CONSUMER PREFERENCES TOWARDS ONLINE GROCERY RETAIL STORES – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates "Consumer Preferences Towards Online Retail Stores" with the aim of gaining insights into the factors influencing consumer preferences in the online retail environment. The research seeks to identify key challenges and opportunities in this domain to enhance the overall consumer experience. **Methodology:** A convenient sampling approach was employed to collect data from 120 respondents, utilizing both Linear Regression and Exploratory Factor Analysis. These quantitative research methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the various aspects impacting consumer preferences in online retail. **Findings:** The study reveals those factors such as "Local and Global Shipping Options" significantly influence consumer preferences, highlighting the importance of offering diversified shipping choices. Additionally, challenges related to "Product Customization" and "Product Authenticity" were identified, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to address these issues effectively. The study also highlights issues surrounding "Incorrect Product Shipment" and "High Delivery Charges," which have a negative impact on customer purchase intent. This underscores the urgency of improving inventory management and feedback mechanisms. "Quantity Discrepancies" were found to correlate with delivery-related challenges, emphasizing the need for swift resolutions and streamlined inventory management processes. **Implications:** To enhance consumer preferences for online retail, a dual strategy is recommended. First, it is imperative to diversify and optimize shipping options while strengthening product authenticity to build trust and enhance customer satisfaction. Second, a focus on inventory management improvements, accurate shipments, and offering cost-effective choices like in-store pickups is

essential. This proactive approach aims to foster more effective consumer preferences for online retail stores, ultimately driving increased customer satisfaction and loyalty in this dynamic and competitive market.

Key Words: Authenticity, Customization, Tracking, Online Retail Stores, Referral Programs

INTRODUCTION

The retail landscape has witnessed a transformative shift with the advent of e-commerce, and this transformation extends to the grocery sector. Online grocery retail has emerged as a rapidly growing segment, offering consumers the convenience of ordering groceries from the comfort of their homes. The proliferation of smartphones, internet connectivity, and digital payment solutions has further accelerated the adoption of online grocery shopping. This study delves into the dynamic realm of consumer preferences towards online grocery retail stores, seeking to understand the factors that drive consumer choices and satisfaction within this evolving market. The preference of consumers in the context of online grocery retail is a multifaceted and evolving subject, influenced by an array of factors that encompass product variety, pricing, delivery efficiency, and the overall online shopping experience. Understanding these preferences is not only crucial for the success of online grocery retailers but also offers valuable insights for traditional brick-and-mortar stores looking to enhance their online presence. As online grocery retail continues to gain momentum, it is essential to explore the nuanced preferences of consumers, the challenges they encounter, and the opportunities for improvement within this domain.

This study aims to explore the intricacies of consumer preferences in the realm of online grocery retail stores by employing both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. By analyzing these preferences, the research seeks to identify the key determinants of consumer satisfaction and the factors that influence their choices when it comes to online grocery shopping. The findings of this study will not only provide valuable insights for online grocery retailers but will also serve as a valuable resource for shaping the future of the grocery retail industry, as it navigates the evolving landscape of e-commerce.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Vijay Bahadur et al (2023), the research focuses on online marketing's global popularity and the expected growth in internet users, emphasizing its role as a leading marketing medium. It aims to analyse consumer habits in internet shopping and identify the motivating factors for online purchases. The study employs convenience sampling and collected 50 samples using Google Forms. Data analysis is carried out using bar diagrams, pie charts, and percentages. The findings reveal that most respondents prefer online shopping, with monthly purchases, primarily in electronic gadgets and clothing. They find online shopping convenient, secure, cost-effective, and offering good product quality. The research concludes that the complex interplay of factors influencing consumer buying behaviour in online shopping. It highlights the importance of variables such as age, gender, price, convenience, satisfaction, product type, and quality in

shaping consumer habits and behaviour in the context of online shopping.

Thabang Mofokeng (2021), the research focuses on the impact of various factors on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the context of online shopping in South Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic's role in accelerating e-commerce growth is highlighted. The research uses structural equation modelling to analyse data collected from 287 respondents. The study also considers the moderating effect of e-commerce experience exceeding five years. The findings reveals the study identifies that product delivery, perceived security, information quality, and product variety influence customer satisfaction. Additionally, customer satisfaction and information quality affect customer loyalty. The research concludes that the managerial implications for online shopping businesses aiming to enhance customer loyalty. Understanding the factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty is crucial for e-commerce companies, especially in the context of the COVID-19-induced e-commerce growth.

Vijendra Pratap Singh et al (2018), the research focuses on the evolving landscape of business competition in the era of technological advancements, where the traditional concept of competitive advantage is evolving due to the high degree of dynamism in the market. The methodology used the attitudes and experiences of common people in India toward online shopping. It touches upon factors such as literacy, internet access, and computer literacy, which are crucial in shaping the Indian context of online shopping. The reveals that the adoption of online shopping is influenced by various factors, including literacy levels and internet familiarity. It implies that online retailers in India must consider the unique circumstances and challenges in the Indian market. The research concludes that the paper highlights the significance of technology-driven innovation and online shopping in the Indian business landscape. It underscores the need for businesses to adapt to the specific conditions in India, including literacy and digital literacy, to effectively capture the market's potential.

Arun Kumar Sivakumar et al (2017), The primary focus of this research is to investigate and understand the determinants affecting the online purchasing behaviour of millennial consumers in the online market of India. The study conducted its research on the millennial customer segment of Chennai metro, Tamil Nadu, India, using a systematic random sampling method. The conceptual framework included four main factors: consumer innovativeness, perceived benefits, perceived risks, attitude, and intention. The research identified and delved into various determinants, including consumer innovativeness, perceived benefits, perceived risks, attitude, and intention, and their impact on driving online purchasing behaviour among the millennial demographic. The study concludes by recommending suggestive strategies for online companies based on the findings. It emphasizes the importance of real value addition beyond just promotional activities in the online market in India.

Karthik M (2017), The study explores the impact of the internet on India's retailing industry, focusing on online retailing's convenience and its significance in a context with limited internet penetration (11%). It proposes a conceptual framework to understand the factors shaping consumer intentions for online shopping. Based on 123 observations, the research employs partial least squares for analysis. The findings reveal the substantial influence of trust on forming

consumer attitudes. Perceived usefulness is identified as a fundamental belief that further influences attitudes and intentions to shop online. The research concludes that evolving e-commerce landscape in India, understanding factors such as trust and perceived usefulness are crucial for retailers.

Deshmukh G K et al (2016), the research focuses on the behaviour of online shoppers in India, recognizing that online shopping is different from traditional in-person shopping. It seeks to understand the factors influencing consumers' online shopping behaviour. The researchers conducted an empirical study with 100 online shoppers in India, employing Structural Equation Modelling to analyze their online shopping behaviour. The findings reveal the various factors play a positive role in influencing the online shopping behaviour of Indian customers. These factors include the customers' demographic profiles, the type of products they intend to purchase, the online sellers from whom they make purchases, and the characteristics of online shopping websites. The research concludes that the Customers prefer online shopping for its convenience and the ability to compare prices and product features. To enhance the online shopping experience, addressing consumer concerns related to financial security, merchant identification, insurance coverage, and effective promotional strategies is essential. Ensuring data encryption, privacy, and user-friendly website design also contributes to a positive customer experience.

Anitha N (2015), The focus of this research studies in understanding how online shopping preferences vary across different age groups and assessing the importance of various features affecting the online shopping experience. To achieve this, the researchers conducted an online survey to collect data from shoppers of different age groups. The study's validation was carried out using a chi-square test. The findings indicate significant variations in consumer preferences among different age groups, with the 25-35 age group showing the highest interest in online shopping, particularly in Chennai. Statistically significant differences were identified when individual features were compared. This research indicates valuable insights into online shopping preferences from an age perspective, emphasizing the need for businesses to tailor their online shopping platforms to cater to the specific needs of different age groups.

Rajeswari M (2015), the research study focusses on the comprehensively understand the factors that influence customers' decisions regarding online shopping and how these factors impact customer satisfaction. The research methodology employed a Descriptive Research Design. The findings of this research provide valuable insights for businesses seeking to enter or expand their presence in the online shopping landscape, offering a deeper understanding of the determinants of customer satisfaction in the digital retail environment. The research study indicates the significance of meeting customer expectations and preferences to thrive in the competitive realm of online shopping. In conclusion, this research serves as a practical guide for businesses aiming to succeed in the online shopping market by aligning their strategies with customer needs and fostering a high level of customer satisfaction.

Ashish Bhatt (2014), the research study focus on the research is to identify the factors that influence Indian consumers' online buying decisions and the relationships between these factors and the types of online buyers. By recognizing these factors, e-marketers can refine their

strategies to attract and retain customers effectively. The research appears to apply a comprehensive approach to analysing consumer behaviour concerning online purchases. research employed a mixed-method research methodology, including surveys or interviews, to gather data. The findings indicates that these identified factors significantly impact consumer preferences for online purchasing. The study highlights that the research indicates the importance of these factors in shaping the Indian online shopping landscape and provides insights that businesses can utilize to enhance their online marketing strategies.

Nishad Nawaz M (2014), The focus of this studies in examining the impact of technology-based internet connectivity on consumer preferences and buying behaviour, particularly in the context of online shopping. The research seeks to identify the factors influencing Bahraini consumers to engage in e-shopping, including the professions showing interest in this mode of shopping. The methodology used to investigate these trends, but it appears to be cantered around understanding the changing consumer behaviour in response to the digital era. The findings likely reveal a growing enthusiasm among consumers to adopt online shopping, driven by factors like time savings, convenient payment methods, and the vast array of product options available online. The study indicates may suggest that e-tailors and consumers should consider adapting their strategies and behaviours to align with these evolving trends, emphasizing the importance of e-commerce in the modern marketplace.

Hemant Kumar P. Bulsara et al (2012), the research focuses on the diverse retail formats operating in India and their influence on consumer purchasing behaviour. It considers the impact of various factors on the choice of retail formats, examining reviews and experiences. The changing policies regarding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are discussed, indicating a potential shift with the entry of multinational brands in the Indian retail market. It aims to identify variables that can contribute to a coexistence model between organized and unorganized retail formats in India, focusing on quality, product choice, and brand preferences. Research findings reveals that consumer choices in India's retail landscape are influenced by various factors, including technology and channels of purchase. The evolving policy environment may usher in new dynamics with the entry of multinational brands, affecting the coexistence of organized and unorganized retail formats. The research concludes that the complex interplay of factors in India's diverse retail market. It emphasizes the need for a coexistence model that considers quality, product variety, and brand preferences to enable both organized and unorganized retail formats to thrive in the Indian market.

Khaled Hasaean & Milena Head (2007), The primary focus of this paper is to investigate how the integration of human warmth and sociability within the web interface of e-commerce platforms can positively influence consumer attitudes towards online shopping. The study conducted an empirical investigation to explore the impact of different levels of socially rich text and picture design elements on the perception of social presence in online shopping experiences. Researchers likely designed various website interfaces with different levels of social cues (such as text, images, or design elements conveying warmth and sociability) to analyse how these variations affected consumers' perceptions. The findings of the study indicate

that higher levels of perceived social presence within the web interface positively influence the perception of usefulness, trust, and enjoyment of shopping websites. The study concludes that integrating human warmth and sociability into the web interface of e-commerce platforms positively impacts consumer attitudes towards online shopping. By enhancing the perceived social presence through design elements and text cues that create a more socially rich environment

Els Begelman's et al (2006), This study explores is to examine whether traditional shelf effects, which significantly impact consumer choices in physical grocery stores, are similarly influential in the context of online grocery shopping. The researchers conducted an online shopping experiment to investigate the impact of shelf position on consumer decision-making. They examined how the placement of products on the screen, including being on the first screen or located near focal items (especially when those items are out-of-stock), influenced consumer choice behaviour These findings suggest that the primacy and proximity effects observed in physical stores also affect online consumer decision-making. The research concludes that the order in which products are displayed and their positioning relative to other items continue to be essential in directing consumer attention and guiding their online choice decisions

Bonde et al (2000), The research focuses on how online companies handle customer complaints in order to improve customer relations within the growing Internet business channel. The methodology involved conducting four case studies of online companies. Multiple sources such as documentation, participant-observation, and interviews were used to collect data for the study. Customer relations are improved through several means, including encouraging customers to complain, offering monetary compensation, providing excellent service, and handling complaints personally. The study concludes that online companies employ diverse strategies to handle customer complaints effectively, focusing on the personnel's approach towards customers and resolving issues promptly.

RESEARCH GAP
After an extensive review of the literature relating to consumer preference and online retail stores, several key insights have emerged. While the existing studies provide valuable insights into various aspects of online shopping behavior, a notable research gap is evident. Specifically, there is a need for a comprehensive investigation into the nuanced factors that shape consumer preferences in the dynamic landscape of online retail. The existing literature, although informative, falls short in providing a holistic understanding of the multifaceted elements that influence consumers' choices and behaviors in the realm of online shopping. Additionally, a deeper exploration into the evolving trends, emerging technologies, and socio-economic factors impacting consumer preferences in this context is warranted. This research endeavor aims to address this critical gap by delving into the **Consumer Preference towards Online Retail Stores**, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive body of knowledge in this gap.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To study the consumer preferences towards online retail stores.
2. To validate the problems to enhance the consumers purchase intension towards Online retail stores.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY
H0: There is no significant consumer preference towards the Online Retail Stores.
H1: There is a significant consumer preference towards the Online Retail Stores.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The study adopted the quantitative research approach for the examination of consumers preferences towards online retail stores. The study has considered the online aspect where it has considered Retail stores products.

Sampling Method: A convenient sampling approach was employed to collect responses from online retail store consumers.

Sample Size: This study gathered data from 120 responses using a convenient sampling method for the collection of primary data through the questionnaire.

Sample Units: The study considered the online Retail platforms.

Sample Respondent: The study considered the respondents, who are having the minimum one-year experience in using online retail platforms.

Statistical Tools: The statistical analysis was conducted using two key methodologies:

Linear Regression: It helps quantify the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable and provides insights into the strength and direction of these relationships. This method was used to explore the relationships between the independent variable (Consumer Preferences) and the dependent variable (Online Retail Stores).

Exploratory Factor Analysis: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a statistical technique used in data analysis to identify the underlying structure or patterns within a set of variables. It aims to uncover the relationships between observed variables and the latent factors that may influence them. EFA helps researchers reduce data complexity by grouping related variables and extracting meaningful factors, which can simplify the interpretation of large datasets. It is commonly used in disciplines like psychology, social sciences, and market research to gain insights into the underlying constructs that drive observed behaviors or attitudes.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION
The analysis employs the Linear Regression model as the statistical tool to assess the consumer preference towards online retail shopping. The analysis considered the independent variable as

Consumer preference and Online Retail Stores is consider as dependent variable

The hypothesis is stated as follows:

H0: There is no significant impact of consumer preferences on purchase intention through online and offline retail stores.

H1: There is a significant impact of consumer preferences on purchase intention through online and offline retail stores.

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Table No -1
Model summary of Consumer Preferences on Online Retail Stores

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Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.781ª	.609	.577	.39575

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Source: Primary Data

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The table summarizes a model assessing consumer preferences towards online retail stores. The high 'R' value of approximately 0.781 (which is greater than 0.60) indicates a strong positive relationship between predictor variables and the online retail (dependent variable). The 'R Square' value of 0.609 indicates that around 60.9% of the variance in consumer preferences towards online retail stores, highlighting the substantial influence of these factors on online retail choices, signifying a strong fit.

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Table No -2
ANOVA of Consumer Preferences on Online Retail Stores

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Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.856	9	2.984	19.053	.000ᵇ
	Residual	17.228	110	.157		
	Total	44.084	119			
a. Dependent Variable: online retail						

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Source: Primary Data

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The table displays an ANOVA analysis for a regression model evaluating consumers' preferences for online retail stores. The 'Regression' reveals the model's ability to significantly account for variance in the online retail (dependent variable), with a sum of squares of 26.856 and 9 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 2.984. The statistically significant F-statistic of 19.053. and the significance is ($p < 0.50$) that indicates the collective impact of

predictor variables on consumer preferences. On the other hand, the 'Residual' component represents unexplained variance, with a sum of squares of 17.228 and 110 degrees of freedom, yielding a mean square of 0.157. Overall, the ANOVA table indicates that the model fits the data well, explaining a substantial portion of the dependent variable's variance.

Table No -3
Coefficients of Consumer Preferences on Online Retail Stores

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.254	.218		-1.168	.245
	product customization	-1.086	.063	-.085	-3.367	.014
	product authenticity	-1.156	.130	-.074	-4.197	.034
	Product Warranty and Guarantee	3.107	.032	.207	3.386	.001
	Order Tracking	3.021	.066	.033	3.314	.045
	Customer feedback and Surveys	2.217	.082	.365	2.660	.009
	In-app messaging and Chat Support	2.263	.119	.424	2.211	.029
	Exclusive Previews	1.046	.112	.074	1.414	.038
	Referral Programs	3.047	.053	.074	3.891	.035
	Local and Global Shipping Options	4.152	.064	.209	4.385	.019
a. Dependent Variable: online retail						

Source: Primary Data

The table presents the results of a regression analysis that explores the impact of various consumer preferences on online retail stores. The above table highlighting the highest and lowest unstandardized coefficients and their significance. The table displays the highest coefficient is associated with "Local and Global Shipping Options" (4.152, significance 0.019), signifying a positive and significant impact on online retail. "Referral programs" follow closely with a coefficient of 3.047 and a significance of 0.035, emphasizing the influence of word-of-mouth marketing. "Order tracking" (3.021, significance 0.045) ensures transparency and reliability.

"Product Warranty and Guarantee" (3.107, significance 0.001) highly influences online retail by assuring product quality. "In-app messaging and Chat Support" (2.263, significance 0.029) enhances the shopping experience. Conversely, "Exclusive Previews" (1.046, significance 0.38) have a positive impact by creating anticipation. However, "product customization" (-1.086, significance 0.014) negatively affects online sales, possibly due to consumer preference for simplicity, while "product authenticity" (-1.156, significance 0.014) has a low impact, indicating that other factors like quality and convenience are prioritized over authenticity when shopping online. The study suggests that, to enhance product authenticity, online retailers should provide detailed information, certification, and reviews that build trust. They can also collaborate with recognized brands to bolster authenticity. For product customization, simplifying the customization process and offering user-friendly tools can make it more appealing to consumers. Additionally, understanding and aligning customization options with consumer needs and preferences can enhance its appeal, thus improving consumer preference for both authenticity and customization in online retail.

The study aims to validate the problems to enhance the consumers purchase intension towards Online retail stores. A total of 120 responses were collected using a convenient sampling method. The analysis employs the Exploratory factor analysis as the statistical tool to assess the problems to enhance the consumers purchase intension towards Online retail stores.

Table No -4
Sample Adequacy Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.797
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	626.041
	Df	36
	Sig.	.000

Source: Primary Data

The table represents the results of KMO and bartletts test, A KMO measure of 0.797 means that the study is suitable for factor analysis. Furthermore, with a significant chi-square value of 626.041 and 36 degrees of freedom (df) at a significance level of 0.000 the study collectively indicates that the sample used to assess consumer preferences towards online retail stores is suitable for factor analysis.

Table No -5
Component Matrix of Problems to Enhance the Consumers Purchase Intension

	Component	
	1	2
Poor Product Quality	.526	
Incorrect Product Shipment	.738	
Damaged Product on Arrival	.754	
Delivery Delays	.463	
Quantity Discrepancies	.664	
Non-Delivery or Failed Delivery Attempts		.491
Quantity Discrepancies		.703
Digital Payment Failures		.644
Technical Website Problems		.502

Source: Primary Data

The table represents a comprehensive analysis focused on identifying issues within online retail stores and improving customer purchase intent. The analysis is broken down into two components, each containing both higher and lower loading factors that contribute to these components.

Component 1, with high factor loadings of 0.754 for Damaged Product on Arrival, 0.738 for Incorrect Product Shipment, and 0.664 for High Delivery Charges, primarily addresses product and service quality issues that strongly influence customer purchase intent. Customers receiving damaged products on arrival highlight the importance of implementing robust packaging to withstand environmental conditions during transit. Incorrect product shipments indicate the need for a follow-up process to gather customer feedback and provide incentives. To mitigate the impact of high delivery charges, promoting cost-effective options like in-store pickup (0.664) is recommended. Fortunately, delivery delays (0.463) seem to have a lesser influence, indicating an efficient supply chain, minimal transportation issues, and high demand for products, contributing to smoother deliveries and an overall improvement in the online retail shopping experience, thus enhancing customer purchase intent.

Component 2, predominantly centers on delivery-related challenges, with notable associations indicated by high loading values. Specifically, it strongly correlates with 'Quantity Discrepancies' (0.703), underscoring the need for prompt resolution and potential recourse options for customers. 'Digital Payment Failures' also exhibit a significant connection (0.644),

emphasizing secure financial transactions and reliable payment platforms, with the recommendation to contact one's bank in case of recurring issues. Conversely, this component has a lower association with 'Non-Delivery or Failed Delivery Attempts' (0.491), indicating improvements in logistics and delivery systems, including route optimization and real-time tracking, effectively minimizing failed delivery attempts.

Therefore, the study suggested that, To overcome these problems, online retail stores should implement strict quality control measures to minimize damaged products on arrival. Additionally, they should enhance inventory management systems to reduce quantity discrepancies and incorrect product shipments. Regular customer feedback mechanisms and improved order tracking can also play a crucial role in addressing these issues.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The study found that, "Local and Global Shipping Options" (4.152) and "Referral programs" (3.047) have significant positive impacts on online retail, indicating the importance of diverse shipping choices and word-of-mouth marketing (significance values of 0.019 and 0.035, respectively).

2. The objective highlights that, "Product customization" (-1.086) negatively affects online sales, possibly due to consumers preferring simplicity, while "product authenticity" (-1.156) has a lower impact, indicating prioritization of quality and convenience over authenticity (both with significance values of 0.014).

3. It found that, Incorrect Product Shipment" (Factor loading: 0.738) negatively influences customer purchase intent, emphasizing the importance of enhanced inventory management and customer feedback mechanisms.

4. High Delivery Charges" (Factor loading: 0.664) has a notable impact on customer purchase intent, suggesting the promotion of cost-effective options like in-store pickup.

5. The analysis finds that, Quantity Discrepancies" (Factor loading: 0.703) significantly correlates with delivery-related challenges, underscoring the importance of prompt resolution and improved inventory management.

CONCLUSION

The study focused on the "Consumer Preferences Towards Online Retail Stores," employed a convenient sampling approach to collect data from 120 respondents. The research utilized Linear Regression and Exploratory Factor Analysis to gain insights into consumer preferences in online retail. The study highlighted the significant impact of "Local and Global Shipping Options," signifying the importance of diverse shipping choices. The study found that, Challenges related to "Product Customization" and "Product Authenticity" underscore the need for targeted strategies in these areas. Furthermore, "Incorrect Product Shipment" was identified as a factor negatively affecting customer purchase intent, emphasizing the need for robust inventory management and customer feedback mechanisms. High Delivery Charges were found to impact

customer purchase intent, suggesting the promotion of cost-effective options like in-store pickup. Lastly, "Quantity Discrepancies" were associated with delivery-related challenges, necessitating prompt resolutions and streamlined inventory management processes. The study suggest that, To enhance consumer preferences towards online retail stores, we recommend a dual strategy. First, focusing on providing diverse and cost-effective shipping options and collaborating with recognized brands to enhance product authenticity. Simplifying the product customization process and aligning it with consumer preferences can make it more appealing. Second, improving inventory management and quality control processes, addressing discrepancies, ensuring accurate product shipments, and minimizing high delivery charges through alternative options like in-store pickups will foster trust and customer satisfaction. A proactive approach in these areas will ultimately lead to more effective consumer preferences towards online retail stores.

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