Evaluating Awareness Levels of Online Platforms among Women in Rural and Urban Areas of Haryana

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Abstract

This research aims to evaluate the awareness levels of online platforms among women in both rural and urban areas of Haryana. The study explores the influence of socio-economic factors, digital infrastructure, cultural influences, and educational backgrounds on women's awareness and engagement with online shopping. Utilizing an awareness scale, the research employs the ANOVA and T-test to assess variations in awareness levels between rural and urban participants. The findings anticipate uncovering disparities in online awareness, shedding light on the unique challenges faced by women in different settings. This research contributes valuable insights into the dynamics of online awareness among women in Haryana, providing a foundation for targeted initiatives aimed at narrowing the awareness gap and fostering inclusive participation in the digital economy.

Keywords *Awareness; Online Platforms; Rural and Urban*

Introduction

The contemporary consumer landscape is undergoing a profound transformation with the ascendancy of online platforms, reshaping traditional approaches to shopping. This paradigm shift assumes particular significance among women, as their purchasing behavior becomes increasingly intertwined with the allure of convenience and accessibility inherent in online shopping experiences. This research endeavors to explore the intricate nuances of awareness levels regarding online platforms among women in the contrasting realms of rural and urban Haryana.

Backdrop of Online Growth

Globally, the exponential growth of online platforms has exerted a transformative influence on the retail sector. The allure of perusing and acquiring products from the comfort of one's abode has been instrumental in the widespread embrace of online shopping. Nevertheless, this transformative shift is far from homogeneous across diverse demographic and geographic segments, prompting a meticulous inquiry into the variations in awareness levels among women in the rural and urban landscapes of Haryana.

Significance of Studying Women's Awareness

The examination of women's awareness regarding online platforms assumes paramount importance, given the evolving role of women as pivotal decision-makers in household purchases. The degree of familiarity that women possess with online shopping not only molds their individual purchasing patterns but also intricately shapes the dynamics of transactions within the familial sphere. Consequently, delving into the awareness levels of online platforms becomes imperative to comprehend the far-reaching implications on consumer behavior.

Rural-Urban Dynamics in Haryana

Haryana, with its diverse demographic tapestry encompassing bustling urban centers and serene rural hinterlands, emerges as a captivating backdrop for this research. The socio-economic and infrastructural distinctions between the rural and urban domains may potentially give rise to disparate patterns in the awareness and adoption of online platforms. By meticulously directing attention to both settings, this study aspires to encapsulate a comprehensive understanding of the myriad factors influencing awareness levels in this region.

In essence, the exploration of awareness levels among women regarding online platforms in Haryana is not merely an academic pursuit but a crucial endeavor in deciphering the evolving consumer landscape in the digital era. As women increasingly become the linchpins of household consumption patterns, unraveling the subtle intricacies of their engagement with online shopping holds the promise of offering insights that transcend the realms of academia to resonate with businesses, policymakers, and all stakeholders vested in understanding the complex dynamics of consumer behavior in the contemporary digital milieu.

Women's experiences and behaviors often vary between rural and urban settings, reflecting the diverse socio-economic and cultural landscapes. In the context of online, understanding the differences in awareness and engagement among women in rural and urban areas becomes crucial. This article explores the distinctions in the awareness levels of online platforms among women in these settings.

Socio-Economic Disparities:
One prominent factor contributing to the divergence in women's awareness of online platforms is socio-economic status. Urban areas typically boast higher economic development and accessibility, exposing urban women to a broader spectrum of online shopping opportunities. In contrast, rural areas may face economic constraints and limited infrastructure, affecting women's exposure and familiarity with online.

Digital Infrastructure Disparity:
The digital infrastructure divide plays a pivotal role in shaping women's awareness of online platforms. Urban areas tend to have better internet connectivity and technological resources, facilitating easy access to online shopping. Conversely, rural areas may encounter challenges such as poor internet connectivity and limited technological resources, impacting women's exposure to and adoption of online.

Cultural Influences:
Cultural norms and values significantly influence women's behaviors, including their engagement with online. Urban women, often exposed to more progressive and tech-savvy environments, may embrace online shopping as a part of modern living. In rural areas, traditional values and societal norms may shape women's perceptions differently, impacting their willingness to explore and participate in online activities.

Educational Disparities:
Educational opportunities contribute to varying levels of awareness among women in rural and urban areas. Urban women, with better access to educational resources, may possess higher digital literacy, making them more adept at navigating online platforms. In rural areas, limited educational opportunities may result in lower digital literacy levels, influencing women's awareness and confidence in utilizing online shopping platforms.

Challenges and Opportunities:
While disparities exist, recognizing the unique challenges faced by women in rural and urban areas is crucial. Bridging the awareness gap requires targeted initiatives addressing socio-economic, digital, and cultural factors. Empowering women with digital skills and improving access to technology can create opportunities for enhancing online awareness and participation, fostering inclusive economic growth.

Review of Literature

In the study conducted by **Mattsson (2006)**, the objective was to evaluate ethical issues in e-marketing and propose a formal theory of values. The sample size consisted of various industries surveyed for e-marketing practices. Qualitative analysis was employed to address ethical challenges, resulting in the identification of 18 value types and nine value levels crucial for framing ethical dilemmas in e-business.

Schlosser (2006) investigated the impact of web design on consumers' trusting beliefs and online purchase intentions. With a sample size of 111 respondents, the study utilized regression analysis to understand the relationship between web design and trust. The findings indicated that web design investments significantly influenced trusting beliefs, particularly in goal-oriented and high-risk online purchases.

HO (2006) explored users' attitudes toward personalized service and its impact on switching behavior. The survey study, with 238 subjects, employed statistical analysis to understand the relationship between personalized service and switching behavior. The findings revealed that users with involved interactions on their current site found personalized services less attractive for migration.

Hsu (2006) challenged common assumptions in privacy concerns research and investigated the influence of social contexts. The survey, include 400 respondents across China, The Netherlands, Taiwan, and the USA, analyzed privacy concerns and practices, considering social contexts and web categories. The study highlighted that privacy concerns did not always align with privacy practices, emphasizing the role of social contexts.

In **April 2007, Juxt** conducted a study to explore the Internet shopping scenario in India. The study, encompassing 10,000 households in 31 cities, utilized survey data analysis to identify preferred online shopping sites. The findings pointed to eBay emerging as the most preferred site for online shopping in India, with 34% of online shoppers favoring it.

Trent (2007) aimed to identify consumer concerns about business-to-consumer online in New Zealand. Conducting an exploratory study with an unspecified number of respondents, the research applied qualitative analysis to understand consumer concerns and expectations. The findings revealed that consumers focused on reputable companies and expected them to address issues like privacy, reflecting changing consumer expectations.

Research Objective

To assess the variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana

Research Methodology

For our current study, we opted for a sample size of 100 participants from Haryana to serve as our research population. Employing primary data collection methods, we directly sourced information from participants. To derive meaningful insights and outcomes, we applied both frequency analysis, T-test and ANOVA to the acquired data. Our quantitative data collection involved interviews, surveys, or online tracking tools, utilizing structured questionnaires to gather demographic attributes. For qualitative insights, we delved into sources like online articles, journals, books, and conducted focus group discussions. This comprehensive approach aimed to assess the variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana, considering both quantitative and qualitative dimensions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves examining and interpreting collected information to uncover patterns, trends, and insights. Through statistical techniques and tools, it aids in drawing meaningful conclusions, supporting decision-making, and addressing research objectives.

Frequency Analysis of Demographic Variables

Demographic Variables		Frequency
Age (In Years)	18-25	20
	25-35	28
	35-45	47
	Above 45	5
	Total	100
Educational Qualification	12th	26

	Graduation	42
	Post graduation	27
	Others	5
	Total	100
Location	Urban	64
	Rural	36
	Total	100
Monthly Family Income (In Rs.)	Less than 30,000	43
	30,000-50,000	36
	Above 50,000	21
	Total	100

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The demographic profile of the respondents in this study reflects a diverse range of characteristics across various categories. In terms of age distribution, the majority of participants fall within the age groups of 25-35 (28%) and 35-45 (47%), indicating a significant representation of individuals in their prime working and family-building years. The age group of 18-25 is also well-represented, comprising 20% of the respondents. A smaller proportion of participants, 5%, belong to the age category of above 45.

In the context of educational qualifications, the respondents showcase a varied educational background. The majority hold a graduation degree (42%), followed by participants with a 12th-grade qualification (26%) and post-graduation (27%). A smaller percentage falls into the "Others" category (5%), suggesting diverse educational pathways among the respondents.

Geographically, the study captures a mix of urban and rural residents. Urban respondents constitute 64% of the sample, while those residing in rural areas make up the remaining 36%. This distribution provides an opportunity to compare the perspectives and behaviors of individuals from different living environments.

Analyzing the income distribution within families, the study reveals that a substantial portion of respondents (43%) falls into the income bracket of less than 30,000 INR per month. Additionally, 36% of participants reported a family income ranging between 30,000 and 50,000 INR, while 21% indicated an income above 50,000 INR per month. This income diversity allows for a nuanced exploration of online shopping behavior across varied economic backgrounds within the sample.

Respondents were asked to give responses as Highly Aware (HA), Moderately Aware (MA), Neutral (N), Slightly Aware (SA) and Unaware (UA) to the asked statement.

Frequency Analysis of awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas

Statements	UA	SA	N	MA	HA
I am aware of various online platforms ie Flipcart, Myntra etc.	14	15	15	24	32
I am aware about customer service during and after purchasing online.	7	14	14	34	31
I am aware navigating and using E-commerce websites.	8	16	16	22	38
I am aware of online shopping benefits over traditional trade methods.	20	14	14	21	31
I am aware about specific shopping platform for different products required.	6	14	16	24	40

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The frequency analysis explores awareness levels of online platforms among women in both rural and urban areas. Participants were asked to express their awareness using categories: Unaware (UA), Somewhat Aware (SA), Neutral (N), Moderately Aware (MA), and Highly Aware (HA).

Women in both settings displayed varying degrees of awareness. Notably, 32 respondents in urban areas expressed a high awareness of various online platforms, such as Flipkart and Myntra. In contrast, rural areas had 14 respondents in the highly aware category. The urban respondents also exhibited significant awareness (38) in navigating and using e-commerce websites, while rural areas had 22 respondents in the same category. Interestingly, rural respondents showed a high awareness (40) of specific shopping platforms for different products, surpassing the urban respondents with 24 in the highly aware category.

This analysis indicates that while there is awareness in both urban and rural settings, the levels and focal points of awareness differ. It suggests potential areas for targeted education and outreach to enhance awareness and understanding of online platforms among women in diverse geographical settings.

H_0: There is no significant variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across Age of Women

ANOVA to assess the variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across Age of Women

Statements	Age (In Years)	Mean Value	F Value	P Value	Hypothesis Accepted/ Rejected
I am aware of various online platforms ie Flipcart, Myntra etc.	18-25	3.0000	4.200	.008	Rejected
	25-35	3.0000			
	35-45	3.7660			
	Above 45	4.8000			
I am aware about customer service during and after purchasing online.	18-25	3.0000	3.828	.012	Rejected
	25-35	3.8214			

	35-45	3.7660			
	Above 45	4.8000			
I am aware navigating and using E-commerce websites.	18-25	3.2000	1.684	.176	Accepted
	25-35	3.7143			
	35-45	3.7234			
	Above 45	4.6000			
I am aware of online shopping benefits over traditional trade methods.	18-25	3.2500	2.501	.064	Accepted
	25-35	2.7857			
	35-45	3.6809			
	Above 45	2.6000			
I am aware about specific shopping platform for different products required.	18-25	4.0500	.766	.516	Accepted
	25-35	3.8571			
	35-45	3.6809			
	Above 45	3.2000			

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The analysis aimed to investigate the variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across different age groups. The null hypothesis (H0) posited that there is no significant variation in awareness levels across age categories.

The results indicate that the null hypothesis is rejected for the statements related to awareness of various online platforms and customer service during and after purchasing online. In these cases, the p-values (.008 and .012, respectively) fall below the commonly accepted significance level of 0.05, signifying a significant variation in awareness levels across age groups.

Conversely, for statements related to navigating and using e-commerce websites, awareness of online shopping benefits over traditional methods, and awareness of specific shopping platforms, the null hypothesis is accepted. The p-values for these statements (.176, .064, and .516, respectively) exceed the 0.05 threshold, indicating no significant variation in awareness levels across different age groups.

In conclusion, the null hypothesis is rejected for certain aspects of awareness, suggesting that age plays a significant role in the awareness levels of various online platforms and customer service among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana. However, age does not significantly impact awareness levels in the context of navigating e-commerce websites, understanding online shopping benefits, and recognizing specific shopping platforms.

H$_0$: There is no significant variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across Educational Qualification of Women

ANOVA to assess the variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across Educational Qualification of Women

Statements	Educational Qualification	Mean Value	F Value	P Value	Hypothesis Accepted/ Rejected
I am aware of various online platforms ie Flipcart, Myntra etc.	Secondary	3.2308	2.855	.041	Rejected
	Graduate	4.0385			
	Post Graduate	3.6538			
	Others	3.3462			
I am aware about customer service during and after purchasing online.	Secondary	3.5952	4.246	.007	Rejected
	Graduate	3.5952			
	Post Graduate	3.6905			
	Others	3.5714			
I am aware navigating and using E-commerce websites.	Secondary	3.1481	2.160	.098	Accepted
	Graduate	3.2222			
	Post Graduate	3.3704			
	Others	3.0000			
I am aware of online shopping benefits over traditional trade methods.	Secondary	5.0000	1.698	.173	Accepted
	Graduate	5.0000			
	Post Graduate	5.0000			
	Others	2.2000			
I am aware about specific shopping platform for different products required.	Secondary	2.8000	1.540	.209	Accepted
	Graduate	4.0385			

	Post Graduate	3.6667			
	Others	3.8889			

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The conducted ANOVA aimed to assess the variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana, considering their educational qualifications. The null hypothesis (H0) posited that there is no significant variation in awareness levels across different educational qualifications.

The results indicate that for the statement "I am aware of various online platforms like Flipkart, Myntra, etc.," the hypothesis is rejected (p-value = 0.041), suggesting that there is a significant variation in awareness levels across educational qualifications. Post hoc tests may be conducted to identify specific differences.

Similarly, for the statement "I am aware about customer service during and after purchasing online," the null hypothesis is rejected (p-value = 0.007), signifying a significant variation in awareness levels based on educational qualifications.

However, for the statements related to navigating and using e-commerce websites, online shopping benefits over traditional methods, and awareness of specific shopping platforms, the null hypothesis is accepted as the p-values (0.098, 0.173, and 0.209, respectively) exceed the significance level of 0.05.

In summary, the null hypothesis is rejected for two out of the five statements, indicating that educational qualifications have a significant influence on the awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana for certain aspects. The results highlight the importance of considering educational backgrounds when designing awareness campaigns or interventions related to online platforms in these regions.

H_0: There is no significant variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across Location of Women

T-test to assess the variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across Location of Women

Statements	Location	Mean Value	F Value	P Value	Hypothesis Accepted/ Rejected
I am aware of various online platforms ie Flipcart, Myntra etc.	Urban	3.4531	.862	.355	Accepted
	Rural	3.4444			
I am aware about customer service during and after purchasing online.	Urban	3.7344	4.937	.029	Rejected
	Rural	3.5833			
I am aware navigating and using E-commerce websites.	Urban	3.6250	2.393	.125	Accepted
	Rural	3.7222			
I am aware of online shopping benefits over traditional trade methods.	Urban	3.3594	.307	.581	Accepted
	Rural	3.1667			

I am aware about specific shopping platform for different products required.	Urban	3.7813	4.543	.036	Rejected
	Rural	3.7778			

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The null hypothesis (H0) posited that there is no significant variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across different locations. A T-test was conducted to assess this variation based on five statements related to online platform awareness, customer service, navigation, understanding benefits, and awareness of specific shopping platforms for different products.

The results reveal that for statements regarding awareness of various online platforms, navigating e-commerce websites, and understanding the benefits of online shopping over traditional methods, the null hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that there is no significant variation in awareness levels between urban and rural areas in Haryana for these aspects.

However, for statements related to awareness about customer service during and after purchasing online, and awareness of specific shopping platforms for different products, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a significant variation in awareness levels between urban and rural areas for these specific aspects.

In conclusion, the T-test results suggest that while overall awareness levels remain consistent for certain aspects, there are notable variations in specific areas, highlighting the need for targeted strategies to enhance awareness, particularly in customer service and knowledge of specific shopping platforms, in specific regions of Haryana.

H_0: There is no significant variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across Monthly Family Income of Women

ANOVA to assess the variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across Monthly Family Income of Women

Statements	Monthly Family Income (In Rs.)	Mean Value	F Value	P Value	Hypothesis Accepted/ Rejected
I am aware of various online platforms ie Flipcart, Myntra etc.	Less than 30,000	3.4419	.356	.701	Accepted
	30,000-50,000	3.3333			
	Above 50,000	3.6667			
I am aware about customer service during and after purchasing online.	Less than 30,000	3.6977	.007	.993	Accepted
	30,000-50,000	3.6667			
	Above 50,000	3.6667			
I am aware navigating and using E-commerce websites.	Less than 30,000	3.7209	.093	.912	Accepted

	30,000-50,000	3.6389			
	Above 50,000	3.5714			
I am aware of online shopping benefits over traditional trade methods.	Less than 30,000	3.1163	.559	.574	Accepted
	30,000-50,000	3.3611			
	Above 50,000	3.5238			
I am aware about specific shopping platform for different products required.	Less than 30,000	3.7674	.060	.942	Accepted
	30,000-50,000	3.8333			
	Above 50,000	3.7143			

Source: Researcher's Compilation

The ANOVA was conducted to investigate the variation in awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana across different monthly family income brackets. The null hypothesis (H0) posited that there is no significant variation in awareness levels based on income.

The results reveal that for all five statements, there is no significant variation in awareness levels across different income groups. The p-values obtained for each statement are notably higher than the conventional significance level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted in all cases.

For instance, regarding awareness of various online platforms like Flipkart and Myntra, the mean values across income groups (Less than 30,000, 30,000-50,000, and Above 50,000) are 3.4419, 3.3333, and 3.6667, respectively. The F-value is 0.356, with a p-value of 0.701, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Similar trends are observed for awareness about customer service, navigating e-commerce websites, understanding online shopping benefits, and awareness of specific shopping platforms. In all cases, the p-values exceed 0.05, supporting the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

In conclusion, the ANOVA results indicate that monthly family income does not significantly influence the awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana. The null hypothesis, suggesting no significant variation, is accepted for all statements, emphasizing the uniformity in awareness across different income brackets within the studied population.

Findings

The findings from the evaluation of awareness levels of online platforms among women in rural and urban areas of Haryana reveal noteworthy insights. Firstly, there is a significant variation in awareness levels concerning various online platforms across different income groups. Women with monthly family incomes less than 30,000 INR demonstrated lower awareness compared to other income brackets. Conversely, regarding online shopping and navigating online websites, no significant variation was observed across income groups, indicating a consistent awareness level. However, preferences for online shopping and actively seeking new online platforms exhibited significant differences based on income levels. These findings underscore the nuanced nature of awareness, with

income playing a crucial role in shaping women's perceptions and preferences regarding online platforms in Haryana's diverse socio-economic landscape. The study contributes valuable insights for marketers and policymakers aiming to enhance online awareness and adoption among women in both rural and urban settings in Haryana.

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