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A study on pandemic: An opportunity for e-commerce players

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***Abstract*---**A new boom for e-commerce is expected worldwide and in the Indian Market in the essential category. This is accelerated during the pandemic leaving the buyers with no other option but procuring things from the online platforms. When strict measures were in place to avoid crowds, the e-commerce players have advantaged by making the order "PAY NOW" rather than what it was earlier in the option of "Cash on Delivery". The opportunity in this sector has multiplied with the help of thoughtful technology and effective logistics management. According to Peter Hinsen, we are already ten years ahead of technology. The pandemic has accelerated the pace of technology acceptance. The successful entrepreneurs in the last decade that India has seen have been "Oyo rooms, Your Story, Ola cabs, Paytm, Zomato, Cred, Flipkart, MakeMyTrip, BYJU's, Big Basket. Though the times are not the same as before the pandemic, businesses and buyers have adapted to the new dictated time. Adaptability is the key. The author has tried to understand how e-commerce has been progressive in this paper. An attempt has been made to understand the trends and parameters that differentiate the e-commerce players and whether traditional and e-commerce players will co-exist or compete with each other.

***Keywords*---**pandemic, e-commerce, shopping, online.

Introduction

E-Commerce refers to commercial engagement over the internet or the practice of conducting business online using computer networks. An e-commerce site's primary objective is to sell products and services online. Online shopping can also refer to a type of electronic shopping store where the buyer connects directly to

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the seller's computer, typically over the internet. (Sharma, 2018) From a broader viewpoint, every website on the internet is an eCommerce website. It might be the platform, applications, an entertainment website, a retail website, an online course website, or an online degree website. A person sitting in front of a computer can use the internet to shop for or sell things. The Online Shopping System assists in purchasing items, products, and services online by selecting the listed products on the website (ECommerce site). The go-cart is extremely handy for those who do not have time to go shopping. A go-cart may be a significant element used in e-commerce to assist users in completing online purchases. The purchase and sale are accomplished online or with cash on delivery. (Gupta, 2014) Users may log in to the eCommerce website; after logging in, one go-cart is immediately formed; when the user picks an item, the cart is increased. If the user believes the selected item is not beneficial to him, he can remove it from the cart. Crystal Reports is used to generate many reports such as bar graphs, pie charts, and table style charts, among others. The suggested method aids in developing an internet site to shop for and sell products or goods online via an internet connection.

Unlike traditional commerce, which is spread physically by an individual's effort to travel and find things, eCommerce has made it simpler for humans to reduce physical labor and avoid wasting time. The basic idea behind the application is to allow consumers to buy virtually via the internet and shop for the products and articles they want from the business. E-commerce is quickly becoming a recognized and widely utilized business model. The e-commerce sector has seen growth due to the restrictions imposed during the pandemic situation. The shoppers were restricted to sticking to the online shopping method for their grocery and other household needs. This has given rise to the e-commerce players exploiting the opportunity and making the most out of it. The e-commerce players have tried and catered to the customers' needs during these pandemic times. It has been advantageous to the customers to shop online and stay indoors. This paper intends to study whether the pandemic has been an opportunity for e-commerce players.

Literature Review

As we all know, the internet and e-commerce are entirely dedicated to each developed country. However, we anticipate it will be frequently completed and may provide an exciting benefit to developing nations if a great business proposition is frequently created. Ecommerce today gained so much popularity due to the essential technologies figured out in giant steps. We are even offered to feel the merchandise to be raised to understand its shape, size, and quality. With these benefits, why leave elsewhere? Once you need to make an order, choose the delivery method, put up your feet and wait till the order is supplied right to the doorstep.

The advantages of achieving Business-to-Customer (B2C) e-Commerce are compelling. Effective B2C e-Commerce solutions may assist firms in realizing significant cost savings, increase revenue, provide speedier delivery, lower administrative expenses, and improve customer service. As a result of its novelty and rapid expansion, e-commerce might be a good study topic. An extensive study in E-Commerce implementation studies shows that the notion of implementation has been debated and is challenging for researchers. E-commerce development is completed by B2B and B2C and assists customers in meeting their needs. (Numberger & Renhank, 2005)

Despite the decreasing activity, Covid 19 has increased e-commerce and has driven digital transformation. According to UNCTAD, as lockdowns become the new normal for businesses and consumers progressively move digital, the percentage of global trade accounted for by e-commerce will rise from 14 percent in 2019 to 17 percent in 2020. (UNCTAD, March 2021) According to bcg.com, the transition to e-commerce will fuel a more than 70% increase in food and beverage sales through 2022. CPG companies that can establish the most sophisticated and successful omnichannel capabilities will reap these benefits. (By Justin Manly, July 2020) E-commerce is a blessing to any country, and if given the right push and a favorable environmental framework, it may considerably contribute to the country's progress and development. (Dr. Shahid Amin Bhat, 2016)

Objectives of the study

1. To study which parameters are in favor of e-commerce players.
2. To study whether the e-commerce and traditional retailers will compete or complement each other.

Methodology

Primary and secondary data were collected methodically. Young adults have distributed the questionnaire through google forms in the Bhopal region. The questionnaire had a mix of open-ended and close-ended questions.

Target respondents: Young adults and Adults
Geographical ambition: Bhopal region
Sample Design: Convenience sampling method
Data collection: Through a structured questionnaire
Research Design: This study aimed to investigate young adults' perceptions of e-commerce players and their business strategies throughout the pandemic era.
Sampling: The questionnaire was designed to be completed by 55 individuals. Due to insufficient information, 07 forms were rejected. Finally, 48 responses were examined and incorporated into this paper.
Data: Data collected was analyzed using bar charts, pie charts, and suggestive responsesto an open-ended question.
Tracking: The respondents' responses to a google forms questionnaire were monitored. Tables, pie charts, and conclusive statements are examples of reporting.

Parameters incorporated in the study

1. Frequency of shopping
2. Categories that have been shopped for.
3. Locating the products regarding quality and quantity preferred
4. The payment method

5. Areas that would need improvement
6. Key strengths of the e-commerce players
7. Exploiting the opportunity during a pandemic
8. Compete or complement traditional stores.

Data Analysis

Age

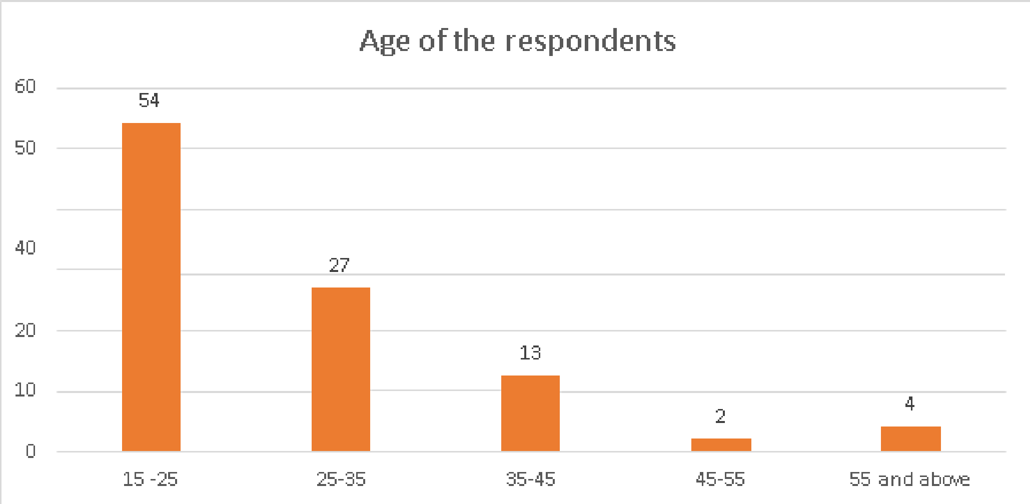


Figure 1: Age of the respondents

Interpretation

54% of the respondents are from the age group of 15 years to 25 years, 27% from the age group 25 to 35 years, 13% from the age group of 35 to 45 years, 2% from 45 to 55 years, and 4% from 55 and above.

Gender

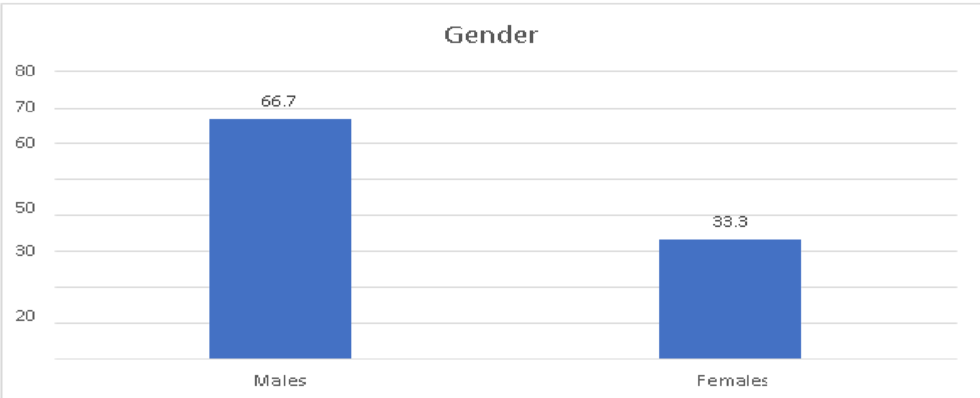


Figure 2: Gender

Interpretations

67% of the respondents were males, and 33% were females.

Area

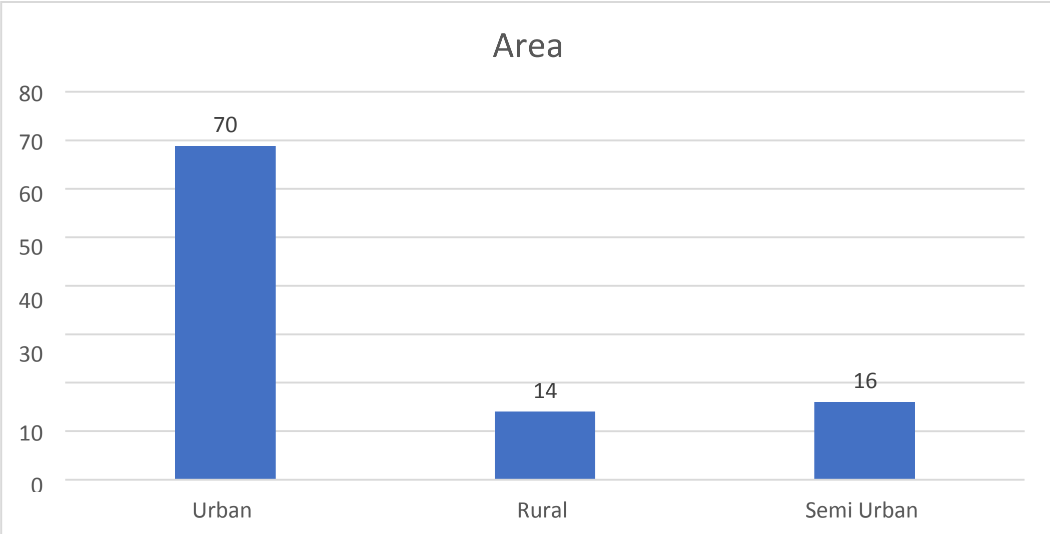


Figure 3: Area

Interpretation

70% of the respondents stayed in the urban area, 14% in therural areas, and 16% in the semi-urban areas.

Online shopping during pandemic times – Frequency

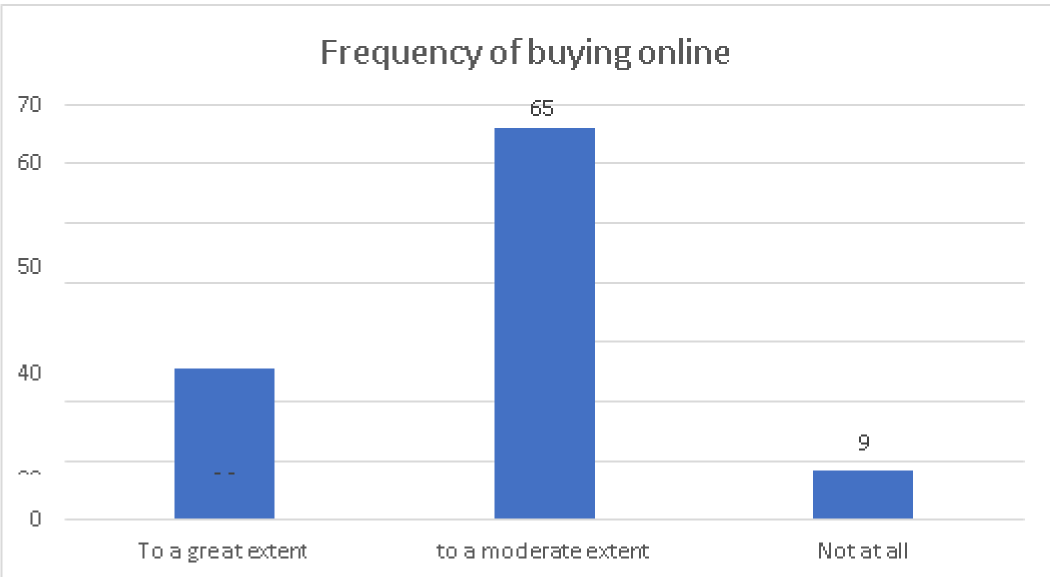


Figure 4: Frequency of buying online

Interpretation

65% of the respondents shopped to a moderate extent, 26%shopped to a great extent, and 9% did not shop.

Which Categories have you been shopping for?

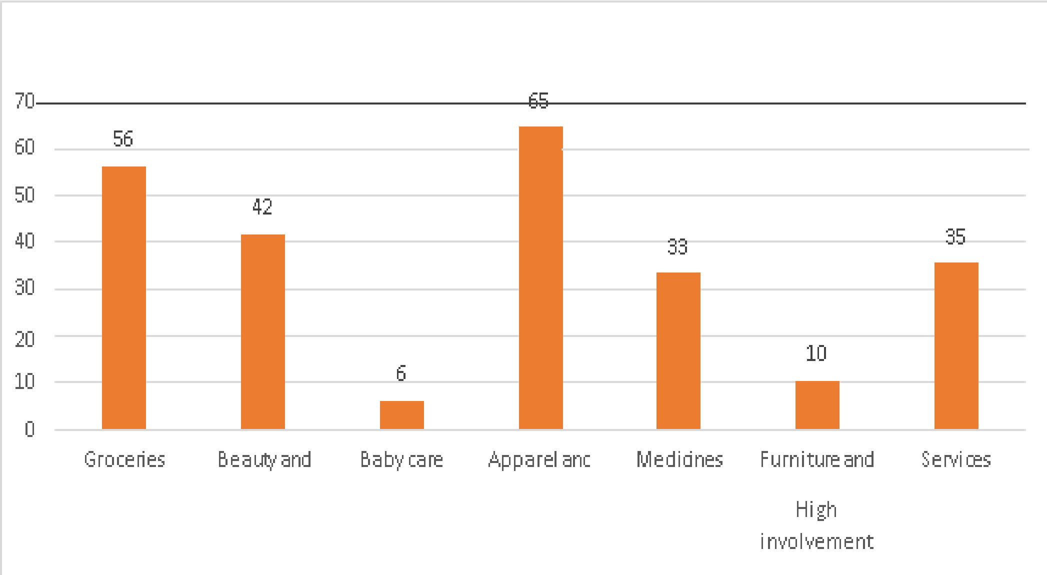


Figure 5: Category for shopping

Interpretations
Apparel, accessories, and groceries are the highest shopped categories, followed by beauty and hygiene and services and medicines.

Is it easy to find products in the Quantity and Quality preferred?

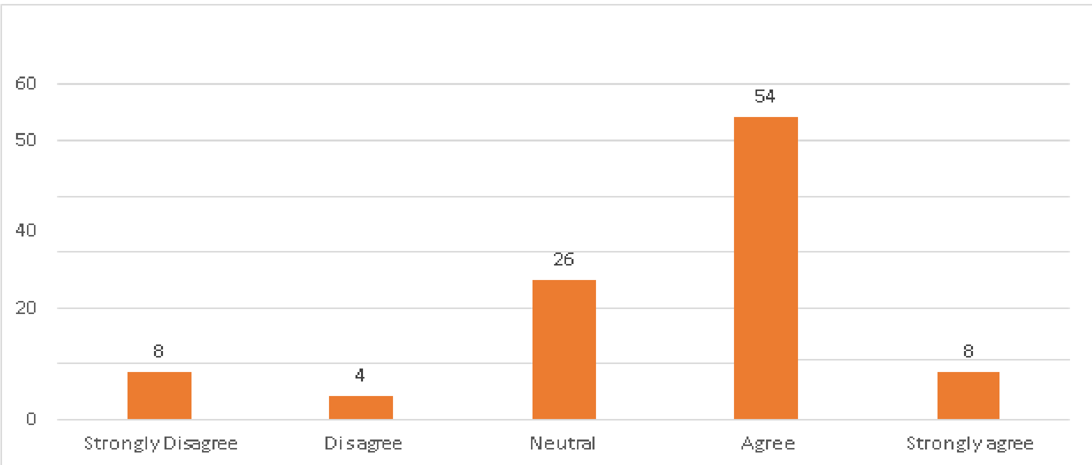


Figure 6: Product in quantity and quality preferred

Interpretations

54% of the respondents agreed that they could find the products in the quantity and quality preferred. 26% were neutral in their opinion, 8% strongly disagreed, 8% strongly agreed, and 4% disagreed.

Cash on delivery as a payment option?

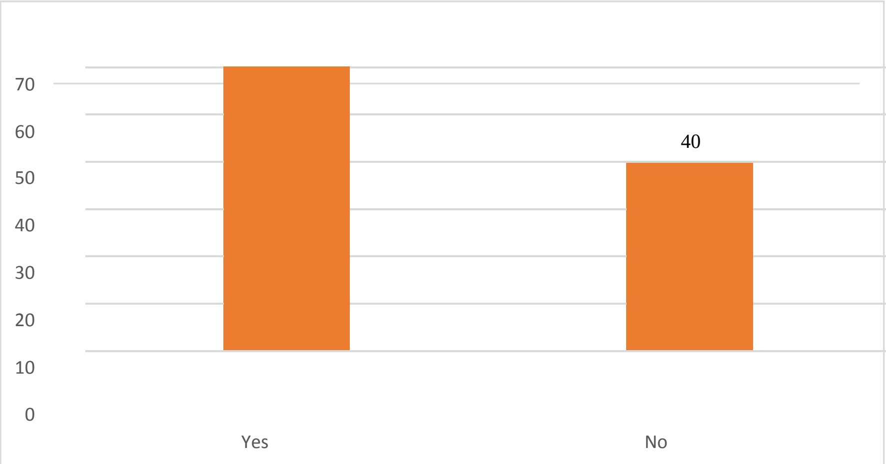


Figure 7: Payment option

Interpretations

60% of the respondents said there was a cash-on-delivery option, and 40% said there was no cash-on-delivery option.

Aspects that need improvement while shopping online

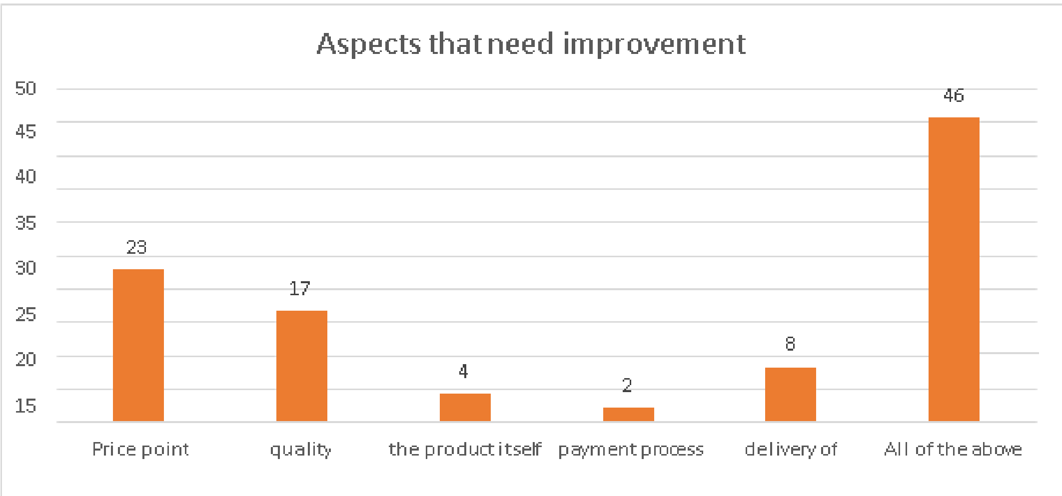


Figure 8: Aspects that need improvement

Interpretations

46% of the respondents said that the price point comparison, quality, payment process, the product itself, and delivery of the product are the areas that need improvement. 23% agreed with that price point comparison, and 17% said that the quality of the product needs improvement. The remaining 8% of respondents said that product delivery needs attention, and 2% said that the payment process requires improvement.

Key strengths of e-commerce players

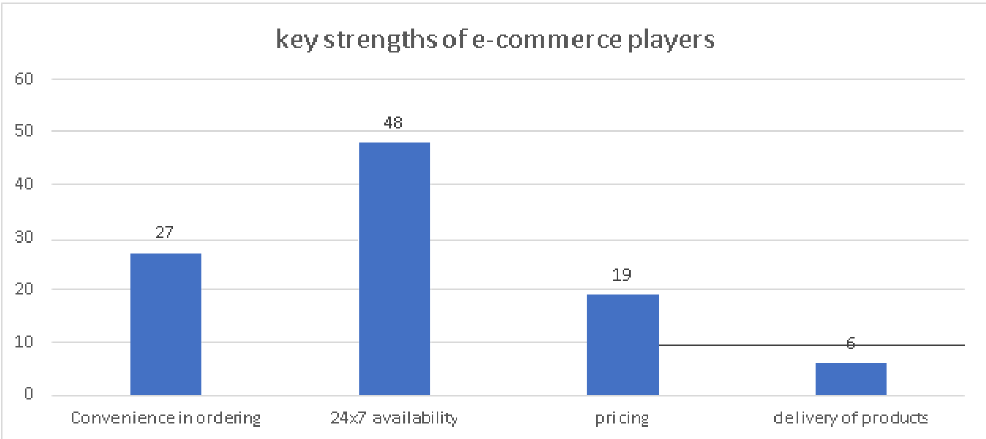
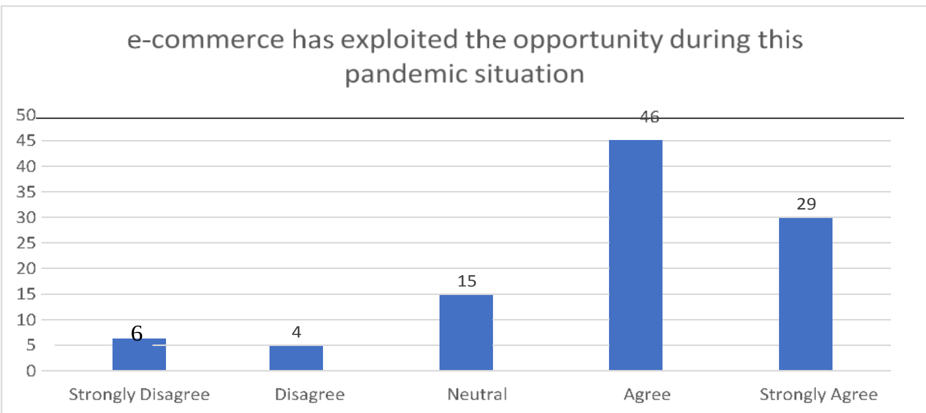


Figure 9: Key strengths of e-commerce players

Interpretations

48% of the respondents said that 24x7 availability, and 27% said that convenience in order is the fundamental strength of the e-commerce players, followed by pricingand delivery of products.

Has e-commerce exploited the opportunity during this pandemic situation?



Interpretations

29% of the respondents strongly agree, and 46% agree that e-commerce has exploited the opportunity during this pandemic. 15% of the respondents were neutral, 6% strongly disagreed, and 4% disagreed the same.

Traditional stores and e-commerce players will complement each other or compete with each other?

Table 1: Traditional stores and e-commerce players

Complement each other	25	52%
Compete with each other	18	38%
May be	2	4%
Yes	1	2%
No	2	4%

Interpretations

52% of the respondents said that the e-commerce players and traditional stores would complement each other, 38% said they would compete, 4% responded by saying Maybe, 2% said Yes, and 4% said No.

Findings

1. 65% of the respondents have agreed that they shopped online to a moderate extent.
2. The highest shopped categories are Apparel and accessories and Groceries.
3. 54% of the respondents said that they could locate the quality and quantity that they preferred.
4. 40% of the respondents said that there was no Cash on delivery option.
5. 46% of the respondents said there is scope for improvement in price point comparison, quality, the product itself, payment process, and delivery of products.
6. 48% of the respondents said 24X7 availability, and 27% said that convenience in order is the e-commerce player's key strength.
7. 29% strongly agree, and 46% agree that the e-commerce players have exploited the opportunity during this pandemic.
8. 52% of the respondents said that the traditional stores and e-commerce players would complement each other, and 38% said they would compete.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above study that shopping online has been an option during these pandemic times. Apparel and accessories, and groceries are the highest shopped categories online. Locating quality and quantity, 24X7 availability, and convenience in order are the factors that are in favor of the e-commerce players.
Payment option like – Cash on Delivery has been avoided during a pandemic. The e-commerce players have exploited the opportunity during these pandemic times.

E-commerce will complement the traditional stores and compete with them in the years to come.

Scope for further research

1. The focus of this study is limited to a geographical region. There is scope to explore othergeographic locations.
2. The study is carried out during the pandemic period. There is scope to conduct a study during ordinary times further.

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