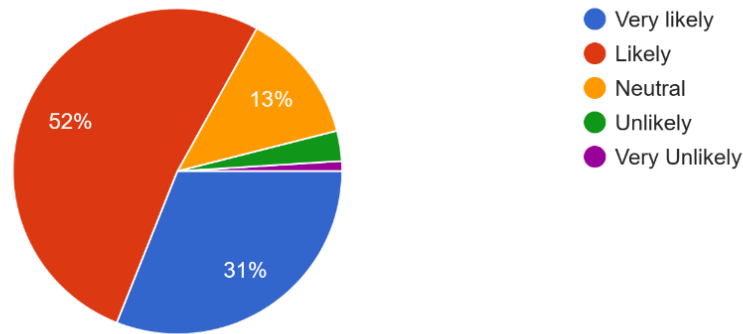

Source: Own Analysis

Lastly on this discussion, we look into the how the overall experience of the customers may result in them referring other prospective customers to use the e-commerce platforms that they use. It is important to understand, customer often make referrals based on their post experience with the different platforms. The following results were obtained from this study:

Figure 2.0 Summary of Respondent's Challenges when Shopping online.

Source: Own Analysis

The pie chart above shows a vast majority, which is that almost all the respondents are likely to recommend online shopping to others based on their prior experiences. This vast majority aggregates to 83%, with 52% just likely to recommend the online shopping and 31 % very likely to recommend online shopping to others, based o their past experience and exposure to different e-commerce platforms. A small number of respondents standing at 13% are neutral on the matter, hence they are neither likely nor unlikely to recommend e-shopping to others. There is a 4% of respondents who are not likely to recommend e-shopping to others, which is also based on their past experiences that probably were not so impressive.

4.4 Factor Analysis

Table 1.0 Cronbach's Alpha for Customer Satisfaction

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.886	5

Source: Own Analysis

In order to ensure that the factors that were used to measure customer preferences and satisfaction are reliable for the test to be conducted, a factor analysis was done as a preliminary test for these factors. It is important to note that, there are different levels of Cronbach's Alpha, that determines the reliability of the factors used.

The above table 1.0, the Coefficient output, for testing the reliability of factors that determine customer satisfaction, is 0.886 (It is higher than 0.5). This is an indication that all the statements are very reliable for the factor analysis. Usually a Cronbach Alpha of (0.6 – 0.8) is regarded to be reliable, while tat greater than (0.8 – 1.0) is regarded to be very reliable.

Table 1.1 Item-Total Statistics for Reliability				
Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Website/mobile app usability	13.35	18.755	.652	.881
Product quality and accuracy	13.60	18.889	.747	.857

Delivery speed and reliability	13.48	17.989	.812	.841
Customer service responsiveness	13.73	19.916	.687	.870
Return and exchange process	13.56	18.875	.738	.859

Source: Own Analysis

An Item-Total Statistics for Reliability test for factors that measures the customer satisfaction on e-shopping was also carried out. The table 1.1 above show the different values of each factor "if Removed". All the factors if removed, will result in a decrease in the in the Cronbach's Alpha. It is important to note that of all the above statements, "Delivery Speed and Reliability" is most reliable as when removed, it will reduce the Cronbach's Alpha down to 0.841. There is no statement on the above that when removed results in an increase in the Alpha Coefficient, this implies that all the statements used are all reliable and we therefore forego the removal of any of these statements.

Table 1.2 Cronbach's Alpha for Customer Preferences

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.934	8

Source: Own Analysis

Taking a look into the Cronbach's Alpha for factors that measure the customers preferences of the online shopping platform to use, the Cronbach's Alpha 0.934 (It is higher than 0.5). This, as already discussed in table 1.1, is an indication that all the statements are very reliable for the factor analysis as it is usually insinuated that a Cronbach Alpha of greater than (0.8 – 1.0) is regarded to be very reliable.

It is equally Important to measure the item total statistic for the factors that determine the customers preferences when doing their online purchases. The table below gives the values of the 8 different factors that were used to test for customer satisfaction, together with the values of the Cronbach's Alpha if those factors were removed.

Table 1.3 Item-Total Statistics for Reliability

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Price competitiveness	18.25	70.371	.816	.922
Product assortment and variety	18.17	76.264	.734	.928
User-friendly website/mobile app	18.40	75.758	.776	.925
Delivery speed and reliability	18.32	72.644	.847	.919
Customer service quality	18.32	74.644	.827	.921

Easy Returns Policy	18.25	72.311	.826	.921
After Sales Service	18.18	79.462	.660	.933
Mode of Payment	18.13	78.458	.675	.932

Source: Own Analysis

It is notable from the table 1.3 above that for all the factors, the Cronbach's Alpha reduces if the factor is removed. It therefore shows that all these factors are reliable for the test to be carried out. It is important to notice that it is important to notice that the "Customer service Quality" and the "Easy Returns Policy" both reduce the Cronbach's Alpha to 0.921 when the factors are deleted. Since they drop the Alpha the more than most of the Items, they become more important in this case. "Delivery speed and Reliability" still stands as the most important and reliable of all the factors since "if Deleted" it drops the Cronbach's Alpha to the lowest of all the values, 0.19.

The table 1.4 shows the descriptive statistics of factors affecting the customer satisfaction. The table shows the mean and standard deviations of the different factors under consideration. The standard deviation shows how dispersed the values are from the mean. The standard deviations of all the variables are relatively the same, with web app usability with a standard deviation of 1.408, which implies that the respondents have quite a variability in their responses towards their perception on their satisfaction.

It is important to note that Factors with higher mean scores and lower standard deviations may represent areas where the company is performing well and consistently meeting customer expectations.

Table 1.4 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customer Satisfaction	3.386	1.0713
Website app usability	3.58	1.408
Product quality and accuracy	3.33	1.264
Delivery speed and reliability	3.45	1.306
Customer service responsiveness	3.20	1.198
Return and exchange process	3.37	1.276

Source: Own Analysis

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Analysis of the Pearsons Correlation Coefficient: It is evident from the table 1.5 below that all factors discussed shows a significantly positive correlation (95% Confidence Interval) between the factors and Customer satisfaction. The highest Correlation coefficient (r) is 0.887, which is estimated between the delivery speed and reliability and customer satisfaction.

The lowest, yet still positive correlation coefficient (r) is 0.7900, which is estimated between website application usability and customer satisfaction. All the association of the factors under consideration is showing some positive results, this therefore means we fail to reject all the Hypothesis 1 through to Hypothesis. 5

Table 1.5 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient:

	Customer Satisfaction	Website app usability	Product quality and accuracy	Delivery speed and reliability	Customer service responsiveness	Return and exchange process
Customer Satisfaction	1					
Website app usability	0.790081	1				
Product quality and accuracy	0.842054	0.578093	1			
Delivery speed and reliability	0.887063	0.691636	0.723323	1		
Customer service responsiveness	0.795780	0.469511	0.583294	0.581402	1	
Return and exchange process	0.837028	0.491869	0.618590	0.674897	0.710947	1

Source: Own Analysis

4.6 Findings

The following are the results of the case study analysis and discussion as done above, in relation to the objectives as stated at the beginning of the study. There are three major objectives that will be evaluated in depth, looking into the different aspects of the discussion above.

Objective 1

To determine the primary factors influencing customers' choice of e-commerce platforms.

From the analysis we managed to pick on multiple factors that affect the choice of the e-commerce platform that consumers use. We can conclude that, the choice is often determined by the frequency of purchase by an individual. Most customers purchase goods on a Monthly basis and some on a weekly basis, which implies that they have to make a choice based on the lead time, the convenience and urgency of the order that they place. It is also important to note that, most customers prefer e-commerce sites that allow them to make payments as Cash on Delivery (COD) and or E-payments. These have been selected by customers at 71% and 68% respectively in terms of preferences.

Most consumers have also shown price competitiveness of the platforms as one of the top factors that influence their choice of the online platform. The price competitiveness can be in terms of the ability of the app to offer the lowest prices in comparison to other platform, that the same products that satisfies the same need and are of the same quality. Price competitiveness has been selected by majority of the customers at a high percentage of 58% compared to important other factors. Some of the customers gave an example of Amazon, that operates on best cost strategy and provides choices from different vendors for the same product, and the buyer makes their choice based on the best price.

This is then followed by the user friendliness of the app/ mobile application, which can mean the ease of use of an application (easy to maneuver around the app), with no complications, that may render the user

leaving the app without placing orders due to complicated ways. This factor was selected by 57% of customers as a major factor that influence the customers choice of the e-commerce site to purchase from. There is also the factor of returns policy. This look into whether the return policy is favorable, there are some online platforms that do not allow for return of items once purchased. Some platforms have a policy of accepting returns only when there is a video showing the whole opening process of the parcel, there are a lot of ultimatums that are given to customers in that regard. This may affect the customers choice of the e-commerce platform. This factor has been rendered a major factor in selecting the online platform by 56% of the respondents.

The last but not least factor is that of delivery speed and reliability. This has been selected by 54% of customers in the study a s a major factor that affects their choice of the online platforms. This is basically on how responsive and flexible the platform is in terms of delivering the customer's parcel. Some long lead times may result in customers deciding on a different platform for their future purchases that is faster in terms of delivering the goods. This factor of delivery speed and reliability has been rendered more important and reliable in the factor analysis.

It is therefore important to note that customers look into the different factors that ensure them of responsiveness, convenience and price competitive.

Objective 2

To assess the various aspects of the online shopping experience that contribute to customer satisfaction.

We have found out that 77% of the customers are satisfied with the online platforms that use for their e-shopping. This level of satisfaction is one way or the other a product of customer experience with the different web apps that they use on a regular basis to make their purchases. This level of satisfaction is evident on the three major factors that the customers chose to be the factors that they are mostly satisfied on with regards to e-commerce platforms that they use on a regular basis.

First and top on the list is the website and or mobile app usability, which as selected by 64% of the customers as one factor that which they are mostly satisfied on with regards to the online platforms that they use. Useability encapsulates user experience, and the ability of the user to interact with the interface. This implies that the e-commerce companies are doing well in ensuring that the customers do not struggle while accessing and using the platforms. The user interfaces are not so complex for different users to be able to comprehend and interact with.

The other major factor that determines high level of satisfaction by the customer is delivery speed and reliability, at 55%. This factor is mostly based on convenience and reliability of the e-commerce platform in terms of delivery, and their ability to provide the goods and services within the expected time.

This factor has also been rendered a very critical factor on the factor analysis, through the Cronbach's Alpha. Product Quality and accuracy has also been selected as one of the factors that got clients satisfied with the online shopping experiences. It is evident that 56% of the respondents are happy with the product quality that which they buy from the online platforms that they use.

Objective 3

To explore the common challenges and or pain points faced by customers while shopping online.

While this may seem a whole lot more contradictory from the previous discussion in relation to the concept of product quality, a lot of consumers shows that they have a major challenge of poor product quality. A total of 54% of the customers have shown that they experience this challenge, where the product quality does not match the customer expectation of the quality of that particular product, especially with clothing.

The other major problem that the customers complain about is the complicated or no return policy. Most of the customers at 45% complain that the face problems of e-shopping platforms that do not have a friendly returns policy. According to most customers, some of the return policies are so complicated that they require customers to have parcel opening videos, which puts some customers on a painful situation, since such requirements are not common across all the platforms.

Some platforms do not allow for returns at all, so that forces the clients to be stuck with the products that they do not like or that does not match their needs. There are some platforms that go as far as requesting for return payments from the customer, forces the customer to either dig deep into their pockets or forever hold onto the products that they do not like/ want. This same problem is made worse by the other problem of tendency of the sellers to provide wrong items from what the customer had ordered.

Some customers also complain about the payment security concerns, this is growing at an alarming rate due to increase in technology that has resulted in a lot of scams happening to online buyers. The boom in online shopping requires the e-commerce community to be vigilant and has made payment security a very critical issue that requires immediate attention. Some of the major concerns with regards to this payment security are:

Fraudulent Activities: This includes card skimming, fake online shopping sites, and phishing scams.

Data Breaches: Which may result in unauthorized access to customer data that can lead to significant financial losses and damage to reputation.

Identity Theft in there is an unauthorized use of someone's personal information for fraudulent purposes, which was gotten online by the scammers.

It is therefore very essential for the e-commerce platforms to have measures in place assure customers of their full protection form any form of scam that may happen and also to ensure protection of their personal information for security purposes.

Some customers, especially the international customers face problems of language barrier between the assistants, whether in sales or even with the delivery people, where they fail to communicate in the language that is comprehended by many. It important to understand that and subsequent difficulties in communication for updates on orders is concerning for some of the customers. Such experiences erode trust in online retailers and highlight the importance of robust customer support systems to address grievances promptly.

Lastly, we found out that there is a significantly positive relationship between the different factors and the Customer Satisfaction. Delivery speed and reliability scored the highest correlation coefficient at 0.887, followed by Product quality and accuracy at 0.842, then the return and exchange process at 0.837. The other factors, customer service responsiveness and web app useability scored below the rest ab 0.795 and 0.79 respectively. These shows a highly positive correlation between these factors and customer satisfaction.

4.7 Recommendations

- There should be a regulatory body that regulates these platforms in order for them to be compliant especially in terms of quality and returns policies, in that way customers may have a place to put through their grievances if the need be.
- The e-commerce platforms should work on the supply chain processes to ensure that the outbound logistics are faster, in order to reduce the waiting time for customers, this may help to increase customer satisfaction.

- The e-commerce platforms should Invest in robust security measures such as the multi-factor authentications in order to protect customers important information while making their payments online.
- There should be transparent communication between the buyer and the seller in order to build trust and improve customer experience. Communication is key to good customer relations.
- These e-commerce platforms should provide a simplified return policy that is understandable, customer-friendly return policy with simple steps. They should reduce complexity and provide a variety of return options for the convenience of your customers. Free returns within a fair period of time should be taken into consideration to entice customers to test new products.
- Platforms such as Amazon should have policies in place that allow them to do a thorough background research on the sellers before bringing them aboard, in order to avoid frauds trading in the name of Amazon, while scamming unsuspecting customers.

4.8 Directions for future Research

- Researchers should pay more attention into the gender disparities of the respondents in order to have a better understanding of the causes and any other underlying factors for such disparities, as this has been a trend looking at the previous studies carried out in relation to this topic.
- The study should have a diverse number of respondents from different geographies within Delhi NCR, in order to reduce any possible biasness that may come about due to having majority of respondents as the student body.
- There are some other factors that other than the ones discussed in this research, hence there is need to explore the role these factors such as the role of emerging technologies like AI and ML in enhancing the e-commerce customer experience.

4.9 Limitations of the Study

- The sample size (100 participants) might be relatively small for a definitive analysis, which definitely makes it difficult to make inferences of the findings to the entire population of the Delhi, NCR. A larger sample could have brought in better insights with regards to the subject matter.
- The time constraint and lack of other resources to cater for a larger sample were also major limiting factors while carrying out this study, as other means of data collection could have been incorporated into the study, such as the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews with individual respondents.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Customers prioritize factors that make online shopping convenient, including frequent purchase options (cash on delivery, e-payments), user-friendly apps, and fast & reliable delivery. This emphasis on convenience underscores the importance of accommodating diverse customer needs and preferences, ultimately enhancing the overall shopping experience and fostering customer loyalty.

A study was carried out with 100 participants using questionnaire that was distributed through social media platforms, especially WhatsApp and Instagram. The collected data on the participant's general information and rating on their preferences and levels of satisfaction on e-shopping experiences. To prevent bias and provide comprehensive data, the individuals were selected at random. After that, the

data was examined statistically, and factor analysis was applied to the factors that determine both the customer preference and levels of satisfaction on e-shopping.

The many demands and tastes of contemporary consumers are reflected in the multitude of elements that impact customers' choice of e-commerce platforms. First off, a major factor influencing how customers behave is the frequency of their purchases. Frequent buyers want for systems that offer them ease, dependability, and efficiency. Platforms that are able to adapt to consumers shopping preferences and offer seamless shopping experiences are probably going to be given preference.

Although 58% of respondents said price competition is crucial, it is not the only determining factor. Ease of use and user experience are also highly rated (57%). This nuanced viewpoint emphasizes how consumers make decisions based on a variety of factors, and how platform choice is influenced by aspects including price, usability, and total value offer. For many consumers, price competitiveness is an essential factor. Customers are more likely to look for platforms that provide the highest value in a competitive market. This goes beyond just having inexpensive costs; it also includes things like sales, incentives, and loyalty points. Customers looking for affordable buying options are more likely to be drawn to and stay on platforms that continuously exhibit price competitiveness.

The significance of a favorable return policy (56%) cannot be overstated in terms of customer trust and platform choice. Having a good returns policy is essential to fostering confidence and trust among online buyers. Customers appreciate knowing that, in the event of a mistake or unhappiness, they may easily return or exchange items. Platforms that promote long-term loyalty and demonstrate their dedication to customer pleasure are those that have clear, forgiving, and customer-focused return policies. On the other hand, complicated or cumbersome return policies may discourage users and undermine their faith in the platform's dependability and customer-first philosophy.

Finally, the total purchasing experience is greatly influenced by the reliability and quickness of delivery. In today's fast paced world, customers want orders to be delivered promptly and reliably. Customer trust and satisfaction are increased when platforms can reliably meet or even go beyond delivery expectations, as evidenced by the positive feedback they receive. However, mishandling, inconsistent delivery, or delays can cause customers' annoyance and discontent, which may prompt them to look for other platforms.

To sum up, consumers give priority to e-commerce sites that combine reasonable pricing, a wide range of payment methods, easy-to-use interfaces, accommodating return policies, and dependable delivery services. Platforms may improve consumer satisfaction, encourage loyalty, and obtain a competitive advantage in the ever-changing world of e-commerce by attending to these crucial criteria. This will improve customer satisfaction, drive engagement, and promote sustainable growth in the online economy.

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