



ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN IMPACTING THE PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT

In present era, social media has emerged as a necessity for survival. One of the means of communication which is bridging the barriers between people and coming close to each other across the globe. It facilitates a platform to share varied experiences on different topics. The experiences comprise of how a product is after the use, its pros and cons. Numerous people read the reviews of the product, conduct research on their level before making the decision to buy a product or not. After recognising the noteworthiness of how significant is the social media, a huge number of organizations have diverted to social media advertising, targeting people according to their income levels. This study is mainly to observe and present the impact of social media on purchasing behaviour of consumers, where the data is collected from different states of India through a questionnaire, circulated through whatsapp and in-depth interview.

KEYWORDS: social media, consumer behaviour, e-commerce platforms.

INTRODUCTION

In this ultramodern time, users have come up with new perspective and a business-oriented way in approaching the online domain. The repercussion of, the way online stores is presented today is that the users of media have become consumers. Social media has reshaped the way consumers communicate with these organizations. (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004)

Social media platforms famous among consumers for online shopping are as follows:

1. YouTube

With over 225 million YouTube users, India has the most YouTube users than any other country. The forecast is that it will keep growing between 2023 and 2028 by 252.2 million users, which is 43.92 percentage. There will be fifth consecutive increase to 826.44 million users. As a result a lot of companies are advertising in-between the videos watched by people.

2. Instagram

According to latest Instagram statistics, India tops the ranking list of its users with 229.6 million active Instagram users. It is one of the famous and most-used social media platform. Its mostly all about what you see is what you get, that is visual, in the form of Instagram stories, Instagram live, pictures. It also has many influencers having large followers, which are used to influence people to buy a particular product or services.

3. Facebook

There are almost 315 million Facebook users in India at present. When we see Facebook audience size, India is one of the leading country. Every now and then requests can be seen from a local venture or big ventures advertising their products, from different events to big announcements can be seen sharing by giant companies.

4. Twitter

Twitter is a tremendous and one of the huge social networking site to tweet and retweet a work , objectives, opinions and ideology in order to reach out to more chunk of people with diverse backgrounds and extend the business idea and enlarge the horizon. Expanding the contacts even out side the circle of knowers.

5. Other E-commerce platforms are:

5.1 Myntra

Myntra is an online shopping site for fashion and lifestyle in India, which attracts consumers by bringing variety of footwear, clothing, accessories and lifestyle products. Geared to provide services to 900 thousand users. It is famous among people looking for various products and at the same time people looking for a particular brand or celebrity following.

5.2 Flipkart

Flipkart has about 200 million monthly active users.it offers over 80 million products across 80+ categories. The product range provided encompasses electronics, clothing, and other categories.

5.3 Amazon

Amazon is a highly regarded e-commerce platform in India. It has expanded its to 50+ cities in India. It is most successful due to its comprehension of the market and potential to procure necessary piece of content.

5.4 Quora

Quora is a community-based questions and answers website and app. Where users post questions on any topic and other users answer it. People share their experiences and **reviews about products and helps them in taking a better decision.**

5.4 Pinterest

There are at present 67 million users of Pinterest. It has 176 million registered users and 110 million of active users. In the forms of pinboards the images, animated GIFs, videos can be shared, it is used for saving and discovering new information. There are many amazing features of a Pinterest Business Account.

5.5 Google

As of November 2022, Google is the most famous easy to use search engine with 99.74%. Many people if they have no idea where to go for searching reviews they opt for google, which provides them the reviews on different websites.

In this 21st century a customer is smart enough to make a purchase only after spending good amount of time on research. According to GlobalWebIndex 54% social media users are such that use the above and many more social media platforms to investigate about the product before going for it and 71% of them do buy the product and services through social media referrals.

Through this study I want to examine and comprehend the impact created by social media advertisement on consumer purchasing behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The motivation for a consumer in order to join a social media is the desire to get various information and seek help when needed; in order to enrich their skills and receive knowledge about a product or services.(Shao, 2009, Park et al., 2009, Brodie et al., 2011a, Zaglia, 2013). Social media is a place where people gather to communicate and do the business Baird and Parasnis, 2011).

Concurrent society people have developed the habit of checking these social media accounts and they are not getting rid of it and such is the presence of social media networking sites (Staad, 2013). Enhanced social contacts and staying one step ahead through internet and online congregation of people have changed consumers, humankind and corporations with extensive information present virtually.(Kucuk and Krrishnamurthy, 2007).

Advertising a particular product and promoting it has gone many steps ahead due to distinct features of social media and its humongous popularity. (Hanna, Rohn and Crittenden, 2011). According to Internet Retailer Facebook profile is being maintained by top 100 corporations is (79%), twitter (69%), or both (59%). It was conducted in 2009.(What's in a Retail email?,2009).

While making the decision to buy a product a consumer is definitely affected or influenced by virtual groups. For example, a person has the liberty to viece her/his own

opinion on a particular product, and other use it for decision making before making a purchase, so a global platform is being provided by these social networking sites.(Kozinets et al., 2010)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Through this research I wanted to discover what is impact of media on consumers while buying the products and services online, what are the different virtual and E-commerce platforms are used by them. Also the efforts are made to collect data from pan-India for better understanding of the behaviour of the consumers.

By putting in apt strategy and incorporating media mechanism, a large number of potential audience and players can be targeted. It doesn't depend on the size of the venture, weather it is massive or in the initial stage, social media networks and tools play a pivotal role.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the primary principle that guides the research. (Dawson, 2019). It involves choosing subjects, data collection techniques, procedures for analysing the data.

Type of Research

A self-administered questionnaire was prepared which clearly states the data is primary in nature. Consumers from pan-India were targeted. Questionnaire is less costly, very effective, way to gauge the conduct, panorama, viewpoint, purpose, of large number of people. Questions where the probability of liking or disliking is to be gathered, the use of scales play a magnificent role.

Research Design

To get comprehensive outlook a questionnaire was designed to understand how social media is comprehended by the purchasers.

The approach is qualitative in nature, what is their practices or habits when it comes to virtual shopping and their belief system, all this is included in ethnographic data, which is the main purpose of the study. This method makes it simple and form conclusion as it is liberal and well organised to interpret the data.

After receiving the information filled in the questionnaire, in-depth interview was carried out to find out what are the other media or E-commerce platforms are being used by them and a brief explanation of it is given in the introduction part.

Population and Sampling

The questionnaire was filled by respondents of different age groups, it included homemakers, employees etc...

There was total 39 respondents from pan-India from where the data was collected, convenience sampling was done.

Variables

Dependent and Independent are the two variables in any research, where the relationship is of cause and effect. The independent variables are age, gender and their preferences about social media platforms and E-commerce platforms, etc.

Scales Used

Scales used are given as follows:

- **Nominal Scale:** It is also called as categorical variable scale, labelling variables into different classifications and excludes quantitative factor. It has been used to collect data regarding age, gender etc.
- **Likert Scale:** this is most widely used for surveys. The data is collected through questionnaires. It gives the respondents a range of options to choose as answer. Response category includes “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neutral”, “agree”, “strongly agree”.

Instruments Used

To understand the influence of social media and how it impacts the purchasing behaviour an E-Questionnaire was taken up to conduct this study which facilitates to assess and understand the opinion of the respondents. The questionnaire was developed through: Google Forms” and circulated through whatsapp.

Aspects covered under the study:

How the consumer behaviour is impacted by social media is being covered under this study. The aspects stressed upon are as follows:

1. Role of social media advertisement visuals:

57.9% of the respondents agree that it does play an important role. This may have a positive outcome if it is liked by masses and also adverse effects if disliked by people.

2. Does bad reviews affects the decision to buy:

There are various factors while making a decision and one of them is the review shared by people at large. 63.2% agree that if a product is reviewed badly, they will modify their decisions accordingly.

3. Shopping interests:

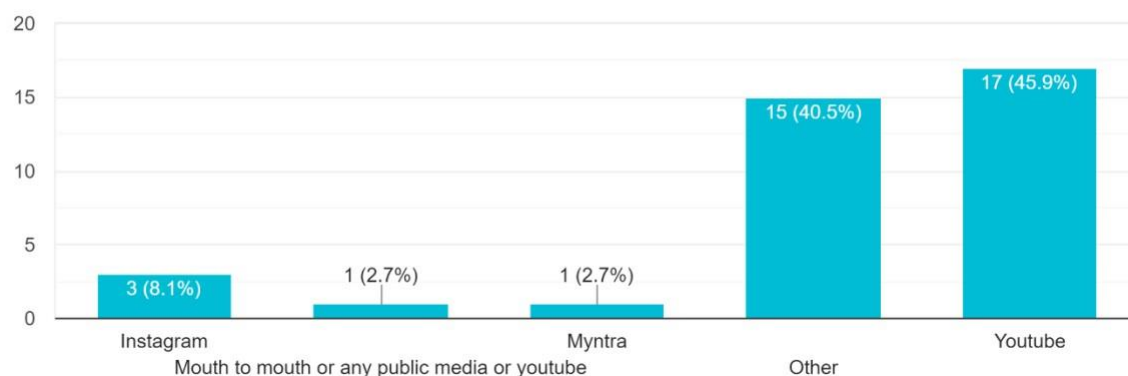
Everyone has different perspective when it comes to interests, which matters a lot while we speak here about shopping interests. 26.3 % say that shopping is a hobby and they end up buying without even planning for it.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Fig 1:

To get product reviews which social media is trustworthy?

37 responses

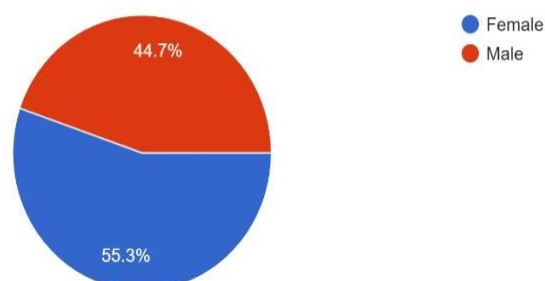


In Fig 1. We observe that out of total 37 respondents represented here, 45.9% go for YouTube when it comes to selection of most trustworthy media to get product reviews. After an in-depth interview with the respondents it was revealed that they followed various other E-commerce platforms to gain knowledge about the particular product. The others being Amazon, Google, Flipkart, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Myntra, Meesho, Quora, Pinterest.

Fig 2:

Gender

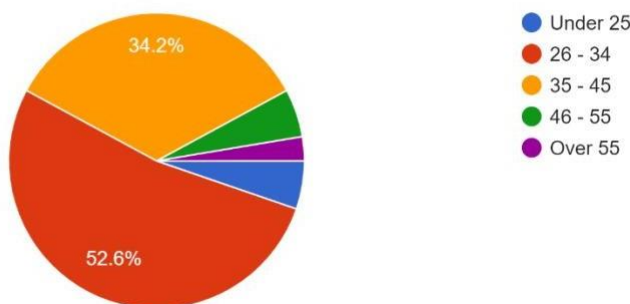
38 responses



In Fig 2. We see that the data presented here is of 38 respondents where 55.3% are Females and 44.7% are males. So, the chart presents that females are 10.6% more than males.

Fig 3:

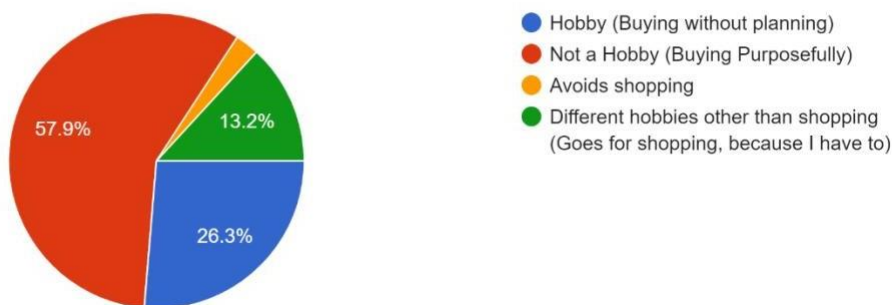
Age Information
38 responses



In Fig 3. In this pie chart it can be observed that the majority of the people who responded belongs to the age group of 26 – 34 yrs., after that 34.2% belongs to the age group of 35 – 45 yrs. Under 25 yrs. and 46- 55 yrs. Are divided almost equally, with least information from the age group over 55 yrs.

Fig 4:

What are your shopping interests?
38 responses

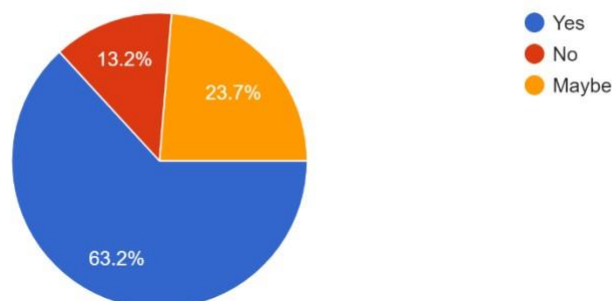


In Fig 4 it can be seen that 57.9% of respondents do not feel the urge to do shopping, they buy purposefully. It is also because the data collected had almost equal number of males, who have basically disliking over buying goods and services online or have other hobbies than shopping.

Fig 5:

If a product is reviewed badly on social media, will you modify your decision accordingly?

38 responses

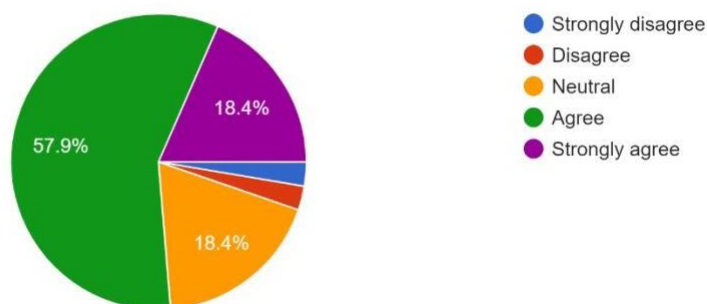


In Fig 5. Through collective analysis it can be observed that if a product is reviewed negatively, it does affect the decision of the purchaser, and they are likely to modify their final call to buy or not to buy a product. Here, as we can see 63.2% respondents says “Yes” they will change their decision and 23.7% says maybe or may be not, where as the percentage of “No” is low that is 13.2%.

Fig 6:

In social media advertisements the visuals plays an important role.

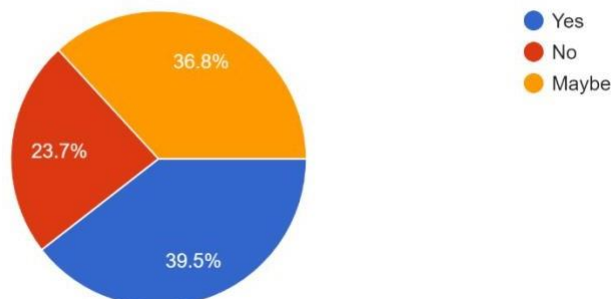
38 responses



In Fig 6. The importance of visuals of social media advertisements is shown. Here it can be seen that 57.9% of respondents agree that visuals does play a pivotal role in making the decision to buy a good or services. 18.4% respondents strongly agree that, they are swayed by the advertisements and believe it to be correct.

Fig 7:

Does advertisements on social media influence you to buy a product?
38 responses



In Fig 7 it is observed that advertisements on social media does influence the respondents to go for a product. Here 39.5% says “yes” that they get impressed by the advertisements and 36.8% are not sure about it.

CONCLUSION

Only constant thing in world is change. Social media is one of the amazing communication tool to inform people and circulate the news about new products arrived in the market. This study is an endeavour to understand whether the media influences the consumers in their decision making and till what extent. Here, Male and female participated in the survey almost equally. Most of the people were from the age group of 26-34 yrs.

According to the study the most famous and go to place to check product reviews is YouTube, followed by others, which are Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Myntra, Flipkart, Amazon, Quora, Pinterest, Google. Visuals matters a lot while buying a product, how creatively the advertisements are presented before prospects matters a lot.

People are trusting the reviews on social media and then only making the decision to buy or not. Consumers are evolving too before taking the decision they are doing the research from their side before purchasing the product.

LIMITATIONS

In this study the main objective was to know the influence of media on purchasing behaviour of the consumers. It has limitations like, more time should have been devoted to collect the data, the sample size could be more to get broader view of the topic. More literature survey could be done. The questions in the questionnaire could be more in number and specific too.

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