The Popularity of Online Shopping is increasing during COVID-19 Pandemic: An Online Study in Khulna City of Bangladesh

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Abstract:

The growing trend of online shopping has taken over the popularity of traditional shopping among its consumers In recent decade. In the world of digitization it has eased the difficulties of retailing and paved a modern approach to trade online. In this paper, we aim to investigate the reason of the increase of popularity of online shopping among the consumers of a selected region, especially during this pandemic period. The present study has been conducted among the consumers of Khulna City. Convenience sampling method has been used to select the sample. The primary data was collected from 111 respondents by means of a self-constructed questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed using Excel and SPSS software. There are many reasons for increasing of online sales. However, due to time and resource constraints, this paper considers some influential factors such as Facebook, website design, reviews and Covid-19. 72.1% of respondents would like to start up an online shopping service because they can run that with their study, job or other businesses. Almost 97.3% respondents think that online business is the demand of time because it is less risky and they can stay home through this. Of these, 63.1% respondents have increased online shopping than before and 13.5% have been involved in online shopping for the very first time by the influence of Covid-19. This study has been conducted by online which may not be generalized. It is an established fact that online shopping has become crucial for every business hub. But the pandemic has accelerated the shift towards a more digital world and triggered changes in online shopping behaviors that are likely to have lasting effects.

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1. Introduction

Online shopping is a sort of e-commerce that allows consumers to directly purchase goods or services from a seller by using the web. An online shop contains physical similarity of buying products as well as services from internet shops and this process of shopping is called business-to-consumer online shopping. Online shopping is the practice in which consumers decide to buy a product through the internet. Online shopping is one of the fastest-growing trends in the world. Also, online businesses are growing rapidly in Bangladesh. With the increase of internet users, the number of online shoppers is also increasing.

The internet has played a significant role in people's daily life through its varied service from communicating to trading (Katawetawaraks & Wang, 2011). Meanwhile, internet shopping has been widely accepted as a way of purchasing products and services, it has become a more popular means in the web world (Bourlakis, Papagiannidis, & Fox, 2008). It also provides consumer more information and choices to compare product and price, more choice, easier to find anything online (Butler & Peppard, 1998). Online shopping has been show to provide more satisfaction to modern consumers seeking convenience and speed (Yu & Wu, 2007).

Online shopping is gradually becoming more popular. Online shopping is quickly becoming the preferred way of expressing all purchases made at home, at work or in another country. This trend of shopping online from the comfort of one's own home has recently gained traction in Asia. Bikroy.com, ekhaney.com, buynia.com, bagdoom.com, PriyoShop.com, Kiksha.com, and Daraz.com, for example, appear to have introduced the movement much faster in Bangladesh, with various fashion, furniture, cosmetics, medicine, and food websites, as well as venturing into more widely known companies such as bikroy.com, ekhaney.com, buynia.com, bagdoom.com. When consumers want to buy product, they will look at the brand and the characteristics of product or service, web site features, firm capabilities, marketing communication stimuli and consumer skills are also important for customer's decisions to shop (Laudon & Traver, 2009) web site feature is one of the important fact that can influence consumers to buy online products (Prasad & and Aryasri, 2009) consumer experience with online shopping (Broekhuizen & Huizingh, 2009) or consumer skills, which refer to the knowledge that consumers have about product and how online shopping works also influences online shoppers (Laudon & Traver, 2009).

In this paper, we aim to investigate the popularity of online shopping is increasing in a particular region. For the ease of analysis, we selected Khulna city, which is situated in the southern part of Bangladesh. The study broadly identifies the things that attract most for online shopping, satisfaction about product delivery, dissatisfaction about online shopping, the influence of Facebook and website design, effects of reviews, and the influence of covid-19. The present paper focuses on the study of identify increasing and influences factors behind online shopping and also find out dissatisfaction level about online shopping.

2. Literature review

In this new era of generation, the number of people shopping online has increased significantly throughout the year which gives a greater impact on the business world (Vasić,

Kilibarda, & Kaurin, 2019). The growth in the number of online shoppers is greater than the growth in Internet users, indicating that more Internet users are becoming comfortable to shop online (Gurleen & Kanwal, 2012). This whole new phenomenon of purchasing online kept on increasing due to the existence of the internet that triggers the users to choose the online shopping medium to purchase their items (Katawetawaraks & Wang, 2011). The Internet, as a means for both firms and individuals to conduct business, is nowadays one of the most widely used non-store formats (Saprikis, Chouliara, & Vlachopoulou, 2010).

From the customer's point of view, the Internet offered the potential advantages of reducing shopping time and money spent (Zama, Yawei, Siddiqui, Wang, Liu, & Lu, 2010). It allowed twenty-four hours a day access, provided perhaps better service, and gave the consumer perception of control over the shopping experience. The two most commonly cited reasons for online shopping have been convenience and price (Rahman, Islam, Esha, Sultana, & Chakravorty, 2018). The capability of purchasing without leaving your place is of great interest to many consumers. Online shopping permits the consumer to buy or to purchase online at anytime and anywhere as long as they are connected to the internet (Gurleen & Kanwal, 2012). The potential benefits of online shopping for consumers include convenience, various selection, low price, original services, personal attention, and easy access to information, among others (Zhou, Dai, & Zhang, 2007).

Online shopping has great economic prospects. Online traders should understand the scope of the industry and for developing this economically potential industry in the country traders should realize that determinants of success not only depend on website presence, low price, and product variety but also depend on service quality. The consumer should be satisfied with the additional benefits he/she would receive from online shopping (Sadia, Hoq, & Jebu, 2019). The Internet has developed into a new distributive channel for many products. Using the internet to shop online has become a primary reason to use the internet, combined with searching for products and finding information about them. Therefore, the internet has developed a highly competitive market, where the competition over consumers is fierce (Sharma & Dwivedi, 2019). The Internet has developed into a new distributive channel for many products. Using the web to buy online has become a primary reason to use the web, combined with checking out products and finding information about them. Therefore, the internet has developed a highly competitive market, where the competition over consumers is fierce. The Internet has changed the way consumers store and has rapidly developed into a worldwide perspective. Many companies started using online shopping with the aim of reducing marketing costs, which will lead to reducing the price of their products in order to stay forward in very highly competitive markets. Companies also use the web to deliver, connect and distribute information and products. The customer uses the web in numerous ways not just for buying the products, but also to match product structures, prices, warranties, and delivery services. Many specialists are positive about the future of the online marketing business. In accumulation to the wonderful potential of the E-market, the web provides a singular opening for companies to additional efficiently to succeed in existing and possible customers. Although the maximum income of online dealing comes from business-to-business trade, the practitioners of business-to-consumer trade should not lose their confidence. Researchers and practitioners of e-commerce regularly struggle to develop an improved vision into consumer behavior and Along with the development of E-retailing, scholars continue to explain consumer's behavior from diverse perspectives and many of the studies have assumptions that are based on classical models of consumer behavior, and then study the validity of e-marketing (Singh & Sailo, 2013).

The study paper, according to (Tabassum, Khan, & Farhana, 2017), aims to determine the relationship between the influential factors of price, trust, convenience, and experience in determining attitudes toward online shopping. Data is collected from 318 Bangladeshi users in the urban youth segment using a self-administered and organized questionnaire. This paper discusses five parameters.The importance of five parameters discussed in this paper, attributed, followed by price, is found to be greater than that of others. Another finding is that the parameter variables are variable.

Both convenience and trust are linked and can be represented by the same factors. The foundation. It can also be used in other developed countries to learn more about their target market. Online commerce, according to (Lim & Osman, 2014), is attracting the attention of university students.The purpose of this paper is to identify the key drivers of online shopping intention among Malaysian undergraduate students. Several quantitative factors were investigated, including perceived convenience, website attractiveness, perceived riskiness, and initial confidence. According to (Mansori, Liat, & Shan, 2012), recent developments in the business sector, combined with the increasing popularity of the Internet, have made businesses more aware of the importance of e-business in achieving a competitive edge in the global market. The aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence online shopping intention, which will aid in the development of better marketing strategies.

3. Methodology

The present study has been conducted among the consumers of Khulna City of Bangladesh. The study is explorative as well as descriptive in nature. Convenience sampling method has been used to select the sample. This study will be helpful in exploring the popularity of online shopping. For the purpose of the given study primary and secondary data has been used. The primary data was collected by means of a self-constructed questionnaire. The questionnaires were given to respondents in an online form due to covid-19. The questionnaire contained a total of 17 questions. The respondents were selected conveniently and 111 respondents gave their responses on online. The Secondary data has been collected from various books, journals, published research papers etc. The collected data was analyzed using Excel and SPSS software. A regression analysis has been conducted to explore potential contributing factors of online shopping systems.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Demographic characteristics

The primary data are collected from 111 respondents from Khulna city of Bangladesh. The demographic attributes of the sample respondents are as follows:
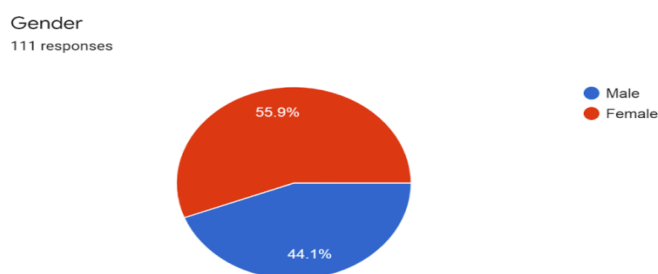

Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

The figure shows that, among the 111 respondents 49(44.1%) are male and 62(55.9%) are female respondents.
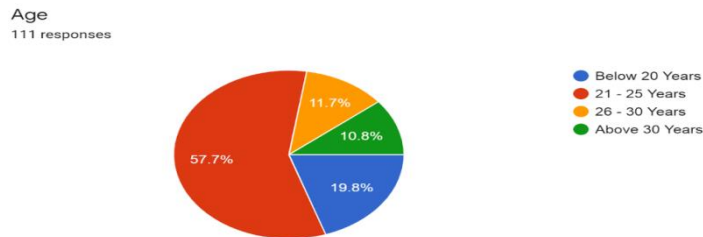

Figure 4.2: Age of Respondents (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).
Among 111 respondents, 19.8% respondents are below 20 years of age. 57.7% respondents are in 21-25 years' age group. 11.7% respondent are in 26-30 years' segment. And the rest 10.8% respondents are above 30 years.

Increasing factors of online shopping
There are lots of factors that increase online shopping. Some factors attract people most for online shopping and some are influence people to start up online shopping service. Some factors are related to the favorability of governments' current rules, regulations, policies and IT sectors budgets and some are like free shipping/delivery and the duration of delivery time.

Figure 4.3: Most attractive things for online shopping (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).
The figure shows that 46.8% respondent feel attraction to do online shopping for exclusive product that are not available in physical shop, 44.1% for all time (7/24) accessability, 42.3% for money and time efficiency, 36% for versatility of product, 17.1% for customization of product and services facility and 26.1% customer feels that online shopping is easier than traditional shopping.
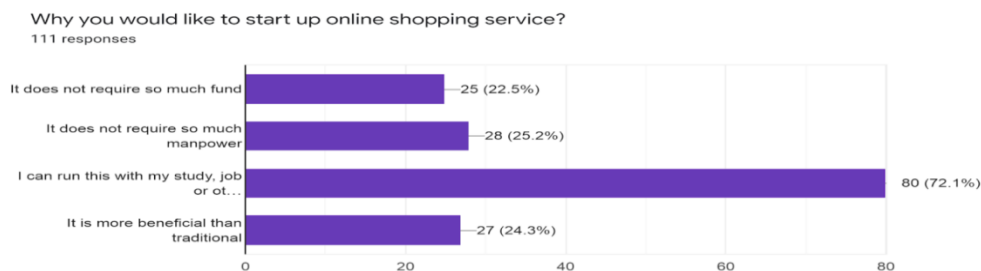

Figure 4.4: Reasons behind starting up online shopping service (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

From the above figure we can see that 22.5% people start up online shopping service because it does not require so much funds, 25.2% for it does not require so much manpower, 72.1% people are involved in online shopping as they can run this with their study, job or other businesses and 24.3% think it is more beneficial than traditional business.

Figure 4.5: Favorability of governments' current rules, regulations, policies and IT sectors budgets for online shopping (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

The graph shows that 8.1% respondents thinks the governments' current rules, regulations, policies and IT sectors budgets are unfavorable, 8.1% respondent think it is near to unfavorable. 36.9% respondent have neutral opinion about the favorability of Govt. rules, regulation and IT sector budget. 27.9% respondent think as near favorable and 18.9% think it is favorable.
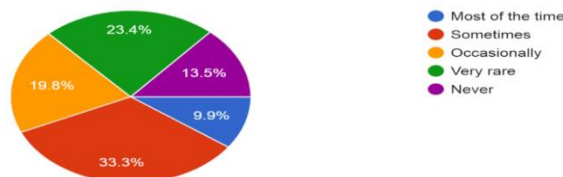

Figure 4.6: Experience of free shipping or delivery during online shopping (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

Among the respondent 9.9% experienced free shipping/delivery most of the time, 33.3% experienced sometimes, 19.8% experienced occasionally, 23.4% experienced very rare and 13.5% never experienced during online shopping.
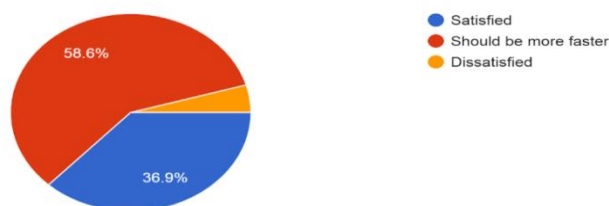

Figure 4.7: Opinion about product/service delivery time (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

The above figure tells that 36.9% respondent customers are satisfied with delivery time where 4.5% are dissatisfied. 58.6% customer thinks that the delivery time should be faster.

Dissatisfaction about online shopping
There is some dissatisfaction about online shopping among various consumers
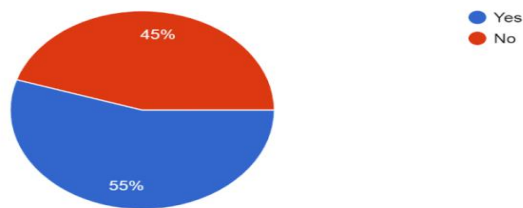

Figure 4.8: Facing of frauds during online shopping (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020)

From figure 4.8 we can see that 55% respondent customers faced frauds during online shopping and 45% said they never faced any kind of frauds.
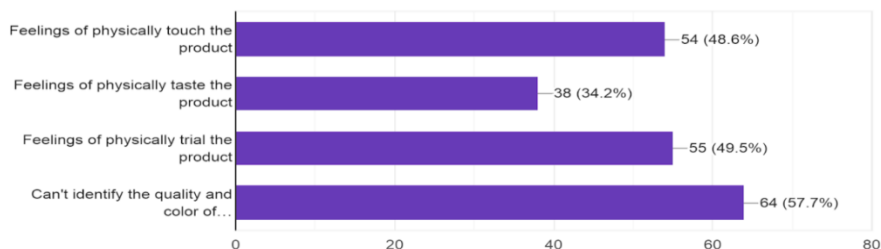

Figure 4.9: Mostly missing things during online shopping (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020)

From figure 4.9 we can see that 54 respondents customer (48.6%) miss the feeling of physically touch the product, 38 respondent (34.2%) miss the feelings of physically taste the product, 55 respondents(49.5%) miss the feelings of physically trial the product and 64 respondents(57.7%) customer can't identify the quality and color of the product during online shopping.

Influences factors of online shopping
Now a day Face book is the most popular social media in our country. Large amount of people is using Facebook daily. For this Facebook is a suitable medium for promoting.

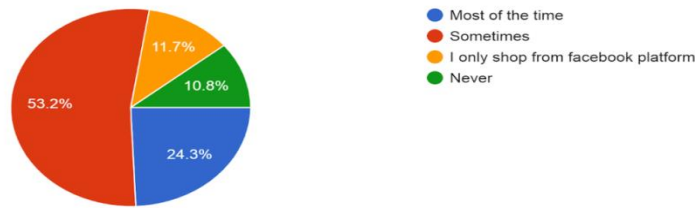How often you shop from facebook platform?
111 responses

● Most of the time
● Sometimes
● I only shop from facebook platform
● Never

Figure 4.10: Shopping experience from Facebook platform (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

The figure shows that 24.3% respondent customer do online shopping most of the time from Facebook platform, 53.2% shopping sometimes, 11.7% shop only from Facebook platform and 10.8% customer never shopped from Facebook platform.

Have you ever market from facebook platform suddenly or without any pre intention of shopping?
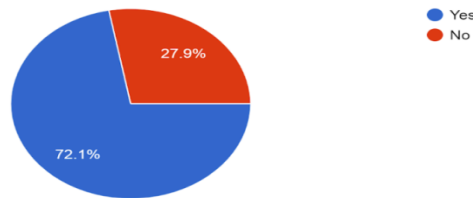111 responses

● Yes
● No

Figure 4.11: Shopping experience from Facebook platform suddenly or without any pre intention (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

From the figure 4.11 we can see that 72.1% respondent customer market from Facebook platform suddenly or without any pre intention of shopping. 27.9%customers don't market from Facebook platform suddenly or without any pre intention of shopping.

Website design plays a vital role for shopping in online and that particular store.

What is your opinion about the website of various online shop?
111 responses

Very easy to use — 62 (55.9%)
Sometimes I faced difficulties to use — 40 (36%)
It requires personal information to pro… — 23 (20.7%)
It's very tough — 3 (2.7%)
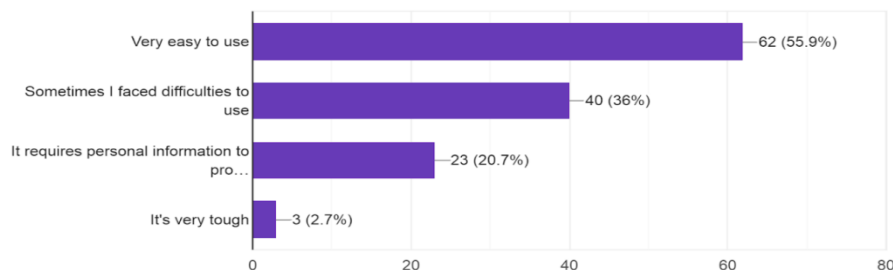
Figure 4.12: Opinion about the website of various online shops' (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

Here, the large portions (55.9%) of the respondent agrees that websites of various online shops' are very easy to use, 36% respondent faced difficulties, 2.7% said it's very tough and 20.7% respondent response that, it requires personal information to provide access.

Have you ever change your shopping decision from a shop for customer unfriendly website design?
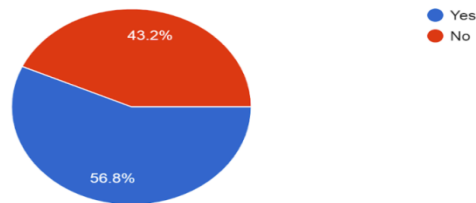111 responses

Figure 4.13: Changing of shopping decision from a shop for customer unfriendly website design (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

The figure shows that 56.8% of the customers have changed their shopping decision from a shop for customer unfriendly website design, where 43.2% customer never experienced this behavior.

Reviews and comments are actually tells about the product. From these reviews and comment new customer gather experience about the quality and durability of the product.

How often you depend on reviews and comments of other customer during online shopping?
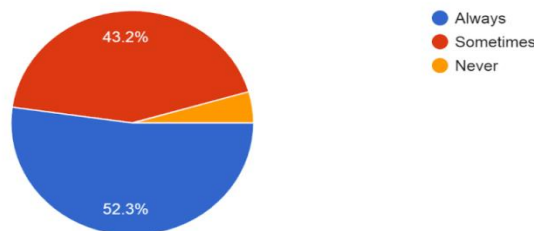111 responses

Figure 4.14: Dependency on reviews and comments of other customer during online shopping (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

The figure shows that 53.3% respondent customers (52.3%) are always depend on the reviews and comments of other customer. On the other hand, 43.2% depends sometimes and 4.5% never depends on reviews and comments of other customer.

Do you feel that you have better knowledge about the quality of the product in online shopping because you can see lot of reviews and comparisons?
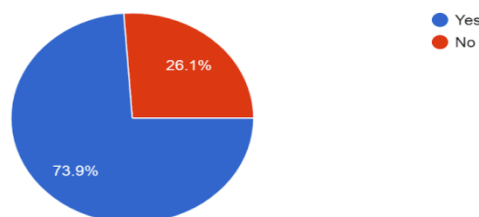111 responses

Figure 4.15: Feeling of better knowledge about the quality of the product in online shopping because of reviews and comparisons (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

Here in figure 4.15 we can see 73.9% respondent feel that they have better knowledge about the quality of the product in online shopping because they can see a lot of reviews and comparison, where 26.1% respondent feel the opposite. Covid-19 has rapidly affected our day to day life, businesses, disrupted the world trade and movements. This Covid-19 has affected the sources of supply and affects the global economy. There are restrictions of travelling from one country to another country and even outing from home without serious problem or needs. In this situation people can't shop from the traditional market as before. So, people more likely turn their shopping towards online.
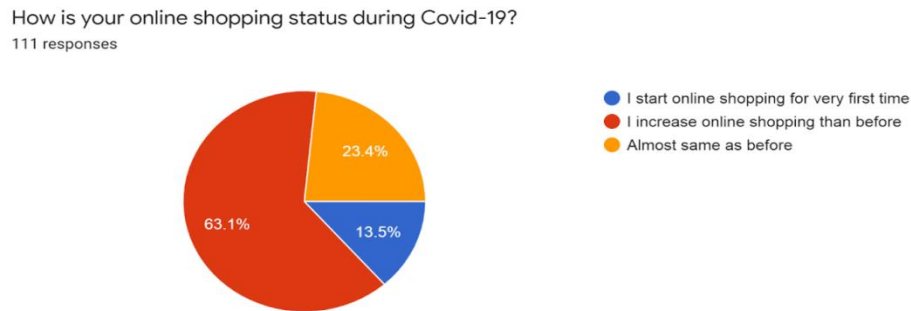
How is your online shopping status during Covid-19?
111 responses

- I start online shopping for very first time
- I increase online shopping than before
- Almost same as before

23.4%

63.1%   13.5%

Figure 4.16: Online shopping status during Covid-19 (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

The figure 4.16 shows that 63.1% respondent consumers have increase online shopping during Covid-19 than before. There are 13.5% consumers who start online shopping for very first time from the effect of Covid-19. And 23.4% consumer responds as almost same as before.
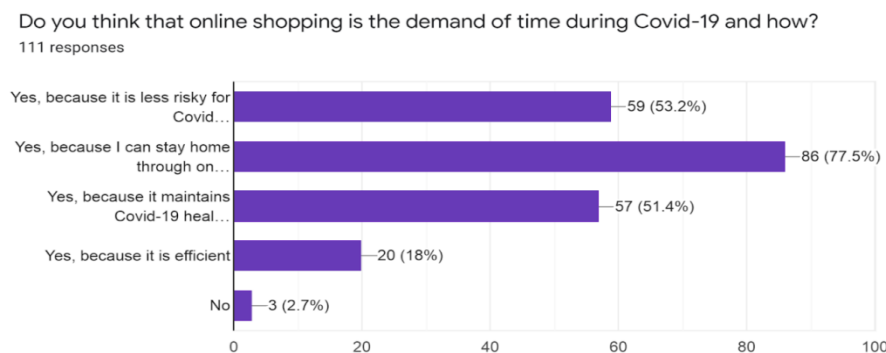
Do you think that online shopping is the demand of time during Covid-19 and how?
111 responses

Yes, because it is less risky for Covid...	59 (53.2%)
Yes, because I can stay home through on...	86 (77.5%)
Yes, because it maintains Covid-19 heal...	57 (51.4%)
Yes, because it is efficient	20 (18%)
No	3 (2.7%)

Figure 4.17: Peoples thought about online shopping as demand of time during Covid-19 (Source: Author's compilation based on field survey, 2020).

Here, the figure 4.17 shows 97.3%respondents think that online shopping is the demand of time during Covid-19. Only 2.7% respondent consumer has opposite opinion.
The figure also shows that 86 respondents (77.5%) consumer think online shopping is the demand of time because, they can stay home through online shopping, 53.2% respondents think online shopping is less risky for Covid-19, 51.4% respondents think online shopping maintains Covid-19 health rules and 18% respondent think online shopping is the demand of time because it is efficient during Covid-19. So, from the statistics we can say online shopping is the demand of time during Covid-19.

Multivariable linear regression results showed that the online shoping is positively correlated with the increase of age of the respondents (beta: 0.46, 95% CI: 0.203-0.733), positively correlated with the male gender (beta: 0.286, 95% CI: -0.164, 0.737), negatively correlated with the participants having experienced free shipping or free delivery during online shoping (beta : -0.092, 95% CI: -0.266, 0.082), negatively correlated with the satisfaction level of participant about the delivery time of product (beta: -0.265, 95% CI: -0.265, 95 % CI: -0.679, 0.150), negative correlation with the participants who had faced difficulties of the product (beta:-0.122, 95% CI: -0.558, 0.314) and positively correlated with the participants who can take decision to changes (beta: 0.025, 95% CI:-0.416, 0.466). The R-square values of the model was 0.21, indicating that the adjusted factors can explain the 21% response regarding the outcome variable.(**Table 1**)

Table 1. Linear regression analysis of participants opinion regarding favorable the Governments current rules, regulations, policies and IT sectors budgets for online shopping service with different characteristics.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		t-test	P-value	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.670	.732	3.647	.000	1.218	4.122
age	.468	.134	3.503	.001	.203	.733
Male gender (Ref: Female)	.286	.227	1.260	.211	-.164	.737
Experienced free shipping or free delivery during online shopping	-.092	.088	-1.052	.295	-.266	.082
Satisfied about product/service delivery time	-.265	.209	-1.266	.208	-.679	.150
Faced difficulties/fraudity of product	-.122	.220	-.555	.580	-.558	.314
Frequently shop from facebook	.033	.125	.266	.791	-.215	.282
Can take decision to changes the product	.025	.222	.113	.910	-.416	.466

5. Conclusion

Online shoppers are variety lovers. Exclusive products, all time accessibility, time and cost efficient attract them most for doing online shop. Most of the people would like to start up online shopping service because they can run that with their study, job or other businesses. They think current rules, regulations, policies and IT sectors budgets are almost favorable. Customer experience free delivery sometimes but it should be faster. Most of the respondents' have shopping experience from Facebook platform and they market from Facebook platform suddenly or without any pre intention of shopping. Websites of various online shops is easy to use but in case of customer unfriendly website design the customer has changed their shopping decision from that particular shop. Most of the respondent depends on reviews and comments during online shopping and feel that they have better knowledge about the quality of the product because they can see a lot of reviews and comparisons. People increase online shopping from the influence of Covid-19. Almost all the respondent thinks that online shopping is the demand of time because it is less risky, maintains Covid-19 health rules and they can stay home through this. However, the greatest dissatisfaction of online shopping, as indicated by the study is experience of fraud activities

and products cannot be touched, trialed or tasted at the time of purchase. For this they can't identify the actual color and quality of the product.

The study gives only an overview picture of online consumer and why they are engaging in online shopping more and more. However, the online stores were located in different areas which ensured the geographical scope for the research. The survey was also carried out during a specific date and time, which meant that I was not able to reach the most active customers all the time. In addition, some of the customers did not want to participate in the survey even if they were active in online shopping.

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