

CHILDREN'S BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN ONLINE SHOPPING: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF FLIPKART AND AMAZON

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Received: 16 / 12 / 2025

Accepted: 22 / 01 / 2026

Published: 04 / 02 / 2026

Abstract: Children are becoming increasingly aware of online shopping. With the growing shift of the population toward digital media, children have emerged as an important segment of consumers. In India, Flipkart and Amazon are the most commonly used online shopping platforms, covering all types of consumers, including children. The present study aims to examine the market position of Flipkart and Amazon with reference to children's buying behaviour study is based on secondary data collected from academic journals, research papers, books, and credible online sources. The findings of the study suggest that the strong market positioning of Flipkart and Amazon, along with multiple influencing factors, collectively shape children's online buying behavior on these platforms. The study concludes that the dominant market presence of Flipkart and Amazon, combined with various cultural, social, personal, and situational factors, significantly affects children's online buying behavior. The research provides useful insights for parents, marketers, and future researchers, while also acknowledging the limitations associated with secondary data-based studies.

Keywords: Children's Buying Behaviour, Online Shopping, Flipkart, Amazon, E-commerce Platforms, Consumer Behaviour.

Cite this article: Prajapat, M. & Pandya, M. (2026). CHILDREN'S BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN ONLINE SHOPPING: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF FLIPKART AND AMAZON. *MRS Journal of Accounting and Business Management*, 3(2), 15-18

Introduction

In recent years, the evolution of digital marketplaces has significantly influenced consumer behavior, particularly among children. Children are increasingly influential in family purchasing decisions and act as initiators and information seekers, aided by their digital media and online shopping platforms, such as Amazon and Flipkart (Ravali, 2019) (Tripathi & Sengupta, 2011). Children actively participate in the selection and purchase of various goods, including toys, electronics, clothing, and entertainment subscriptions (Sharma & Rao, 2021).

The growing accessibility of smartphones, tablets, and the Internet has significantly exposed children to targeted digital marketing, gamified advertising, and peer-driven trends on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram (Feijoo & Gómez, 2024) (Lupiáñez-Villanueva et al., 2016). These exposures shape their brand preferences and buying patterns, often aligning them with popular online retailers. In India, Amazon and Flipkart are the two dominant e-commerce giants catering to millions of consumers, including families with tech-savvy children (Jain & Thakkar, 2023).

With an increasing number of dual-income households, children are not only exposed to different media but also take part in family buying decisions, effectively becoming influential consumers themselves (Sharma & Sonwaney, 2013; Kaur & Medury, 2011). The rise of e-commerce further facilitates this trend, as parents increasingly turn to online platforms to purchase

products for their children, balancing their professional and parental responsibilities (Sondhi, 2015).

Literature review

Online Buying Behaviour

Consumer behavior refers to the study of how individuals and groups select, purchase, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences in order to satisfy their needs and wants (Askegaard, Bamossy, Hogg, & Solomon, 2013). Similarly, in the context of online buying behaviour, consumer behaviour refers to the process of searching for, evaluating, and purchasing products or services through internet-based platforms such as Flipkart, Amazon, FirstCry, Meesho, Myntra, etc (Hamsalekha & Srikant, 2025). With the rapid growth of e-platforms and e-commerce, online shopping has become an important part of consumer behaviour. Researchers have found that convenience, variety, ease of comparison, and attractive pricing are the main factors influencing online purchase behaviour (Noor, 2024).

Children as consumer

A child, as defined by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC, 1989), is "every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier" (UNICEF, UNCRC, Article 1). This definition has been supported and discussed by several scholars (Lansdown & Vaghri, 2022; Roscia, 2022). Several studies have considered children within the age group of 7 to 11

years (Adams, 2014). Childhood encompasses both physical and mental development; children aged 10 to 14 years are considered older children, while those above 14 years are regarded as young adults (Fletcher, 1999). For the purpose of the present research, the age of children is considered to be 6–18 years.

With respect to cognitive development, Piaget (1970) proposed a theory consisting of four distinct stages. The sensorimotor stage involves learning through sensory exploration and coordination. The preoperational stage is characterized by reliance on visual representations. The concrete operational stage involves logical thinking and the emergence of abstract thought, while the formal operational stage enables adolescents to think abstractly and logically, handle complex ideas, and solve problems effectively (Reoder, 1981).

In 1990, McNeal categorized the children's market into three segments: primary, influencing, and future markets. The primary market focuses on children's own spending, such as pocket money, shopping choices, and product preferences. The influencing market reflects children's impact on their parents' purchasing decisions. Over time, this influence can lead to the development of brand loyalty and positive attitudes toward specific brands (McNeal, 1992).

Similarly, Children as Consumer behavior typically occurs in four phases: recognizing wants and needs, searching for ways to satisfy them, making a choice and purchasing, and finally evaluating the product and alternatives (Patti M. Valkenburg, 2002). Researchers have also noted that children are becoming increasingly sophisticated consumers, with awareness of products, brands, advertising, shopping habits, pricing, decision-making processes, and parental involvement (John, 1999; Watson & Aitken, 2024).

Factors Influencing Online Buying Behaviour

Children's online buying behaviour is influenced by a combination of cultural, social, personal, and situational factors. These factors collectively shape how children develop preferences and make purchase-related decisions in an online environment.

- **Cultural factors** play an important role in influencing children's buying behaviour. Values, beliefs, lifestyle patterns, and family traditions shape children's attitudes toward online shopping. Children learn these cultural elements mainly from their families and surrounding social environment. Parental attitudes toward technology usage, spending habits, and exposure to digital platforms significantly affect children's participation in online shopping. Children raised in digitally adaptive families are more likely to engage in online purchasing under parental guidance (Meneses et al., 2023).
- **Social factors**, particularly family and peer influence, strongly affect children's buying behaviour. Parents act as role models and decision-makers and control financial resources, thereby influencing children's purchase decisions. Children often observe and imitate their parents' online shopping habits. Peer groups also influence children's preferences, especially as they grow older, as children tend to prefer products that are

popular among their friends to gain social acceptance (Chaudhary, 2024).

- **Personal factors** such as age, gender, and income also shape children's buying behaviour. Younger children rely on parental guidance, while older children show greater independence. Gender influences product preferences, and purchasing power depends on pocket money or parental support (Alfarkh, 2022).
- **Situational factors** such as festivals, discounts, sales offer, time availability, and parental supervision further increase children's interest in online shopping (Julian, 2024).

Role of E-commerce Platforms: Amazon and Flipkart

E-commerce platforms considered as digital marketplaces that facilitate the buying and selling of goods and services through the internet. These platforms provide consumers with features such as product listings, price comparisons, reviews, secure payment systems, and home delivery services (Islam & Bhuiyan, 2022). Over the past decade, the rapid growth of e-commerce platforms has transformed traditional shopping behaviour by offering convenience, variety, and accessibility to consumers of all age groups (Tang, 2023).

E-commerce platforms also employ marketing strategies such as discounts, flash sales, festive offers, and targeted advertisements, which significantly impact children's interest and purchase requests. The integration of mobile applications has further increased accessibility, allowing children to browse products anytime and anywhere using smartphones or tablets under parental supervision (Hussain et al., 2022).

However, the growing influence of e-commerce platforms on children's buying behaviour raises concerns related to data privacy, persuasive marketing practices, and ethical advertising.

Amazon and Flipkart

The rapid growth of e-commerce in India has significantly transformed consumer buying behaviour, with Flipkart and Amazon emerging as the two dominant players in the market. Flipkart, established in 2007 and registered in Singapore, initially operated as an online bookstore before diversifying into electronics, personal lifestyle healthcare, home appliances, and apparel. Currently, Flipkart holds a 39.5% share of the Indian e-commerce market and dominates apparel sales, while also offering digital payment services through mobile and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platforms (Bhavsar & Pal, 2022).

Similarly, Amazon, founded in 1994 by Jeff Bezos, began its operations as an online bookstore under the name *Cadabra* before expanding into a global e-commerce giant. According to Search Logistics, Amazon experienced a USD 29 billion increase in net sales between 2013 and 2021, with Amazon Prime contributing USD 31.77 billion in revenue in 2021 (Hopkins, 2023).

Both platforms have significantly diversified their product offerings to cater to a wide consumer base. Flipkart provides a comprehensive range of products, including children's apparel, footwear, merchandise, books, and toys (Malvania, 2020).

Prior research highlights the importance of online reviews in shaping consumer purchase decisions. Studies indicate that

source credibility, observational learning, and review quality significantly influence the perceived usefulness of online reviews, which in turn positively affects impulse buying behaviour (Haiqin & Kem, 2020).

Furthermore, convenience and affordability are key factors driving the preference for online shopping, particularly among teenagers. Online platforms offer access to a wide variety of products, competitive pricing, and ease of comparison, making them more attractive than traditional retail formats (Kilhof, 2014). In addition, online shopping provides flexibility, measurability, and cost-effectiveness, and is strongly influenced by consumer attitudes and buying behaviour.

Customer satisfaction in e-commerce is further enhanced by secure online payment systems, efficient electronic stores, favourable return policies, and attractive discounts. Previous studies have found that these factors have a positive impact on customer satisfaction, especially in the case of Amazon (Asha, 2022; Nikita, Ajay, & Parul, 2019).

Several comparative studies have examined Flipkart and Amazon to understand their competitive strategies in the Indian e-commerce market. Research comparing.

Flipkart.com and Amazon.com highlights the strategies adopted by these platforms to succeed in India, identifies market opportunities, and analyses the advantages and challenges associated with online shopping platforms (Khan, 2019). Additionally, studies emphasise the role of technology in influencing consumer decision-making and demonstrate how both platforms leverage technological innovations to enhance customer experience and build long-term customer loyalty (Nayana, 2019).

Major e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart have expanded their product categories to include items that attract younger consumers, including toys, books, games, clothing, and electronic gadgets. Features such as product images, videos, ratings, reviews, and recommendation algorithms increase children's exposure to brands and products. Although children may not directly complete transactions, they actively participate in product selection and influence parental purchase decisions.

Research methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine children's online buying behaviour with reference to Flipkart and Amazon. The study is based on secondary data, which has been collected from reliable and relevant sources such as academic journals, research papers, books, and authentic websites related to e-commerce, consumer behaviour, and children's buying behaviour. Since the research is literature review-based, no primary data has been collected. The collected secondary data has been systematically reviewed and analysed using content analysis and conceptual review techniques.

Objective:

- To examine the market position of Flipkart and Amazon with reference to children's buying behaviour.

Finding:

- Flipkart and Amazon have established a strong and dominant position in the Indian e-commerce market, making them leading platforms for online shopping among consumers, including children and their parents.

- Flipkart holds a significant share of the Indian e-commerce market and has a strong presence in the apparel segment, including children's clothing, footwear, and related products, which enhances its appeal for child-oriented purchases.
- Amazon's wide product range, global brand reputation, and efficient delivery services contribute to its strong competitive position in the children's product segment.
- Both platforms offer a diverse variety of children-oriented products such as toys, books, apparel, footwear, and educational materials, enabling one-stop shopping convenience for parents and guardians.
- The availability of attractive discounts, festive offers, and competitive pricing on Flipkart and Amazon positively influences purchasing decisions related to children's products.
- Secure online payment options, easy return policies, and reliable customer service on both platforms enhance trust among consumers, indirectly influencing children's buying behaviour.
- Online reviews and ratings available on Flipkart and Amazon play a significant role in shaping parents' and children's purchase decisions for children-related products.
- The user-friendly interface and personalised recommendations offered by both platforms improve product visibility and engagement for children-oriented categories.
- Overall, the combination of strong market positioning by Flipkart and Amazon and multiple influencing factors collectively shapes children's online buying behaviour on these platforms.

Discussion

The findings of the study highlight that Flipkart and Amazon occupy a strong and dominant position in the Indian e-commerce market, which significantly influences children's online buying behaviour. The wide availability of children-oriented products, competitive pricing, attractive discounts, and user-friendly interfaces on both platforms enhance their appeal to young consumers and their parents. The literature indicates that parents play a crucial role in children's online purchasing decisions by acting as role models, decision-makers, and financial controllers. Children often observe and imitate their parents' online shopping behaviour, which shapes their preferences and expectations.

Conclusion

The study concludes that children's online buying behaviour is significantly influenced by both the strong market position of Flipkart and Amazon and various cultural, social, personal, and situational factors. As leading e-commerce platforms in India, Flipkart and Amazon provide a wide range of children-oriented products and convenient shopping features that encourage online purchasing. The review of existing literature suggests that parental influence plays a dominant role in shaping children's online buying behaviour, while peer influence and personal characteristics gain importance with age. Furthermore, the present study has certain limitations. First, the research is based solely on secondary data and relies on critical analysis of existing literature, without the use of primary data. As a result, the findings are

dependent on previously published studies and may not fully capture current consumer behaviour or recent market changes.

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