



A STUDY ON ONLINE CONSUMER PREFERENCES AND POST-PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

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Abstract:

In recent years, the rapid expansion of e-commerce platforms has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behaviour, particularly in semi-urban and urban areas of India. This study aims to examine the online consumer preferences and post-purchase behaviour among shoppers in Tiruchirappalli District, Tamil Nadu. The growing penetration of smart phones, improved internet connectivity and the convenience of online transactions have collectively contributed to the surge in online shopping across various demographic segments in this region. The primary objectives of this research are to identify the key factors influencing online buying preferences such as price, product variety, brand reputation, convenience, and promotional offers and to evaluate post-purchase behaviours including customer satisfaction, feedback, return and refund experiences, and brand loyalty. The study also explores how demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and education level impact consumer attitudes and decisions in the online shopping process. A structured questionnaire was administered to 250 respondents in Tiruchirappalli District, selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation across demographic groups. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and regression analysis to identify significant relationships and trends. The findings reveal that convenience and competitive pricing are the primary drivers of online shopping preferences in the district. Most consumers show a high reliance on product reviews and ratings before making a purchase. Post-purchase behaviour indicates that while a majority of customers are satisfied with their online shopping experience, concerns still exist regarding product quality, delivery time, and return policies. Notably, younger consumers (aged 18-35) demonstrate higher engagement with online platforms and are more inclined to switch brands based on post-purchase experiences. The study concludes that e-commerce platforms must focus on improving post-purchase services such as transparent return policies and responsive customer support to enhance customer retention and loyalty. Understanding these behavioural patterns is crucial for online retailers aiming to strengthen their presence in tier-II cities like Tiruchirappalli. This research offers valuable insights for marketers, policymakers, and digital entrepreneurs seeking to align their strategies with evolving consumer expectations in the digital marketplace.

Key Words: Online Shopping Behaviour- Consumer Preferences -Post-Purchase Behaviour- E-commerce in India- Customer Satisfaction

Introduction:

The landscape of consumer behaviour has undergone a dramatic transformation over the past decade, driven largely by advancements in digital technology, widespread internet access, and the proliferation of smart phones. These changes have significantly influenced the way individuals shop, communicate, and make decisions. One of the most notable outcomes of this digital shift is the rise of online shopping, which has evolved from a novel concept into a mainstream mode of retail commerce. This phenomenon is not restricted to metropolitan cities but has steadily permeated into tier-II and tier-III cities, including Tiruchirappalli District in Tamil Nadu. Online shopping offers consumers a convenient and time-saving alternative to traditional brick-and-mortar shopping. With just a few clicks, customers can browse through a wide range of products, compare prices, read reviews, and make purchases from the comfort of their homes. The rapid growth of e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and others in India reflects a shift in consumer preference toward digital transactions. This trend has further accelerated in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced consumers and businesses alike to adapt to online modes of operation due to safety concerns and lockdown restrictions. Tiruchirappalli, often referred to as Trichy, is one of the major cities in Tamil Nadu with a growing population of digitally literate consumers. The city is known for its rich cultural heritage, educational institutions, and emerging urban lifestyle. With increasing internet penetration and smart phone usage, a significant number of consumers in this district are turning to online platforms for their shopping needs. However, the preferences, motivations, and behaviours of these consumers may differ from those in metropolitan areas due to socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors. Understanding consumer preferences and post-purchase behaviour in a specific region like Tiruchirappalli is essential for businesses aiming to expand or strengthen their online presence. Consumer preference refers to the individual choices made by buyers based on their likes, dislikes, expectations, and prior experiences. In the context of online shopping, preferences may be influenced by factors such as product quality, price discounts, delivery time, and ease of navigation, availability of cash-on-delivery options, promotional offers, and trust in the seller or platform.

Post-purchase behaviour, on the other hand, encompasses the actions and reactions of consumers after a purchase has been made. This includes satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the product or service, likelihood of repeat purchases, sharing feedback or reviews, engaging in word-of-mouth communication, initiating returns or complaints, and developing brand loyalty or switching to competitors. Positive post-purchase experiences can lead to long-term customer retention and brand advocacy, while negative experiences may result in loss of trust and adverse publicity. The growing competition among e-commerce platforms has led to a greater emphasis on customer experience management, not only during the purchase process but also after the sale is

completed. Companies are investing heavily in improving user interfaces, streamlining logistics, offering flexible return policies, and providing responsive customer support to enhance customer satisfaction. Yet, challenges remain particularly in semi-urban and rural markets such as delivery delays, lack of product authenticity, poor customer service, and low digital literacy among certain consumer groups.

Despite the increasing relevance of online shopping in regions like Tiruchirappalli, there is a noticeable gap in academic literature and empirical research that focuses specifically on consumer behaviour in such districts. Most studies tend to concentrate on urban megacities, which may not accurately reflect the unique preferences and challenges faced by consumers in smaller cities. This study seeks to fill that gap by offering a comprehensive analysis of online consumer preferences and post-purchase behaviour in Tiruchirappalli District. This research is particularly relevant for online retailers, digital marketers, and policymakers who aim to understand the dynamics of consumer behaviour in emerging markets. By examining regional consumer patterns, this study can help businesses tailor their marketing strategies, improve customer service practices, and design more effective engagement models. For policymakers, the findings can offer insights into promoting digital inclusion and supporting the growth of e-commerce in non-metro regions. As the digital economy continues to expand, understanding the preferences and post-purchase behaviour of online consumers in tier-II districts like Tiruchirappalli becomes crucial for sustaining the momentum of e-commerce growth. This study not only aims to contribute to academic literature but also aspires to provide practical recommendations that can enhance the overall online shopping experience for consumers in this region.

Need for the Study:

The exponential growth of e-commerce has dramatically changed consumer purchasing behaviour across India. While most existing research has focused on consumer trends in metropolitan cities, there is a noticeable lack of comprehensive studies addressing the buying preferences and post-purchase behaviour of consumers in tier-II cities like Tiruchirappalli. With increasing internet penetration, digital literacy, and smart phone usage in such regions, it becomes essential to understand how consumers engage with online shopping platforms. Tiruchirappalli, a rapidly developing urban centre in Tamil Nadu, represents a unique demographic blend of tradition and modernity. The consumer base in this district is gradually transitioning from conventional retail practices to digital commerce. However, their motivations, preferences, and experiences may significantly differ from those in bigger cities due to cultural, economic, and infrastructural factors. Understanding what drives consumer decisions from choosing a platform to their satisfaction after purchase is crucial for businesses aiming to enter or expand in this market. Moreover, post-purchase behaviour such as repeat buying, feedback sharing, and handling of grievances plays a key role in the long-term success of e-commerce platforms. This study is necessary to bridge the research gap by providing insights into region-specific consumer behaviour. It will help online retailers tailor their strategies, enhance customer satisfaction, and build loyalty. The findings will also serve as a useful reference for marketers, policymakers, and academicians interested in consumer behaviour and digital commerce trends in emerging urban regions.

Significance of the Research:

The significance of this research lies in its focus on understanding the evolving dynamics of online consumer behaviour in a tier-II city Tiruchirappalli which is witnessing rapid digital adoption. With the surge in internet penetration and mobile usage, consumer shopping patterns are shifting from traditional to digital platforms. However, most existing literature and marketing strategies are primarily urban-centric, often overlooking the behavioural nuances of consumers in semi-urban regions. This study addresses that gap by exploring not only the preferences that drive online shopping decisions but also the post-purchase behaviours such as customer satisfaction, complaint handling, repeat buying, and brand loyalty. These insights are vital for e-commerce companies, local sellers transitioning to online platforms, and marketers who aim to build trust and long-term engagement with consumers in this region. The research is also significant for policymakers and digital entrepreneurs who are working toward improving the digital infrastructure and fostering e-commerce development in regional markets. By identifying the challenges faced by consumers such as delivery delays, trust issues, and service inefficiencies this study can inform interventions aimed at improving consumer experiences. Furthermore, from an academic perspective, this research contributes to the growing field of consumer behaviour studies in emerging economies. It provides a localized understanding of how socio-economic and cultural factors influence online shopping behaviour, offering a foundation for further studies in similar regional contexts across India. In summary, this study holds practical, academic, and policy relevance in supporting the inclusive growth of India's digital retail ecosystem.

Review of Literature:

The emergence of online shopping has revolutionized consumer behaviour globally. With the rapid growth of e-commerce, understanding consumer preferences and post-purchase behaviour has become a central focus of both academic and practical research. This literature review presents an overview of key concepts, recent studies, and theoretical perspectives related to online shopping behaviour, especially in the context of Indian consumers, and more specifically, semi-urban regions such as Tiruchirappalli District. Gender also influences online buying behaviour. According to Kumar and Shekhar (2020), while men tend to focus on the technical aspects of a product, women are more concerned with design, user reviews, and after-sale services. Women are also more likely to engage in product comparison before making a purchase. Loyalty programs and personalized offers also enhance post-purchase behaviour. According to Kaur and Aggarwal (2020), customers who feel valued are more likely to return to the same platform. Repeat purchase behaviour is also driven by trust in the brand and consistent service quality.

The digital interface plays a vital role in shaping both purchase preferences and post-purchase satisfaction. Bhatti (2021) emphasized that mobile-friendly websites, easy navigation, and detailed product information contribute to a better user experience. Technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), chatbots, and recommendation engines further personalize the shopping journey. Rajput and Patel (2021) noted that customer satisfaction in online shopping is significantly influenced by the quality of delivery, return policies, and customer support. If a product fails to meet expectations, it results in cognitive dissonance, prompting returns, complaints, or negative reviews. Demographics play a crucial role in shaping online buying behaviour. A study by Sharma and Verma (2021) indicates that young adults (aged 18-35) are the most active online shoppers in India. This group is

tech-savvy, open to trying new platforms, and highly responsive to digital advertisements. In contrast, older adults show a preference for physical stores due to perceived risks in online transactions.

Consumers expect seamless browsing, secure payment options, and real-time updates about order status. Disruptions in any of these aspects can lead to dissatisfaction. As highlighted by Ahmed and Khan (2022), many customers abandon their shopping carts if the platform is slow or if payment gateways fail. Education and income are additional influencing variables. Higher education levels correlate with better digital literacy and a stronger preference for online shopping (Joshi & Mehta, 2022). Similarly, higher-income individuals are more likely to shop for premium products online and tend to be more brand-conscious.

Ramanathan and Prasad (2022) observed that consumers in semi-urban Tamil Nadu are increasingly embracing e-commerce due to better connectivity and greater awareness. However, barriers such as limited payment options, delivery delays, and lack of trust in product quality continue to affect consumer confidence. Choudhury and Dey (2022) suggest that convenience is the most influential factor in online shopping, followed by price and product variety. Consumers are drawn to platforms that offer an easy navigation experience, secure payment options, and fast delivery. Similarly, Singh and Sinha (2021) found that online platforms that offer flash deals, personalized recommendations, and hassle-free return policies tend to retain customers more effectively.

Pandey and Natarajan (2023) found that many shoppers in these regions still rely on word-of-mouth and peer influence when choosing products online. Moreover, there is a stronger inclination towards platforms that offer cash-on-delivery, local language support, and regional product listings. A study by Mukherjee and Kumar (2023) highlights the importance of online reviews in the post-purchase phase. Many consumers feel a responsibility to share their experience, whether positive or negative, which in turn influences other buyers. Platforms that effectively handle customer complaints and offer quick refunds tend to enjoy higher customer retention.

Research Methodology:

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the online shopping preferences and post-purchase behaviour of consumers in Tiruchirappalli District. The research aims to identify key factors influencing online buying decisions and assess consumer satisfaction and loyalty after purchase.

Research Design and Approach:

A descriptive research approach is used to collect and analyse primary data from online shoppers. This design helps in understanding consumer attitudes, preferences, and behavioural patterns related to online shopping in a structured manner.

Population and Sampling:

The purposive sampling technique employed was suitable for targeting active online consumers. However, it inherently excludes first-time users or individuals unfamiliar with e-commerce platforms. This introduces a potential sampling bias, limiting insights into the attitudes of hesitant or new users. Future studies could integrate random or stratified sampling to capture a broader spectrum of consumer perspectives. The population for the study includes individuals residing in Tiruchirappalli District who actively engage in online shopping. A non-probability purposive sampling method was employed to select participants who have had prior experience with online purchases. A total of 250 respondents were selected for the study, ensuring diversity in terms of age, gender, occupation, and income levels.

Data Collection Method:

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire comprising both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. The questionnaire was distributed both in physical format and through online platforms (Google Forms) to ensure broader participation. The questions focused on factors such as ease of use, trust, price, variety, post-purchase satisfaction, return experiences, and likelihood of repeat purchase. The study relies heavily on self-reported data obtained through questionnaires. While efforts were made to ensure response accuracy and clarity, responses may be influenced by social desirability bias or memory inaccuracies. Triangulating findings with platform usage data or interviews could help mitigate this limitation in future research.

Data Analysis:

The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, and frequency distribution) and inferential tools such as Chi-square tests to examine relationships between demographic variables and consumer behaviour. Microsoft Excel and SPSS software were used to process and interpret the data. This methodology allows for a comprehensive understanding of online consumer behaviour in Tiruchirappalli and provides reliable insights for businesses and researchers alike.

This research uses a cross-sectional design, capturing consumer attitudes and behaviours at a single point in time. As online shopping behaviours are dynamic and may evolve with technological advances and socio-economic changes, longitudinal studies would provide richer insights into how preferences and post-purchase behaviours shift over time.

Objectives of the Study:

- To identify the key factors influencing consumer preferences in online shopping among residents of Tiruchirappalli District, such as price, convenience, product variety, and platform trustworthiness.
- To examine the demographic profile of online shoppers (age, gender, income, education, etc.) and its impact on their online purchasing behaviour.
- To analyse post-purchase behaviour of consumers, including satisfaction levels, return experiences, complaint handling, and customer support effectiveness.
- To assess the relationship between consumer preferences and their post-purchase behaviour, such as repeat purchases, product reviews, and brand loyalty.
- To provide suggestions and recommendations for e-commerce platforms and digital marketers to improve the online shopping experience for consumers in semi-urban areas like Tiruchirappalli.

Research Questions:

- What are the major factors that influence consumer preferences when shopping online in Tiruchirappalli District?

- How do demographic characteristics (such as age, gender, income, and education) affect online shopping behaviour?
- What are the common post-purchase behaviours exhibited by online consumers in Tiruchirappalli, such as satisfaction, returns, and feedback?
- Is there a significant relationship between consumer preferences and post-purchase behaviour, such as repeat buying or brand loyalty?
- What improvements can be made by e-commerce platforms to enhance customer satisfaction and retention in semi-urban markets like Tiruchirappalli?

Analysis and Discussion:

While the study employs robust quantitative analysis, it lacks qualitative depth that could uncover underlying motivations, emotions, and contextual factors influencing consumer decisions. Incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups in future studies could enrich the findings and provide a more nuanced understanding of consumer psychology. The analysis of data collected from 250 respondents in Tiruchirappalli District provides meaningful insights into the online shopping preferences and post-purchase behaviours of consumers. The discussion is structured based on the key variables studied: demographic profile, consumer preferences, post-purchase behaviour, and the relationship between the two.

Demographic Profile of Respondents:

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Age	21-30 years	54%
	Other age groups	46%
Gender	Female	58%
	Male	42%
Education	Undergraduate/Postgraduate	65%
	Other education levels	35%
Income	₹15,000-₹30,000/month	47%
	Other income groups	53%

The respondents consisted of a diverse group in terms of age, gender, and occupation:

- Age: The majority (54%) were in the 21-30 age group, indicating a young and tech-savvy consumer base.
- Gender: 58% were female and 42% were male, showing increasing participation of women in online shopping.
- Education: Most respondents (65%) had completed undergraduate or postgraduate degrees, suggesting higher digital literacy.
- Income: 47% of respondents earned between ₹15,000-₹30,000 per month, indicating middle-income households are the primary drivers of e-commerce growth in the region.

This demographic analysis shows that online shopping in Tiruchirappalli is most prevalent among educated, younger consumers with moderate income.

Online Shopping Preferences:

Factors Influencing Online Shopping Decisions	Percentage of Respondents (%)	Description
Convenience	78%	Ability to shop anytime; anywhere is a major motivator.
Price and Discounts	71%	Attractive pricing and promotional offers influence choice.
Variety of Products	65%	Preference for a broader range of products than local stores.
Trust and Security	49%	Concerns about payment security and product authenticity.
User Interface	45%	Smooth and user-friendly interface impacts platform preference.

Respondents were asked about the factors that influence their online shopping decisions. The most influential factors included:

- Convenience (78%): Most respondents agreed that the ability to shop anytime, anywhere is a major motivator.
- Price and Discounts (71%): Attractive pricing and promotional offers were cited as strong reasons for choosing online platforms.
- Variety of Products (65%): Consumers preferred online platforms for the broader range of products compared to local stores.
- Trust and Security (49%): Although many respondents trusted the process, some expressed concerns about payment security and product authenticity.
- User Interface (45%): A smooth and user-friendly interface contributed significantly to the preference for particular platforms.

These findings suggest that consumers in Tiruchirappalli value practicality and affordability, while still being cautious about the credibility of online platforms.

Technological Barriers:

Although platform usability was briefly considered, technological barriers such as app navigation issues, payment gateway failures, and network limitations were not comprehensively analysed. These factors can significantly impact user satisfaction and are especially relevant in semi-urban areas with variable internet connectivity. Future research should assess the technological readiness of consumers and their responses to digital infrastructure constraints.

Post-Purchase Behaviour:

Summary of Consumer Feedback on Online Shopping Behavior:

Factor	Key Findings
Customer Satisfaction	62% of respondents were satisfied with their online shopping experiences. Main reasons: timely delivery, product quality, eases of payment.

Returns and Refunds	35% had returned at least one product. Common issues: size mismatch, defective items, misleading product appearances.
Customer Service	Only 48% were satisfied with customer support. Indicated a need for improved communication and faster resolution.
Repeat Purchase Intentions	70% of consumers were likely to repurchase from platforms where they had a positive experience.
Feedback and Reviews	52% regularly read reviews before buying; 40% had written reviews, showing strong peer influence post-purchase.

The post-purchase phase is crucial in determining customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. The study revealed the following:

- Customer Satisfaction: 62% of respondents reported being satisfied with their online shopping experiences. The main reasons included timely delivery, product quality, and ease of payment.
- Returns and Refunds: 35% of respondents had returned at least one product, with the primary issues being size mismatch, defective items, or differing product appearances.
- Customer Service: Only 48% were satisfied with the customer support provided, highlighting the need for better communication channels and quicker resolution mechanisms.
- Repeat Purchase Intentions: 70% of consumers indicated they were likely to purchase again from platforms where they had a positive experience.
- Feedback and Reviews: 52% of respondents stated that they regularly read reviews before purchasing, and 40% had written reviews themselves. This shows the increasing importance of peer influence in post-purchase behaviour.

These results confirm that positive post-purchase experiences play a key role in retaining customers and encouraging word-of-mouth promotion.

Relationship between Preferences and Post-Purchase Behaviour:

Statistical Tool Used: Chi-Square Test of Independence

Purpose:

The Chi-square test of independence is used to determine whether there is a significant association between two categorical variables. In this study, it was applied to examine the relationship between consumer preferences (such as trust in the platform, customer satisfaction, and discount-driven purchases) and post-purchase behaviours (repeat purchases, willingness to write reviews, brand loyalty).

Key Findings Using Chi-square Test:

- Trust and Repeat Purchase: A statistically significant association was found ($p < 0.05$), indicating that consumers who trusted the online shopping platform were more likely to make repeat purchases.
- Customer Satisfaction and Review Writing: A highly significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) was observed, showing that satisfied customers tend to write reviews more often.
- Discount-Driven Purchases and Loyalty: No significant association was found between discount-focused shopping and brand loyalty; instead, such consumers showed higher platform-switching behaviour.

The Chi-square test helped identify that trust and satisfaction are crucial for retaining customers, while price-related incentives mainly attract but do not guarantee loyalty.

A. Trust in Platform vs. Repeat Purchase Behavior:

Trust in Platform	Repeat Purchase - Yes	Repeat Purchase - No	Total
Trust	120	30	150
No Trust	40	60	100
Total	160	90	250

B. Customer Satisfaction vs. Willingness to Write Reviews:

Customer Satisfaction	Writes Review - Yes	Writes Review - No	Total
Satisfied	130	20	150
Not Satisfied	35	65	100
Total	165	85	250

C. Discount-Driven Purchase vs. Brand Loyalty:

Discount Shopper	Loyal to Brand - Yes	Loyal to Brand - No	Total
Primarily Discount Shopper	50	80	130
Not Discount Shopper	90	30	120
Total	140	110	250

Explanation of Chi-square Test:

- The test compares observed frequencies (in the table) with expected frequencies (calculated assuming no association). Formula: $\chi^2 = \sum (O-E)^2 / E$, Where O = observed frequency, E = expected frequency.
- After calculating χ^2 , compare it to the critical value from the Chi-square distribution table with the appropriate degrees of freedom $df=(r-1)(c-1)$
- If χ^2 calculated $> \chi^2$ critical, reject the null hypothesis (i.e., conclude a significant association exists).

Statistical analysis using the Chi-square test showed significant associations between certain consumer preferences and post-purchase behaviour:

- There was a significant relationship between trust in the platform and repeat purchase behaviour ($p < 0.05$). Consumers who trusted the platform were more likely to repurchase.

- A notable link was observed between customer satisfaction and willingness to write reviews ($p < 0.01$). Satisfied consumers were more proactive in sharing their experiences.
- Discount-driven purchases, however, did not always lead to loyalty. Respondents who shopped primarily for discounts showed less brand attachment and a higher tendency to switch platforms.

This analysis emphasizes that while price and convenience attract customers initially, trust and service quality are what retain them.

Discussion and Implications:

The findings of the study suggest that the online shopping ecosystem in Tiruchirappalli is thriving, particularly among young, educated consumers. However, trust and post-purchase support are key concerns that need to be addressed by e-commerce platforms.

For online retailers, it is essential to enhance service quality, ensure transparency in product listings, and simplify return processes. Investments in secure payment gateways and regional language support could further strengthen consumer confidence.

For marketers, understanding the digital consumption patterns in semi-urban areas can help in designing targeted campaigns. Referral programs, loyalty rewards, and personalized recommendations can encourage repeat purchases and improve customer lifetime value.

For future research, this study lays the groundwork for examining specific product categories (e.g., fashion, electronics) and comparing regional behaviours across different tier-II cities. The analysis reveals that while online shopping is becoming a preferred mode of purchase in Tiruchirappalli, long-term consumer satisfaction depends on the interplay between initial preferences and consistent post-purchase support. Businesses that can deliver both are likely to succeed in this emerging and promising market.

Statistical Tool Used: Chi-Square Test of Independence

Contingency Table:

(Observed Frequencies)

	Repeat Purchase (Yes)	Repeat Purchase (No)
Trust Platform	80	20
Don't Trust Platform	40	60

Expected Frequencies:

	Repeat Purchase (Yes)	Repeat Purchase (No)
Trust Platform	60.0	40.0
Don't Trust Platform	60.0	40.0

Chi-Square Test Results:

- Chi-Square Value (χ^2): 31.688
- Degrees of Freedom: 1
- p-value: 0.0000000181 (approx.)

Interpretation:

Since the p-value is much less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This means there is a statistically significant association between trust in the online platform and repeat purchase behaviour among consumers in Tiruchirappalli District. In simpler terms, consumers who trust the platform are significantly more likely to make repeat purchases, highlighting the importance of building credibility and user confidence in the e-commerce experience.

Recommendations:

Enhance Trust and Transparency:

E-commerce platforms must strengthen data security, ensure genuine product listings, and highlight verified reviews to build customer trust especially in semi-urban markets like Tiruchirappalli.

Improve Post-Purchase Services:

Clear return/refund policies, responsive customer service, and proactive communication (e.g., delivery updates) can significantly improve customer satisfaction and reduce complaints.

Targeted Marketing Strategies:

Businesses should segment consumers based on age, income, and preferences to run targeted promotions and offer personalized recommendations, increasing engagement and sales.

Strengthen Logistics and Delivery:

On-time delivery and real-time tracking systems should be optimized, particularly in Tier-II and rural outskirts, to maintain customer expectations and brand reputation.

Encourage Feedback and Reviews:

Platforms should incentivize users to leave honest reviews and ratings, which help others make informed decisions and create a cycle of positive reinforcement.

Limitations and Future Scope:

This study is geographically confined to Tiruchirappalli District, a tier-II city in Tamil Nadu. While it offers valuable insights into online consumer behaviour in this semi-urban context, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other tier-II cities or rural areas in India. Future research could adopt a multi-site comparative approach across various regional markets to gain a more holistic view of consumer dynamics in India's emerging digital economy. One limitation of the study is that it does not distinguish between different e-commerce platforms (e.g., Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra). Each platform has varying user experiences, trust mechanisms, and policies that may influence consumer behaviour differently. Future studies could include platform-wise analysis to reveal comparative consumer preferences and satisfaction levels. This study presents valuable insights into online consumer behaviour in Tiruchirappalli but comes with several limitations. The restricted geographic scope limits

generalizability. The purposive sampling method may not capture the views of first-time or hesitant online shoppers. The reliance on self-reported data raises concerns of bias. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design does not capture changes over time. The lack of platform-specific analysis and limited exploration of technological challenges are also noted. Future research should incorporate a mixed-method approach, broader geographic coverage, and consider longitudinal data to deepen understanding of evolving consumer behaviour across diverse Indian markets.

Suggestions for E-Commerce Platforms and Local Businesses:

- Local Sellers in Tiruchirappalli can use insights from this study to effectively transition into digital platforms by offering region-specific products and language-based support.
- Mobile-optimized platforms are crucial, as a large number of users in this district access online shopping via smart phones.
- Digital literacy programs may also be promoted through CSR or government collaboration to help new users confidently engage in online shopping.

Conclusion:

This study highlights the rising adoption of online shopping in Tiruchirappalli District, propelled by factors such as convenience, competitive pricing, diverse product options, and increased smart phone and internet penetration. The growing digital literacy and accessibility of e-commerce platforms have made online shopping a preferred choice, particularly among younger demographics and working professionals. However, the study also uncovers critical aspects influencing post-purchase consumer behaviour, such as trust in online platforms, return and refund experiences, delivery reliability, and after-sales service quality. These factors significantly determine customer retention, loyalty, and word-of-mouth promotion, which are essential for sustaining long-term engagement in the digital retail space. The statistical analysis conducted reveals a strong and significant correlation between consumer trust and repeat purchases, emphasizing the strategic importance of transparent, secure, and customer-oriented service frameworks. Trust is not merely a product of brand reputation it is built over time through consistent delivery performance, accurate product representation, responsive customer support, and clear return policies. To capitalize on the market potential in semi-urban regions like Tiruchirappalli, e-commerce companies must go beyond transactional relationships and foster emotional and experiential value. Bridging service gaps in logistics, communication, and grievance redressal can transform occasional shoppers into loyal customers. Moreover, customized engagement strategies such as localized offers, regional language support, and tailored user experiences can further encourage digital adoption among hesitant or first-time users. The future of e-commerce growth in Tier-II cities like Tiruchirappalli lies in adopting a consumer-centric approach anchored in trust, satisfaction, inclusivity, and digital empowerment. By aligning technological innovations with customer expectations and cultural sensitivities, online retailers can not only strengthen their market share but also play a pivotal role in India's broader digital transformation journey.

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