

Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behavior

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Abstract

This research is about the study of the Buying process of consumer's complex purchases, that keeps a special emphasis on how the process is being influenced by the use of social media. Here, the complex buying behavior refers to the infrequent purchases by the consumer with their high involvement that makes a significant brand difference. Social media is becoming a new trend. Over the last decade, the World Wide Web has seen a burgeoning in user generated web technologies like blogs, social networks and social media websites. All in all, that is known as social media and these technologies are the actual reason in the enablement of expansion in the user generated content, a community that is worldwide. Social media has given rise to the online platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, where people can connect with each other, share thoughts and the content. This revolution of social media has given new way of gaining the information on the products as well as on services. One consumer's opinion and feedback on products and services can be dominated by strangers on Social media, which subsequently influence the opinions in the offline world also. But undoubtedly Social media has given the power to the consumer where content is generated by them only through online conversations so consumers are the one who play an important role in making or breaking the brand. The marketers try to understand the utilization of Social media by the consumers and their deciding pattern on the basis of the content showed there that can change their decision process. The research also explores that how the abundance of the content and the user generated information can change the buying pattern of the consumers. The six phases of customer decision process, also known as EBM model has been used. The research has also been done to know the relevance of the model in the context of Social media usage. A quantitative survey has been done to explore the aspects of the customer decision process.

Keywords: Social Media, Consumer Behavior, World Wide Web, online platforms.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media is the online communication medium on which we can interact with each other, share content and get the information from. The various sorts of Social media can be social networking, forums and social book marking etc. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Pinterest, Google plus and twitter are included in Social media and no doubt that it has become an integral part of our life. In businesses, Social media is generally used to spread the awareness about the products and services, promoting brands, to retain the existing customers and to find new prospects.

In this way Social media marketing definitely takes the benefit of Social networking, increasing the brand awareness, brand value and to increase the customer reach. The goal of the research is to find out the impact of Social media on consumer buying behaviour in urban areas. No doubt, now the consumers and the businesses are more connected than ever with each other for the very first time due to more internet connects than ever and After China, India has become the largest internet connection user.

When the data was collected from the web and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), It had shown that Mumbai has the highest internet users in India that is around 13 million. Delhi comes on Number two on this list with 11.3 million users that is followed by Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai respectively. The associate Vice-President at IAMA says that the reason for the increase in number of internet users in Mumbai is the college going students.

With the increase in use of social media, companies are now considering the value of it in shaping the consumer perception, increase in brand value and to influence the buyer's decision. Now companies also know that they can have a strategic approach to use the Social media to get the advantage over those that don't use it. To access the impact of Social media on Consumer Buying Behaviour, the literature review and the data analysis on its use and perception of the customers can be used in identifying the best strategies for making an improvement in consumer engagement through Social media.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the impact of social media on consumer buying decision process.
- To measure the change in perception of the consumers through the content and engagement on Social media.
- To understand how businesses can engage more customers to increase the brand value.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Nasir, S., Vel, P., & Mateen, H [1] This article says that Social media doesn't always need some language or the words to spread the message to the consumer. When a product and the services is marketed then the context can be interpreted by the potential buyer. On the basis of that, the buyer gives the response. It can be in the way of purchasing a product, repurchasing a product or it can be in the form of not purchasing a product. So, this process is based on the customer need, his knowledge and liking towards the product, brand loyalty & brand value, word of mouth and its demand.
2. Nima Barhemmati et al., [2] 18 founds that the best and the successful way of advertising is Social Media Marketing. The study focuses on knowing the factors how the buying pattern of those consumers change who are on Social media through Social Network Marketing. This study also finds the relationship between the selling activities of the companies and the customer engagement and their purchase behaviour. In this, a survey was conducted among the 50 students in Malaysian National University. The result of the study shows the positive relation in between

consumer buying behaviour and Social media engagement.

3. Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pederzoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., & Singh, R [3] According to this article, the use of Social media is increasing rapidly. For the businesses and the Marketing professionals, Social media can be used to increase the awareness about a product and the services. In this research paper, a survey has been done to interpret and analyze the connection between Social media use, Social media Marketing and the consumer buying behavior. The key question also included the membership status in different Social media sites and the generated content by them on those sites. The analysis of the research gives the statistical evidence of how Social media makes a higher impact on consumer buying behavior. This research also shows whether the investment on Social media marketing is impactful or not and if it is, which ones?
4. Gupta, S., Agarwal, A. K., & Chauhan, A. K [4] The article talks about the past and the future impact of Social media because the fifth Social media week held in September 2011. Toby Daniels, the founder of Social media week found the increase in role of Social media in the lives of people. SMW is there in 21 cities in the world, because of increase in use of Social media in Middle east and how it is completely changing the business models too.
5. Liu, Q., Zhang, X., Huang, S., Zhang, L., & Zhao, Y [5] Social media is giving an opportunity to the consumers to get the feedbacks and reviews about a product and services. Result from the primary and the secondary data shows that the product recommendations can lead to an impulse buying behaviour. This impulsive buying behaviour is decided on the basis of the trust on the recommender and an affection towards that particular product. In simple words, it is influenced by both the recommender and the product itself.
6. Varghese, S., Nandhini M [6] in their article speaks about the influence of demographic factors towards the purchase intention of customers. Article also reveals about the internet usage pattern among the customers. This can be related as an opportunity for the increased engagement of companies with customers through social media.

Sampling Plan & Research Instrument

The Research paper is based on the empirical data from the respondents who are actively involved in online shopping platforms. The primary data is collected from 200 respondents who were selected through convenient sampling technique. The data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire.

ANALYSIS

Which social media sites do you have an account on? (Choose as many as apply)
200 responses

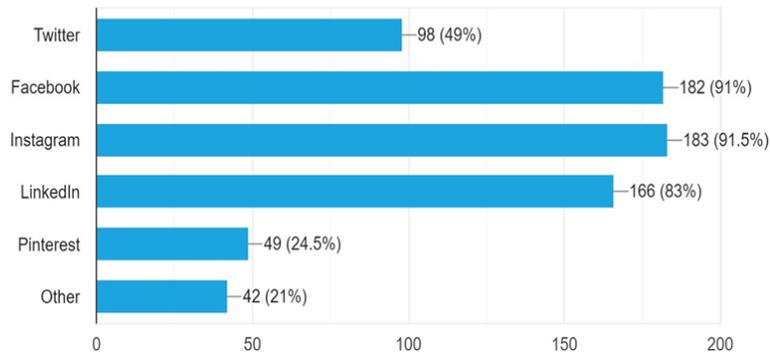


Fig-1: Presence on Social Media

Out of the 200 responses the least that is 24.5% people are having an account on Pinterest otherwise most of the respondents are having their account on Instagram and Facebook that is 91.5% &

91% respectively, 83% people are having the account on LinkedIn and the rest 18% have their account on other social media websites.

Compared to traditional media, what are the advantages of using social media?
200 responses

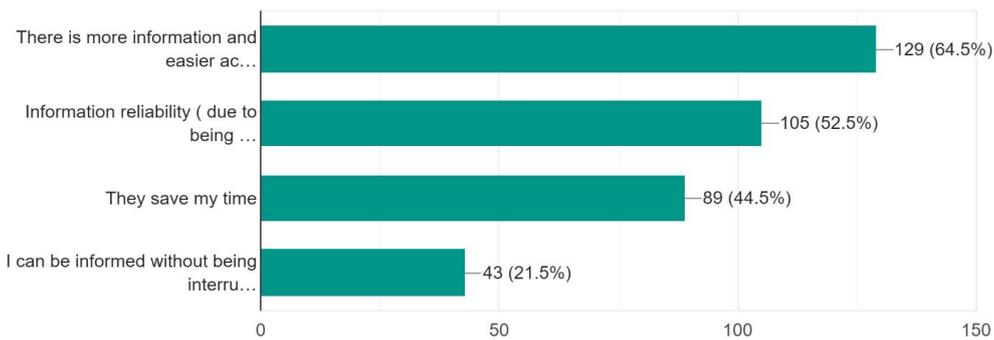


Fig-2

Out of 200 respondents, 64.5% accepts that social media provides more information with easier access, 52.5% says that they can trust more on social media advertisements and reviews, for 44.5% it saves

their time and 21.5% accepts that they can be informed without being interrupted while doing other activities. In other words, they find social media more beneficial than the traditional media.

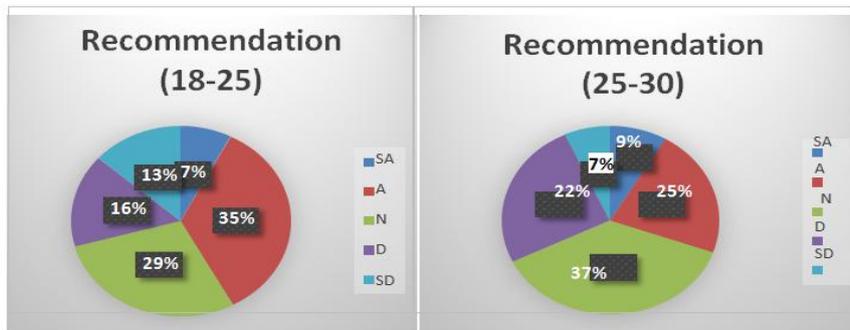


Fig-3: Word of Mouth on Social Media about the Products those are Liked

In the age group of 18-25, 7% people that is the least percentage, strongly recommend the products that they like and the 35% of the population agree with

this fact that they do. But in the age group of 25-30, only 9% of the population strongly agree with this fact while only 22% say that they agree with this.

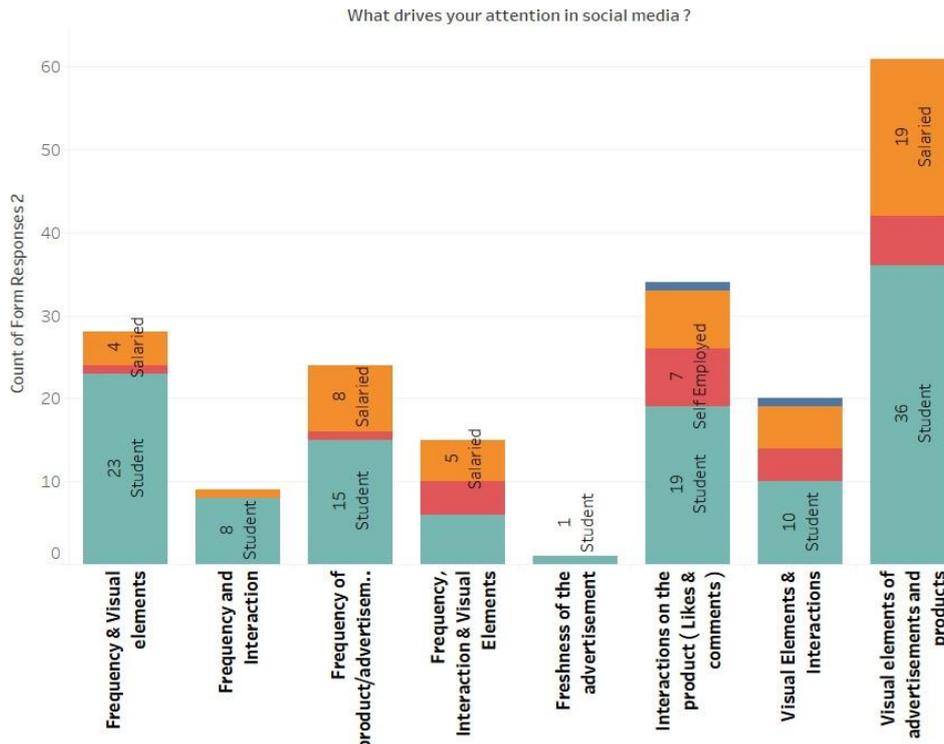


Fig-4: Driving force of attention on social media classified based on occupational categories

Student community can be engaged more via Frequency of Advertisements on their feed and also through Visual elements of products & advertisements.

However, salaried class isn't much affected by Frequency of Advertisement and can be engaged via attractive Visual display (elements) of advertisements and products.

Moreover, it is evident people who prefer discounts and promotions on social media end up doing unplanned purchase. And, people who don't end up doing unplanned purchase on social media don't prefer discounts & promotions on social media.

FINDINGS

- It is suggested for the organizations to understand the crucial role of Social media to sell and promote its merchandise as Social media is the best way to entice the customers towards products and services.
- The marketing methods should be designed in such a way that could attract the various age and class of the customers.
- Social media influencers make a positive impact on the buying decision process of the customers.
- Consumers are more attracted towards the content that shows discounts, promotions and influencers because it keeps that ability to change customers mindset and their perception.
- Consumers, Influenced by Social media are tending to spend 4 times more than their normal purchase and the attraction towards the products is so high that they buy it on the same day using Social media.
- Social media is effective and cheap
- Social media can make a direct interaction with customers
- Social media is an effective way to generate more leads and sales.

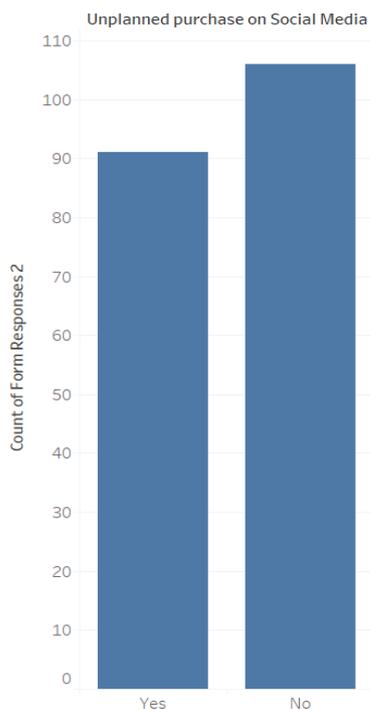


Fig-5: Unplanned purchase on Social Media

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Companies should give more importance to Social media marketing. Their presence on Social media can give them more visibility and it can also increase the brand value that will lead to more customer loyalty and customer lifetime value.
- Companies can be more connected with customers through Social media because the brands can communicate with them regularly and help or guide them to make a better purchase decision.
- Companies can use Social media more frequently to draw the consumer attention and brand awareness.
- Brands can be more interactive with the customers and it can get more customers insights and their reviews and feedbacks to make them feel that they are a part of the brand.
- Brands can share more positive experience of the customers who have already used that product so that the prospects and the ones who are already planning to buy can relate themselves more.
- Brands need to show themselves as more influential and it should try to make the product viral on Social media.
- Social media influencers should be chosen wisely, they should be the one who can connect with the customers with their want and needs.

CONCLUSION

The research has shown a powerful impact of Social media on consumer buying behaviour in digital age. No doubt that Social media had brought major changes to both, consumer as well as businesses. The research has shown that consumers are highly selective while making a purchase. Though there is a plenty of data and sources of information on Social media, still personal attitude of the consumers makes a lot of difference in selecting and making a purchase.

The quality of content on Social media makes a big impact so it should be consumer relevant. When the marketing is done through Social media, it is not all about consumer awareness or selling the product itself. It is more than that which includes retaining a built-up relationship and building it between the potential buyers and corporations. Now the consumer is the king who can get all the information regarding a product or services by simply speaking with each other. So, the companies and marketers should highly careful about the bad mouth on Social media because it can lead to destroy the company's reputation.

Even many individuals have agreed on the fact that through Social media, they can share their opinion

and talk to other consumers and the corporations more effectively. Social media has definitely bridged up the gap between the brands and the consumers. Considering this fact, companies are now making each possible effort in making the buyer feel connected with the brand and allowed them to put their views, opinions, feedbacks and reviews.

The company that are adapting an integrated strategic approach with the aim of Social network platforms that is becoming the most successful in getting, engaging, influencing and retaining the customers. Factors, that can change the customer's brand perception and a will to buy includes the strategies that led to consumers perspective, and the opinion of the people who create content on Social media. So, these strategies definitely need a high degree of maintenance and those companies that are using the method should be ready to fix all the marketing services to retain the existing customers and to increase the customer lifetime value.

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