THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT ON ONLINE PURCHASING

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Abstract:

Social media tools have become effective channels for marketers to reach consumer products. Social media is crucial for marketers because it allows them to talk directly to consumers and allows consumers to directly interact with the company's brand. Over the past few years, social media has changed consumers' purchasing behavior, directly influencing their purchase of goods and services. Having thousands of thoughts and comments means marketers need to change their perspective on social media from "fun" to "must see." Buyers' use of social media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs and Facebook has increased in the last two years. The purpose of this article is to examine the influence of social media content on online purchasing. For this purpose, secondary data was used and the researcher tried to analyze the research through online purchasing behavior.

Keywords: Social media, Online shopping, Advertisements, Decision making, Influence.

Introduction:

The rapid adoption of e-commerce is driven by the increasing use of devices such as smartphones and tablets and the availability of broadband, 3G, 4G, etc. This is due to the increasing number of online consumers accessing the Internet via. Additionally, the active population and the increasing number of online users also contribute to this growth. In terms of importance, the growth of local players such as Flipkart, Snapdeal and the intense interest in these companies indicate the huge potential of the market. Competition is expected to intensify with the entry of e-commerce giants such as Amazon and Alibaba into the market. Both global players have large budgets and ambitions to drive growth in the Indian e-commerce market. The role of social media content in online shopping is quite high. It plays an important

role in online marketing by helping companies build a strong online presence, generate leads, and increase traffic. A good social media strategy is crucial to boost the development and growth of e-commerce business. Social media continues to benefit from its commercial success around the world.

The majority of advertisements are made through social media. It is very beneficial to use social media to promote the development of e-commerce. It provides a great way to engage a wide audience using social media. The use of social media has been increasing rapidly for some time and many people shop on social media. Many businesses prefer to take advantage of the opportunities provided by social media networks to gain more customers. While some business owners may be sceptical about using social media, the truth is that it is worth incorporating social media into online business. Social media sites have new features such as "like" buttons and comments that are often used to encourage discussion. Sharing information through social media is important because it influences the choices people make when choosing products and services. Adding share buttons to website for social media like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter allows you to promote business and increase engagement. Some social media users shop online after sharing products on Pinterest, Facebook and Twitter. This clearly demonstrates the importance of collaboration in e-commerce. Consumers around the world spend billions of dollars of hard-earned money through social media platforms every year.

Online Behavior

One of the growing areas of e-commerce is online shopping. More and more consumers are turning to the World Wide Web for their shopping needs, allowing them to access local or international products with just a click. The concept of shopping anytime, anywhere appeals to customers who do not have time to shop due to their busy work schedule. Keeping this in mind, many online stores have emerged in cyberspace offering products ranging from books to music CDs, from home appliances to food, from furniture to cars. Customers can also benefit from various services such as communication and chat. Online sales are the fastest growing part of the retail industry, outpacing the growth of all retail stores. In the early days of online shopping, online availability and low prices were seen as the main drivers of success. Recently, service has become important in building customer loyalty and increasing customer satisfaction, thanks to easy online presence and low cost. Online shopping is a new phenomenon in e-commerce and will be the future of shopping in the world. Most companies operate their online portals to sell their products/services online. Although online shopping is very common outside India, the growth of India, which is a large consumer market, has not yet caught up with the global market. The increasing potential of online shopping has given rise to the idea of conducting a study influence of social media content on online purchasing.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the consumers profile who purchase products from online through social media reference.
- To analyse the features of social media content in online purchasing.
- To identify the content of social media that influence the customers to purchase products through online.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hoffman and Novak[1] have indicated that interactivity is the key distinguishing feature between marketing communication on the Internet and traditional mass media. Today online consumers have more control and bargaining power than consumers of physical stores because the Internet offers more interactivities between consumers and product/service providers as well as greater availability of information about products and services.

Geissler and Zinkhan[2] claimed that the Internet shifted the balance of power in favor of consumers as it became very easy for them to make shopping comparisons and evaluate alternatives without being pressured by salespeople. Online stores reduce transaction costs and have advantage for both consumers and vendors.

Armstrong, Armstrong et al[3] have the study on consumer buying behavior based on purchase intention has been developed in marketing for more than 20 years. One issue remains
disputable is whether purchase intention can effectively predict consumer buying behavior.

Yulihasri etal[4] studied the usefulness of internet shopping, ease of use, compatibility, privacy, security, normative beliefs, self-efficacy, attitude and student's buying intention. They found that web advertising favorably influences the purchasing of a company's products. Shoppers increasingly want what's called a "seamless omni channel experience", meaning one in which retailers allow them to combine online and brick and mortar browsing, shopping, ordering and returning in whatever combo they would like.

Norazah Suki and Norbayah Suki[5] suggested marketers should propose more on attractive promotion such as advertisements or discounts through the web.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This survey focuses on the opinion of the respondents regarding online purchasing. This research focuses on what are the benefits received and problems faced by the respondents and their attitudes towards the influence of social media content on online purchasing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE SIZE: Field survey techniques was employed to collect primary data from the 150 respondents.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE: The sampling design used in the study was non-probability sampling. Convenience sampling techniques are used for collecting the data.

TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS: Data collected through questionnaire were presented in a master table. From the master table, sub table was prepared. For analysis and interpretation of the data simple statistical tools like percentage analysis, rank analysis, t-test and chi-square test were used.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Factors	Category	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	55	36.7
		Female	95	63.3
2	Age	18-25 years	45	30.0
		26-35 years	22	14.7
		36-45 years	65	43.3
		Above 45 years	18	12.0
3	Marital Status	Married	86	57.3
		Unmarried	64	42.7
4	Occupation	Agriculture	7	4.7
		Professional	49	32.7
		Employee	18	12.0
		Business	12	8.0
		Housewife	28	18.7
		Students	36	24.0
5	Monthly Income	Below 40,000	16	10.7
		40,001-50,000	28	18.7
		50,001-60,000	58	38.7
		60,001-70,000	27	18.0
		Above 70,001	21	14.0
6	Frequency of using social media per day	Less than 2 hours	43	28.7
		2 to 4 hours	18	12
		4 to 6 hours	58	38.7
		More than 6 hours	31	20.6
		Total	**150**	**100**

Source: Primary data

The above table depicts that 63.3% were female. 43.3% of them between 36-45 years. 57.3% of them were married. 32.7% of them were professional. 38.7% of them earning between 50,001- 60,000. 38.7% of them were using social media for 4 to 6 hours per day.

Table 2

Content of social media that inducing to purchase

Factors	I	II	III	IV	V	Total score	Rank
Branded graphics	20	35	38	35	22	454	4
Infographics	31	24	25	33	37	471	2
Blog content	31	25	22	35	37	472	1
Videos	28	29	24	34	35	469	3
Presentations	39	29	23	35	24	426	5

Source: Primary data

The above table depicts that the content of social media that inducing consumer to purchase through social media reference. Among the features, blog content assigned as first rank, infographics assigned as second rank, Videos assigned as third rank, branded graphics assigned as fourth rank and presentations assigned as fifth rank.

Table 3

Features of social media content

Factors	I	II	III	IV	V	Total score	Rank
Interesting and attractive	19	36	35	38	22	458	1
Interactive	37	33	25	34	31	429	4
Perception of a product	35	25	37	31	22	430	3
Fast and wide spreading	28	29	35	34	24	447	2
Informative	29	39	27	35	20	428	5

Source: Primary data

The above table depicts that the features of social media content that inducing consumer to purchase through social media reference. Among the features, interesting and attractive assigned as first rank, fast and wide spreading assigned as second rank, perception of a product assigned as third rank, interactive assigned as fourth rank and informative assigned as fifth rank.

H_0: There has been no significant difference between the Gender and the Age

Table 4

Gender with Age – t-test

Factor	Category	N	T value	Asymp. sig	Result
Age	18-25 years	45	0.410	0.070	Accepted
	26-35 years	22			
	36-45 years	65			
	Above	18			

Source: Computed

The resultant from the table, that there has been no significant difference between gender and age of the respondents, since the significant value has been more than 0.05 then the null hypothesis has been accepted.

H0: There has been no significant difference between the Marital status and Frequency of using social media per day

Table 5

Marital status with Frequency of using social media – Chi-square test

Term	DF	P-Value	S/NS	Remarks
Pearson chi square	5	0.00340	Significant	Rejected

Source: Computed

The chi-square test reveals that the significance value of 0.00340 is lesser than the value 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant association between marital status and frequency of using social media per day.

H0: There has been no significant difference between the Occupation and Frequency of using social media per day

Table 6

Occupation with Frequency of using social media – Chi-square test

Term	DF	P-Value	S/NS	Remarks
Pearson chi square	5	0.0845	Significant	Accepted

Source: Computed

The chi-square test reveals that the significance value of 0.0845 is more than the value 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant association between occupation and frequency of using social media per day.

H0: There has been no significant difference between the Monthly Income and Frequency of using social media per day

Table 7

Monthly Income with Frequency of using social media – Chi-square test

Term	DF	P-Value	S/NS	Remarks
Pearson chi square	5	0.000814	Significant	Rejected

Source: Computed

The chi-square test reveals that the significance value of 0.000814 is lesser than the value 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant association between monthly income and frequency of using social media per day.

DISCUSSION

The majority (63.6%) of the respondents belong to the category of Female. The majority (43.3%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 36-45 yrs. The majority (57.3%) of the respondents are married. The majority (32.7%) of the respondents are professionals. The majority (38.7%) of the respondents have the income level of Rs.50,001-60,000. The majority (38.7%) of the respondents are using the social media for 4 to 6 hours per day.

SUGGESTION

To safeguard the consumers from the fake websites by filtering the unwanted and irrelevant advertisement using firewall security. Social media can keep the private information of the consumers according to their searching of products. E-commerce websites can give more offers and discounts to the users who subscribed to their page in social media. Make the customers realize how trustworthy their products are through social media by creating related contents.

CONCLUSION

This research identifies the influencing of social media content on online purchases and measured the frequency of using social media. The study reveals that, the majority of the respondents are frequently using social media which is influenced by the content of social media. Creating awareness about the social media in rural area will improve the overall growth of online shopping.

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