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COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF PREFERENCE FOR ONLINE BOOKING AND BILLING BY CONSUMERS OF CONTRASTING DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to investigate and assess the preference of male and female respondents for online booking of rail tickets, air (flight) tickets, hotels and the taxi (cabs) booking based on nine different criteria's viz. satisfaction, convenience, time saving, cost effectiveness, compatibility, future preference, accessibility, acceptability and reliability. The majority (~51.1%) of respondents were young (18-40 years), had medium family size (5-8 members; ~47.8%) and qualified (~35.6% graduate and ~46.7% post graduate). These results revealed that ~52.9% of the total respondents who preferred online rail ticket booking were male, while ~47.1% were female. About 1/3rd (~33.3%) of male respondents consider online rail booking as highly convenient, while ~44.4% observe it as moderate and ~22.2% considered it as less convenient. Nearly ~44.4% of male respondents consider online rail booking as highly time saving method, while ~33.3% observe it as moderate and ~22.2% considered it as less time saving method. The distribution of respondents based on cost effectiveness of online booking revealed that ~33.3% of male and ~25.0% of female respondents considered online rail ticket booking as cost effective, while a large proportion observe it as low to moderate cost effective means of ticket booking. The study revealed that ~55.6% of male and ~50% of female respondents reported high compatibility for online rail ticket booking, while ~11.1 and 12.5% of male and female, respondents respectively had low compatibility. These results revealed that ~88.9% of male and 87.8% of female respondents would prefer online rail ticket booking in future.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, mobile communication services have gained worldwide attention as portable ubiquitous technologies, and consumers established a close nexus with the devices involved (Rao and Troshani, 2007; Abrahão et al., 2016). The advancement especially in the development of smart phones had played a key role in this context and the target of the convergence of communication and entertainment functions (Karnouskos and Fokus, 2004; Jarvenpaa and Lang, 2005). The elasticity, compatibility, mobility and efficiency are among the key variables that resolve everyday problems or satisfy the end users (Rao and Troshani, 2007). The multi-national companies associated with communication sector and payments are paying attention on business opportunities that are a result of the accomplishment of these concerns and needs (Bitner, 2001; Overbr, 2014; Rao and Troshani, 2007). Among the services offered these days, access to digital information, entertainment and transaction permissions such as ticket booking, tracking orders, banking services and verification of records etc., there is a trend called 'mobile payment' (or *m-payment*) (Mallat et al., 2008). The online booking and/or purchase aimed at the purchase, payment or transfer of values done through the mobile device without the need for cash or the participation of banking institutions (Diniz et al., 2011; Overbr, 2014; Rao and Troshani, 2007). The feeling linked to environmental (i.e. social influence) and the individual motivation and value significantly influence the will determine the decision to purchase (Engel et al., 1986; Solomon, 2002). The stimulus characterized by the prospect developed by the marketing area, such as presentation, ease of use, price and quality help changing the attitude of consumers to collect and process information related to goods, perceive risks and costs and synthesize the learning step (Abrahão et al., 2016). However, the degree of individual participation in the decision making process is a likeness of the apparent risk and the significance agreed to the object of the decision, considering the needs, interests, and personal values of individuals (Coulter et al., 2003; Blackwell et al., 2008). The previous studies revealed that independence of time and location are the main attributes influencing the adoption of mobile technologies and services (Jarvenpaa and Lang, 2005; Carlsson et al., 2006). With considering the importance of mobile based services for online booking and billing by the consumers, the present study was conducted to investigate the preference of online booking/billing service by the consumers of contrasting demographic backgrounds.



METHODS AND MATERIALS

Brief description about study

The present study was conducted in Punjab (India) to investigate the distribution of respondent's ($N=90$) male ($n=39$) and female ($n=51$) based on their experience for online bookings. For this study the response of the selected respondents was collected based on their experience for online booking of rail tickets, air (flight) tickets, hotels and the cabs (taxi) for travelling. The information related to each selected respondent was gathered in a semi-structured interview schedule, which was pre-tested on 16 randomly selected respondents (8 male and 8 female). The questionnaire included information regarding demographic characteristics of the respondents and their preference for online shopping. For this survey, a total of 90 respondents were randomly selected. The selection was made in such a way that each category includes respondents of different age group, education level and family size which are generally considered for making a conclusion on the distribution of population and assessing their preference for online booking. In this study, the respondents of very young (age < 18 years), and medium (age 18-25 years) to relatively above medium age (>25 years) were included. These respondents had small (1-4 family members) to large family sizes (> 8 family members). To discern the behavior of respondents towards online booking, the survey included respondents which were 10+2 passed as well as graduates or even post-graduates were also included.

Data compilation and interpretation

The data were compiled in Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets (MS Office, 2010). The data were analyzed for frequency distribution to categories respondents in each category based on their preference for online shopping. The preference of respondents was expressed as percent of total respondents for online shopping within each category.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 showed that majority (~51.1%) of respondents were young (18-40 years), closely followed by relatively medium age group (>40 years), which represents ~34.4% of total respondents. A large majority (~47.8%) of respondents had medium family size (5-8 members), while ~31.1% had large family size (>8 family members). Data revealed that ~17.8% of respondents were qualified above 10+2, while ~35.6% of respondents were graduate, and those with post graduation were ~46.7% of total respondents selected. Due to the friendly usefulness, mobile users are established to be increasingly in favor of mobile payment methods among the youngsters (Kreyer et al., 2003; Dewan and Chen, 2005).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents ($n=90$) selected for the assessment of online purchase scenario

Characteristics of respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation
<u>Age (years)</u>				
<18	13	14.4	16.7	0.54
18-25	20	22.2	22.2	2.41
25-40	26	28.9	32.5	2.87
>40	31	34.4	45	3.92
<u>Family size (No. of members)</u>				
1-4	19	21.1	3.4	0.26
5-8	43	47.8	5.3	2.47
>8	28	31.1	6.5	3.19
<u>Educational qualification</u>				
10+2	16	17.8	-	-
Graduation	32	35.6	-	-
Post graduation	42	46.7	-	-

Distribution of respondents based on satisfaction for online bookings

Table 2 shows that ~52.9% of the total respondents who preferred online rail ticket booking were male, while ~47.1% were female. Of these total male respondents, ~44.4% were highly satisfied, while ~33.3% were had



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moderate and ~22.2% had low satisfaction level for rail ticket booking. The corresponding values for female respondents showed that ~37.5% had moderate to high satisfaction, while the remaining ~25.0% had low satisfaction level. These results showed that ~41.2% of male and ~64.7% of female respondents prefer online air tickets bookings (Figure 1). Among male respondents, ~42.8% had moderate to high satisfaction level, while ~14.3% had low level of satisfaction. However, the proportion of high satisfaction level among female respondents was ~63.8%. Of the total respondents who preferred online booking, ~35.3% were male, while ~64.5% were female respondents. These results revealed that ~83.3% of male respondents had moderate to high satisfaction level, while the proportion of female respondents was ~77.8%. The survey showed that female residents had high preference for online taxi (cab) booking; ~76.5% for female and ~23.5% for male respondents. A large proportion of selected respondents had high satisfaction level for online cab booking. The online payment is a global phenomenon which helps individuals to carry out online transactions anywhere and anytime (Weir et al., 2006), therefore, reinforcing both domestic and global trade (He et al., 2006; Ho and Wu, 2009). Gouveia and Coelho (2007) studied the purchase decision factors and adoption of mobile electronic services of potential consumers, and reported that the expectation of economic profitability, low initial cost, social prestige, time and effort economy and the immediate and guaranteed reward are the important determinants for online billing/booking. The mobile payment system is becoming a well-liked payment trend, not only in developed countries but also in developing markets (Lallmahamood, 2007; Kim et al., 2009). Although not every mobile user pays using their mobile phones, the number of mobile payment system users is projected to increase significantly in the coming years (Wong, 2014).

Distribution of respondents based on convenience for online bookings

These results revealed that ~33.3% of male respondents consider online rail booking as highly convenient, while ~44.4% observe it as moderate and ~22.2% considered it as less convenient (Table 2). For flight booking, ~28.5% of male and ~63.6% of female respondents observe online booking as highly convenient, while ~57.1 and 27.3%, respectively had observed moderate convenience. Similarly, ~14.3% of male and ~9.1% of female respondents experienced low convenience rate. Again for taxi booking, ~46.2% of female respondents had reported high convenience, while ~33.3% of male respondents had observed high convenience. The proportion of male and female respondents with low convenience experience was very low; ~22.2% for male and ~15.4% for female. The popularity of online payments is mainly due to flexibility and convenience, thanks to rapid technological development (Lee, 2009). The mobile payment has been the particular form of e-payment, which utilizes communication technology by enabling mobile users to make payment using internet connected mobile devices (Dahlberg et al., 2006).

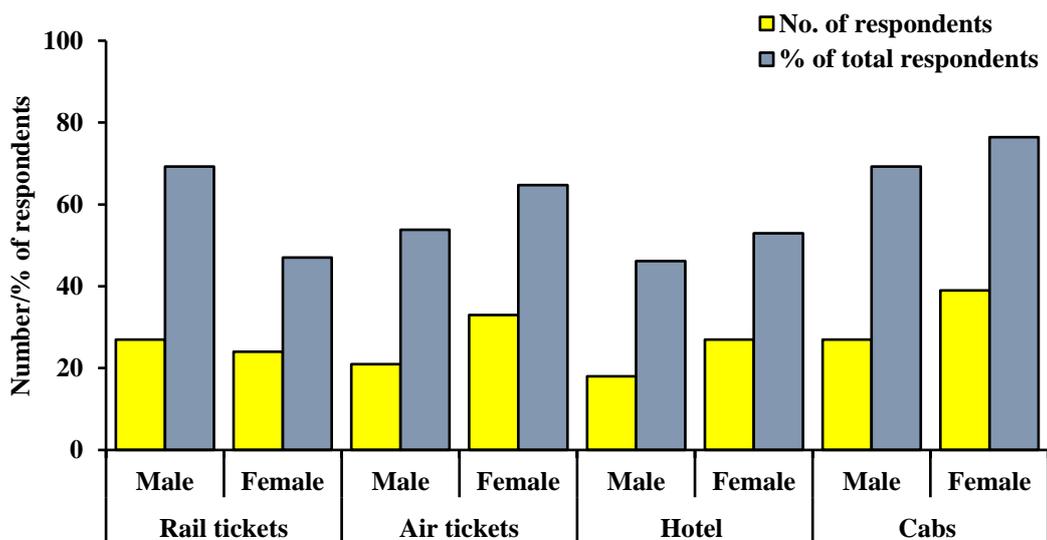


Figure 1. Distribution of male and female respondents based on their preference for online booking of rail tickets, air (flight) tickets, hotels and taxi (cabs) for travelling.



Distribution of respondents based on time saving for online bookings

These results revealed that ~44.4% of male respondents consider online rail booking as highly time saving method, while ~33.3% observe it as moderate and ~22.2% considered it as less time saving method (Table 2). For flight booking, ~57.1% of male and ~54.5% of female respondents observe online booking as highly time saving method, while ~42.9 and 27.3%, respectively had observed moderate convenience. Similarly, ~18.2% of female respondents experienced low convenience rate. About 83.3% of male and ~33.3% of female respondents consider online hotel booking as moderate to highly time saving method. Again for taxi booking, ~53.8% of female respondents had reported high convenience, while ~55.6% of male respondents had observed high convenience. The proportion of male and female respondents with low convenience experience was very low; ~11.1% for male and ~7.69% for female.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents (N=90) based on their satisfaction, convenience and time saving for the online booking of rail tickets, flight (air) tickets, hotel booking and taxi (cab) booking.

Particular	Rail booking		Air booking		Hotel booking		Taxi booking	
	Male <i>n</i> =27	Female <i>n</i> =24	Male <i>n</i> =21	Female <i>n</i> =33	Male <i>n</i> =18	Female <i>n</i> =27	Male <i>n</i> =27	Female <i>n</i> =39
Satisfaction								
High	12	9	9	21	6	9	15	27
Moderate	9	9	9	6	9	12	9	9
Low	6	6	3	6	3	6	3	3
Convenience								
High	9	6	6	21	3	15	9	18
Moderate	12	12	12	9	9	6	12	15
Low	6	6	3	3	6	6	6	6
Time saving								
High	12	9	12	18	9	6	15	21
Moderate	9	9	9	9	6	3	9	15
Low	6	6	0	6	3	6	3	3

Distribution of respondents based on cost effectiveness for online bookings

The distribution of respondents based on cost effectiveness of online booking revealed that ~33.3% of male and ~25.0% of female respondents considered online rail ticket booking as cost effective, while a large proportion observe it as low to moderate cost effective means of ticket booking (Table 3). On the other hand, for flight ticket booking, a large proportion had experienced online mode of booking as moderate to highly cost effective means of booking. Similar was the case for hotel bookings; ~66.7% of male and ~44.4% of female respondents consider online hotel booking as moderate to highly cost effective method. The proportion of female respondents who consider online taxi booking as moderate to highly cost effective method was considerably higher, compared with the male respondents. The earlier research has also established that beliefs and attitudes are predictors of behavioral intention (Wang et al., 2009).

Distribution of respondents based on compatibility for online bookings

Table 3 showed that ~55.6% of male and ~50% of female respondents reported high compatibility for online rail ticket booking, while ~11.1 and 12.5% of male and female, respondents respectively had low compatibility. These results revealed that a large proportion of male and female respondents; ~57.1 and 54.5%, respectively had high compatibility for online air (flight) ticket booking. Majority (~83.3% male and 44.4% female) of respondents reported high compatibility level with online booking of hotels. Similarly, ~88.9% male and ~76.9% female respondents had shown high compatibility for taxi (cab) booking. The intention is often used to understand



how attitude can have an effect on actual behavior (Huang et al., 2004), and how negative attitude would lead to unfavorable intention and behavior (Stevenson et al., 2000).

Distribution of respondents based on preference for online bookings

These results revealed that ~88.9% of male and 87.8% of female respondents would prefer online rail ticket booking in future (Table 3). For air (flight) booking, a large proportion (85.7-90.9%) of respondents had shown their future preference for online booking. About 50% of male and ~33.3% of female respondents reported that they will prefer online booking in future. A large proportion (~77.8 for male and ~69.2% for female) had shown their moderate to high level preference for online booking of cabs (taxi) for travelling in future. The e-ticketing has been defined as the merging of issuance and delivery of tickets into one operation, thus improving work efficiency (Sulaiman et al., 2008). In general, consumers can also buy cheaper tickets on the internet than physical channels (Crespo-Almendros and Del Barrio-García, 2016).

Table 3. Distribution of respondents (N=90) based on cost effectiveness, compatibility and future preference for the online booking of rail tickets, flight (air) tickets, hotel booking and taxi (cab) booking.

Particular	Rail booking		Air booking		Hotel booking		Taxi booking	
	Male <i>n</i> =27	Female <i>n</i> =24	Male <i>n</i> =21	Female <i>n</i> =33	Male <i>n</i> =18	Female <i>n</i> =27	Male <i>n</i> =27	Female <i>n</i> =39
Cost effectiveness								
High	9	6	9	15	9	6	9	15
Moderate	12	9	9	12	3	6	9	12
Low	6	9	3	6	6	3	9	12
Compatibility								
High	15	12	12	18	12	9	15	18
Moderate	9	9	9	12	3	3	9	12
Low	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	9
Preference								
High	12	12	9	15	9	9	9	15
Moderate	12	9	9	15	9	6	12	12
Low	3	3	3	3	0	3	6	12

Distribution of respondents based on accessibility for online bookings

These results revealed that ~33.3% of male respondents consider online rail booking as highly, moderately and less assessable method (Table 4). However, ~25.0% of female respondents perceived online rail ticket booking as highly assessable, ~50% as moderately assessable, while the remaining ~25% as less assessable method. For air (flight) booking, a large proportion of selected respondents (~71.4% male and ~81% female) had responded online air ticket booking as moderate to highly assessable method. Similarly, ~55.6-83.3% of respondents had responded online hotel booking as moderate to highly assessable method, with male respondents had ~27.7% higher preference. For taxi booking, ~55.6% of male respondents had reported online booking as highly assessable method, as compared with only ~46.2% male respondents. The passengers can look up the internet, find out which seats are available, and conveniently reserve their choice seats through the relevant website from any place at any time of the day (Chang and Hung, 2013).

Distribution of respondents based on acceptability for online bookings

These results revealed that ~55% of male and ~50.0% of female respondents had reported high acceptability for online rail ticket booking (Table 4). None of the male respondent has reported low acceptability level for online rail ticket booking, while ~12.5% of female had responded low acceptability of online booking. For air (flight) ticket booking, ~71.4% male and ~44.4% female respondents had moderate to high acceptability response for online booking. These results revealed that ~50.0% of male and ~33.3% of female respondents had



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shown high acceptability for online hotel bookings. A large proportion (84.6-88.9%) of selected respondents had moderate to high acceptability for online taxi (cab) booking. It is the consumers' positive versus negative perceptions of the internet that influences their likelihood to buy air tickets online (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2014). There are certain benefits to buying tickets online as well such as convenience, access to useful information, easy to compare price, promotions and deals, and quicker shopping (Vijayasathya, 2004).

Distribution of respondents based on reliability for online bookings

Table 4 revealed that ~75.0% of male and ~62.5% of female respondents has high reliability for online rail ticket booking, in contrast to ~33.3% male and ~37.5% female respondents with low to moderate reliability for online rail ticket booking. For air (flight) tickets, ~85.7% male and ~72.7% female respondents had revealed high reliability for online booking. In a similar way, a large proportion (~83.3% male and ~50.0% female) of respondents had moderate to high reliability for online booking of hotels. For taxi (cab) booking, all male and ~76.9 of female respondents had moderate to high reliability for online booking. In online shopping, the consumer has no choice but to use the self-service technology which effectively shoves the purchase responsibility to the shopper including any buying mistakes (Park et al., 2016).

Table 4. Distribution of respondents (N=90) based on accessibility, acceptability and reliability for the online booking of rail tickets, flight (air) tickets, hotel booking and taxi (cab) booking.

Particular	Rail booking		Air booking		Hotel booking		Taxi booking	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	n=27	n=24	n=21	n=33	n=18	n=27	n=27	n=39
Accessibility								
High	9	6	6	18	6	12	15	18
Moderate	9	12	9	9	9	3	6	9
Low	9	3	6	6	3	3	6	12
Acceptability								
High	15	12	9	21	9	9	12	15
Moderate	12	6	6	9	9	3	12	18
Low	0	3	6	3	0	6	3	6
Reliability								
High	18	15	9	12	6	6	15	18
Moderate	6	3	9	12	9	3	12	12
Low	3	3	3	9	3	9	0	6

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