

## ONLINE READYMADE GARMENT PURCHASE: A STUDY IN MADURAI CITY

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### Abstract

Electronic commerce is rapidly changing the way people do business all over the world. In the business-to-consumer segment, sale of readymade garment through the web have been increasing dramatically over the last few years. Several academics and practitioners have identified the "online shopping experience" or "virtual experience" as a crucial e-commerce marketing issue. Understanding the mechanisms of virtual shopping and the behaviour of the online consumer is a priority issue in the fast expanding virtual market place. Given the continuous expansion of the Internet in terms of user numbers, transaction volumes and business penetration, customers not only those from well-developed countries but also those from developing countries are getting used to the new shopping channel. More than 20 per cent of Internet users in several countries are online buyers of products and services while more than 50 per cent of US net users are regularly buying online. These developments are gradually transforming e-commerce into a mainstream business activity while at the same time online consumers are maturing and virtual vendors realize the importance and urgency for a professional and customer-oriented approach as online customer is not simply a shopper but also an information technology user. This study is aimed at outlining the most relevant behavioural characteristics of online readymade garment consumers and examines the ways in which they find, compare and evaluate product information.

**Key Words:** online consumers, search pattern, behavioural pattern.

### Introduction

Internet is a new information technology device that has dramatically changed the way we live. It has become an integral part of the modern life across the world. With abundance and diversity of information, easily found and conveniently shared facilities, Internet use has grown exponentially reshaping informational and social needs of the peoples. As Internet usage rapidly grew and spread across the country, it fuelled the growth of Internet commerce. The term "Internet Commerce" refers to online transactions where an organization sells its products or services to consumers over the Internet. Internet commerce exploded and became a normal part of everyday life of consumers. It provided both organizations and consumers, with endless options to choose from for various transactions. Consumers on one hand have the ease of choice, the comfort of shopping from home and an endless variety of products, while saving time and money.

As Indian consumers turned to the Internet to tap into this explosion, Internet commerce has become an important business initiative. Online consumer behaviour is a broad and interesting area of study that can benefit organizations in their efforts to market

and sell products online. There are four distinct consumer groups with different intentions and motivations as exploration, entertainment, shopping and information.

### Objectives of the Study

The study is undertaken with the following objectives:

- To identify the Information Retrieval and Search Patterns of online consumers.
- To analyze the factors influencing the online consumer's behaviour

### Methodology

This is an empirical study based on sample survey method. The sampling frame consists of 500 consumers from the city of Madurai. Systematic sampling method was adopted. Every tenth customer of a day was contacted. Ten prominent shops were identified and fifty each from the shops were contacted. Pre-tested interview schedule was used to collect primary data.

### Tools Employed

The study depended entirely on Primary data and the data were collected through an interview schedule designed exclusively for the study after an extensive review of Internet commerce literatures. The interview schedule was administered in English to customers near office premises, shopping malls, colleges and Internet centers.

### Analysis and Discussions

**Table 1 Gender of the Respondents**

S. No	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	284	56.8
2	Female	216	43.2
Total		500	100.0

Source: Primary data

It is seen in Table 1 that 284 respondents forming 56.8 per cent of the total respondents were male and the rest of the 216 respondents forming 43.2 per cent were female. Male respondents constitute more than half of the total sample size of this study.

**Table 2 Age of the Respondents**

S. No	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	15 Years to 25 years	207	41.4
2	26 Years to 35 years	124	24.8
3	36 Years to 45 years	118	23.6
4	Above 45 years	51	10.2
Total		500	100.0

Source: Primary data

It is seen in Table 2 that 207 respondents forming 41.4 per cent of the respondents were between 15 to 25 years. The respondents of the age group of 26 to 35 years and 36 to

45 years were at the rate of 24.8 and 23.6 per cent respectively. Only 10.2 per cent of the respondents belong to Above 45 years. A majority (41.4%) of the respondents belongs to the age group of 15 years to 25 years which shows that the young and prime youth of the respondents use readymade garments the most.

**Table 3 Education Level of the Respondents**

S. No	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	23	4.6
2	High School	44	8.8
3	Higher Secondary	17	3.4
4	Under Graduate	185	37.0
5	Post Graduate	198	39.6
6	Others	33	6.6
Total		500	100.0

Source: Primary data

It is seen in Table 3 that the majority (39.6%) of the respondents was of Post Graduates which was followed by Under Graduates who form 37 per cent of the total respondents. It is inferred that three-fourth of the total respondents are of graduates which include both Under Graduate and Post Graduate.

**Table 4 Occupation of the Respondents**

S. No	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Student	160	32.0
2	Farmer	10	2.0
3	Business	88	17.6
4	Professional	117	23.4
5	Private Sector Employee	102	20.4
6	Public Sector Employee	23	4.6
Total		500	100.0

Source: Primary data

It is seen in Table 4 that the majority (32%) of the respondents were students. The second highest buyers of readymade garments in this study were a professional who form 23.4 per cent and which was followed by 20.4 per cent of the respondents who were private sector employees. Only 2 per cent of the respondents were farmers and another 4.6 per cent of them were employees of public sector. It is inferred that student community who are youth are more in number with regard to purchasing of readymade garments.

**Table 5 Opinion about Search for Readymade Garment Information Online**

S. No	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very rarely	44	24.9
2	Rarely	19	10.7
3	Sometimes	98	55.4
4	Very often	16	9.0
Total		177	100.0

Source: Primary data

It is seen in Table 5 that majority (55.4) of the respondents opined that search for information about the readymade garments is sometimes, which is followed by 24.9 per

cent respondents are opined that very rarely and 19 and 16 respondents are opined 'rarely' and 'very often' respectively. It is inferred that half of the total respondents are searching information about the readymade garments is sometimes.

**Table 6 Rating of Statements for Online Purchase**

S. No	Statement	Rating								Mean	Std. Deviation
		1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00			
1	Friends and family think I should shop online for RMG	Count	34	16	5	11	87	6	13	3.9942	1.87784
		%	19.8	9.3	2.9	6.4	50.6	3.5	7.6		
2	Friends and family approve e-shopping is security	Count	24	10	10	11	93	14	10	4.2849	1.69457
		%	14.0	5.8	5.8	6.4	54.1	8.1	5.8		
3	Friends and family recommend me to buy RMG most online.	Count	32	5	25	9	95	6	0	3.8605	1.61978
		%	18.6	2.9	14.5	5.2	55.2	3.5	.0		
4	My friends and family buy RMG online.	Count	32	10	0	26	95	6	3	4.0000	1.66491
		%	18.6	5.8	.0	15.1	55.2	3.5	1.7		
5	I intend to use the internet to buy RMG	Count	19	5	5	21	105	17	0	4.3895	1.41608
		%	11.0	2.9	2.9	12.2	61.0	9.9	.0		
6	I plan to use the internet to purchase RMG within the next few months.	Count	29	10	6	19	89	14	5	4.1105	1.70122
		%	16.9	5.8	3.5	11.0	51.7	8.1	2.9		
7	Overall, I would use the internet.	Count	29	5	0	21	85	17	15	4.3895	1.78181
		%	16.9	2.9	.0	12.2	49.4	9.9	8.7		
8	Via the internet is something I would do.	Count	21	8	27	23	77	16	0	4.0174	1.50816
		%	12.2	4.7	15.7	13.4	44.8	9.3	.0		

Source: Calculated from Primary data

It is seen in Table 6 that the agreement is more for the statements 'I intend to use the internet to buy readymade garment' and Overall, and 'I would use the internet to buy readymade garment I need' with a mean score of 4.3895 each, and the agreement was lowest for the statement 'Friends and family recommended me to buy readymade garment online' with a mean score of 3.8605.

Table 7 Importance Level of Factors for Readymade Garment Shopping

S. No	Factors	Unimportant Important							Mean	Std. Deviation	
		1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00			
1.	More merchandise options	Count	5	8	0	20	39	33	67	5.5988	1.55093
		%	2.9	4.7	.0	11.6	22.7	19.2	39.0		
2.	Higher payment security	Count	5	9	5	10	50	21	72	5.5698	1.61166
		%	2.9	5.2	2.9	5.8	29.1	12.2	41.9		
3.	More fashionable clothing	Count	0	3	0	16	8	15	125	6.4371	1.13299
		%	.0	1.8	.0	9.6	4.8	9.0	74.9		
4.	More convenience	Count	0	8	5	10	3	23	118	6.2874	1.38886
		%	.0	4.8	3.0	6.0	1.8	13.8	70.7		
5.	More time saving	Count	5	3	0	16	3	19	121	6.2934	1.44502
		%	3.0	1.8	.0	9.6	1.8	11.4	72.5		
6.	Lower prices	Count	5	8	11	24	48	6	65	5.2754	1.68860
		%	3.0	4.8	6.6	14.4	28.7	3.6	38.9		
7.	A better quality	Count	5	3	5	13	46	49	46	5.5329	1.41330
		%	3.0	1.8	3.0	7.8	27.5	29.3	27.5		
8.	A better customer service	Count	5	3	0	21	55	27	56	5.5329	1.41330
		%	3.0	1.8	.0	12.6	32.9	16.2	33.5		
9.	A better return policy	Count	5	9	18	10	47	28	50	5.2096	1.67128
		%	3.0	5.4	10.8	6.0	28.1	16.8	29.9		
10.	Better personal advice	Count	0	3	5	18	51	63	27	5.4790	1.09125
		%	.0	1.8	3.0	10.8	30.5	37.7	16.2		
11.	More social interaction	Count	6	8	10	8	56	50	29	5.1916	1.50475
		%	3.6	4.8	6.0	4.8	33.5	29.9	17.4		
12.	More possibilities to compare	Count	0	3	5	22	33	62	42	5.6287	1.18470
		%	.0	1.8	3.0	13.2	19.8	37.1	25.1		
13.	Sufficient product information	Count	0	9	10	10	9	33	96	6.0060	1.51099
		%	.0	5.4	6.0	6.0	5.4	19.8	57.5		

Source: Calculated from Primary data

A factor that is most important is 'more fashionable clothing' with a mean rating of 6.4371, and the factor most unimportant is 'more social interaction' with a mean rating of 5.1916.

Table 8 Comfortableness with Internet Purchases

S. No	Mode of Payment	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Comfortable	107	64.07
2.	Uncomfortable	60	35.93
Total		167	100.00

Source: Primary data

It is seen in Table 8 that the majority (64.07%) of the respondents use online shopping opined that they were comfortable with their purchases, and rest (35.93%) of the respondents using online shopping opined that they were uncomfortable with online purchases.

#### Findings

- There were 177 respondents who searched information about garments online, 44 respondents (24.9%) searched very rarely, 19 respondents (10.7%) searched it rarely, 98 respondents (55.4%) searched sometimes, and for the rest 16 respondents (9%) it was very often.
- The agreement is more for the statements 'I intend to use the internet to buy readymade garment' and overall, and 'I would use the internet to buy readymade garment I need' with a mean score of 4.3895 each.
- A factor that is most important is 'more fashionable clothing' with a mean rating of 6.4371, and the factor most unimportant is 'more social interaction' with a mean rating of 5.1916.
- There were 107 respondents forming 64.07 per cent of the total using online shopping stated that they were comfortable with their purchases, and rest of the 60 respondents (35.93%) using online shopping stated that they were uncomfortable with online purchases.

#### Suggestions

Given the complex, dynamic and continuously evolving character of the Internet it is obvious that the Web experience is an issue with a multi-faced and dynamic character. New methods, technologies and tools for enriching and enhancing the online experience are frequently emerging as a result of technological advancements, market trends or as a response of Web vendors to the changing online population. The findings confirm that online readymade garment consumer behaviour is still immature and the suggestions would help in facilitating cyber visitors into customers and encourage customer loyalty and referrals. Following are some of the suggestions that emanate from the study.

- Creating awareness about the usage and purpose of cyber purchase and its related processes, procedures,
- Usage of appropriate marketing tools and marketing mix so as to attract and retain the cyber consumers by the web vendors.
- Enable the web users with easy access, user friendly, interactive system.

**Conclusion**

Research on the buying behaviour of readymade garments and the factors influencing the decision-making process of online readymade consumers revealed similarities as well as differences between them and the traditional customers. This study could help online marketers and Web site designers to identify issues requiring special attention when designing and building their online firm or evaluating their existing online venture. Finally, the Web experience must be regarded as a dynamic and evolving subject rather than a static one; developments in the virtual marketplace, changing customer techno graphics and technological innovation will present e-marketers with new tools and methods for enhancing their customers' online experience.

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