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Major Research Project

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS MATTRESSES IN THE E-COMMERCE MARKET IN INDIA

Submitted By:

Payal Pangtey

23/DMBA/87

Under the guidance of

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CERITICATE

This is to certify that the project work titled **"Consumer Behaviour Towards Mattresses in the E-Commerce Market in India"**, undertaken by Payal Pangtey, Roll Number: 23/DMBA/87 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MBA from Delhi School of Management (DSM), Delhi Technological University has been completed under my supervision.

The project is a record of original work carried out by the candidate during the academic session 2023-2025 and has not been submitted to any other institution or university for the award of any degree or diploma.

I further certify that all necessary ethical guidelines were followed during the execution of this project.

_____

Dr. Deep Shree
Assistant Professor
Delhi School of Management (DSM)
Delhi Technological University

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project report titled **"Consumer Behaviour Towards Mattresses in the E-Commerce Market in India"** is a genuine and original work submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MBA at Delhi School of Management (DSM), Delhi Technological University.

This project has been completed by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Deep Shree, Assistant Professor, and has not been submitted previously to any other university or institution for the award of any degree, diploma, or fellowship.

All the information and data presented in this report are collected and analysed with integrity and honesty. Where content has been borrowed from other sources, due acknowledgement has been made through proper citation and referencing as per academic standards.

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Payal Pangtey
23/DMBA/87

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my project guide, Dr. Deep Shree, Asst. Professor Delhi School of Management (DSM), Delhi Technological University, for their invaluable support, guidance, and encouragement throughout this research.

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Regards,
Payal Pangtey
23/DMBA/87

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the title "Consumer Behaviour Towards Mattresses in the E-Commerce Market in India," this study delves deeply into how consumers' purchasing habits are changing inside one of the most intimate and involved product categories: mattresses. A growing number of Indian consumers are opting to buy expensive goods like mattresses online as e-commerce grows in popularity. The causes for this change, the main determinants, the perceived obstacles, and customer satisfaction with online mattress purchases are all examined in this study. In order to help organizations better meet customer expectations and take advantage of market opportunities, it also offers strategic recommendations.

Understanding Indian consumers' preferences and decision-making process when purchasing mattresses online is the main goal of this study. This topic is important because of how retail has changed from traditional in-store experiences to digital-first shopping models, which are further impacted by improved logistics, shifting lifestyle patterns, and technology improvements. As cell phones and the internet become more widely used, consumers are better informed, have access to a greater range of options, and place a higher value on convenience, quality control, and after-sale support.

Using primary and secondary data sources, this study employs a descriptive methodology. A structured online survey with 98 participants from a range of demographic backgrounds—including students, salaried professionals, self-employed people, and residents of Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities—was used to collect primary data. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information about price sensitivity, satisfaction levels, platform preferences, mattress kinds, prior mattress purchasing behaviour, frequency of online shopping, and obstacles to online shopping. Journals, e-commerce research, industry reports, and publications by market leaders in the mattress sector were the sources of secondary data.

The results of the study show a number of significant patterns. Online mattress purchases are becoming more and more popular among consumers, especially those between the ages of 25 and 34. In addition to having great digital literacy, this age group—which is primarily made up of salaried professionals—is open to trying new companies that have flexible return policies, product trial periods, and good value. Some well-known platforms that have established a large online presence are Amazon, Flipkart, Wakefit, and The Sleep Company. Orthopaedic and memory foam mattresses became the most popular options, frequently associated with improved health and sleep quality.

Online purchasing has benefits, but there are also a number of drawbacks. More than 61% of

respondents said they had never bought a mattress online, citing issues like the inability to physically inspect the item, worry about obtaining subpar goods, and a lack of knowledge regarding return and refund procedures. Others cited unclear product descriptions and lengthy delivery periods as deterrents. These obstacles highlight how crucial trust, open communication, and robust post-purchase assistance are to the customer journey.

However, the degree of satisfaction among people who have bought mattresses online is positive. A large number of responders were pleased with trial policies, product quality, and delivery schedules. More than 90% of these consumers gave their internet mattress purchases an ordinary to exceptional rating, and they were very likely to suggest them to friends and family. This implies that customers are likely to become repeat customers and brand ambassadors once they purchase for mattresses online and have a satisfying experience.

The report makes a number of recommendations for improving customer loyalty and adoption in the online mattress business. Enhancing digital trust with verified reviews and influencer material, making navigation easier with comparison charts and guided tools, guaranteeing hassle-free returns, and funding regional outreach initiatives for Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets are a few of these. Further bridging the experience gap between online and physical purchasing can be achieved by product education, open policies, and the utilization of emerging technologies like AR and VR for product presentation.

Additionally, brands need to target particular consumer segments with their messaging. While older consumers might require more certainty through thorough demos and live customer assistance, younger professionals might react favorably to wellness-focused content and tech-driven features. Marketing strategy should include competitive pricing and EMI alternatives, as they are important factors in buying decisions.

The research is not without limitations, even though it has yielded valuable insights. Due to the limited sample size and urban concentration, it might not accurately reflect the Indian population as a whole. Long-term behavioural changes are especially difficult to capture in this study due to its cross-sectional design. Future studies should try to use longitudinal data, bigger and more varied sample sizes, and focus groups or interviews to examine qualitative elements.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Understanding of E-Commerce

The term "e-commerce," which stands for "electronic commerce," describes the purchasing and selling of goods and services using the internet. Using computers, tablets, or smartphones, it includes digital transactions that take place across several platforms. E-commerce functions using a variety of models, including Direct-to-Consumer (D2C), Business-to-Business (B2B), Business-to-Consumer (B2C), and Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C). B2C and D2C are the most popular models in India. The e-commerce industry in India has grown rapidly in the past ten years. Widespread smartphone usage, rising internet penetration, changing consumer expectations, and the growth of safe digital payment methods like UPI, mobile wallets, and online banking have all contributed to this increase. With more than 850 million internet users as of 2023, India is the world's second-largest internet market, and this number is still rising quickly. The emergence of mobile-first shopping, when customers, particularly those from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, started using inexpensive cellphones and data packs to access online retail platforms, was one of the significant turning points for Indian e-commerce. A very dynamic and varied online consumer base is the outcome of this democratization of digital access. Platforms that offer multi-category product listings, such as Amazon India and Flipkart, dominate the Indian e-commerce market. Accompanying these markets are a number of category-specific and specialized D2C brands that sell directly to consumers through their websites, including Mamaearth, Wakefit, boAt, and Lenskart. Through targeted marketing and customer interaction, these direct-to-consumer (D2C) firms have been able to forge closer bonds with their customers, make better use of consumer data, and add value. Furthermore, the COVID-19 epidemic greatly sped up the introduction of digital technology. Due to mobility restrictions and lockdowns, online purchasing became more of a need than a luxury. Even previously reluctant consumer groups, such older folks or people who lived in semi-urban areas, adopted the product more frequently as a result. Product transactions are no longer the only use of e-commerce platforms. Through blogs, videos, and influencer partnerships, they offer integrated experiences that include real-time customer service, order tracking, feedback systems, and content marketing. These days, personalization, product recommendations, logistical optimization, and user experience are all powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics. Through programs like "Digital India," the Indian government has also bolstered the e-commerce industry and encouraged more retailers to automate their business processes. Furthermore, the digital marketplace is becoming more formalized and secure over time as

legislative frameworks pertaining to data privacy, digital taxation, and consumer protection are developed. Consequently, e-commerce has developed from a practical tool to a major force behind India's retail economy. It offers unparalleled accessibility, transparency, diversity, and value, and it is a significant factor in influencing contemporary consumer behavior.

1.2 Barriers of E-Commerce in India

Despite the rapid growth of e-commerce in India, several significant barriers continue to prevent its full adoption across the country. One of the primary concerns is trust. Many consumers remain skeptical about the quality of products they purchase online, often fearing that the items they receive may not match their expectations. Issues surrounding the reliability of return and refund policies further add to this mistrust, alongside rising concerns about cybersecurity threats, including the potential for data breaches and online fraud. Logistics and delivery infrastructure also pose major challenges, particularly in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, where supply chains are less robust and last-mile delivery can be inconsistent or delayed. In addition, digital literacy remains a barrier, as a substantial portion of the population is still unfamiliar or uncomfortable with navigating e-commerce platforms, making online shopping feel intimidating or inaccessible. Language and accessibility issues exacerbate this problem, since the majority of platforms primarily cater to English-speaking audiences, thereby alienating a vast number of potential users who are more comfortable with regional languages. Lastly, for high-involvement and tactile products like mattresses, furniture, or apparel, many Indian consumers still prefer a traditional, in-person shopping experience. They value the ability to physically inspect and assess products before making a purchase, something that online shopping cannot fully replicate. Together, these challenges highlight the complexities that e-commerce companies must address to achieve broader and more inclusive adoption across India's diverse market.

1.3 Advantages of Online Shopping

Despite the persistent barriers, e-commerce in India presents numerous advantages that continue to fuel its growth and acceptance. Foremost among these is the convenience it offers, enabling consumers to shop at any time and from virtually any location, thereby eliminating the constraints of physical store visits. E-commerce platforms also provide access to a significantly wider selection of products and brands compared to traditional retail outlets, granting consumers a greater variety of choices to meet their diverse needs and preferences. Competitive pricing further strengthens the appeal of online shopping, as many e-commerce

businesses are able to offer lower prices due to the elimination of intermediaries and reduced operational costs. Moreover, the availability of customer reviews and ratings has become a vital tool for informed decision-making, as peer feedback helps potential buyers assess the quality and reliability of products before making a purchase. Flexible return policies and trial periods, particularly for high-involvement products such as mattresses, have also reduced purchase anxiety, offering consumers reassurance that they can easily return or exchange items if they do not meet expectations. Collectively, these advantages demonstrate the transformative potential of e-commerce in reshaping consumer behavior and the broader retail landscape in India.

1.4 India Mattress Market Overview (Size and Forecast)

The Indian mattress market has witnessed robust growth and exhibits strong future potential. Valued at approximately INR 13,000 crore (USD 1.6 billion) in 2023, the market is projected to expand to INR 20,000 crore (USD 2.5 billion) by 2028, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 8%. Several socio-economic factors are driving this expansion, including rapid urbanization, rising disposable incomes, increasing health consciousness, and heightened awareness of the critical importance of sleep for overall well-being. Consumers are becoming more discerning, seeking quality sleep solutions that align with their evolving lifestyles and health needs. As a result, the demand for premium, orthopaedic, and customized mattresses has surged. While the offline segment still commands a majority share of the market, the online distribution channel is expected to experience significant growth, projected to capture over 20% of the total market by 2026. The growth of the online segment can be attributed to increasing internet penetration, wider smartphone adoption, and the convenience of e-commerce platforms, which offer consumers easy access to a variety of options along with home delivery and attractive promotional offers. Moreover, flexible return policies and trial periods—particularly crucial for high-involvement products like mattresses—have significantly reduced purchase anxiety among consumers, further accelerating online adoption. A major development within the online space is the rise of Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) mattress brands such as Wakefit, SleepyCat, The Sleep Company, and Sunday. These brands have disrupted the traditional retail model by bypassing intermediaries and selling directly to consumers via their own websites and online marketplaces. By doing so, they offer competitively priced, high-quality products along with additional value propositions such as 100-night trial periods, easy financing options, and detailed product education through digital content. This customer-centric approach has not only increased consumer trust but has also

allowed these brands to rapidly gain market share, especially among younger, tech-savvy urban consumers. Furthermore, innovations such as memory foam technology, hybrid mattresses, and ergonomic designs tailored to Indian sleeping habits have helped D2C brands differentiate themselves from legacy players. The steady formalization of the market is another notable trend. Organized sector players are gradually outpacing the unorganized and local mattress makers, as brand reputation, after-sales service, and product warranty become increasingly important factors influencing purchase decisions. This shift toward the organized segment mirrors broader transformations within India's retail ecosystem, where quality assurance, customer service, and brand reliability are becoming essential for sustained growth. Overall, the Indian mattress industry stands at a pivotal point, with digital channels, D2C innovation, and changing consumer preferences poised to redefine the future landscape of the market.

1.5 Mattress Market Segmentation

The Indian mattress market is typically segmented along multiple dimensions, reflecting the diverse needs, preferences, and purchasing behaviours of consumers across the country. One of the primary bases of segmentation is material composition. Mattresses are commonly available in various types such as memory foam, coir, spring, latex, and orthopaedic designs. Memory foam mattresses are popular for their pressure-relieving properties and are particularly favoured by urban consumers seeking enhanced comfort. Coir mattresses, traditionally made from coconut fibre, are valued for their natural composition and affordability, especially among price-sensitive consumers in semi-urban and rural areas. Spring mattresses are often chosen for their bounce and ventilation, appealing to younger demographics and hospitality clients, while latex mattresses, known for their durability and eco-friendliness, attract premium customers focused on sustainable and healthy living. Orthopaedic mattresses are increasingly sought after by consumers with back pain or specific health concerns, aligning with the growing awareness around sleep health. Another important segmentation is based on the end-user. Residential customers, who form the largest portion of the market, prioritize factors such as comfort, budget, and brand reliability. Meanwhile, the commercial segment, including hotels, resorts, and hospitals, demands high-durability mattresses that can withstand frequent use while ensuring comfort for guests and patients. Commercial buyers often opt for bulk purchases and favour brands that offer customization and volume discounts. The market is also divided by distribution channels. Traditional offline sales through retailers, multi-brand outlets, and exclusive brand showrooms continue to dominate, as many consumers still prefer a physical touch-and-feel experience before making a purchase. However, the online segment,

encompassing e-commerce marketplaces and direct-to-consumer (D2C) brand websites, has been growing rapidly. This shift is driven by the increasing convenience of online shopping, attractive trial periods, easy financing options, and the influence of younger, tech-savvy consumers who are comfortable making high-involvement purchases digitally. Finally, the mattress market is segmented according to price range, catering to a broad socio-economic spectrum. The economy segment targets price-sensitive consumers seeking basic, functional mattresses at affordable prices, often in smaller towns and rural markets. The mid-range segment appeals to the growing urban middle class, offering a balance of quality and affordability. The premium segment, on the other hand, caters to affluent consumers who are willing to invest in luxury sleep solutions that promise superior comfort, advanced technology, and longer lifespan. These segmentation patterns not only illustrate the complexity of the Indian mattress market but also highlight the strategies brands must employ to successfully cater to the country's diverse and evolving consumer base.

1.6 Key Players in Brick-and-Mortar Mattress Market

Kurlon: Kurlon is one of the oldest and most recognized mattress brands in India. Established in 1962, it pioneered rubberized coir mattresses and has maintained a strong offline presence through more than 10,000 dealers nationwide. Kurlon caters to a broad customer base and is known for offering durable, affordable sleep solutions rooted in traditional comfort preferences.

Sleepwell (Sheela Foam): Sleepwell is a market leader in the organized mattress segment and operates a robust offline retail presence through exclusive brand outlets and multi-brand dealers. The company offers a wide range of foam, memory foam, and orthopedic mattresses. With a strong brand image, Sleepwell is known for its consistent product quality, wellness focus, and excellent post-sale service.

Duroflex: Initially focused on South India, Duroflex has expanded nationally and established itself as a leader in health-focused mattresses. The brand emphasizes orthopedic support and scientifically tested designs, appealing to consumers concerned with posture and sleep wellness. Duroflex operates through exclusive stores and multi-brand retail partners.

Coirfit: Coirfit is well-regarded in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities for its affordable range of coir and rebounded foam mattresses. Its strength lies in offering value-driven products through an

extensive dealer network. Coirfit has positioned itself as a practical and accessible option for cost-sensitive consumers who prioritize durability and local availability.

Springfit: Springfit is a premium mattress brand that specializes in spring and hybrid mattresses targeted toward urban, affluent consumers. Its products are typically found in upscale furniture showrooms, and the brand is known for offering enhanced aesthetics, advanced comfort features, and high durability. It caters to customers seeking a luxurious and modern sleep experience.

1.7 Key Players in Mattress E-Commerce

Wakefit: Founded in 2016, Wakefit is one of the most successful D2C mattress brands in India. It is known for offering high-quality memory foam and orthopedic mattresses at competitive prices. Its 100-night trial policy, customer-centric approach, and strong digital marketing presence have positioned it as a market leader in the online mattress space.

SleepyCat: SleepyCat gained popularity with its “bed-in-a-box” concept and gel memory foam mattresses. The brand focuses on convenience, quality, and modern design, appealing to a younger, tech-savvy consumer base. It emphasizes simplified online purchasing, free shipping, and 30-night trial offers.

Pepperfry: Although not a mattress-exclusive brand, Pepperfry plays a significant role in online mattress retail. As a major furniture and home decor marketplace, it offers mattresses from multiple brands as well as its private labels. Its omnichannel presence through “Studio Pepperfry” showrooms strengthen its reach.

The Sleep Company: This premium D2C brand is recognized for its proprietary SmartGRID® technology, designed to adapt to body contours for superior comfort. With a strong emphasis on sleep science and innovation, it appeals to health-conscious urban consumers seeking ergonomic sleep solutions.

Urban Ladder: Urban Ladder, now owned by Reliance Retail, offers a curated range of mattresses as part of its broader online furniture ecosystem. Though not exclusively a mattress brand, it leverages its strong design aesthetic, trust factor, and omni-channel presence to attract consumers looking for style and substance.

Frido: Frido is an emerging digital-first brand focused on wellness and orthopedic support. It promotes ergonomic mattress designs aimed at improving posture and reducing body stress. With clean branding and wellness positioning, Frido caters to modern, health-aware consumers.

1.8 Indian Consumers: Growth Drivers and Challenges

Growth Drivers:

The Indian mattress e-commerce sector is being propelled by several socio-economic and technological factors that are reshaping consumer behaviour. Key growth drivers include:

- **Rising Digital Penetration**: With increased access to smartphones and affordable internet, more Indian consumers are now shopping online, including for big-ticket items like mattresses.
- **Changing Lifestyles and Urbanization**: A growing urban middle class, nuclear family structures, and hectic work schedules have made convenience a top priority, driving demand for online mattress solutions that save time and effort.

- **Health and Wellness Awareness**: Consumers are increasingly prioritizing sleep quality as a critical component of wellness. This has boosted demand for ergonomic, orthopaedic, and tech-enabled mattresses.
- **Young Demographics and Tech Adoption**: Millennials and Gen Z, who are more comfortable with digital platforms and online payments, form a significant portion of the mattress e-commerce market.
- **Trust in D2C Brands**: Direct-to-consumer mattress brands have built strong credibility by offering free trials, easy returns, and detailed product information, which reduce the perceived risk of online purchases.
- **Financing and EMI Options**: The availability of no-cost EMIs, buy-now-pay-later schemes, and cashback offers has made it easier for consumers to afford premium mattresses online.

Challenges:

Despite the positive outlook, several challenges continue to affect the mattress e-commerce market in India:

- **Lack of Physical Trial**: Many consumers still prefer to "touch and feel" a mattress before buying, which limits online sales potential, especially in semi-urban and rural areas.
- **Trust and Quality Concerns**: Consumers often hesitate to trust new online brands due to concerns about product durability, after-sales service, and return/replacement processes.
- **Limited Awareness**: In many parts of India, awareness of the importance of sleep quality and orthopedic support remains low, reducing interest in premium mattress categories.
- **Logistics and Delivery Issues**: Delayed deliveries, damaged products during shipping, and limited serviceability in Tier 2 and 3 cities affect customer satisfaction and adoption rates.
- **Highly Competitive Market**: The online mattress segment is becoming increasingly crowded with numerous players, making differentiation and brand loyalty harder to achieve.

1.9 Background of the Study

The way Indian consumers buy products and services has changed significantly during the last

20 years. India is now one of the e-commerce markets with the fastest rate of growth in the world due to rising internet penetration and digitization. The India Brand Equity Foundation, or IBEF, projects that by 2030, the country's e-commerce business will be worth US$350 billion. This quick change in consumer purchasing patterns has been facilitated by a growing number of young people, faster smartphone adoption, cheap mobile connectivity, and an increase in digital payments. The mattress and sleep solutions industry are one of the most intriguing of the numerous sectors being revolutionized by this e-commerce wave. In India, buying a mattress has historically been primarily done at physical stores. Before making a choice, customers tended to visit stores, test the goods by sleeping on it, compare the feel of various fabrics, and frequently seek assistance from sales personnel. Because of their long-term use and direct influence on health, especially posture and sleep quality, mattresses were regarded as high-involvement products. As a result, decision-making was heavily influenced by in-store service, brand trust, and the ability to physically try the product. Nonetheless, the Indian consumer market has been challenged and transformed by the emergence of tech-driven mattress firms like Wakefit, SleepyCat, The Sleep Company, and Frido, as well as D2C (Direct-to-Consumer) startups. These companies implemented novel tactics to establish confidence in a hitherto totally offline market, including doorstep delivery, free returns, 100-night trials, and thorough online buying recommendations. It was no longer necessary for customers to go to a store to feel comfortable. Rather, they depended on endorsements from influencers, certificates, evaluations, testimonies, and simple returns. Changes in consumer tastes were further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to limits on their freedom of movement, people are increasingly choosing to buy necessities and lifestyle items, like beds, online. Curiously, the change also signalled a larger cultural shift: a greater emphasis on ergonomics, health consciousness, and the value of good sleep hygiene, all of which positioned mattresses as wellness investments rather than merely necessities for the home. Price and legacy brands are no longer the only factors driving Indian consumers, which is part of a larger trend. These days, comfort, digital assurance, convenience, and enjoyment are all important factors. Consequently, the mattress market—once inflexible and usually disregarded in talks about mainstream retail—is now a developing arena for retail innovation powered by technology.

1.10 Problem Statement

Even though the Indian e-commerce market has grown significantly, there are still issues that prevent full consumer confidence in making some high-commitment online purchases. The

mattress is one such item. The decision to purchase a mattress entails weighing subjective factors including comfort, firmness, back support, and temperature management, in contrast to fashion or electronics, where buyers are better familiar with specs or the return policy. These factors are difficult to measure online, which causes hesitancy. Even while online mattress retailers provide free returns and trials, many customers are either uninformed about these services or have doubts about their dependability. Furthermore, the market is still in its infancy, and a substantial portion of customers are ignorant of the advantages of making a high-quality mattress purchase. Traditional purchasing practices, a lack of product knowledge, and mistrust of internet promises sometimes cause purchase decisions to be postponed or avoided. Additional problems with product communication occur. "GSM," "latex blend," "dual comfort," and "memory foam density" are examples of technical terms that an average consumer may find confusing. Numerous internet resources continue to fall short in providing relatable explanations of issues. Customer satisfaction is also impacted by logistical issues like shipping delays, return collection issues in Tier 2/3 cities, and uneven post-purchase support. It becomes challenging to differentiate from a brand standpoint. The majority of competitors provide comparable product categories, warranties, and trial durations, which obscures their USPs in the perspective of customers.

1.11 Objectives of the study

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- To examine the key factors influencing online mattress purchasing decisions, such as price, quality, convenience, product features, return policies, customer reviews, and delivery services.
- To evaluate consumer awareness and perception of online mattress brands including Wakefit, SleepyCat, The Sleep Company, and others, and assess how digital branding and marketing affect buying behaviour.
- To analyse the level of consumer trust in e-commerce platforms when purchasing high-involvement products like mattresses, and to identify psychological or emotional barriers to adoption.
- To assess post-purchase satisfaction and brand loyalty, by evaluating aspects such as product performance, ease of returns/exchanges, customer service experience, and likelihood of repeat purchase or referrals.
- To understand demographic and psychographic profiles of online mattress consumers, including factors such as age, income, lifestyle, digital literacy, and their correlation

with purchase behaviour.

- To identify the challenges faced by e-commerce mattress brands, including logistical issues, competition from offline retailers, customer skepticism, and limitations of current digital strategies.
- To explore emerging opportunities for growth and differentiation, such as AI-driven product recommendations, virtual try-on tools, personalized sleep solutions, and wellness-based marketing.
- To propose strategic recommendations for enhancing customer acquisition, satisfaction, and retention in the digital mattress segment, based on consumer insights and market analysis.

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1.12 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the online buying of mattresses and related sleep products, and it is restricted to the Indian e-commerce environment. With a focus on digital-native or digital-first purchasers between the ages of 20 and 60, it looks at consumer behaviour in metropolitan and semi-urban areas.

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The scope covers:

- Both first-time and recurring mattress purchases.
- Purchases done via e-commerce sites (like Amazon and Flipkart) and brand websites (like Wakefit.in and SleepyCat.in).
- Examination of digital touchpoints such as user-generated reviews, blogs, product pages, email advertising, social media advertisements, and video content.
- Opinions about well-known mattress companies in comparison.
- The impact of trust-building tools including return policies, warranties, EMI choices, and 100-night trials.
- Customer reactions to packaging, checkout process, website usability, and brand attractiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The past decade has seen a tremendous evolution in the Indian e-commerce business, leading to new trends in consumer purchasing behaviour. The rising accessibility and trustworthiness of internet platforms has led consumers to consider buying traditionally high-involvement products like mattresses online. The purpose of this literature review is to give readers a thorough grasp of the theoretical underpinnings and market dynamics impacting the current study by examining earlier research and academic work on consumer behaviour in e-commerce, specifically with regard to buying mattresses.

A number of factors, including as perceived utility, trust, and convenience of use, affect the adoption of e-commerce. Particularly for high-touch products like mattresses, trust has become a key determinant of online purchase intentions. Trust is still a crucial factor in online shopping settings, especially when there is no way for physical examination, claims Pavlou (2003). Mattresses fit right into this category because they are expensive and tactile products. Brands that provide trial periods, return policies, warranties, and dependable customer support reduce the risks involved with internet shopping. Through open return policies, client endorsements, and lengthy trial periods, companies like Wakefit, SleepyCat, and The Sleep Company have been successful in gaining the trust of Indian consumers.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) Model have both had a significant impact on our understanding of how consumers go through the purchasing decision process. According to these approaches, decision-making proceeds methodically from identifying the issue to evaluating the purchase after it has been made. However, customers are overloaded with options and information in the digital realm, which makes the evaluation process more drawn out and challenging. Kotler and Keller (2016) point out that social media influence, content-driven marketing, and the volume of product evaluations all affect how online shoppers weigh their options. This is especially true when purchasing a mattress because buyers are forced to rely largely on digital content due to the inability to physically inspect the goods.

Mattresses are a high-involvement purchase that requires lengthy decision-making cycles because buyers consider a variety of factors, such as firmness, size, price, material, and brand reputation. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) claim that high-involvement purchases necessitate a higher cognitive commitment, which raises the need for comparison analyses and comprehensive product information. In response, e-commerce companies have launched cutting-edge products like interactive shopping guides, augmented reality previews, and video

demos. These tactics have been adopted by a number of Indian mattress startups to improve product transparency and facilitate well-informed decision-making. These solutions serve as alternatives to the traditional in-store trial experience that customers depended on.

Chiu et al.'s (2009) additional research shows how well digital product augmentation affects consumers' opinions about quality. Consumer confidence is increased by digital tools like size configurators, 3D models, and side-by-side product comparisons, particularly in high-involvement categories. Such digital augmentation is essential to online mattress shopping since it enables customers to remotely see and understand the product's properties. Consumers are also assisted in the selection process by features such as chatbot-guided recommendations and sleep quizzes.

Building trust is still a recurring subject in the literature on the adoption of e-commerce. Mayer et al. (1995) highlight ability, compassion, and integrity as the three fundamental components of trust. Indian consumers are generally wary of e-commerce because of inconsistent service quality and delivery reliability, especially in semi-urban and rural areas. Features like cash-on-delivery, bilingual support, and round-the-clock helplines have worked well to allay these worries. Strong return procedures, validated user feedback, and third-party certifications are further factors that support client trust.

37 In this regard, the Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) business model has become more popular. D2C companies in the mattress industry offer directly to customers online, eschewing conventional middlemen. D2C tactics have been used by companies like Wakefit, The Sleep Company, and SleepyCat to provide premium goods at affordable costs. According to reports from RedSeer and KPMG, D2C brands are more likely to be well-received by younger Indian consumers—especially millennials and Gen Z—because of their affordability, transparency, and customer-first philosophy. These firms' success indicates that consumers' expectations are shifting in favor of ease, customization, and after-sale care.

Social proof is a significant factor that influences mattress purchases made online. By acting as stand-ins for in-person assessments, reviews, ratings, and customer endorsements help close the experience gap between online and offline shopping. The vast majority of consumers place an equal amount of faith in online evaluations and personal recommendations, according to BrightLocal (2021). These cues are what customers rely on to lessen uncertainty when there is no sensory connection. The existence of thorough and genuine evaluations raises the legitimacy of a product, according to several research. Fascinatingly, even unfavourable reviews can increase trust by presenting the company as attentive and customer-focused if they are handled openly.

Globally, the expansion of online shopping in the mattress market is a reflection of India's progress. With their long trial periods, free returns, and customer-focused practices, companies like Casper, Purple, and Nectar have made the bed-in-a-box idea popular in the United States. Indian firms have taken inspiration from their success and have adapted these tactics to suit local tastes and practical limitations. Customer happiness and loyalty are considerably greater for direct-to-consumer (D2C) firms that provide trial periods, flexible delivery, and instructional content, according to Deloitte's 2020 consumer insights report.

India's consumer behaviour is not uniform. Due to improved internet infrastructure, more affordable mobile devices, and government-led digital literacy initiatives, Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are progressively adopting e-commerce, whilst metro areas have high levels of digital adoption. To engage these expanding audiences, Sinha (2016) highlights the importance of mobile-optimized websites, vernacular content, and regional personalization. Mattress companies aiming to reach these areas must use localized engagement tactics in conjunction with strong logistics to establish relevance and confidence.

Despite these developments, scholarly research that focuses only on the Indian internet mattress sector is still lacking. Current research frequently discusses global case studies or broader e-commerce trends. In the Indian context, post-purchase behaviour, brand loyalty, and the emotional aspects of trust have not received much attention. Moreover, nothing is known about how various demographic groups—like joint families, students, and older citizens—use the internet mattress purchasing process. Future studies should investigate these subtleties using both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to gain a deeper understanding of brand performance and customer expectations in various Indian submarkets.

In summary, the research on e-commerce and consumer behaviour clearly shows that social proof, digital trust, and high-involvement product uptake are all related. In order to lower risk and improve decision-making, online platforms have used a variety of tactics for mattresses, which are intrinsically challenging to evaluate without physical contact. Indian customers are becoming more receptive to these signals, especially when they are paired with prompt service and value-driven products. The current study expands on these findings to examine the reasons behind Indian consumers' preference for buying mattresses online, the difficulties they encounter, and the ways in which businesses can adapt to satisfy their needs.

Future parts of this review will go further into consumer behaviour models like Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and the Diffusion of Innovation theory in order to deepen this understanding. These models all aid in the interpretation of behavioural changes among Indian customers. Additionally, in order to comprehend the variety of

preferences, literature on consumer segmentation—including income levels, age groupings, regional behaviors, and urban-rural divides—will be included. Through the integration of comparative analyses from various developed and emerging countries, including China, the United States, and Southeast Asia, this comprehensive assessment will offer a multifaceted and comprehensive view of the development of the online mattress business.

In addition, case studies from both domestic and foreign mattress companies will be thoroughly examined to illustrate both effective and unsuccessful tactics, assisting in the identification of weaknesses and prospects for next market initiatives. These extensions will create a strong academic base that will support the primary study and make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge regarding the transformation of Indian consumers brought about by e-commerce.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive research design is used in this study to methodically examine the several facets of mattress-related consumer behaviour in the Indian e-commerce sector. In particular, a descriptive design is helpful when the goal is to observe, record, and evaluate current conditions without changing or altering the research setting. With regard to online mattress purchasing, it enables researchers to investigate and explain the "what," "why," and "how" of consumer preferences, purchase reasons, and post-purchase satisfaction levels. The characteristics, behaviours, and patterns of the target population in their natural environment can be thoroughly understood with this design. It is not experimental in nature and uses structured instruments, like surveys, to gather data. Without making an effort to change or control the variables, the data is then examined to extract factual insights and see how they relate to one another. When conducting market research, descriptive research is especially pertinent because the goal is to find patterns and trends that companies can utilize to develop or improve their strategy. The rationale for selecting this design stems from the issue statement's focus on comprehending the actions, thoughts, and decisions of Indian consumers when it comes to online mattress purchases. Presenting a clear picture of the factors influencing consumer choices and the degree to which different elements—such as trust, product quality, digital marketing, return policies, and price—play a role in decision-making is the aim of this research, not running experiments or using control groups to test hypotheses.

3.2 Extent of Influence from Researcher

One of the fundamental guidelines followed in this study was to keep researcher intervention to a minimum during the data gathering and analysis procedures. To reduce prejudice and preserve the integrity of the study, objectivity was maintained at every stage. Only creating the study tool, distributing the survey online, gathering replies, and performing objective data interpretation were the researcher's responsibilities. The survey was anonymous and self-administered to guarantee that participants could freely voice their opinions without outside interference. By using this method, the possibility of social desirability bias is decreased, which occurs when respondents give answers they think are appropriate or anticipated rather than expressing their actual thoughts. Because their answers would remain anonymous, participants were more inclined to be candid about their preferences and experiences with online mattress

shopping. The questionnaire was also written in a neutral, non-leading, and clearly comprehensible manner to prevent misunderstandings. A small number of people participated in a pilot study to confirm the questionnaire's clarity and organization. In order to make some of the questions more understandable and objective, the pilot's feedback was helpful. Throughout the study, the researcher maintained a strictly observational approach, making no effort to direct or push respondents. By using this method, the data's authenticity was preserved and it was made sure that the insights gathered represented actual customer opinions.

3.3 Time Horizon

This research uses a cross-sectional time horizon, which entails gathering information from a sample that is representative of the larger population of interest at one particular moment in time. To provide a quick look at a specific occurrence, cross-sectional studies are frequently employed in social sciences, market research, and health studies. The cross-sectional method is suitable for this study since it enables an examination of customer behaviour as it is currently observed in the marketplace. It makes it easier to analyse how Indian consumers are reacting to the idea of buying mattresses online in real time, particularly in light of the nation's growing e-commerce usage and rising level of digital literacy. The choice to use a cross-sectional time period was motivated by pragmatic factors including time and resource constraints. When understanding the current environment rather than long-term behavioural shifts is the aim, cross-sectional studies are more appropriate than longitudinal studies, which follow the same subjects across time to evaluate changes and developments. In order to investigate the potential impact of recent events, like the COVID-19 epidemic and shifting economic conditions, on online purchasing behaviour, this time period was also selected. In the short to medium term, brands looking to customize their pricing, marketing, and service strategies can benefit greatly from these data.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

A systematic and methodologically sound methodology was used to collect data in order to obtain significant insights. A digital questionnaire made with Google Forms was used to gather the main data for this study. This instrument was selected due to its adaptability, simplicity of use, and capacity to rapidly gather structured responses from a large population. A survey of pertinent literature and business practices served as the foundation for the questionnaire's construction. In order to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, it contained a variety of multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions. Many areas

were covered in the study, such as expectations from e-commerce platforms, decision-making considerations, brand familiarity, online purchasing behaviours, post-purchase satisfaction, and demographic information. The survey was distributed through email and social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, WhatsApp) to a wide range of responders. Since online customers are more likely to be frequent internet users, the study's focus on them was in keeping with the decision to adopt digital distribution. By doing this, the data gathered was guaranteed to be pertinent to the intended audience. Apart from primary data, secondary data was gathered from reliable sources such government databases, academic publications, market research reports, and white papers. These secondary sources served to set the scene, confirm patterns, and supply benchmark data to back up the study.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data was systematically cleaned, arranged, and analysed after collection in order to produce insightful findings. Microsoft Excel was used to evaluate quantitative data from closed-ended questions, along with fundamental statistical techniques including average scoring, frequency distribution, and percentage computation. In order to visually depict customer answers and facilitate the interpretation of trends and patterns, charts and graphs were developed. The data was compiled using descriptive statistics to give a broad picture of the traits and actions of the customers. The association between age group and desire to test new mattress manufacturers is one example of how cross-tabulations were used to examine correlations between customer preferences and demographic characteristics. The qualitative information gained from open-ended questions was examined and grouped into themes. In order to find common patterns, feelings, and worries among the respondents, thematic analysis was employed. The results gained depth from this method, which also offered subtle insights that might be missed by using only quantitative approaches. In order to ensure that all interpretations were in line with the key questions of what drives online mattress purchases and how customer expectations are changing in the digital sphere, the analysis was directed by the study objectives.

3.6 Sample Size

A sample of 98 people was selected for this study. Even though it was a small figure, it was adequate for an exploratory study that sought to find early patterns and collect data on customer behaviour. People who were accustomed to online shopping and had some experience with e-commerce platforms in relation to home and lifestyle products made up the sample. A variety

of age groups, socioeconomic statuses, educational backgrounds, and geographic locations—including metropolitan, urban, and semi-urban areas—were represented among the participants. This variety made it possible for the data to represent a broad spectrum of customer viewpoints. A greater sample size would enable more detailed segmentation and inferential statistics; however, the selected sample offered a strong basis for comprehending the main factors and correlations within the parameters of the study.

3.7 Sampling Method

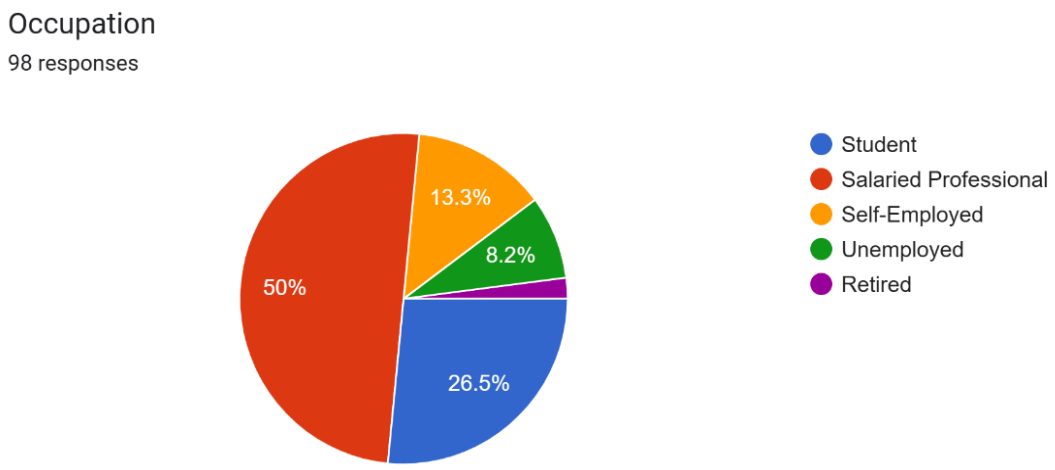
A non-probability sampling approach was used because of real-world limitations like time and financial limitations. In particular, convenience sampling was used since it made it possible for the researcher to swiftly and effectively contact willing subjects. When the goal of exploratory research is to obtain preliminary insights rather than statistically extrapolate findings to the full population, this approach is frequently employed. Convenience sampling is the process of choosing participants who are willing and easily accessible. Respondents were contacted for this study via personal contacts, professional networks, and social media groups. This approach is useful for spotting broad trends and coming up with ideas for further study, even though it restricts the ability to generalize findings. In an effort to reduce the possibility of biases related to homogeneity, efforts were made to guarantee variety within the sample. There were unofficial demographic quotas that included a balanced mix of age, gender, and professional backgrounds.

3.8 Sampling Technique

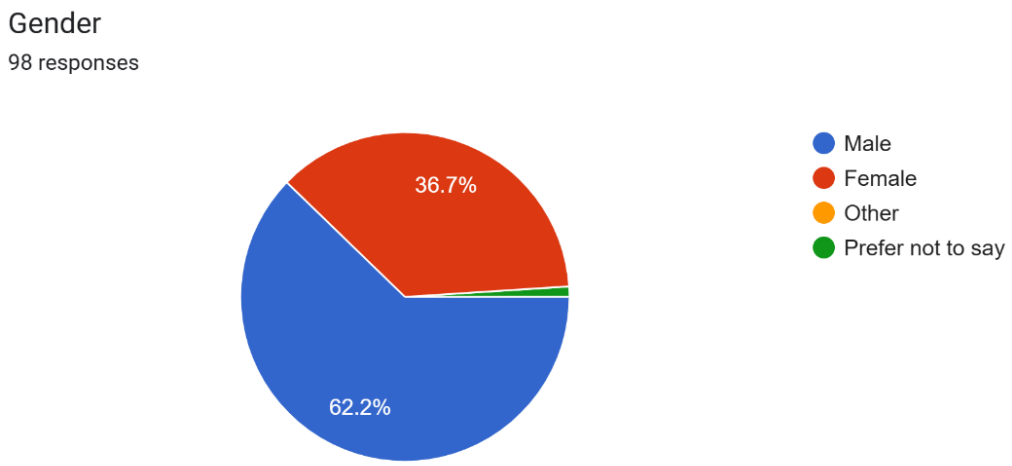
Digital outreach via internet platforms served as the sample strategy for this investigation. Participants were given access to the questionnaire through email, Facebook, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp. This strategy was selected because it fits the research issue, which is about consumers who are likely to shop online and are active in digital environments. Real-time response collecting, a broad geographic reach, and economical sampling were made possible by digital dissemination. Before starting the survey, participants received an explanation of the study's objectives and gave their informed consent. The comments' validity and dependability were enhanced by the voluntary nature of involvement and the guarantee of anonymity.

ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Survey Results and Interpretation (Sample size 98)

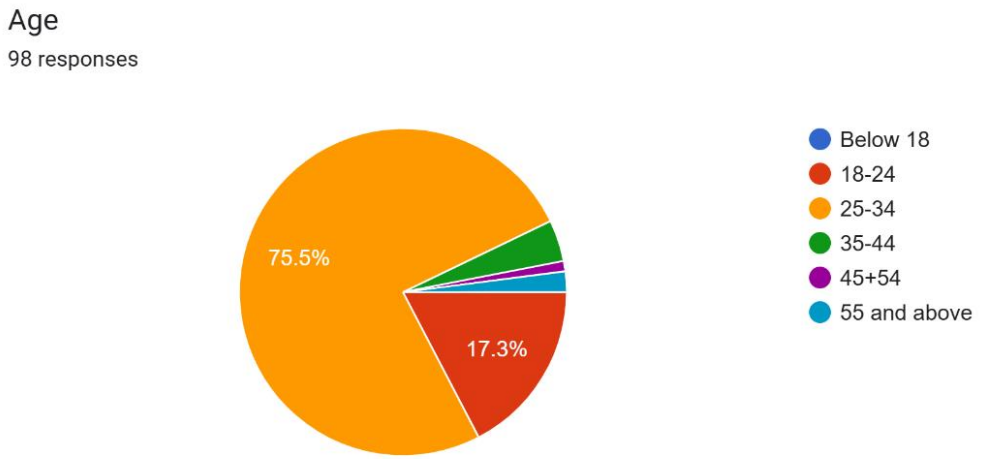


Interpretation: According to the data, students make up 26.5% of the respondents, while salaried professionals make up the majority (50%) of the respondents. 13.3% of people work for themselves, compared to 8.2% who are jobless and 2% who are retired. This suggests that working professionals make up the majority of online mattress buyers or potential customers, indicating that digital familiarity and stable income are important factors in online buying behaviour.

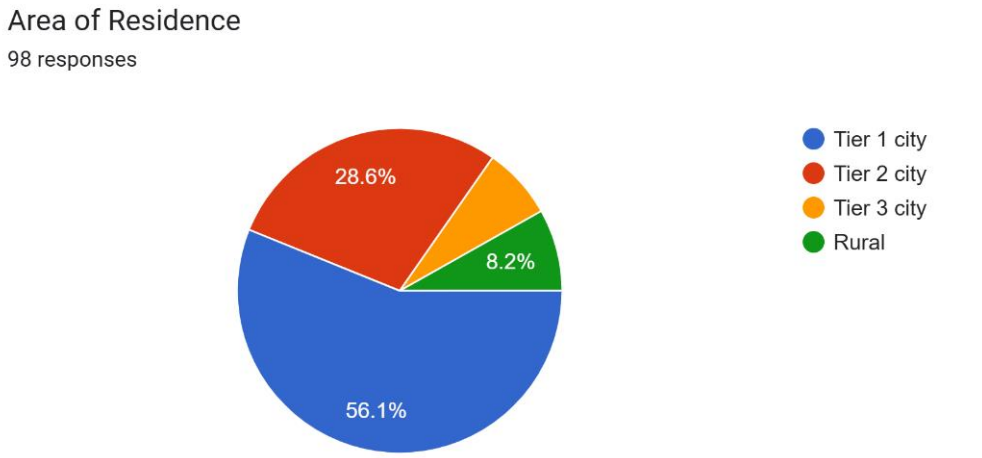


Interpretation: According to the graph, 36.7% of respondents identify as female, and 62.2% as male. Only a tiny portion of respondents chose "other" or "prefer not to say." This suggests that men were more interested in or involved in online mattress purchasing, which may have

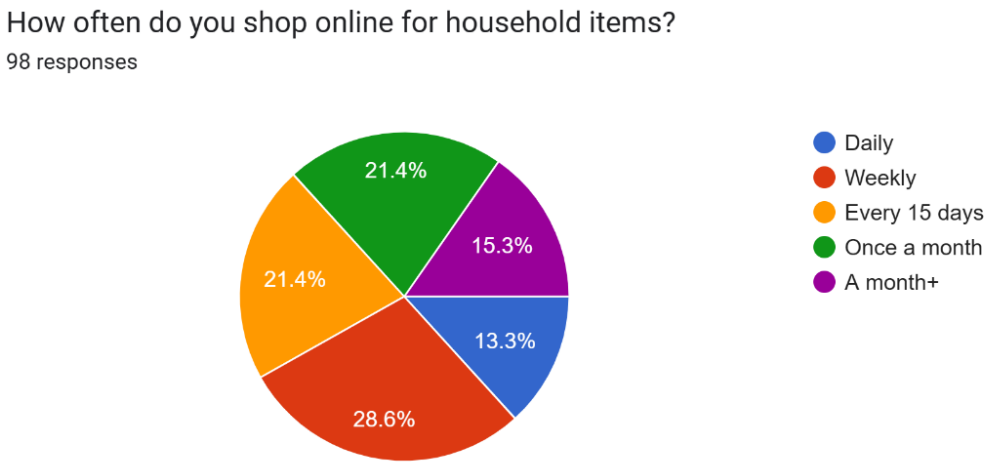
an impact on how companies customize their user experience and marketing tactics.



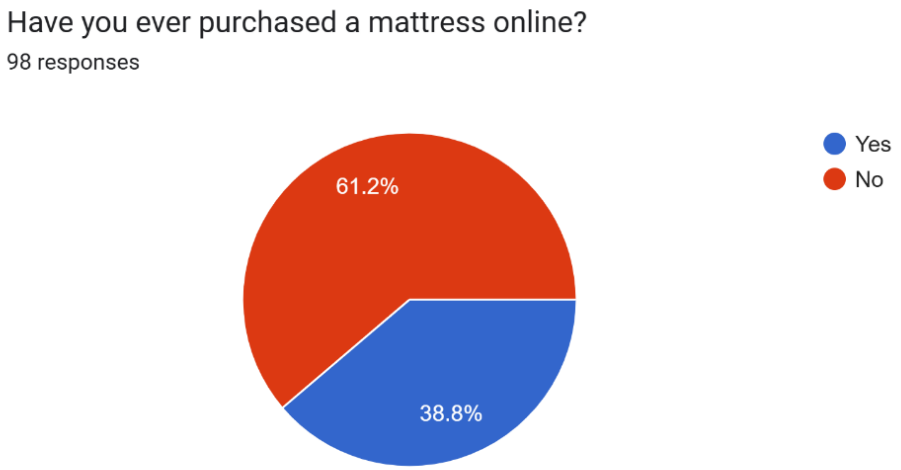
Interpretation: According to the figure, the bulk of responders (75.5%) are in the 25–34 age range, with 17.3% falling into the 18–24 age range. Very few people fit within the 35–44, 45–54, and 55+ age groups. This suggests that younger folks, especially millennials, are most interested in online mattress shopping since they are probably more accustomed to e-commerce and digital decision-making.



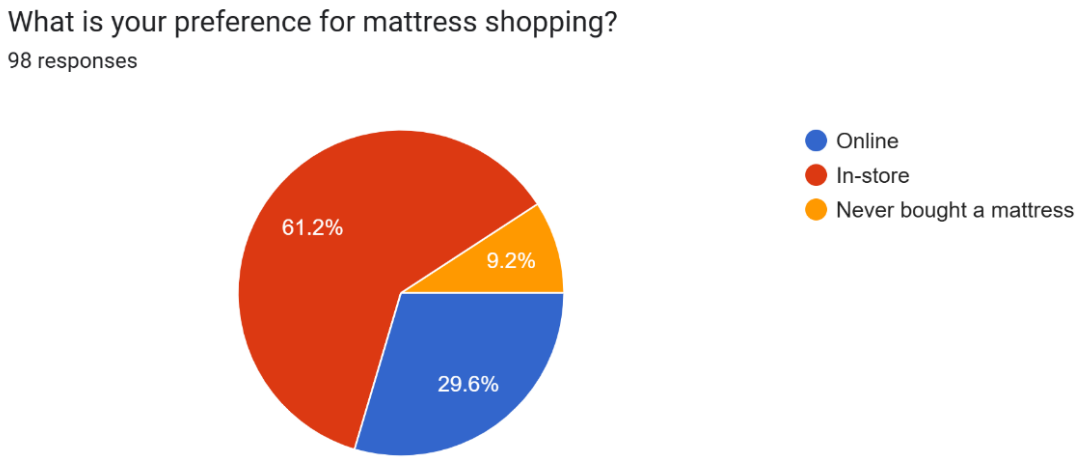
Interpretation: The majority of respondents (56.1%) live in Tier 1 cities, while 28.6% do so in Tier 2 cities, according to the chart. Just 7.1% come from Tier 3 cities, while 8.2% come from rural areas. This suggests that the majority of prospective or actual online mattress customers are centered in urban areas, which often have greater levels of internet access, digital literacy, and e-commerce adoption.



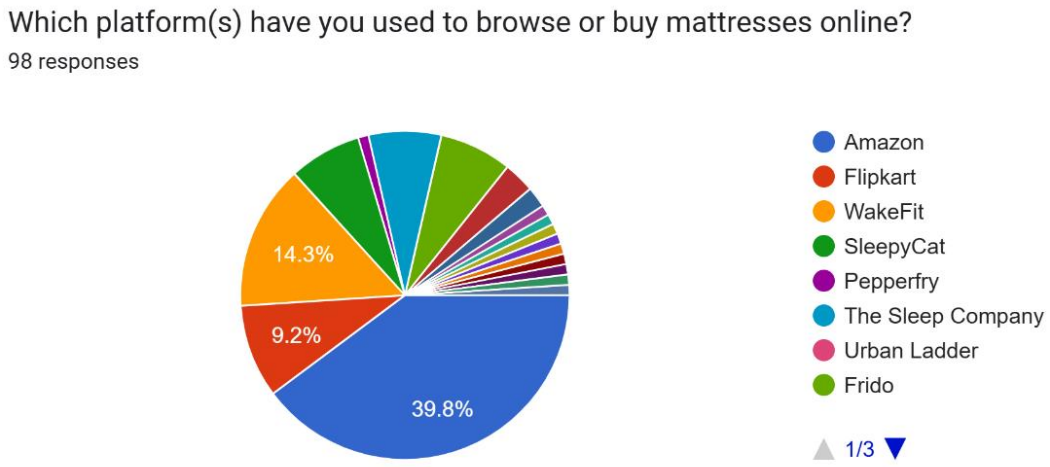
Interpretation: The chart shows that most respondents shop online for household items frequently, with 28.6% shopping weekly and 21.4% each shopping every 15 days or once a month. Only 13.3% shop daily, while 15.3% shop less than once a month. This indicates that over 70% of users shop online at least once every 15 days, highlighting the growing reliance on e-commerce for regular household needs and the increasing trust in digital shopping platforms.



Interpretation: According to the chart, 61.2% of respondents have not bought a mattress online, whereas 38.8% have. This suggests that even while purchasing mattresses online is becoming more and more common, most people still prefer to shop offline, most likely because they have trust issues and want to physically test the goods. The adoption rate of 38.8%, however, indicates rising trust in e-commerce for expensive goods.

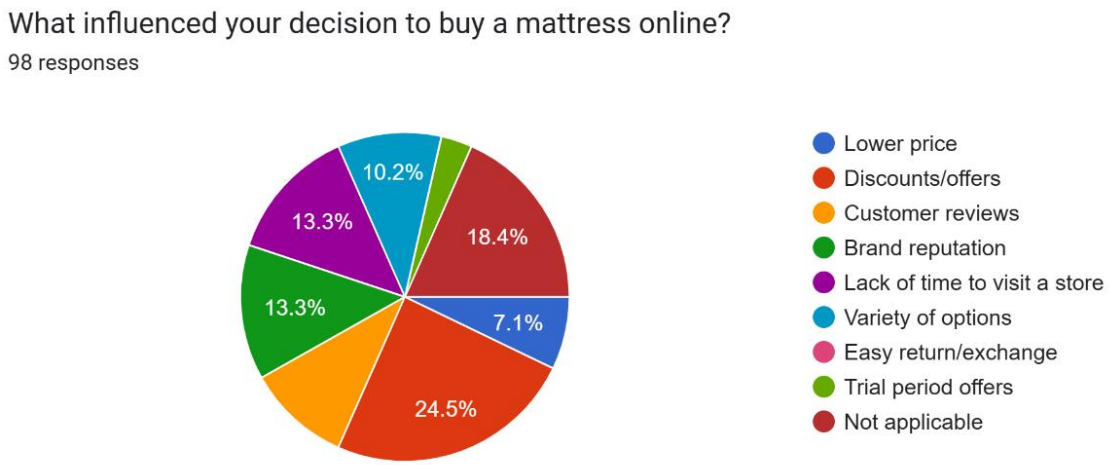


Interpretation: Mattress buying in-store is preferred by 61.2% of respondents, whilst online is preferred by 29.6%, according to the chart. 9.2% have never purchased a mattress as well. This shows that although physical stores remain the preferred option, a significant percentage of customers are now willing to purchase mattresses online, indicating a shift in consumer behaviour toward digital adoption.

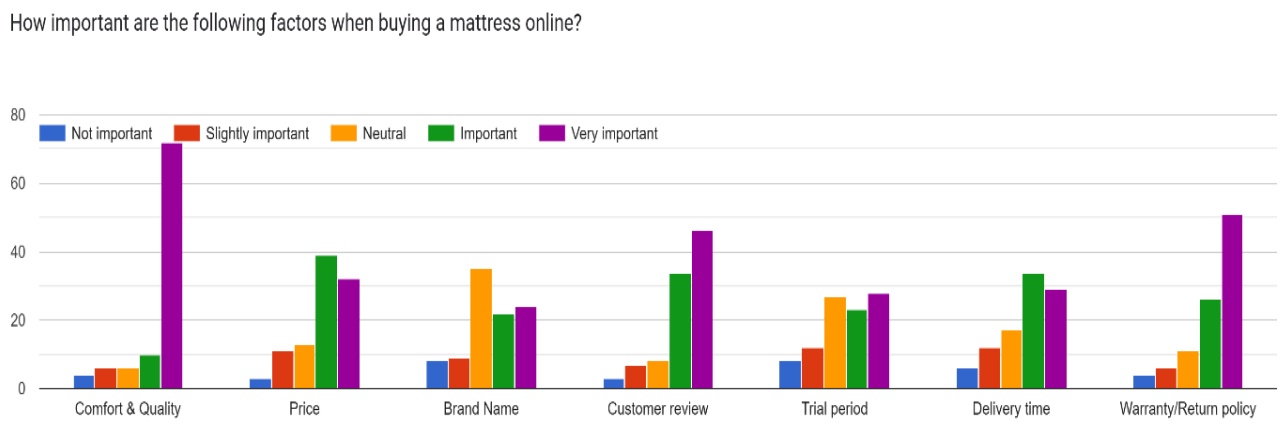


Interpretation: Amazon is the most popular platform for online mattress shopping, according to the chart, with 39.8% of respondents choosing it. Following it are WakeFit (14.3%) and Flipkart (9.2%), suggesting that they are also well-liked options. Smaller percentages of respondents used other platforms such as SleepyCat, Pepperfry, and The Sleep Company. This

implies that major markets like Amazon dominate consumer preference because of their extensive reach and trust factor, even while niche D2C firms are becoming more popular.

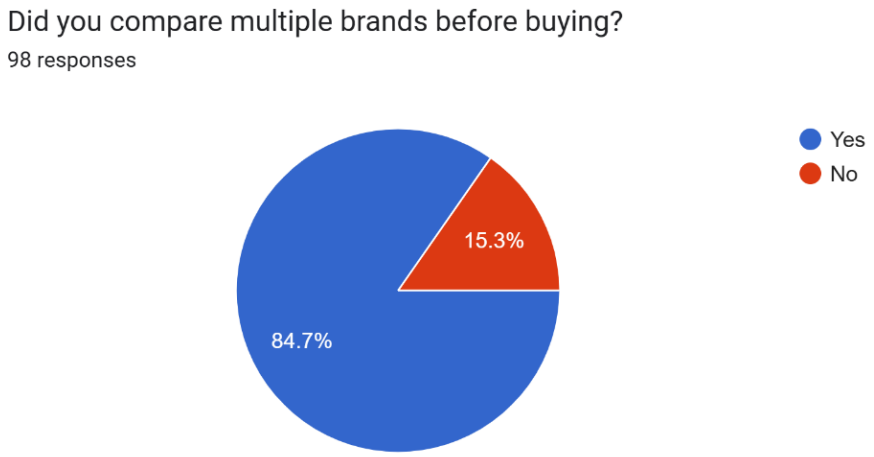


Interpretation: According to the chart, discounts/offers (24.5%) and customer reviews (18.4%) are the best variables affecting mattress purchases made online. In addition, easy return/exchange policies and brand reputation are significant factors (both at 13.3%), with trial period offers (10.2%) coming in second. The significance of variety of options and lower price (7.1%) was lower. This suggests that important factors influencing online mattress purchasing decisions include value-driven offers, trust signals, and customer-friendly practices.

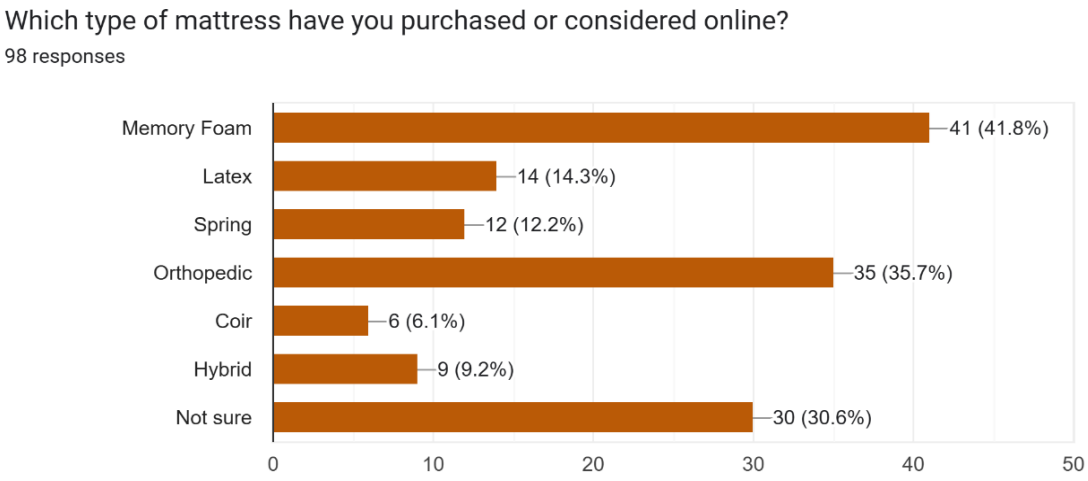


Interpretation: The majority of respondents rated comfort and quality as extremely important, making them the most crucial considerations when purchasing a mattress online, according to the chart. Additionally, highly ranked are customer reviews and return or warranty policies.

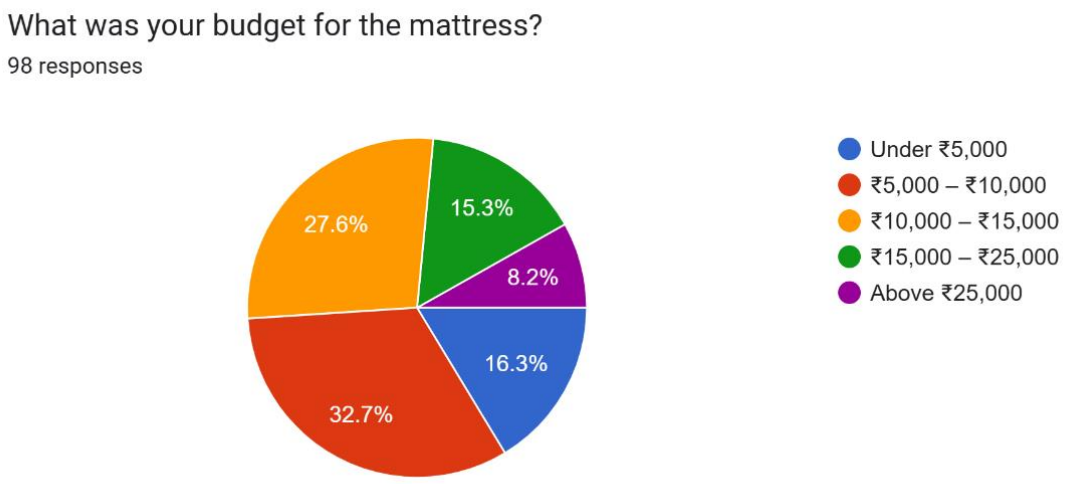
Many people regard price, trial term, and delivery time to be significant, albeit not all of them do. Responses to brand names are more neutral, suggesting that they are not as important. Purchase decisions are generally influenced more by buyer reassurance and useful features than by brand repute.



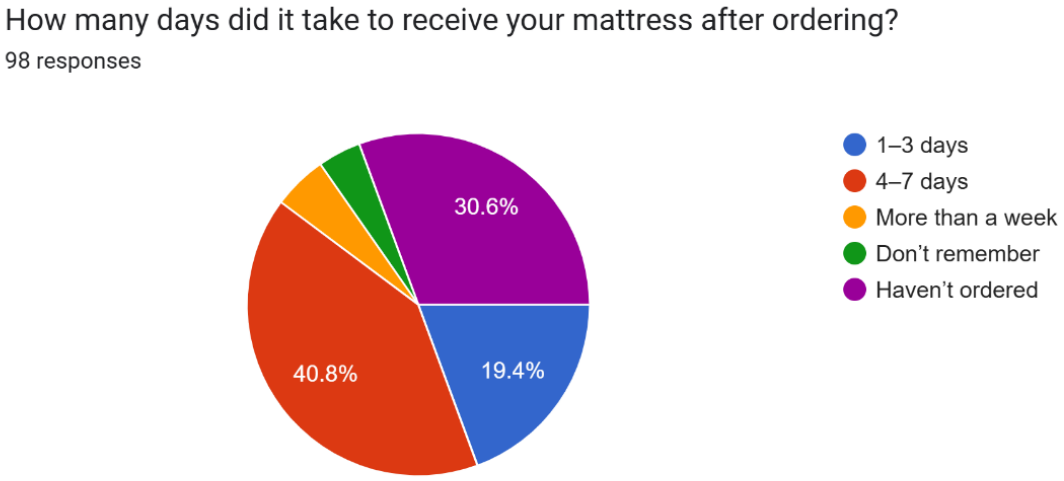
Interpretation: According to the graph, only 15.3% of respondents did not check brands before making an online mattress purchase, compared to 84.7% who did. This implies that most buyers compare and research products thoroughly before making a major purchase, such as a mattress, highlighting the need of competitive positioning and comprehensive product details for brands.



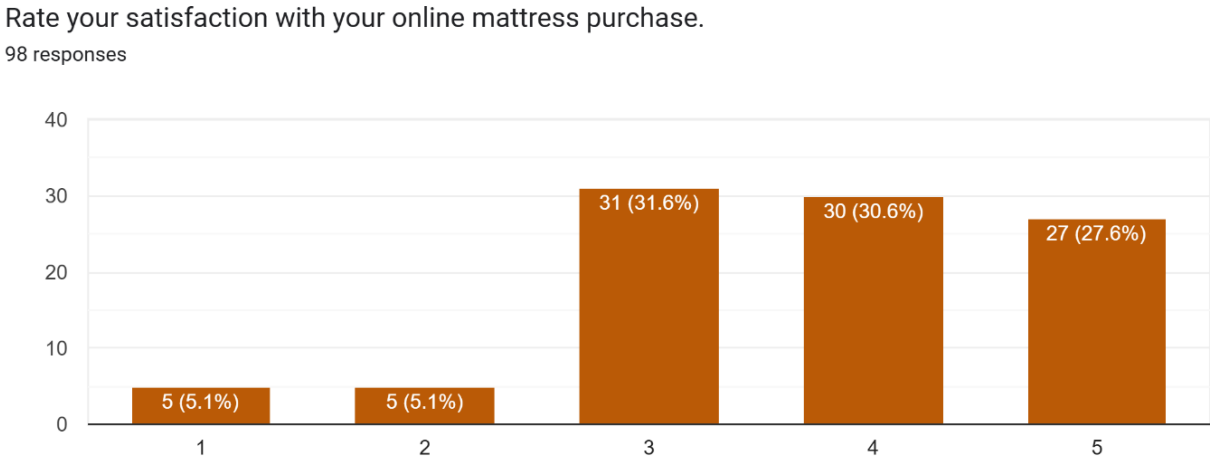
Interpretation: According to the chart, 41.8% of respondents chose memory foam mattresses, making them the most popular product to buy or consider online. Orthopedic mattresses come in second at 35.7%, while a noteworthy 30.6% are unsure of the kind. While hybrid mattresses (9.2%) and coir mattresses (6.1%) were less popular, latex and spring mattresses were taken into consideration by 14.3% and 12.2% of respondents, respectively. While a significant percentage of consumers are still unsure about mattress types, indicating a need for improved product education online, this shows that online shoppers strongly choose comfort-focused options like memory foam and orthopaedic mattresses.



Interpretation: According to the chart, 32.7% of respondents selected a mattress budget between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000. Following this, 27.6% of respondents had a budget between ₹10,000 and ₹15,000, suggesting a strong preference for mid-range products. 15.3% of respondents were willing to spend between ₹15,000 and ₹25,000, while 16.3% of respondents chose to spend less than ₹5,000. Just 8.2% of them had more than ₹25,000 in their budget. This implies that the majority of online buyers are price conscious and favor mattresses that are reasonably priced over those that are moderately priced.

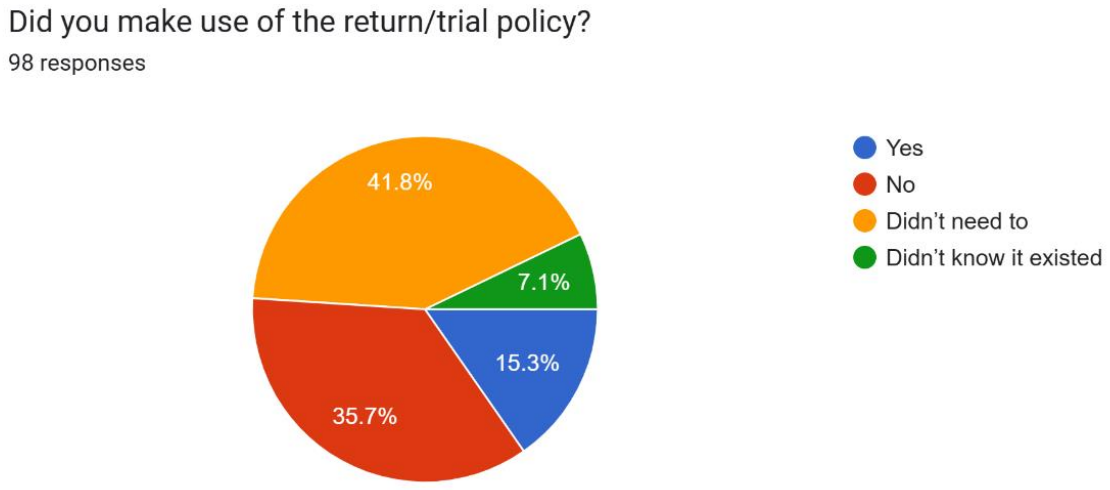


Interpretation: According to the chart, 19.4% of respondents received their mattress in 1-3 days after placing their order, whilst 40.8% received it in 4-6 days. A tiny portion couldn't recall or had delivery durations longer than a week. Interestingly, 30.6% of those surveyed have never placed an online mattress order. This implies that even while delivery times are usually acceptable, a significant percentage of individuals are still unfamiliar with buying mattresses online.

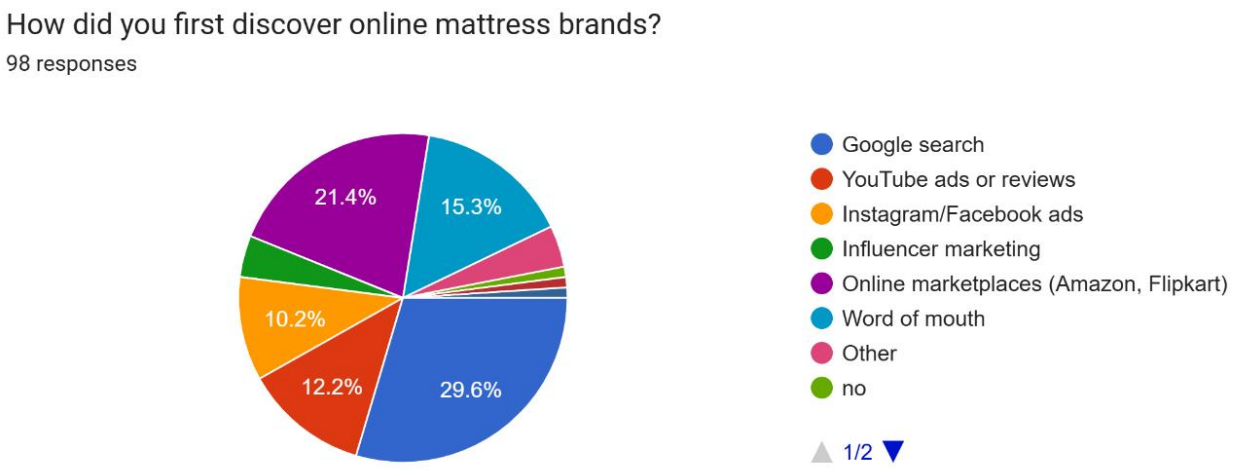


Interpretation: Customer satisfaction scores for mattress purchases made online are displayed in the chart. With 31.6% giving their experience a score of 3, 30.6% giving it a 4, and 27.6% giving it a 5, the majority of respondents gave their experience a favorable rating. Merely 5.1% of respondents gave satisfaction ratings of 1 or 2. Nearly 90% of respondents gave their online

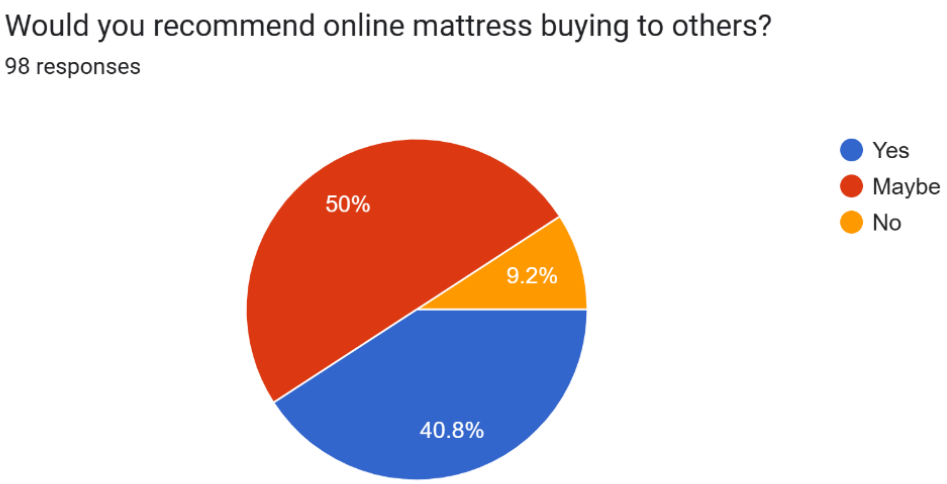
mattress buying experience a rating of three or above, suggesting that overall satisfaction is high.



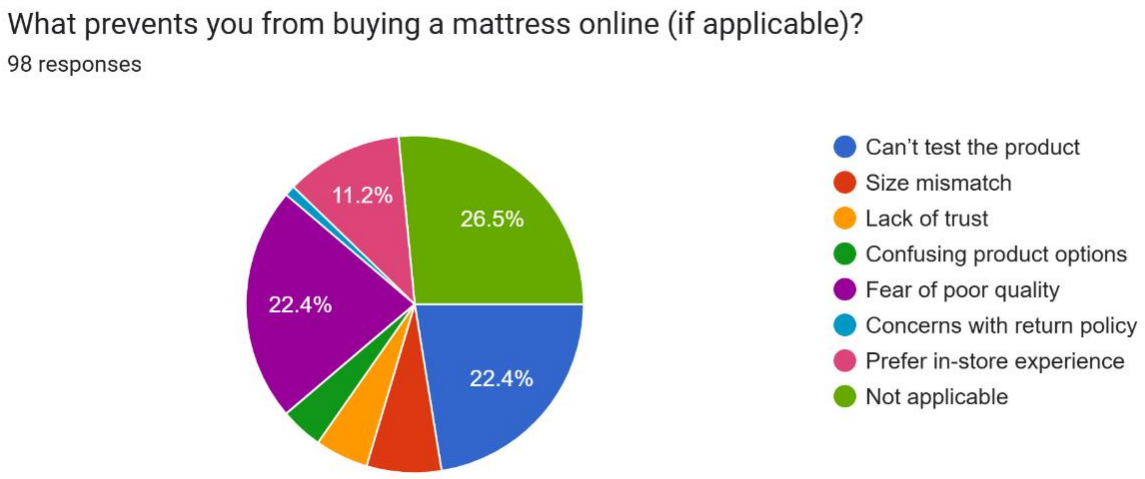
Interpretation: According to the graph, 35.7% of respondents claimed they did not utilize the return or trial policy after buying a mattress online, while 41.8% of respondents indicated they did not need to use it. Just 15.3% of people actually used the policy, and 7.1% were not aware that it was in place. This shows that even though return and trial policies provide comfort, many consumers either didn't think they needed to utilize them or weren't completely aware of their availability, underscoring the need for brands to communicate more clearly.



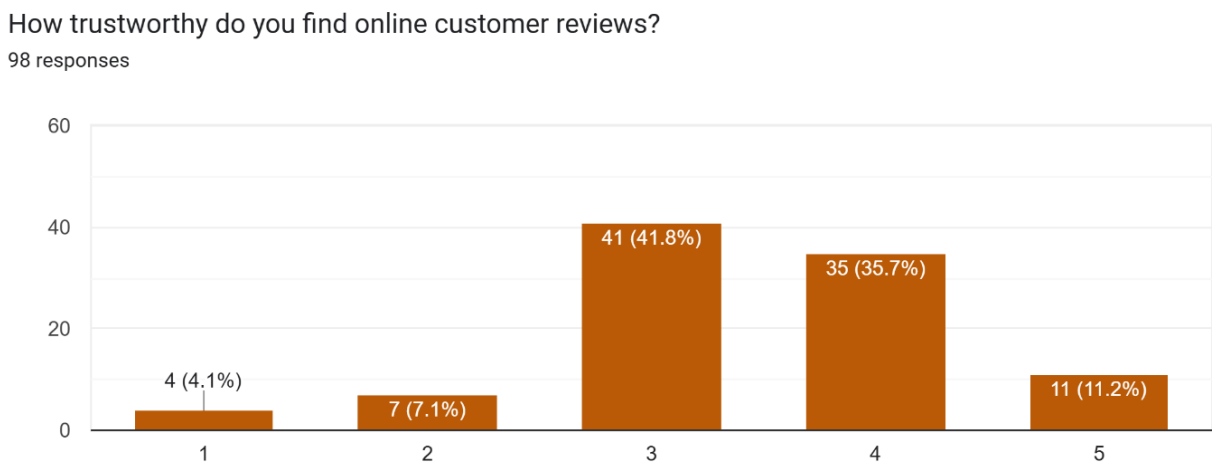
Interpretation: According to the data, Google searches were the primary source of information for the majority of respondents (29.6%), followed by online marketplaces such as Amazon or Flipkart (21.4%). Instagram/Facebook ads (10.2%) and YouTube reviews or advertisements (12.2%) were additional noteworthy sources. The majority of brands were found through word-of-mouth (15.3%), but fewer were found through influencer marketing or other channels. This emphasizes how crucial search engine visibility and marketplace presence are, as well as how social media and peer recommendations are becoming more and more influential in raising customer awareness.



Interpretation: According to the chart, 50% of participants stated that they might suggest online mattress purchasing to friends, with 40.8% responding in the affirmative and 9.2% disagreeing. This implies that even though many people are happy with their experience, a sizable portion are still apprehensive, most likely because of worries about delivery, comfort, or trust. The forecast is generally quite bright, but it does emphasize how important it is for brands to gain more trust from customers.

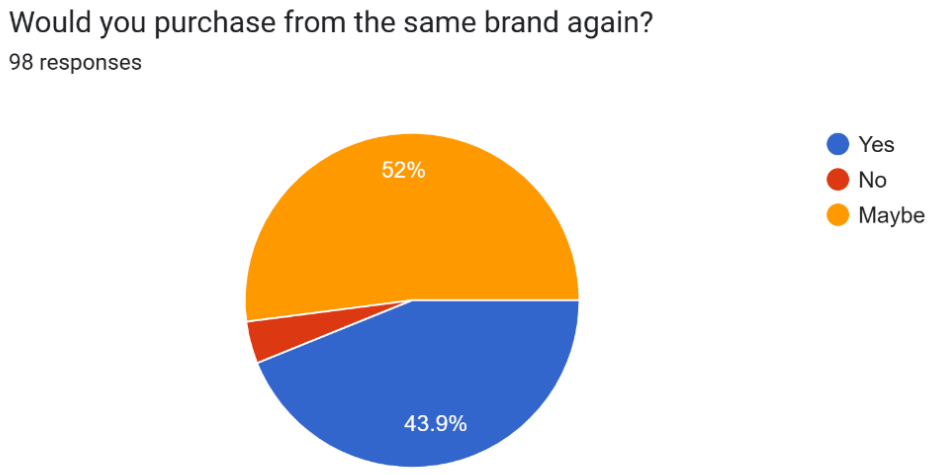


Interpretation: According to the statistics, the inability to test a mattress is the main deterrent for consumers to purchase one online (26.5%). At 22.4%, worries about return policies and worry of subpar quality come in second and third, respectively. Other concerns include size mismatch, lack of trust, unclear product alternatives, and preference for in-store experiences (11.2%). In order to increase consumer confidence, these data suggest that e-commerce mattress brands should prioritize physical inspection, quality assurance, and clear return procedures.



Interpretation: According to the graph, the majority of respondents believe internet customer reviews to be somewhat reliable. 35.7% awarded reviews a level 4 rating, while 41.8% gave them a level 3 rating. Very few gave them low trust ratings (1 or 2), and only 11.2% gave them

a highly trustworthy rating (5). This implies that even if consumers perceive online evaluations as beneficial, they nevertheless proceed cautiously and would rather confirm them with more data before making a purchase.



Interpretation: According to the graph, 52% of respondents said that they might make another purchase from the same brand, 42.9% agreed, and just 4.1% disagreed. Since a sizable percentage are still unsure, there is possibility for development in areas like the post-purchase experience and continuing customer involvement, but overall, this shows a high degree of brand satisfaction and prospective consumer loyalty.

4.2 Recommendations

The following specific recommendations are put out based on a thorough examination of Indian consumers' online mattress buying habits. These are designed to increase market reach, boost brand equity, improve digital purchasing experiences, and increase consumer trust. Every point is intended to address a particular realization or issue that was brought forth by the study's results and survey data.

- **Establish and communicate trust:**
  Successful e-commerce operations continue to rely heavily on establishing trust, particularly for high-involvement products like mattresses. Brands ought to spend money fostering openness at every stage of the purchasing process. Detailed specs, precise images, and pertinent certifications (such ISO or CertiPUR-US) should all be

included in product descriptions. Using user-generated content (UGC) and video testimonials can add credibility. In order to inspire confidence, it is also important to prominently display clearly stated return policies, warranty durations, and trial conditions (such as 100-night trials). Credibility is further increased with trust badges, validated reviews, and secure payment gateway icons.

- **Improve the Online Buying Experience:**
  Online mattress companies need to enhance virtual encounters in order to close the physical gap. Customers can examine features from various perspectives by utilizing tools such as comparison modules, virtual room previews, and 3D product views. Furthermore, the experience can be customized with the use of guided tools such as sleep personality tests or mattress finders. Decision-making can be facilitated and cognitive strain reduced by comprehensive buying guides that describe hardness levels, material distinctions (such as memory foam vs. latex), and health benefits. Live video consultations and chatbot support should be investigated as well.
- **Make Influencer and Content Marketing More Effective:**
  Brand memory is fostered and awareness is raised through content-driven marketing. Partnerships with both small and large influencers on social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest aid in showcasing how products are used in everyday situations. Content such as "How to choose the right mattress for back pain" or "Top 5 mattresses under ₹10,000" can be published on social media, blogs, and emails and optimized for search engines. Participation can be further increased by repurposing user-generated reviews into blog articles, highlight reels, or films.
- **Encourage and streamline the policies for returns and trials:**
  Policies pertaining to returns and trials have a big impact on consumer confidence. Not only should brands provide lengthy trial periods, but they should also make returns easier by requiring little paperwork, providing free pickups, and providing prompt refunds. These guidelines must to be made explicit on the product page, during the checkout procedure, and again after the sale. First-time buyers may be less hesitant if customer testimonials about successful returns or exchanges are proactively shared.
- **Extend Market Reach in Tier 2 and Tier 3:**
  The next step in the development of online mattress brands is to enter non-metropolitan areas. Enhancements in accessibility can include regional language support, localized advertising, and customer service helplines that are available in Bengali, Tamil, Telugu,

Hindi, and other languages. To increase awareness, consider partnering with local influencers or providing offline experience centers. Adoption can be facilitated by offering choices like EMI and cash-on-delivery, especially in semi-urban areas. Selecting logistics partners should be based on their last-mile effectiveness and rural reach.

- **Enable Comparison of Brands and Products:**
  Platforms should make it simpler for consumers to compare brands before making a purchase, as indicated by 84.7% of respondents. Key specifications (such as price, warranty, foam type, and firmness level) are listed in product comparison tables to assist customers in making decisions more quickly. Resources that enable consumers to visually and performance-wise compare two to three items (such as cooling, support, and motion isolation) are quite valuable.
- **Encourage Client Loyalty and Repeat Business:**
  It is more economical to retain customers than to acquire new ones. Brands ought to put in place loyalty systems that award points for reviews, referrals, and purchases. Recurring purchases can be encouraged by loyalty tiers, birthday discounts, and first looks at new products. Check-in emails, mattress care instructions, and promotions for accessories (pillows, protectors, etc.) are examples of post-purchase care that strengthens brand loyalty.
- **Use Demographic Segments to Customize Messaging:**
  The results of the survey indicate that the largest purchase category consists of salaried professionals aged 25 to 34. Value for money, convenience, and restful sleep are important factors for this population. Modern lifestyles should be reflected in marketing messaging, which should emphasize internet shopping's time-saving qualities as well as productivity and wellness. Style, affordability, and influencer reputation are more important to younger customers and students. Assurance, support, and call-based order placements might be more suitable for senior consumers.
- **Enhance the Unpacking, Delivery, and Setup Process:**
  The logistics component is crucial. Brands should provide real-time tracking, proactive delivery alerts, and assured delivery windows (such as three to five working days). With a welcome message, setup instructions, and a QR code for assistance, the unboxing process should be easy, tidy, and unforgettable. White-glove delivery and setup can be

a valuable addition to high-end products. It is also necessary to pick up returns quickly and clearly.

- **Use awareness campaigns to address major obstacles:**
  It is necessary to proactively address major obstacles through awareness campaigns, such as the absence of a physical trial, the fear of inferior quality, or returned difficulties. These could include interactive advertisements outlining trial procedures, webinars for client education, and social media posts that dispel common misconceptions (such as "Is buying a mattress online risky?"). FAQs and chatbots with AI capabilities can help in real-time objection resolution.

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4.3 Limitations of the study

This study offers valuable insights on how Indian e-commerce consumers behave when purchasing mattresses, but it's crucial to be aware of the limitations that could restrict the study's applicability, generalizability, and scope. These restrictions are present in the majority of original research efforts and give future research directions to fill up the gaps.

- **A small sample size:**
  98 participants' comments served as the study's basis, which may not be enough for thorough generalization throughout India's huge and varied consumer base, despite being helpful for identifying trends. More accurate findings would come from a bigger and more representative sample, particularly considering the diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic origins of India.
- **Geographical Focus:**
  The vast majority of those surveyed were from Tier 1 cities or urban areas. Since access to e-commerce platforms, digital literacy, and consumer preferences might differ greatly in Tier 2, Tier 3, and rural areas, this urban-centric perspective restricts our understanding of consumer behavior in these locations. Because of this, the study might not adequately represent the subtleties of non-metropolitan customers.
- **Survey Bias Exclusively Online:**
  8
  Through the use of digital channels like social media, email, and WhatsApp, an online survey was used to gather the data. This inevitably left out individuals who are not online or who are not digitally active, such as elderly people, those who are not tech-savvy, or people who live in remote areas with irregular internet connection. A bias in favour of users who are active and aware of digital issues could result from this.

- **Information Self-Reported:**

  Self-reported data, which is the basis for the conclusions, is prone to biases such exaggeration, selective remembering, and social desirability bias. The validity of the data may be impacted by respondents' inaccurate recall of past acts or their provision of answers they felt were more acceptable.

- **Designing Across Sections:**

  Because the study was cross-sectional, data was gathered all at once. As such, it is unable to take into consideration long-term developments in the e-commerce sector, seasonal trends, or changes in customer views over time. More thorough insights into changing patterns and behaviours would be provided by a longitudinal approach.

- **Exclusive to Online Purchases:**

  Excluding consumer behaviours in offline or hybrid retail experiences (such as showroom visits followed by online orders), this study concentrated solely on mattress purchases made through e-commerce platforms. This restricted focus might have overlooked significant decision-making preferences and behaviours associated with in-person product evaluations.

- **Specific Scope of the Product:**

  Mattress protectors, bed frames, pillows, and other closely related sleep goods were not included in the study because it was restricted to mattresses. Future studies on these goods could provide a more comprehensive picture of the sleep product market and have an impact on consumer happiness and decision-making.

- **Inadequate Qualitative Analysis:**

  The study mostly used quantitative approaches to collect data, while it did include some open-ended responses. Because of this, it might have overlooked more profound emotional, psychological, and experiential insights that can only be found through qualitative techniques (such as focus groups and interviews).

- **Unconsidered External Factors:**

  External macroeconomic factors that can impact consumer purchasing behavior, such as supply chain disruptions, government policy changes regarding e-commerce, and inflation, were not taken into consideration in this study. Furthermore, no particular analysis was done on the impact of post-pandemic lifestyle changes or the rise in work-from-home culture.

- **Diversity Limitations:**

The study might still be lacking in variety in terms of economic groups, educational attainment, and regional representation, despite the fact that respondents had a range of professional backgrounds. These demographic factors may have a big impact on how customers view and interact with online mattress purchases.

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CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate and evaluate how Indian consumers behave while buying mattresses through the country's e-commerce industry, which is changing quickly due to shifts in lifestyle, technology, and market accessibility. The online mattress market offers special chances and challenges because it is one of the more complicated product categories because of its tactile and highly involved nature. This study offers a well-informed perspective on how Indian consumers view and interact with this product in the digital sphere by carefully analysing primary data gathered from customers and bolstered by secondary research from industry sources and scholarly literature. The report shows that younger, tech-savvy consumers living in metropolitan areas are the main drivers of India's online mattress market's steady growth. Most of the respondents are salaried professionals, and the majority are between the ages of 25 and 34. Online mattress companies have started to meet these consumers' growing demands for convenient, cost-effective, and health-conscious products by implementing clever product designs, customer-focused policies, and effective digital marketing techniques. Companies that sell directly to consumers (D2C), such as Wakefit, SleepyCat, and The Sleep Company, have benefited from this change by providing trial periods, simple return policies, and competitive prices. However, a number of obstacles prevent online mattress shopping from being fully adopted nationwide, even with the encouraging increase. The most important of these is that you can't personally inspect the thing before buying it. Consequently, a significant number of consumers continue to be cautious or just partially involved in this industry. Anxiety among consumers is exacerbated by concerns about subpar products, restrictions on returns, and practical problems like delivery delays or damage sustained in transportation. In Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, where infrastructure may be deficient and trust in online platforms is still growing, these issues are especially noticeable. The majority of mattress buyers who shop online are quite involved in the decision-making process, according to the research. Before making a purchase, they thoroughly consider product specs, check user reviews, and compare brands. For this reason, customer education and product openness are essential for success in this industry. With the aid of visual aids like films, infographics, and augmented reality previews, clear, succinct, and comprehensive product information can help close the gap caused by the absence of in-person product engagement. The survey also revealed that return policies, trial periods, and discounts are important factors that affect consumers' decisions to buy. Because of their established legitimacy and ease, platforms like Amazon and Flipkart continue to dominate, but direct-to-consumer (D2C) websites are becoming more popular because of their

customized services, focused content, and open lines of communication with customers. In order to stand out in the increasingly competitive market, brands need to take into account consumer interaction, post-purchase services, and overall brand experience in addition to product quality. Additionally, the study emphasizes how critical it is to target underserved markets and consumer demographics. Despite their current underrepresentation in online mattress purchase, rural and semi-urban populations provide a significant development opportunity. Brands must concentrate on regional language support, streamlined user interfaces, cash-on-delivery choices, and collaborations with regional shipping companies in order to reach this market. Changing consumer perception and boosting penetration will also require education efforts that emphasize the importance of sleep health and product quality. Additionally, as technology advances, customer behaviour changes as well. The online mattress market might be further transformed by combining AI for customer service, AR for virtual mattress testing, and machine learning for tailored suggestions. Companies stand to gain a substantial competitive edge if they make early investments in these technologies and match them with customer expectations. In conclusion, India's online mattress business sits at the intersection of technological ease and conventional product demands. Although online mattress shopping is becoming more popular and accepted, this study has shown that there are still significant gaps in service delivery, education, and trust. Brands that prioritize customer-centricity, openness, and innovation will be the ones who actively strive to close these gaps. The report clearly admits its shortcomings, including its small sample size and narrow focus on urban populations. In order to obtain a deeper understanding, future study should try to increase regional variety, incorporate longitudinal data, and investigate behavioural psychology. Furthermore, by capturing the emotional and experiential elements of online mattress purchase, qualitative interviews may deepen comprehension. After all, shifting from showroom to screen-in mattress shopping is more than just a fad; it's a reflection of India's digital revolution. Online mattress companies have the opportunity to not only expand but also reshape the future of sleep wellness in India by consistently responding to customer requirements, upholding openness, and fostering enduring connections.

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    - *Note: Additional sources include primary survey data collected via Google Forms and analytical tools such as Microsoft Excel*

ANNEXURE

21

1. What is your occupation?
   - Student
   - Salaried Professional
   - Self-employed
   - Retired
   - Unemployed

6

2. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female
   - Other/Prefer not to say
3. What is your age group?
   - 18–24
   - 25–34
   - 35–44
   - 45–54
   - 55+
4. What is your location type?

10

   - Tier 1 City
   - Tier 2 City
   - Tier 3 City
   - Rural Area
5. How often do you shop online for household items?
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Every 15days
   - Once in a month
   - A month+
6. Have you ever purchased a mattress online?

30

   - Yes
   - No
7. What is your preference for mattress shopping?
   - Online

- In-store
- Never bought a mattress

8. Which platform(s) have you used to browse or buy mattresses online?
    - Amazon
    - Flipkart
    - WakeFit
    - SleepyCat
    - Pepperfry
    - The sleep company
    - Urban ladder
    - Frido
9. What influenced your decision to buy a mattress online?
    - Lower price
    - Discounts/offers
    - Customer reviews
    - Brand reputation
    - Lack of time to visit a store
    - Variety of options
    - Easy return/exchange
    - Trial period offers
    - Not applicable
10. How important are the following factors when buying a mattress online?
    - Comfort & Quality
    - Price
    - Brand Name
    - Customer review
    - Trial period
    - Delivery time
    - Warranty/return policy
11. Did you compare multiple brands before buying?
    - Yes
    - No
12. What type of mattress did you buy or consider buying?
    - Memory Foam

- Latex
- Spring
- Orthopedic
- Coir
- Hybrid
- Not sure

13. What was your budget for the mattress?

9

- Under ₹5,000
- ₹5,000 – ₹10,000₹
- 10,000 – ₹15,000
- ₹15,000 – ₹25,000
- Above ₹25,000

14. How many days did it take to receive your mattress after ordering?

19

- 1–3 days
- 4–7 days
- More than a week
- Don’t remember
- Haven’t ordered

15. Rate your satisfaction with your online mattress purchase. (Rate 1 to 5)
16. Did you make use of the return/trial policy?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Didn’t need to
    - Didn’t know it existed
17. How did you first discover online mattress brands?
    - Google search
    - YouTube ads or reviews
    - Instagram/Facebook ads
    - Influencer marketing
    - Online marketplaces (Amazon, Flipkart)
    - Word of mouth
    - Other
18. Would you recommend online mattress buying to others?

54

    - Yes
    - No
    - Maybe
19. What prevents you from buying a mattress online (*if applicable*)?

- Can’t test the product
- Size mismatch
- Lack of trust
- Confusing product options
- Fear of poor quality
- Concerns with return policy
- Prefer in-store experience
- Not applicable

20. How trustworthy do you find online customer reviews? (Rate 1 to 5)
21. Would you purchase from the same brand again?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Maybe