

Digital Consumer Behavior in Khurda, Odisha: An Empirical Study



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Abstract. This study delves into the evolving landscape of digital consumer behavior in Khurda, a district in Odisha, emblematic of India's rapid technological adoption. The study aims to understand the dynamics of consumer preferences for online purchases. Data were collected from 500 respondents through a structured questionnaire and were analyzed using statistical tools. Findings reveal that a major proportion of consumers engage in frequent online purchases, driven by factors such as price, reviews, and brand reputation. Smartphones dominate as the primary device for using the internet and making online purchases. Consumer satisfaction was found to be driven by factors beyond spending habits and is significantly different among respondents using different devices for digital activity. Online purchase frequency changes significantly with the education level of the consumers. Similarly, gender influences the types of products people tend to purchase whereas Females and Others seem to report more issues with online purchases compared to Males. The research explores digital consumer behaviour and highlights the necessity for businesses to adopt localized, transparent, and consumer-focused strategies to bridge the trust gap to thrive in this digital age. This paper provides actionable insights for stakeholders aiming to harness the potential of the digital consumer market.

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1. Introduction

In the digital era, consumer behavior is changing as technological advancements reshape how individuals interact with products and services. Khurda, a prominent district in Odisha, India, exemplifies such a change in consumer behaviour in a digital age. Anchored by Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha, Khurda represents a blend of urban and semi-urban dynamics, with a population that is increasingly becoming tech-savvy. The district boasts robust internet penetration, widespread smartphone usage, and a growing inclination toward online shopping, making it a fertile ground for studying digital consumer behavior. The relevance of examining digital consumer behavior in Khurda lies in its socio-economic and cultural diversity, which reflects broader consumer trends in India. Understanding how digital touchpoints such as e-commerce platforms, social media, and digital marketing influence purchasing decisions can offer valuable insights for businesses. By exploring these dimensions, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of the digital consumer ecosystem, providing actionable strategies for market stakeholders in Khurda and similar regions.

2. Objectives

The study aims to comprehensively analyze digital consumer behavior in Khurda, Odisha, and its impact on purchasing decisions. Firstly, it aims to explore the roles of demographic factors such as gender, age, and education level on digital consumer behavior and how these factors drive purchasing decisions. Secondly, it aims to examine the role of e-commerce social media platforms and digital marketing strategies in influencing consumer choices. Thirdly, it seeks to identify the key drivers of customer satisfaction in their digital purchasing journey and provide strategic recommendations for businesses to address these challenges.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Digital Consumer Behavior

Digital consumer behavior refers to the ways consumers interact with online platforms and digital tools in their decision-making and purchasing processes. Digital technologies have significantly transformed consumer behavior in recent years

(Martínez–Ruiz and Moser, 2019, 2731; Palalić et al., 2020; Mason et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the shift towards digital consumer behavior, with increased reliance on online shopping, social media, and digital communication channels (Mason et al., 2021; Laato et al., 2020). This has led to changes in consumer purchasing patterns, such as reduced impulse buying and increased focus on essential goods (Laato et al., 2020). Past studies have emphasized the shift from traditional purchasing behaviors to digital-first approaches, driven by increasing internet penetration, smartphone usage, and the proliferation of e-commerce platforms. The rise of social media, increased importance of online word-of-mouth and user-generated content have a profound impact on how consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions (Voramontri and Klieb, 2019, 209; Hudson et al., 2016; Fan 2022, 2695; Palalić et al., 2020; Colicev and O'Connor, 2016, 130). Consumers now rely heavily on online reviews, recommendations, and social media posts from their peers when evaluating products and services (Palalić et al., 2020; Parajuli and Budhathoki, 2022, 80). The credibility and perceived authenticity of this content play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Palalić et al., 2020; Li and Liu, 2020). Additionally, the use of social media influencers has emerged as a powerful marketing strategy, as consumers are heavily influenced by the opinions and endorsements of these online opinion leaders (Tobón and García-Madariaga, 2021, 605; Singh 2021, 235). Factors such as the influencer's perceived trustworthiness, expertise, and social attractiveness can significantly impact consumer behavior (Singh 2021, 236; Chopra et al., 2020).

3.2 Factors Influencing Digital Consumer Behavior

Commerce Platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Snapdeal have revolutionized how consumers purchase goods in India. Key influencing factors include product availability, pricing, user reviews, and convenience. Research highlights that features like flash sales and personalized recommendations significantly impact consumer buying behavior (Gupta and Verma, 2019, 40). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences. User-generated content, influencer marketing, and peer recommendations drive consumer trust and engagement (Bhattacharya and Sinha, 2020, 115). Social proof, combined with targeted advertisements, is found to significantly enhance purchase intent.

Digital content tailored to local languages and cultural contexts fosters deeper engagement, especially in semi-urban and rural areas (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2022). For regions like Odisha, providing localized content in Odia has been found to boost consumer confidence and conversion rates. Factors like convenience, trust, and social belongingness influence online purchase decisions. The role of price sensitivity, loyalty programs, and emotional branding is also critical in shaping consumer preferences. Consumers often face challenges related to trust in online transactions, including fears of receiving counterfeit products and lack of clarity regarding return policies (Sharma and Bhardwaj, 2021, 50). Accessibility issues stemming from low digital literacy or inadequate infrastructure continue to limit digital consumer behavior in certain segments of the population.

The body of literature underscores the evolving nature of digital consumer behavior and its dependence on technological, psychological, and cultural factors. For Khurda, a district with diverse consumer demographics, these insights form the foundation for exploring how digital tools and platforms can further influence and enhance consumer behavior.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Questionnaire and Survey Methods

A structured questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on digital consumer behavior in Khurda, Odisha. The questionnaire covered key areas including demographics such as age, gender, education, internet usage patterns, device preferences, purchasing behaviors, and satisfaction levels. Digital Usage Patterns questions were on Frequency of internet use, and preferred devices for internet usage. Purchasing Behavior was assessed through the frequency of online purchases, preferred e-commerce platforms, and factors influencing purchase decisions. Furthermore, consumer satisfaction levels with digital platforms were measured. The questionnaire was distributed through both online (Google Forms, social media platforms) and offline (in-person interviews) channels to ensure a diverse and representative sample. The target population included individuals aged 18–60 residing in urban and semi-urban areas of Khurda. This group was chosen due to their likely engagement with digital platforms. A stratified random sampling method was employed to capture the diversity in demographics and usage patterns. Responses were reviewed for completeness and

consistency. Invalid or incomplete responses were excluded from the analysis to ensure data accuracy. The data collection was stopped after getting 500 valid responses. Responses were compiled into a structured data sheet using Microsoft Excel, which served as the foundation for statistical analysis.

4.2 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research practices, ensuring participant confidentiality and voluntary participation. Consent was obtained before collecting data, and all findings are presented in aggregate form to maintain privacy. This methodology provided a robust framework for understanding digital consumer behavior in Khurda, ensuring that the insights derived are both reliable and actionable.

5. Data Analysis

Microsoft Excel was used for initial data cleaning, descriptive statistics, and creating visualizations such as graphs, and tables. SPSS was used for Descriptive Statistics, Chi-Square Tests and Correlation analysis. Out of the 500 respondents, 171 were male, 149 were female, and 180 respondents preferred not to mention their gender. 107 respondents had education up to 10th or below, 133 had education considered to be post-10th and before undergraduate degrees, 124 were undergraduates, and 136 were postgraduates. The average age of the respondents was 37 years, with the youngest respondent at 28 years and the oldest respondent at 60 years indicating a wide diverse sample representing the population of the region. The study's findings highlight several significant insights into digital consumer behavior in Khurda, Odisha.

6. Results and Discussion:

The majority of respondents were found to be engaged in daily internet usage, with smartphones being the primary device for digital consumption. This is because the study area is a rapidly urbanizing region with a strong technological infrastructure. Bhubaneswar, the state capital located in Khurda, plays a pivotal role in fostering this digital adoption, with its growing IT sector and widespread availability of affordable internet services (Table 1).

Table 1: Internet usage frequency and use of primary device distribution among respondents

Internet Usage Frequency	Primary device						Percentage for Internet usage frequency
	Smart - phone	Desktop	Laptop	Tablet	Others	Total	
Daily	211	21	58	38	23	351	70.2
Weekly	64	6	18	10	6	104	20.8
Occasionally	20	3	14	3	5	45	9
Total	295	30	90	51	34	500	
Percentage for the primary device	59	6	18	10.2	6.8		

A significant proportion of respondents reported frequent online purchases (Table 2). This highlights a shift in consumer behavior, where convenience and accessibility outweigh traditional in-store shopping preferences. The presence of regional e-commerce delivery services has likely contributed to this trend, making digital shopping more accessible even in semi-urban areas a region.

Table 2: Online purchase frequency by age categories

Age category	Online Purchase Frequency					Percentage of different Age category
	Once a week	Once a month	Rarely	Never	Grand Total	
<=25 years	67	28	13	6	114	22.8
25-35 years	49	28	17	6	100	20.0
35-45 years	67	50	13	5	135	27.0
45-55 years	46	42	15	1	104	20.8
>=55 years	22	13	8	4	47	9.4
Grand Total	251	161	66	22	500	
Percentage for Online Purchase Frequency	50.2	32.2	13.2	4.4		

More than 40% of the respondents (205) were either very satisfied or satisfied with the online purchase suggesting a positive reception toward digital platforms. A similar number of respondents (187, 37.4%) were also either dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied whereas 21.6% of respondents were neutral on it. Similar patterns were observed

among respondents when they were compared against their online purchase frequency, indicating that the respondents have no differences in satisfaction concerning their online purchase frequency (Figure 1). It shows that though a substantial number of people are getting desired services, still there are challenges for the business entities to identify the factors of dissatisfaction among consumers and address those.

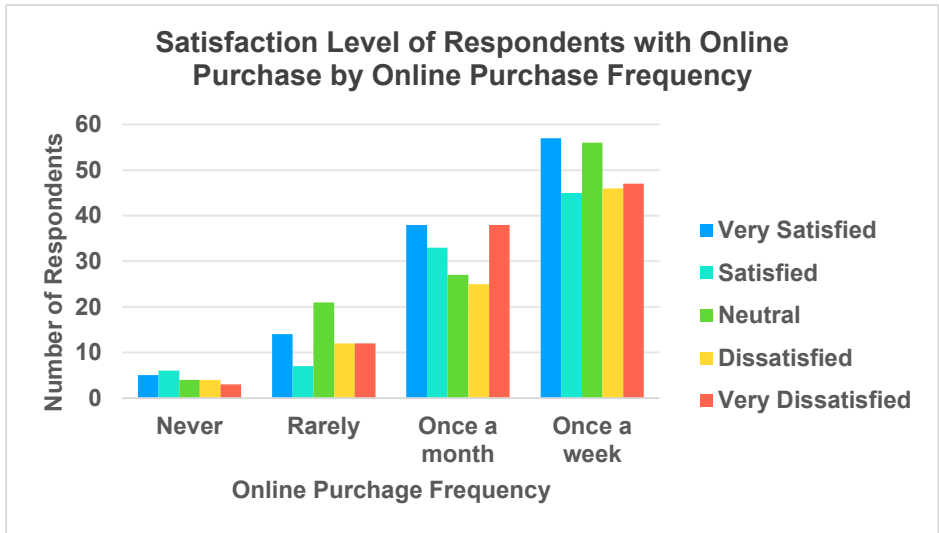


Figure 1: Satisfaction Level of Respondents with Online Purchase by Online Purchase Frequency

54.4% of respondents expressed a preference for content in regional languages such as Odia. This underscores the importance of regional relevance in digital engagement. Respondents have been influenced by various sources such as social media, product reviews, brand value of the products, competitive prices, and advertisements.

Table 3: Primary Device of Use and Satisfaction with online purchase

		Satisfaction					Total	Chi-Square	Likelihood Ratio
		VD	DS	NE	ST	DS			
Primary Device	Smartphone	61	45	76	56	57	295	Pearson Chi-Square = 28.02; df = 16;	Likelihood Ratio = 31.04;
	Desktop	4	5	8	4	9	30		
	Laptop	18	18	8	18	28	90		
	Tablet	6	11	14	7	13	51		

	Other	11	8	2	6	7	34	df = 16;	<i>P</i> = .013
Total		100	87	108	91	114	500	<i>P</i> = .031	
VD: Very Dissatisfied, DS: Dissatisfied, NE: Neutral, ST: Satisfied, VS: Very Dissatisfied, <i>p</i> = Significance level									

In Table 3, both the Chi-Square and Likelihood Ratio tests show a statistically significant relationship between the primary device and the satisfaction level (since both *p*-values are less than 0.05). This means that people's satisfaction levels vary depending on which primary device they use. Similarly, Table 4 shows that people's education level has an impact on how often they make online purchases indicating that individuals with different educational backgrounds (Others, 10th, Under Graduate, Post Graduate) have varying frequencies of online shopping, and this difference is statistically significant (Table 4).

Table 4: Education Level and Online Purchase Frequency

		Online Purchase Frequency				Total	Chi-Square	Likelihood Ratio
		Never	Rarely	Once a Week	Once a month			
Education Level	Others	3	11	48	71	133	Pearson Chi-Square = 21.73; df = 9; <i>P</i> = .01	Likelihood Ratio = 20.72; df = 9; <i>P</i> = .014
	10th	11	19	26	51	107		
	Under Graduate	2	20	37	65	124		
	Post Graduate	6	16	50	64	136		
Total		22	66	161	251	500		

Table 5 suggests a noticeable difference in the distribution of issues with online purchases across genders. A larger proportion of females and others reported issues with online purchases compared to males. While 99 males reported No issues, only 63 females did. Similarly, the number of "Yes" is higher among females (86) and others (93) compared to males (72). Both the Chi-Square and Likelihood Ratio tests indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between Gender and the occurrence of issues (*p*-value < 0.05). This means that gender significantly influences whether an

individual has issues with online purchases or not. Females and Others seem to report more issues compared to Males, as seen in the higher counts of Yes responses. This pattern suggests that certain issues might be more prominent or more likely to be reported by specific genders. Businesses or service providers might consider these findings when developing support systems, marketing strategies, or addressing product-related issues to better cater to gender-specific needs or preferences.

Table 5: Gender with online purchase Issues and product categories

		Issues			Product Category				
		No	Yes	Total	CL	EL	GR	OT	Total
Gender	Male	99	72	171	51	35	32	53	171
	Female	63	86	149	38	52	28	31	149
	Others*	87	93	180	38	57	44	41	180
Total		249	251	500	127	144	104	125	500
Chi-Square		Pearson CS = 8.01; df = 2; P = .02			Pearson CS = 14.84; df = 6; P = .02				
Likelihood Ratio		LR = 8.04; df = 2; P = .02			LR = 15.04; df = 6; P = .02				
CS: Chi-Square, LR: Likelihood Ratio, CL: Clothing, EL: Electronics, GR: Groceries, OT: Others, P: Significance Level *Preferred not to mention									

From Table 5, it is observed that males are more likely to purchase clothing and other products than electronics or groceries. Females show a preference for electronics, followed by clothing and other products. They have a lower tendency to purchase groceries than males. Others have a relatively balanced distribution across all categories but show a stronger preference for electronics and groceries. Both the Chi-Square and Likelihood Ratio tests indicate a statistically significant relationship between Gender and Product Category (p-value = 0.02 for both tests). This suggests that gender influences the types of products people tend to purchase. Businesses targeting specific genders may want to adjust their product offerings and marketing strategies to appeal to gender-based preferences. Understanding these preferences can help in inventory planning, product promotions, and customer engagement.

Correlation analysis (Table 6) revealed no significant correlation between monthly spending, education levels, and online purchase frequency of the respondents with their satisfaction levels with online purchases, indicating that consumer satisfaction is driven by factors beyond spending habits. This might happen due to a trust gap between the customers and the authenticity of the product and services by online platforms and business entities. Ease of use and quality of service might be another area of concern

causing low customer satisfaction. Enhancing user experiences rather than merely driving higher transactions can be a solution to such low customer satisfaction (Table 6).

Table 6: Correlation among Monthly Spending on Online Purchase, Education Level, Online Purchase Frequency, and Satisfaction with Online Purchase

	Monthly Spending on Online Purchases	Education Level	Online Purchase Frequency	Satisfaction with Online Purchase
Monthly Spending on Online Purchases	1	-0.047	-0.052	-0.047
Education Level		1	-0.031	-0.022
Online Purchase Frequency			1	-0.002
Satisfaction with Online Purchase				1
In each case p (Significance level) > 0.05				

The dominance of smartphones in digital consumption highlights mobile-first consumer behavior. This aligns with the trends in emerging markets where affordable smartphones and data plans drive digital engagement. Businesses may prioritize mobile-optimized platforms and applications to cater to this audience effectively. The blend of urbanization, cultural diversity, and technological adoption in the studied area creates a fertile ground for digital engagement. While digital consumer behavior has significantly evolved, addressing challenges related to trust, localized content, and user experience will be key to fully unlocking the potential of the digital consumer market.

7. Recommendation of Strategies for Engaging Digital Consumers

Based on the study's findings, a few strategies have been developed that can help business entities gain more customers online.

Region-specific marketing campaigns using localized languages and cultural references can be developed for wider awareness and branding. Product descriptions, user guides, and customer support in the local language are needed to enhance accessibility and trust. As smartphones dominate as the primary device for digital consumption, websites and e-commerce platforms for mobile devices need to be optimized to ensure seamless

browsing and purchasing experiences. Mobile apps with lightweight designs for users with limited data requirements can be useful for potential customers. App-exclusive discounts and rewards may also be offered. Trust issues, such as concerns about counterfeit products and unclear return policies, remain a major barrier. Prominent display of verified user reviews and ratings on e-commerce platforms, implementation of stringent product verification and anti-counterfeit measures, and clear, easy and customer-friendly return policies can be helpful to enhance the trust of customers. Secure payment options can assure customers of transaction safety. Social media platforms significantly influence consumer decisions. Collaboration with local influencers who resonate with the audience, and targeted advertisements with localized messaging on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube can be very useful. User-generated content may be encouraged by incentivizing reviews, testimonials, and social media shares. It has been observed that personalized experiences drive customer satisfaction and loyalty. AI-driven chatbots can be used to provide instant and personalized customer support.

Festivals and cultural events play an important role in the purchase intention of customers. Marketing campaigns with local festivals and events can be designed and special discounts, promotions, or exclusive collections can be offered during these periods. Some consumers prefer exploring products online but purchasing offline due to trust or convenience factors. Online-to-offline (O2O) integration, allowing consumers to reserve products online and pick them up in stores can help such deficit in trust. Digital platforms to showcase offline store inventory in real-time. Loyalty programs can increase repeat purchases and build long-term customer relationships. Introduction of reward points, cashback offers, referral incentives for frequent buyers, and benefits to loyal customers, such as early access to sales or personalized offers can be crucial boosts for engaging digital customers. It will help if organizations can partner with logistics companies to expand delivery services to remote areas. Increasing digital literacy can enhance confidence in online transactions. Workshops, and digital literacy drives to educate consumers about safe online practices, use social media and apps to provide tips on secure payments and recognize genuine products are helpful strategies.

8. Conclusion

This study highlights the impact of digital platforms on digital consumer behavior. The findings underscore increasing digital adoption among people, with a strong preference

for mobile-first engagement and daily internet usage. Factors such as price sensitivity, social media influence, and regional language content significantly shape purchasing decisions, reflecting the importance of cultural and contextual alignment. While consumer satisfaction with digital platforms is generally high, challenges such as trust issues, counterfeit fears, and accessibility barriers remain areas of concern. The future scope of the research includes a possible investigation of the role of artificial intelligence and machine learning in enhancing digital consumer experiences through personalized recommendations and chatbots. The impact of digital literacy programs on consumer confidence and trust in online transactions may be explored for a better understanding of the trust deficit among consumers. Assessment of the potential of augmented and virtual reality to transform the online shopping experience, exploration of psychological drivers behind digital consumer choices, such as loyalty, emotional branding, and peer influence, an analysis of the digital adoption gap between urban and rural areas can be taken in future for better understanding of the issue paving the way for more inclusive and effective digital ecosystems. The study is not free from limitations. It collects responses from the respondents in the Khurda district of Odisha, India. The district has places that are digitally, economically and education-wise advanced and are quite ahead of some other areas. The wide divide makes it a complex sample to get a generalized finding. Samples from similar demographics would have made the study stronger. Notwithstanding the limitations, the study provides further understanding of the concept of digital consumer behaviour.

Data Availability Statement: The Data Sheet is available at

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zFqwJXRS3tHS8Hp2PkwK8K_VujDvzxag?usp=share_link. Access will be provided upon reasonable request.

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