

Original Article

A Study on Consumer Preferences Towards Online Shopping Vs Offline Shopping Among Millennials in Karaikal

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital technology and e-commerce platforms has significantly transformed consumer buying behaviour. The present study examines consumer preferences towards online shopping versus offline shopping among millennials in the Karaikal region. The study aims to identify the dominant shopping preference among millennial consumers, analyse the key factors influencing their buying decisions such as price, convenience, and trust, compare online and offline shopping in terms of convenience and cost, study the impact of reviews and ratings on purchase decisions, and evaluate the level of satisfaction among millennial consumers in both shopping methods. Primary data were collected from 150 respondents through a structured questionnaire using the simple random sampling method. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, weighted average method, mean score analysis, chi-square analysis, and one-way ANOVA were used for data analysis with the help of SPSS software. The findings reveal that millennials exhibit a balanced preference towards both online and offline shopping depending on the situation and type of product. Reviews and ratings significantly influence purchase decisions, while satisfaction levels are higher for offline product quality and online convenience. The study concludes that both shopping channels coexist and complement each other in the current retail landscape.

KEYWORDS

Online Shopping, Offline Shopping, Millennials, Consumer Preferences, Buying Behaviour, E-Commerce, Reviews and Ratings, Customer Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

The retail industry has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past few decades, driven by rapid advancements in technology, increasing globalisation, and evolving consumer lifestyles. The emergence of digital technologies and internet penetration has revolutionised the retail sector, giving rise to e-commerce and online retail platforms. Platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra have significantly altered the way consumers interact with markets by offering convenience, accessibility, and a broader range of choices.

Millennials, generally defined as individuals born between 1981 and 1996, constitute a significant and influential segment of the consumer market. This generation has grown alongside technological advancements, making them highly comfortable with digital tools and online platforms. Their familiarity with mobile applications, social media, and digital transactions has contributed to a strong inclination towards online shopping. At the same time, offline shopping continues to hold its importance due to unique advantages such as the ability to physically inspect products, assess quality, and experience immediate ownership.

Understanding the shopping preferences of millennials has become essential for both researchers and businesses. The present study examines and compares these preferences in the Karaikal region, identifying key factors influencing their purchasing decisions and evaluating satisfaction levels across both shopping channels.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY

The need for this study arises due to the rapid transformation in consumer buying behaviour influenced by digitalisation and changing lifestyles. Businesses are increasingly investing in both online and offline channels, but understanding which channel consumers prefer and why is essential for strategic decision-making. The study helps businesses understand current market trends, enables retailers to design better customer engagement strategies, provides insights into consumer expectations and satisfaction levels, and supports the development of effective marketing and promotional strategies. Moreover, the study contributes to academic knowledge by providing empirical data on consumer behaviour in the digital age.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Most previous studies have focused on online shopping behaviour in metropolitan cities and large urban areas. Limited research has been conducted on millennial consumer preferences in semi-urban regions such as Karaikal. Furthermore, earlier studies have largely concentrated on either online or offline shopping independently, with limited comparative analysis addressing both channels simultaneously. The present study attempts to fill this research gap by conducting a detailed comparative analysis of consumer preferences towards online and offline shopping among millennials in the Karaikal region.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the preference of millennial consumers between online and offline shopping.
- To identify the key factors influencing their buying decisions such as price, convenience, and trust.
- To compare online and offline shopping in terms of convenience and cost.
- To study the impact of reviews and ratings on millennial purchase decisions.
- To evaluate the satisfaction level of millennial consumers in both shopping methods.

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is confined to analysing consumer preferences among millennials (aged 28–45 years) in the Karaikal region. The study focuses on understanding behavioural patterns, attitudes, and decision-making processes through a comparative analysis of online and offline shopping behaviour, identification of key influencing factors, evaluation of customer satisfaction levels, and an assessment of the impact of digital technology on purchasing habits.

6. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rodriguez (2025) stated that millennials and Generation Z strongly prefer online shopping due to convenience, digital accessibility, and social media influence, while older consumers continue to value offline shopping for direct product experience and personal interaction.

Zamfirache et al. (2025) explained that consumer purchasing experiences differ between online and offline retail environments, with online shopping offering convenience and offline shopping providing better physical examination and emotional satisfaction. Paliwal and Vyas (2025) found that consumers aged 20–40 years prefer online shopping because of time-saving benefits, better prices, and product variety, whereas older consumers prefer offline shopping due to trust and personalised service.

Lokhande and Kale (2025) observed that factors such as convenience, income, pricing, and frequency of visits significantly influence online and offline buying behaviour among consumers. Shukla and Ojha (2026) concluded that consumers prefer online shopping for convenience and product availability, while offline shopping remains important for quality assurance and immediate possession of products. Capgemini Report (2025) revealed that millennials prefer AI-powered and personalised online shopping experiences, showing increasing dependence on digital platforms for purchasing decisions.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1. Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine consumer preferences towards online and offline shopping among millennials. The descriptive nature of the study enables the researcher to analyse existing shopping behaviour without manipulating any variables.

7.2. Data Collection

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data were gathered from books, research journals, articles, websites, and previous studies.

7.3. Sampling Technique

A sample of 150 respondents was selected using the simple random sampling method. The target population consists of millennials aged 28–45 years in the Karaikal region. This age group was selected because millennials are the most active participants in both online and offline shopping.

7.4. Tools Used for Analysis

The collected data were analysed using SPSS software with the help of appropriate statistical tools:

- Percentage Analysis – To study the demographic profile of respondents and their shopping preferences.
- Weighted Average Method – To measure the overall opinion of respondents for each section of statements.
- Mean Score Analysis – To identify which factor has the highest influence on consumer purchasing decisions.
- Chi-Square Analysis – To examine the relationship between demographic variables and consumer preferences.
- One-Way ANOVA – To compare opinions of different demographic groups regarding shopping preferences.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

8.1. Percentage Analysis

Table 1: Age Group of the Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
28–32 Years	56	37.3%
33–37 Years	49	32.7%
38–42 Years	36	24.0%
43–45 Years	9	6.0%
Total	150	100.0%

Interpretation: The table shows that majority of the respondents (37.3%) belong to the age group of 28–32 years, followed by 32.7% in the 33–37 years category. This indicates that younger millennials are the most active shoppers in the study.

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	69	46.0%
Female	77	51.3%
Prefer not to say	4	2.7%
Total	150	100.0%

Interpretation: Female respondents constitute the majority with 51.3%, while male respondents account for 46.0%. A small percentage (2.7%) preferred not to disclose their gender.

Table 3: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate	44	29.3%
Postgraduate	69	46.0%
Professional Degree	18	12.0%
Others	19	12.7%
Total	150	100.0%

Interpretation: Most respondents are postgraduates (46.0%), followed by undergraduates (29.3%). This indicates that the sample is highly educated, which may influence awareness and adoption of online shopping.

Table 4: Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Private Employee	77	51.3%
Self-Employed	32	21.3%
Government Employee	28	18.7%
Others	13	8.7%
Total	150	100.0%

Interpretation: Private employees form the largest occupational group (51.3%), followed by self-employed respondents (21.3%). This indicates that salaried professionals are the major participants in the study.

8.2. Weighted Average (Mean) Analysis

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics – Weighted Average Scores

Section	N	Mean Score	Result
Preference (Online vs Offline)	150	2.81	Moderate agreement
Factors Influencing Buying Decision	150	2.90	Significant influence
Convenience & Cost	150	2.81	Moderate agreement
Reviews & Ratings	150	3.10	High agreement
Satisfaction Level	150	3.11	High satisfaction

Interpretation: The mean scores for Reviews & Ratings (3.10) and Satisfaction (3.11) are the highest, both exceeding the neutral value of 2.5. This indicates that reviews and satisfaction are the most significant factors influencing millennial shopping behaviour. The mean score for overall preference (2.81) reflects a balanced inclination towards both online and offline shopping.

8.3. Mean Score Analysis

Table 6: Mean Score Ranking of Influencing Factors

Rank	Statement	Mean Score
1	Return and refund policies of online shopping platforms	3.33
2	Negative reviews stop me from purchasing a product	3.29
3	Satisfied when able to physically check products before buying	3.23
4	Satisfied with quality of products from offline stores	3.17
5	Ratings influence purchase decisions significantly	3.12
6	Check reviews before buying products online	3.08
7	Prefer offline shopping for important purchases	3.03
8	Trust offline stores more than online platforms	3.03
9	Price plays a major role in shopping decision	2.99
10	Prefer online shopping over offline shopping	2.55

Interpretation: The statement regarding satisfaction with return and refund policies of online platforms ranked highest with a mean score of 3.33, indicating it is the most influential factor. Negative reviews (3.29) and the satisfaction of physically checking products (3.23) also rank high. The preference for online over offline shopping has the lowest mean (2.55), confirming that millennials do not exclusively favour either channel. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted – different factors influence consumer preferences at different levels.

8.4. Chi-Square Analysis

The chi-square analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between demographic variables and consumer preferences towards online and offline shopping.

Hypothesis

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between age of the respondents and preference towards online shopping.
- H_1 : There is a significant relationship between age of the respondents and preference towards online shopping.

Table 7: Relationship between Age and Preference for Online Shopping

Chi-Square Test	Value	df	Significance Value
Pearson Chi-Square	15.128	9	0.087
Number of Valid Cases	150	–	–

Interpretation: The significance value of 0.087 is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant relationship between age and preference towards online shopping.

Hypothesis

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between gender of the respondents and the influence of price on shopping decisions.

- H_1 : There is a significant relationship between gender of the respondents and the influence of price on shopping decisions.

Table 8: Relationship between Gender and Price Influence on Shopping Decision

Chi-Square Test	Value	df	Significance Value
Pearson Chi-Square	6.138	6	0.408
Number of Valid Cases	150	–	–

Interpretation: The significance value of 0.408 is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant relationship between gender and the influence of price on shopping decisions, indicating that both male and female respondents are similarly price-sensitive.

Table 9: Relationship between Educational Qualification and Online Shopping Convenience

Chi-Square Test	Value	df	Significance Value
Pearson Chi-Square	7.384	9	0.597
Number of Valid Cases	150	–	–

Interpretation: The significance value of 0.597 is greater than 0.05. The null hypothesis is accepted. Educational qualification does not significantly influence perception of online shopping convenience, suggesting respondents across all education levels hold similar views.

Table 10: Relationship between Occupation and Satisfaction with Return and Refund Policies

Chi-Square Test	Value	df	Significance Value
Pearson Chi-Square	12.208	9	0.202
Number of Valid Cases	150	–	–

Interpretation: The significance value of 0.202 is greater than 0.05. The null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant relationship between occupation and satisfaction with return and refund policies.

8.5. One-Way Anova

ANOVA was used to compare the opinions of different age groups regarding preference for online over offline shopping.

Table 11: ANOVA – Age Group and Preference for Online Shopping

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Value	Significance
Between Groups	6.995	3	2.332	3.471	0.018
Within Groups	98.079	146	0.672	–	–
Total	105.073	149	–	–	–

Interpretation: The F value is 3.471 and the significance value is 0.018, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference in preference for online shopping among different age groups. Younger millennials (28–32

years) show a higher preference for online shopping compared to older age groups (43–45 years), indicating that online shopping preference declines with age within the millennial segment.

9. FINDINGS

- Majority of respondents belong to the 28–32 age group, indicating that younger millennials are more active shoppers.
- Price plays an important role in influencing purchasing decisions for most respondents.
- Online shopping is considered convenient, but not all respondents strongly prefer it over offline shopping.
- Consumers highly value return and refund policies, which received the highest mean score (3.33).
- Negative reviews significantly affect purchase decisions, showing the critical importance of customer feedback.
- Many respondents still prefer offline shopping for important purchases due to trust and product verification.
- Consumers rely more on reviews and ratings than on advertisements.
- Satisfaction levels are higher for offline product quality, while online platforms are appreciated for convenience and return policies.
- Chi-square analysis shows no significant relationship between demographic variables (age, gender, education, occupation) and shopping preferences.
- ANOVA results indicate a significant difference between age groups in preference towards online shopping ($F=3.471$, $p=0.018$).

10. SUGGESTIONS

- Online retailers should improve return and refund policies further to sustain and enhance customer satisfaction.
- E-commerce platforms must ensure authentic and trustworthy reviews to positively influence buying decisions.
- Businesses should focus on improving product quality assurance to reduce hesitation in online purchases.
- Companies should provide better delivery speed and tracking systems to meet customer expectations.
- Offline stores should adopt digital strategies and exclusive offers to compete effectively with online platforms.
- Marketers should focus on customer experience rather than only promotions and advertisements.
- Online platforms should strengthen trust and security measures to attract more consumers.
- Personalised offers and recommendations can help increase customer engagement and loyalty.

11. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that consumer shopping preferences among millennials in Karaikal are influenced by several important factors such as price, convenience, trust, product quality, and customer reviews. Although online shopping has become increasingly popular due to its convenience and attractive discounts, offline shopping continues to play an important role because it allows customers to physically verify products and ensures greater trust and authenticity.

The findings highlight that consumers do not depend on just one mode of shopping. Instead, they make choices based on the situation, urgency, and type of product they intend to purchase. The statistical analysis indicates that demographic factors generally do not have a significant impact on shopping preferences, though a significant difference in online shopping preference is observed across different age groups.

Overall, both online and offline shopping channels coexist in today's market, with each offering unique advantages. Retailers and marketers must adopt an omnichannel approach to effectively cater to the diverse and dynamic preferences of millennial consumers.

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