

# Customer Satisfaction from the Context of Brand Promise in E-Commerce Companies in India

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## ABSTRACT

For efficient e-commerce and business of the products, the retailers should definitely recognize about the growing complexity of the customer journey and the need for rewards-based redemption programs for custom brand products, apart from providing meaningful interactions from time to time. The digital shopping experience could be best defined by greater technological acceleration, the mobile ubiquity and an efficient analysis paralysis. This would be mainly due to the fact that the customers would always forego routine items, and prefer to choose either the products or the different services at any point of time.

In the present day world, there is a great change in the thinking of the customers regarding the suitability of a product and maintaining long-term relationship with any retailer for procuring a product. E-commerce business will succeed only by if the retailers provide the most relevant experience to the customers, apart from providing highly cost-effective price for any product. Thus, it could be easily understood that e-commerce would succeed only if the business marketers move beyond the traditional thinking of 'buying' the customer loyalty by providing discounts of a product, rather than providing proper long-term customer satisfaction. In other words, instead of bothering about the brand loyalty, one should bother about the relevance of the brand itself.

**KEYWORDS:** e-commerce, marketers, technology, digital shopping, customers

## INTRODUCTION

### The Loyalty:

It is highly obligatory that any retailer should know about the preferences of the customers regarding the brand of the product or the loyalty of the customers for a particular brand. If the thinking of the customers has been changing regarding the brand of a product, then it is very much essential that the relevant platforms should be immediately developed for it. An example could be about a shoe company for dealing the sales of running shoes. Instead of assuming that the customers would buy only Nike shoes, the company would display a series of fitness products and provide all the details. The display of a fitness ecosystem and all the details would certainly help the customers to have complete knowledge of the different products. Accordingly, the relevance or the loyalty of a product will increase to a great extent and the customers will stay with a particular brand for a longer period.

### Measuring the brand relevance:

The brand relevance could be efficiently measured by the concept of 'social listening'. One should always pay appropriate attention to what actually is being expressed about a given brand of product on the different types of social media. With this activity, one could always gauge the buzz among different customers, apart from different employees, trade, vendors, and others. If the excitement is palpable, you are surely building something very much relevant in the business.

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## E-Commerce Developments:

In India, the introduction of e-commerce has increased two most important aspects of the business viz., the transparency and the liquidity in the marketplace. A proper planning of e-commerce in India would certainly make the country as one of the world's leading markets with an assured growth rate of about 6-7% even under the present era of the global economic downturn. During 2020, the new avenues of e-commerce viz., the daily deals, the private sales, etc. have greatly enhanced the momentum of different sectors. Further, this will greatly contribute for an enhanced share of the e-commerce market in the next few years.

The information technology (IT) has contributed significantly in bringing out more number of online transactions through the Internet. The users of Internet in India have often adopted the latest advancements in the online space and also are always keen to include the different digital interactions into their daily purchase activities through Internet.

Due to the large size of the e-commerce industry in India, the country's GDP in 2030 has been predicted to increase about 5 times to that of the present GDP. The population of India would be wealthier within a few decades. Our present research study would find out the online buy and sell transactions through the e-commerce and its applications at various places. The study would also provide about the advantages and disadvantages of e-commerce and also the m-commerce of the transactions carried out through smart mobile phones.

The online process of buying and selling of goods and services, including the transactions of the Business to Business (B2B), Business to Customers (B2C) as well as the paperless exchange plus the extensive cost savings etc., is known as the E-Commerce. Originally, it was nothing but the facilitation of commercial transactions made through the electronic process using the advanced technologies such as the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT).

### The Branding Process:

In order to take an appropriate decision, the consumers would always need a branding process or a mechanism for recognizing a brand of a product. The 'branding process' would also help the firm for improving the value of its products, apart from providing a long-term success. The branding process could be defined by 6 different phases viz., market research, designing brand identity, clarifying strategy, brand platform, brand guidelines and brand evaluation. These phases will have appropriate logical beginning and endpoints, which would work as a suitable mechanism for the customers for properly recognizing the brand. An overview of the branding process is given in Figure 1.1.



In our research study, we have made an in-depth study about the role of branding and its effect on the customer satisfaction. We have investigated in detail about (i) the process of branding, and (ii) how a brand would influence the perception of customers and gain the customers satisfaction. Apart from these important aspects, we have also studied about the relationship and its significance between the customer satisfaction and the brand loyalty of a product.

### Managing the Customer Expectation:

The customer satisfaction is the most important thing which would decide about the demand for a product and the success of any brand. Accordingly, the customers would always form many specific expectations from various sources viz., the (i) past experiences, (ii) advertisement campaigns, (iii) word of mouth, and (iv) individual consumer needs. The expectations of customers would set the basis for the customer satisfaction which would ultimately affect the customer loyalty.

### The Significance of E-Commerce:

There have been many advantages of the business done through E-commerce by using different components of the web, digital television, telecommunication, phones, fax, copiers, PCs and the printers, other different integrated machines, apart from doing all the transactions through e-mail. The different activities would be carried out for the purpose of an easy on-line transfer of money from customers who have purchased the products, business partners, and significantly improving the productivity of different transaction processes, further development through efficient automated processes in the background. The information technology, telecommunications and different business processes are involved in the E-commerce transactions. It will regularly update the timing on the deals done by the existing as well as new customers.

### The Brand or the Branded Experience:

There is always a need to assess the distinction between the 'brand customer experience' and the 'branded customer experience'. The essence of the brand, promise, values, and all that it would stand for and which would come through the actual customer experience is called the 'brand customer experience'. The brand itself would set the customer expectations for proper experience. In the process, the customer experience would deliver on those expectations through an intentional and guided design framework. Thus the experience that the customers would get would be true with reference to the brand. An example could be John Lewis where its customer experience is always in tune with its brand values viz., *'Quality Service and the Value'*. The 'branded customer experience' would be going one step further, where the experience would become unique and recognizable. Under this, the customer experience would become an appropriate source of competitive differentiation.

### The Key Drivers of Indian E-commerce:

It is a fact that the awareness of the Internet has gone up tremendously among people irrespective of age, sex, rural or urban living or any other category. Most of the people prefer to procure goods through the online E-commerce business due to an easy access and details about the availability of different products. Thus the Internet access and availability of different electronic devices have significantly contributed to the growth of E-commerce business in most of the cities, small towns in India. This has led to a great earning of income by companies through E-commerce.

The online business will further grow due to many more advancements in communication technology, Internet advancements, easy access, higher band width availability, discounts and competitive prices, quality improvement of products, and many other improved aspects in the immediate future. In other words, the immediate advancements in the adoption of latest technologies like improved devices of Mobile phones, Smart phones, Tablets, access of Internet through the broadband connectivity, 3G/4G connectivity etc. have become a major driving force. These features have certainly led to a significant increase in the online consumer base of companies doing E-commerce business.

### The Customer retention:

Any company would adopt some efficient strategies to retain customers in the business. This is done with the objective of improving the business, apart from providing some advantages and also profits to the customers. The retention of customers is nothing but integrating different activities of a business for either increasing or retaining the repeated customers for further growth of the organization and enhancing customer life time value. The central idea of customer retention would be to recognize the existing customers who have contributed to the company by staying for a long time and accordingly should be recognized and provided with some improved quality products at a reasonable price. This process would enhance the customer experience, and provide a continuity for attaining much higher value/returns from different products.

### Customer Retention Strategies for the E-commerce Business:

In the E-commerce, the customers would be provided with details of the products, prices, quality and many related things. However, the customers would decide from where

they should buy a product. For the business of a company, the 'repeat customers' would be considered as the 'life blood', and this is very much true in the E-commerce business since it would lack the 'brick-and-mortar' outlets for attracting the walk-in customers. It is a fact that a company would spend 3-times more to retain old customers compared to acquiring new customers.

### Review of Literature

The Online customer experience would be quite fundamental and is surely an essential factor for the long-term relationship for most of the E-marketers. Pine and Gilmore (1998) expressed that after creating an unique customer experience, the firm should orient itself towards capturing many repeat purchases, and strategically facing the competitors in business.

Arnold et al., (2005) have expressed that among different concepts in the business, the "Customer experience" concept has been extensively studied across a big range of business situations. The situations include (i) the online business, (ii) service delivery, (iii) tourism and retailing.

The Customers could always (i) purchase, (ii) properly communicate and (iii) exchange the information online at any time and at any place that would suite them. However, this could be done with specific emphasis on the connectivity with high speed Internet access through the mobile devices. However, within the offline context, it would be greatly restricted by the opening hours of the company (Rose et al., 2011).

### Research Design and Methodology

In the present day period, the E-commerce has been observed to become highly popular. It has been growing at a great speed like the Information Technology (IT), apart from an increasing popularity of the Internet and also many in-depth applications. In view of these aspects, relatively a significantly higher development of the activities of E-commerce could be seen, which could be mostly because of the (i) online sales, (ii) online promotions, apart from the (iii) online services.

### The Research Problem:

It has been very much observed that any organization without a proper and significant customer relationship management, it would definitely suffer from an extremely serious competitive disadvantage. Ultimately, there is a high chance that the organization would surely lose (i) the competitive edge that the knowledge of the customers and (ii) a better understanding of the customer would need, could give them properly, while anticipating and adapting the relationship marketing developments. Any company which fails to implement a suitable customer relationship management (CRM) system in the most appropriate time would become slow for significantly improving the customer service.

### The Research Objectives:

Our present research study has the following major objectives:

1. To study the trends and the developments in the E-commerce and the E-business scenario in India;
2. To analysis the E-Commerce customer perception and also the behavior with respect to the customer service quality policies that have been adopted by the different E-commerce companies;
3. To analyze the different strategies of E-commerce

companies towards the customer retention and also the business development plans and brand buildings.

4. To suitably suggest the best practices to the E-commerce companies for attracting more customers to acheive the competitiveness and the profitability.

### The Research Hypothesis:

- H0:** The Customer Experience has a significant impact on the customer satisfaction.
- H1:** The Customer Experience has no significant impact on the customer satisfaction.
- H0:** The Customer Experience when delivered under the brand promise has a significantly higher customer satisfaction.

### The Research Methodology:

We have collected different types of data for meeting the different objectives in this research study. The data collected are the primary and the secondary data, both in the forms of the quantitative and qualitative nature. The Primary data have been obtained from the different respondents with the responses provided them to the different questions that have been compiled into a detailed questionnaire. Compared to this, the secondary data have been obtained from different research studies as available through a number of scientific publications made by the authors e.g. research reports, research journals, books, bulletins, number of doctoral thesis and dissertations. In addition to these documents, the articles that could be accessed through online and also in the library have also been collected as the complementary material so that the secondary data could be used as a reference in properly interpreting all the results of the primary data collected in the research study.

### The Sample:

The research hypotheses have been carefully formulated based on the theoretical model postulated in our study. About 100 stakeholders or the respondents were contacted for collecting the primary data in this research study. We have used different statistical techniques like the Multiple Regression Analysis, and Qualitative Analysis have been used to test the different research hypotheses that have been formulated in the study. The results of the different empirical study have clearly indicated that (i) the satisfaction, (ii) the trust and (iii) the commitment have a significant impact on the consumer retention and the loyalty towards the online shopping under the E-commerce.

### The Sampling Method:

The sampling method in any research study would be nothing but a simple process that would suitably empower the researcher in order to derive many suitable statistical inferences about the population parameters of the study. The research study, we have drawn the random sample based on the **Stratified Random Sampling** method from the population. This has been done in order to collect the opinions of the different respondents in the study.

### Data Analysis and interpretation:

Our research study has the statement of problem which states about which factors would influence the brand loyalty. It would mainly focus on the benefits of branding through the use of mass media marketing. The research literature would also be very much lacking in the area of suitably targeting the consumers with the demographical issues and the decision making aspects that are significantly related to the marketing efforts and also the benefits that would occur while creating the brand loyalty.

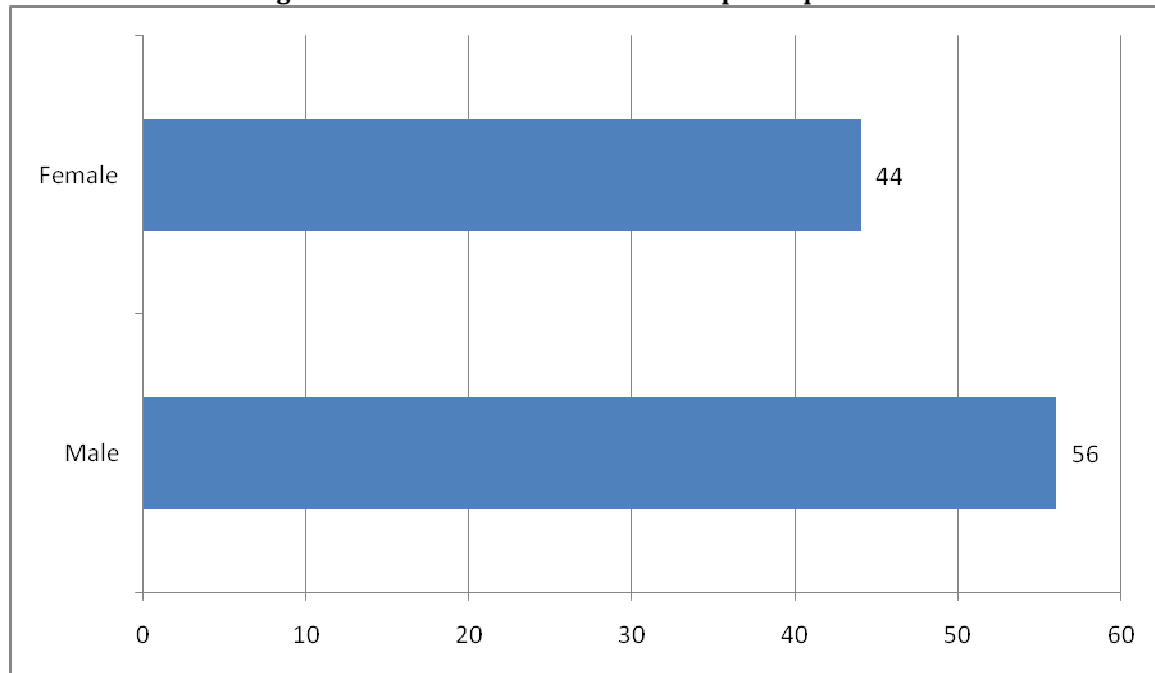


**Table: 1 The gender details of sample respondents**

Gender	Respondents	Percent
Females	56	56
Males	44	44
Total	100	100

**Source: Data compiled from the field study**

The details of gender in the sample as considered during the E-commerce company performance in terms of the Customer satisfaction and also the brand loyalty are given in Table:1 Almost male and female respondents have been reviewed with an equal sample size in order to know about the purchase behaviour in the selected E-commerce companies of Amazon and Flipkart. Compared to 51% males, there were 49% females in the study.

**Figure:1 The Gender details in the sample respondents****Table: 2 The respondents on the basis of age**

Age	Percent
Below 25	44
26-35	20
36-45	18
Above 45	18
Total	100

**Source: Data compiled from the field study**

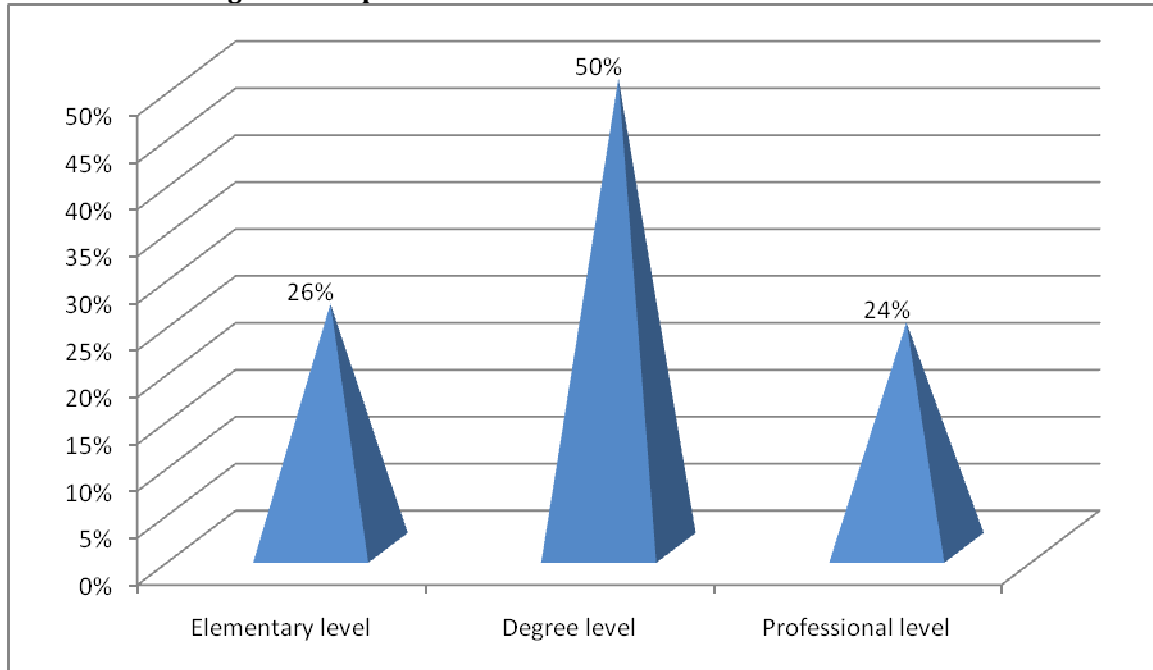
The age details of the respondents considered to assess the performance in the E-commerce companies in terms of the Customer satisfaction and the brand loyalty are given in Table: 2. The different age groups of respondents have been by using the 100 sample respondents to know about the purchase behaviour about the selected E-commerce companies of Amazon and Flipkart. About (44%) respondents were below an age of 25 years, followed by persons (20%) between 26-35 years, persons (18%) between 36-45 years and persons (18%) were above 45 years.

**Table: 3 Respondents on the Basis of Educational level**

Qualification	Percent
Elementary level	26
Degree Level	50
Professional level	24
Total	100

**Source: Data compiled from the field study**

Table: 3 revealed about the educational details considered during the E-commerce companies with regard to the performance in terms of the Customer satisfaction and the brand loyalty. Among 100 respondents, (50%) were degree holders, followed by (26%) had education upto elementary school level, (24%) had professional level of education. The 100 respondents with different types of qualification in the sample were assessed for the purchase behaviour in the E-commerce companies of Amazon and Flipkart. A majority of the respondents were graduates who were well aware of making the online purchases/ transactions without any problem.

**Figure: 2 Respondents chosen on the Basis of Educational level**

The E-Commerce companies have already started to appropriately implement the strategies to reach both the existing and the new consumer markets in a personalized way. Through the use of the grass roots consumer marketing brands, one could capitalize on the growing field of young consumers to build brand loyalty and also create all the returning customers for life. For the purpose of investigation, our research study has used the advanced strategies for marketing the products of brands through the E-commerce business.

**Table: 4 Testing the product related factors from different E-commerce Companies using t-test**

Products factors	Type	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	t- value	P-value
Product Quality	Amazon	50	20.26	2.916	0.185	1.656	0.124 (NS)
	Flipkart	50	19.62	3.244	0.195		
Product Service	Amazon	50	15.54	2.915	0.186	1.324	0.196 (NS)
	Flipkart	50	16.28	2.846	0.176		
Innovativeness	Amazon	50	11.36	2.655	0.168	0.564	0.646 (NS)
	Flipkart	50	10.58	2.986	0.182		
Competitiveness	Amazon	50	15.26	3.492	0.225	0.628	0.597 (NS)
	Flipkart	50	15.58	3.268	0.196		
Design	Amazon	50	15.62	3.288	0.214	1.824	0.065 (NS)
	Flipkart	50	14.59	3.226	0.198		

Source: Data compiled from the field study

NS – Not Significant

**Ho: There is no significant mean difference between the respondents of the E-commerce companies on the product related factors.**

The different statistics viz., mean, standard deviation (SD), standard error of mean (SEM) and Student's t-test values for the scores of product related factors among the customers are given in Table 4. The product quality was found to have a significant influence on the factors as indicated by the customers of the Amazon company with a higher mean value of 20.26, compared to the mean value of 19.62 as indicated by the customers of the Flipkart company. The difference between these two groups was tested based on the Students t-test. The computed t-value 1.656 indicated that it was less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 5% level of significance. Accordingly, we do not reject the null hypothesis. The t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between the two companies for the different product related factors studied. Therefore the hypothesis that the E-commerce firms customers group has preferred more product quality factors than Non E-Commerce firms has been accepted. The other factors such as the product service, Innovativeness, Competitiveness and design have proved that the hypothesis of the E-commerce firm's customers group has preferred more product quality, Innovativeness,

**Table: 5 t-test for brand related factors on the basis of Level of Income: E-commerce companies**

Brand related factors	Type	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	t-value	P-value
Brand Name	High income group	50	14.26	3.52	0.216	0.428	0.698 (NS)
	Medium Income group	50	15.60	2.94	0.185		
Brand Trust	High income group	50	15.20	3.47	0.220	0.462	0.663 (NS)
	Medium Income group	50	15.65	2.86	0.174		
Brand Affect	High income group	50	11.22	2.59	0.168	0.892	0.427 (NS)
	Medium Income group	50	11.28	2.68	0.168		

Brand Relevance	High income group	50	8.25	2.04	0.130	1.38	0.224 (NS)
	Medium Income group	50	8.10	2.00	0.125		
Band Performance	High income group	50	11.60	2.59	0.168	2.624	0.010 (S)
	Medium Income group	50	10.85	2.57	0.156		

**Source: Data compiled from the field study**

S – Significant NS – Not Significant

Competitiveness factors than Non E-Commerce firms has been accepted. Thus, both the companies of Amazon and Flipkart have considered the above strategic factors for improving their market share and also the brand Loyalty for retaining a large customer base.

**Ho: There is no significant mean difference between the respondents on the brand related factors based on the income level.**

The mean, SD, SEM and the Student t-test values for the scores of brand related factors on the basis of the income level are given in Table 5.8. In the E-commerce, the Brand name is an important influential factor. The Higher Income Group customers have a mean score of 15.60, which is higher than the Middle Income Group with mean score value of 14.26. The difference between these two groups was tested by using the Student's t-test. The computed t-value was found to be 0.428 which indicated that the p-value was not significant. Since t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value, we do not reject the null hypothesis.

**Table: 6 The Customer Satisfaction : Loyalty of E-Commerce firms**

Factors	Mean	SD	CV (%)
Preference for online purchases	3.95	1.06	26.8
Price and discount offers	3.86	0.85	22.0
Product Choice	4.21	0.92	21.9
Brand Image	4.22	0.87	20.6
After sale service	4.42	0.84	19.0
Performance	4.52	0.86	19.0
Responsiveness	4.62	0.81	17.5
Reliability	4.62	0.96	20.8

**Source: Data compiled from the field study CV (%) : Coefficient of variation (%)**

The mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation (%) values of different factors for deriving the customer satisfaction viz., preference for online purchases, product choice, brand image, after sale service, performance, responsiveness and reliability are given in Table 6 The customer satisfaction towards the loyalty aspects in the E-commerce companies indicated that the preference for online purchases is a highly improved source for the E-commerce companies, followed by price discounts wide choice, brand image, after sale service, reliability etc were also found to be significantly influencing the performance of the E-commerce companies. The coefficient of variation (%) which is derived as a ratio of standard deviation and mean for each factor ranged from 17.5% for responsiveness to a maximum of 26.8% for the preference for the online purchases made by the customers.

### Discussion, Findings and Suggestions

- Among different strategies, the most important strategies for the online E-business that could significantly help for re-establishing the brand loyalty would be (i) disseminating the different types of information, and (ii) retaining as many customers as possible. In the present day world, the online community would be treated as a high value business for many companies. For doing an efficient business, a supplier/company should properly understand (i) the customers' perceptions, (ii) different attitudes and (iii) behaviour among online communities.
- Based on our research study, we have clearly investigated about (i) the different antecedents and also (ii) the consequences of the different aspects of the customer loyalty on the online business-to-consumer (B2C) context. Thus, in our research study, we have obviously identified eight different factors, viz., the 8Cs—(i) the customization, (ii) the contact interactivity, (iii) the proper care, (iv) the community, (v) the convenience, (vi) the cultivation, (vii) the choice, and (viii) the character that would significantly and most potentially impact the E-loyalty, and also would appropriately develop different scales in order to measure these factors. We have collected the data from 500 respondents, based on which the online customers have clearly demonstrated about all these factors, except the convenience and the impact of E-loyalty.
- In order to efficiently reap the benefits of a loyal customer base, the E-retailers would definitely need strategies to suitably develop a clear and thorough understanding of the antecedents of the E-loyalty. In other words, with the customer loyalty in any business, it would be easy to sell the products of a company through the online business. Such a good understanding would always help all the E-retailers to certainly gain a competitive advantage by suitably devising different strategies for increasing the E-loyalty. Accordingly, the main objectives of our research study have identified the managerially actionable factors that would significantly impact the E-loyalty, apart from investigating the nature of the impact in a clear manner.
- Our research study has suitably investigated about the different effects of the brand image benefit on the customer satisfaction and the loyalty intention, both directly and indirectly based upon the postulated hypothetical model. In the current research study, we have also efficiently evaluated the performance of the Large, Medium and Small companies, by considering three types of product categories viz., the Groceries and the Food items, the Electronic products and the Garments and Cosmetics in India.

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