



# A STUDY ON SPENDING BEHAVIOUR THROUGH ONLINE AMONG POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF BHARATHIAR UNIVERSITY, COIMBATORE

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## ABSTRACT

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*Online spending behavior refers to the various ways consumers purchase goods and services over the Internet. This phenomenon has shown remarkable growth, with significant social and economic impacts, particularly among younger demographics. Online shopping has become integral to daily life, especially for college students who often seek convenience and variety in their purchasing decisions. This study specifically investigates the online spending behaviour of postgraduate students at Bharathiar University, aiming to gain insights into their shopping preferences and expenditure patterns. A proportionate random sampling method was employed, gathering 75 samples from the Arts and Science departments to ensure a representative overview of the student population. Descriptive statistics and the chi-square method were utilized for data analysis. The findings reveal that the frequency of online purchases is a key factor influencing spending behavior. Students predominantly purchase dresses and gadgets, indicating a preference for fashion and technology. On average, students reported spending approximately Rs. 4,074.59 over a semester, which spans six months. This study highlights the growing trend of online shopping among postgraduate students, showcasing their adaptability to digital marketplaces and the importance of understanding their spending habits for businesses targeting this demographic.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Spending Behaviour, Bharathiar University, Online Shopping, postgraduate students, digital marketplace*

## INTRODUCTION

Spending and saving are closely interconnected concepts that can be viewed as two sides of the same coin. Recent trends indicate a significant increase in spending habits among young people globally (**Intergenerational Foundation, 2024**). This phenomenon is part of a larger global shift towards digital transactions, which has been remarkably accelerated by the widespread adoption of internet and mobile technologies. These advancements are reshaping financial practices and consumer behaviors worldwide (**Alkhowaiter, 2020**). In India, the situation is particularly striking due to its status as home to the largest youth population on the planet, approximately 808 million individuals. The landscape of spending and saving among college students in India has undergone a transformation over time, largely due to the retail revolution and the emergence of mall culture. Previously, consumer choices were

somewhat limited; however, modern students now have access to an array of brands, products, and services that were not available to previous generations. This exposure has contributed to a significant change in their spending behavior. Today's college students are more brand-conscious than ever before. The constant exposure to corporate marketing and advertising has led to shifts in their purchasing decisions and spending habits. With a plethora of options available at their fingertips, students are increasingly inclined to spend more money on trendy brands and products. A recent study revealed that 65 percent of young Indians—specifically college students aged 18 to 35—frequently engage in online spending (**India News, 2023**). This substantial figure highlights a cultural shift towards a more consumer-driven society among younger demographics. The convenience of online shopping has played a significant role in shaping these spending habits. By

2024, estimates suggest that around 91 percent of consumers will make purchases online (**E-commerce Insight**). This trend indicates a dramatic move away from traditional retail environments to digital platforms, allowing consumers to shop anytime and from anywhere. In exploring the spending behavior of postgraduate students, this study will focus on students from Bharathiar University. The aim is to analyze their online purchasing frequency and to identify the key factors that influence their spending patterns. As online shopping continues to evolve, it is crucial to understand its implications on the financial habits of young consumers. By analyzing the online purchasing behavior of postgraduate students, we can gain deeper insights into how modern financial practices are evolving in the context of a digitally driven economy. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive view of spending habits, offering valuable guidance for educators, policymakers, and businesses looking to engage effectively with this influential demographic. Understanding the interplay between spending and saving among young consumers can lead to better financial literacy programs and responsible consumer behaviors in the future.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Manju (2016)** estimates the trends in spending and money management practices among students in Kerala. This study tried to figure out the likelihood of the students following the budget limit spending and managing their finances. This study suggests that students to encouraged to save money by minimizing wasteful expenses and keeping track of their expenditure patterns. This study reveals that the major income of many students is their patent allowance.

**Nasir et al (2021)** examined Afghan students spending and saving behavior. The study also determines the reason for saving and figuring out the difference in the spending pattern of students pursuing higher education in India. This study found that there is a significant difference in the spending behaviour of the three groups of students and the reason for savings is different among the male and female students. This study also reveals that Afghan students are not saving regularly.

**Chawla (2021)** enumerated the spending and saving habits of college students in Delhi. This study focuses on the changing trend of using digital transactions rather than cash transactions. This study aims to find that the purchase influencers determine the spending habits of college students in Delhi. This study figured that a maximum number of students save less than 25 percent of the money.

**Sruthi (2024)** studies spending behaviour and money management among college students in Bangalore. This study investigates the financial management strategies employed by college students including spending plan creation and effectiveness. The study found that the speculation of college students being irresponsible with money management.

## OBJECTIVES

- To study the socio-economic background of the selected students of Bharathiar University.
- To Understand the spending behaviour of the selected students of Bharathiar University.
- To figure the factors that determine the frequency of online purchase of the students in Bharathiar University.

## METHODOLOGY

In Coimbatore District, Bharathiar University has been chosen for the study. Bharathiar University offers arts and science for PG courses to the students. 678 students are studying in the arts department and 830 students studying in the science department in PG second year (2023-24 batch). By using the proportionate random sampling method, 33 samples from the Arts Department and 42 samples from the Science Department, a total of 75 samples were collected randomly using Google Forms to the students.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The following indent is to figure the reasons for frequency of online shopping using the chi-square test. The chi-square was used to test the following null hypothesis.

- **H<sub>01</sub>**: There is no significant association between age and the frequency of online purchase.
- **H<sub>02</sub>**: Gender and frequency of online purchase are insignificantly associate.
- **H<sub>03</sub>**: There is insignificant between father's occupation and frequency of online purchase.
- **H<sub>04</sub>**: Mothers occupation and frequency of online purchase are independent of each other.
- **H<sub>05</sub>**: There is no significant association between respondents stay and frequency of online purchase.
- **H<sub>06</sub>**: There is an insignificant association between the department and frequency of online purchase.
- **H<sub>07</sub>**: Family income and frequency of online purchase had a insignificant association.

**Table 1: Socio-Economic Status of the respondents**

Particulars	Arts Department	Science Department	Total
<b>Age</b>			
21	9 (27.3)	16(38.1)	25(33.3)
22	20(60.6)	22(52.4)	42(56.0)
23	3(9.1)	4(9.5)	7(9.3)
24	1(3.0)	0(0.0)	1(1.3)
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	15(45.5)	18(42.9)	33(44.0)
Female	18(54.5)	24(57.1)	42(56.0)
<b>Religion</b>			
Hindu	27(81.8)	40(95.2)	67(89.3)
Christian	4(12.1)	1(2.4)	5(6.7)
Muslim	2(6.1)	1(2.4)	3(4.0)
<b>Native</b>			
Coimbatore district	12(36.4)	15(35.7)	27(36.0)
Other district	18(54.5)	24(57.1)	42(56.0)
Other state	3(9.1)	3(7.1)	6(8.0)
<b>Stay</b>			
Hosteller	25(75.8)	28(66.7)	53(70.7)
Day scholar	8(24.2)	14(33.3)	22(29.3)
<b>Source of Income</b>			
Parent	32(97.0)	39(92.9)	71(94.7)
Part-time work	1(3.0)	3(7.1)	4(5.3)
Monthly Earning by the respondents	<b>900</b>	<b>3760</b>	<b>3283.33</b>
<b>Type of Part-time Job</b>			
No Part-time job	32 (97)	36 (85.7)	68 (90.7)
Catering	1(3)	4(9.5)	5(6.7)
Sales	0(0)	2(4.8)	2(2.6)

Source: Primary Data (2024)

( ) – indicates row wise percentage

The Socioeconomic status of the respondents was denoted in Table 1. The average age of the PG second-year students shows that in the art department, the majority 60.6 per cent of the respondents were belonged to 22 age, followed by 27.3 per cent of the respondents were belonged to 21 age, 9.1 per cent of the respondents was belonged to the 23 age and 3 per cent of the respondents were belonged to 24 age. In the science department majority 52.4 per cent of the respondents were belong to 22 age, followed by 38.1 per cent of the respondents were belonged to 21 age, and 9.5 per cent of the respondents belonged to 23 age. This figured out that the majority 56 per cent of the respondents were 22 years old.

The gender of the students reveals that, in arts department majority 54.5 per cent of the respondents were female and 45.5 per cent of the respondents were males. In the science department, majority 57.1 per cent of the respondents were females and 42.9 per cent of the respondents were male. This founds out that majority 56 per cent of the respondents were females, which shows the more female participation in the higher education.

The religion of the PG students in the university shows that in the arts department majority 81.8 per cent of the respondents belonged to Hindu religion followed by 12.1 per cent of the respondents were belonged to Christian religion and 6.1 per cent of the respondents belonging to Muslim religion. In the Science department, majority 95.2 per cent of the respondents were belonged to Hindu religion, followed by 2.4 per cent of the respondents were belonged to Christian and Muslim Religion. This table concludes that majority 89.3 per cent of the respondents were belonged to Hindu religion.

The Native place of the respondents shows that, In Arts department majority 54.5 per cent of the respondents were from other district, followed by 36.4 per cent of the respondents were belonged to the Coimbatore district itself and 9.1 per cent of the respondents were belonged to other state (mostly like Kerala and Karnataka). In Science department majority 57.1 per cent of the respondents were belonged to other district, followed by 35.7 per cent of the respondents were belonged to Coimbatore district and 7.1 per cent of the respondents were belonged to

other state. This table finds that majority 56 per cent of the respondents were from other district.

The stay of the respondents denotes that in Arts department, majority 75.8 per cent of the respondents were hostellers and remaining 24.2 per cent of the respondents were day scholars. In Science department majority 66.7 per cent of the respondents were belonged to hosteller and remaining 33.3 per cent of the respondents were belonged to day scholar. This table concludes that majority 70.7 per cent of the respondents were belonged to hostellers.

The Source of income of the PG students denoted that in the Arts department, majority 97 per cent of the respondents were getting pocket money from their

parents and remaining 3 per cent were going to the part time work. In the science department, majority 92.9 per cent of the respondents were dependent on their parent’s income and remaining 7.1 per cent of the respondents were going to the part time job. This table concludes that majority 94.7 per cent of the respondents were dependent on their parent’s income.

The average earning of the students working in the part time job shows that, in the arts department respondents going to the part time work were earning average Rs. 900 in a month through the catering job and the science department respondents going to the part time work were earning Rs. 3760 in a month through catering and working as sales department (i.e. dress shop and department stores).

**Table 2: Most Frequently Buying Products**

Discipline	Most Frequency buying in Online Shopping							Total
	Dress	Cosmetic	Gadgets	Foods	Gifts	Book	Others	
<b>Arts Department</b>	16 (48.5) [41.0]	5 (15.2) [55.6]	5 (15.2) [41.7]	2 (6.1) [25.0]	0 (0.0) [0.0]	0 (0.0) [0.0]	5 (15.2) [100.0]	33 (100.0) [44.0]
<b>Science Department</b>	23 (54.8) [59.0]	4 (9.5) [44.4]	7 (16.7) [58.3]	6 (14.3) [75.0]	1 (2.4) [100.0]	1 (2.4) [100.0]	0 (0.0) [0.0]	42 (100.0) [56.0]
<b>Total</b>	39 (52.0) [100.0]	9 (12.0) [100.0]	12 (16.0) [100.0]	8 (10.7) [100.0]	1 (1.3) [100.0]	1 (1.3) [100.0]	5 (6.7) [100.0]	75 (100.0) [100.0]

Source: Primary data (2024)

( ) – indicates row wise percentage

[ ] – indicates column wise percentage

The table 2 shows that the most frequently purchased items in online shopping among students in the arts and science departments. In the arts department, majority 48.5 per cent of the respondents were most frequently buying dresses in online followed by, 15.2 per cent of the respondents were frequently purchase gadgets, cosmetics, and gifts through online, and only 6.1 per cent of respondents most frequently buy foods online. In the science department, majority 54.8 per cent of respondents most frequently buy gadgets in online, 9.5 per cent of the respondents most frequently

buy cosmetics online followed by 16.7 per cent of respondents frequently buy foods online, and 14.3 per cent of respondents most frequently buy gifts online. The table concludes that the majority of 52 percent of students most frequently buy dresses online followed by 16 per cent of the respondents most frequently purchase gadgets in online.

**Table 3: Total Spending in the Online Shopping**

Spending in Online Shopping	Statistics	Arts Department	Science Department	Total
<b>Dress</b>	Sum	10300	13350	23650
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>858.33</b>	<b>1026.92</b>	<b>946</b>
	N	12	13	25
<b>Book</b>	Sum	1800	0	1800
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>450</b>
	N	4	0	4
<b>Cosmetics</b>	Sum	4750	4650	9400
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>431.82</b>	<b>581.25</b>	<b>494.74</b>
	N	11	8	19
<b>Gadgets</b>	Sum	9050	6800	15850
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>1131.25</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>990.63</b>
	N	8	8	16
<b>Food</b>	Sum	3450	4619	8069
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>383.33</b>	<b>577.38</b>	<b>474.65</b>
	N	9	8	17
<b>Gifts</b>	Sum	2350	1500	2300
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>328.57</b>
	N	5	2	7
<b>Others</b>	Sum	2300	1600	3900
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>328.57</b>	<b>533.33</b>	<b>390</b>
	N	7	3	10
<b>Average Online Shopping</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>34000</b>	<b>32519</b>	<b>64969</b>
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>4053.3</b>	<b>4318.88</b>	<b>4074.59</b>

Source: Primary data (2024)

The table 3 shows the total amount spent on online shopping. In the Arts department, an average of Rs. 858.33 was spent on dresses, Rs. 450 was spent on purchasing books, Rs. 431.82 was spent on cosmetics, Rs. 1131.25 was spent on the purchase of gadgets, followed by Rs. 383.33 was spent for the consumption of food, Rs. 470 was spent for the purchase of gifts in the online and Rs. 328.57 was spent on the other purpose (i.e. Pads, nuts, medicine). The Arts department respondents had an average spending of Rs. 4053.3 online in a semester (6 months). In the Science department, an average of Rs. 1026.92 was

spent on dresses, followed by Rs. 581.25 spent on the purchase of cosmetics, Rs. 850 on the purchase of gadgets, Rs. 577.38 spent on the consumption of food, Rs. 750 on the purchase of gifts and Rs. 533.33 spent on the other purpose. In the Science department, respondents had an average of Rs. 4318.88 spent on online shopping in a semester (6 months). This table concludes that most of the amount Rs. 990.63 was spent on the purchase of gadgets followed by Rs. 946 spent on the purchase of dresses and Rs. 4074.59 was the average spent by the postgraduate students in a semester (6 months).

**Table 4: Chi-Square test for Frequency of online purchase**

Variable	X <sup>2</sup>	P-value
Age	108.986	< 0.001**
Gender	7.588	.023*
Father occupation	41.025	< 0.001**
Mother occupation	7.131	.523
Stay	47.630	< 0.001**
Department	0.248	0.884
Family income	73.311	< 0.001**

Source: Primary Data (2024)

\* denote 5 per cent level of Significant; \*\* denote 1 per cent level of significant

Table 4 reveals the result of variables that recoded the lowest p-value (< 0.001) which are Age, father occupation, stay, family income and the gender shows the 0.23 level of p value. There is a relationship between the frequency of online purchase of the students with these independent variables. Hence there is a no relationship between mother occupation and

department of the student with the frequency of online purchase. Since age, gender, father occupation, stay and family income are significant, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between frequency of online purchase with these independent variable.

**Table 4.1: Result of Hypothesis testing Socio- demographic variables and Frequency of online purchase**

H. No	Hypothesis Statement	Chi-square			Remark
		Value	df	P	
H <sub>01</sub>	There is no significant association between age and the frequency of online purchase.	108.986	6	<0.001	Rejected
H <sub>02</sub>	Gender and frequency of online purchase are insignificantly associate.	7.588	2	0.023	Rejected
H <sub>03</sub>	There is insignificant between father’s occupation and frequency of online purchase.	41.025	10	<0.001	Rejected
H <sub>04</sub>	Mothers occupation and frequency of online purchase are independent of each other.	7.131	8	0.523	Accepted
H <sub>05</sub>	There is no significant association between respondents stay and frequency of online purchase.	47.630	2	<0.001	Rejected
H <sub>06</sub>	There is an insignificant association between the department and frequency of online purchase.	0.248	2	0.884	Accepted
H <sub>07</sub>	Family income and frequency of online purchase had an insignificant association.	73.301	6	<0.001	Rejected

**CONCLUSION**

The study provides an in-depth analysis of the spending behaviors exhibited by postgraduate students at Bharathiar University in Coimbatore, revealing intriguing differences between those enrolled in the Arts stream and their counterparts in the Science stream. Interestingly, students from both disciplines express a strong preference for purchasing products from online marketplaces rather than traditional offline retail stores, highlighting the growing importance of the digital shopping landscape in their lives. On average, these students allocate approximately Rs. 4,074.59 for their expenditures over a semester, which spans six months. A significant portion of this budget is dedicated to essential items such as academic books and electronic gadgets, reflecting the priorities of modern postgraduate students who rely heavily on these resources for their education and daily needs. This association suggests that various demographic factors play a critical role in shaping the online shopping habits of these students, providing valuable insights into their consumer behavior in a rapidly evolving market.

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