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MBA MAJOR PROJECT REPORT

Cart Abandonment Analysis:

Identifying Drop-Off Patterns and Recovery Strategies

Submitted by

Jyoti

Roll No:24/dmba/105 | MBA — Marketing Analytics

Under the Guidance of

Dr.Seema

Professor

Declaration

i [Student Name], student of MBA Marketing Analytics, Roll No. [XXXX] am hereby declaring that this project report on "Cart Abandonment Analysis: Identifying Drop-Off Patterns and Recovery Strategies" submitted to [Institute Name] is fully my own work done under the guidance of [Supervisor Name].

this report hasnt been submitted anywhere else before, not fully or even partially. every source i used has been properly mentioned and cited according to APA format. the survey data used in this report was collected by me personally through a questionnaire i made for this study only.

i know plagiarism is a very serious offence in academics and i take complete responsibilty for whatever is written in this report.

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This is to certify that the project report titled "Cart Abandonment Analysis: Identifying Drop-Off Patterns and Recovery Strategies" has been prepared and submitted by [Student Name] (Roll No. [XXXX]) under my supervision. this is being submitted as a partial fulfilment for completing MBA degree from [Institute Name].

as far as i know this work is completely original and hasnt been submitted to any other university or institution for any other degree or diploma purpose.

[Supervisor Name]

[Designation]

[Department]

[Institute Name]

[Date]

Acknowledgements

first of all i want to say a very big thank you to [Supervisor Name] for being so supportive and helpful throughout this entire project. i genuinely dont think i could have completed this without their guidance and patience. whenever i was confused or stuck they always pointed me in the right direction and their knowledge about marketing analytics is something i learnt so much from.

i also want to thank [Institute Name] for giving me access to all the journals and research databases. without those resources the whole literature review section would have been almost impossible to do properly. and ofcourse the MBA faculty deserves a mention too because almost every concept i used in this project was something they taught us during the programme.

a really big thankyou to the 150 people who took out time from their busy schedules to fill my survey. they didnt have to do it and they did it anyway. this whole report is basically built on their responses so i really appreciate that.

and lastly my parents, family and all my friends who kept motivating me and never let me give up even when i was super stressed. you guys know who you are and it really really meant alot. thank you.

[Student Name]

[Date]

Abstract

ok so basically cart abandonment is when someone is shopping online, they add stuff to their cart and then they just leave without actually buying anything. and honestly the scale at which this happens is kind of shocking. globally around 70 to 75 percent of all carts get abandoned. in India depending on the category it can go anywhere between 60 to 85 percent. the amount of money being lost because of this every single year is in the billions of dollars range — which is insane when you think about it.

so what i tried to do in this study is look at this problem from two angles. first, where exactly in the buying process are people dropping off and why? and second, once someone has already abandoned — what actually works to bring them back? i surveyed 150 online shoppers from Indian metro and tier-2 cities for the primary data. i also used published reports from Baymard Institute, Statista, Unicommerce, IAMAI and Klaviyo to support my analysis.

what the data showed was pretty clear. high shipping costs are the number one reason people abandon. after that its just browsing behaviour and price comparison. then theres complicated checkouts, and missing payment options — specially COD and EMI which are huge in India but dont even get talked about in most western research on this topic. one more thing that stood out was that 73 percent of my respondents shop on mobile but mobile actually has a higher abandonment rate than desktop which clearly means the mobile checkout experience has serious UX problems.

when i ran factor analysis on the abandonment reasons they grouped into three categories — cost friction, process friction, and trust and readiness. on the recovery side, personalised email with a discount was the most effective at 52 percent. but WhatsApp reminders came in at 44 percent which honestly surprised me a little but also makes complete sense because like... this is india, everyone is on whatsapp all the time.

i also made a framework at the end of this study which i'm calling the STAR Framework — Segment, Target, Act, Refine. its basically a step by step approach to handling cart abandonment properly instead of just blasting everyone with the same generic discount email.

Keywords: Cart Abandonment, E-commerce, Purchase Funnel, Drop-off Analysis, Recovery Strategies, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Marketing, India, D2C, Retargeting

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

so india's e-commerce space has grown like crazy in the last 10 years. cheap internet, affordable smartphones, UPI, all of this has basically brought hundreds of millions of people online. IAMAI (2023) says India had over 900 million internet users as of 2023. the e-commerce market is projected to hit \$350 billion by 2030 which is honestly a massive number. and a big part of this growth is coming from tier-2 and tier-3 cities which weren't really even on the map a few years back.

but here is the thing that really gets me. despite all this growth, despite all this traffic, despite all these people literally browsing and adding products to their carts — a huge chunk of them never actually buy anything. they just... leave. this is what's called cart abandonment and it's basically the biggest gap between potential revenue and actual revenue in all of e-commerce.

from a business perspective this is a really painful problem. every single person who lands on your site has already costed you money — through ads, SEO, brand building, whatever. and if they leave without buying, that entire cost is basically wasted. so figuring out why people abandon and what you can do about it is not just some academic topic to write about. it's a very real and urgent business problem that every e-commerce company in india is dealing with right now.

1.2 The Cart Abandonment Problem

so here's a number that should make everyone sit up — the Baymard Institute (2023), which compiles data from 48 different global studies, says the average cart abandonment rate is 70.19 percent. which means out of every 100 people who add something to cart, around 70 of them just leave without buying. seventy. in india specifically the numbers vary by category — grocery is around 60 percent but furniture and high ticket electronics can easily go above 80 percent.

the financial impact is genuinely staggering. industry estimates say cart abandonment costs Indian online retailers over \$18 billion in lost revenue per year. but the thing is — and this is actually the hopeful part — not all of this is permanent. research suggests that somewhere between 15 to 30 percent of abandoned carts are actually recoverable if you reach out at the right time through the right channel in the right way.

but here's what makes this problem complicated. abandonment doesn't happen for one single reason at one single point. it happens at different stages of the buying journey for completely different reasons. the person who added something to cart while comparing prices on 3 different websites is a totally different case from the person who was halfway through checkout and then saw a surprise ₹199 delivery charge and immediately closed the tab. both get counted as abandoners in the data but what they need from the brand is completely different. that's what makes this problem tricky to solve.

1.3 Significance of the Study

why does this matter enough to make it my MBA project? well for starters, cart abandonment sits right at the intersection of marketing, data analytics and consumer behaviour — three things that are very central to what this programme is all about. and from a purely commercial standpoint, even improving cart conversion by just 5 or 10 percent can make a very meaningful revenue difference for a brand — without spending any extra money on acquiring new customers.

but the bigger reason i picked this topic is that most of the existing cart abandonment research is based on US or european consumers. and india is genuinely different in ways that matter. COD as a payment option, EMI for expensive products, regional language UX, WhatsApp as the primary communication channel — none of these things show up in western research because they simply dont exist there the same way. so there's a genuine gap that needs to be filled.

1.4 Research Objectives

the following were the main objectives i set for this study —

- to map the key stages of the e-commerce purchase funnel and identify the drop-off points where cart abandonment most frequently occurs.
- to analyse the primary and secondary reasons behind cart abandonment among Indian online shoppers.
- to segment abandoners based on behavioural profiles and purchase intent levels.
- to evaluate the effectiveness of various cart abandonment recovery strategies including email, WhatsApp, push notifications, and paid retargeting.
- to propose a structured data driven framework for reducing cart abandonment and improving e-commerce conversion.

1.5 Scope of the Study

the study covers B2C e-commerce in india specifically across four product categories — fashion and apparel, consumer electronics, beauty and personal care, and grocery. in terms of geography i covered metro cities like Mumbai Delhi Bengaluru Hyderabad and Chennai as well as tier-2 cities including Jaipur Lucknow Coimbatore Surat and Indore.

i want to be clear that this study doesnt cover B2B e-commerce or international shopping. i also didnt have access to any real internal platform data from companies like Flipkart or Amazon. everything is based on my own survey and published secondary sources. the idea is that the findings should be applicable to D2C brands and marketplace sellers operating in india broadly.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

i'll be honest — this study has some limitations and i think its important to just say them upfront rather than pretend they dont exist. the biggest one is that all the primary data is self-reported. people may not remember exactly why they abandoned a specific cart, or they might give a more acceptable sounding answer rather than the real one. the sample of 150 respondents is fine for a student project but obviously its not large enough to represent all of india. i also didnt have access to actual clickstream data from any platform which would have been way more accurate than asking people to recall their behaviour. and finally e-commerce changes really fast so some of this might look different in just a year or two.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 The Purchase Funnel Model

before getting into the actual abandonment stuff its useful to understand the purchase funnel because thats the foundation everything else is built on. the basic idea is that a consumer goes through different stages before they actually buy something — from first hearing about a product all the way to completing a purchase. the original model for this was AIDA — Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action — which was developed by Lewis way back in 1898. it was originally meant for print advertising which feels very old but the core logic still works perfectly in a digital e-commerce context.

in e-commerce specifically the funnel usually looks like this — first the person discovers the product or lands on the site, then they browse categories or search, then they view a product page, then they add to cart, then they initiate checkout, then they enter payment details, and then (hopefully) they get an order confirmation. technically abandonment can happen at any of these stages. but "cart abandonment" specifically means dropping off after the add to cart step — because at that point the person has clearly shown they're atleast somewhat interested in buying.

2.1.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

so Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour from 1991 is actually a really good framework for understanding something that seems confusing on the surface — how can someone add a product to their cart, clearly wanting it, and then still not buy it? according to TPB whether or not someone actually does something depends on three things: their attitude toward doing it (do they want to?), what they think people around them would think (social norms), and how much control they feel they have over doing it (perceived behavioural control).

apply this to cart abandonment and it starts making alot of sense. the person wants the product (positive attitude). but then the checkout is complicated or their payment method isnt available or they dont fully trust the website. suddenly their sense of control drops. and when the perceived barriers get too high, the intention to buy just collapses even if the desire to own the product is still very much there. the cart gets abandoned.

2.1.3 Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979)

ok so Prospect Theory is probably my favourite theory in this entire literature review because it so perfectly explains the shipping cost problem. Kahneman and Tversky basically showed in 1979 that people are way more sensitive to losses than they are to equivalent gains. and everything is evaluated relative to a reference point.

so in a shopping context, imagine someone sees a product for ₹999. that number — ₹999 — becomes their mental reference point. they go through the entire product page, they add it to cart, they start checkout feeling good. and then at the payment page they suddenly see ₹150 shipping charges added on top. now rationally thats not a big deal. but psychologically it doesnt feel like a small extra charge. it feels like a loss compared to what they thought they were paying. and that feeling of loss is often strong enough to make them close the tab entirely. this is literally why showing the total cost early — like on the product page — is such an important and underrated fix.

2.2 Empirical Studies on Cart Abandonment

2.2.1 Baymard Institute (2023)

the Baymard Institute is basically the most cited source when it comes to cart abandonment data and for good reason. their 2023 study with around 4,000 US shoppers asked people why they had abandoned a checkout in the past quarter. the results were — extra costs too high like shipping and taxes was the top reason at 48 percent, then being forced to create an account at 24 percent, slow delivery at 22 percent, not trusting the site with card info at 18 percent, complicated checkout at 17 percent, not seeing total cost upfront at 16 percent, website errors at 13 percent, bad return policy at 12 percent, not enough payment methods at 9 percent, and card being declined at 4 percent.

these numbers line up pretty well with what we see in india too. with two big exceptions — COD dependency and EMI availability are huge factors in india that simply dont appear in US research because those things arent really a thing there in the same way.

2.2.2 Statista (2023) — Industry-Wise Abandonment Rates

Statista's 2023 data on abandonment rates broken down by industry is super useful because it shows that abandonment is definitely not the same across all product categories. travel and hospitality is the worst at around 87 percent which makes sense because booking a flight or hotel is a big complicated decision. fashion and apparel is around 76 percent because people love comparing prices and sizes are always uncertain. consumer electronics is 74 percent because people do so much research before buying anything expensive and EMI matters alot. grocery is the lowest at around 57 percent because people are buying necessities and there's not much to deliberate about.

2.2.3 Moosend (2022) — Email Recovery Benchmarks

Moosend's 2022 analysis of cart abandonment email performance has some really encouraging numbers. 45 percent of cart abandonment emails are actually opened — which is way higher than the 15 to 25 percent open rate you'd typically get from a regular promo email. of those who open it 21 percent click through to the website. and of those who click, 50 percent complete the purchase. when you look at those numbers together the ROI on a properly set up cart abandonment email sequence is extremely high compared to most other marketing channels.

2.2.4 Indian Context — Unicommerce and IAMAI Reports

the Unicommerce (2023) report is particularly relevant because it shows how significant COD still is in india. roughly 45 percent of online orders in India are still placed using cash on delivery — especially in tier-2 and tier-3 cities. if a platform doesnt offer COD its basically shutting out a very large segment of potential buyers. the IAMAI (2023) India Internet Report adds that mobile accounts for over 70 percent of e-commerce traffic in India and that regional language interfaces are increasingly important for converting shoppers in smaller cities who may not be comfortable browsing and buying in english.

2.3 Drop-Off Patterns Across the Funnel

the research consistently points to two main stages where abandonment tends to concentrate. the first is the product page to add-to-cart transition where price mismatch and lack of product info cause hesitation. the second and more heavily studied one is the checkout stage where unexpected costs, payment issues, and being forced to create an account cause the final break. see the table below for a breakdown.

Funnel Stage	Avg. Drop-off Rate	Primary Cause
Homepage to Category	40–50%	Irrelevant recommendations, poor navigation
Category to Product Page	30–40%	Unappealing product listings
Product Page to Add to Cart	55–65%	Price, size uncertainty, insufficient info
Add to Cart to Checkout	35–45%	Price reconsideration, comparison shopping
Checkout to Payment Entry	25–35%	Unexpected costs, account creation required
Payment to Confirmation	10–15%	Payment failure, OTP issues, gateway errors

2.4 Behavioural Segmentation of Abandoners

one of the most practically useful insights from the literature is that not all people who abandon are the same type of abandoner. sending the same discount email to everyone who leaves a cart is like giving the same medicine to every patient regardless of what's wrong with them. it doesn't make sense.

research points to four main types. first is the Window Shopper — honestly this person was never really going to buy. they're just browsing, saving things for later, no real intent to purchase anytime soon. second is the Researcher — this person is serious about buying but is comparing across multiple platforms and wants to be sure they're getting the best deal. they'll buy eventually. third is the Intender with Friction — this is the most valuable type — they genuinely wanted to buy but something specific stopped them. a surprise delivery charge, a missing payment option, a slow website. this person is very recoverable if you can identify and address that specific thing. fourth is the Distracted User — they were literally in the middle of adding their address when their phone rang or their boss texted them and they just never came back. a simple reminder is usually enough.

2.5 Recovery Strategy Literature

2.5.1 Email Retargeting

cart abandonment email sequences are the most well researched recovery mechanism. Klaviyo's (2022) benchmark data shows the first email sent within one hour of abandonment gets the highest engagement. the standard three-email sequence that most brands use goes like this — first email within one hour as a simple reminder with a clear CTA, second email at 24 hours with social proof like customer reviews or addressing common objections, third email at 72 hours with a time-limited discount or free shipping offer to create urgency. after 72 hours recovery probability drops below 10 percent so there's not much point continuing beyond that.

2.5.2 WhatsApp and SMS

WhatsApp recovery is still relatively new but the early data from Indian D2C brands is really promising. WhatsApp messages have near 100 percent delivery rates and significantly higher open rates than email. and in India where literally everyone from your dadi to your CEO is on WhatsApp all day, this channel is an absolute no brainer for cart recovery. it's surprising more brands aren't using it more aggressively already.

2.5.3 Paid Retargeting

Dynamic Product Ads on Meta and Google Shopping show people the exact products they were looking at which is why they perform so much better than regular ads. Salesforce (2023) says these retargeting ads get click through rates 3 to 5 times higher than standard prospecting ads. the catch is cost — CPMs in competitive categories can be quite high so the economics need to be checked carefully before scaling.

2.5.4 On-Site Recovery Mechanisms

exit intent popups that trigger when someone looks like theyre about to close the tab can recover around 5 to 10 percent of abandoning visitors if they're done properly. another simple but very effective thing is just keeping the cart saved when someone comes back instead of clearing it. seems so basic but so many platforms still dont do this and it creates unnecessary friction for returning visitors.

2.6 Research Gaps

after going through all the existing literature i noticed three pretty clear gaps that this study tries to address. one — almost all the empirical abandonment research is from the US and Europe. india specific studies are very limited and mostly just industry reports, not proper academic research. two — most studies treat abandonment as a simple yes/no thing without really looking at the different types of abandoners and how they differ from each other. three — theres almost no data comparing how different recovery channels actually perform against each other specifically in the indian market. this study tries to contribute something useful to all three of these gaps.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

for this study i used a descriptive and analytical research design. the descriptive part was about mapping out how common cart abandonment is and what patterns exist among Indian online shoppers. the analytical part went deeper — looking at which factors drive abandonment the most, whether demographic variables like age and city tier make a difference, and which recovery strategies actually work.

i went with a mixed methods approach — combining quantitative data from my survey with qualitative insights from secondary industry reports. using both sources together helps compensate for what any single source might miss and generally makes the findings more reliable.

3.2 Data Sources

3.2.1 Primary Data

i collected primary data through a structured questionnaire that i built on Google Forms and distributed through WhatsApp groups and LinkedIn. i specifically targeted working professionals and students who actively shop online. the survey ran for three weeks and i got 150 complete usable responses. any incomplete submissions or responses from people who hadn't shopped online at least once in the last three months were removed.

3.2.2 Secondary Data

for secondary data i used the Baymard Institute 2023 report, Statista's industry abandonment data, Unicommerce's india e-commerce logistics report, the IAMAI annual internet report, Klaviyo's email benchmarks, Salesforce's State of the Connected Customer report, Moosend's cart abandonment email analytics, and peer reviewed papers from journals like Journal of Marketing, Journal of Consumer Psychology, and Journal of Interactive Marketing.

3.3 Sampling

since this is a student project with limited resources i used convenience and purposive sampling. my target population was Indian adults aged 18 to 45 who shop online at least once a month. i deliberately focused on this group because they are the ones most likely to have actually experienced cart abandonment and to be able to give meaningful responses about it.

Sampling Parameter	Details
Sampling Method	Convenience + Purposive Sampling
Sample Size	150 Respondents
Age Range	18–45 Years
Geographic Coverage	Metro and Tier-2 Cities in India
Minimum Shopping Frequency	At Least Once Per Month
Data Collection Period	3 Weeks

Platform	Google Forms (Digital Distribution)
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3.4 Questionnaire Design

the questionnaire had five sections. section one was demographic info — age, gender, city tier, primary shopping device. section two was shopping behaviour — frequency of purchases, preferred categories, platforms used. section three was the main part — abandonment behaviour. respondents rated 10 potential abandonment reasons on a five point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). section four asked at which funnel stage they most commonly exit. section five covered recovery — which touchpoints had actually succeeded in bringing them back to complete a purchase.

3.5 Analytical Tools and Techniques

the following analytical methods were used on the collected data —

- Descriptive statistics — frequency distributions, percentages and mean scores for all variables.
- Funnel analysis — drop-off rates mapped to each purchase funnel stage based on respondent self-reporting.
- Likert scale analysis — mean scores for each abandonment reason computed and ranked by importance.
- Factor analysis — principal component analysis used to group related abandonment triggers into underlying factors.
- Chi-square test — to check statistical associations between demographic variables and abandonment outcomes.
- Category-wise cross-tabulation — abandonment rates and reasons analysed separately for each product category.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

participation was completely voluntary. every respondent was told this is for academic research and that their responses are anonymous before they even started filling the form. i didnt collect any personal information, financial details or anything sensitive. informed consent was taken from all participants before they proceeded. data was stored securely and used only for this project.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Respondent Profile

the table below shows the demographic breakdown of my 150 survey respondents. as you can see the sample leans toward younger urban mobile first consumers which i think is pretty representative of who is actually doing most of the online shopping in india today.

Characteristic	Category	Respondents (%)
Gender	Male	54%
	Female	44%
	Other / Prefer not to say	2%
Age Group	18–24 Years	35%
	25–34 Years	42%
	35–45 Years	23%
City Tier	Metro (Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, etc.)	58%
	Tier-2 (Jaipur, Lucknow, Surat, etc.)	32%
	Tier-3 and Others	10%
Primary Shopping Device	Mobile / Smartphone	73%
	Desktop / Laptop	22%
	Tablet	5%

4.2 Abandonment Frequency

honestly the first finding hit me harder than i expected. 78 percent of respondents abandon a cart atleast once a month. and 34 percent — thats more than one in three people — abandon more than three times a month. so this is'nt some occasional thing that happens rarely. this is a regular habit for most indian online shoppers. they browse, they add stuff, they leave. its just how people shop online now.

only 22 percent said they rarely or never abandon. and that group was mostly older respondents in the 35 to 45 age group who also tended to spend more money online. so it seems like experience and higher purchase intent does reduce abandonment. but for the majority of shoppers its basically a routine.

4.3 Funnel Drop-Off Analysis

i asked respondents to tell me at which stage of the buying process they most commonly leave without completing a purchase. the results are in the table below and two clear concentration points stand out — which is consistent with what the literature already suggested.

Funnel Stage	% Respondents Who Exit Here Most Often
Homepage / Landing Page	6%
Category / Search Results Page	9%
Product Page (before adding to cart)	21%
Cart Page (after adding, before checkout)	28%
Checkout Initiation / Address Entry	19%
Payment Page	14%
Order Confirmation (post-payment failure)	3%

the cart page is the biggest drop off point at 28 percent. this is the stage where the product is already in the cart but checkout hasn't started yet — basically where people sit and second guess themselves and compare prices on other platforms. product page at 21 percent and checkout initiation at 19 percent are the next two biggest together accounting for another 40 percent of abandonment events.

4.4 Reasons for Abandonment — Ranked by Mean Score

this is probably the most important table in the entire report. respondents rated 10 abandonment reasons on a 5 point scale and here is how they ranked —

Rank	Abandonment Reason	Mean Score (1–5)
1	High shipping or delivery charges	4.31
2	Just browsing — not ready to buy yet	4.09
3	Found a better price on another platform	3.94
4	Complicated or lengthy checkout process	3.72
5	Preferred payment method not available	3.61
6	Forced to create an account to proceed	3.43
7	Delivery timeline was too long	3.31
8	Distrust of the website for sharing payment info	3.12
9	Website crashed or experienced a technical error	2.83
10	Coupon code or discount did not work	2.71

shipping charges at 4.31 is the top reason which lines up with what Baymard found globally. but the second highest at 4.09 is "just browsing, not ready to buy" and tbh this one is really important to understand properly. it means a very significant chunk of cart abandonments are not happening because of any friction or problem at all. the person simply wasn't planning to buy right then. they were window shopping or saving things to think about later. this completely changes how you should be thinking about recovery strategy for these people.

4.5 India-Specific Triggers

outside the 10 Likert scale questions i also asked an open ended question about any other factors that caused abandonment. three very India-specific triggers kept coming up.

the first was no Cash on Delivery option. 41 percent of respondents mentioned this and it was especially high among tier-2 city respondents. COD is still a massive trust and accessibility factor in india. for a lot of shoppers — especially people who are newer to digital payments or who dont fully trust giving card details online — no COD basically means no purchase. full stop.

the second was no EMI option. 33 percent flagged this specifically for electronics and appliances above ₹10,000. when someone literally cannot afford to pay the full amount at once, not having EMI makes the product unaffordable for them no matter how much they want it. its not a preference issue, its a financial access issue.

the third one was language barriers. 28 percent of respondents — mostly from tier-2 cities and older age groups — said they had difficulty navigating the shopping interface because of language. the big platforms have been working on vernacular UI but clearly theres still a real gap especially for non-english speaking shoppers.

4.6 Category-Wise Abandonment Behaviour

Product Category	Survey Abandonment Rate	Top Primary Reason
Fashion & Apparel	74%	Size/fit uncertainty; cheaper price found elsewhere
Consumer Electronics	71%	Extensive price comparison; EMI unavailability
Beauty & Personal Care	62%	Authenticity concerns; ingredient verification
Grocery & FMCG	43%	Delivery time; minimum order value barrier
Home & Furniture	81%	High shipping cost; long delivery timeline

home and furniture has the highest abandonment at 81 percent and honestly its not surprising. shipping a sofa or a wardrobe costs a lot and delivery can take weeks. fashion is second at 74 percent — the classic problem of not being able to try things before you buy. grocery is lowest at 43 percent because people are buying necessities out of habit, theres not much to think about.

4.7 Device-Wise Abandonment Patterns

this finding genuinely surprised me. 73 percent of respondents shop primarily on mobile. but mobile users had an abandonment rate about 12 percentage points higher than desktop users in the same scenarios. so the platform that most people are using is also the one with the worst completion rate. thats a pretty big problem.

when i asked what specifically made mobile harder the responses were very consistent — payment gateways that redirect you out of the app and then you have to navigate back and start again, difficulty typing card numbers accurately on a small screen, OTP fields that dont auto read the SMS, and autofill failing on address fields. none of these are attitude problems. they are all engineering and UX problems. and the important thing is — they are fixable.

4.8 Factor Analysis — Grouping Abandonment Reasons

i ran principal component analysis on the 10 abandonment reasons to see if they grouped into any underlying patterns. three factors came out which together explain 81 percent of the total variance. see table below.

Factor	Variables Loading	Variance Explained
Factor 1: Cost Friction	Shipping charges, price comparison, coupon failure	34%
Factor 2: Process Friction	Checkout complexity, forced account creation, payment method	26%
Factor 3: Trust & Readiness	Security concerns, browsing intent, delivery timeline	21%

cost friction at 34 percent is the dominant factor — basically all the money related barriers grouped together. process friction at 26 percent covers all the UX and operational stuff that prevents a willing buyer from completing checkout. trust and readiness at 21 percent captures the more psychological side — people who aren't ready or don't trust the website enough. what i find useful about this grouping is that each factor basically tells you what type of intervention is needed. cost friction needs pricing and logistics solutions. process friction needs UX investment. trust and readiness needs content, reviews, and better segmentation.

4.9 Chi-Square Test Results

Association Tested	Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	p-value	Significance
Age group vs. abandonment frequency	12.41	6	0.03	Significant
City tier vs. COD preference	18.73	4	0.001	Highly Significant
Device type vs. abandonment rate	9.82	4	0.04	Significant
Gender vs. category abandoned most often	5.21	8	0.18	Not Significant

the chi square results confirm a few things i was already suspecting from looking at the raw data. younger respondents (18 to 24) abandon significantly more often — consistent with higher window shopping and price comparing in that age group. city tier and COD preference are very strongly associated — basically tier-2 and tier-3 cities are where COD dependency is most concentrated. device type and abandonment rate are significantly associated — confirming the mobile friction hypothesis. the one thing that was not significant was gender vs. product category which was a bit unexpected but interesting.

4.10 Recovery Strategy Effectiveness

i gave respondents a list of recovery touchpoints and asked which ones had actually successfully brought them back to complete a purchase they had previously abandoned. they could select multiple. here are the results —

Recovery Touchpoint	% of Respondents Who Returned Because of This
Personalised email with discount or offer	52%
WhatsApp reminder message	44%
Push notification with price drop alert	38%
Retargeting ad on Instagram or Facebook	35%
SMS reminder	29%
Returned independently without any prompt	18%
Phone call from platform representative	8%

personalised email with a relevant offer came first at 52 percent which lines up with Moosend's benchmarks. but the WhatsApp finding at 44 percent is the one im most excited about because it really validates something i had a feeling about. WhatsApp isn't just a messaging app in india. it's how people communicate with everyone in their life. the open rates are near 100 percent and people actually engage with WhatsApp messages in a way they dont always engage with emails. for D2C brands especially this is a massive opportunity that most are underutilising right now.

4.11 Time-to-Recovery Analysis

among respondents who confirmed that a recovery touchpoint brought them back i also asked how long after the abandonment they eventually completed the purchase —

Time Since Abandonment	% of Recoveries Occurring in This Window
Within 1 hour	22%
1–6 hours	28%
6–24 hours	17%
24–72 hours	21%
After 72 hours	12%

so 67 percent of all recoveries happen within 24 hours and 50 percent happen within the first 6 hours. this tells me that the speed of the first recovery touchpoint is absolutely critical. the longer you wait before sending that first email or WhatsApp message the lower the chances of getting the person back. after 72 hours only 12 percent of recoveries happen so continuing to message people beyond that point is mostly a waste of effort and potentially annoying.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Interpretation

5.1 Alignment with Existing Literature

looking at the findings overall i think they align well with what the existing research already tells us — with some important india-specific additions. the shipping cost finding at 4.31 mean score is completely consistent with Baymard's (2023) global data showing extra costs as the number one checkout abandonment reason. so that's a universal pattern regardless of geography which is interesting in itself.

the three factor structure from the factor analysis also maps really neatly onto Ajzen's **Theory of Planned Behaviour**. cost friction = **perceived behavioural control** barriers. process friction = effort component of perceived control. trust and readiness = attitudes and subjective norms. when primary data and established academic theory align like this it usually means the framework is capturing something genuinely real about how consumers make decisions.

5.2 The Dual Nature of Abandonment

something this study made really clear to me is that cart abandonment is two fundamentally different things happening at the same time and being counted as one number. on one side you have abandonment caused by real barriers — shipping costs, checkout friction, missing payment options. these are problems that can be solved. on the other side you have people who were just browsing with no real intent to buy that day. these people didnt abandon because something went wrong. they abandoned because they were never really going to buy in the first place.

the fact that "just browsing" came in second at 4.09 means this second type is very common. and this completely changes how you should design your recovery strategy. if you send an aggressive discount email to a window shopper you're wasting money. worse, you might be training them to always wait for a discount. the solution is to segment first — figure out which type of abandoner you're dealing with — and then respond in a way that actually makes sense for that person.

5.3 Mobile as the Battleground

73 percent of respondents shop on mobile but mobile has a higher abandonment rate than desktop. that's a pretty significant contradiction and it tells you something important. mobile users are'nt less motivated or less likely to buy. the problem is that the mobile checkout experience is systemically worse than desktop and it's causing unnecessary drop-off. payment gateway redirects are the biggest issue. every time a user gets kicked out of the app to complete a payment and has to navigate back, a bunch of them dont come back. industry research says each extra redirect adds 10 to 15 percent to abandonment probability. fixing this is'nt a nice-to-have, its a must.

5.4 Price Transparency as a Trust and Conversion Signal

the shipping cost problem raises an interesting question. is the solution to eliminate shipping charges altogether? or is the solution to just show them earlier? based on the data and the Prospect Theory logic i discussed in chapter 2, the answer is clearly the second one. consumers can handle shipping costs. what they cant handle is discovering those costs at the last moment when they've already mentally committed to a price. showing the total landed cost on the product page — not at the payment page — resets the reference point early and

removes the loss aversion trigger completely. its a simple change but the conversion impact is real.

5.5 WhatsApp as an Underrated Recovery Channel

i want to spend a bit more time on the WhatsApp finding because i think it's the most strategically interesting one in the whole study. 44 percent recovery rate for WhatsApp reminders. thats not far behind email at 52 percent and its way ahead of SMS at 29 percent. in any other market this might be a surprising result. in india it makes complete sense. WhatsApp is the default communication channel for basically everyone. your mom uses it, your colleagues use it, your building watchman uses it. the open rates are near 100 percent and people respond to WhatsApp messages in a way they dont always respond to emails.

for D2C brands specifically this is a huge opportunity because you own the customer relationship and can build WhatsApp flows that do multiple things at once — cart recovery reminders, customer support, repeat purchase nudges. its a genuinely differentiated capability in the indian market and more brands should be investing in it.

5.6 The COD-RTO Paradox

the COD finding needs some nuance. yes 41 percent of respondents said no COD caused them to abandon. yes that seems to suggest just enabling COD everywhere as the solution. but it's not that simple and if a brand just enables COD everywhere without thinking it through they might actually end up losing money.

here's why — Unicommerce (2023) data shows that COD orders have Return to Origin rates of 25 to 40 percent in fashion and electronics. meaning the customer placed the order but refused it when the delivery guy showed up. every single RTO costs you forward logistics cost, reverse logistics cost and product handling. for some category and geography combinations that total cost wipes out the margin on the original sale. so the right answer is to model this carefully by category and by geography. not just turn COD on everywhere and hope for the best.

Chapter 6: Recovery Strategy Framework

6.1 The STAR Framework

based on everything i found in this study, i want to propose a structured framework that e-commerce brands can actually use to manage cart abandonment properly. i'm calling it the STAR Framework — Segment, Target, Act, Refine. the whole idea behind it is to move away from the very common and very lazy approach of sending the same generic discount email to every single abandoner, and instead build something that actually thinks about who abandoned and why before deciding what to do.

STAR = Segment → Target → Act → Refine

A four-step framework for structured cart abandonment recovery

Step 1 — Segment: Identify Who Abandoned and Why

the first step is segmenting the abandoner pool using behavioural signals — session duration, pages viewed, whether they initiated checkout, past purchase history, device type, cart value. the goal is to classify each abandoner into one of the four archetypes.

Segment	Behavioural Signal	Recovery Priority
Window Shopper	No prior purchases, short session, no checkout initiated	Low — nurture only
Researcher	Multiple sessions, category browsing, price page views	Medium — social proof
Intender with Friction	Long session, checkout initiated, high cart value	High — urgent intervention
Distracted User	Mid-session exit, return visitor, engaged browsing history	Medium — simple reminder

Step 2 — Target: Match the Right Channel to the Right Segment

Segment	Optimal Channel	Optimal Timing
Window Shopper	Email (low-cost, non-intrusive)	24–48 hours post-abandonment
Researcher	Retargeting Ad + Email with reviews	6–12 hours post-abandonment
Intender with Friction	WhatsApp + Email (urgent)	Within 1 hour of abandonment
Distracted User	Push Notification	Within 15–30 minutes of abandonment

Step 3 — Act: Personalise the Recovery Communication

the recovery message has to be actually personalised — not just putting the person's name at the top and calling it personalisation. i mean showing the exact product they left, addressing the specific thing that might have stopped them, and offering something relevant. generic "hey you left something!" messages consistently underperform.

key things to include — persons first name (increases email open rates by 26 percent), image and name of the exact abandoned product, real time stock signals like "only 3 left" to create genuine urgency, and a contextually appropriate incentive which doesnt always have to be a percentage discount. sometimes free shipping or loyalty points is enough and saves you margin.

Step 4 — Refine: Measure, Test, and Improve

the STAR Framework isn't a one time thing you set up and forget. it needs to be continuously tested and improved. **A/B test everything — subject lines, send times, message length, incentive type, CTA copy, number of messages in the sequence. and track the right KPI which is revenue recovered per email sent — not just open rate or click rate. open rates tell you if people are curious. revenue recovered tells you if it actually worked.**

6.2 Checkout Optimisation Recommendations

beyond recovery the bigger win is reducing abandonment in the first place. based on the findings here are the most impactful changes —

- enable guest checkout. forcing people to create an account to buy something is one of the most common checkout killers globally. it should be treated as a serious conversion barrier and removed or made optional.
- show the total cost — product price, taxes, delivery charges — on the product page or atleast the cart page. never let the payment page be the first place someone sees the full amount.
- offer atleast five **payment options — UPI, debit/credit card, net banking,** EMI for carts above ₹5,000, and COD where the RTO economics make it viable.
- add a checkout progress indicator. people abandon when they dont know how long the checkout process is going to take. showing them they're on step 2 of 3 removes that uncertainty.
- display trust signals near the payment section — SSL badge, secure payment logos, return policy summary, customer service contact.

6.3 Mobile UX Recommendations

- sticky Add to Cart and Proceed to Checkout buttons that stay visible as the user scrolls the product page.
- in-app payment integration instead of external gateway redirects wherever technically possible.
- context appropriate keyboards — numeric for OTP, email keyboard for email fields, address keyboard for location fields.
- OTP auto-read so users dont have to switch apps to copy paste the code.
- reduce mandatory form fields to the absolute minimum. every extra field adds friction and drops completion rate.

6.4 Pricing and Transparency Recommendations

- show shipping cost or a free shipping badge on the product page itself. not just at checkout.
- dynamic prompt for carts close to a free shipping threshold — "Add ₹X more for free delivery" — this reduces abandonment and increases average order value at the same time.
- for electronics and appliances show the EMI breakdown on the product page — "as low as ₹X per month on no cost EMI" — makes expensive products feel much more accessible.
- price drop alerts for wishlisted or abandoned cart products via push notification or email — a good way to bring back passive browsers as active buyers.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Summary of Findings

let me summarise **the key** things that came out of this study because i think its worth pulling them all together in one place.

first — cart abandonment is basically universal among indian online shoppers. 78 percent abandon atleast once a month and a third do it more than three times a month. this is the norm, not an exception.

second — the biggest drop-off points are the cart page where price reconsideration and comparison shopping happens, and the payment page where unexpected costs and missing payment options create the final barrier.

third — the top triggers align with global research but India specific factors like no COD, no EMI, and language barriers are significant and completely missing from most western academic literature on this topic.

fourth — mobile is where most shopping happens but mobile has a higher abandonment rate than desktop purely because of UX engineering issues in checkout flows. these issues are fixable.

fifth — personalised email is the most effective recovery channel at 52 percent but WhatsApp at 44 percent is a distinctively Indian opportunity that is currently underutilised by most brands.

sixth — 67 percent of recoveries happen within 24 hours. speed of the first touchpoint is not optional, its critical.

7.2 Recommendations

For E-Commerce Brands and Marketing Teams

- invest in proper behavioural analytics — Google Analytics 4, Mixpanel, or Amplitude — to actually see where in the funnel people are dropping off. decisions based on assumptions rather than data are almost always wrong.
- use the STAR Framework as the operating model for abandonment recovery. segment before you act. the days of sending a blanket discount to everyone should be over.
- fix mobile checkout UX. run usability testing specifically on payment gateway integration, OTP handling, and form fields. the conversion gain from fixing these issues alone can be substantial.
- implement total cost transparency from the product page onwards. never surprise someone with costs at the payment stage.
- build WhatsApp Business API integration into the recovery workflow. for the indian market this is not a nice to have. its a genuine competitive differentiator.
- model COD-RTO economics by category and geography before deploying it broadly. for some combinations the RTO cost will outweigh the conversion benefit.

7.3 Scope for Future Research

this **study opens** up **several** directions that **future research** could explore. one — machine learning models trained on real clickstream data could predict abandonment probability in real

time and trigger proactive in-session interventions like instant chat support or a contextual discount offer before the user even leaves. two — it would be really interesting to track abandonment behaviour across different economic conditions — like during inflation or festive sale seasons — to see if price sensitivity patterns change cyclically. three — there's a growing conversation about using generative AI to hyper-personalise recovery messages. does a fully AI-personalised message actually outperform a standard human-written template on conversion rate? that's a question worth studying empirically. four — a direct comparison of abandonment dynamics on D2C websites versus marketplace listings would give useful insights for brands figuring out where to invest their conversion optimisation efforts.

7.4 Conclusion

the way i want to end this report is by saying — cart abandonment isn't a failure. it's information. every single abandoned cart is telling you something. about price sensitivity. about UX friction. about purchase readiness. about what the consumer needs to feel confident enough to complete the transaction. brands that learn to read these signals and respond intelligently — rather than throwing a generic 10 percent off email at everyone — are the ones who will actually build something sustainable out of what everyone else is writing off as lost revenue.

the STAR Framework isn't some complicated enterprise level system. even a basic version of it — just segmenting by intent level and sending timely personalised messages through email and WhatsApp — can produce a measurable improvement relatively quickly. and in a market like india where customer acquisition costs keep rising, brand loyalty is fragile, and margins are already tight, being able to recover 15 to 25 percent of abandoned carts through smart retention strategy isn't a marginal optimisation. it's a real and sustainable competitive advantage.

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Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Screening Question

Have you made at least one online purchase in the past three months? (Yes / No — If No, survey ends here)

Section 1 — Demographic Information

- What is your age group? (18–24 / 25–34 / 35–45 / Above 45)
- What is your gender? (Male / Female / Other / Prefer not to say)
- Which city category do you reside in? (Metro / Tier-2 / Tier-3 / Rural)
- What is your primary device for online shopping? (Mobile / Desktop / Tablet)

Section 2 — Shopping Behaviour

- How frequently do you shop online? (Daily / Weekly / Monthly / Less than monthly)
- Which product category do you most frequently purchase online? (Fashion / Electronics / Beauty / Grocery / Home & Furniture / Other)
- Which platforms do you most frequently use? (Amazon / Flipkart / Myntra / Meesho / D2C brand website / Other)

Section 3 — Cart Abandonment Behaviour

- How often do you add items to your online cart but leave without purchasing? (Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often / Almost Always)
- At which stage do you most often exit without completing a purchase? (Product Page / Cart Page / Checkout / Payment Page / Post-payment error)

Please rate the following reasons on a scale of 1 (Never) to 5 (Almost Always):

- High shipping or delivery charges
- Just browsing, not ready to buy
- Found a better price elsewhere
- Complicated checkout process
- Preferred payment method unavailable
- Forced account creation
- Delivery timeline too long
- Distrust of website for payment info
- Website crashed or had a technical issue
- Coupon or discount code did not work

Section 4 — India-Specific Factors

- Has the absence of Cash on Delivery (COD) caused you to abandon a cart? (Yes / No / Sometimes)

- Has the absence of an EMI option caused you to abandon a cart for a high-value item? (Yes / No / Sometimes)
- Have you ever abandoned a cart due to difficulty navigating the interface? (Yes / No)

Section 5 — Recovery Strategy Response

- Which of the following have successfully brought you back to complete an abandoned purchase? (Select all that apply) — Email with offer / WhatsApp reminder / Push notification / Retargeting ad / SMS / Returned on own / Phone call / None
- How long after abandonment did you complete the purchase? (Within 1 hour / 1–6 hours / 6–24 hours / 24–72 hours / After 72 hours)

Appendix B: Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Cart Abandonment	when a shopper adds products to their online cart but exits without completing the purchase.
Conversion Rate	percentage of site visitors who complete a desired action, usually a purchase in e-commerce.
CAC	Customer Acquisition Cost — total marketing spend divided by number of new customers acquired.
CLV / LTV	Customer Lifetime Value — total revenue expected from a single customer over their entire relationship with the brand.
RFM	Recency, Frequency, Monetary Value — a segmentation method used in retention marketing.
DPA	Dynamic Product Ad — retargeting ad that automatically shows users the exact products they previously viewed or added to cart.
RTO	Return to Origin — when a COD order is refused at delivery and returned to the seller's warehouse.
COD	Cash on Delivery — customer pays in cash when the product is physically delivered to them.
EMI	Equated Monthly Instalment — fixed monthly payment that lets customers buy expensive items in instalments.
UX	User Experience — how easy and pleasant it is for a person to use a product or service.
CTA	Call to Action — a prompt that encourages the audience to take a specific action like 'Buy Now' or 'Complete Your Order'.
OTP	One-Time Password — temporary single-use code sent to a user's phone to verify identity during a transaction.
AIDA	Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action — classic marketing model describing consumer decision stages.
STAR Framework	Segment, Target, Act, Refine — the cart abandonment recovery framework proposed in this study.

Appendix C: Factor Analysis Output Summary

the factor loadings for each abandonment reason across the three identified factors are shown in the table below.

Abandonment Reason	Factor 1: Cost Friction	Factor 2: Process Friction	Factor 3: Trust & Readiness
High shipping charges	0.81	0.12	0.08
Found better price elsewhere	0.77	0.15	0.11
Coupon code did not work	0.68	0.22	0.14
Complicated checkout process	0.14	0.79	0.10
Forced account creation	0.18	0.75	0.12
Payment method unavailable	0.21	0.71	0.09
Distrust of website for payments	0.09	0.14	0.82
Just browsing / not ready to buy	0.11	0.08	0.77
Delivery timeline too long	0.23	0.19	0.68
Website crash / technical error	0.16	0.31	0.54
Variance Explained	34%	26%	21%

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