

“Impact Of User Reviews On Consumer's Buying Behaviour During Online Shopping”

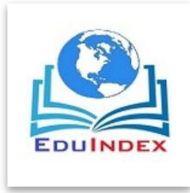
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ABSTRACT

Online consumer reviews, service recommendations and product reviews from peers play a vigorous role in the process of decision making and buying process of consumers. This research paper was carried on identifying and analysing the impacts of the user reviews presented over different platforms which had a significant impact over buying behaviour while online shopping.

This research was conducted through secondary data which was presented in the form of a literature review prepared through conducting a meta-analysis. This secondary data was focussed on the consumer stories that were reflected over different platforms in the form of ratings or product reviews.

The findings of the research came out to be a significant impact over the customer preferences as a result of the user reviews regarding any product or services either from friends or relatives or from the third person. There emerged to be a correlation between the ratings and reviews and with the impact that it creates over the buying behaviour of the consumers. Thus the results revealed that there may be both positive as well as negative reviews expected over the top-quality products as well which is not controllable and ultimately influences the consumer buying behaviour while shopping online.

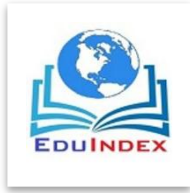


INTRODUCTION

The new era of blogging, reviewing, social media interactions and online communities have transformed the internet from a broadcasting platform to a participatory platform. Internet and social media sites have become a tool of empowerment for the consumers through which they communicate their experiences to the wide social network. In this generation of advanced technology and widespread use of the internet, online shopping has become the widely participated activities by the consumers. Information gathering and sharing have become very easy and quick as with just a few clicks, the information of the whole wide world can be reached to customers through internet and social media. With the medium of social media platform, customers can provide their views and experiences to the world. Electronic word of mouth consists of the contents that are generated by the consumers and this access to free information has overpowered the mainstream marketing of the companies.

Reviews generated online and also peer influences and customers perception of the products have become the major source of information that is assessed by consumers during shopping. User reviews are subjective and are based on the personal experiences of shoppers but have become a basis to compare market products and services. With these user generated reviews, customers seek information online by changing the traditional way of finding the necessary information to begin their purchasing process. The online platforms consist of two types of people, one who generates the review and others those who seek information about the products and services. In the online market, from food to shoes to clothes to toys, every item is reviewed by the customers and as per their experience, the content is created and that content is regarded more than the content used by these e-commerce markets to sell the goods and services.

The influence of user-review is increasing consistently and consumers have started majorly in creating the information to guide and support the other consumers as well as assert



their power through online channels to the markets. In this research work, the impact of user reviews on the purchase decision of the consumers is assessed and how these online reviews influence the behaviour and intention of the consumers to buy in the online shopping markets.

RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This work aims at assessing the impact of user review on the buying decision of the customers and also assesses the impact of user review on the consumer buying behaviour during online shopping.

The objectives of this research project are:

- To identify the relationship between online users' review and decision making process of customers during online shopping
- To analyse the reason behind the consumer's use of user review before making a purchase decision
- To comprehend the positive and negative influence of user review on consumer's buying behaviour

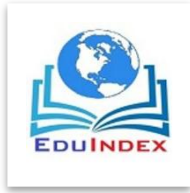
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions of the study are mentioned below:

- How users' reviews are interrelated with the purchase intention of the consumers?
- How buying behaviour of the customers is affected via online users' reviews?
- Why do consumers seek user review before buying the products and services online?

RESEARCH RATIONALE

Participatory media has become a common occurrence where every individual can create the contents and share it with the world, which is now possible because of social media platforms

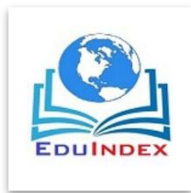


and we 2.0. This has increased the number of reviews and experiences that consumers share on the online platforms regarding the products. It further encourage to the need to understand the impact that these online feedbacks have on the buying intention and buying behaviour of the consumers during online shopping. This study will help e-commerce channels and marketers to understand the importance of user review and help in enhancing their strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of *Zhang and Benyoucef (2016)* emphasises on understanding behaviour of customers in the social commerce market. The business environment is evolving rapidly such that the emergence of social commerce in the market has resulted in various changes to the businesses and consumer perspectives. It is vital for the companies that they understand the consumer behaviour adequately as it will assist them in influencing their customers and harness potentially strong relationship with them. The findings of the study help in determining that social commerce has been gaining significant growth due to the social networking sites which possess a major impact on the behaviour of the consumers. The social media sites have been conducting attractive marketing of the shopping websites which gains the attention of the users and further encourage them to indulge in online shopping.

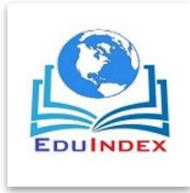
The social media sites are gaining huge popularity in the 21st century such that more number of users has been increasing on the platform daily. The marketing of shopping brands and products on the social media platforms possess a significant role in influencing the customer decision-making which assists the online shopping sites in gaining huge business (Mo et al., 2015). The attitude and behaviour of the consumers toward online shopping has been evolving significantly due to the regular marketing and branding on their social media platforms.



The online shopping channel for the consumers has been evolving in recent time which has been impacting the shopping behaviour of the consumers significantly. Park and Lee (2017) has been understanding the matter and a study has been carried by them which assess the implications of consumer online shopping channel toward the choice behaviour in business environment.

The digital technology is considered as one of the major boom in the market which evolves the consumers and companies to a huge level. Moreover, the smart devices have been carrying the diffusion in the market as they help in building an interactive communication between the consumers and companies. There are various mobile channels which have been accessed by the consumers where the companies provide information about their products through attractive marketing. The effectiveness of the mobile channels has been assessed effectively by the companies' such that they have been indulged in building CRM i.e. customer relationship management (Park and Nicolau, 2015). The tool has been assisting the companies in understanding the requirements of the customers more effectively and also building a potent relationship with them. The omnichannel environment has been evolving in recent time which attracts the consumers to a huge level as they get diverse kinds of products and services. The implementation of attractive communication strategies by the companies has been manipulating the shopping perspective and behaviour of the consumers.

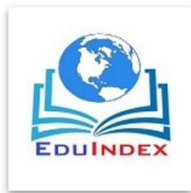
In recent time, the role of social commerce has been significant in building consumer buying behaviour. The study by Hajli (2015) focuses on understanding how social commerce has been building consumer intention to buy. E-commerce has experienced evolvement in the form of social commerce where social media is utilized by the companies so that they could empower the customers to interact effectively on the internet. The advancement in the form of ICT and web technologies has a paved path for the companies in gaining enhancement. There are various



social platforms that have been assisting the companies in attracting the users effectively toward their brand and products. The findings of the study help in determining that the users who are operating on social media platforms is increasing significantly due to the high popularity. It has been directly benefiting the companies as the attractive marketing campaigns on the social platforms possess a certain impact on the intention and behaviour of the consumers for buying (Zhao et al., 2018). The consumers have been operating the social media platforms for building communication, gaining information of brands, products and services. Moreover, the content on the social platforms has been attracting the consumers to a huge level which also enhance the level of trust and intend them to buy products.

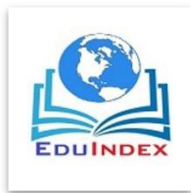
Hussain et al (2018) have studied about the understanding of consumer buying behaviour based on electronic word of mouth (eWOM) communication. Majority of the consumers' behaviour that has been adopted during shopping is majorly based on different attributes which possess an influence on the behaviour and perspective of the consumers toward buying. In the world of technology, the consumers have been majorly influenced through the eWOM regarding their online buying. The electronic word of mouth could be expressed as the online review by the consumer regarding the products and services. Moreover, the eWOM is carried on online platforms where the customers exchange their opinions and experiences. It has been determined by the findings of the study that the eWOM possesses a substantial influence on the behaviour and intention of the consumers for buying as the exchange of customer experiences and opinion form the mind-set among the consumers (Wang and Yu, 2017). The companies that have been operating on the social media platforms effectively utilize the benefit of eWOM in gaining the attention of the consumers.

A case of consumer buying behaviour in the travel sector has been carried so that substantial insight regarding customer buying behaviour on online shopping could be attained.



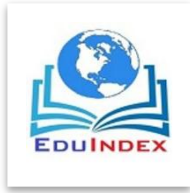
The study by Rondán-Cataluña et al (2015) assists in gaining significant knowledge regarding the buying behaviour of customers on social network sites regarding travel in comparison to the online and offline platforms. The shopping behaviour of the consumers on online and offline platforms differ to a significant extent. There are different factors which incorporated during the shopping of customers and influence them to indulge in online or offline shopping. Online shopping is majorly preferred by the consumers for their travel shopping as it assists them in gaining substantial benefits. Offline shopping has been lagging due to the edge factors of online shopping such as smart interface, easy to shop, incur less time, offers and discounts, etc. The purchasing behaviour of consumers on the online platform is major in comparison to offline shopping due to these factors (Singh et al., 2017). The social networking sites possess a vital role in influencing consumer decision-making.

The online customer reviews have been managing the buying intention and behaviour of the customers through online platform to a significant level. Ziegele and Weber (2015) have discussed in their study regarding the implications of customer reviews and how they influence the buying attitude of online shoppers. The eWOM has been presented in the form on online customer reviews which has been influencing the online shoppers to a certain extent. It is evaluated by findings that the online retail stores have been displaying two kinds of electronic word of mouth i.e. customer reviews on their website regarding the product based on customer reviews and aggregate review scores. The consumer buying behaviour has been influencing due to the online customer reviews at a huge level. The online shopping consumers assess the reviews critically so that a substantial level of findings regarding the products could be attained. It also helps in understanding the authentication, reliability, and value for money of the product. Moreover, it is found from the findings that the effect of aggregate review score has been weak and majorly influenced by the potential buyers such that impacting the overall customer satisfaction.



Ullrich and Brunner (2015) discuss the effect of negative online consumer reviews on consumer shopping behaviour in the study. The role of consumer reviews has been significant in the online shopping and it has been influencing the customers and companies to a huge extent. The positive online reviews assist the company to attract the consumers in indulging toward online shopping. Still, there are certain kinds of negative online reviews which have been impacting the online shopping consumer to a little extent. The negative online reviews have become a major concern for the companies as there are certain fraud reviews which are made to deteriorate the image of the company. The findings of the study focus on the customer experience regarding the online customer reviews such that it is determined that the positive reviews encourage them to purchase the products (Erkan and Evans, 2016). But the negative reviews are not false or true such that explicit assessment is done on different platforms for building insights toward the products. The companies have been working with a framework on determining the fraud reviews and taking strict actions so that better experience could be offered to customers.

Plotkina and Munzel (2016) possess substantial insight regarding online shopping of customers such that they understand the importance of customer satisfaction and their study provides implicit insight toward the online review source on buying products. The online reviews have been developed due to the eWOM which influences the market place to a huge extent. The online reviews possess certain effect and it could be observed on the behaviour and attitude of the consumers. The significance of source regarding the online review is not determined effectively. General, the source for online review could be from the expert of industry or the peer consumer. The findings help in assessing the online reviews could be positive and negative which influence the online buying behaviour of customers (Zhang et al., 2018). It is vital for the customers that they access reliable sources such as company websites and platforms for attaining reviews so that a substantial level of information could be attained.

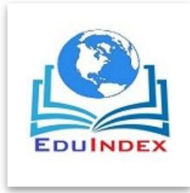


METHOD

The research method is known as the process which is implemented in the study so that the required level of understanding regarding the certain area could be attained by following certain sources (Silverman, 2016). The importance of research method in the study is huge as it helps in attaining the required data and further assist in analysing it so that the research outcomes could be determined. In this study, the qualitative research methodology has been applied which assist in collecting the data through the secondary data sources. The method which would be applied under the qualitative research methodology is the literature review.

The literature review is the method where the former studies on a similar research area are critically assessed which help in building insights toward the existing study. Also, it helps in considering the key aspects and challenges which are observed in the study. The findings attained through the literature review process are vital in the study and help in reaching the research outcome effectively (Taylor et al., 2015). Six pieces of literature have been critically assessed in the study so that a substantial level of knowledge and understanding regarding the research area could be attained effectively. The authors have carried the study on assessing the implication of online shopping of customers due to different factors. The factors which influence online shopping are user reviews, social media sites, etc. The former studies have certain merits and demerits such that they have been considered in the study so that it could attain maximum benefits.

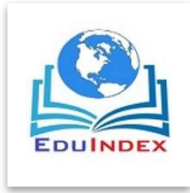
There are certain limitations in the study which hinder the progress to some extent. There are some studies which were unable to access due to their unavailability and access. Therefore, alternative studies were utilized. The ethical considerations are made to conduct the study effectively. The literature utilized in the study is properly cited and authors are given complete credit.



DISCUSSION

The findings which have been attained through the collection of secondary data assist in building significant insights toward the user review on the buying behaviour of the consumers during online shopping. The user reviews on the online platform possess a major impact on the customer online buying. The findings attained through the qualitative study have helped build a substantial level of knowledge toward the research area. The technology advancement has enhanced the shopping to a huge level which provides a potential framework for the companies to expand their business and gain effectiveness. The online shopping has been acting as a key strategy for the companies to attract the customers and also building potent share in the market. The customers are also getting influenced due to online shopping due to different factors such as simplicity, benefits, offers and discounts.

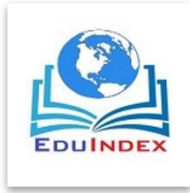
The effectiveness of online shopping has been implicating due to a certain factor which concerned the companies to some extent in conducting their business practices. The user review is that key factor in the current competitive environment which could develop or destroy the image of the product. Generally, the user reviews on an online platform have been assisting the consumers to determine the efficacy and quality of the products. It also helps the consumer in comparing similar products from different brands and making a suitable decision. The user reviews are generally offered by the experts of the industry which assist the consumers in gaining significant insights into the products (Mo et al., 2015). Recently, a new breed of crowd-sourced reviews has been developed which impact the consumers in their purchasing decisions. It could be stated that it becomes a new era for the reviews which replaces the word of mouth and expert reviewers and put the power in the hands of the crowd. The online reviews possess a significant impact on the online shopping behaviour of the customers as the customer check the reviews to attain information about the products before shopping. The relationship between the



reviews and buying behaviour has been significant which influence online shopping to a huge level.

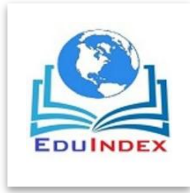
In recent time, the number of sources for rating has been increased significantly. Previously, only the marketplace websites are the source for reviews regarding the products but now there are a plethora of sources which could provide the reviews. The feedback could be positive or negative which possess a significant impact on the buying behaviour of the customers. The persuasion of positive and negative feedback on customers for shopping could be from small to large extent. The former studies help in determining that the feedback is influenced by factors like prices, margin, etc. The negative feedbacks are effectively ousted by the customers and only focus on the positive feedback during the purchase of products with low margin and price. It is also determined by the findings that the higher number of feedbacks i.e. reviews attract the consumers and result in huge sales.

Still, the scenario is not true for all the online shopping customers. Some online shopping sites have been providing certain reviews which are not understood by the consumers and impact the buying. For instance, an online marketplace has been offering feedback for a certain product. A customer has didn't provide good feedback for a product which is not even purchased by them such that deteriorating the rating of the product. Still, the potential customers who possess knowledge of product purchase the product. The online marketplace must ensure that the review of the products is correctly available so that the required customer could purchase them. The implications of negative feedback have been low but it still deteriorates the image of the company and marketplace (Luan et al., 2016). There are top-quality products who also receive negative feedback. There is no avoiding of the feedbacks in the real world and the people expect feedbacks to gain a better knowledge of the product. The feedback assists the customer to attain different aspect regarding the product which further intends them to purchase the products.



The majority of the customers look for reviews for the products whether they purchase the product or not as it helps them in gaining insight regarding the effectiveness of the marketplace. The pictures and videos which are posted in the review of the product assist the consumer in gaining significant knowledge regarding the efficacy of the products. Moreover, it could be stated that the consumers considered user reviews of the product as an important element of their shopping. It is also determined through the findings that the user review helps the consumer in building better decision regarding the shopping of the product. The online shopping experience of customers has been enhancing due to user reviews (Erkan and Evans, 2016). There are different kinds of reviews such as normal post, pictures, videos, etc. which helps the customer in understanding the product effectively.

The majority of the marketplaces have been working with a new way of uploading the reviews and pictures so that genuine review could be shared with the online consumers. It helps in providing accurate idea to the consumer regarding the product on the online shopping platform. The role of these reviews in online shopping has been significant as it enhances the shopping experience of the customers and also encourages them to purchase quality products from the marketplace. The reviewer who has significantly contributed to reviewing the product is incentivised by the merchant. Overall, it could be stated that the majority of the customer trust the user reviews of product such that the healthy reviews of the product indulge the customer to purchase products from the marketplace. The online shopping has been enhancing adequately due to the user reviews such that providing high customer satisfaction and quality experience to the customers. Therefore, it could be stated from the findings that the role of user reviews have been potent on the buying behaviour of the customers during online shopping.

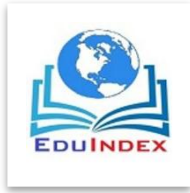


CONCLUSION

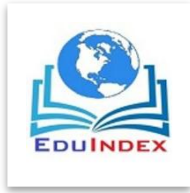
The online shopping platform for customers has been evolving significantly. The buying behaviour of the consumer on the online shopping platform has been dependent on different elements such as offers, discounts, branding, marketing, access, simplicity, etc. In the recent time, a new factor has been influencing the buying behaviour of the consumers on online shopping which is known as user review. There are various online shopping platforms which are provided with the feature of user review. Also, there are other platforms which provide a review regarding the products. The customers have been considering the user review due to different reasons like quality assurance, value for money, etc. The effective user review is helpful for the customer in understanding different aspects of the product and also encourages them to purchase the product. The findings which have been attained through the study help in understanding that the online shopping behaviour of the customers has been enhancing due to the user reviews. It is vital for the marketplaces that they ensure the effectiveness of user reviews such that false reviews and fake customer ids should be prohibited.

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