

SHOPPING TRENDS DURING FESTIVE SEASON IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behavior is the process, by which a customer or a group of customers identify, decide, buy, and use goods and services that satisfy their wants and needs. It is a pertinent process that describes the consumer's attitude, outlook, and position towards a product. It also helps the organization to make the required changes to their product or service according to the consumer's taste and preference.

With the era of digitalization, everything is available online. It has made shopping convenient and stress-free making everything available in touch of a fingertip to the consumer's doorsteps. The seasonal flu spreading still operating at its full pace has also led a lot of people to shift online for a lot of their shopping needs. India's festival season is a thrilling time of the year across every religion and a lot of this enthusiasm has made its way online. Due to technological enhancement internet become more and more accessible to a lot of Indians, various big organizations have also started to reap the benefits of this movement either by offering new products or stock clearance products at heavy discounts or other offers.

The major shopping festival months in India are considered to be around the time of October and November during Diwali celebration and most of the online shopping platform provide big discounts and offers during this period and have also created distinctive names for such shopping sales like The Big billion days by Flipkart, Great Indian Shopping Festival by Amazon to name a few.

Keywords: Online shopping, e-marketing, e-commerce, seasonal flu spreading

1. INTRODUCTION

India is a land of festival; because of its diverse demography, culture, tropical and religion India celebrate wide range of festival. Even there is evidence of pattern in Indian festival. Most of the Indian festival is concentrated near the harvesting sessions of agriculture. During festive season Indian consumer spend large amount of time and money. Most of the lower and middle income group population, save money and wait for festive seasons to buy a new product. This festive season add multiplier effect on the factor of production and economic activity of the country. Apart from that, during festive season immigrant worker also go back to their respective home which also contributes the multiplier cycle in the rural economy. It is an economic engine of rural or local economy [1].

The concept of festival is treated differently in India with respect to rest of the world. As we said earlier the concept of festival in India is mainly based on demography, culture, and religion. Apart from that in world festival can be an event which often held regularly at a defined place like a series of play, musical performance films or even an expo. For example; various events like Rio de Janeiro's Carnival, New Orleans's Mardi Gras, various jazz festivals, the Cannens festival and gala New Year's parties are rich in cultural and attract attention from the whole world [2].

Studies have indicated that consumer behave differently during festivals with respect to purchasing and shopping. The author finds that there are six domains which affect festival motivation: "cultural exploration, novelty, recover equilibrium, known group socialization, external interaction, and family togetherness". Further, explored various motivational dimensions for attending world cultural expo 2002, using factor analysis: they found following motivational dimension: cultural exploration, family togetherness, novelty, escape, event attractions, and socialization. Which is more or less extension of work done [3] But one important finding suggests the first dimension which is cultural exploration explained the largest proportion of the total variance, which shows that culture is a central theme of the festival. Apart from festival motivation find festival quality dimensions such as program, food, facilities and souvenirs affect value, which also contribute to satisfaction and loyalty of the visitor of the festival.

The author talked about festival experience. They found that there are four dimensions of festival experience: education; entertainment; escapism; and esthetics; Using SEM results

suggested that optimal experience leads to loyalty through vivid memory. Further, regression model findings reveals that vividly of memory are significantly impacted by all four dimensions (education; entertainment; escapism; and esthetics) of experience economy, while loyal visitors are mostly affected by entertainment and esthetics dimensions [4].

The current seasonal flu brings significant changes in our thinking, behavior and life style. Like; people are adopting healthier diet; sustainable attitude and reduction in food wastes (although intensity is depend in age, financial position, and family size). All product sellers and retailers in the market use festive time to promote and sell their products – either new products or stock clearance products at huge discounts or through various other offers (freebies, cash-backs, buy 1 get 1, etc.). The major shopping time in India begins around October and ends in November when festivals like Dussehra, Diwali, etc. are celebrated. Online websites become an attractive channel for consumers to purchase diverse products at reasonable prices, through the comfort of their home. Most of the e-commerce shopping platform provide big offers during and around this period and have created unique names for such shopping events– for example– Big billion days by Flipkart, Great Indian Shopping Festival by Amazon to name some.

However, a great proportion of people also prefer in-store shopping as it guarantees the quality of the product and gives the consumer an air of satisfaction. Not to forget, the eye-catching decorations in malls, stores, shopping complexes pose as attractions for consumers step off line for festive shopping. Most consumers spend a great amount of money during festive seasons than what they usually do. People buy products either through online websites or go in-store. Various products that people spend on can be categorized as:

- Clothing & Apparel
- Gadgets
- Gift packs
- Jewelry
- Home appliances, etc [5].

2. OBJECTIVES

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH IS TO GAIN AN IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF HOW CONSUMERS PLAN TO SHOP FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON (BOTH ONLINE AND OFFLINE) GIVEN THE IMPACT OF THE SEASONAL FLU SPREADING:

The research focuses on the study of consumer perception and behavior towards online and offline shopping during this festive season combined with the seasonal flu spreading. The study is carried out to understand the sentiments (positive or negative) of customers during this festive season. Following key parameters apart from other parameters are part of the survey [6]:

- Whether the customers started more online shopping after the seasonal flu spreading than they ever did
- Find out various factors that are contributing highly towards festival spends which determine the consumer buying behavior during the seasonal flu spreading (like e-commerce websites sales, sanitization, contactless delivery etc.)
- Percentage of new online shoppers which have been added during the seasonal flu spreading
- How consumer shopping habits have evolved over the past several months (Preference to contact less delivery, sanitization and temperature check in offline stores, etc.)
- Percentages of people who are shopping online and offline
- Understand the expectations of consumers from online and offline retailers during the seasonal flu speeding.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to gain consumer insights in-depth, understanding of how consumers plan to shop for the festive season during seasonal flu spreading and expectations of consumers from online and offline brands/retailers given the impact of the seasonal flu spreading [7].

It was a primary data collection with a small sample of respondents. An Online Google form questionnaire has been circulated on Consumer Behavior and marketing during the festive season that enlists questions evoking different responses from the consumers. There were 14 Multiple Choice Questions.

The responses were at different levels in the form of tables and charts. The data analysis of this research is mostly represented in a quantitative manner.

Maximum consumers were between 18-25 years old (i.e. 86.9% of consumers) only 6.6% consumers are above 30y/o. Huge number of respondents are students (91.8%) Only 3-4% consumer's occupations are either business or homemaker.

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: TOTAL 107

- 60% FEMALE
- 40% MALE

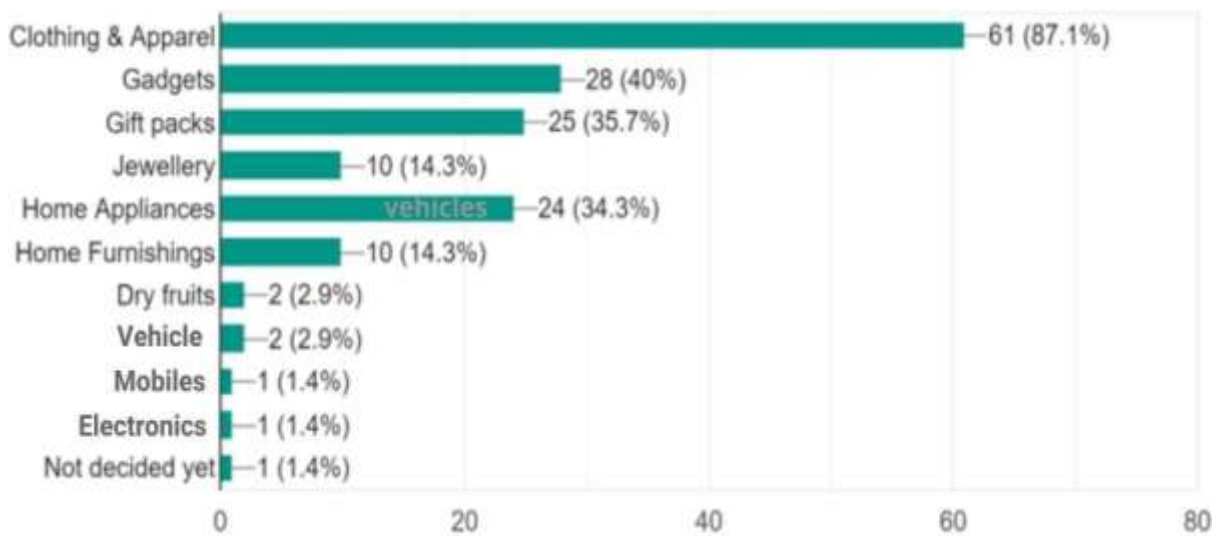
SURVEY DATE-1st Oct 2018 – 31st Dec 2018

Result and Analysis

Customers will be spending an average of Rs. 15,000 this shopping season:

Around 40.6% of the people surveyed expect to spend below 5000, 24.6% of the people surveyed expect to spend between 10000 to 25000, 23.2% of the people surveyed expect to spend between 5000 to 10000, 7.2% of the people surveyed expect to spend between 25000 to 50000 and only 4.3% of the people surveyed expect to spend above 50000.

According to the survey, Indians will spend INR 15,000 on average this festive season. A large no of people's income has been affected due to the seasonal flu reducing their purchasing power. People expect to spend amounts on gift packs, clothing, home appliances, and electronics and so on. Only a small section of the survey i.e. 4.3% expects to spend more than 50000. There was also a large section that is around 54% who expect to spend more than INR 10000 but less than 50000, for this section of the society their isn't much change in spending and have either recovered or impervious by the losses incurred from the virus.



Ques.- What amount do you expect to spend this festive season? (Diwali, Dussehra, Christmas, etc)

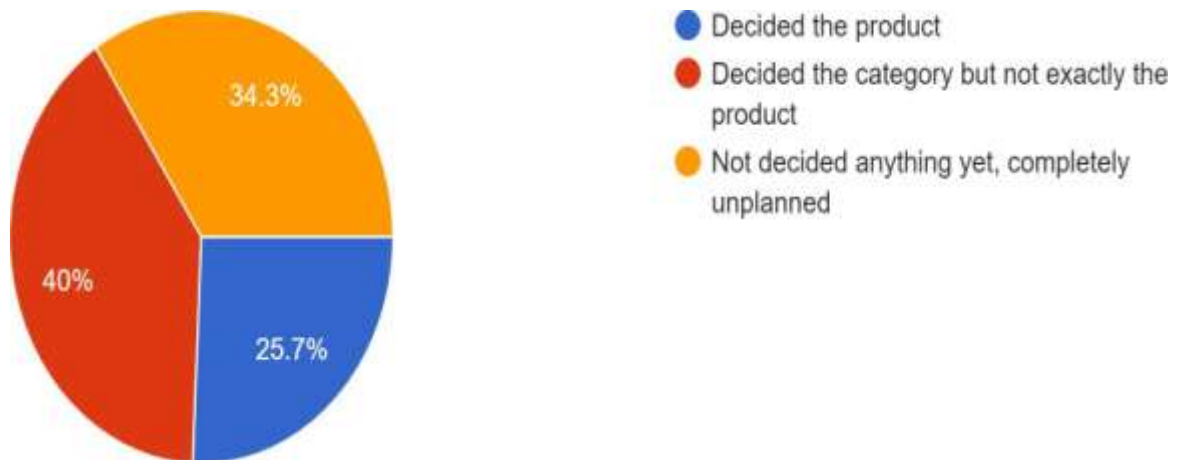
Clothing & Apparel, gadgets and gift packs are the top categories people will spend on

The seasonal flu spreading had a serious impact on some part of the country. While companies faced challenges such as supply chain disruption, lack of workforce, etc, consumers also remained skeptical of discretionary spending amid layoffs and salary cuts. With the festive season nearing people have yet again started to increase their purchase with maximum no of people planning to spend the most on apparel and clothing and home appliances directly shows the effect of online festive sales and the fun and excitement of the new festival. **Dhanteras is considered auspicious to buy kitchen equipment and jewelry there by promoting its sale during the festive season.**

Ques.- Which categories are you planning to spend the most on this festive season?

34.3% of customers are still undecided on the category or yet to plan their shopping

Usually the festive season is considered a highly planned affair with people starting to prepare for it months before than the actual festival. However, according to the survey there is a large section of the population i.e. 34.8% still completely unplanned and undecided. The 2018 festive season is characterized by a sustained period of average demand and consumer spend which is a bit lower than expected as people usually wait for festive sales to buy big value items. With close to **40%** of 'undecided' or 'completely unplanned' festive shoppers, brands have the opportunity to tap into the shopping moments of these consumers. There also a significant section of the surveys who have decided the product category but remain undecided on the product indicating amore undecided behavior pattern [8].



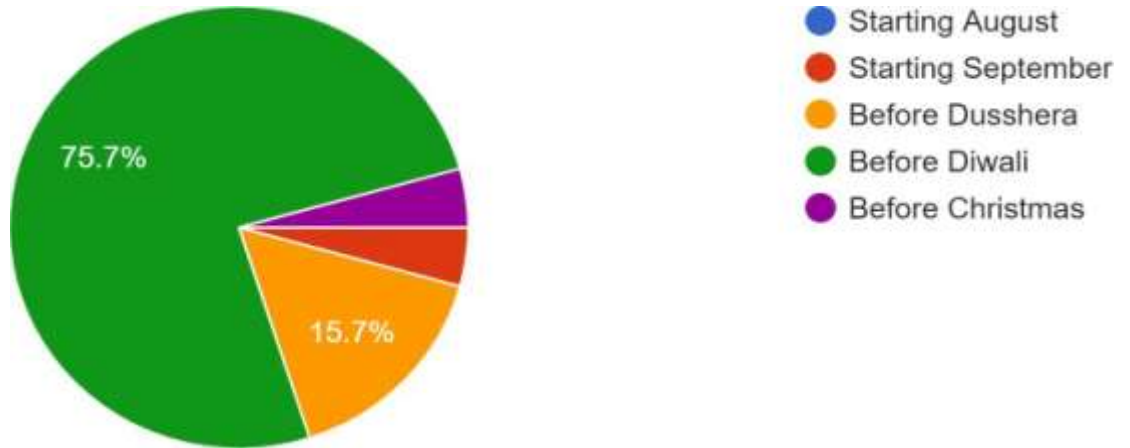
Ques.- Have you decided already what will you shop for in this festive season?

Maximum people start their festive season shopping before Diwali

As much as 75% of the people start shopping for festive season before Diwali. Diwali is preceded and followed by other festivals as well, hence making it an

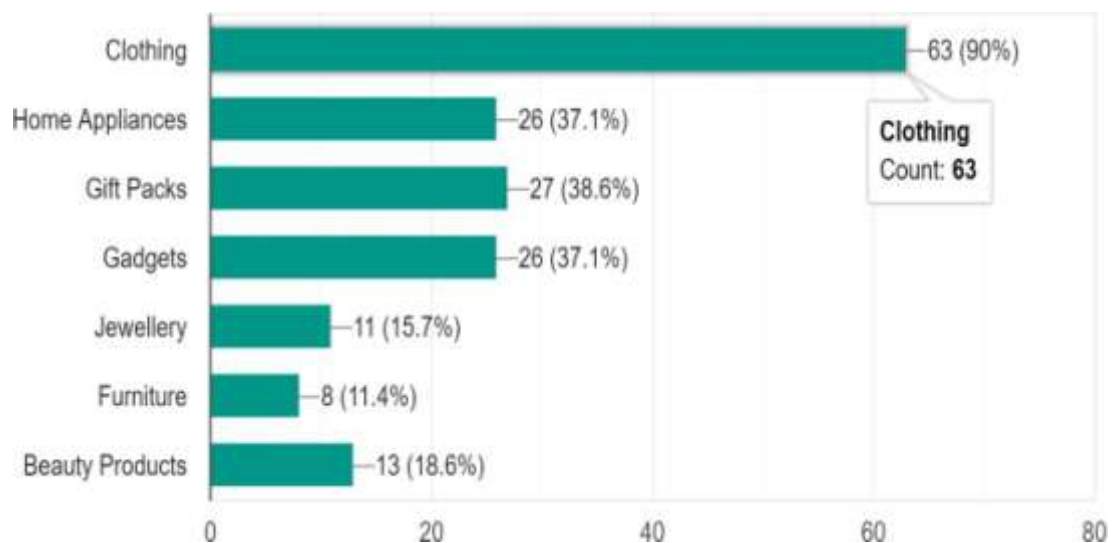
appropriate time to shop. During this time, loads of festive season sales are live in offline and online shops.

Ques.-When will you start your shopping for the festive season this year?



Clothing is the top priority for people to shop during festive season

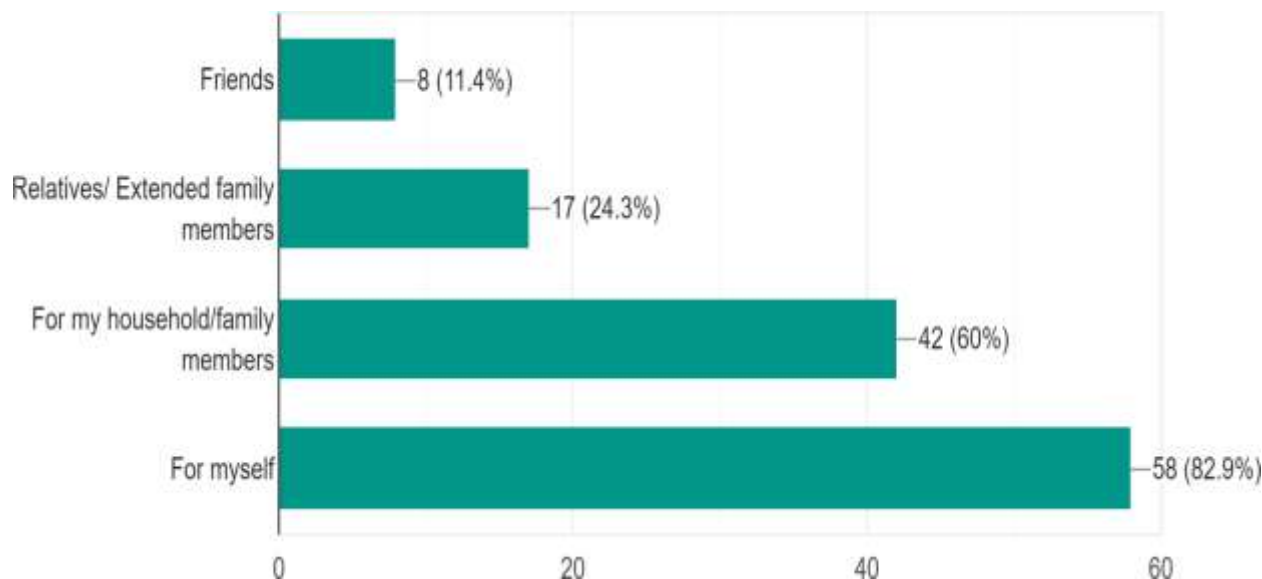
About 63% of the people shop for clothing items during the festive season. This mainly includes traditional wear which is most worn during festive season. This is also the time followed by a lot of weddings in India which is why people shell out money for clothing items. About 27% of people shop for home appliances, gift packs, and gadgets as these things are available at heavy discounts during festive seasons.



Ques.- What categories / items are you planning to shop during festive season?

People shop mostly for themselves and their families during the festive season

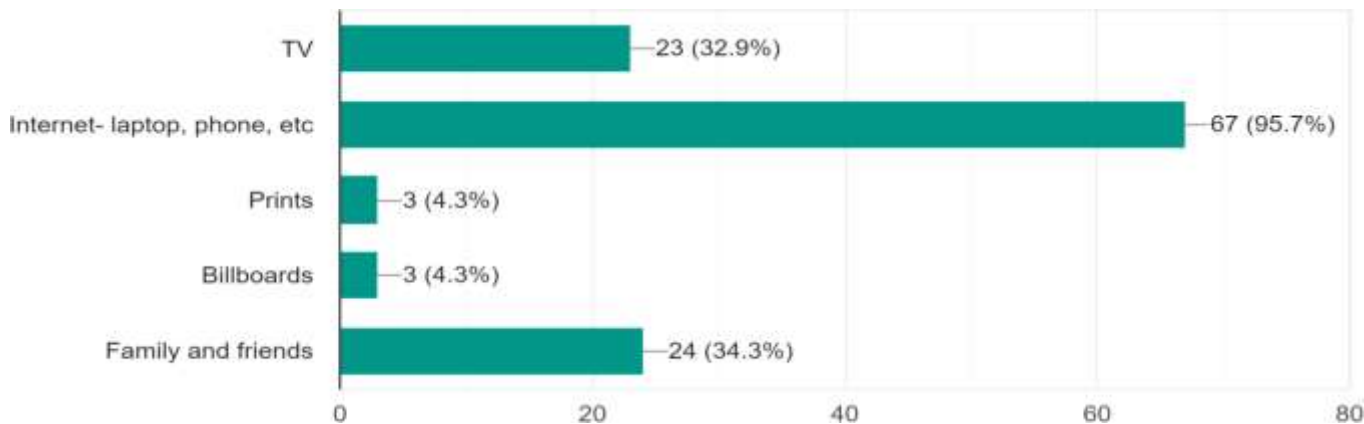
82% people prefer to shop for themselves and 60% for their families as well during the festive season. About 35% people shop for their relatives and friends for the purpose of gifting.



Ques- Who is you mainly shopping for this festive season?

Internet and mobiles play a crucial role to aware consumers about various products and services in the market. Mobile and laptops are critical to learn, explore and buy for consumers. 95.7% consumers explore and research about products only on internet, 34.3% consumers get to know from their friends and family and 32.9% from television.

Whereas, only 4.3% consumers got to know from prints and Bill boards. Whether the festive shopping is online or In-store, for maximum consumers mobile is the constant companion for learning, exploring and buying.

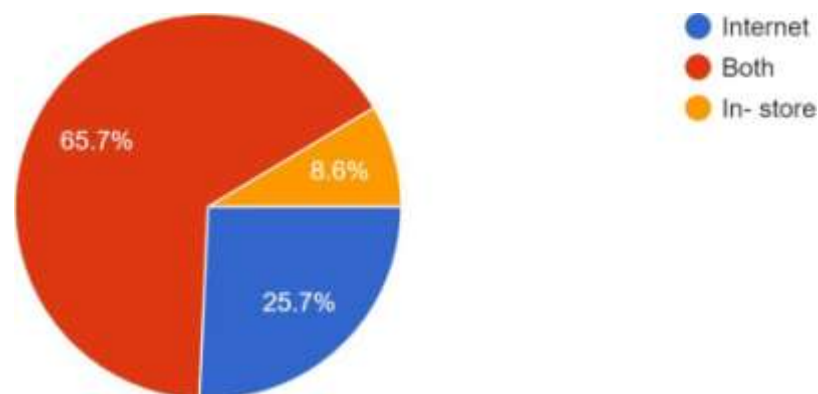


Ques.-Through which platforms do you get to know about offers and sales in the festive season?

The seasonal flu has not hampered India's festive spirit. It has just shifted priorities from offline to online

Despite the seasonal flu spreading, the sentiments of the consumers are positive during the festive season.

Out of the total respondents, only about 8.6% of the consumers are preferring the option of only In- store shopping option, rest are either opting for Internet or the combination of Offline and Online.

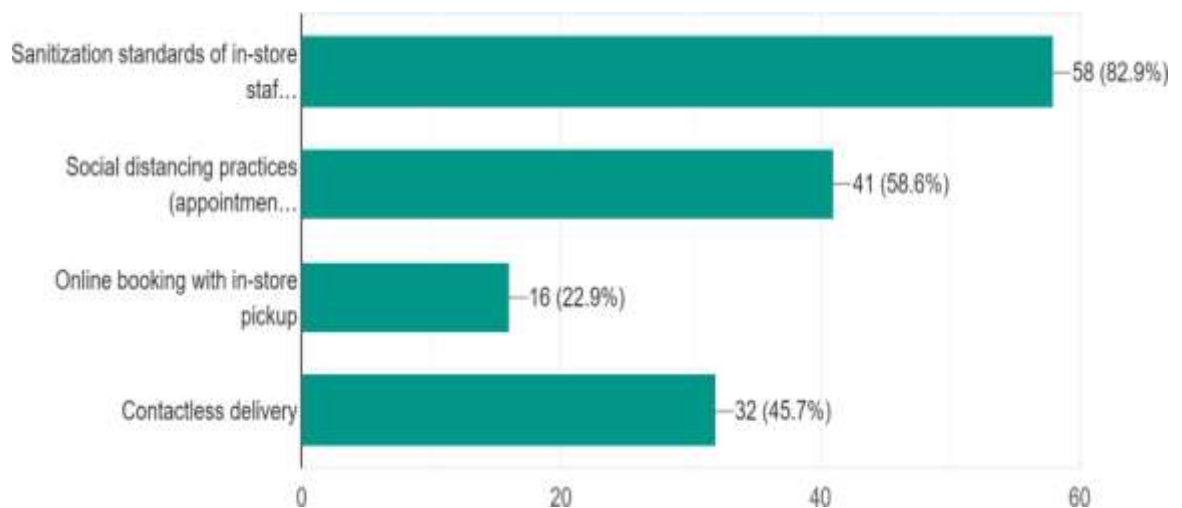


Ques. – Through which channel / channels are you planning to shop this festive season?

Considering the recent scenario, cleansing and sanitization of staff and stores is vital factor for consumers to shop offline.

According to the data 82.9% consumers agreed with fact that several retailers are maintaining sanitization standards of In-store staff, product and services.

They are also regularly sanitizing the stores and disinfecting all trolley and basket handles. Only 58.5% consumers agree that there's proper cleansing being maintained in the stores. 45.7% consumers experienced hygienically Delivery which is very less and dangerous in this seasonal flu spreading. 22.9% consumers experienced Online booking service to maintain sanitization in stores.

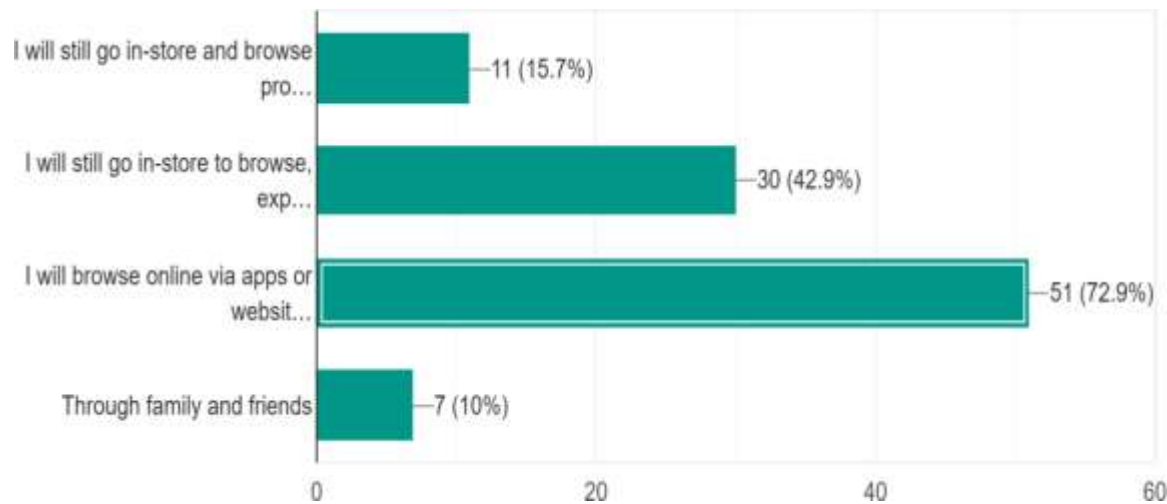


Ques. – If you are planning to go in-store, what is critical for retail stores to provide you during festive season sales?

Consumers explore and research for products through online channels via apps and websites

In the new normal environment consumers still plan to go only In-store to shop this festive season. But maximum consumers prefer both online and In-store shopping. 72.9% consumers would prefer browse online via apps or website for shopping, whereas, 42.9% consumers prefer to browse or explore the products in-store and might buy the product in-store. But due to seasonal flu spreading consumers primarily want to know that stores are maintaining high levels of sanitization standards and are following. In case of certain categories like gadgets and jewellery, they also demand hygiene delivery.

Ques. – How will you explore and research for a product that you are planning to buy?



Mobile and Internet will rule the shopping journey

83% of the respondents will rely on their mobile devices for shopping, research and explore purpose in total and only 17% will not use their mobile for any of the purpose.

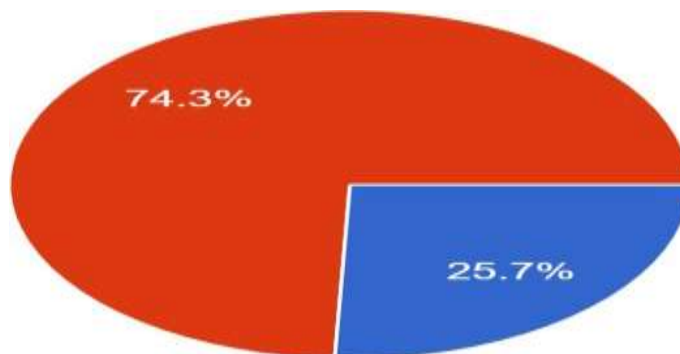
Out of the 83% using mobile devices, 47% will use for only exploring and research, 11% will use for only shopping and 25% will use for both shopping as well as exploring and research purpose.

Ques – How does the Internet impact your shopping decisions?

New shoppers have been added to the universe of online shopping during the seasonal flu spreading

Around 26% of the respondents have started online shopping during the seasonal flue (dengue and chikungunya) i.e., in 2018 while rest of them had done before also. First time online shoppers are rising during the seasonal flu spreading .

Consumers in emerging economies are witnessing a great shift to online shopping leading to a faster acceleration of a more digital world.

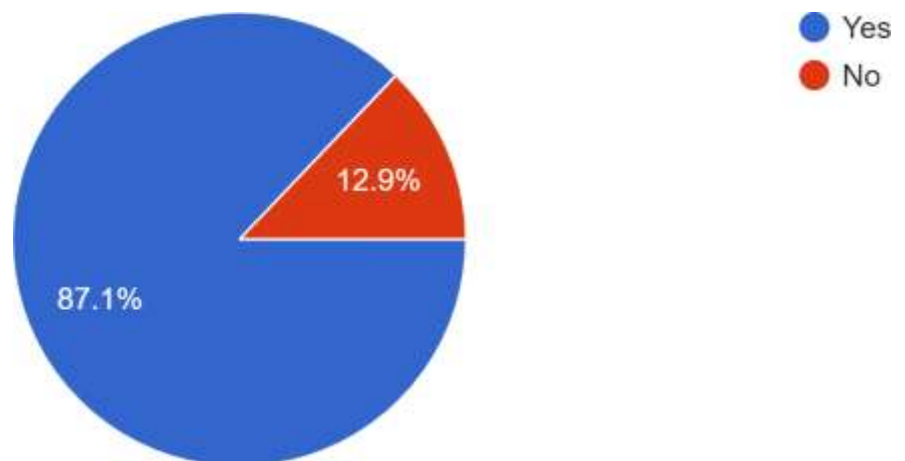


Ques. – Did you start online shopping in 2018 or you've done before?

Over 87% of the respondents are utilizing festive sales of ecommerce websites and apps

The months of October and November are considered as festive months in India and the ecommerce websites launch mega sales like Amazon's Great Indian Festival, Flipkart's big billion Days, Myntra's End of Reason Sale and, of course Diwali and the upcoming Christmas sales. People have enough hand more reasons to splurge on online sales this festive year due to seasonal flu as a fundamental shift in buying behavior has occurred, this has transformed buying behavior with general averseness to not go out and shift to online channels.

Out of the total respondents, only about 13% of the consumers are not utilizing the



online festivals as on sales.

Ques. - Did you planning to shop anything from online apps / websites during the festive sales (Amazongre at Indian sales, Flipkart big billion sales, etc.)

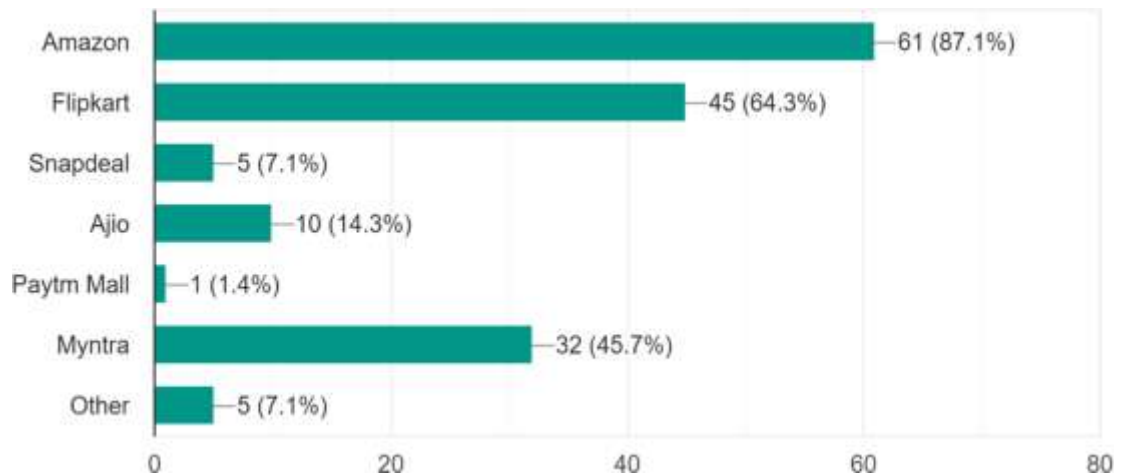
Amazon and Flipkart are on the peak

Flipkart and Amazon ran their flagship festive season sales, Big Billion Days and Great Indian Festival, respectively, starting Oct 20 this year.

Out of all the online platforms, most of the respondents prefer Amazon followed by Flipkart and Myntra. There are many choices of products as well as brands particularly on these platforms. There are many other platforms also, but these are the most reliable. These platforms are attracting customers by providing heavy discounts and faster delivery. On

festive sales, these websites usually promote themselves by giving extra discounts, bank offers, and cash-back deals.

Walmart owned Flipkart is giving a cut throat competition to Amazon this festive season. Both the platforms have also entered in the grocery delivery service. Online fashion retailer Myntra (owned by Flipkart) is ruling the fashion industry in India and is accelerating its sales growth by widening its product offerings. Myntra has also increased its warehousing capacity by four times and is spending a lot more on marketing this festive season.



Ques. - Which of the following would you prefer the most?

4. SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSION

A sample study of 107 respondents geographically scattered in different cities mostly in North India and with 83% respondents in the 18 to 25 Years age bracket, a detailed analysis revealed that during the seasonal flu spreading the spending falls. But festival sales are indeed very beneficial for the online marketers. Basically, this year people have spent the less amount on offline shopping mode, what they would usually do. Online apps and websites are more preferred but in-store shopping is still a trend.

Various brands and e-commerce websites give huge discounts on products during the festive season as more and more no. People are willing to buy the products and spend more than what they usually do. We suggest that small scale businesses should take their business online as mobile and internet play a huge role in spreading awareness about products and there by enhance sales.

There is still a lot of scope in this study to be further revised in terms of the questionnaire, increase the sample count and collect data of a more diverse age group as this study mainly consists of the responses of the age group 18-25 years age bracket and come up with a more detailed study in the future and provide a holistic view.

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