



Online shopping during Covid-19 pandemic: A study on working women in Aurangabad City, Maharashtra

Lakshkaushik D Puri¹, Ganesh N Kathar²

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Vinayakrao Patil Mahavidyalaya, Vaijapur, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India

² Professor, Department of Commerce, S.A. Bhandwadar College, Deogaon Rangari, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

Online purchasing has transformed the retail industry over the last two decades or so, benefiting both customers and vendors. Many items can be found for an additional reasonable fee online, and having the product delivered to your door can be very convenient. However, critics are aware of the packaging waste, time, and price delays caused by shipping, as well as the viable issues that arise when customers are unable to see or contact the product in person or speak face-to-face with a store prior to shopping for.

The pandemic is changing what customers need and how they buy it in the midst of lockdowns and social distancing. Women consumers play an important role in online purchasing. The growing use of the internet by women customers in India provides a growing opportunity for on-line retailers. If online stores recognise the factors influencing women customers' purchasing behaviour, they can similarly broaden their advertising techniques to convert passive customers into active ones. As e-trade is turning into such a critical a part of many peoples' lives, we thought it might be exciting and beneficial to listing the relative merits and disadvantages of this nevertheless incredibly latest phenomenon.

The researchers employed a quantitative framework to assess the buyer's possibilities nearer to online purchasing, specifically working women in Aurangabad, Maharashtra State. Questionnaires are used to collect data. This research also seeks to identify important factors such as age, gender, and various pricing strategies that influence purchaser behaviour in relation to online purchasing.

Keywords: Covid 19, pandemic, online shopping, working women etc

Introduction

While the coronavirus pandemic and a nationwide lockdown to prevent infection spread interrupted daily life in the country, online shopping emerged as the clear winner as people compelled to stay indoors turned to the internet to order daily supplies. Reverse migration from urban areas accelerated growth in smaller communities during the epidemic... More than 95% of India's pin codes were covered, allowing users to stay at home and prevent sickness from spreading. Consumers have been compelled to adjust their buying habits as a result of the COVID-19 situation, with many opting to either boost their online spending or try shopping online for the first time. Despite the fact that e-commerce has been slowly growing for many years, this is the first time we've witnessed such a dramatic and widespread movement away from purchasing in brick-and-mortar businesses and toward shopping online. The spread of COVID-19 has resulted in a global pandemic. Since the COVID-19 crisis, different preventative programmes have been developed in several nations. Online shopping and the use of the internet for ecommerce for the purchase of items and services have increased to avoid actual connection with persons. Consumer usage and transaction habits have increased as a result of the shift from traditional cash to digital services.

Women are the most powerful consumers in India, accounting for half of all household purchases. Women have a lot of influence when it comes to purchasing and making family decisions. Without a doubt, women are the sole decision makers in the purchasing process. With the advancement of the internet and the ease of access and internet usage, the trend of e-commerce has increased rapidly in recent years. The introduction and implementation of internet technologies has created a new market for manufacturers and service providers, as well as a new arena for innovative marketing strategies by professionals.

During the pandemic, online purchase patterns changed dramatically, with a higher number of internet users purchasing basic items including food and beverages, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. It forced everyone to change their shopping habits whether you preferred online shopping or in-store browsing, the pandemic disrupted routines in a variety of obvious and not-so-obvious ways. The fundamental concept behind this study was to see if there was a link between lockdown scenarios and professional women's attitudes toward online purchasing.

Review of Literature

1. Karishma Chaudhary (2018)¹: stated in her research paper that "due to growing penetration of mobile phones and internet usage in India, online shopping has become a way of life!"

2. Amit Ranjan, Jitendra Yadav, Madhvendra Mishra (2021)²: According to their study report, social media plays a vital role in sharing information among customers, and customers' reliance on it has grown throughout the COVID 19 pandemic.

3. Bharti Aggarwal, Deepa Kapoor (2020)³: stated in their survey that the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted customers to become more engaged in their internet purchases. In this circumstance of Corona virus, E-shopping has become a better source, and E-retailers sell things that are generally purchased in supermarkets by consumers.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives will be met by this study on "Working Women's Online Shopping."

1. To find out how the COVID-19 pandemic shifted working women's buying habits from brick-and-mortar to internet retailers.
2. To investigate the online purchasing habits of working women in Aurangabad City.
3. To perceive the major factors that influence working women for online shopping.

IV. Methodology and Sample Design

The goal of the study is to look into working women's internet buying during COVID 19. A systematic questionnaire is used to obtain primary data. The questionnaire was created with Google Forms and distributed via electronic media as well as a paper copy to collect responses. The data collected was analysed using MS Excel. The demographic questions on the survey inquired about the participant's age, education, and occupation. To better understand the buying habits of working women, questions like the amount spent, the mode of payment etc. were asked. Women were also asked to rate the importance of other factors such as brand, variety, return policy, and style in influencing their purchasing decisions. Secondary data was gathered from a variety of journals, magazines, articles, and web sources etc.

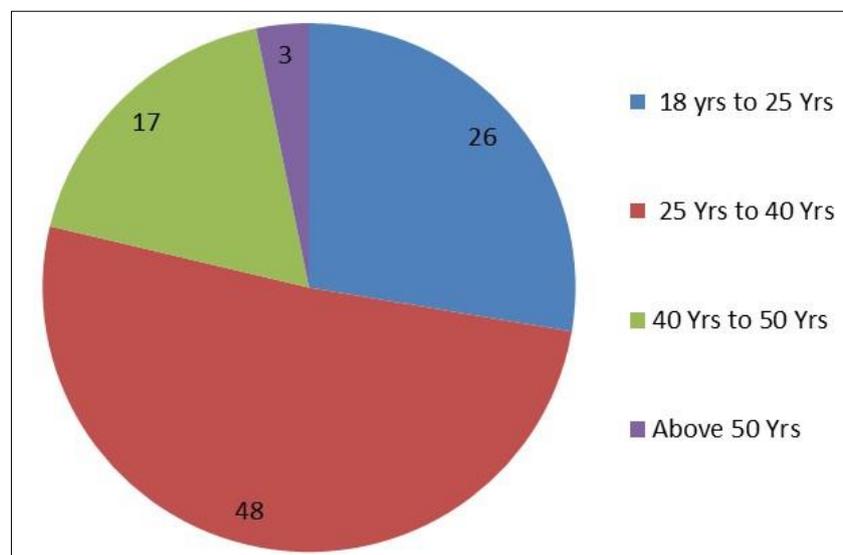
The results came from a sample of 94 women out of 100 in Aurangabad and the surrounding areas between December 2021 and January 2022. The respondents were contacted more frequently via WhatsApp and in-person meetings at their workplace. The responders ranged in age from 18 to more than 60 years old. The ladies who took part included undergraduates, postgraduates, professionals, and PhD candidates.

V. Scope of the Study

Convenient delivery, pricing, product ranges, and other factors influenced online shopping during the Covid 19 pandemic. Most working women in Aurangabad prefer online shopping because of product availability that is not available in local stores, product selection, price comparison, and customer reviews.

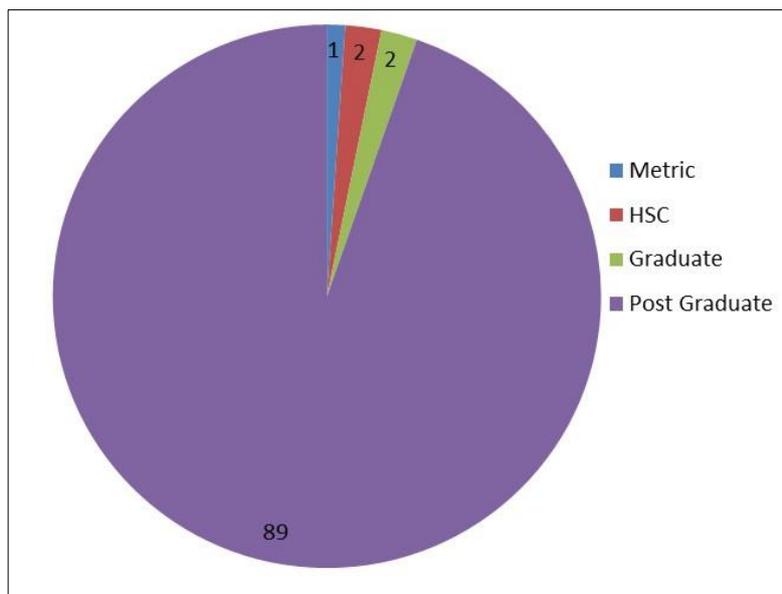
VI. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The survey was performed between December 2021 and January 2022, with responses coming from a varied group of 94 working women in the city of Aurangabad. The following are the data collection results and analyses.



Graph 1: Ages of the Respondents

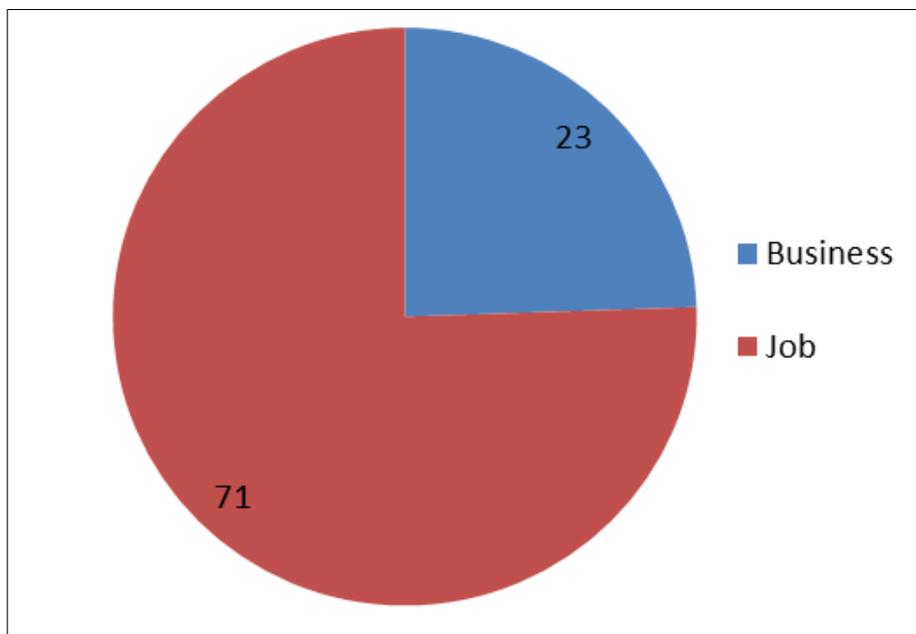
According to their ages, 27.66 % were between the ages of 18 and 25 years old, 51.06 % were between the ages of 25 and 40 years old, 18.08 % were between the ages of 40 and 50 years old, and 3.19 % were over 50 years old. The majority of respondents were young people who said they knew exactly how to shop on the internet.



Source: Primary Data

Graph 2: Education of the Respondents

94.68 % of respondents were post-graduates, 2.12 % had completed their graduation, 2.12 % had a high school education, and 1.06 % had a metric education. As a result, the majority of working women were postgraduates, indicating that they had a high level of awareness and understanding of the online shopping terms and conditions.



Source: Primary Data

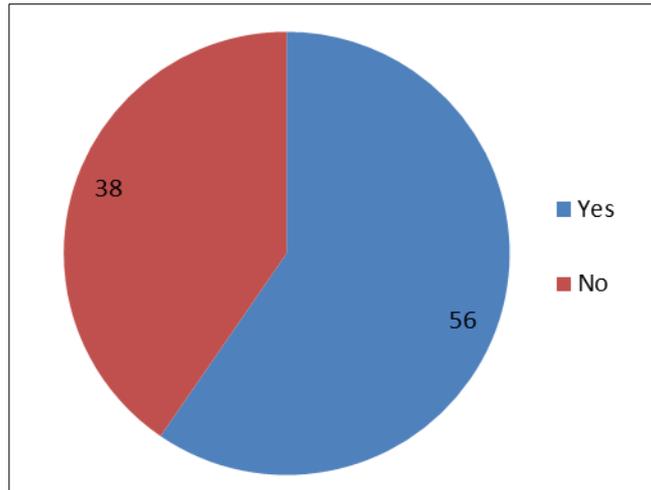
Graph 3: Working Style of the Respondents

75.53 % of the women questioned worked in the commercial or public sector, while 24.47 % had their own businesses. Out of the salaried, 50% worked for the state government, 40.6 % for the private sector, and 9.4 % for the federal government. 72.7 percent of the women in business were service providers, 18.2 % were Gruh-Udyog operators, and 9.1 % were traders.

For the first time, 59.57 people shopped online, while 40.43 increased their online shopping.

Because of the outbreak, online shopping has become a considerably more important aspect of working women's buying habits than it had been previously. Despite the fact that the majority of them had already made some

online purchases, the lockdown prompted them to increase their online buying, as well as encouraging a large number of them to try e-commerce for the first time.



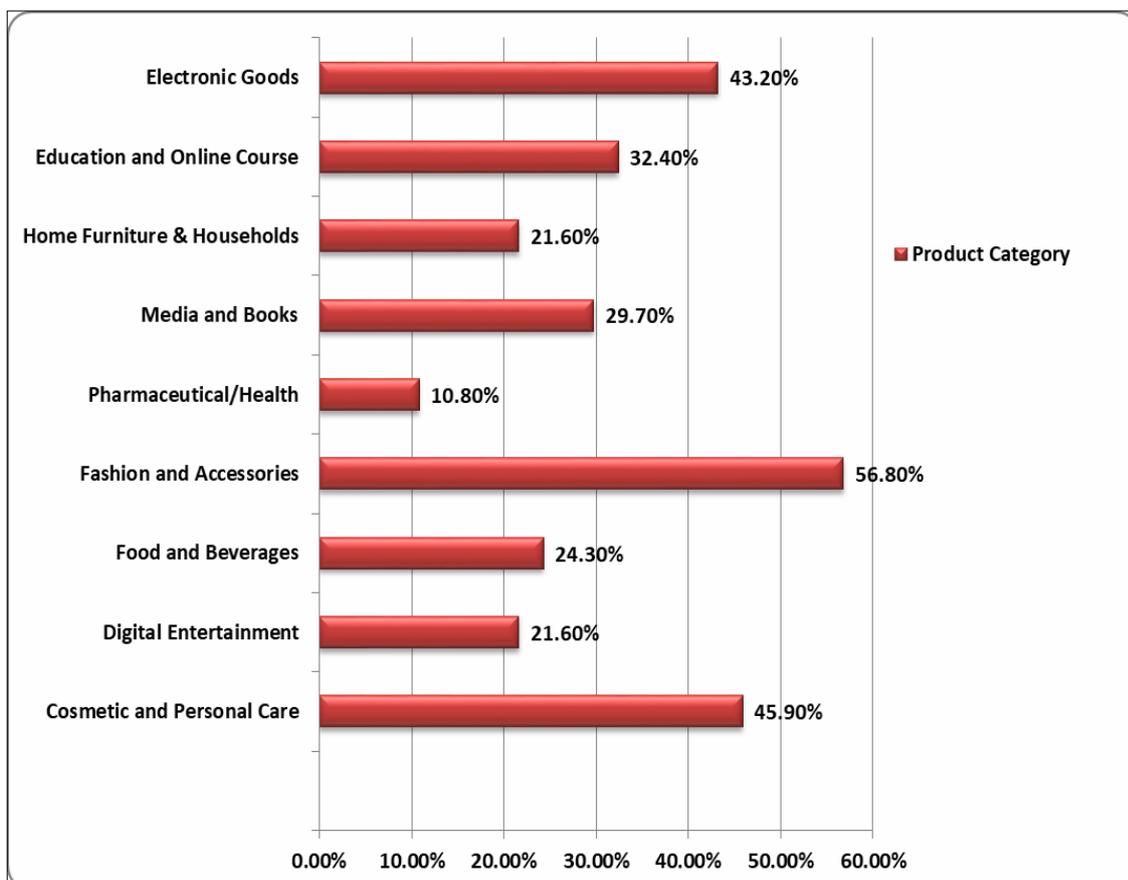
Source: Primary Data

Graph 4: First Internet Shopping

Which of the following product categories have you been buying online during COVID-9 pandemic?

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on e-commerce varies by product category and by seller. 56.8% recently purchased apparel and accessories, 45.9% cosmetics and personal care products, 32.4 percent profited from online learning and 43.20 percent acquired technological goods such as mobile phones. So they were the main product groups. In addition, about 30% of people bought books, 21.60 percent spent money on digital entertainment online, and 24.30 percent bought food and beverages, and 10.80 percent bought medicinal products.

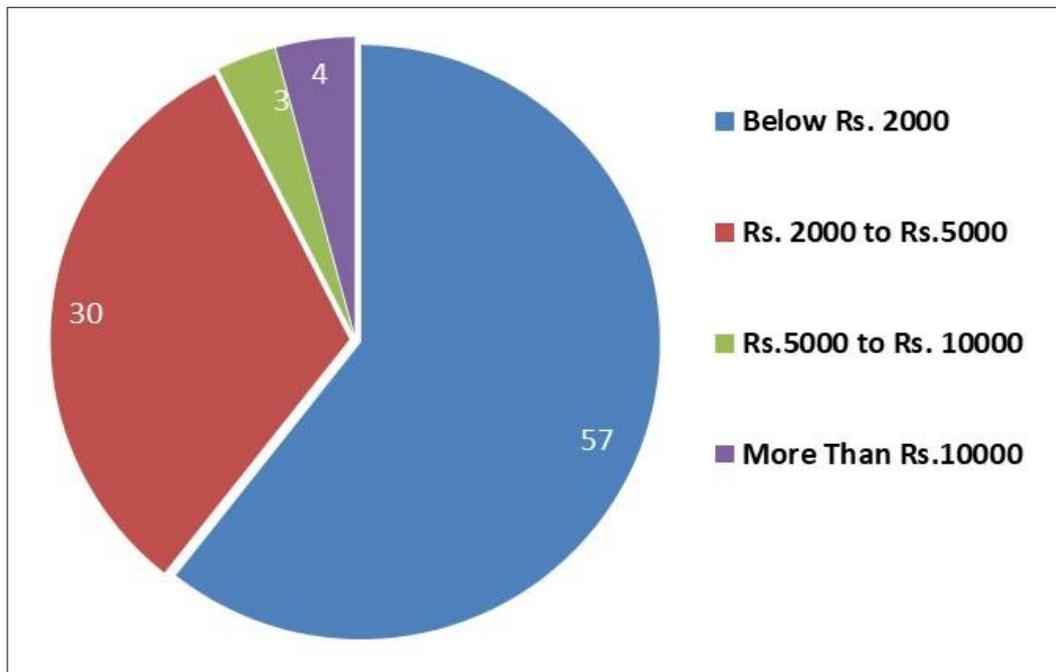
Personal protection, home activities, groceries, and ICT equipment have all seen an increase in demand.



Source: Primary Data

Graph 5: Product Categories Purchased Online

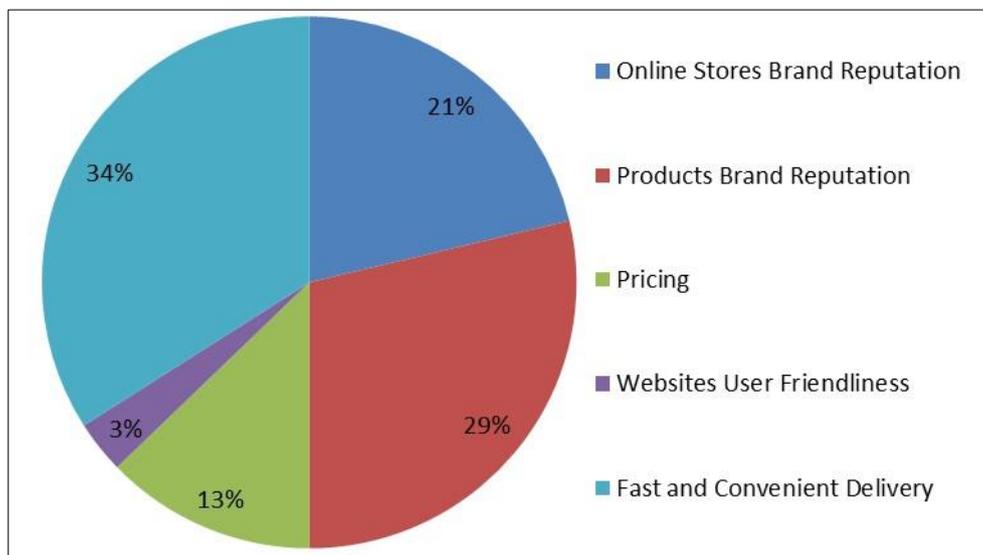
60.6% of working women in Aurangabad spend less than Rs.2000 on online shopping, 31.9 % spend between Rs.2000 and Rs.5000 monthly, 3.19 percent spend between Rs.5000 and 10000, and only 4.26 % spend more than Rs. 10000. While online spending has seen a rapid increase, consumer spending has seen a significant decrease. According to the survey, the average monthly online expenditure per person is less than Rs. 2000.



Source: Primary Data

Graph 6: Monthly Average Spending

For 34% of those surveyed Fast and convenient delivery is the most influential factor for online shopping; 29 % of respondents stated that product brand reputation is the most important factor for them when purchasing online; 21 % prefer online store brand reputation when purchasing; and 13 % believe that pricing is the most important factor for online shopping. Because of the website's user-friendliness, 3% prefers to shop online.



Source: Primary Data

Graph 7: Most Influencing Element

In addition, to gain a better understanding of E-commerce, some additional questions were posed to the respondents. The following is an analysis of the aforementioned questions.

1. Payment Method

According to our findings, the most popular payment method for the working women is cash on delivery, 42.10% of respondents prefer this method. For 23.7% of respondents, UPI payments are the most secure method of payment. 18.4% use debit cards for payment, 10.5 % use credit cards, and 5.3 % use internet banking as a

payment method when shopping online. When asked about security, digital payments are considered secure by 84.2 % of respondents, while 15.8 % do not believe they are.

2. Delivery Choice

In online retailing, delivery is a significant component that influences customers. Nowadays, internet merchants provide a wide range of shipping choices, each with its own set of characteristics. 94.7 % of online buyers prefer delivery to their house, 2.6 % prefer delivery to their workplace, and 2.6 % prefer delivery to the logistic provider's location. It's fantastic to have a variety of handy, rapid, or low-cost delivery alternatives, but E-commerce merchants must meet client expectations in terms of performance. 94.7 % of people surveyed are happy with the service they received.

3. Product Description and Quality

A convincing product description provides consumers with information about functionality, challenges it solves, and other benefits to help drive a sale. 73.7 % of respondents say that the information offered by sellers regarding the goods is sufficient, while 26.3 % believe that the product description falls short of their expectations.

When it comes to acquiring goods and services, product quality is a critical issue to consider. However, due to the diverse features unique to distinct product categories, determining the most relevant attributes that customers use to assess product quality is a tough undertaking. Working women are dissatisfied with this important segment of online shopping because they did not receive the product quality that they expected. Only 26.6 % of respondents claimed they always received the product quality they bought, 65.8% said they sometimes obtained the same product quality as wanted, and 7.9 % said they never received the product quality they ordered.

4. Multilingual Website

Consumers who shop online typically want to shop from a site that is in their native language, such as Marathi in Maharashtra; as a result, they will shop from websites that make purchasing decisions simple and convert into their native languages. As a result, when asked if they want an E-commerce website in their native language, 84.2% replied yes, while 15.8% stated they don't think a multi-language website is necessary for online buying.

5. Overall Satisfaction Level

This study attempted to answer issues such as "What do online shopping consumers mean by "quality"?" and "What are the factors that influence consumers' decision to purchase online?" "Are working women satisfied with online shopping?" In this regard, a final question was asked of the respondents to determine whether they are satisfied with their online shopping experience, and we discovered that 73.7 % of working women are satisfied, 21.1% are neutral, and 5.3 are dissatisfied with online shopping.

Conclusion

The study sought to identify the online purchase variables that working women online shoppers in Aurangabad considered to be most important during COVID 19 pandemic and also to determine the level of satisfaction. The study was carried out with the assistance of qualitative and quantitative data collection, as well as an overview of current and previous research works on related topics. The factors that assess and affect respondents' satisfaction were evaluated using an online survey. In light of this, we've arrived at the following conclusions:

1. It is disturbing to know that, despite a high level of customer satisfaction (73.7%), 21.1 % of working women are unsure whether or not they are satisfied.
2. The security of online payment, however they prefer cash on delivery as a payment method, as well as the quality and prompt delivery of goods, are satisfactory to Aurangabad's online women customers.
3. According to the analysis, the Google search engine and social media play a vital role in spreading information among customers, and customers' confidence on them has grown throughout the COVID 19 pandemic.
4. Other important considerations for working women while making online purchases included product quality, seller information, product description, and post-purchase experience.

In Aurangabad, following COVID-19 pandemic, attitudes regarding internet buying are improving. It will be extremely beneficial in preventing the spread of Corona from person to person. Consumers have been more involved in their online shopping activities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In this circumstance of Corona virus, E-shopping has become a better source, and E-retailers sell things that are generally purchased in supermarkets by consumers.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

In relation to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper, the authors disclosed no potential conflicts of interest.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

References

1. Karishma Chaudhary. Analysis of Online Buying Pattern of Women Consumers with Reference to Apparels in India, *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*,2018;22:2. <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/analysis-of-online-buying-pattern-of-women-consumers-with-reference-to-apparels-in-india-7297.html>
2. Amit Ranjan, Jitendra Yadav, Madhvendra Mishra. Online Shopping behaviour during COVID-19 Pandemic: An Indian Perspective, *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2021. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.3874348.
3. Bharti Aggarwal, Deepa Kapoor. A Study on Influence of COVID-19 pandemic on customer's online buying behaviour, *MDIM Business Review*,2020;1(II):41-47.
4. Neger M, Uddin B. Factors Affecting Consumers' Internet Shopping Behavior During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence From Bangladesh. *Chinese Business Review*,2020;19(3):91-104.
5. Devaraj S, Fan, M, Kohli R. and Examination of online channel preference: using the structure-conduct-outcome framework. *Decision Support Systems*,2006;42:1089-1103.
6. Shem Otoi Sam. Exploring the statistical significance of Africa covid-19 data. *Int J Stat Appl Math*,2020;5(4):34-42.