Female Adolescent And Young Adult Consumers' Affinity For Online Flash Sales Concept In India : A Triangulation Approach

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ABSTRACT

Modern day marketers have a tremendous opportunity to connect to women in a better way with the products they buy and the media technologies they use to make a positive impact in their lives. After a strong and immense growth in 2010, internet retailing just came shining ahead of all other retailing channels and emerged as a strong winner even after recession, driven by shifting consumer attitudes and mindsets. Remarkable transformation in economic independence, better access to education, better and improved career opportunities and higher pay scales in both developed and emerging economies have been some of the major factors responsible for the transformation of women into smart and intelligent consumers. Online flash sales sites are the latest buzz in India that have come up in response to rising investor interest in private sale portals across the globe such as the Gilt Group and Rue LaLa in USA and Ventee-Privee.Com in Europe. Today, the flash-sale shopping sites have their own loyal following, and the range of products offered varies from fashion to electronic gadgets to apparels to loads of other categories. The fact that shopping behavior varies not only between men and women, but is quite different between the women of different countries, religions and even age groups intrigued the researchers to get a deeper insight about the young female consumers' psyche and attitude regarding the online flash sales hype in India.

Keywords : Consumer Buying Behavior, E-Commerce, Indian Female Adolescents , Young Adults, Online Flash Sales

INTRODUCTION

Shopping is enjoyed by maximum number of women globally, and now, in the era of e-commerce also, it has been found that like men, women are becoming equally well equipped to surf the internet and shop. A plethora of research has been conducted to analyze the buying behavior of women as homemakers, professionals, single parents, etc. But a particular section of females, who comprise of the teenage and the youth, have now turned out to be one of the most prospective and potential segments for products like clothes, books, cds, electronic gadgets, fashion accessories, food, flowers and services like beauty treatments, salons, spas, midnight express delivery etc. They have an independent cognitive process; the young adults are financially independent as compared to the teenagers, but both actively participate in the process of consumer buying behavior. In the present era, the females in this age group have expanded their thoughts beyond the vicinity of their universities and families; it is at this stage that they decide a suitable career option for themselves, a strong economic future and a strong desire to prove themselves to their family and the world. Today, young women want to own the best brands at the cheapest and most affordable prices. They might be affluent, but they don't mind bargaining, which is proved by the fact that in a country like India, where organized retailing is booming, street shopping is equally popular with all segments of women. Hence, it is interesting to study this particular segment's buying intentions when it comes to e-marketing and more precisely, the flash sales sites where all the big brands are available at the most reasonable prices. Today, flash-sale shopping sites have their own loyal following, and the range of products offered varies from fashion to electronic gadgets to apparels to loads of other categories.

The concept of online flash sales is new in India, and is becoming popular because of the exciting deals it offers in a limited time.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies on e-consumer behavior have been conducted due to the tremendous growth of online shopping (Dennis et al., 2004; Harris and Dennis, 2008; Jarvenpaa and Todd, 1997). Consumer oriented research has been conducted to analyze psychological characteristics (Hoffman and Novak, 1996; Lynch and Beck, 2001; Novak et al., 2000; Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2002; Xia, 2002), demographics (Brown et al., 2003; Korgaonkar and Wolin, 1999), perceptions of risks and benefits (Bhatnagar and Ghose 2004; Huang et al., 2004; Kolsaker et al., 2004;), shopping motivation (Childers et al., 2001; Johnson et al., 2007; Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2002), and shopping orientation (Jayawardhena et al., 2007; Swaminathan et al., 1999). The technology aspect has studied technical specifications of an online store (Zhou et al., 2007), including interface, design and navigation (Zhang and Von Dran, 2002); payment (Torksadeth and Dhillon, 2002; Liao and Cheung, 2002); information (Palmer, 2002; McKinney et al., 2002); intention to use (Chen and Hitt, 2002); and ease of use (Devaraj et al., 2002; Stern and Stafford, 2006). The online buying behaviour of young Indian women (from flash sales sites) will throw light on an altogether newer perspective.

❖ **E-Commerce Segmentation Variables :** Segmentation is an important stage of marketing practices, and in the case of the internet or e-commerce, it requires an altogether different strategy to segment the prospective consumers. This was suggested by Hoffman and Novak's 1996 (flow) research. Another framework for comparison of segmentation variables implemented in traditional and virtual shopping environment was suggested by Sen et al. (1998), based on which, the framework used in this research was developed, which is shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Segmentation Variables For Virtual Shopping	
Criteria	**Segmentation Variables For E - Commerce**
Demographic Segmentation	Age & Gender, Size Of Family, Occupation, Education, Generation, Visitor email address, Knowledge of the web, Navigator programme and version
Geographical Segmentation	Region, Size of town, Population Density, Accessibility, Connection network, Place of connection
Psychographical Segmentation	Social class, Lifestyle, Personality, Attitude towards website innovations, Attitude towards data privacy & security
Segmentation According to Behaviour	Frequency of product/service use, Loyalty rating, User category (new, non-user, regular, potential), Purchase intention against information search, frequency of internet access, Time of access, Visits to competitor's websites, User category for the website (new, regular)
Segmentation According to the Benefits Sought	Perceived benefits of the use of product and brand, benefits from obtaining additional information about the product, benefits from choosing from a wide assortment of products, Benefits sought for using the internet as the channel of purchase
Source: Authors' research based on Sen et al. (1998)	

Based on all these variables, qualitative and quantitative research was conducted. Qualitative research techniques, whether online or traditional, lead to revelations that are honest, unambiguous and less affected and restricted by social norms and conventions that are very much present in traditional methodologies (Montoya-Weiss, Massey and Clapper, 1998). Online qualitative research is a suitable option not only for those who have time constraints, but also for those who are internet savvy and are not accessible for in- person depth interviews (Mary Wolfinbarger & Mary Gilly, 2000). Quantitative research techniques help understand the statistics part and quantify and support the results obtained from qualitative analysis.

FACTORS INFLUENCING E-BUYING BEHAVIOUR

i) Functional Attributes : The image of the website/online store plays an important role in driving the buying behaviour of the shopper. There have been several examples of e-service instruments that help in measuring the image like Loiacono et al.'s (2002) WebQual; Parasuraman et al.'s (2005) E-S-QUAL; Wolfinbarger and Gilly's (2003) eTailQ; and Yoo and Donthu's (2001) SITEQUAL. The impression is also created by the buyer's past experience.

ii) Social Factors : Social factors and norms are an inevitable part of e-shopping as well, just as traditional shopping (Kolesar and Galbraith, 2000; Shim et al., 2000). It has been found that one of the most important motivating factor for

e-shopping is social interaction (Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004). Similarly, Parsons (2002) found that social motives such as: social experiences outside home; communication with others with similar interests; membership of peer groups; and status and authority were valid for e-shopping.

iii) Experiential Factors : Like traditional shopping, e-shoppers also look out for an overall nice and positive shopping experience, which includes personalization, customization, hassle free and secured payment options and on-time delivery at the doorstep, which further helps in establishing a long-term relationship with the customer and converting him into a loyal customer (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Sharma & Sheth, 2004; Srinivasan et al., 2002). Ease of navigation, graphics, visuals, audio, colour, product presentation at different levels of resolution, video and 3D displays also stimulate the customer's online shopping experience (Richard and Chandra, 2005).

iv) Situational Factors : Consumers also get interested in e-shopping because of their perceptions of convenience (Evanschitzky et al., 2004; Szymanski and Hise, 2000), for example, a reduction of search costs when the consumer is under time pressure (Bakos, 1991; Beatty and Smith, 1987). For instance, the flash sales sites offer the best and the most lucrative deals for a limited time period (Modahl, 2000). Further, avoiding going out in the rain or sun and shopping while sitting at home, freedom to choose from the widest assortment available (Brown et al., 2003; Sim and Koi, 2002), access to comprehensive information, shopping at any hour of the day (Burke, 1997; Dholakia and Uusitalo, 2002; Kim, 2002) are some of the conveniences that e -shopping offers.

THE EVOLUTION OF ONLINE FLASH SALES CONCEPT IN INDIA

The largest online flash sales website today is Ventee-Privee.com and its present CEO, Jacques-Antoine Granjon, actually invented the concept of online flash sales in 2001. It is the world's largest flash site offering luxury brands in Europe. Following this, bigger players emerged like Gilt Groupe, Rue La La, Hautelook, and Ideeli in the US.

Gilt Groupe's gross revenues for 2011 were approximately $500 million, and presently, it is valued at over $1 billion and now, it is being recognized as the second most valuable US e-commerce company next to Amazon. The concept works as an invitation only private shopping site, where designer brand sales events are organized online over a limited period of time available only to members. An invitation email is sent to all members just 48 hours before the sale starts, and it lasts for two to four days. Even traditional retail giants like Wal-Mart also have short term sales. K-Mart has "blue light special", which is a form of flash sale, which comprises of exclusive sales available only to select members. In India too, the last couple of years have a seen a boom in the online retailing market, especially in the daily deals category. Market research reports stated that by 2011, the number of consumers shopping online by accessing a retail website reached a figure of almost 27.2 million. Among big cities, consumers in Mumbai are the ones who do maximum online shopping followed by Ahmedabad and Delhi. In India, the first flash sales site started operating online in 2010 and companies like Bagittoday.com and 99labels.com were one of the few first initiators in this sector.

There are other Indian players now, like FashionAndYou, Brandmile.com, and Theprivatesales.com. Theprivatesales.com was set up in June 2010 and currently offers 200 high end global brands at discounts up to 80 percent. The site has more than five lakhs registered members and is growing at 50-70 percent on a monthly basis. Bagittoday.com covers almost 4500 pin codes in the country, and they have a reasonably good customer base in smaller towns and Tier II cities as well. 99labels.com's 60 percent buyers are women, and it offers a mix of national and international brands like Diesel, DKNY, Gucci, Hidesign, Ritu Kumar etc. Theprivatesales.com caters to customers who are educated, employed and have above average income.

YOUNG INDIAN FEMALE CONSUMERS

It is quite evident from recent demographic data that there are certain factors like education, delayed age of marriage, delayed motherhood and women's employment that are potentially causing women's evolution. Adolescence is the phase where significant transformation of a girl takes place. Hence, girls in this age group are vulnerable to any exposure or stimulus for that matter, and hence, they constitute a lucrative market because of certain characteristics like self identity, self concept, sense of freedom and independence, self esteem, evolved cognition, buying power, judgmental thinking and pester power. Cool looking technology, style is all what a teen demands along with functionality. Furthermore, teens have a need to personalize every aspect of their lives, right from personalized t-shirts

to cell phone ring tones. Innovation, style, ultra customization and tradition are what young adult Indian women look for while shopping. They are influenced by several environmental factors that separate them from older shoppers. Young females have been conditioned into consuming earlier than previous generations and have been socialized into shopping as a form of leisure. They have been reared in an environment that provides more reasons and opportunities to shop as well as additional consumption opportunities such as television, the internet and traditional catalog based shopping. Furthermore, young females are more apt to have become accustomed to media that depict affluent and opulent lifestyles (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003).

SCOPE

The concept of online flash sales sites is yet at a budding stage in India, and is gradually gaining popularity among the young adults and also among the busy professionals who have time and travelling constraints. Lot of research work has been conducted in the field of e-commerce, consumers' e-buying behavior, customer satisfaction related to online purchases, motivations for e- buying behavior and after a thorough literature review, a sincere attempt has been made to bring out some insights on e - shopping behavior focusing on this new concept of online flash sales. Also, women have always been an integrated part of marketing, as they play an important role as influencers, decision makers and purchasers. There has been a positive evolution in the various roles portrayed by women and even as consumers, they are looking at better value propositions. Brands have to discover new and innovative ways to please and convince them. Many research works have indicated that it is indeed a challenging task to market a product/service to the 21st century woman consumer. And it is even more challenging to cater to a segment of females who are in a transformational phase or have recently tasted the success of being professionally independent and successful.

Table 2: Variables For Factor Analysis	
S.No	Factors/Variables and Codes
1	Large Assortment (LA)
2	Convenient (Conv)
3	Best Deals (BD)
4	Home Delivery (HD)
5	Varied Payment Options (VPO)
6	Cash On Delivery (COD)
7	Trial Periods (TP)
8	Limited Time Offers (LTO)
9	International Designer Brands (IDB)
10	High Discounts (HDISC)
11	Innovative (INNO)
12	Comparative Shopping (CS)
13	Time Saving (Time)
14	Economic (ECO)
15	Exclusivity (EXCLU)
16	Exciting (EXC)
17	Popular (POPU)
18	Satisfaction Of The Customer (CS)
19	Smart (SMART)
20	Loyalty (LOYAL)
21	Family Bonding (BOND)
22	Customer Delight (CD)
Source: Authors' Research	

Understanding their psyche is a tough task as they do not think and act only according to their traits, but are largely influenced by the formal and the informal world around them. This research discovers the determinants of young Indian female consumers' buying decision from online flash sales sites in the booming virtual shopping space. The research might prove useful for online marketers to specifically cater to this particular segment of consumers and marketers may launch an online flash sales portal targeted specifically towards the female Indian teenager and young adult women as well.
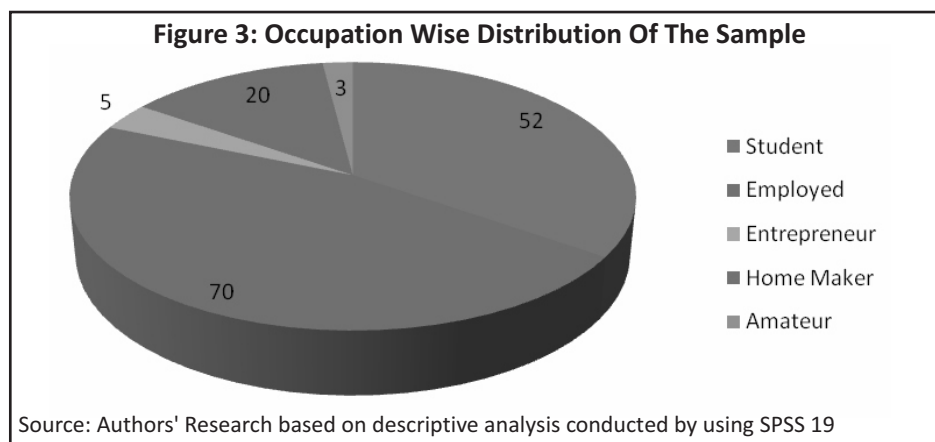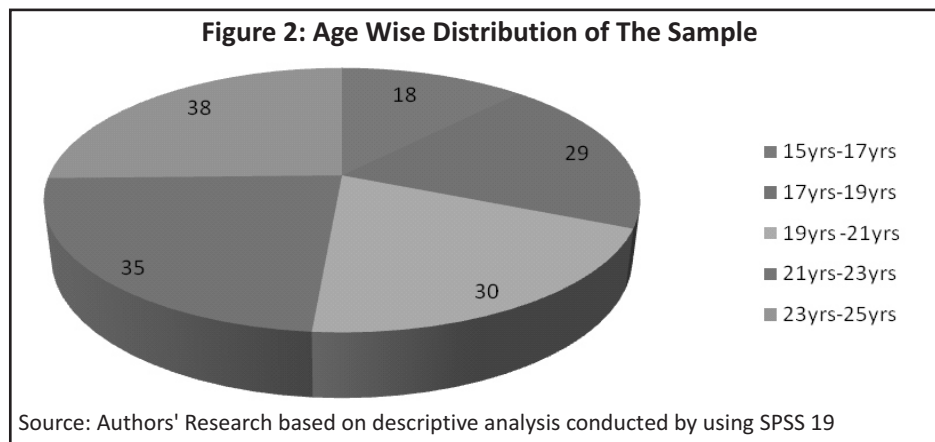
OBJECTIVES

i) To discover the factors driving the online buying behavior of Indian female adolescents and young adult women with reference to online flash sales sites in India.

ii) To measure their (Indian female adolescents and young adult women consumers) attitude towards this new concept.

Figure 1: Schematic Model Of The Research Methodology
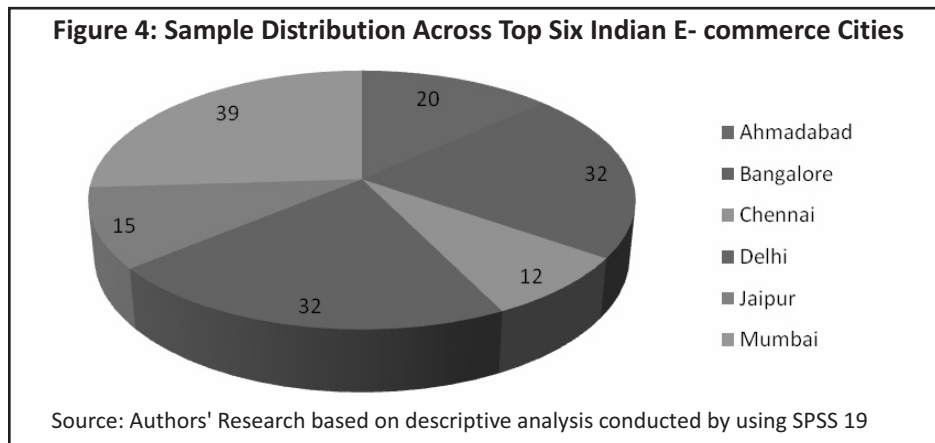
Source: Authors' Research
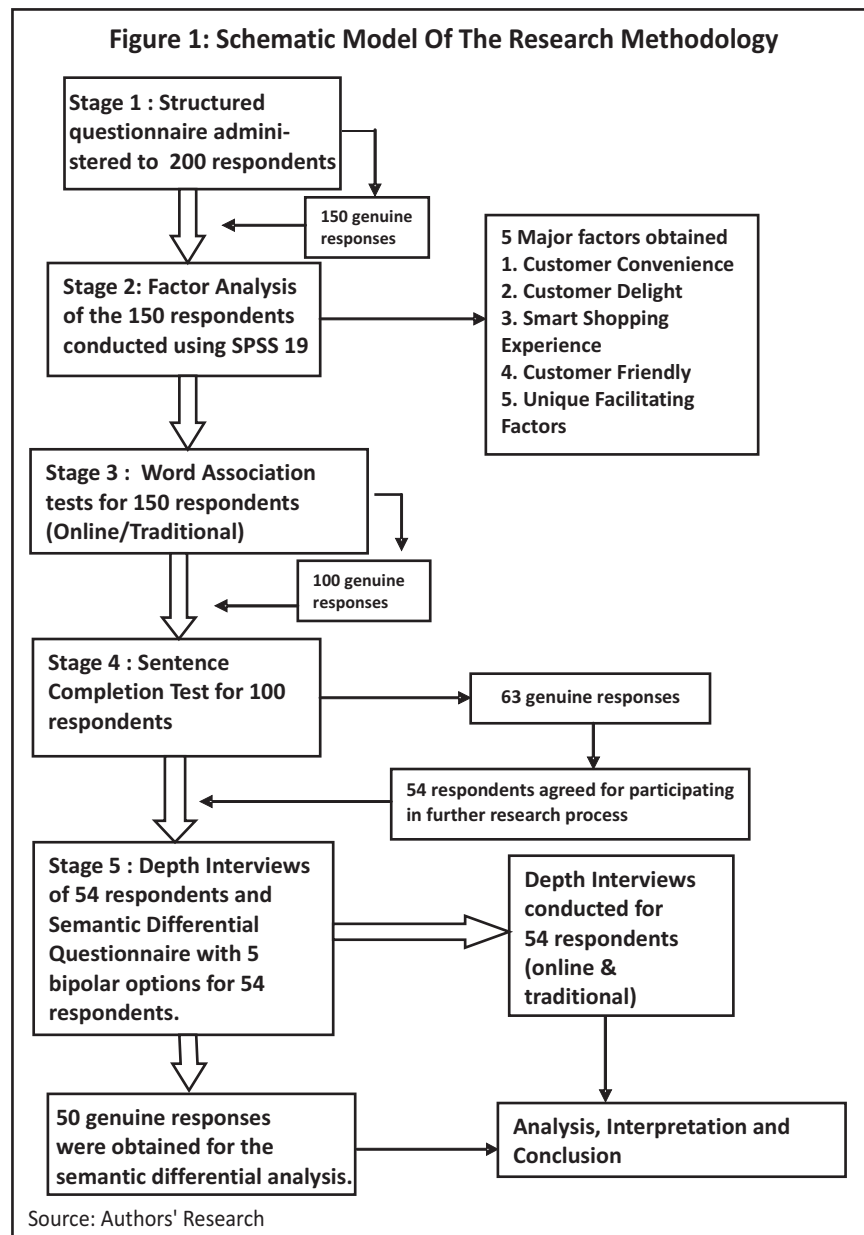
METHODOLOGY, SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION

Triangulation approach that is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques was implemented for the present research study. Qualitative methods were used to understand the respondents' responses from a deeper perspective and also to derive any hidden thoughts. The research was conducted over a period of three months, from January 2012 until March 2012, during which, around 200 female consumers belonging to the age group of 15-25 years were contacted in the six top e-commerce cities of India- Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Bengaluru, Jaipur and Chennai. They were given a structured questionnaire, where they were asked to rate the mentioned variables on a five-point Likert scale (from 5 being the most important to 1 being the least important) in the order of their importance while opting to shop from online flash sales sites. A set of 22 variables or factors used for the study is presented in the Table 2.

Out of the 200 respondents who were surveyed, only 150 respondents provided genuine responses. Factor Analysis was conducted using SPSS19 and five major factors were derived. At the same time, these 150 respondents were sent a word association test to assess their perceptions regarding online shopping from flash sales sites and out of the total respondents, only 100 respondents reverted to the researchers with genuine responses. These 100 respondents were then requested to respond to sentence completion tests to further understand their behavioural and consumption pattern with reference to online shopping through flash sales sites. Out of these 100 respondents, only 63 provided genuine responses, and only 54 respondents could be convinced to participate in the last stage of the research - i.e., in -depth interviews and semantic differential analysis- that included the 5 factors obtained during factor analysis in the form of 5 pairs of bipolar adjectives, which the respondents had to rate on a scale from 1-least favourable to 7-most favourable, in order to understand the overall attitude of this final set of respondents towards variables associated with the choice of shopping online through flash sales sites. The entire research process has been diagrammatically

Figure 2: Age Wise Distribution of The Sample

Source: Authors' Research based on descriptive analysis conducted by using SPSS 19

Figure 3: Occupation Wise Distribution Of The Sample

Source: Authors' Research based on descriptive analysis conducted by using SPSS 19

Figure 4: Sample Distribution Across Top Six Indian E- commerce Cities

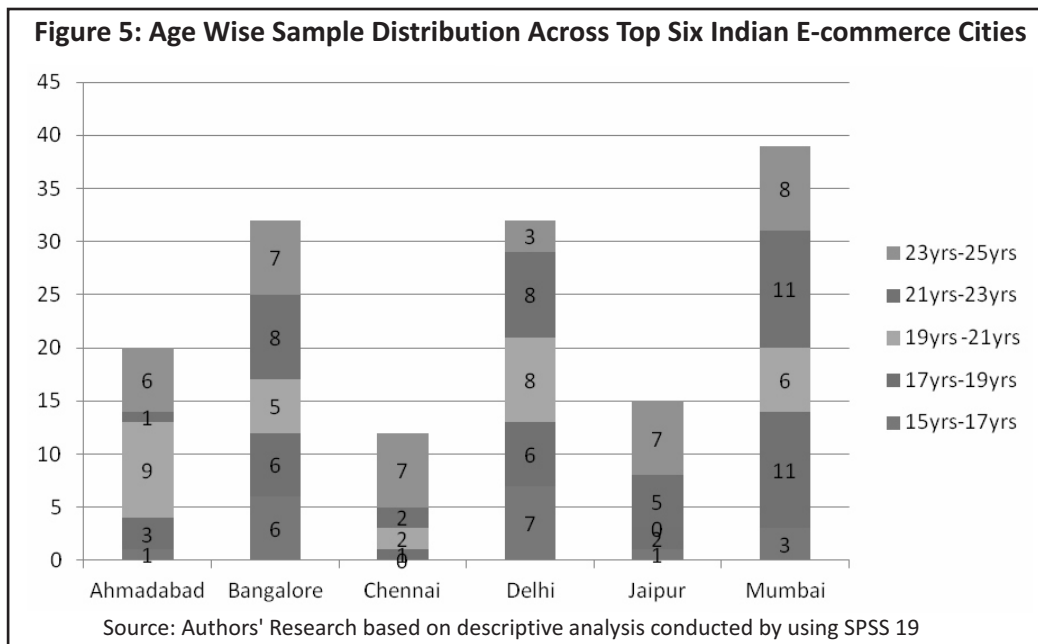Source: Authors' Research based on descriptive analysis conducted by using SPSS 19

represented in the Figure 1.

RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

a) Descriptive Analysis : For the descriptive analysis, SPSS 19 was used and the results are presented graphically in the form of figures.

**i)** The age wise distribution of the sample obtained during descriptive analysis has been presented in the Figure 2, where a majority of the respondents belonged to the age category of 23 - 25 years, followed by 21-23 years, 19-21 years,17-19 years and 15-17 years respectively.

Figure 5: Age Wise Sample Distribution Across Top Six Indian E-commerce Cities

Source: Authors' Research based on descriptive analysis conducted by using SPSS 19

ii) The Figure 3 depicts the occupation wise distribution of the sample obtained through descriptive analysis using SPSS 19. It is clear from the Figure 3 that a majority of the respondents were salaried, followed by a good number of students and homemakers respectively.

iii) The Figure 4 gives us the geographical distribution of the sample covered, considering the top six Indian E-commerce cities, and the descriptive analysis shows that a major number of the respondents were from Mumbai, followed by Delhi and Bengaluru at the second position, Ahmedabad at the third place, Chennai and Jaipur at the

Figure 6: Occupation Wise Sample Distribution Across Top Six Indian E-commerce Cities
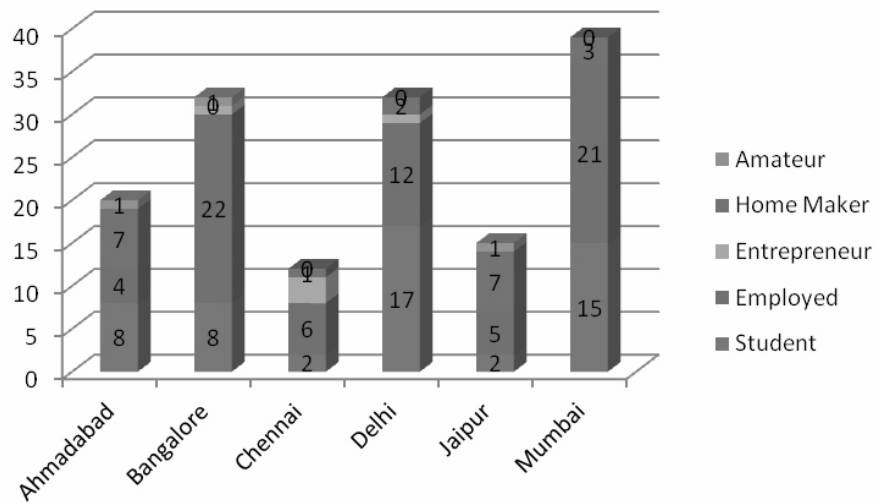
Source: Authors' Research based on descriptive analysis conducted by using SPSS 19

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix[a]					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
LA		.986			
Conv	.990				
BD					.992
HD				.977	
COD			.979		
VPO	.990				
TP		.986			
LTO	.990				
IDB					.992
HDISC				.977	
INNO	.990				
CS			.979		
Time		.986			
Eco	.990				
Exclu					.992
Exc				.977	
Popu	.990				
CS			.979		
Smart			.979		
Loyal	.990				
Bond				.503	
CD		.986			
Source: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, Rotation converged in 6 iterations					

fourth and fifth position respectively.

iv) Age wise sample distribution across the top six Indian e-commerce cities is depicted in the Figure 5, where it is evident that Mumbai had the largest number of respondents in the age groups of 21- 23 years, 17- 19 years and 23-25 years. Ahmedabad and Delhi had the maximum number of respondents in the age group of 19 - 21 years and a majority of the sample in the 15-17 years category also belonged to Delhi.

Table 4: Major Factors Derived Out Of Factor Analysis		
1	Customer Convenience	Convenience ,Varied Payment Options , Innovative, Economic, Popular, Loyal
2	Customer Delight	Large Assortment, Trial Periods, Time Saving, Customer Delight
3	Smart Shopping Experience	Cash on Delivery, Comparative Shopping , Customer Satisfaction, Smart
4	Customer Friendly	High Discounts, Home Delivery, Exciting Offers, Bonding With Family
5	Innovative Facilitating Factors	Best Deals, International Designer Brands, Exclusivity
Source: Authors' Research based on descriptive analysis conducted by using SPSS 19		

v) The Figure 6 gives the occupation wise sample distribution across the top six Indian e-commerce cities, where the researchers observed that Bengaluru and Mumbai had the maximum number of respondents who were employed. Delhi and Mumbai had the maximum number of student respondents. Ahmedabad, Delhi, Jaipur and Mumbai had a fewer number of home makers as compared to Bengaluru and Chennai.

❖ **Factor Analysis :** The Factor Analysis technique was employed to determine the factors representing the satisfaction/dissatisfaction level of the respondents. Factor Analysis identifies common dimensions of factors from observed variables that link together the unrelated data and provides insights into the underlying structures of the data (Dillion and Goldstein, 1984). The first step involves calculation of correlation matrix, which shows the interrelationship among the observed variables. The next step in factor analysis is to summarize most of the original information (variance) in a minimum number of factors. The present study also employed Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation. A Principal Component Analysis is a factor model in which the factors are based upon the total variance. In addition to selecting the factor model, the researchers have specified how the factors are to be extracted. In the present study, the researchers have used orthogonal factors. Here, the factors are extracted in such a way that each factor is independent of all other factors.

An important concept in factor analysis is the rotation of factors. Since the unrotated factor solution may or may not provide a meaningful patterning of variables; the factors have to be rotated using unorthogonal or an oblique method. In this study, the researchers have used varimax rotation to simplify the factor structure by maximizing the variance of a column of the pattern matrix. The final step in factor analysis is naming the factors based on the appropriateness for representing the underlying dimensions of a particular factor. Variables with higher loadings are considered more important in this type of factor interpretation (Refer to Table 3).

Factor Analysis was then conducted for the 150 genuine responses, in which the respondents rated the various variables mentioned in Table 3 on a 5-point Likert Scale. Scale. Based on the Correlation Matrix and the Rotated Component Matrix, the 22 variables were reduced to 5 factors, that are presented in the Table 4.

❖ **Qualitative Research Analysis (Word Association Test, Sentence Completion Tests, Depth Interviews) :** The main motive behind the word association test given to the respondents in person and online was to bring out the motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings they had towards the entire process of shopping in brick and mortar stores as well as in the virtual space. Majority of the respondents responded to the stimuli "shopping" as a mode of enjoyment, having fun, interesting, exciting and a good option as a stress buster. There were a few respondents who associated shopping with having fun with friends, going to the malls and dining with friends and family along with shopping. Furthermore, very few respondents did not enjoy shopping and considered going out for shopping as a waste of time and money as well. Interestingly, those respondents who considered shopping as fun and enjoyment, when given the stimulus - "online shopping", responded the other way round. They were not very comfortable with the concept of online shopping, and perceived it to be risky. Some were comfortable as far as shopping of books, cds, gift items were concerned, but for

clothes and other accessories, they were not very sure. On the contrary, those who considered traditional shopping as a waste of time and money, expressed a positive attitude regarding online shopping. They responded to the stimuli of "online shopping" with responses like trendy, wider assortment and choice, economic, no hassles of travelling, parking , convenient, saves time , saves fuel, and can evaluate the best alternatives available sitting at home. All the respondents, irrespective of their response to online shopping, were quite fascinated by discounts, bargains and limited time sales. They all believed in getting the best deals because that's how today's youth defines smart shopping. At the same time, they are brand savvy too, as for the stimuli "shopping for cosmetics", everyone mentioned brands like Maybelline NY, L'Oreal, Garnier, Ponds, Dove and for accessories, around half of the lot responded to street shopping, and the remaining half mentioned brands like Carbon, Haute Curry, Infinity, Push & Shove, Hidesign, Vettorio Fratini, Pretty Woman, Sangini, Tommy Hilfiger, Viola and many more. In response to the stimulus of "daily deals" and "best deals", a majority of the respondents mentioned Snapdeal.Com, Sosasta.com, which were acquired by the global group buying leader Groupon.com and offered discounts up to 95%.

For flash sales being a new concept in the Indian e-commerce industry and due to the concept not being promoted rigorously until now, though the respondents had the awareness, but not many of them had actually bought items from these sites. However, when "flash sales" was given as a stimuli, a majority of the respondents responded as limited time sales on big brands. When "designer brands" was given as a stimuli, many responded as expensive, available at malls, not affordable, but few responded with the names of a few flash sales sites where expensive designer brands could be purchased at heavily discounted prices.

The sentence completion test was conducted to understand the various underlying factors that motivated the respondent's buying behaviour both traditionally and online. Furthermore, through these tests, the researchers could make out the preferred method of shopping for a respondent and the reasons behind it - whether the choice of mode of shopping was purely the respondent's choice or her family members also participated in the activity and who took the final call on the purchase decision, whatever be the mode of shopping. The mode of payment also becomes an important decision when purchases are done online, especially by those who are not financially independent.

For instance, when the respondents were asked to complete the sentence "When I shop online, I usually make payment.................", among the respondents up to 21 years of age, a majority of the respondents replied that they used their father's or elder sibling's credit card and maximum respondents replied that they preferred the cash on delivery medium to make the payment.

For the sentence "I usually shop online for...........", many responded books, DVDs, spa offers or pizzas, but a good number of respondents also responded clothes, watches or apparels, and they usually shopped online for "some very good and cheap deals".

"For purchasing designer branded outfits and accessories..................", a good number of respondents replied that they shopped from exclusive designer stores in the market or malls or even at flash sales websites.

Finally, fifty four respondents agreed for in- depth interviews. For online in-depth interviews, twenty three participants residing in the five mentioned cities except Bengaluru were interviewed online over a period of ten days on a one to one basis through videoconferencing via Skype. On an average, two to three respondents were interviewed in a single day, and the duration of each online interview varied from one hour to two hours. On the completion of the online interviews, the one to one traditional in-depth interview in the city of Bengaluru was conducted with the remaining twenty one respondents from Bengaluru. This was done within ten working days and two to three respondents were interviewed in one day. The interview lasted for forty-five minutes to ninety minutes. These interviews were conducted at the researchers' workplaces and at coffee shops.

The interview questions were designed as soul searching questions that would stimulate revealing responses. On being asked, "How do you prefer to spend your weekends?", the responses varied from watching movies with friends or family, shopping and dining with friends or family, or just a casual outing with friends or family, and some even replied they just stayed at home and spent time with their families. So, the most evident fact that could be ascertained from the responses was, that for the respondents, their family was an integral part of their lives followed by their friends. Now that there is a shift in the consumer preference from traditional to organized retail shopping for one stop shop convenience, many respondents informed the researchers that they might go to outlets like Big Bazaar, Star Bazaar, which offer a variety of products ranging from clothes to technical gadgets and offer EDLP (Everyday Low Price). On being asked what actually motivated them to buy products/services from the online flash sales sites, the respondents in the age group 21-25 years replied that it saved time and fuel cost or transportation cost. The respondents in the age
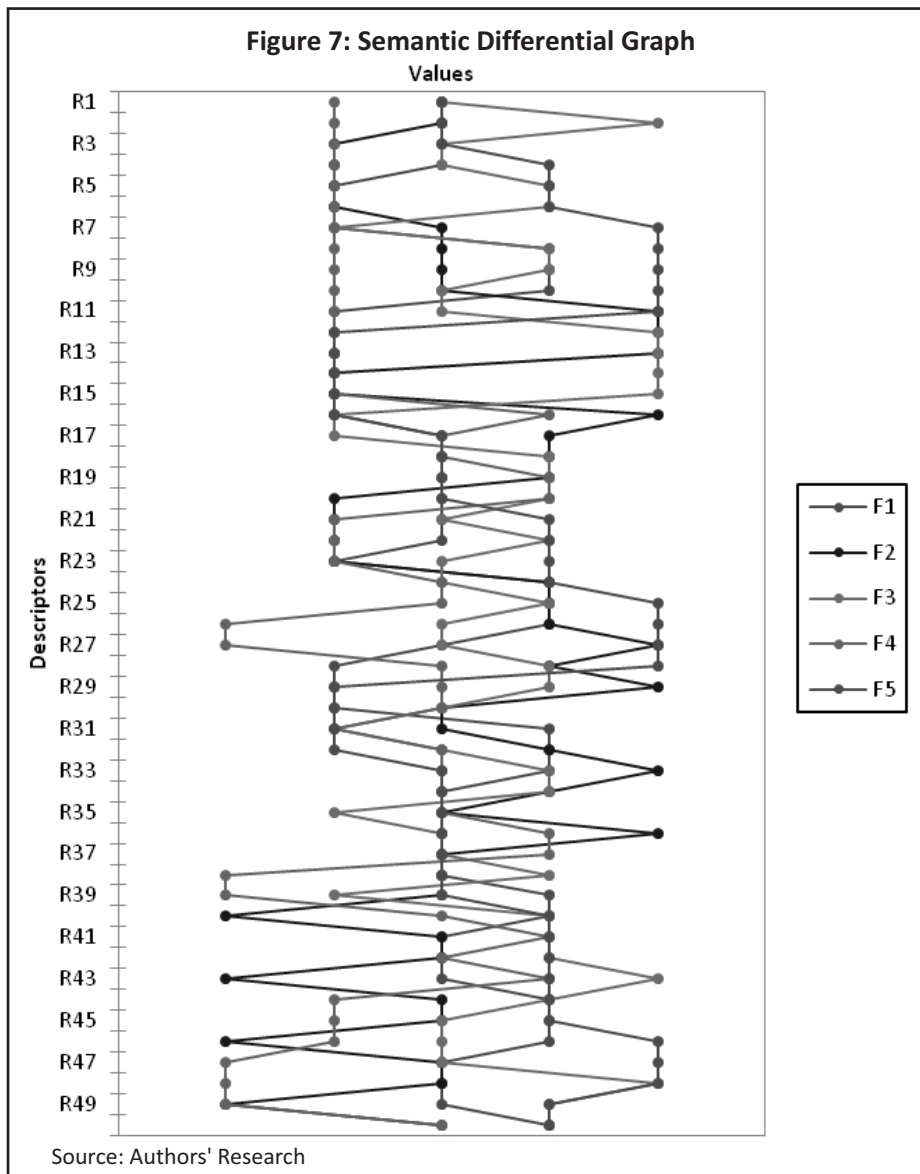
Figure 7: Semantic Differential Graph

Source: Authors' Research

Table 5: Set of Five Bipolar Characteristics

Convenient-Inconvenient	CONV (F1)
Delightful Shopping Experience-Unhappy Experience	DELI (F2)
Smart Shopping-Conventional Shopping	SMAR (F3)
Customer Friendly- Unfriendly for customers	FRIE (F4)
Innovative -BoringINNO (F5)	
Source: Authors' Research based on the factors obtained from factor analysis.	

group of 17-21 years said that browsing and online purchasing provided them with an overall nice shopping experience. The respondents in the age group of 15-17 years responded that their choice of shopping was primarily guided by their parents, and their parents were willing to try online shopping. The in-depth interviews also revealed that it is not only ease and comfort that is driving today's youth to shop from online flash sales sites, but the exclusive international designer brands that are available at affordable prices actually attracts them and the youth today wants to have the best at the most economical prices. They get the best deals at the online flash sales sites and the young

consumer feels smart and proud for being sensible shoppers.

❖ **Attitude Measurement With Semantic Differential Analysis :** To understand the affinity of customers towards this new concept, semantic differential analysis was performed by analyzing the respondents' attitude towards the five major factors that were obtained during factor analysis. The factors were transformed into a set of five bipolar characteristics and the coding that was done is presented in the Table 5.

The semantic differential analysis was performed by using XLSTAT 2012, and the semantic differential graph was obtained, which is presented in the Figure 7.

It is very clear from the semantic differential graph that very few respondents showed a somewhat unfavorable attitude towards the two factors F2 and F4 that represent Delightful Shopping Experience and Customer Friendly respectively. Apart from that, a majority of the respondents showed a favorable attitude towards all the factors i.e. - Customer Convenience (F1), Smart Shopping (F2) and Innovative Facilitating Factors (F5).

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

It can be concluded from the study that young Indian female consumers are interested in experimenting with flash sales online shopping as they can order and get their desired brands or products at their doorstep. This is a great advantage that these sites offer in today's scenario where fuel prices are rising and parking spaces are narrowing.

The young Indian female consumer is maturing fast and is upgrading her choices at a pace that parents or even marketers, for that matter, are struggling to keep up with. But keeping in mind the cultural and the social aspect, girls still value the opinion of their parents and peers, and consult them before taking a purchase decision. As a consumer, they have become quite smart regarding their aspirations, and the quality and price of the products they purchase. Due to the abundance of choices available, they are not ready to compromise with quality or price. From wielding their pester power, the role of teenagers and youth has changed as they become the influencers, and along with their parents, they actively participate in the decision-making process related to purchasing. Due to a higher degree of exposure, increased awareness levels, and their know - how of latest technology and trends, parents now view their adolescent/adult daughter as an expert.

It is evident from the research that the aspirations of this group are the same, driven primarily by the fact that they are all internet savvy, and this has given them equal access to information, but at the same time, they value their parent's opinion, family values, like spending time with their family and when needed, also provide them with valuable information and opinion. This evolution is definitely working in favor of the new concept of flash sales in India. As young girls are a brand savvy lot, online flash sales are giving them their choice of brands at reasonable prices, hence, this segment of shoppers has a great potential to make this concept successful. However, at the same time, the girls continue to shop traditionally as that provides them an opportunity to spend quality time with their families and friends.

FUTURE SCOPE

This research opens new avenues for further investigation for this new concept based on other segmentation variables as in this research, a particular demographic and psychographic segmentation analysis has been conducted. Furthermore, future studies can be conducted for analyzing the service quality dimensions of online shopping through flash sales sites with specific reference to customer's perceptions and expectations.

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