

## An Empirical Study On Customer Buying Preferences A Cross E-Commerce Companies

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### ABSTRACT

Currently, the Indian retail industry is very dynamic, digitalized, and competitive. As a result, this antecedent prompts researchers to do an investigation or examination on variables such as E-WOM, and customer happiness. The main aim of this study is to examine the customer buying preferences across multiple e-commerce sites. The study's population consisted of Indian e-retail shop consumers. This study's population included those who made purchases from online retail establishments in any category or form. The results showed that local retailers and Amazon were the most popular options. Meesho was the least popular option for all preferences 1 through 7. Whereas, it was null for option Meesho for preference 6 since no one chose it for purchasing food products..

**Keywords:** Customer buying behavior, preference, e-commerce, E-WOM, E-service Quality, online retail sites etc. .

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Retailing is primary component of marketing in which marketer meets the unique customer who exchanges an incentive for goods, so endorsing the business's actual presence. Retailing is a basic company that requires little capital and infrastructure. On a worldwide scale, India's retail industry is the fifth biggest, comprising both unorganized and structured sectors. The Indian retail market is promising, and competition is currently increasing. Rivalry for coordinated retail area stems from many angles, including equal shop assortments, large value discounters, various types of retail sites, and non-store suppliers. This essential aim is to move business away from this constantly competitive environment while simultaneously eroding opposition and protecting one's continued customer base. Today's buyers are knowledgeable about a variety of factors such as education level, importance of value for money, human sympathies, additional perceptions, and much more. As a result, shopping is often a substantial promotion that is becoming increasingly important to both marketers and customers.

The retail business is one of India's fastest expanding industries today. A significant change in retail throughout time, ranging from local kirana stores inside region to massive commercial regions; a crossover is occurring on a traditional retail area to coordinate retailing. The coordinated fraction accounts for 5% of current US\$ 450 billion retail sector, which is expected to grow to almost US\$900 billion by middle of this decade. Globally, retailing is regarded a profit arena where merchants may advance their businesses on trust, customer loyalty, and customer happiness.

Aside from E-Service, customer happiness is an important factor in marketing since it evaluates consumer expectations. Customer expectations are determined by all of the factors that contribute to the consumer's enjoyment.

Furthermore, it is a phrase commonly used in marketing. Fundamentally, this refers to how well an organization's products and services meet consumer expectations. It measures customer satisfaction as a leading indicator of consumer purchasing & positive electronic word of mouth (E-WOM).

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), the services include: ["Activities, benefits, and satisfaction that are offered for sale or are provided in connection with sale of goods."]

The current improved technology has calibrated the operations, service delivery mechanism, and retailer integrity in terms of quality product delivery. Service characteristics such as intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity, and inseparability (Moeller, 2010; Laudien & Pesch, 2018; Hong, Choi, & Chae, 2020) are the modus operandi of service excellence and its associated traits. Various writers defined these terminology differently, but their real-world significance stays the same. The term "intangibility" refers to the fact that services cannot be touched but only sensed. Services are hard to define because they lack a clear definition of shape and size.

Inseparability refers to the simultaneous conceptualization and consumption of services. Another important aspect of service is perishability, which implies that services should not be stored for future use (Moeller, 2010). Service performance does not always remain consistent. They vary by group and day. The discrepancy may be used by many service providers at the same time, or vice versa. As a result, heterogeneity is a significant component of service quality.

The term "variability" is defined as "the degree to which the product can vary to a certain acceptance level of conformance". This is commonly regarded as an essential component of service quality in service management. As a result, numerous researches throughout the world have

found that this dimension frequently leads to the achievement of quality elements of a product and service.

## 2. RETAIL MARKET

The future of retail is experiential. For years, we've heard that the collapse of brick-and-mortar stores will lead to a rise in internet purchasing. The desire for retail experiences, on the other hand, is increasing, with 52% of millennials saying that experience-related purchases constitute for the majority of their spending. With this viewpoint, India's retail business has emerged as one of most resilient & tenacious organizations. India is the fifth-largest market in the world for retail sales. India is ranked 73rd out of 152 countries in the 2019 Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-trade Index by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. In addition, India ranked 63 in the World Bank's 2019 Doing Industry report and sixth in the retail industry's complete target. In the FDI Confidence Index, India comes in at number sixteen (after the US, Canada, Germany, the UK, China, Japan, France, Australia, Switzerland, and Italy).

Forrester Research estimates that the Republic of India trade zone will be valued \$883 billion in 2020, with food retail accounting for \$608 billion. By 2024, marketplace is estimated to be worth \$3 trillion. In FY20, the revenue of India's offline shops, known as brick & mortar (B&M) stores, is expected to expand by 10,000-12,000 billion.

The retail business reached 1.1 trillion dollars in 2020 and is expected to reach 1.4 trillion dollars by 2025. The e-commerce retail market is expected to grow by 31% in 2018, reaching \$32.70 billion. Income has shifted after internet retail reached 600 million US dollars in 2020. According to Euro monitor International, digital will account for half of the global retail sector's absolute value increase between 2020 and 2025.

More things sold online result in a USD1.4 trillion rise in absolute value. According to Retail Association of India (RAI), the retail sector contributed 93% of pre-COVID income in February 2021, with consumer durables & quick service restaurants (QSR) both increasing by 15-18%.

Considering this extensive statistics, the retail business in emerging countries like as India has a long-term viability for electronic distribution in many product or service areas. India is expected to become world's fastest expanding electronic business sector, driven by a significant interest in the industry and a quick increase in the number of online pages. Different groups have their own requirements for the growth of India's e-trade economy.

According to Ministry of Industry & Internal Trade, the Indian retail exchange got a total FDI infusion of \$2.12 billion during March and April 2020. (DPIIT). Many organizations have invested in the Indian retail environment in a variety of areas, including buyer gadgets and home machines, in response to the previous year's increased desire for consumer merchandise. In 2019, the retail industry in India got \$970 million from a variety of value assets.

Electronic retailing, or E-commerce, is growing rapidly not only in India but throughout the world. As a future

road map, buyers will be able to select things at lowest rates. E-commerce is perhaps most significant transformation in retail industry, & it will help this movement endure in next years. Retailers would oversee and regulate digital retail networks (e-commerce). According to one analysis, by 2021, a substantial portion of the retail marketplace will be traditional retail (75%), organized retail (18%), and cyber commerce (7%). However, prolonged positions in the retail business appear optimistic and confident, bolstered by rising wealth, stable demographics, increased urbanization, and the ability to accept FDI or international players.

In light of the foregoing, we may conclude that web technology has transformed the entire spectrum of information with features such as electronic messages, purchasing and distribution of products/services, and service quality. There are numerous models for measuring service quality qualities. Several researches have utilized the approaches and dimensions of service quality by either adopting the (SERVQUAL) paradigm or extending its features. Many firms strive for customer loyalty and satisfaction (Gazor et al, 2012). Parasuraman et al. (1988) established SERVQUAL methodology for evaluating customer expectations and impressions.

Consumers make purchasing decisions based on online customer reviews, which are influenced by viewer-created content. E-WOM has grown in popularity because to its anonymity and diverse material. E-WOM has one unique feature that separates it from traditional marketing communication: feedback machinery between E-WOM and sales, as well as information sharing via social media (Duan & Washington, 2008; Choi, Seo, & Yoon, 2017).

It promotes the product, resulting in greater sales The new Class technology paradigm, which includes fast distribution of high-speed internet & widespread use of smartphones in tier 2 & tier three cities, has resulted in exponential development in India's e-commerce industries. Numerous initiatives, such as digital India (recent government initiatives for the digital economy & e-governance through various systems such as digital India), Bharat Net, e-panchayats, Internet Saathi, and BHIM (mobile-based platform for digital payments), have contributed to population's access to Internet facilities, which is directly related to the growth of India's e-retail market.

According to a Nasscom analysis, India's retail sector is predicted to create 2.5 crore new jobs by 2030, with offline and online models accounting for about half of overall retail employment growth. The implementation of Retail 4.0 may boost the Indian retail industry to \$1.5 trillion by 2030, resulting in major improvements in local consumption, job creation, and exports. Exports will reach 125 billion dollars through the offline and online models, while retail tax contributions will rise at a 37% rate, resulting in an additional GST contribution of approximately \$8 billion by 2030. The retail sector has swiftly expanded to the point that it can provide both offline and online shopping formats. To achieve this, retail players, legislators, and supporting sectors must work together to increase technological knowledge and efficiency.

### 3. LITRETURE REVIEW

Jeevananda. S (2011) revealed in the research that high levels of customer satisfaction are vital for business, primarily because pleased consumers are more likely to be loyal and would purchase from the same firm repeatedly. Customer happiness is a valuable asset that should be measured and maintained by the firm in the same way that any other physical asset is. This may apply to both service and product-oriented enterprises.

Sima Kumari (2012) discovered that customers' preferences in selecting a particular retail store are usually based on product quality, good value for money, trendy products, and prices in comparison to product quality. However, they are typically dissatisfied with credit facilities, free gifts, discounts, and coupons.

Toufaily et al. (2013) discovered that security is one of the indications of deceit when not managed appropriately. It was also claimed that social website presence has a strong and favorable impact on charity and compassion. 989 French clients were nominated, and an online panel was conducted to investigate the reasons for unsteadiness. A multivariate inferential study was conducted, which revealed that online availability and perceived safety/confidentiality were inextricably linked to online kindness and integrity.

According to Amresh Kumar and Pallab Sikdar (2014), in their paper "Retail service quality assessment - A scale validation study in Indian perspective," establishing valid and reliable RSQS would serve as a strategic tool for retailers functioning in a variety of ways. Furthermore, they stated that a reliable and valid RSQS will benefit retail managers by allowing them to quantify consumers' overall perceptions and sentiments about retail shop service quality. It might give rapid feedback on retail service efforts in terms of dependability, physical elements, issue solutions, & human engagement.

Fu et al. (2015) stated that buyers valued common relationship standards on the internet that allowed them to do something for others without expecting to receive anything in return. Buyers may choose to participate in E-WOM correspondence in order to raise awareness of the organization's administration's failures and protect themselves from similar situations. In light of the equity hypothesis, the concept of organized behavior, and the social brain research writing, their study sought to analyze the predecessors of shoppers' expectations to participate in E-WOM communication. The findings revealed that satisfaction had a limited association with E-WOM goals. Buyers who contemplated posting positive E-WOM were shown to be influenced by core attitudinal characteristics, whilst those who recommended posting negative E-WOM were found to be motivated by prevailing burden. Buyers' contentment feelings were mostly driven by their perception of distributive fairness for their bad shopping experiences. In contrast to favorable shopping experiences, it was observed that insights into procedural and interactional equity had a significant impact on fulfillment.

Philips et al. (2016) developed a consistency model for social networking sites called SNSQUAL, which takes into account ease of use and trustworthiness. Thus, the

SNSQUAL model assessed the significance of the aforementioned traits as a consideration for social networking sites.

Vijayanand Sundaram et al. (2017) did a study to examine the conceptual framework of customer perception on service quality in online company and its influence on satisfaction and loyalty in the e-commerce industry. A simple random sampling approach was used to pick 539 respondents in Tamil Nadu, India. The study found a substantial association between demographic characteristics such as marital status, gender, and customer awareness of email/internet operation and e-service quality, customer happiness, and loyalty, with the exception of educational qualification and residence status.

Mishra (2018) analyzed two key aspects of e-service quality: efficiency and fulfillment. He also investigated effects of e-service quality on consumer perceptions of product value and loyalty.

Monojit Kumar et al. (2019) sought to raise awareness of how service quality characteristics affect customer pleasure and consumer loyalty. The research's goal is to determine mediating role b/w client loyalty & service quality. For this study, questionnaire was designed to meet the study title criteria and is divided into two sections. The first section addresses demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, educational credentials, residence status, & internet awareness. The second section provides 26 comments on various areas of the level of operation, including responsiveness, client confidence, and loyalty. Customer loyalty is most important aspect in the success of almost every business, hence measurement is required to determine which factors have a significant impact on consumers.

Adly (2019) investigate the relationship between the variables of client perceived value, customer loyalty, and client devotion to accommodations. The primary strategy of this study was to conceptualize accommodation as an incentive as a multidimensional construct consisting of seven variables from both psychological and affective viewpoints. Five of these seven variables, specifically self-delight, value, characteristics, exchange, and degraded measurements, were revealed to have a significant direct positive impact on customer loyalty and client devotion. It was also shown that four hotel obvious worth measurements (voracious, value, quality, and exchange) had a torturous but significant positive impact on client dependability via consumer loyalty as a go-between.

According to Uzman Saleem et al. (2022), each variable had a substantial effect on eWOM with website quality. Furthermore, the data indicate a large gender discrepancy in internet buying behavior. This innovative study gives various management tips to help managers improve their business performance in e-commerce market. This investigation also identified several shortcomings.

Denok Kurniasih et al.'s (2023) study seeks to investigate the connection among public service and population satisfaction, as well as the correlation between e-service quality and satisfaction with life within government organizations. The study uses quantitative descriptive

research. Furthermore, the study collects data to test hypotheses or answer questions concerning the factors under consideration. The study used a data gathering methodology known as a questionnaire, which is distributed to respondents and contains written statements about the research topic, which is public services, e-service quality, & community satisfaction. This study's population is the community. This research had 470 participants.

The study by Nazatul Shuhida Ahmad et al. (2024) aims to establish a relationship and identify the most essential e-service quality components that influence online purchases. The original data was gathered by convenience sampling. 250 self-administered questionnaires with four Likert scales were sent through a social media channel to Klang Valley residents aged 18 and up. The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to investigate the relationship among e-service quality and customer contentment. Except for Perceived Risk, the researcher discovered that Customer Satisfaction had a significant influence on all independent variables. Convenience was shown to be the most important element influencing customer satisfaction. As a result, internet company owners may profit from this study's findings as they build appropriate methods to expand their businesses.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is a causal-relationship analysis of impacts of E-SERVQUAL & Customer Satisfaction on E-WOM. There are two types of strong research designs for a causal-relation investigation: surveys and experiments. This study used a set of questionnaire. The set of questions asked respondents about their preferred e-commerce sites for specific categories of consumer goods, such as computers, smartphones, electrical appliances, clothing and shoes, beauty and wellness products, groceries, and books and stationery items. The current analysis includes everyone in India who purchases or has ever purchased from an e-retailer. Because the population in the current study is rather vast and there is no list, the researcher used a straightforward sampling design to choose a sample. The study's sample size was 300 respondents from around Uttar Pradesh (especially Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, and Aligarh) based on the thumb rule of confidence interval sample selection for proposed questionnaire. The data was obtained using Google Forms, an online survey tool. The poll link was circulated over social media platforms & instant messaging apps such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram. The majority of the data was collected by the researcher's close friends and family, which is why he refers to it as a handy sampling strategy.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DATA INTERPRETATIONS

Table 1 shows customer buying preferences across multiple categories for e-commerce sites like as Amazon, Flip kart, Meesho, Reliance Digital, local retailers, and others. Table 1 shows the various options available to consumers for products such as smart phones and tablets, laptops, computers, and gaming consoles, electronic

appliances, apparel and shoes, beauty and health products, grocery items, and books and stationery.

Table 1: Where Do You Prefer To Shop For Smart-Phones And Tablets?

	AMAZON	FLIPKART	MEESHO	RELIANCEDIGITAL	LOCALSTORES	OTHER
N	163	64	5	2	61	5
%	54.44	21.33	1.56	0.67	20.22	1.78

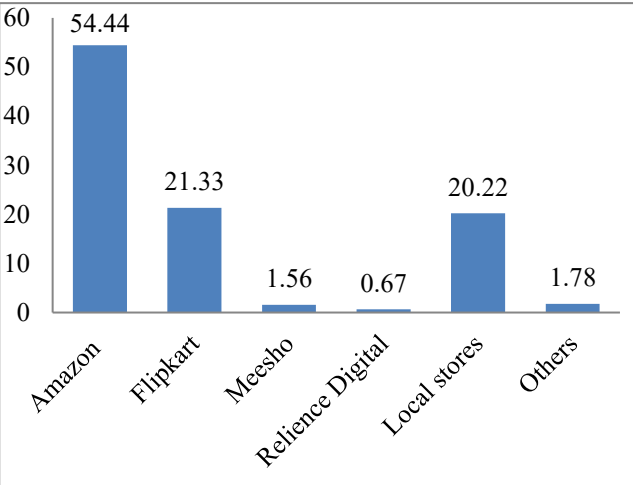
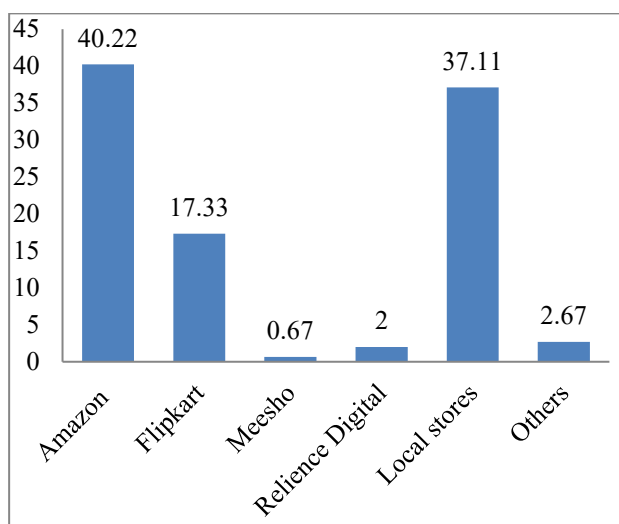


FIGURE 1: % OF RESPONDENT ON PREFER TO SHOP FOR SMART- PHONES AND TABLETS

Table 1 displayed the frequency distribution for variable preferences 1–7. Two service providers, Amazon and local retailers, were identified as substantial contributors to all choices. Preference 1 for smart phones and tablets was supplied by Amazon 54.44%, Flip kart 21.33%, Meesho 1.56%, Reliance Digital 0.67%; local retailers 20.22%, and 1.78% others.

TABLE 2: WHERE DO YOU PREFER TO SHOP FOR LAPTOPS, COMPUTERS, AND GAMING CONSOLES?

	AMAZON	FLIPKART	MEESHO	RELIANCEDIGITAL	LOCALSTORES	OTHER
N	121	52	2	6	111	8
%	40.22	17.33	0.67	2.00	37.11	2.67

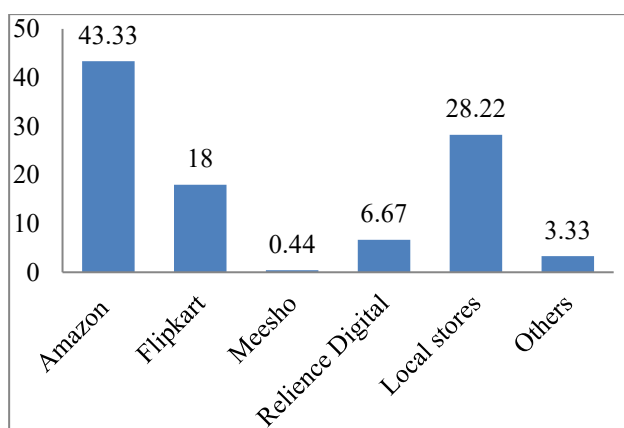


**FIGURE 2: % OF RESPONDENT ON PREFER TO SHOP FOR LAPTOPS, COMPUTERS, AND GAMING CONSOLES**

In preference 2, laptops, desktops, and gaming consoles were provided by Amazon 40.22%, Flip kart 17.33%, Meesho 0.67%, Reliance Digital 2.00%, and Local retailers 37.11%, among 2.67% others.

**TABLE 3: WHERE DO YOU PREFER TO SHOP FOR ELECTRONIC APPLIANCES?**

	AMAZON	FLIPKART	MEESHO	RELIANCE DIGITAL	LOCAL STORES	OTHER
N	130	54	1	20	85	10
%	43.33	18.00	0.44	6.67	28.22	3.33

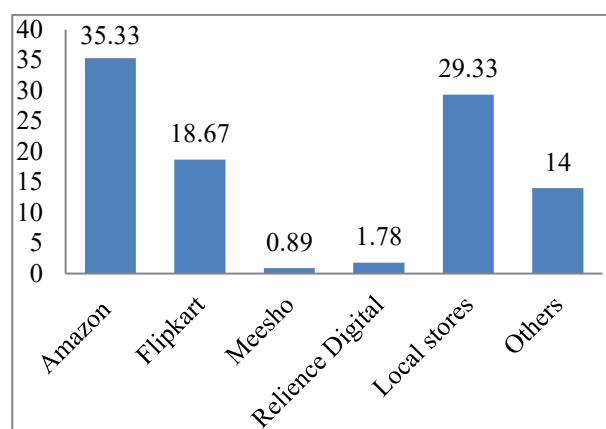


**FIGURE 3: % OF RESPONDENT ON PREFER TO SHOP FOR ELECTRONIC APPLIANCES**

For Preference 3, electrical appliances were supplied by Amazon 43.33%, Flip kart 18.00%, Meesho 0.44%, Reliance Digital 6.67%, Local retailers 28.22%, and 3.33% others.

**TABLE 4: WHERE DO YOU PREFER TO SHOP FOR APPAREL AND SHOES?**

	AMAZON	FLIPKART	MEESHO	RELIANCE DIGITAL	LOCAL STORES	OTHER
N	106	56	3	5	88	42
%	35.33	18.67	0.89	1.78	29.33	14.00

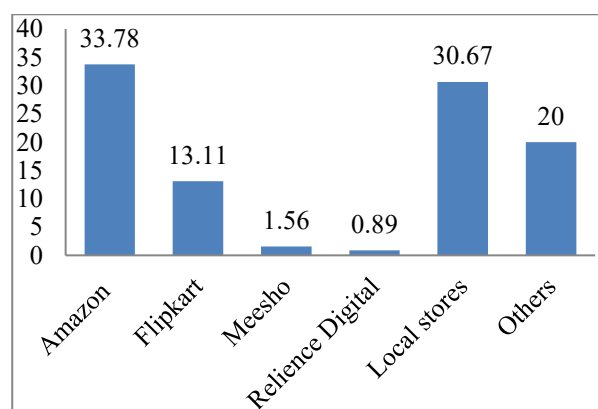


**FIGURE 4: % OF RESPONDENT ON PREFER TO SHOP FOR APPAREL AND SHOES**

Consumers chose to shop for garments and shoes on four platforms: Amazon 35.33%, Flip kart 18.67%, Meesho 0.89%, Reliance Digital 1.78%, local retailers 29.33%, and 14.00% others.

**TABLE 5: WHERE DO YOU PREFER TO SHOP FOR BEAUTY AND HEALTH PRODUCTS?**

	AMAZON	FLIPKART	MEESHO	RELIANCE DIGITAL	LOCAL STORES	OTHER
N	101	39	5	3	92	60
%	33.78	13.11	1.56	0.89	30.67	20.00

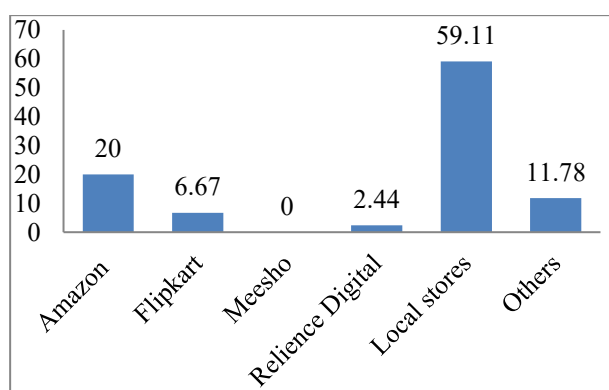


**FIGURE 5: % OF RESPONDENT ON PREFER TO SHOP FOR BEAUTY AND HEALTH PRODUCTS**

For choice 5, beauty and health items, participants provided the following buying preferences: Amazon has 33.78%, Flip kart has 13.11%, Meesho 1.56% has 0.89% Reliance Digital and local retailers and others have 30.67% and 20% respectively.

**TABLE 6: WHERE DO YOU PREFER TO SHOP FOR GROCERY ITEMS?**

	AMAZON	FLIPKART	MEESHO	RELIA NCE DIGIT AL	LOC AL STOR ES	OTH ER
N	60	20	0	7	177	35
%	20.00	6.67	0.00	2.44	59.11	11.78

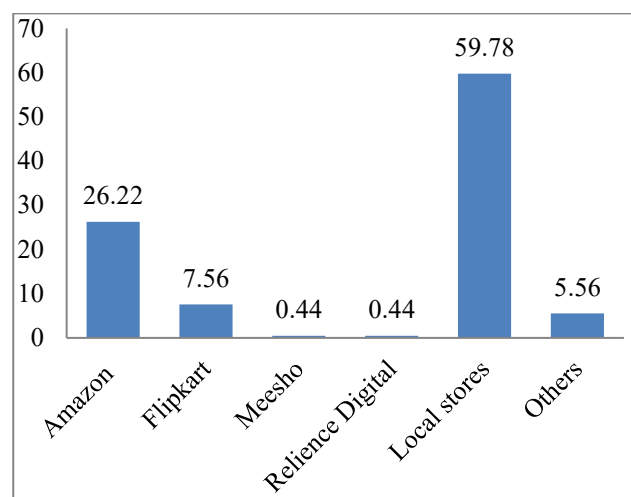


**FIGURE 6: % OF RESPONDENT ON PREFER TO SHOP FOR GROCERY ITEMS**

As for Preference 6, consumer-selected categories contributed 20.00%, Flipkart 6.67%, Meesho 0.00%, Reliance Digital 2.44%, local retailers 59.11% and 11.78% others.

**TABLE 7: WHERE DO YOU PREFER TO SHOP FOR BOOKS AND STATIONERY ITEMS?**

	AMAZON	FLIPKART	MEESHO	RELIA NCE DIGIT AL	LOC AL STOR ES	OTH ER
N	79	23	1	1	179	17
%	26.22	7.56	0.44	0.44	59.78	5.56



**FIGURE 7: % OF RESPONDENT ON PREFER TO SHOP FOR BOOKS AND STATIONERY ITEMS**

Finally, for preference 7, browse for books and stationery products. Customers said that the frequency distribution for various categories was as follows: Amazon 26.22%, Flip kart 7.56%, Meesho 0.44, Reliance Digital 0.44%, Local retailers 59.78%, and 5.56% others. The above-mentioned data showed that local retailers and Amazon were the most popular options. Meesho was the least popular option for all preferences 1 through 7. Whereas, it was null for option Meesho for preference 6 since no one chose it for purchasing food products.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results displayed the frequency distribution for variable preferences 1–7. Two service providers, Amazon and local retailers, were identified as substantial contributors to all choices. Preference 1 for smartphones and tablets was supplied by Amazon 54.44%, Flip kart 21.33%, Meesho 1.56%, Reliance Digital 0.67%; local retailers 20.22%, and 1.78% others. In preference 2, laptops, desktops, and gaming consoles were provided by Amazon 40.22%, Flip kart 17.33%, Meesho 0.67%, Reliance Digital 2.00%, and Local retailers 37.11%, among 2.67% others. For Preference 3, electrical appliances were supplied by Amazon 43.33%, Flip kart 18.00%, Meesho 0.44%, Reliance Digital 6.67%, Local retailers 28.22%, and 3.33% others. Consumers chose to shop for garments and shoes on four platforms: Amazon 35.33%, Flip kart 18.67%, Meesho 0.89%, Reliance Digital 1.78%, local retailers 29.33%, and 14.00% others. For choice 5, beauty and health items, participants provided the following buying preferences: Amazon has 33.78%, Flip kart has 13.11%, Meesho 1.56% has 0.89% Reliance Digital and local retailers and others have 30.67% and 20% respectively. As for Preference 6, consumer-selected categories contributed 20.00%, Flipkart 6.67%, Meesho 0.00%, Reliance Digital 2.44%, local retailers 59.11% and 11.78% others. Finally, for preference 7, browse for books and stationery products. Customers said that the frequency distribution for various categories was as follows: Amazon 26.22%, Flip kart 7.56%, Meesho 0.44, Reliance Digital 0.44%, Local retailers 59.78%, and 5.56% others. The above-mentioned data showed that local retailers and Amazon were the most popular options. Meesho was the least popular option for

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