CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

In our study we found significant number of customers as internet buyers. However, many customers are still in the category of non-web users followed by visitors and browsers. Maximum customers buy 1 to 5 products online, followed by customers who buy 6 to 10 products online, followed by customers who buy 10 or more products online. There are minimum numbers of respondents who do not indulge in online shopping. Travel tickets are the most preferred category of product which is purchased online. Next preferred categories are flowers & gift items, beauty care & toys and electronics. Least preferred category of product purchased online is clothing and footwear. Snapdeal.com tops the list of most preferred online stores followed by Makemytrip.com. Least preferred online store is Homeshope18.com.

Our study on e-shopping behaviour reveals that there is significant change in customer behaviour in shopping due to which they are inclined towards online shopping. Customers are satisfied with the quality of service provided by e-retailers and therefore they recommend others to shop online.

Customer’s perception regarding e-service quality of online stores is reliable due to favourable response in following: Error free transactions, On-time delivery and Secured payment gateways. Responsiveness of online stores is favourable due to following: Prompt confirmations
through e-mails, convenient options for returning products and prompt problem solving. Customers are happy with the access and availability of online stores due to following: Customers service representative are available online, online store websites are available 24 X 7. They consider online stores as flexible option of shopping due to availability of variety of products, various payment options such as credit card/debit card/ cash on delivery.

Customers find it easy to shop online since it facilitates quick and easy browsing and selection of products by providing various search dimensions. They believe online store to be efficient since it assures prompt and timely delivery of products. Also online stores are considered to be trustworthy since they are truthful about their offerings. Customers feel secure in providing sensitive information to online stores since they will not misuse their personal information. They believe online shopping provides better price comparison, clarity of total bill with break-up of product price, taxes and shipping charges. Customers are delighted with the look and feel of websites which have proper linkages to the granular level of product specifications and insights. They have changed their mindset and prefer to shop online without seeing and touching the product. In addition, they are not keen to interact with sales representatives or receive individual attention during the purchase process. Customers feel secured and comfortable in online shopping. They are optimistic and innovative towards online shopping option. This is noted during technology readiness study which is measured through four attributes namely optimism, innovativeness, discomfort and insecurity.
There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female customers for e-shopping behaviour attribute. In addition to this, marital status does not impact perception of customers towards e-shopping behavioural pattern. There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female customers for the e-service quality dimensions except reliability. There is difference in views of male and female customers about reliability of online stores. Female customers experienced on-time delivery, error-free transactions, secure payment gateways and therefore they concluded online stores as reliable source. However, male customers are having exactly distinct experience. Married and single customers have same opinion about all the dimensions e-service quality of online stores. There is no significant difference in the views of male and female customers for all statements regarding checking their optimism, innovativeness, discomfort and insecurity i.e. attributes of technology readiness in online shopping context. Similar results are found with married and single customers.

E-Shopping behaviour and satisfaction is independent of per annum income of the customers. The views of all customers belonging to different income groups (lower, middle and higher income groups) are same for e-shopping behaviour and satisfactory online shopping experience. Similarly all income group customers perceive same judgment about e-service quality of online stores. Diverse income group customers do not feel discomfort or insecure while shopping online. Furthermore, they all are innovative towards online shopping. Nevertheless, study reveals that middle income group customers are more optimistic towards online shopping than the higher and lower income group customers.
Perception about e-shopping and satisfaction of different age group customers i.e. younger, middle and older is not different. Similarly, all age group customers perceive same views about e-service quality of online stores. As well, the beliefs of technology usage in online shopping are same for younger, middle aged and older customers.

The views of customers for the attribute satisfaction are same for all the customers irrespective of number of credit cards they use. (i.e. 0-1, 2-3, 4-5 and more than five cards). However, customer’s views for the shopping behaviour are different among different range of credit card holders. The views of customers holding 2-3 credit cards are having more positive perception about shopping behaviour as compared to customers holding 4-5 credit cards. All customers irrespective of number of credit cards they use perceive same views about e-service quality of online stores. Moreover the beliefs of technology usage in online shopping are not different among them.

Perception of different type of customers such as non-web users, visitors, browsers and internet buyers about all the attributes of e-shopping behaviour, e-service quality of online stores and technology readiness are alike. Perception of customers about e-shopping behaviour, e-service quality of online store and their technology readiness is not differing based on the frequency of shopping online and also the volume of online transaction.

The findings of the study clearly disclose that there is positive relationship between e-service quality and shopping behaviour. Thus, we can infer good e-service quality of online stores encourages customers to shop online. However, findings suggests that e-service quality cannot be correlated with the other attribute of e-shopping behaviour i.e.
satisfaction. Thus, even if online stores confirm good e-service quality it may not necessarily result in satisfactory online shopping experience for the customers.

Study confirmed affirmative relationship between customer’s optimism, their innovativeness and e-shopping behaviour. Thus, we can conclude that if customers are optimistic and innovative for technology usage then they will prefer to shop online and will result in increase in e-shopping behaviour among customers. We found negative relationship between customer’s technology readiness attribute namely discomfort and e-shopping behaviour. This directs us to infer that customers are hesitant to shop online if they feel discomfort in using technology of online shopping. Study proved negative relationship between customer’s technology readiness attribute namely insecurity and e-shopping behaviour. As a result of this customers do not explore online shopping option unless they are sure about the security measures taken care by online stores.

The relative importance of the independent variables in influencing E-SQ, E-SB and TR is determined by examining the standardized coefficients (called \( \beta \)). They are reported in Table 5.102 of chapter 5 (on page no. 243,244). The standardized coefficients are obtained by running the regression of standardized values of dependent variable on the standardized values of the independent variables by using structural equation modeling. The standardized values of a variable are obtained by subtracting from the variable its mean value and dividing by its standard deviation. Higher the value of absolute standardized coefficient, higher is the importance of that variable in influencing E-SQ, E-SB and TR. Therefore we note that access is the most important variable followed by security/privacy, ease of use, site aesthetics, price knowledge, flexibility,
personalization, reliability and assurance & trust in influencing the E-Service quality of online shopping. Shopping behaviour is the most important variable followed by satisfaction in influencing the E-Shopping behaviour of online shopping. Finally, optimism is the most important variable followed by innovativeness in influencing the Technology readiness of online shopping. Customers feeling of discomfort and insecurity towards online shopping increases leads to decrease in TR and vice versa.

The relative importance of the independent variables in influencing E-Shopping behaviour is determined by the standardized regression coefficients, and we observed the E-Service quality is the most important variable followed by Technology readiness in influencing the E-Shopping behaviour of online shopping.

6.2 Managerial Implications and recommendations

The research is relevant to understand e-shopping behaviour of Indian customers as well as helpful in understanding e-business model of India. As proposed this research suggests that customer’s Technology Readiness (TR), e-service quality (e-SQ) of online stores and e-shopping behaviour (e-SB) these three constructs are interrelated to each other. Research has contributed in measuring customer’s perception about e-service quality and their technology readiness which is valuable for e-retailers. The study has identified attributes of e-service quality and technology readiness influencing e-shopping behaviour.

The research has shown there is positive correlation between e-service quality and e-shopping behaviour. But same is not true in case of e-service quality and satisfaction. Thus good quality of e-service may
influence customers to shop online but not necessarily will improve their satisfaction. This suggests, it is necessary to identify the factors along with e-service quality attributes, which will help to improve the satisfaction level of the online customers.

The research finding confirms technology readiness attributes – Optimism and Innovativeness as contributors for technology usage i.e. increase in online shopping. Moreover, technology readiness attributes – Discomfort and Insecurity as inhibitors for technology usage i.e. decrease in online shopping.

Based on research findings following recommendations are suggested to online stores:

1. E-stores need to take extra initiatives to convert visitors and browsers (category of customers) into internet buyers. Additional efforts are required to train and convince non-web users to become internet buyers.

2. Online stores should provide flexible options in return / change policy to boost / encourage online shopping in clothing and footwear category.

3. In the current study only male customers believed online shopping as unreliable option, thus it is suggested e-store should work in direction to change their belief by assuring them online delivery, error-free transaction and secured payment gateways.

4. Since middle income group customers are more optimistic about online shopping than the higher and lower income, online store should provide variety of products in price range suitable to this income group to increase the sales.
5. The views of customers holding 2-3 credit cards are more positive perception about online shopping as compared to 4-5 credit card holders, thus more products affordable to their credit limit should be made available by e-stores.

6. Research directs us to infer that customers are hesitant to shop online if they feel discomfort in using technology of online shopping. Hence, we recommend that online stores should take due care about technology failures during online transactions. Technology systems should be designed in simple and easy way to understand by the ordinary people. E-stores should provide 24 hours technology support to the customers. In addition, the technology used should not be so hi-tech which may end up as embarrassing situation for customers.

7. Research concludes that customers do not explore online shopping option unless they are sure about the security measures taken care by online stores. Hence, we recommend that online stores should provide hard copies of transaction receipts for future reference. Online stores should give assurance that the customer personal information will not be shared by anyone and will not be misused by them. Online stores should also convey all security measures taken for financial transaction to get customers confidence.
6.3 Limitations of the study

- The study was unable to conclude difference in e-shopping behaviour perceptions with respect to gender. This is because of the reason; data collection was not included equal number of samples for male and female customers.

- The method of data collection was survey method using a questionnaire. Researchers have limitations with this type of data collection, due to low response rate, complex and confusing questions and surveys that might be too long.

- The number of respondents though drawn from the specific method is varied in terms of age groups, gender, income levels, type of customers, frequency of online shopping etc. This may lead to differences in perception on various dimensions.
6.4 Future Research Potential

- Multiple measurement methods such as focus group interviews, nominal group technique, etc. can be used for justifiability of theoretical model.
- The sample can be bigger and broad based to increase the representatives of the study.
- The study can also be done in different locations.
- The study can be done by comparing perceptions of Inter-buyers and non-web users. Since study revealed that technology readiness attributes are not significant in influencing e-shopping behaviour and controlling satisfaction. Further behavioural and psychological factors affecting e-shopping behaviour and e-satisfaction need to be identified.
- Further research is needed to check moderating impact of Technology Readiness on E-Service quality and E-Shopping Behaviour.