# A Study on Exploring the Issues Faced by Customers on Ecommerce Platforms

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## Abstract

Online customers enjoy various benefits of shopping conveniently in the comfort of their homes. However, there are a few limitations faced by online shoppers with regard to purchase experiences such as touching or feeling the product. The other issues related to online shopping include wrong billing or tracking of the order and these are addressed by the marketers by supporting the customer in tracking the product through logistics management. Different marketing strategies such as interactive marketing and digital marketing are adopted by the online retailers to attract customers and resolve the issues that are faced by them while/after making online purchases. Yet customers across the geographical locations of the country face various issues while purchasing online. This study explores the various issues faced by customers while shopping online and analyses analyse the extent to which they affect vendor trust in the ecommerce platform. It attempts to investigate the various strategies adopted by ecommerce platforms' to resolve customer issues and complaints. It investigates the various strategies adopted by ecommerce platforms' to resolve customer issues and complaints. The survey was conducted using purposive sampling method and the questionnaire was distributed among 156 respondents in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka, India chosen because of convenience. The statements used in the questionnaire were not obtained from previous

studies and hence, reliability test and exploratory factor analysis were performed to check the reliability and validity of the statements and the data. Reliability test was performed on the second section of the questionnaire by using Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha was 0.819. It reflects a good reliability of the scale. The respondents have experienced good customer service. Only a small percentage of the population have had issues with the quality of customer service sometimes. Hence, the study finds that the quality of customer service is good on e-commerce platforms.

Keywords: Online Shopping; Customer Issues; Customer Complaint Behaviour; Security Concerns

**Introduction**

Customers on ecommerce platforms often encounter various issues that can affect their overall shopping experience. Some common issues include Payment Problems like Payment failures, Customers may face issues with payment processing, leading to failed transactions.

Lack of payment options is another issue, as some customers may prefer specific payment methods that may not be available on certain platforms. Security Concerns include data breaches as customers worry about the security of their personal and financial information, especially in the wake of data breaches on ecommerce platforms. Lack of trust is a concern as unsecured websites or unclear privacy policies can lead to a lack of trust among customers. Customers also complain about product quality and description including mismatched product descriptions and customers may receive products that don't match the descriptions or images on the website, poor quality concern as the actual product received may not meet the expected quality, leading to dissatisfaction. Another issue is shipping and delivery issues are delayed deliveries as late deliveries can frustrate customers, especially if they were expecting the products within a specific timeframe, lost or damaged packages are common and some customers experience issues with lost or damaged packages during transit. Customer Service Problems include unresponsive customer support and slow or unhelpful customer service can leave customers feeling frustrated. Lack of communication can leave the customers frustrated as customers may not receive timely updates or information about their orders or issues. Returns and Refunds policies can turn out to be a harassment as complicated return processes and cumbersome return procedures can discourage customers from returning products. Delayed refunds are common and customers may face delays in receiving refunds for returned items. Purchase experience includes uninterrupted user interface and experience with no website glitches. Technical issues are very annoying such as slow loading times or system errors, can hinder the overall user experience. Poor website design causes complicated or confusing website layouts can make it difficult for customers to navigate and find what they need. Misleading promotions may leave the customers disappointed if advertised discounts or promotions are not honoured during the checkout process. False advertising and exaggerated claims about products may lead to unsatisfied customers. Ecommerce platforms also have inventory issues and customers may encounter frustration if they discover that the product they want is out of stock after making a purchase. Inaccurate inventory information may cause customers may receive notifications about available items that are not actually in stock. Customers could face an absolute lack of personalization as generic recommendations are made by the ecommerce platforms. Customers may feel that the platform doesn't understand their preferences if product recommendations are not personalized. Poorly implemented personalization efforts are ineffective and may lead to irrelevant suggestions or promotions.

Ecommerce platforms need to address these issues promptly to ensure customer satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat business. Regularly updating security measures, improving communication, and enhancing the overall shopping experience can help mitigate these challenges. This study explores the various issues faced by customers while shopping online and analyses analyse the extent to which they affect vendor trust in the ecommerce platform. It attempts to investigate the various strategies adopted by ecommerce platforms' to resolve customer issues and complaints.

## Review of Literature

Online retail has become an important part of the daily life of the consumers as it provides several advantages to individuals. It includes saving time of the consumers as the consumer buys products with a click-through online retail portals in place of visiting the near-by shops. Online shopping is also preferred by consumers as it saves energy, ensures 24/7 availability, and eliminates waiting time. Online retailing also allows the consumers to purchase products from anywhere in the world by removing geographical limitations, allows comparison of price, and saves fuel. Jain, (2016). However, the consumer faced certain issues while performing online retailing activities. It includes issues related to fraud and security concerns. The consumers are at a high risk of fraud as they do not get the chance to inspect the merchandise before making a purchase. As a result, the consumer might receive a sub-standard product that is different from the product description mentioned in the online portal. Privacy is another major issue as many consumers are afraid of making online payments through net banking or credit cards owing to security issues. There is a lack of full cost discloser while making purchases through online retail stores which reduces the intent of the consumer to make the online purchase. Zuroni & Goh, (2012). This section examines the literature on the extent to which customer's needs are met through online shopping, various issues faced by customers, their complaint behaviour and strategies adopted by digital platforms in resolving the issues.

**Agatz et al., (2008)** found that the issues that are faced by the customers while making online purchases impact their online consumer behaviour and their relationship with the online retail sector.

**Al-Debei, Akroush, & Ashouri, (2015)** To reduce the issues that are faced by consumers and meet their major/minor needs and wants, retailers must adopt a customer-centric approach. It includes focusing on three essential aspects of the consumers such as acquisition, retention, and development so that there is the maintenance of extended customer lifetime value. The retailing company must align its business process by fulfilling the needs and demands of customers so that there is a reduction in customer grievances. It includes establishing proper communication with the customers so that there is the attainment of product reviews and feedback. It will help in making improvements in the products and providing the consumer with high-quality products as per their expectations.

**Fernie & McKinnon, (2009)** find that due to increased online retailing volumes, the company faces issues related to fulfilling of the online orders on time, meeting last-mile delivery targets on time, administering inventory, and warehouse management.

**Jarvenpaa & Todd, (1997)** found that when the retailers provide quality services through their website and address risk perception issues associated with online shopping, there is a meeting of major/minor needs and wants of the consumers.

**Ramya & Ali, (2016)** state that to get a better understanding of online consumer behaviour and their relationship with the online retail sector, it is essential to consider several external and internal factors. The external factors include cultural, social, and environmental aspects, while internal factors include psychological and personal aspects. The cultural factors include community class, sub-traditions, and cultural attributes while social factors include societal status, income, family unit, and reference

attributes. The environmental factors include innovation, financial, and ecological attributes. Additionally, psychological aspects include inspiration, awareness, learning, conviction, outlook, self-concept, and individuality attributes, while personal aspects include age, the standard of living, profession, edification, and financial condition of the consumers.

**Minculete & Olar, (2018)** Marketing and promotion of products by online retailers also play an important role in determining the online consumer behaviour and their relationship with the online retail sector. While focusing on digital marketing, it is an advertising procedure in which electronic means and interactive technologies are used to establish an association between the retailers and consumers. The online retailers use different digital marketing techniques such as email marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization, and pay per click marketing to attract the online consumers. For example, search engine optimization is increasingly used increasing the ranking of the products and company in the search engines such as Google Search and Yahoo.

**Krizanova, Lăzăroiu, Gajanova, Kliestikova, Nadanyiova, & Moravcikova, (2019)** opine that the social media sites use attractive content, images, videos, and audios to attract the attention of the customers. To improve the consumer service level, the online ensures that the content that is shared on the social media platform is useful and authentic. It also includes increasing the engagement levels of consumers by organizing contests or campaigns. As a result, when the consumers experience good social experience, they recommend the brand to the other. It not only increases the customer satisfaction levels but also increases the scalability of the company.

**Berman, (2016)** said that referral marketing is another marketing tool that is related to the word of mouth advertisement of the product and brand. As per the survey conducted by Nielsen's latest Trust in Advertising report, it was found that 84% of consumers highly prefer to buy merchandise as suggested by the family members, friends, and close associates. When the retailers provide adequate services to the customers in the form of quality products, on-time delivery, hassle-free returns, competitive price, and post-sales services, the consumers become loyal advocates of the company and refer the company and product to other individuals. However, to gain the advantage of the referral, the marketer and retailer need to ensure that the customers are provided enriched customer experience and ask for referrals politely to their friends. This marketing technique ensures that all the grievances of the customers are met by providing high-quality services.

**Venkatraman, (2020)** said that while performing online shopping activities, the customer face issues related to lack of rightful information as they could not to depend upon the reviews that are provided by the other users to decide on the purchase of merchandise. However, this issue faced by the customers is resolved by marketers by introducing blogging and microblogging platforms to the customers. Through the blogging platform, the consumers can avail of all the information about the product which they intend to buy. In the current age of digital revolution, each manufacturer and retailer have their websites and blogging sites that provide rightful information about the product to the consumers. Additionally, there are options available to the customers that they can more information to the blog, comment on it, ask for any query, or object to the content if not appropriate. It increases the engagement level of the customers with the company and provides ample opportunities to address customer's queries.

**Olbrich, Schultz, & Bormann, (2019)** claim that in addition to the above claim, marketers are also advertising their products to customers in different regional languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, and Tamil. According to the survey conducted by KPMG India & Google, 2018, it was predicted that there would be 201 million Hindi base users (38%), 51 million Marathi base users (9%), 42 million

Bengali base users (8%), and 32 million Tamil users (6%) against 200 million English users in India by the year 2021. Therefore, marketers are efficiently capturing this opportunity and promoting products in different languages through Hindi posts so that there is a generation of huge traffic on the website. It helps online retailers to reach consumers belonging to different communities and promote products to large masses. It also helps in addressing the issues that are faced by the non-English consumers and meet the needs and want of all consumers that use online shopping platform effectively.

**Nizam, Jaafar, & Supaat, (2018)** claim that there are different types of issues that are faced by the consumer while making online purchases such as returns, refunds, shipping errors, billing errors, wrong information, and unordered merchandise. To resolve the issues faced by the consumers, different marketing strategies such as interactive marketing strategy and digital marketing strategy are adopted by online retailers. While focusing on the interactive marketing strategy, it includes adopting marketing processes that encourage the active engagement of consumers with the marketing campaign of the company. It promotes the adoption of the customer-centric approach in the business processes. It specifies that all activities of the organization must be carried out by keeping the customer service aspects into consideration.

**Majid, (2020)** found that consumers appreciate the initiatives taken by the company to include them in the company working process. For example, when the consumers log into the company website, they might want to see their name with the merchandise interests and communication predilections. When such personalized services are provided to the consumers, they become highly satisfied and tend to remain associated with the company long-term. It also develops a positive relationship between the consumer and brand which empowers the consumers to share product reviews and provide updates about the product response in the market. The consumers also share their grievances with the product and recommend measures that would improve product quality and allow the company to provide better services. For example, Amazon develops a constructive association with its consumers by addressing their grievances in the earnest. It helps in regaining the trust of the consumers and reducing the chances of CCB against the company or products.

**Kingsnorth, (2019)** state that digital marketing is another strategy that can be adopted by the online retailers to promote products, establish communication with the consumers, and resolve the issues that are faced by the consumers. The digital marketing strategy includes two essential aspects that are pulled and push concepts. The digital push aspect is associated with a company perspective in which association is established with the consumers by using different technologies. It includes using email, instant messaging, banner marketing, podcasting, blogs, content marketing, and video marketing. The company provides rightful information about the products which makes it easy for the online consumer to form product purchase decisions. On the other hand, the pull aspects include the consumer perspective that is when they try to connect with the company. The consumer can connect with the company by posting their comments on the company website, social media sites, blogs, instant messages, or calls. The consumers may also signup with the official text message, newsletter, podcasts, and email to share their grievances or issues with the product.

**Mandal & Joshi, (2017)** found that by developing digital communication with the consumers, the company can get a better understanding of the issues that are faced by the users. It includes interacting through private messages, customer care, and the grievance department of the company. When the company representative listens to consumer issues and resolves them, it develops a trust-based association between them. Additionally, many a time, the consumers are faced with issues such as complicated websites as the site navigates then to different options and irrelevant details. It reduces the interest of the visitors to explore the products provided by the online retailer and they switch to less

complicated websites. Thus, the online retailers must ensure that the websites made for consumer interface are simple, attractive, and informative so that more consumers visit the website.

**Madhumitha Ravindran (2022)** in her article "Issues of trust and distrust in e-commerce" E-commerce trust is built on the idea of customer data protection. When a consumer enters an e-com site, there are risks involved, the most common of which is not receiving that for which they paid. On the other hand, a retail trader may be worried about not receiving payment for what they sold.

## Statement of the Problem

Offering secure payment options is crucial for building credibility for your ecommerce store. Customers want to know that their personal and financial information is safe when they make a purchase from your business, and offering secure payment options can help to instill this confidence. Customers look for more personalized buying experience, platforms keeping abreast with social media trends, have an attractive display of the products they sell, has multiple payment option, enables easy checkout process, has effective content strategy and attractive design for the store. The most popular websites for online shopping in India today are a known fact, Amazon India, since June 2013, Flipkart, Nykaa, IndiaMART, Meesho, FirstCry, BookMyShow, OLX, MakeMyTrip and AJIO. These ecommerce platforms use a lot of digital marketing strategies to build customer loyalty and establish platform credibility along with increase in sales revenue. The use of digital marketing helps online retailers to establish interaction with consumers through websites, social media sites, mobile applications, emails, direct calls, and messages. The online retail sites also provide chatbot services to the customers so that any issue faced by them is resolved by the customer assisted device. For example, Amazon which is one of the topmost online retail companies Amazon uses social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to promote its products, increase its market presence, and augment visitor strength. As a result, the company provides efficient platforms to the consumers to avail of rightful information about the product, interact with the online retailers, and make product buying decisions. Thus, when constructive initiatives such as developing communication channels, accurate product specification, customer reviews, and on-time delivery are provided by online retailers, there is the development of a positive relationship between the online customer and online retailers. However, online platforms are highly sensitive to criticism and customer churn due to customers having complaints and issues during their purchase experience. This causes them to give bad reviews online and spread the news of their negative experiences to their contact groups. This can seriously affect the platform credibility. While there is a lot of research on customer satisfaction on online platforms, not much research has been found with regard to customer dissonance resulting in customer churn and loss of credibility. This study deals with an analysis of how customer dissonance impacts the credibility of the ecommerce platforms.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the main issues which lead to customer dissonance on ecommerce platforms.

2. To compare the various issues faced by customers on the top ecommerce platforms and analyse the extent to which they affect vendor trust in the ecommerce platform.
3. To investigate the various strategies adopted by ecommerce platforms' to resolve customer issues and complaints.

### Scope of the Study

This study covers customer satisfaction based on purchase experience in online shopping only. The study is also limited to Dakshina Kannada district only.

## Research Methodology

The study aims at exploring the issues faced by customers on e-commerce platforms. A structured questionnaire consisting of two sections was framed. The first section collected data demographic profile of the respondents that includes age, gender, education, occupation, income and the frequency of online shopping. The second section had 13 questions and collected data on the issues faced by customers on e-commerce platforms. The questionnaire required the respondents to provide their response based on a five-point scale with values ranging from Never (1) to Always (5). The survey was conducted using purposive sampling method and the questionnaire was distributed among 156 respondents in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka, India chosen because of convenience. The statements used in the questionnaire were not obtained from previous studies and hence, reliability test and exploratory factor analysis were performed to check the reliability and validity of the statements and the data. Reliability test was performed on the second section of the questionnaire by using Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha was 0.819. It reflects a good reliability of the scale.

## Data Interpretation and Analysis

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor analysis using principal component analysis was employed to ensure the scale's validity. Although 13 statements were used from the second section of the questionnaire as inputs for factor analysis, only 11 statements were found to be valid (a factor loading of above 0.5). Four factors were obtained from factor analysis. The Eigen values of the four factors were greater that 1. The cumulative variance was 62.49%. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was equal to 0.787. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant. Table 1 presents the variables and the factors with factor loadings above 0.5.

**Table 1**

*Factor Analysis Results*

| Items | Eigen Value | Loadings | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Quality of Customer Service* | 4.271 | | | | |
| Unprofessional Services | | 0.741 | | | |
| Lack of Customer Support | | 0.747 | | | |
| Lack of Personalization | | 0.559 | | | |
| Uncertainty Regarding Payment Failures | | 0.634 | | | |
| *Product Purchase Experience* | 1.507 | | | | |
| Missing or Unclear Product Information | | | 0.639 | | |
| Missing or Fake Product Reviews | | | 0.778 | | |
| Complex Check-out Process | | | 0.728 | | |
| *User Interface Experience* | 1.281 | | | | |
| Poor Search Function | | | | 0.606 | |
| Bad User Experience | | | | 0.685 | |
| Bad Sales Copy | | | | 0.700 | |
| *Hidden Charges* | 1.064 | | | | |
| Extra Hidden Charges | | | | | 0.811 |
| KMO − 0.787; Bartlett's test of sphericity Approx Chi-Square = 585.274; df = 78; Significance = 0.000 | | | | | |

The respondents of the study were the e-commerce platform users who have used them to shop online. The general information of 156 respondents is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**
*General Information*

| Questions | Options | No of Respondents | Total Respondents | Respondents % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Gender** | Male | 50 | 156 | 32.1 |
| | Female | 102 | | 65.4 |
| **2. Age** | Below 20 | 27 | 156 | 17.3 |
| | 21-30 | 90 | | 57.7 |
| | 31-40 | 20 | | 12.8 |
| | 41-50 | 14 | | 9 |
| | 51-60 | 5 | | 3.2 |
| | Above 60 | 0 | | 0 |
| **3. Education** | SSLC | 24 | 156 | 15.4 |
| | PUC | 16 | | 10.3 |
| | Graduation | 40 | | 25.6 |
| | PG | 69 | | 44.2 |
| | Professional | 7 | | 4.5 |
| **4. Occupation** | Student | 76 | 156 | 48.7 |
| | House Wife | 25 | | 16 |
| | Private | 40 | | 25.6 |
| | Government | 7 | | 4.5 |
| | Self Employed | 8 | | 5.2 |
| | Retired | 0 | | 0 |
| **5. Income** | Nil | 82 | 156 | 52.6 |
| | < 2Lakhs | 38 | | 24.4 |
| | 2-5 Lakhs | 23 | | 14.7 |
| | 5-10 Lakhs | 8 | | 5.1 |
| | 10-15 Lakhs | 2 | | 1.3 |
| | > 15 Lakhs | 3 | | 1.9 |
| **6. Frequency of Use of E-Commerce Platforms** | < 10 times | 81 | 156 | 51.9 |
| | 10 -15 times | 52 | | 33.3 |
| | 15-20 times | 13 | | 8.3 |
| | > 20 times | 10 | | 6.4 |

Female respondents constitute 65.4% of the sample and the remaining are males. 57.7% of the respondents fall in the age category of 21-30 indicating a relatively young sample. Majority of the sample have a post graduate degree and are students. As the majority are students, they do not have an annual income. However, this does not prevent them from shopping online. 51.9% of the people have shopped online less than 10 times in the last three months. At least 33.3% of the sample has shopped online 10 to 15 times in the last three months.

**Table 3**
*Quality of Customer Service*

| Items | Mean | Never (1) | Rarely (2) | Sometimes (3) | Often (4) | Always (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Quality of Customer Service* | | % | % | % | % | % |
| Unprofessional Services | 1.46 | 63.5 | 26.9 | 9 | 0.6 | 0 |
| Lack of Customer Support | 1.51 | 61.5 | 26.3 | 12.2 | 0 | 0 |
| Lack of Personalization | 1.52 | 60.9 | 29.5 | 6.4 | 3.2 | 0 |
| Uncertainty Regarding Payment Failures | 1.37 | 68.6 | 25.6 | 5.8 | 0 | 0 |

Table 3 presents the opinion of respondents on the quality of customer service provided by e-commerce platforms. All the four statements have a mean score below average indicating that majority of the respondents disagree to the statements. The respondents have experienced good customer service. Only a small percentage of the population have had issues with the quality of customer service sometimes. Hence, the study finds that the quality of customer service is good on e-commerce platforms.

**Table 4**
*Product Purchase Experience*

| Items | Mean | Never (1) | Rarely (2) | Sometimes (3) | Often (4) | Always (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Product Purchase Experience* | | % | % | % | % | % |
| Missing or Unclear Product Information | 1.62 | 51.3 | 35.9 | 11.5 | 1.3 | 0 |
| Missing or Fake Product Reviews | 1.74 | 51.9 | 28.3 | 13.4 | 6.4 | 0 |
| Complex Check-out Process | 1.43 | 67.9 | 23.1 | 7.1 | 1.9 | 0 |

Table 4 presents the opinion of respondents on the product purchase experience on e-commerce platforms. All the three statements have a mean score below average indicating that the majority is

satisfied with the product purchase experience. The customers believe that they have sufficient product information, have good reviews for decision making and the checkout process is smooth. However, 10 to 15 percent of the sample have faced these issues. Overall, the product purchase experience was good for customers.

**Table 5**
*User Interface Experience*

| Items | Mean | Never (1) | Rarely (2) | Sometimes (3) | Often (4) | Always (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *User Interface Experience* | | % | % | % | % | % |
| Poor Search Function | 1.56 | 60.3 | 25 | 13.5 | 1.3 | 0 |
| Bad User Experience | 1.56 | 61.5 | 21.8 | 15.4 | 1.3 | 0 |
| Bad Sales Copy | 1.74 | 51.9 | 23.7 | 23.1 | 1.3 | 0 |

Table 5 presents the opinion of respondents on their user interface experience online. The mean score for the three statements is below average indicating that the experience was not bad for customers. The respondents agree that the search function, sales copy and user experience is good while shopping online.

**Table 6**
*Hidden Charges*

| Items | Mean | Never (1) | Rarely (2) | Sometimes (3) | Often (4) | Always (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Hidden Charges* | | % | % | % | % | % |
| Extra Hidden Charges | 1.67 | 53.2 | 28.2 | 17.3 | 1.3 | 0 |

Table 6 presents the opinion of respondents on their experience on hidden charges of e-commerce platforms. Majority agree that they have not faced such issue as the mean score is below average. However, 17% have experienced extra hidden charges in their online shopping experience.

**Conclusions**

Customer satisfaction with online purchases is a critical aspect of the e-commerce industry. In recent years, the convenience of online shopping has led to increased customer expectations and a greater emphasis on delivering a positive shopping experience. This study explored the issues faced by customers purchasing online.

Overall, customer satisfaction in online purchases is influenced by factors such as website usability, product quality, on-time delivery, and customer service. E-commerce platforms that prioritize user-friendly interfaces, secure payment options, and efficient navigation tend to receive higher satisfaction

ratings. The quality of products received, aligned with customer expectations set by online descriptions, significantly impacts satisfaction levels.

Timely and reliable delivery services play a pivotal role in shaping customer satisfaction. Shoppers appreciate accurate delivery estimates, real-time tracking, and hassle-free return policies. Additionally, responsive and helpful customer service contributes to a positive experience, addressing concerns promptly and effectively.

Customer reviews and ratings often influence purchasing decisions, highlighting the importance of fostering positive interactions. In conclusion, maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction in online purchases requires a holistic approach that encompasses website functionality, product quality, delivery efficiency, and responsive customer service.

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