To Assess the Level of Consumer Awareness About Major E-Commerce Platforms in Coimbatore District

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Abstract—The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has significantly transformed the retail sector, leading to the widespread adoption of e-commerce platforms in India. With increasing smartphone penetration, affordable internet connectivity, and digital payment systems, online shopping has become an integral part of consumers' purchasing behavior. In this context, consumer awareness plays a crucial role in determining the effective adoption and utilization of e-commerce platforms. Awareness not only includes familiarity with major platforms but also encompasses knowledge about platform features such as product variety, pricing mechanisms, promotional offers, secure payment systems, return and refund policies, and customer support services.

The present study aims to assess the level of consumer awareness about major e-commerce platforms in Coimbatore District. The study adopts a descriptive research design and is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 175 respondents using a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were sourced from journals, books, and online publications. The data were analyzed using percentage analysis, mean score analysis, and the Mann–Whitney U test to examine gender-wise differences in awareness levels.

The findings reveal that consumers in Coimbatore District possess a generally moderate to high level of awareness regarding major e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and Meesho. The demographic analysis indicates a diverse respondent profile in terms of age, education, occupation, income, and internet experience. The Mann–Whitney U test results show that gender does not significantly influence awareness levels across most dimensions of e-commerce platforms, including platform familiarity, advertisements, mobile applications, sales and discounts, secure payment systems, and product comparison features. However, a significant difference is observed in awareness of return and refund policies, with male respondents exhibiting higher awareness than female respondents.

The study concludes that while overall consumer awareness of e-commerce platforms in Coimbatore District is satisfactory, specific gaps exist in post-purchase awareness, particularly related to return and refund procedures. The findings highlight the need for targeted consumer education initiatives and transparent communication strategies to enhance trust, confidence, and sustained engagement with e-commerce platforms.

Index Terms—Consumer Awareness, E-commerce Platforms, Online Shopping, Gender Differences, Mann–Whitney U Test, Coimbatore District

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of information and communication technology has significantly transformed the retail landscape, giving rise to e-commerce platforms as a dominant mode of buying and selling goods and services. In India, the increasing penetration of smartphones, affordable internet access, and digital payment systems has accelerated the adoption of online shopping across both urban and semi-urban regions. E-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and Meesho have reshaped consumer purchasing patterns by offering convenience, competitive pricing, wider product assortments, and doorstep delivery.

Consumer awareness plays a pivotal role in the adoption and effective utilization of e-commerce platforms. Awareness not only relates to familiarity with platform names but also encompasses knowledge about product availability, payment options, security

features, discount schemes, return and refund policies, and customer service mechanisms. Higher awareness levels often translate into increased trust, frequent usage, and positive purchase intentions.

Coimbatore District, being one of the major commercial and industrial hubs of Tamil Nadu, exhibits a diverse consumer base with varying socio-economic backgrounds. While digital adoption is growing rapidly, differences in awareness levels may exist due to factors such as age, education, income, and digital literacy. Hence, assessing the level of consumer awareness towards major e-commerce platforms becomes essential to understand the readiness of consumers to participate effectively in the digital marketplace.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumar and Anjaly (2021) examined consumer awareness and usage patterns of major e-commerce platforms in urban India. The study revealed that awareness of leading platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart was relatively high among educated and internet-savvy consumers. However, awareness regarding platform features such as return policies, secure payment systems, and grievance redressal mechanisms was found to be moderate. The authors concluded that while brand recognition of e-commerce platforms is strong, functional awareness remains uneven among consumers.

Sivanesan (2022) conducted a study on consumer awareness and perception towards online shopping platforms in Tamil Nadu. The findings indicated that consumers were highly aware of popular e-commerce platforms due to aggressive digital advertising and peer influence. However, differences in awareness levels were observed across gender and income groups, particularly in understanding promotional offers, refund processes, and data security measures. The study emphasized the need for enhanced consumer education to improve informed online purchasing behavior.

Rani and Ramesh (2023) analyzed consumer awareness and trust in e-commerce platforms in South India with special reference to tier-II cities. The results showed that while consumers were familiar with major platforms, awareness regarding platform policies, authenticity of sellers, and post-purchase services was comparatively low. The study highlighted that increased awareness significantly improves consumer confidence and repeat purchase intention, suggesting that awareness acts as a key determinant of sustainable e-commerce growth.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the widespread presence of e-commerce platforms and aggressive digital marketing strategies, the level of consumer awareness regarding online shopping platforms varies considerably among consumers. Many consumers may be familiar with the names of popular platforms but lack adequate understanding of their functionalities, security measures, pricing mechanisms, or post-purchase services such as returns and refunds. Inadequate awareness can lead to mistrust, dissatisfaction, and underutilization of e-commerce services.

In Coimbatore District, although internet access and smartphone usage are relatively high, disparities in awareness levels may restrict the full potential of e-commerce adoption. Consumers with limited awareness may hesitate to engage in online transactions or may face challenges during the purchasing process. Therefore, there is a need to empirically assess the level of consumer awareness about major e-commerce platforms to identify existing gaps and support strategies aimed at improving consumer knowledge and confidence.

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To assess the level of consumer awareness about major e-commerce platforms in coimbatore district.

V. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Based on the objective, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H_0 (Null Hypothesis)

There is no significant level of consumer awareness about major e-commerce platforms among consumers in Coimbatore District.

- H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis)

There is a significant level of consumer awareness about major e-commerce platforms among consumers in Coimbatore District.

(If required for further analysis, sub-hypotheses may be framed based on socio-economic variables such as age, education, and income.)

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design
The study adopts a descriptive research design, as it aims to measure and describe the level of consumer awareness towards major e-commerce platforms.

6.2 Area of the Study
The research is confined to Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu.

6.3 Population and Sample Size
The population of the study consists of consumers who have access to the internet and are potential or existing users of e-commerce platforms. A sample of 175 respondents is selected using an appropriate sampling technique (such as convenience or simple random sampling).

6.4 Data Collection
- Primary Data:

Collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale to measure awareness levels.
- Secondary Data

Collected from journals, books, reports, websites, and previous studies related to e-commerce and consumer behavior.

6.5 Tools for Analysis
The collected data are analyzed using:
- Percentage Analysis
- Mean Score Analysis
- MANN –WHITNEY TEST

6.6 Period of the Study

The study covers data collected during a specific reference period.

VII. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The study focuses exclusively on consumer awareness of major e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and Meesho.
- It provides insights into the extent of consumer familiarity with online shopping platforms, their features, and services.
- The findings may help e-commerce companies to improve awareness campaigns and consumer education programs.
- The study serves as a reference for future research on consumer behavior, digital marketing, and online retailing.

VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite careful design and execution, the study has the following limitations:
1. The study is restricted to consumers residing in Coimbatore District; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other regions.
2. The findings are based on self-reported responses, which may involve personal bias or inaccurate perceptions.
3. The sample size is limited due to time and cost constraints.
4. The study measures awareness at a specific point in time; rapid changes in digital platforms may affect future relevance.
5. Only selected major e-commerce platforms are considered, excluding smaller or niche platforms.

IX. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETERATION

Personal information of the respondents			No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender		Male	113	64.6
		Female	62	35.4
		Total	175	100.0
Age		Below 29 Years	43	24.6
		21 Years to 30 Years	40	22.9
		31 Years to 40 Years	27	15.4
		41 Years to 50 Years	33	18.9

		Frequency	Percent
	Above 50 Years	32	18.3
	Total	175	100.0
Educational Qualification	School education	38	21.7
	HSC/ DIPLOMA	33	18.9
	UG	29	16.6
	PG	44	25.1
	PROFESSIONAL	31	17.7
	Total	175	100.0
Occupational status	Student	25	14.3
	Private employee	33	18.9
	Government employee	34	19.4
	Self employed	25	14.3
	Home maker	26	14.9
	Others	32	18.3
	Total	175	100.0
Monthly_Income	Below Rs.15000	36	20.6
	Rs.15001 to Rs.30,000	26	14.9
	Rs.30001 to Rs.50,000	33	18.9
	Rs.50,001 to Rs.75,000	40	22.9
	Above Rs.75000	40	22.9
	Total	175	100.0
	Single	57	32.6
	Married	118	67.4
	Total	175	100.0
Family_Type	Joint family	74	42.3
	Nuclear Family	101	57.7
	Total	175	100.0
Residence	Urban	63	36.0
	Semi urban	51	29.1
	Rural	61	34.9
	Total	175	100.0
		Frequency	Percent
Internet_Experience	Less than one year	36	20.6
	One year to 3 years	38	21.7
	3 years to 5 years	47	26.9
	>5 years	54	30.9
	Total	175	100.0
Shopping_Device	Smart phone	39	22.3
	Laptop	50	28.6
	tablet	44	25.1
	Multiple	42	24.0
	Total	175	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The personal profile analysis of the 175 respondents reveals a fairly diverse and balanced sample. With regard to gender, the majority of respondents are male (64.6%), while 35.4% are female, indicating a higher participation of male respondents in the study. In terms of age, respondents are well distributed across different age groups. The highest proportion belongs to the below 29 years category (24.6%), followed by 21–30 years (22.9%). Respondents aged 41–50 years (18.9%) and above 50 years (18.3%) also form a considerable share, suggesting representation of both young and mature consumers. Regarding educational qualification, a significant proportion of respondents possess postgraduate qualifications (25.1%), followed by those with school education (21.7%) and professional qualifications (17.7%). This indicates that the respondents are reasonably educated and capable of providing informed opinions. The occupational status shows that government employees (19.4%) and private employees (18.9%) constitute the major segments, followed by others (18.3%). Students, self-employed individuals, and homemakers each contribute around 14–15%, reflecting occupational diversity. With respect to monthly income, the largest share of respondents falls in the Rs. 50,001 to Rs. 75,000 and above Rs. 75,000 categories (22.9% each), indicating a comparatively higher income group. This is followed by respondents earning below Rs. 15,000 (20.6%), showing representation from lower-income groups as well. In terms of marital status, a majority of respondents are married (67.4%), while 32.6% are single, suggesting that family-oriented consumers dominate the sample. Correspondingly, nuclear families (57.7%) are more prevalent than joint families (42.3%). Regarding place of residence, respondents are almost evenly distributed among urban (36.0%), rural (34.9%), and semi-urban (29.1%) areas, ensuring geographical balance. With respect to internet experience, a substantial proportion of respondents have more than five years of experience (30.9%), followed by those with 3–5 years (26.9%), indicating good familiarity with internet usage. Finally, in terms of shopping devices, laptops (28.6%) are the most preferred device, followed by tablets (25.1%), multiple devices (24.0%), and smartphones (22.3%), suggesting multi-device usage behavior among respondents. Overall, the profile indicates a well-diversified respondent base in terms of demographic, socio-economic, and technological characteristics, enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the study findings

MANN –WHITNEY TEST

n consumer behavior and e-commerce studies, the Mann–Whitney U test is commonly used to analyze whether male and female respondents differ significantly in terms of awareness, satisfaction, perception, or usage behavior.

TABLE NO.2

Ranks				
	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Aware_Major_Platforms	MALE	113	90.22	10194.50
	FEMALE	62	83.96	5205.50
	Total	175		
Aware_Fashion_Platforms	MALE	113	92.27	10426.50
	FEMALE	62	80.22	4973.50
	Total	175		
Aware_Budget_Platforms	MALE	113	91.91	10385.50
	FEMALE	62	80.88	5014.50
	Total	175		
Exposure_Advertisements	MALE	113	92.04	10400.00
	FEMALE	62	80.65	5000.00
	Total	175		
Aware_Mobile_Apps	MALE	113	91.84	10377.50
	FEMALE	62	81.01	5022.50
	Total	175		

Aware_Sales_Discounts	MALE	113	88.67	10019.50
	FEMALE	62	86.78	5380.50
	Total	175		
Aware_Return_Refund	MALE	113	93.25	10537.00
	FEMALE	62	78.44	4863.00
	Total	175		
Product_Comparison_Knowledge	MALE	113	92.14	10412.00
	FEMALE	62	80.45	4988.00
	Total	175		
Ratings_Reviews_Understanding	MALE	113	87.10	9842.50
	FEMALE	62	89.64	5557.50
	Total	175		
Aware_Secure_Payments	MALE	113	88.95	10051.00
	FEMALE	62	86.27	5349.00
	Total	175		

Interpretation of Gender-wise Awareness Levels (Mean Rank Analysis)

The rank analysis compares the level of awareness between male (1.00) and female (2.00) respondents across various dimensions related to e-commerce platforms. The interpretation is based on mean ranks, where a higher mean rank indicates a higher level of awareness.

Overall, male respondents show higher awareness levels than female respondents across most dimensions. Specifically, males have higher mean ranks in awareness of major e-commerce platforms, fashion platforms, budget platforms, advertisements, mobile apps, sales and discounts, return and refund policies, product comparison features, and secure payment systems. This suggests that male respondents are comparatively more informed and exposed to various aspects of e-commerce usage and functionality.

The highest difference in mean ranks is observed in awareness of return and refund policies, where males (Mean Rank: 93.25) significantly outperform females (Mean Rank: 78.44). This indicates that male respondents are more knowledgeable about post-purchase services, which are crucial for online shopping decisions.

Similarly, males also demonstrate greater awareness regarding fashion platforms, advertisement exposure, and product comparison knowledge, reflecting higher engagement with online shopping content and decision-support tools.

However, an exception is observed in understanding of ratings and reviews, where female respondents (Mean Rank: 89.64) have a slightly higher mean rank compared to male respondents (87.10). This indicates that female consumers tend to rely more on and better understand online ratings and reviews while making purchase decisions.

In summary, the analysis reveals a gender-based variation in awareness levels, with males generally exhibiting higher awareness of e-commerce platforms and operational features, while females show relatively stronger understanding of ratings and reviews. This variation highlights the need for gender-specific awareness and marketing strategies to enhance consumer knowledge and engagement across different segments.

TABLE NO.3
Test Statistics - Mann-Whitney U

		Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
	Aware_Major_Platforms	3252.5	5205.5	-0.839	0.401
	Aware_Fashion_Platforms	3020.5	4973.5	-1.60471	0.109
	Aware_Budget_Platforms	3061.5	5014.5	-1.47189	0.141
	Exposure_Advertisements	3047	5000	-1.5003	0.134
	Aware_Mobile_Apps	3069.5	5022.5	-1.46313	0.143
	Aware_Sales_Discounts	3427.5	5380.5	-0.25245	0.801
	Aware_Return_Refund	2910	4863	-1.99641	0.046
	Product Comparison Knowledge	3035	4988	-1.57094	0.116
	Ratings_Reviews_Understanding	3401.5	9842.5	-0.33815	0.735
	Aware_Secure_Payments	3396	5349	-0.3576	0.721

It is found that, for most of the awareness dimensions, the p-values are greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents. Specifically, no significant gender-wise difference is observed in:

- Awareness of major e-commerce platforms (p = 0.401)
- Awareness of fashion platforms (p = 0.109)
- Awareness of budget platforms (p = 0.141)
- Exposure to advertisements (p = 0.134)
- Awareness of mobile applications (p = 0.143)
- Awareness of sales and discounts (p = 0.801)
- Product comparison knowledge (p = 0.116)
- Understanding of ratings and reviews (p = 0.735)
- Awareness of secure payment systems (p = 0.721)

These results imply that both male and female respondents possess similar levels of awareness across most aspects of e-commerce platforms.

Significant Difference Identified
A statistically significant difference is observed only for awareness of return and refund policies, where the p-value is 0.046, which is less than the 0.05 threshold. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected for this variable. Based on the earlier mean rank analysis, male respondents exhibit a higher level of awareness regarding return and refund policies compared to female respondents. This indicates that gender plays a role specifically in post-purchase awareness aspects of e-commerce platforms.

Overall Interpretation
The Mann–Whitney U test results reveal that gender does not significantly influence awareness levels for most e-commerce-related dimensions. However, awareness of return and refund policies differs significantly between males and females, suggesting the need for improved consumer education—particularly among female users—on post-purchase procedures and policies.

X. SUGGESTIONS BASED ON GENDER-WISE AWARENESS ANALYSIS (MANN–WHITNEY U TEST)

Based on the findings of the Mann–Whitney U test and mean rank analysis, the following research-based and practical suggestions are proposed:

1. Enhance Awareness of Return and Refund Policies

Since a significant gender difference exists in awareness of return and refund policies, e-commerce platforms should design simple, visual, and easily understandable explanations of return and refund procedures, especially targeting female consumers through FAQs, short videos, and infographics.

2. Strengthen Post-Purchase Communication

E-commerce companies should provide clear post-purchase notifications (via SMS, email, and in-app alerts) regarding return windows, refund timelines, and policy conditions to improve overall consumer confidence.

3. Gender-Neutral Awareness Campaigns

As no significant gender difference is observed for most awareness dimensions, platforms should continue with inclusive and gender-neutral awareness

campaigns, ensuring that information dissemination strategies cater equally to all users.

4. Focus on Consumer Education Programs

Educational initiatives such as digital literacy programs, webinars, and guided app tutorials can help consumers—particularly first-time and less-experienced users—better understand features like product comparison tools, secure payment methods, and discount mechanisms.

5. Improve Visibility of Consumer Rights Information

Information related to returns, refunds, warranties, and grievance redressal mechanisms should be prominently displayed on e-commerce platforms to enhance transparency and trust.

6. Customized In-App Support

E-commerce platforms may introduce personalized in-app assistance or chatbot-based guidance that explains policies and procedures based on user behavior, thereby reducing confusion and improving user experience.

7. Encourage Review-Based Decision Support

Although gender differences are insignificant in most areas, platforms should continue to promote the use of ratings and reviews by providing authenticity indicators, reviewer credibility scores, and simplified summaries to support informed decision-making.

8. Policy Implication for Regulators

Consumer protection authorities and policymakers should ensure standardization of return and refund disclosures across platforms to minimize misunderstanding and improve consumer confidence, especially among vulnerable user groups.

The study suggests that while gender does not significantly influence most dimensions of e-commerce awareness, targeted efforts are required to improve post-purchase awareness, particularly regarding return and refund policies. Strengthening consumer education and transparent communication will enhance trust, satisfaction, and sustained usage of e-commerce platforms.

XI. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that consumers in Coimbatore District exhibit a generally moderate to high level of awareness about major e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and Meesho. The findings indicate that gender does not significantly influence awareness across most platform-related dimensions; however, a notable gap exists in awareness of return and refund policies, where male consumers demonstrate higher awareness than female consumers. This highlights the need for improved post-purchase information dissemination and consumer education initiatives. Enhancing transparency and simplifying communication related to return and refund procedures can strengthen consumer trust, satisfaction, and sustained engagement with e-commerce platforms, supporting the long-term growth of online retailing in tier-II cities (Kumar & Anjaly, 2021; Rani & Ramesh, 2023).

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