Relevance of Traditional Marketing Mix in E-Commerce

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1   E- commerce Industry:

Today E-commerce has become a new trend in business. Every business is expanding its e-commerce infrastructure to meet the market demands and to stay in competition. E – tailers are able to provide flexibility and a wide variety of solutions and products to the customers. In the last decade the commercialization of internet and its adaptation by marketers as well as by consumers has changed the way of business. The penetration of internet in rural market combined with cheap hardware has made the sea change in buying behaviors of consumers in last decade in India. The environment of business markets has faced many revolutionary changes with the advent of new concepts since the inception of the word "Marketing mix" by Neil Borden and since McCarthy (1964) defined the 4 Ps marketing mix as a combination of all the factors which managers may leverage to satisfy market needs. The integration of technology will lead to an overall shift in the behavior and competition strategy of market participants. It is interesting to discuss whether established marketing models can serve for digital products while great changes happen in market environment and in product's characteristics. In this paper, analyzed the basic content of ecommerce and e-marketing, and analyzed the internal relationships of them. This paper attempts to contrast elements of e-marketing with traditional brick and–mortar marketing mix by proposing the other mixes of e-marketing. The intention of this paper is to provide a reference for enterprises in selecting marketing mix model according to product's categories and specifications whether online or physically.

In McCarthy's version, the marketing mix is the mix of **Product, Price, Place and Promotion**. The validity of the traditional mix in the digital context is a matter of how it is possible and convenient to extend the number of elements it includes or to dismiss it and create a new one. McCarthy's marketing mix is a widely used methodology by managers and academics and has become a key element of marketing theory and practice over the time. The wide acceptance may be justified on the basis of its simplicity of use and understanding of the theory which makes it a useful methodology to adapt for both marketing decisions and teaching as well. The interaction with the

customer and the communication capabilities in this digital era is unimaginable. The question which this paper aims to answer is:

"*Is there any possibility to create a new list of elements that can make the traditional mix to fit in new digital contexts?*

The 4 Ps were created for a manufacturer to do their business easily. The main reasons the marketing mix is consider a powerful concept are that It makes marketing easy to handle, allows the separation of marketing from other activities of the firm and the delegation of marketing tasks to specialists; and – The components of the marketing mix can change a firm's competitive position .The value propositions of products and services offered in the physical world are essentially limited "point solutions" that meet only part of a consumer's need or want. Researchers emphasized that the 4 Ps may continue to be the main paradigm of marketing mix in digital world as well, since it is sufficient to change the original mix just by adding and subtracting some elements from the original.

In the online world, even a simple advertisement can be both an advertisement and a direct marketing service. The tools like Google ad world make it easier to advertise and at the same time provide the marketing service by raising the passive consumer awareness of the product.

This industry has become the backbone of the retail industry whether it is fashion retail or grocery. All the industries are coming with their digital platforms to tap the market but at the same time it is very evident that not all the industries entering in this space are impacting the customer. There are many big players like Flipkart, Amazon, Snapdeal, PayTm etc who are able to make difference and able to attract consumer. On the other hand there are many player who did not survive in this competitive space. There are many business which are running only through the e- commerce website and this digital environment is the main reason for their success like Easyfix and Olx etc.

So finding out the correct marketing mix for such industries which are working on digital platforms is very necessary. And also these industries have to find out what type of marketing mix they have to adopt to flourish their business.

Before finding the marketing mix for the e commerce industry we have to first examine the main players in this industry. There is the glimpse of main players in this industry.

Flipkart:

Founder: Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal

Year of Foundation: lunched in October 2007

It is a leading e commerce market place with over 20 million products. It was started by a team of two members in 2007 and now they have around 20000 employees.

Snapdeal:

Founder: Kunal Bahl

Year of Foundation: 2010

It is the india's largest market place. It has around 4 million products in its list. They have team strength of around 1200 employees.

Apart from this there are many start ups that are growing rapidly. Though they are replicating each other with some moderate changes but they are able to find business. In such environments it's become necessary to find out the relevance of traditional marketing mix.

1.2 Objective:

This study is conducted to find out the relevance of traditional marketing mix in to this digital era. But the scope doesn't end here the study also tries to find out the balance marketing mix for the digital environment.

The main objectives of the study are as following:

- To find out the relevance of traditional marketing mix in digital environments
- To suggest the new elements of the E marketing mix
- To find the balance marketing mix for the digital environments

Chapter 2

Literature Review

A wide range of studies and research which shows the need to find a new paradigm for marketing which, surpassing the 4 P, can define more specifically the marketing elements. There are two streams of researchers Revisionist and conservatives. The revisionist stream, emphasize on the need for a radical reconceptualization. The main argument they provide against the 4 Ps is that this model is internally oriented; this limitation leads to the lack of customer orientation and the insufficient attention to the relationship with customers. In today's world of digital era there is the need for a new externally oriented paradigm which considers the external factors as the main governing body and give the freedom to the manufacturer to manufacture according to the external demands i. e. there would be system approach. The revisionist commonly examined the perception of the need for a more explicit customer orientation. This limitation includes all the aspects of today's marketing; nevertheless it has a particularly strong repercussion in Internet marketing, where interactivity is regarded as a crucial aspect.

Though the revisionist always criticize the 4P paradigm but at the same time it is interesting to know that the majority of them reviewed agree to include the 4Ps in their marketing mix model with few exceptions. Some of them proposed some new Ps in addition to the existed ones. These new Ps are always debated in marketing mix literature for decades: people and packaging. Some also suggested the 5Ps concept and these are included in this 5Ps marketing concept: paradox, perspective, paradigm, persuasion and passion. In the Italian literature, there comes the concept of content, community and commerce with the 4Ps i.e price, product, place and promotion. It is called as 3C model, where each C contains some key elements: content (Web site and platform), community (interaction platform and relational capability), and commerce.

Pastore suggested another model of 3C+I; where I stands for interface. This model is also integrated with the 4Ps paradigm and it was reconceptilized in online environments which is the need of the hour.

Kalyanam & McIntyre proposed another model which is different from these models. They included the 4Ps in their model but add some other Ps as well. The model is suggested as 4P+P2+C2+S3 model. The context of this model has become more wider with three

dimensional representation. This was able to give a more complete taxonomy of the elements forming the mix.

Chinese researcher proposed the 8Ps model and Chen highlighted the importance of this model to the environment and interaction elements.

In the 8 Ps' model:

- They emphasize on the need of the selection process of the target market and segment and to positioning in digital contexts. They used data management system for the same. This element is described as Precision and refers to increase the accuracy of the system.
- Payment is other important part of this model. The model emphasize that the system must be secure and easy for use so that customers can rely on it.
- They also give the concept of personalization as different people look things differently. So they talk about the possibility of creating a flexible interface which can adapt the user needs and wills and behave accordingly.
- They also find communication as an important parameter and give it a name of Push and Pull. It is the choice of active communication and communication on user demand.

All these models include the traditional 4 Ps as their core elements, There are other authors also who propose an entirely different marketing mix. Chaffey et al. (2000) Find out that the internet is not the same thing and it has to be address in differntway so he assert the need for change and find out eight critical issues which should be included in marketing planningat the high level of startegy: audience, integration, marketing support, brand migration, strategic partnership, organization structure and budget.

The Web marketing mix model of Constantinides extend these mixes to some broad levels like Startegy and business organization. He suggested a 4S model which includes the following

- They include strategic objectives, stage of e commerce, strategic significance of e commerce for the organization, market analysis and their potential in their new paradigm. This vertical is called as Scope.

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- They also include operational and interface issues as important parameter. This vertical is called as Site.

- Synergy, has organizational significance including the integration among bricks and clicks aspects of the company's business model;

- They find that management of web platforms , data and security systems is also important in digital environment. This vertical is come under the System dimension.

While it is not possible to ignore the need to adjust the marketing mix to the changes in the society and the market produced by the diffusion of digital technologies, Internet in particular, a less numerous, but theoretically consistent, part of the literature on the topic asserts that the 4 Ps' model is perfectly able to adapt and to continue to be the dominant paradigm in these new contexts (Aldridge et al., 1997; Peattie, 1997; O'Connor & Galvin, 1997; Bhatt & Emdad, 2001; Allen & Fjermestad, 2001; Moller, 2006). Moller (2006) points out how the "internal orientation" criticism regards the 4 Ps is based on a misconception of the relation between the marketing mix and the marketing concept. For Moller the 4 Ps paradigms is perfectly coherent with the marketing concept which states that "marketing activities should be based on identification of customer needs and wants", also implying the selection of the explicit information to be gathered from the customers in order to be able to fulfill their needs, through segmentation, product differentiation and positioning. Peattie (1997) pointed out how the new communicative capabilities supplied by the digital technologies are radically changing marketing in several sectors, but the marketing mix approach is able to adapt to the new needs: product, with the introduction of co-design with customers; price, with higher levels of transparency; place, with the creation of new ways to reach customers; and promotion, thanks to the new interactive capabilities. Bhatt & Emdad (2001) see the empowerment of the 4 Ps since the virtual value chain is internally transforming each P by adding new dimensions: personalized information in the Product, transparency and personalization of Price, direct delivery for Place, and improved flexibility for Promotion. O'Connor & Galvin (1997), while assuming that the traditional marketing mix paradigm needs to evolve, propose that digital technologies can be useful to improve the mix's functionality maintaining the 4 Ps as the basic instrument for Internet marketing. Among the changes brought to each of the 4 Ps by the digital technologies, the following are the most relevant:

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- Product. Product has many definitions. But in todays world a product is redefined as: *all the benefits through time that the user obtains from the exchange* (Yudelson, 1999); this definition applies to the digital context. If we look from the outside we will found that product policies can gain great benefits from the capability of Internet. They are able to engage the consumer in long term relationships that lead to the development of new products. The interactive and connective potential of Internet leads to a new product concept: the "virtual product". The virtual product is seen as the union of tangible and intangible aspects, which is adapted and personalized according to the variety and variability of individuals' preferences by customizing the product with the active help of consumers. A product can be delivered from producer to consumer in digital form (mp3 for music, avi for movies, pdf for books and magazines, and so on) thus contextualizing their fruition in the digital framework (Pastore & Vagnani, 2000). If we look from the consumer perspective the capability of retrieving information plays a key role for the purchasing decision (Smith & Chaffey, 2001). Nelson classifies the product in two categories Search and Experience. He suggests that a product can be purchased after obtaining the complete information or if it is too costly or there is no information available for the product then you have to experience it by purchasing. Internet has made it easy to find out the information about the product. it is of great help to find out the information on internet. It is easily accessible and affordable as well. This information collected through such medium is of great help while making buying decisions. With the help of internet information and the interactive modulation of internet it has become possible to change the experience product into the search product.

- Price. Price is seen differently by different people. Some defined it as the exchange of money, time and efforts for the value you are looking for. But in online context its better to say that price is *everything given by the acquirer in terms of money, time and effort given to obtain the product* (Yudelson, 1999). If we look from the consumer perspective of consumer we will find that the benefits of internet are enormous. The main benefits which a web environment provide are data accuracy

and redundancy so the information you find will be asymmetric which gives more transparency to the buying decision and allow consumer to compare benefits on real time basis. Moreover, the implementation of Artificial Intelligent Agents enables to make automatic and tailored comparisons of prices and features, reducing the price in terms of time and effort. Now a days there are many market places which are providing comparison of different product prices through their artificial intelligence modules. If you look from the other side of the globe you will find that internet has make the market more competitive for the producers as there are real time information for the consumers. Though internet help the producer to maintain its database on real time but at the same time it is a risky business as the product now become the search product. To avoid this, online communication must be directed towards qualitative aspects and differentiation attributes of the product.

- Place. Place is very important aspect in digital environment as it not only include the market space but it also include the design of the web and interface of the web. A place can be defined as: *everything that is done and necessary to smooth the process of exchange.* This definition is applicable to digital environments as well. This also shows the importance of place while making purchasing decision. The process must be smooth and easy, while building relations with customers at the same time. The physical place is not the only aspect in the virtual world. As the place becomes virtual there are many intangible aspects which gets attached to it like payment security during transaction and data confidentiality. Internet is not only used for selling online but it has given the power to the producer to building relation with customer and get the benefit of the same. The interactive capabilities of Internet allow the implementation of more efficient and effective systems of digital Customer Relationship Management (e-CRM). Now a day's customer database is common in every industry. The producer have prior information of taste perception and preferences of the customer which will help them to customize their product for the customer and this will lead to a delight customer and hence into more business and good relationships. It will also help in maintain the service level for the different customers.

- Promotion. Promotions are not just the discounts. It has changed its face in this digital era. This can be seen as : *all of the information that is transmitted among parties*. In this internet era flow of information is viral. Every information may gets viral and once the information is out the owner has a very little control over it. If we look at the definition it will talk about the interactive aspect of internet. The Internet is different from other mass communication media. Infact, it is a medium which bounds other medium now a day's. it has its reach in every corner. The introduction of smart phones and wider frequency availability make it more easy to penetrate in every area. It has very disperse audience which make it a different media.It ia one to many communication and it depends on the perception of the audience how they will take it. At the same time with new technologies it is also many to many communication. Personal interaction allows to issue messages directed to a specific individual with a degree of flexibility which no other media can be capable of (Bhatt & Emdad). This also makes it possible to hit the target while he/she is in a situation of relax and confidence similar to that of television, but with higher informative capability, due to the multimedia features of the Web communication. The aim of online communication is not just to advertise a product, but to built a purchase relation and creates a perception of trust in the customer. Interaction, multimedia and relationship should be included as elements of the P of promotion.

So there are many views on the relevance of traditional marketing mix and there are different models and methodologies as well. But to find out the relevance in today's market from the marketers perspective is necessary. So I would be giving emphasis on the web marketing mix requirements from the perspective of a marketer.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Relevance of the Study:

This study will be significant endeavor in making marketing strategies for the digital platforms and e commerce websites particularly in India. This study will tell about the relevant elements of marketing mix in the digital space and provide a route to the industries to go along to maximize their profit and make them visible and more customer oriented.

3.2 Scope of the study:

This study is focus on the e commerce websites and their marketing mix elements which they are using. The study is primarily carried out online through various resources and the participants are mainly college going students and youths who have at least one prior experience of e commerce transaction.

3.3 Research Design and Methodology:

The study was conducted to understand the proper marketing mix for the e commerce websites. The data is collected primarily through survey. The questionnaire is floated online and responses are tapped from online resources. A total of 60 people take part in the survey and data analysis is done in MS excel and SPSS.

Research design	Exploratory research, survey is conducted
Data collecting	Primary data collected by online survey
Sample size	60 respondent
Sampling technique	Target audience through online platforms

Medium of collection sample	Personal interview and survey
Tools Used	MS excel and SPSS

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The data is collected through conducting surveys and by personal interviews as well and then the data is merged and analysis of that data is done to find out the balance marketing mix. There are total 60 respondents in the survey including the personal interview.

The questionnaire has a total of six questions some of which are demographic questions like age and gender. There are some questions on buying behavior like frequency of online buying. The last question is the most important question in which there are twelve parameters on which the buying behavior of the customer is dependent. These parameters are the result of the literature review and the past studies and theories.

The selection of these parameters is done very carefully as they are found first by the interview method. For finding out these parameters personal interview is conducted at the college hostel. The target population is the people who are purchasing online. The author of this study interview around 22 people who has order online and receiving their item. The questions are random but have a specific orientation.

In the personal interview the author ask the questions like:

- From which online platform you ordered your shipment?
- Why you order from this particular platform?
- Have you find any discount on your purchase?
- Are you happy with the time taken by the E tailer?
- According you which is the most important factor which influence your buying decision when you purchase online?
- Why you prefer online purchase over the brick and mortar store?

These questions help the author to find out what are the important parameters when a customer buys online. And what should be the proper marketing mix for the marketer is to be finding out on the basis of these parameters.

After finding these parameters an online survey is done to find out the important elements of the marketing mix. The results are very interesting and show that the conservative view about the traditional marketing mix is not so true. And people still feel that the 4P is the essential part of their buying but apart from that some new elements are also come into existence.

4.2 Data Analysis:

Every data trail has something to say and the best way to find that something is the data analysis. The data collected by the surveys are exposed to excel and the findings are made available in graph form as well. The author didn't find any need to go through any test like Chi-square or paired t- test. As the data is simple and self explanatory so it would be better to be simple. Though this data is simple but yet it will say all about the desired output. The data is analyses through bar charts, pie charts and histograms. Here we will discuss every question one by one and find out the relevance of the parameters.

We assume that if a parameter is labeled important by more than 50% of the sample audience then it is very important parameter and should be addressed accordingly. If the parameter is labeled important by the 40 to 50% audience then it is an important parameter. And if any parameter has less than 40% audience support then it is not so important.

There are the questions and their findings:

- The target audience is young and dynamic which prefers to buy online. As the survey is conducted online and through face book and e- mail only so the audience is mostly the college going students which is also reflected in the pie chart below. We find that 52 people are between 20 to 30 year of age group. So it is a dynamic sample which represents the new India as India is known as the country of youth. The people are

largest segment which use internet as a medium to trade. Though it's a good sign for the study that the responses are from this group but at the same time it introduce a constrain on the study as it is giving the perception of a particular age group. Though the author believe that this age proportion is the best for such type of survey as they are the real potential customer for e tailers and they are the people who are exposed to digital platforms. The following figure shows the rest:
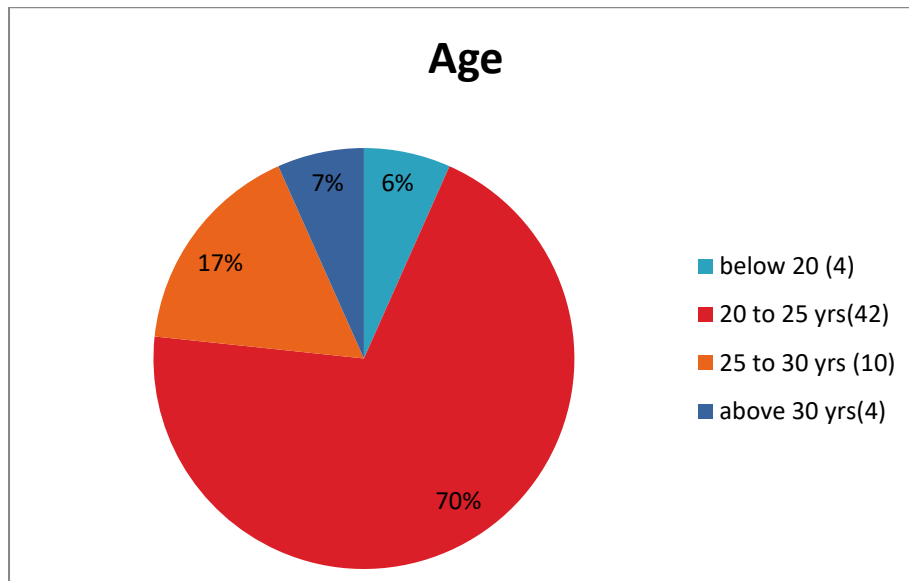

Figure 4.2 (a)

- Another important parameter is the gender. This study finds a balance response from both genders. There are 36 responses from male respondents and 24 from female respondents.
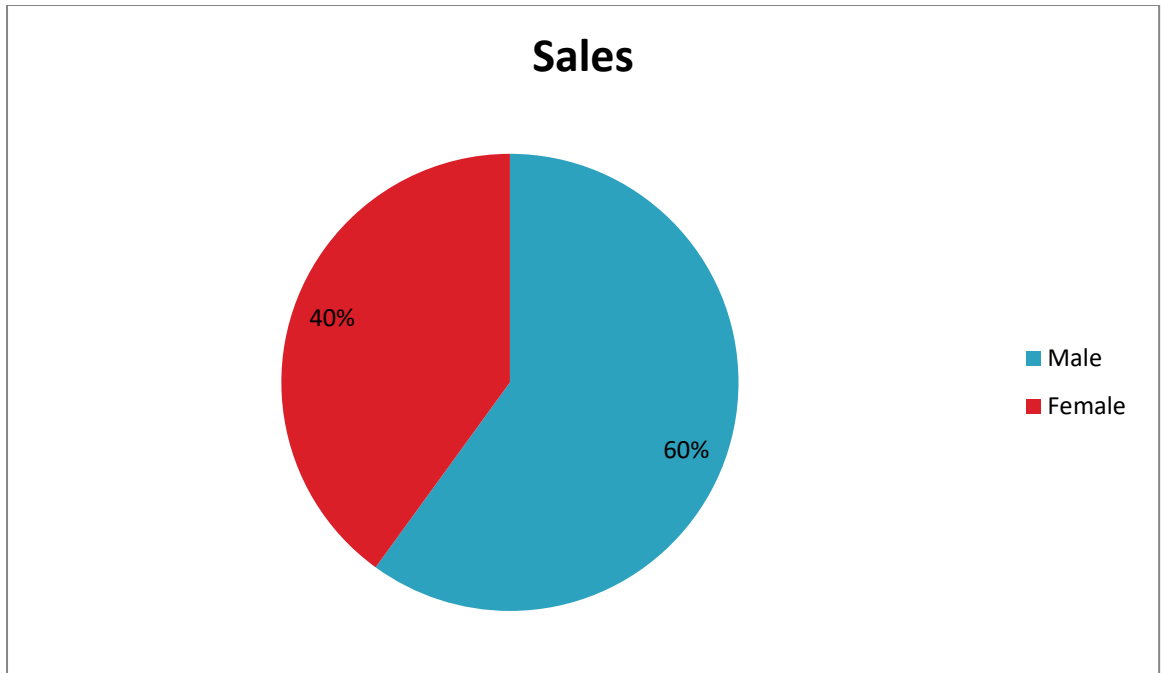
Sales

40%

60%

Male
Female

Figure 4.2 (b)

- The buying behavior of the respondents are very interesting and as per the expectation. On an average 38 respondents admit that they buy online at least once in a month while 8 respondents admit that they buy more than once a week. So if we look collectively we found that 46 respondents are very frequent customer for online retailers. There are only 7 people which admit that they purchase online less than once a year. So this shows that the buying behavior is changing rapidly and most of the people will like to buy online. This is a good sign for the e tailers and at the same time it also shows that the marketing mix they are using to target the customers are effective.

Buying Behaviour

less then once in a year
more than once in a month
once in a month
more than once in a week
once in a week

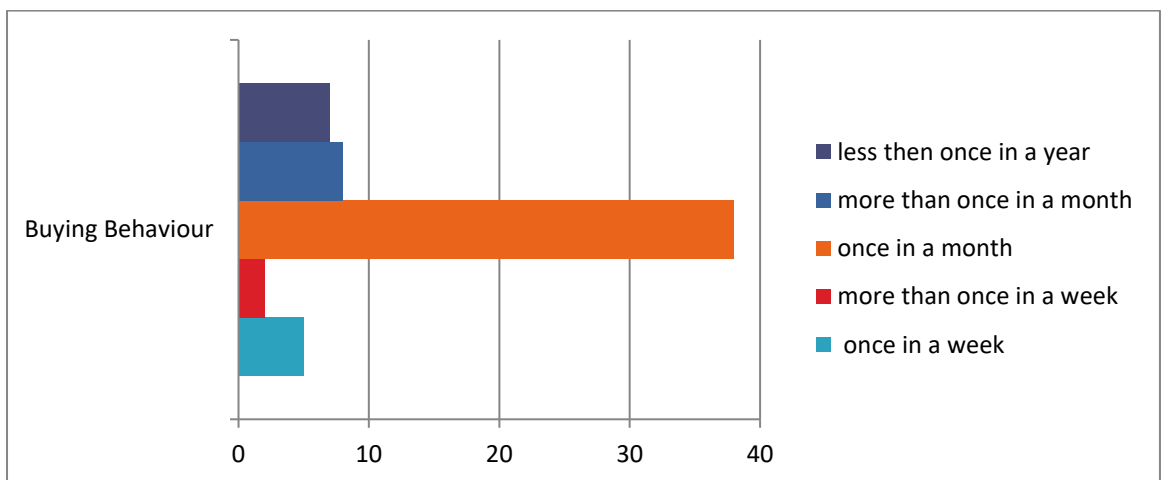0   10   20   30   40

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Figure 4.2 (c) Online Buying Frequency of Respondents

- In this question the author tries to find out the importance of the selected parameters according to the respondents. There are a total of 12 parameters which are to be tested by the responses. These are divided into five categories. The below chart shows the no of respondents belonging to each category. Again it is divided into three dimensions.

Essential factors: these are the factors which should be included while making a marketing mix for digital platforms. These essential elements are those elements which have more than 50% respondents in important and very important category. The author believes that these elements are the essential one which makes the marketing mix for e commerce. And these elements are going to play a vital role in making the marketing strategies for such platforms.

To be included factors: these are the factors which are not so important but still have to be included into the final mix. These elements are those which has more than 40% and less than 50% respondents in important or very important category.

Not so relevant factors: These are the factors which have less than 40% support as important and very important factors. These factors can be excluded from the final marketing mix of the digital platforms.

These factors are shown in below figures. Only four factors are shown in one bar chart. As we can see from the chart below that the four factors shown in the chart vis. Delivery time, payment gate way or payment security, price and quality all have to be placed in essential category parameters as the respondents find them very important.
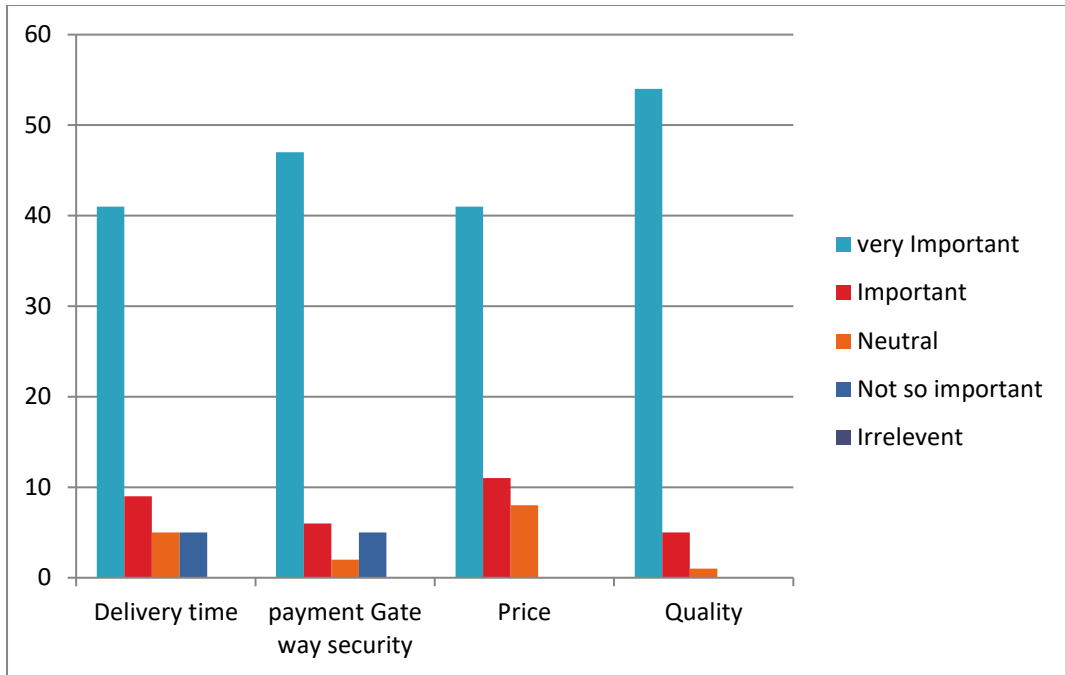
Figure 4.2 (d) Important Factors in Purchasing decisions

Figure 4.2 (e) shows another four parameters vis. Product range, after sales services, reverse logistics, website design. Figure 4.2 (e) shows the importance of each parameter. Most of the respondents find Reverse logistics, Product range and website design as an important aspect when they purchase online while after sales service is not found to be so important. The reason for this may be that most of the respondent purchase product which may not require after sales service like clothes, grocery etc. because they found reverse logistics an important factor at the same time.
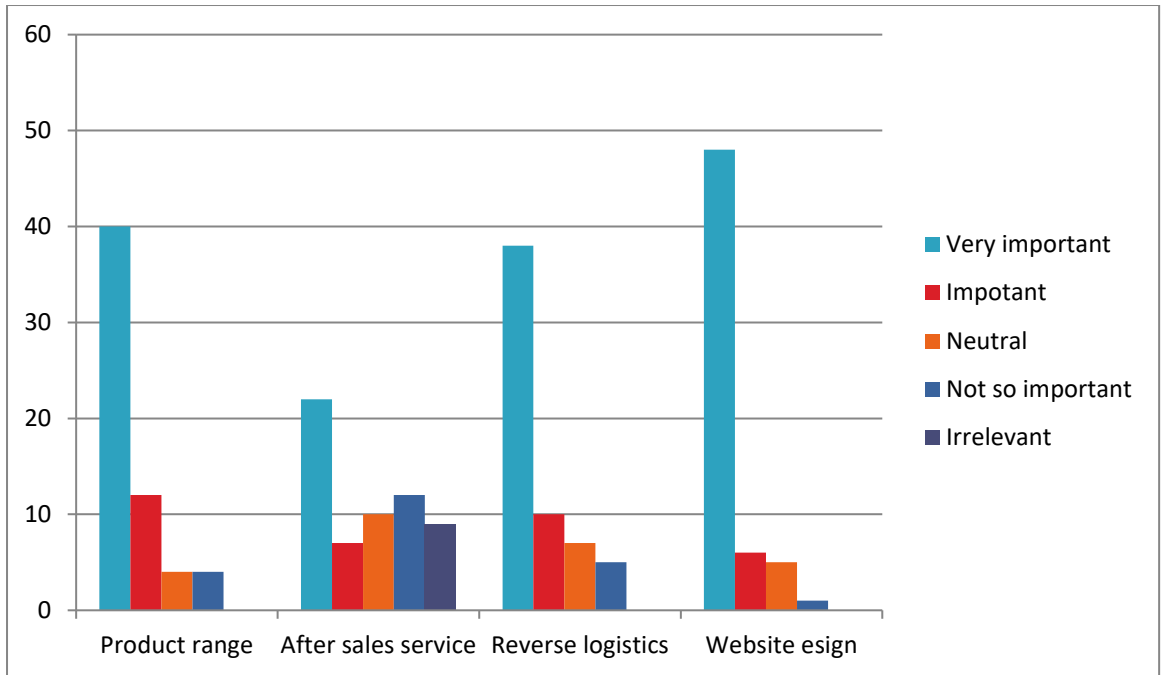
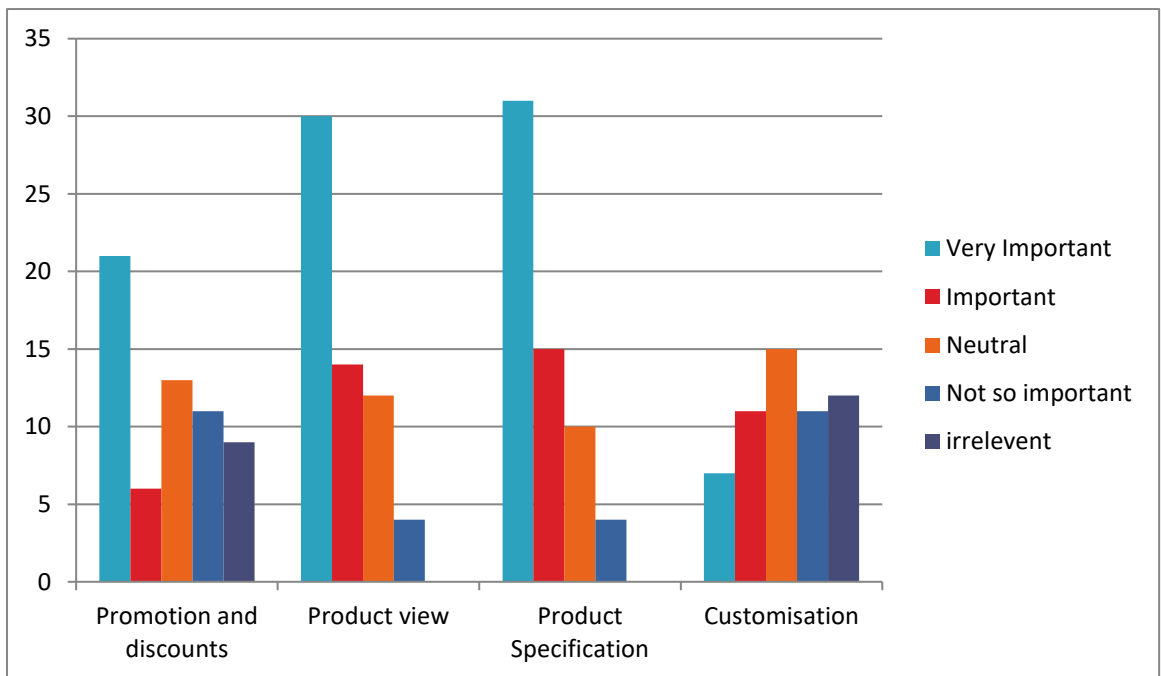Figure 4.2 (e) Important Factors in Purchasing Decisions

Figure 4.2 (f) Important Factors in Purchasing Decisions

Figure 4.2 (f) shows another four elements which was tested. The responses are very interesting as only 21 respondent find that discounts are very important parameter

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when they purchase online and only seven respondents find discount as an important parameter. While half of the respondents find that product view is a very important parameter and 14 respondents find that it is an important parameter which effects their buying. Most of the respondents find product specification and product mix as a very important parameter when buying online.

4.3 Findings and Recommendations:

From the above analysis we can see that the traditional marketing mix has its relevance even in the digital environment most of the respondents find these traditional marketing mix elements as the pulling agents to buy the product online but at the same time there are some other parameters also which has their own significance as suggested by the analysis. So the Main parameter which should be taken care of during making the marketing mix for the digital environments and for e commerce is as follows:

Essential Parameters:

- Price
- Product
- Promotion
- Place
- Delivery Time
- Payment security

- Website design
- Product variety
- Reverse Logistics

To be included parameters:

- Quality
- Product view and specification

One has to include these parameters while designing the marketing mix for e commerce websites. The first four parameters show the traditional marketing mix while the last four are the parameters which should be included in new marketing mix.

The delivery of the product can be achieved by the synergies between the different departments and is a measure of this synergy between different departments of the firm. The delivery may have many issue like timely delivery, right delivery etc. These all problems can be solving by the synergies between the firm resources. So for this parameter the author suggest the SYNERGY as the new element of the new marketing mix for the e commerce websites in digital environment.

Website design is another important parameter which should be included in the marketing mix. It would be better to say it Site only. As it will give the site to the customer. The design of the website is the very important parameter as it will help the customer to find out the product. In digital words it works actually like the location of a retail store which gives the site of the product. Basically it is the store in digital environments. So site is another element of the marketing mix.

Security is a very sensitive issue and the respondents are agreed to this assumption. So it should be included when we go for the marketing mix.

So from the above analysis we can say that the main findings are as follows:

- The traditional marketing mix is relevant in digital environments also.
- The elements of the traditional marketing mix is not the only elements which affect the purchasing behavior of the customer, there are some more elements which affect the purchasing behavior of the customer in digital environments.

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- The new elements which should be included are Site, Synergy and Security.
- The new marketing mix for the digital environments includes 4P+3S.
- So the new marketing mix for digital environments or for the ecommerce platforms are

  Product

  Price

  Place

  Promotion

  Synergy

  Site

  Security

These elements make the new marketing mix for the ecommerce platforms.

4.4 Limitations of the Study:

Though the study tried to include every important parameter but as the study is conducted on a very small sample size and the interview is done only with 21 respondents to find out the important parameters so there may be a possibility that there may be some other important parameters which are not included in the study.

The main limitations of the study are as follows:

- The respondents of this study are college going students mainly and the buying behavior of such community is different than the other age group persons so it may be the case that the result are more inclined towards these age group perceptions.
- Though the study tried to include every possible parameter which is important to find out the proper preposition of the marketing mix according to the author but there may be chance that any such parameter is not included in the study. So there is a scope for such parameters in this study.

- This study is only for online e commerce websites and may not be used for all digital platforms in general.

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Chapter 6:

Annexure