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A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON WEB TRAFFIC ANALYSIS IN E-COMMERCE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GOOGLE AND FLIPKART

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of the internet has transformed e-commerce into one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy, and web traffic has emerged as a critical indicator of a digital platform's visibility, reach, and commercial performance. This paper presents a comparative study of web traffic patterns associated with Google, the world's dominant search and gateway platform, and Flipkart, one of India's largest e-commerce marketplaces. The study examines total visits, traffic source composition (direct, organic, paid, referral, and social), audience demographics, geographic distribution, device usage, and engagement metrics such as bounce rate and average session duration. Secondary data were collected from established web analytics intelligence providers and industry reports, and the two platforms were analysed using a structured comparative framework. The findings indicate that Google functions primarily as a traffic-generating gateway sustained overwhelmingly by direct navigation and search intent, whereas Flipkart's traffic is shaped by a blend of direct brand recall, organic search, seasonal promotional campaigns, and a heavy mobile-and-app orientation. The study further highlights the growing influence of AI-driven search experiences on referral traffic to commercial websites and discusses implications for digital marketing and search engine optimisation strategies in e-commerce. The paper concludes with practical recommendations for e-commerce firms seeking to strengthen their web traffic performance and search visibility in an increasingly AI-mediated digital ecosystem.

Keywords: *Web Traffic Analysis, E-commerce, Google, Flipkart, Digital Marketing, Search Engine Optimisation, Consumer Behaviour, Website Analytics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The internet has fundamentally altered the manner in which businesses reach, engage, and retain customers. In this environment, a website is no longer a passive digital brochure but an active commercial channel whose performance can be measured, monitored, and optimised. Web traffic analysis refers to the systematic study of visitor behaviour on a website, encompassing the volume of visits, the sources from which visitors arrive, the pages they view, the amount of time they spend, and the actions they ultimately take. For e-commerce businesses in particular, web traffic is closely linked to revenue generation, since higher and better-qualified traffic tends to translate into higher conversion rates, sales, and customer lifetime value.

Two platforms occupy uniquely important, though very different, positions within the Indian and global digital commerce ecosystem. Google, through its search engine, advertising network, and allied services, acts as the principal gateway through which a large share of internet users discover websites, products, and brands. Flipkart, on the other hand, is a destination e-commerce marketplace that depends on a combination of direct brand traffic, search referrals, paid advertising, and mobile application usage to drive product discovery and sales. Understanding how traffic flows into and around these two platforms offers valuable insight into the broader dynamics of digital commerce, search behaviour, and online consumer decision-making.

This study undertakes a comparative analysis of the web traffic characteristics of Google and Flipkart, with the aim of drawing meaningful conclusions about how a search-gateway platform and a destination e-commerce marketplace differ in their traffic composition, audience behaviour, and engagement patterns. The study is descriptive and comparative in nature and relies on secondary data obtained from recognised web analytics intelligence providers.

1.1 Significance of the Study

Web traffic metrics serve as an early indicator of brand visibility, marketing effectiveness, and customer engagement. For students, researchers, and digital marketing practitioners, a comparative understanding of how a search giant and a leading e-commerce marketplace generate and sustain traffic provides practical insight into search engine optimisation, paid advertising strategy, mobile commerce, and the emerging influence of artificial intelligence

on information discovery. The study is particularly relevant given the rapid growth of India's e-commerce market and the increasing role of AI-powered search features in reshaping how users find and access commercial websites.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A substantial body of academic and industry literature has examined website traffic, digital marketing effectiveness, and consumer behaviour in e-commerce settings. This section synthesises the key themes emerging from prior work relevant to the present study.

Studies on web analytics generally classify website traffic into distinct acquisition channels: direct traffic (visitors typing a URL or using bookmarks), organic search traffic (visitors arriving through unpaid search engine results), paid search and display traffic (visitors arriving through advertisements), referral traffic (visitors arriving via links on other websites), and social traffic (visitors arriving from social media platforms). Researchers have consistently found that the composition of these channels differs sharply according to the nature and maturity of the website in question, with search engines typically dominated by direct and organic-social traffic and e-commerce marketplaces relying more heavily on a blend of direct, organic, and paid channels.

Literature on e-commerce in India highlights the sector's rapid expansion, driven by increasing smartphone penetration, affordable data services, and growing consumer trust in online transactions. Flipkart, founded in 2007 and later acquired in majority by Walmart in 2018, has been widely studied as a pioneer of the Indian online retail model, credited with popularising practices such as cash-on-delivery, large-scale flash sales events, and app-first mobile commerce strategies. Industry reports have repeatedly noted that a substantial majority of Flipkart's transactions and traffic originate from mobile devices and its dedicated mobile application, reflecting the broader mobile-first character of Indian internet usage.

Research on search engine behaviour underscores Google's structural position as the primary entry point to the internet for most users worldwide. Because Google itself sits at the top of the referral chain for a large share of global web traffic, its own traffic profile is dominated by direct navigation rather than referrals from other sites. Recent industry analyses have also drawn attention to the emergence of AI-powered search features, such as AI-generated answer summaries, which are beginning to alter historical patterns of referral traffic from search engines to third-party websites, including news and commerce destinations, by



resolving certain user queries directly within the search results page.

Comparative studies of e-commerce platforms have generally used metrics such as monthly visits, bounce rate, average session duration, pages per visit, and traffic-source share to benchmark performance against competitors. Such comparative frameworks are adopted in the methodology of the present study, adapted specifically to a comparison between a search-gateway platform and a destination marketplace.

2.1 Research Gap

While considerable literature exists separately on search engine usage patterns and on e-commerce platform performance in India, relatively limited academic work directly compares the web traffic architecture of a global search gateway such as Google with that of a domestic e-commerce marketplace such as Flipkart within a single comparative framework. This study seeks to address that gap by placing the two platforms side by side across a common set of traffic and engagement metrics.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study and compare the overall web traffic volume and growth trend of Google and Flipkart.
2. To analyse the composition of traffic sources (direct, organic search, paid search, referral, and social) for both platforms.
3. To compare visitor engagement metrics such as bounce rate, average session duration, and pages per visit between the two platforms.
4. To examine the geographic and device-wise (desktop versus mobile) distribution of visitors.
5. To identify the key factors influencing web traffic patterns in a search-gateway platform versus a destination e-commerce marketplace.
6. To offer practical suggestions for improving web traffic quality and search visibility for e-commerce businesses.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and comparative research design. It does not test a causal hypothesis but instead systematically describes and compares the web traffic characteristics of two selected digital platforms, drawing inferences from observed patterns.

4.2 Sources of Data

The study is based entirely on secondary data. Traffic and engagement figures were drawn from publicly available reports and dashboards published by recognised third-party web analytics intelligence providers (such as Similarweb and Semrush), supplemented by industry news reports, company disclosures, and previously published statistics on Indian e-commerce and global search engine usage. Because different analytics providers use different estimation methodologies (panel data, ISP data, and modelled crawls), figures from different sources may vary; where relevant, this variation is noted explicitly rather than presented as a single precise value.

4.3 Sampling and Scope

The study is limited to two purposively selected platforms: google.com, representing a global search-engine gateway, and flipkart.com together with its mobile application, representing a leading Indian e-commerce marketplace. The comparison focuses on the most recent monthly data available at the time of writing, alongside recent historical trends where relevant.

4.4 Tools and Techniques of Analysis

Descriptive statistical tools, including percentage analysis and comparative tabulation, were used to organise and interpret the secondary data. Traffic-source shares, bounce rates, session durations, and device splits were tabulated side by side for both platforms to facilitate direct comparison.

4.5 Limitations of the Study

- The study relies on secondary, third-party-estimated traffic data rather than first-party server logs, and such estimates may differ from a platform's actual internal analytics.



- Figures for fast-moving digital metrics can change from month to month; the data used reflect a specific recent period and may not remain constant over time.
- Google and Flipkart are structurally different types of websites (a search gateway versus a transactional marketplace), which limits the extent to which certain metrics can be compared on a strictly like-for-like basis.
- The study does not include primary data collection such as user surveys or interviews.

5. PROFILE OF THE ORGANISATIONS UNDER STUDY

5.1 Google

Google, a subsidiary of Alphabet Inc., operates the world's most widely used search engine along with a broad ecosystem of allied services including YouTube, Gmail, Google Maps, the Android operating system, Google Ads, and, more recently, the Gemini family of generative artificial intelligence products. Google.com functions as the primary gateway through which a very large share of global internet users initiate searches, locate websites, and discover products and services, making it the most visited single website in the world.

5.2 Flipkart

Flipkart is an Indian e-commerce company headquartered in Bengaluru, founded in 2007 by Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal, initially as an online bookstore. Over time, Flipkart expanded into a comprehensive online marketplace offering electronics, fashion, home goods, groceries, and numerous other product categories. In 2018, Walmart acquired a majority stake in the company. Flipkart operates both a website and a widely used mobile application, and it is known in the Indian market for large-scale promotional sales events such as the 'Big Billion Days' campaign, which drive substantial short-term surges in traffic and transactions.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON

This section presents a comparative analysis of Google and Flipkart across key web traffic and engagement dimensions, based on recent secondary data reported by web analytics intelligence providers.

6.1 Overall Traffic Volume

Google remains the single most visited website in the world, with monthly visit estimates in the range of roughly 90 to over 100 billion visits globally as of early-to-mid 2026, according to different analytics providers. This scale is a direct reflection of its role as the default entry point for online search across billions of devices worldwide. Flipkart, as a destination marketplace focused primarily on the Indian market, records monthly visit estimates in the range of approximately 150 to 160 million visits on the desktop and web dataset tracked by leading analytics tools, with substantially higher combined web-and-app engagement when mobile application sessions are included.

Metric	Google	Flipkart
Primary role	Global search engine / gateway	Destination e-commerce marketplace
Approx. global monthly visits	~90–100 billion (worldwide, web)	~150–160 million (web); much higher including app sessions
Core market	Global	Primarily India
Avg. session duration	Approx. 13 minutes (aggregate, reflects varied Google services)	Shorter per-session browsing typical of transactional marketplaces
Primary traffic driver	Search intent / habitual navigation	Brand recall, promotions, and product search

Table 1: Overview comparison of Google and Flipkart traffic characteristics

6.2 Traffic Source Composition

The two platforms show markedly different traffic-source profiles, consistent with their differing roles in the digital ecosystem. Google's own traffic is overwhelmingly direct, since users habitually navigate to it as a starting point rather than arriving via another referring website. Flipkart's traffic, in contrast, is shaped by a mix of direct brand navigation, organic search (much of it referred by Google itself), and paid search advertising, reflecting its dependence on continuous marketing investment to drive discovery.



Traffic Source	Google (approx. share)	Flipkart (approx. share)
Direct traffic	~90%+	~35–60% (estimates vary by source/period)
Organic search	Low (search referrals mainly flow outward, not inward)	Significant secondary source
Paid search / advertising	Not applicable to Google's own traffic in this sense	Notable and actively managed channel
Referral traffic	Small share, largely from allied Google properties	Meaningful share, including from portals and price-comparison sites
Social traffic	Small share (YouTube, Facebook, Reddit prominent)	Smaller share; YouTube, X, and Reddit among top social sources

Table 2: Approximate traffic-source composition (desktop), based on third-party web analytics estimates

It is notable that, according to analytics providers, Google itself is one of the largest single referral sources of traffic to Flipkart, underscoring the extent to which even a large destination marketplace remains dependent on the search-gateway platform for a meaningful share of new visitor discovery.

6.3 Audience and Device Distribution

Google's audience is drawn from every country in the world, with the United States, Japan, and India among the leading sources of desktop traffic in recent data. Flipkart's audience is concentrated overwhelmingly in India, with smaller shares of traffic originating from the United States and other countries with significant Indian diaspora populations. In terms of devices, industry reports have repeatedly emphasised that Indian e-commerce, and Flipkart in particular, is heavily mobile-oriented, with a majority of sessions and a large share of orders originating from smartphones and the dedicated mobile application rather than desktop browsers. This mirrors the broader pattern in Indian internet usage, where mobile devices account for the clear majority of overall web traffic.

6.4 Engagement and Behavioural Metrics

Engagement metrics such as bounce rate and session duration reflect the different purposes for which users visit each platform. Because a large share of Google visits are quick search queries that lead users onward to other websites, aggregate session-duration figures for Google reflect a blend of very short search interactions and longer engagement with allied services such as Gmail or Google Workspace accessed through the same domain. Flipkart, as a shopping destination, is associated with browsing sessions oriented around product search, comparison, and checkout, and industry reports note that its paid-advertising traffic has shown improving engagement quality over time, with bounce rates on paid campaigns reported to have declined in recent years as targeting and landing-page relevance have improved.

6.5 Seasonal and Promotional Effects

Flipkart's traffic exhibits pronounced seasonality connected to major promotional events, most notably its annual 'Big Billion Days' sale, during which application installs and site sessions have been reported to spike sharply compared with non-sale periods. Google's traffic, by contrast, is comparatively stable month to month at the aggregate level, since it is not tied to a single commercial calendar in the way a retail marketplace is, although even Google has shown steady month-on-month growth linked to the rising use of AI-enabled search features.

6.6 Emerging Influence of AI-Driven Search

A significant recent development relevant to both platforms is the growing role of AI-generated answer summaries within Google Search, which are increasingly resolving certain informational queries directly on the search results page rather than sending users onward to third-party websites. Industry analyses have noted that this shift has begun to reduce referral traffic to some categories of websites, particularly informational and news publishers, while simultaneously reinforcing Google's own position as a self-contained destination for many queries. For e-commerce platforms such as Flipkart, this trend carries a longer-term implication: continued visibility within AI-generated search summaries and structured product listings may become as important to future traffic generation as traditional organic search ranking has been historically.

7. FINDINGS

7. Google's web traffic operates at a scale several orders of magnitude larger than Flipkart's, consistent with its role as a universal search gateway rather than a single-category commercial destination.
8. Google's traffic is overwhelmingly direct in nature, while Flipkart's traffic is more evenly distributed across direct, organic, and paid channels, reflecting its need to actively market itself to attract visitors.
9. Google is itself among the most significant referral sources driving traffic to Flipkart, illustrating the continued dependence of e-commerce marketplaces on search-engine discovery.
10. Flipkart's audience and traffic are concentrated in India, whereas Google's audience is globally distributed, reflecting the difference between a domestic marketplace and a global utility platform.
11. Mobile devices and the dedicated mobile application play an outsized role in Flipkart's traffic and transactions, consistent with the broader mobile-first character of Indian e-commerce.
12. Flipkart's traffic shows strong seasonal spikes around major promotional sales events, while Google's traffic is comparatively stable but growing steadily, aided by increasing use of AI-powered search features.
13. The rise of AI-generated search summaries represents an emerging structural shift that could influence how e-commerce platforms attract organic search traffic in the future.

8. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- E-commerce platforms should continue to diversify traffic acquisition across organic search, paid advertising, direct brand-building, and social channels, rather than depending on any single source, to reduce vulnerability to algorithmic or policy changes on any one platform.
- Given the continuing importance of Google as a referral source, e-commerce businesses should invest in search engine optimisation and structured product data to maintain visibility both in traditional search results and in emerging AI-generated answer summaries.



- Because mobile devices and applications account for the majority of e-commerce engagement in India, platforms should prioritise mobile app performance, page-load speed, and app-based personalisation as core elements of their digital strategy.
- Seasonal promotional events should be supported by adequate technical infrastructure and customer-service capacity to handle traffic surges without degrading user experience.
- E-commerce firms should monitor bounce rate and session-quality metrics on paid campaigns closely, using them as a feedback signal to refine targeting and landing-page relevance.
- Future researchers should track the evolving impact of AI-powered search tools on referral traffic patterns, as this is likely to remain a significant and evolving factor in digital marketing strategy.

9. CONCLUSION

This comparative study of web traffic in Google and Flipkart highlights the structural differences between a global search-gateway platform and a domestic destination e-commerce marketplace. Google's dominance rests on its role as the default starting point for online navigation, sustained by direct, habitual usage at a scale unmatched by any other website. Flipkart's traffic, while much smaller in absolute terms, reflects the dynamics typical of a competitive e-commerce marketplace: a diversified mix of direct, organic, and paid traffic, a strong mobile and app orientation, and pronounced seasonal spikes tied to promotional campaigns. Importantly, the two platforms are deeply interconnected, with Google serving as one of the principal channels through which customers discover Flipkart. As AI-powered search features continue to reshape how information and product discovery occur online, e-commerce businesses will need to adapt their digital marketing and search visibility strategies to remain competitive. Overall, the study demonstrates that web traffic analysis remains a valuable diagnostic tool for understanding platform performance, marketing effectiveness, and evolving consumer search behaviour in the digital economy.

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