ISSN: 2249-7862 (Print) : 2455-877X (Online)
www.aureoleonline.in

Awareness and Usage of E-Commerce Platforms among Higher Secondary School Students

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Abstract

There has been a significant increase in the use of e-commerce platforms among the younger generation, mainly due to easier and cost-effective access to the internet and mobile technology. This study, titled 'Awareness and Usage of E-Commerce Platforms among Higher Secondary School Students', focuses on the level of awareness, the frequency of usage and the factors that influence the adoption of e-commerce platforms by students in Kottayam district.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms, with 26 statements measured on a five-point Likert scale, from 50 students (25 each from the commerce and science streams). The primary data were analysed using percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation. Secondary data, collected from books, journals, articles and websites, were used to frame the study. The findings indicate that although the students have a high level of awareness, they use e-commerce platforms only moderately. The key factors that influence usage are ease of product return, wider product variety, the ability to shop at any time, convenient delivery time and better prices. The study concludes that, in spite of high awareness, there is still a need to encourage safe and responsible use through digital literacy initiatives.

Keywords: E-commerce, Online Shopping, Student Awareness, Usage Behaviour, Digital Consumers

Introduction

With the rapid growth of the internet and mobile devices, there has been a significant increase in the adoption of e-commerce platforms globally. E-commerce is an umbrella term for the buying and selling of goods and services over the internet. It has made shopping more convenient, accessible and affordable, bringing about a significant transformation in the way people shop. Several factors drive the widespread adoption of e-commerce, including advances in technology, changes in consumer behaviour and greater access to internet-enabled devices. E-commerce has also transformed the way businesses operate, enabling them to reach a wider audience, reduce costs and improve efficiency.

As consumers are able to browse and purchase products irrespective of place and time through online shopping platforms, businesses have been able to expand their customer base and increase sales with improved customer satisfaction.

As youngsters, particularly higher secondary school students, are among the most active users of the internet and mobile devices, they are a potential target market for e-commerce platforms. In spite of the growing importance of e-commerce, there is a lack of research on the awareness and usage of e-commerce platforms among higher secondary school students. This study aims to bridge this knowledge gap by investigating the level of awareness, the frequency of usage and the factors influencing the adoption of e-commerce platforms among higher secondary school students.

The study is significant in that it provides insights into the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of higher secondary school students towards e-commerce. The findings will be useful for businesses, policymakers and educators who are interested in promoting responsible e-commerce practices among young people.

Review of Literature

Two theoretical perspectives are commonly used to explain the adoption of e-commerce. The Technology Acceptance Model proposes that a person's intention to use a technology is shaped by its perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Applying this model to online shopping, Gefen, Karahanna and Straub (2003) found that consumer trust in the online vendor is as important as perceived usefulness and ease of use in explaining purchase intentions. Diffusion of innovations theory has also been applied: Eastin (2002), studying four e-commerce activities including online shopping and online banking, found that users who adopt one of these activities tend to adopt others as well.

Recent research shows that online shopping behaviour is influenced by convenience, accessibility, trust, price, security, delivery and quality. Patro (2023), in a study of consumers' digital shopping experience, identified these factors as relevant to online purchase decisions. Chauhan and Singh (2024), surveying consumers in major Indian cities, examined motivation, convenience, economic considerations, sources of information, website effectiveness, trust, security, satisfaction and loyalty in relation to online purchase decisions. In an earlier study of consumers in and around Delhi, Jain and Jain (2011) found that past online shopping satisfaction, recreational shopping orientation, education and income significantly influenced online purchases, while expensive products were less likely to be bought online.

Studies on young consumers point in the same direction. Delafrooz, Paim and Khatibi (2011) developed a framework explaining how consumers in Malaysia form attitudes towards online shopping and purchase intentions, and noted that online retailers need to offer competitive prices to attract shoppers. Ismail and Ho (2024), in a qualitative study of university students in northern Malaysia, examined the motivations, benefits, difficulties and satisfaction of students who buy through social media platforms such as Facebook,

TikTok and Instagram.

These studies highlight the need for further research on the awareness and usage of e-commerce platforms among different demographic groups, particularly higher secondary school students, who have received little attention so far.

Objectives

- To assess the level of awareness of students on various e-commerce platforms.
- To find out the frequency of e-commerce transactions conducted by students.
- To identify factors that influence the usage of e-commerce platforms among students.

Methodology

The study adopted a convenience sampling design and was conducted among higher secondary school students in Kottayam district. A total sample of 50 students was selected, comprising 25 students from the commerce stream and 25 students from the science stream. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of 26 statements on a five-point rating scale, with response options ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1), to assess the awareness and usage of e-commerce platforms among students. The primary data were analysed using descriptive statistics: percentage analysis to understand the distribution of responses, mean to identify the average response trend, and standard deviation to measure the variability and consistency of students' perceptions. Secondary data gathered from journals, articles and relevant websites were used to frame the study and review the literature.

Limitations of the Study

Data were collected only from 50 higher secondary school students in Kottayam district using convenience sampling. Hence, the findings cannot be generalised to all higher secondary school students or to other geographical areas.

Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected through the structured questionnaire were analysed using mean, standard deviation and percentage analysis.

Objective 1: To assess the level of awareness of students on various e-commerce platforms

There were 8 statements under the first objective, and the maximum possible score was 40. The scores of the 50 respondents were calculated and a percentage frequency table was constructed.

Table 1. Percentage Frequency Table of Awareness Scores

Score	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
20–25	1	2
26–30	8	16
31–35	25	50
Above 35	16	32
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: *Primary data*

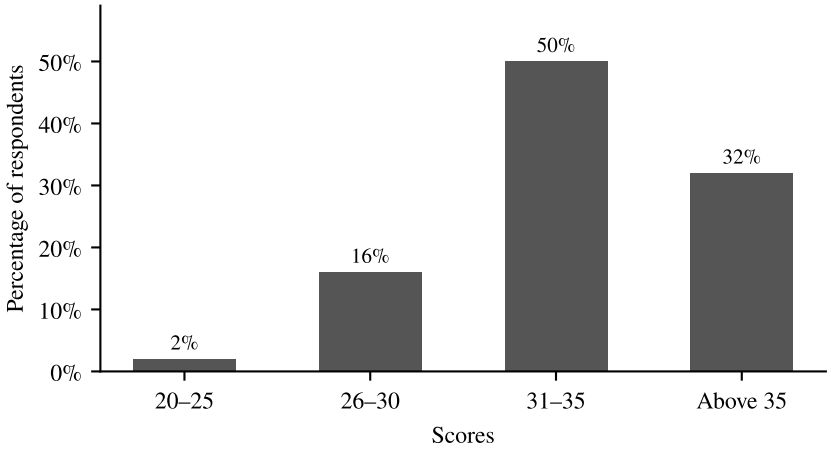


Figure 1. Bar Chart Showing Percentage of Respondents and Scores

The mean score and standard deviation were also calculated to determine the level of awareness of higher secondary school students on various e-commerce platforms.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Awareness Scores

Sample size	Mean	SD	Interpretation
50	33.08	4.01	High level of awareness

Table 1 shows that 82% of higher secondary school students have an awareness score above 30, indicating that the majority of respondents are highly aware of the various e-commerce platforms. The total score obtained by the 50 respondents is 1654. The mean of 33.08 and standard deviation of 4.01 in Table 2 also indicate a high level of awareness, with relatively little variation among students.

Objective 2: To find out the frequency of e-commerce transactions conducted by students

There were 9 statements under the second objective, and the maximum possible score was 45. The scores of the 50 respondents were calculated and a percentage frequency table was constructed.

Table 3. Percentage Frequency Table of Usage Scores

Score	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Below 15	1	2
15–20	3	6
21–25	9	18
26–30	8	16
31–35	15	30
36–40	9	18
Above 40	5	10
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: *Primary data*

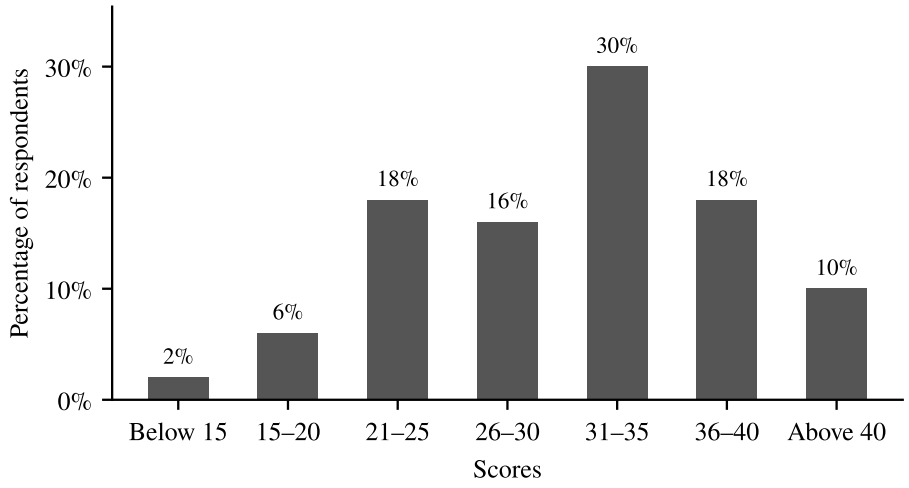


Figure 2. Bar Chart Showing Percentage of Respondents and Scores

The mean score and standard deviation were also calculated to determine the frequency of e-commerce transactions conducted by students.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Usage Scores

Sample size	Mean	SD	Interpretation
50	30.08	7.49	Moderate level of e-commerce usage

Table 3 shows that 82% of higher secondary school students have an e-commerce usage score between 21 and 40, indicating that the majority of students use e-commerce moderately. The total score obtained by the 50 respondents is 1504. Table 4 presents a mean of 30.08 and a standard deviation of 7.49, suggesting that most scores lie between approximately 23 and 38, with a moderate amount of variation in usage among students.

Objective 3: To identify factors that influence the usage of e-commerce platforms among students

Table 5. Influencing Factors

Factors	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total sample	Mean	SD
Convenience	18% (9)	30% (15)	38% (19)	6% (3)	8% (4)	50	3.44	1.11
Any time shopping	16% (8)	36% (18)	40% (20)	6% (3)	2% (1)	50	3.58	0.91
Variety of products	28% (14)	38% (19)	22% (11)	10% (5)	2% (1)	50	3.80	1.03
Reviews and ratings	18% (9)	30% (15)	28% (14)	18% (9)	6% (3)	50	3.36	1.16
Ease of returning	24% (12)	44% (22)	22% (11)	10% (5)	0% (0)	50	3.82	0.92
Attractive offers	12% (6)	40% (20)	36% (18)	10% (5)	2% (1)	50	3.50	0.91
Delivery time	16% (8)	40% (20)	32% (16)	8% (4)	4% (2)	50	3.56	0.99
Security	18% (9)	18% (9)	50% (25)	10% (5)	4% (2)	50	3.36	1.03
Better price	24% (12)	26% (13)	36% (18)	10% (5)	4% (2)	50	3.56	1.09

Source: *Primary data*. Figures in brackets are numbers of respondents.

The most influential factor in the usage of e-commerce platforms is ease of returning, which has the highest mean (3.82). The second most influential factor is variety of products (mean 3.80), followed by the ability to shop at any time (3.58), and delivery time and better price (3.56 each). The least influential factors are reviews and ratings and security, which have the lowest mean (3.36).

Attractive offers and anytime shopping have the lowest SD (0.91), indicating that students' perceptions of these factors are relatively consistent. Reviews and ratings have the highest SD (1.16), indicating that students hold more varied opinions about the importance of reviews and ratings in their e-commerce usage.

Findings of the Study

1. **Level of awareness**

   - The majority (82%) of higher secondary school students scored above 30 on the awareness scale, indicating a high level of awareness of e-commerce platforms.
   - The mean score of 33.08 with a standard deviation of 4.01 suggests that students are generally well informed, with little variation in their knowledge.

2. **Frequency of e-commerce transactions**

   - 82% of students scored between 21 and 40 on the e-commerce usage scale, signifying that most students engage in moderate usage of e-commerce platforms.
   - The mean score of 30.08 with a standard deviation of 7.49 indicates that students' usage habits are moderately varied.

3. **Factors influencing e-commerce usage**

   - The most influential factor is ease of returning products (mean 3.82), followed closely by variety of products (mean 3.80).
   - Other important factors are the ability to shop at any time (mean 3.58), delivery time (mean 3.56) and better price (mean 3.56).
   - The least influential factors are reviews and ratings and security (mean 3.36 each), showing that these are less of a priority for most students.
   - Attractive offers and anytime shopping have the lowest SD (0.91), indicating that students' perceptions of these factors are relatively consistent.
   - Reviews and ratings have the highest SD (1.16), indicating that students hold varied opinions about their importance.

Conclusion

This study explored the awareness, usage and factors influencing the adoption of e-commerce platforms among higher secondary school students. The results offer useful insights into how young consumers engage with e-commerce, which matters to businesses, educators and policymakers who seek to serve this group.

Higher secondary school students have a high level of awareness of e-commerce platforms, with a majority familiar with various online shopping options. However, their moderate frequency of usage indicates that their engagement with these platforms is lower than their awareness would suggest. This implies that there are barriers or limitations affecting their online shopping habits, which may include concerns over security, delivery and other factors.

The factors identified as most significant in shaping students' decisions on online shopping were hassle-free returns, variety of products, the ability to shop at any time, delivery time and better prices. Security and reviews and ratings, although important to

some students, emerged as the less influential factors. These findings suggest that the weight students give to different factors may change as their familiarity with online shopping grows.

Businesses aiming to target the youth market can benefit from this study, which highlights the need for user-friendly, secure and accessible e-commerce platforms. Educational institutions and policymakers can use these insights to improve digital literacy and promote responsible e-commerce practices among students.

In conclusion, although higher secondary school students show strong awareness of e-commerce, there is room for increased engagement and usage. By addressing concerns around security, simplifying online shopping experiences and focusing on the factors that matter most to students, businesses and educational institutions can foster a more informed and active digital consumer base among the younger generation.

Educational Implications

The findings indicate the need to incorporate commerce education into the school curriculum, with a focus on online security, fraud prevention and consumer protection laws, to ensure safe shopping practices. Digital literacy is essential to help students judge the security of websites and evaluate reviews, return policies and payment methods. Digital financial literacy should be provided at schools to help students understand transaction risks and manage their online expenditure. This can include practical activities such as mock e-commerce projects for hands-on learning, along with lessons on ethical online behaviour, responsible consumption and sustainability. Such practices encourage informed decision-making among students. Collaboration with industry can further provide real-world insights into the functioning and challenges of e-commerce platforms.

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