

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON THE CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS APPARELS : A STUDY IN KOLKATA

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Abstract: Social media is creating a major impact on online marketing whereby the brands are getting the opportunity to market their products online. This potential of social media is being recognised by every brand in almost every field. Naturally, the fashion brands are no exception. A company start pages or creates accounts in social media, because it is a very good opportunity not for them to reach and interact with consumers through active communication. Social media marketing has an impact for building customer relationship. Social media is helpful for people especially for continuous monitoring and giving a real time feedback about products from others customers who purchased the products online which leads to brand engagements thereby leading to relationship building. Social media provides clarity to customers about information related to guarantees and Warrantees of products and services as well as it provides genuine product reviews, ratings and feedback on sites which will leads to repeated purchases. Maintaining privacy in personal information such as name, address, phone numbers, credit card details etc. to avoid spam calls is very essentials; this privacy is maintained by social networking sites. We have taken up this study to find out the impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour while purchasing apparels. A structured questionnaire was used as research tool for understanding the of social media marketing: A based in Kolkata. Primary data was collected from 175 respondents in Kolkata. A pilot study was done to check the reliability of the questionnaire. Multiples tests have been conducted to test the hypothesis which is Chi Square, Cross-tabulation, 2-independent sample, Mann Whitney U Test, and Kruskal Wallis Test (Non-Parametric, K-Independent Sample) was used to analyse the responses. Further, on testing the hypothesis, it was found that there is a negative correlation between the frequency of purchase and amount spent per shopping trip, meaning that when one purchases more frequently via social media, they spent lesser amount per trip, however, when they purchase rarely or sometimes, the amount increases per trip.

Key Words: Social Media, Online Marketing, Purchase, Products, Consumer.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Social Media is a computer facilitated tool for communication which allows people or companies to create contents, exchange or share ideas and information, post pictures, upload videos etc. Social Media is a 2.0 internet based application which has user- generated content and creates service specific profiles for the site. It is considered as an ideal landscape for building communities that enable users and companies to socialize and that facilitate content accessibility to the public. The social media was started as a mean of communication and be in touch with our dear once, has slowly but surely become an indispensable part of our daily lives. The emergence and popularity of social networking sites is useful for an individual to meet new people also helpful to discuss, interact, share information and be active and visible. Social media has gradually become a very important platform for businesses, as they can now connect with customers anytime and anywhere. It reduces the gap between the customers and businesses by providing a smooth flow of communication between them. One of the major advantages of social media is the online sharing of information and providing knowledge about a number of things to the people of different groups. However, like a coin has two sides, the disadvantage is that such tools are misused by people which leads to interference into one's privacy leading to dangerous proportions keeping the ethicality of the media. Social Media is a new online platform, which possess few characteristics:

- Participation: - It boosts participation in form of feedback from people.
- Openness: - These services are open for feedbacks and enhance involvement which encourage voting, posts comments and share information.
- Converse: - Two way communication.
- Community: - It allows communities to form for quick and effective communication among group of people.
- Connectedness: - Most of social media succeed on their connections, making use of links to other sites, resources and people.

Social media is also creating a major impact on online marketing whereby the brands are getting the opportunity to market their products online. Online companies use social blogs and networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube etc. For promoting their products in various social media platform. The online companies can reach directly to their target audience especially internet users to stay in constant touch with them to understand their tastes and preferences .A good customer base leads to customer retention which helps company for brand awareness, improve sales and increase market share. Thus, if planned and executed properly, social media is a cost effective tool for companies. Social media allows online companies to sell their products in local market through broadcasting their features, quality, offers etc. and by providing interesting and relevant content for keeping customers engaged. It gives an opportunity to the e-commerce companies for product development, branding and for customer service. Even though the social media is rarely a direct selling channel, it is a very effective tool to gain visibility for the company and its products. A particular segment of business that has changed due to the emergence of the social media is the fashion industry. Through the onset of social media, what was once only available to elite insiders is now accessible by the masses. Before the birth of social media platform, sales, store traffic, and financial was the only way to measure the consumer opinion.

1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Vincent (2006) in his which was conducted in the Bangalore City which evoked that quality was an important factor for branded products to draw attention of the consumer. The branded products are expected to be of high quality. The branded products are of high price and people don't mind paying it as they get value from it. Media as a tool for promoting and advertising plays a huge role in influencing customers about the brands. The younger one of the families affects the buying behaviour of the families. The younger once are very conscious of the branded items. Many times the unbranded clothing gives equal satisfaction compare to the branded products but people still choose the branded clothing's.

Kim and Ko (2010) in their study, "Impacts of Luxury Fashion Brand's Social Media Marketing on Customer Relationship and Purchase Intention" tell us about how luxury brands have turned towards marketing communication using social media to survive the heated competition and to secure profits by providing novel value to its customers in terms of quality products and services, proper management of its customers, retail strategies and innovative marketing mix. The test the effects of social media marketing on customer relationship and purchase intention, Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted. Findings and implications showed that the social media marketing of the luxury brands possessed the distinctive elements such as entertainment, word of mouth, interaction, customization and trend in comparison to old fashioned marketing performances. In order to pre-empt a favourable benefaction to the brands to provide a new luxury value to customers, more engagement in Social Media Marketing activities should be done.

Sharma (2011) in her study, suggests that the technology using generation so much into social media for seeking information related to products or knowing about any services or taking suggestion from friends , relatives etc. and this hype around social networking continues with the companies, which are evolving their business models around 8 social activities on websites and on social media. The study reviewed trends in social media marketing and future trends of the same. Study concluded that social media has great potential for companies to engage the Indian user thereby increasing connectivity and building their brands rather than just bombarding users with information.

Nekatibebe (May 2012) studied that social media provides benefits of long-term engagement between brands and consumers also provided an opportunity for everyone to communicate effectively and efficiently in a way unparalleled by any other media it can be considered as the communication tool of modern era in "Evaluating the Impact of Social Media on Traditional Marketing."

McCarthy (2013) in his study "The Effects of Social Media on Fashion Consumption." revealed that Social Media has changed the way in which people not only communicate but also how firms reaches its customers. The study highlighted the four major social media outlets dominating the market namely Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram, which would benefit the business organizations to focus on creating their sites. There has been a significant impact on the fashion industries by the introduction of online social media in the recent years. Quantitative and Qualitative Research was conducted for the study which included personal interviews and surveys. These social media networks allowed significant opportunities for business growth and innovation. The study provided the fashion retailers with a guideline for mastering social media usage.

Bilal et al. (2014) has examined the role of various social platforms and media towards consumer buying behaviour towards the clothing industry. With Logistic Regression employed as an Analysis Technique to the self-administered questionnaires distributed among the students of University Of Gujarat, Pakistan, it shows the importance of the presence of Social media platforms and how consumers can use them. It also emphasizes on the need of an online presence for all the companies in order to gain a competitive market share and have a competitive edge.

Gul et al. (2014) talks about the impact of social media on the Fashion Consciousness and Consumer Behaviour in his study, "The Relationship of Social Media with Fashion Consciousness and Consumer Buying Behaviour". Consumers nowadays highly depend upon the social media to know about the latest fashion. The study further revealed that consumers spend less per shopping trip (average majority spending below Rs.4000/month) and believe in seeking value for money. This meant that they are not willing to buy premium brands online. However, one drawback of the study was small sample size and only students of Higher Educational Institutes of Karachi being the target population, showing limited generalizability of the research. The major emphasis of the study was to study the relationship of Social Media with Fashion Consciousness and Consumer Buying Behaviour through an Exploratory Research with a convenience sampling strategy being adopted for the collection of data. The study concluded that there was a weak relationship between social media and the fashion consciousness of the consumers.

Mishra and Tyagi (2015) talks about the retailers using social media to target the young adults to highlight the importance of social networking sites (SNS) in the day to day perspective in knowing the Social Media view point of consumers in the Indian Context. The study further analyses perceptions of the customers in the area of social media marketing, by examining the variables of TAM Model. Social media plays a very important role as a marketing platform. Research was conducted keeping in mind the positive ease of use and the personal fit with the brands. It was found that both had a positive impact on marketing through the social networking sites, but was not that much significant. Social networking sites in India are the domain of potential marketing opportunities for business engaged in the internet marketing. Further, the conclusion derived from the study was that the ultimate buying in of customers' loyalty would be through personalised, skilful and sensitive experience created by the online marketing.

2. RESEARCH GAP:

When a problem is well understood it is automatically half solved, so it's a one way of doing research and achieving it. After reviewing the work done from International as well as National contexts, we have found out that various researches have been conducted related to the Impact of Social Media Marketing. After going through some of these studies, it gave immense courage to design this study. Most of the studies conducted relating to the same, have been conducted outside India, mainly in Pakistan (Bilal, 2014; Gul, 2014), and one in Nagpur (Vakhariya and Chopde, 2011). No such study has been conducted in the Eastern India, particularly Kolkata. This study examines the existing status of the Influence of Social Media Marketing Tools and Networks on the Consumer Buying Behaviour of Apparels in Kolkata, India.

2.1. OBJECTIVES:

Keeping in mind the literature review so far done and after identifying the research gap, we have come up with the following objectives:

- To identify the relationship between the frequency of purchase and the amount spent per shopping trip by the customer for Apparels Using Social Media.
- To study whether gender of the buyer plays a significant role in the product category purchased or the frequency of purchase.
- To analyse the relationship between frequency of purchase and good deals/offers or discounts.
- To study whether the buyer is negatively/positively affected by the product reviews available about the products they like to purchase.
- To study the dependence of occupation on the amount spent per shopping trip.

2.2. HYPOYHESIS:

H0: There is no significant relationship between frequency of shopping of apparels and amount spent per shopping trip.

H1: There is a significant relationship between frequency of shopping of apparels and amount spent per shopping trip.

H0: Gender of the buyer has no significant impact on the product category purchased.

H2: Gender of the buyer has a significant impact on the product category purchased.

H0: Good deals/offers/discounts have no significant relationship with the frequency of purchase.

H3: Good deals/offers/discounts have a significant relationship with the frequency of purchase.

H0: Gender does not have a significant impact on the frequency of purchase of the buyer.

H4: Gender has a significant impact on the frequency of purchase of the buyer.

H0: Availability of product reviews do not affect the buyer in a negative or positive manner.

H5: Availability of product reviews does affect the buyer in a negative or positive manner.

H0: Amount spent per shopping trip does not depend on occupation.

H6: Amount spent per shopping trip depends on occupation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study is based on descriptive research where both primary and secondary data are used as the research methodology. Descriptive Research involves the characteristics of users of a given product and degree to which the products use varies with demographic factors like gender, age, income etc. Research Study proposes the research plan for data collection and analysis that is to be undertaken thereby developing the Survey Method and Questionnaire Design. The data used for supporting the analysis in this section is from a practical survey of customers purchasing products, especially clothes/apparels online. A total of 175 respondents have been taken into account for their view on the different factors that would influence or affect their online purchases. The sample selected was on the basis of Simple Random Sampling. The survey was conducted between January 2020 and first week of March 2020 in Kolkata, West Bengal. The questionnaire was prepared in such a manner that it made the consumers respond in the most convenient way. The set of questionnaire was designed to know about the customer perception on online purchase of apparels. The main objective of the study was to understand the impact of social media marketing on online purchases of consumers. To understand the factors which are influencing for social media marketing? A complete study of demographic factors like age, gender, social networking sites mostly used by consumers, frequency of log in on Social Networking Sites, frequency of online shopping, duration of shopping, product category mostly purchased by consumers has been studied. The study area included the online customers who use social media and those who shop online in the city of Kolkata. A pilot study for the first 60 respondents was conducted and reliability analysis was done to check the reliability of the questionnaire.

4. RESULTS:

This study was conducted to establish a significant impact on the Consumer Buying Behaviour of apparels. We see that out of the total respondents, who completed the survey, 100 were women and the remaining 75 were males. Maximum numbers of respondents was of the age group 20-30 and were students by occupation. This further indicates that students belonging to the age group below 20 and 20-30 use and purchase more through social media. Apparel purchases were made often by them and an amount between Rs.4000-8000 was spent per shopping trip by the respondents majorly. To be specific, there were around 64 responses who spend below Rs.4000 and 72 who spend between Rs.4000-8000. Facebook was the most frequently used social media followed by Instagram and mostly all the respondents have noticed fashion apparel advertisements on social media (160 out of 175). Apparels were the most purchased product category indicating that consumers do get influenced by fashion apparel advertisements on social media. A pilot study was conducted for the first 60 respondents. Reliability analysis was done and the value obtained for Cronbach's Alpha was 0.654 which is quite high, indicating that the questionnaire is quite reliable and we can further the research.

RELIABILITY STATISTICS		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Item	N of Items
.654	.629	24

After conducting the reliability analysis for the first 60 respondents we further conducted the reliability analysis for 175 respondents the result is given below:

RELIABILITY STATISTICS		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Item	N of Items
.636	.679	24

Further the Normality Test was conducted to see whether the data collected was normal or not. Where we found that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk have sig. values 0.000 for each variable indicating that it is less than 0.05. As our p-value is less than 0.05, at 95% Confidence Interval, we can say that the data is not normally distributed. As normal distribution is not followed, we will conduct Non-Parametric tests (including Chi-square, 2 Independent sample test (Mann-Whitney), Crosstabs and correlation.

The following tests were conducted to prove the hypothesis:

Test conducted: Correlation

Results:

		HOW OFTEN DO YOU SHOP FOR APPARELS?	HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND PER SHOPPING TRIP? (INR)
HOW OFTEN DO YOU SHOP FOR APPARELS?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.150
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.047
	N	175	175
HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND PER SHOPPING TRIP?(INR)	Pearson Correlation	-.150	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	
	N	175	175

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation: We see from the above result that the Sig value is 0.047 which is less than 0.05. We can say that sig. value is significant at 5% level of confidence, thus, accepting alternative hypothesis. Hence, there is a significant relationship between frequency of purchase and amount spent per shopping trip. Value for Pearson Coefficient is -0.150 which further indicates that there is negative weak correlation between the two variables. We can conclude by saying that as the frequency of purchase increases, the amount spent per shopping trip reduces and vice versa.

Test conducted: Crosstabs (Non-Parametric)

Results:

* GENDER Cross tabulation

	GENDER			Total
		MALE	FEMALE	
WHICH PRODUCT CATEGORY IS MOSTLY PURCHASED BY YOU?	APPARELS	30	69	99
	ACCESSORIES	9	13	22
	FOOTWEAR	21	8	29
	OTHERS	13	12	25
Total		75	100	175

Chi-Square Test

	Value	P-Value (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.208 ^a	.002
N of Valid Cases	175	

2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5.

The minimum expected count is 1.29

Interpretation: The sig value of Pearson Chi-Square is 0.002 which is less than 0.05, indicating that it is highly significant at 5% level. Thus, we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null, concluding that Gender of the buyer has a significant impact on the product category purchased. There are a total of 96 respondents who purchase apparels (30 males and 66 females). Males nowadays are taking more interest in buying different categories of products and are getting as much involved as females. Thus, gender does play a significant role in the type of products purchased online.

Chi-Square (Non-Parametric):**Result:****HOW OFTEN DO YOU SHOP FOR APPARELS?**

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
ALWAYS	13	43.8	-30.8
OFTEN	85	43.8	41.3
SOMETIMES	59	43.8	15.3
RARELY	18	43.8	-25.8
Total	175		

Test Statistics

HOW OFTEN DO YOU SHOP FOR APPARELS?	GOOD DEALS /DISCOUNTS / OFFERS
Chi-Square	80.977 ^a
Sig. Value	.000

a.0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5.

The Minimum expected cell frequency 43.5

b.0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5.

The minimum expected cell frequency is 35.0.

Interpretation: The Significant value of Chi-Square obtained is 0.000 which is yet again less than 0.05. It is confirmed that Chi-Square value is highly significant at 5% Level. Hence, we reject null hypothesis and accept Alternative hypothesis, concluding that Good deals/offers/discounts have a significant impact on the frequency of purchase It means that good deals, offers and discounts influence the consumers to purchase more and thus impacts the frequency of purchase. Also, frequency of purchases reduces when there is no good deal, offers or discounts.

Test conducted: 2-independent sample, Mann Whitney U Test.

Result:**Ranks**

	GENDER	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
HOW OFTEN DO YOU SHOP FOR APPARELS?	MALE	75	100.45	7534.00
	FEMALE	100	78.66	7866.00
	Total	175		

Test Statistics ^a	
	HOW OFTEN DO YOU SHOP FOR APPARELS?
Mann-Whitney U	2816.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
a. Grouping Variable: GENDER	

Interpretation: The sig. value is 0.002 which is less than 0.05. Thus we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject null. To conclude we can say that Gender has a significant impact on the frequency of purchase of the buyer. We see that females purchase more than males.

Test conducted: Mann-Whitney U Test

Result:**Ranks**

	ARE YOU LIKELY TO GET AFFECTED BY A NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE REVIEW ABOUT THE PRODUCTS YOU LIKE TO PURCHASE?	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
PRODUCT REVIEWS AVAILA LE	YES	145	89.18	12931.50
	NO	30	68.25	1774.50
	Total	175		

Test Statistics^a

PRODUCT REVIEWS AVAILABLE	
Mann-Whitney U	1423.500
Sig. Value (2-tailed)	.032
a. Grouping Variable: ARE YOU LIKELY TO GET AFFECTED BY A NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE REVIEW ABOUT THE PRODUCTS YOU LIKE TO PURCHASE?	

Interpretation:

The sig. value is 0.032 which is less than 0.05. Thus we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject null. Respondents get affected by the positive or negative reviews of the products they wish to purchase through social media. Thus, we can conclude that product reviews play an important role in the purchase of products via social media.

Test conducted: Kruskal Wallis Test (Non-Parametric, K-Independent Sample)

Results:**RANKS**

HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND PER SHOPPING TRIP?(INR)	
Kruskal-Wallis H	8.405
Sig. Value	.038
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Variable: OCCUPTION	

Test Statistics^{a,b}

HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND PER SHOPPING TRIP?(INR)	OCCUPTION	N	Mean Rank
	STUDENT		111
BUSINESS		31	108.97
HOME MAKER		16	82.56
SERVICE		17	94.38
Total		175	

Interpretation: The sig. value is 0.038 which is less than 0.05. Thus we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject null. The amount spent per shopping trip depends on occupation meaning that if someone is into business or self-employed, they purchase more at a time. But, however, in case of students they purchase more frequently but spend a lesser amount per shopping trip.

5. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The research focuses on how social media influences the customer buying behaviour of apparels. The major limitations of this study would be the change in the tastes and preferences of the customers thereby causing a change in the factors that would influence them to buy the same. The impact of advertisements, offers or discounts available via social media would differ from person to person. Brand recall ability and brand preferences would also play a major role.

Further, the other limitations of the study are as follows:

- Only the social media users were considered, the non-users were not consider in this study.
- Comparatively the sample size was small that limited the generalizability of findings. This study can be further done with a large number of sample.
- Geographical area was another limitation because the research was conducted only in Kolkata.
- Limited demographic factors considered (age, gender & occupation), other demographic factors such as living location was not considered.
- Only purchase of apparels through social media was consider

6. CONCLUSION:

A change in technology, innovation and dynamics in different ways of communication has given birth to new tools for communication through the internet and social media is one of them. Social online platforms have become most common means of social communication. It used for social communication like contacting to friends, relatives etc. Social Networking Sites is an integration of media and social communication; through collection of online tools that helps us for interaction. Common interests and goals are shared on social media and day by day its importance is increasing which is also creating an impact on online marketing. Social media encourages a two way communication between businesses and consumers. In today's competitive world, the online brands are fighting for marketing their products online as well as create a long lasting impact on the minds of consumers. Social networking sites helps to

create an interest in the brand and also to build trust in the mind of consumers which will leads to good brand building activity. Online companies use social blogs, networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Youtube etc. for marketing their products in online consumer markets. Social and online business networking sites helps for businesses to do business networking, researching high quality and variety of products and services for their customers through social media. The role of e-commerce has been used in industries which use online platforms like social media networking sites for end to end transactions for businesses. Social media strategies have more impact on online marketing. Social media marketing has an impact for building customer relationship. Social media is helpful for people especially for continuous monitoring and giving a real time feedback about products from others customers who purchased the products online which leads to brand engagements thereby leading to relationship building. Social media provides clarity to customers about information related to guarantees and Warrantees of products and services as well as it provides genuine product reviews, ratings and feedback on sites which will leads to repeated purchases. Maintaining privacy in personal information such as name, address, phone numbers, credit card details etc. to avoid spam calls is very essentials, this privacy is maintained by social networking sites. Study also indicated that the important use of social networking sites for people was to communicate, share to their friends and family about news feed, photos, selfie, updated events, tag places visited, share videos etc. which is mostly preferred by people. The study also presented that online advertisement helps in shopping with open options of availability of price comparison with different brands and different shopping sites which is cost effective for online consumers. Social media provides online accessibility 24*7 at any time and any place and it is user friendly for consumers which is the most influencing factor of social media marketing. options of availability of price comparison with different brands and different shopping sites which is cost effective for online consumers. Social media provides online accessibility 24*7 at any time and any place and it is user friendly for consumers which is the most influencing factor of social media marketing

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