A STUDY ON PERCEIVED SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCES ON STUDENTS PURCHAS INTENTION TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING

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Abstract

Online marketing, with the help of internet connectivity, has grown tremendously in recent days and the inclination of youths towards purchasing of products through online is higher than their purchasing rate via traditional pattern. This paper is to find out the factors and components in association with social media platforms which have great effect in the online shopping intentions of youths (students). The researcher has observed in the detailed past studies that E-word of mouth and E-Advertising have significant effect on the youths. By sharing information and experiences on social media purchase intention of consumers are influenced. Convenience sampling technique was applied in collection of data through online and SPSS was used to analyze the data. Reliability and validity of construct and variables was tested and Cronbach's alpha was applied. ANOVA was used to test the significance link between dependent and independent variables. Results were exhibited that the student purchase intention has significant relation with E-Advertising in their online shopping through various social media platforms. This paper would help in further research by including more variables and constructs and will be better understanding for managerial decisions regarding online marketing strategies.

Keywords: Social Media, Online Shopping, Student Purchase Intention

Introduction

With the availability and ease of internet connectivity, the uses of social networking sites have been increased specifically in youths a tremendous growth has been observed in recent days. As the inclination of youths (students) has grown towards online activities, their participations have also been increased in searching the information and selecting the variety of products and brands. Social networking sites provide not only a platform to share the information and experiences while interacting with other associated consumers regarding their products and services over social media but also it have empowered customers in many ways. Marketers are aware about the

power of social media and they are also concentrating on social media advertising so that youths can be induced to prefer and share their products and services.

Customers using social media promote business in their social interaction with other customers in many ways by connecting and sharing their experiences and information concerning the products and services on social media and in their social interaction they promote many people to appear online and proceeds portion (M.Nick Hajli, 2013). Interactive communication has been possible with the facilitation of social networking sites through which social sharing is done by social media users. For instance, on a social media platform a particular brand has its fan page on which customers communicate to the brand (Liang et al.2011). Whatever experiences consumers gained in their shopping are shared with other consumers and on the ground of that experiences they recommend products and services. The entire process of searching and sharing the information on social networking sites has impact on the behaviour of social media users (e-Marketers,2017; Mangold Faulds, 2009). The numbers of user engaged with social networking sites are being increased day by day for business and social media could become a significant marketing strategy (Kim and Ko2012; Liang and Turban 2011; Yadav et al. 2013). It could become a cause to increase the budget in the US markets by the marketers for their marketing strategies specifically for the allocation of social media marketing that have great impact on consumers (e-Marketer 2016).

Argument has been given by the previous researchers regarding the social media communications as various groups of consumers are targeted buy the companies through social media, the customers involvement can be achieved at effective level (Bai and Yan, 2020); hence, purchase intention of the customers can also be affected by the social media engagement (Hasan et al. 2019). Therefore, artificial intelligence (AI) is used by social media platforms and by which marketers using social media strategies to promote and marketing of their products and services. With the assistance of social media, a customer may equip information related to products and services enlisted in the social networking sites; on the other hand criticism can also be done on the same platform regarding the same products and services (Mredu Goyal, 2016). Both marketers and consumers get benefits from the Facebook platform. With the assistance of this domain, competitive position of the business gets new opportunities of the development along with the establishment of new customer values and strong relationship is maintained by retaining the existing customers (Constantinides, 2014).

The prominent increment of social media has become a new approach for digital media marketers in the industry. As a part of e-commerce, social commerce is referred as the commercial activities which are greatly affected by the social media users when they are interacted in computer mediated social environment (Liang et al. 2011; Yadav et al. 2013). Social connectedness is built and developed among the social media users through the activities done online for the social interactions in which the users involve in the activity of liking and sharing the posts (Grieve et al. 2013). As the interaction is made over the social media platforms by the different users, they tend to believe in having the same attitudes and behaviours which yield result in developing their sense of affiliation to the community of brand (Xiang et al. 2016).

In recent days, the researcher have emphasized on their studies to understand the social media pages contents (Asley Tuten, 2015; Kumar et al. 2016), social media usage (Zhao et al.2016) and trusting role in social commerce (Hajli et al. 2017; Yahia et al.2018; Kang and Jhonson, 2013; Kim And Park, 2013;). However the dimension of social relationships was abolished which is a crucial factor and has its own recognition in the social commerce (Rauniar et al.2014).

By connecting and interacting over social media information regarding the products and services can be shared by the consumers among themselves that lead to influence the purchasing decisions of others (W. N. Iblast et al. 2016). For the purpose of e-marketing sufficient places are given by the websites while aiming at consumers choices. Transformation of the experiences and knowledge concerning the products and services among the users of social media may lead to brand reputation and at the same time it may have bad impact as the negative thoughts are shared among them.

That's the pleasant movement for the youths when they are engaged in selecting and purchasing the products online rather than they participate in physical shopping. Social media assist the consumers in getting product information, hence, time and effort is saved that have to spend on physical shopping. Privacy, trust and security are the crucial aspects which play a vital role in social networking sites (Sunita Mehal et al. 2015).

By utilization of different demographic characteristics like gender, age, occupation and disposable income etc.the review given by the social media consumers for a product and service, they have power to influence other social media consumers. For the consumers willing to buy products through online, social media has become more reliable and valuable source (Elisabeta Loanas and Ivona Stoica 2014). In sales and branding of products and services social media has quantifiable impact. Likewise at a minimum cost it spread a large amount of publicity or at a low cost mass audience can be attracted towards its brand. The world of social networking sites is obstinate and energetic change. This study will exhibit about the influences of social media which brought a strategic change in marketing strategy and become lucrative to expand the business and build up good reputation in the mind of the consumers.

Review of Literature
M**.** Nick Hajli (2013) has focused in his studies that how social media plays a tremendous role in the advancement of e-commerce and also traces their trust and observed utility have any impact to the targeted consumers willing to make their purchase over social media sites. The outcome exhibited that consumers purchase intention is influenced directly or indirectly by trust. Abzari (2014) has emphasized in his study to examine the impact of social media and traditional promotions towards the consumers' attitude on and their buying objective. The outcome exposed that brand attitude has tremendous influence on social media whereas traditional promotions has lesser influence than social media.

As far as social commerce is considered consumers are directly or indirectly indulge in commercial transactions. During the purchase phase of consumers, their buying behaviour is

reflected in his decision making process and this entire phase comes in direct transaction. In a defined perspective of social media electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) referral activities are included in the indirect transactions, search the information, process of selection and after sales of customers in their decision making process are identified as the business information sharing and request (Zhang et al. 2014). While sharing similar interest and thoughts on social networking sites individual feel that he/she is connected with others and at the same time the users perceived that it is easy, enjoyable and useful to go through online shopping.

Kwon et al. (2014) revealed about Facebook users that perceived connectedness has significant impact on perceived usefulness. Yuksel et al. (2016) have exposed further that the utilitarian (acquiring information) and hedonic (i.e. playfulness) values are affiliated with online social interactions that direct to positive behavioural intentions. Liang et al. (2011) The social media users get motivation from these supportive interactions, to share information and express their emotional attachment. For instance, utilitarian shopping information is shared by the consumers who are connected socially over the social media regarding the products quality and reliability of sellers. By sharing information it escalate the consumers shopping experience and it influence the perception of consumers regarding the ease of use and usefulness in their shopping process of social commerce.

James E. Richard and Sarita Guppy (2014) revealed that purchasing intention of consumers are merely affected by posting comments on Facebook but the buttons given for like, share and places based check in service have significant effect on their intention towards purchasing. As per defined by Hajli (2013) the social commerce components like comment, review and ratings regarding any product that are being considered as word of mouth (WoM) by many authors. Berger (2014) has perceived word of mouth as a informal communication concerned with purchase, use and features of any products or services or anything associated with the seller intimated to other consumers. Without requiring any other means, individuals exchange information directly in this communication being positively or negatively.

Henning Thurau et al. (2004) the advancement of internet yield opportunity to the consumers to select the option for collecting the information regarding product or service from other consumers through internet and social networking sites and through this platform consumers may share their own consumption related experiences and suggestions by indulging in electronic word of mouth (e-Word of Mouth). Grand and Gurtler (2008) have intimated in this particular sense of electronic commerce that to establish reputation of sellers, the system of recommendation is a significant instrument which aim is to mitigate the uncertainty of the customers concerning a product.

Tubenchlak et al. (2015) summarized that companies should recognize and inspire the customers and persons who is able to influence the opinion of others to spread positive information regarding their products by using social networking sites. The features of online advertising were highlighted by Harshini CS (2015) and its effect on consumer purchase target also studied by them. Buying intention of consumers are inspired by some features of social media advertising like informational, interactive, joyfulness and trustworthiness. Marry R.

Millson (2016) has carried out his study regarding the use of social media platforms by the purchasers of goods with their buying motives. They found that the purchase intention is associated with brand equity and customer equity in relation with positivity and negativity respectively. Mahmood Rehmani and Khan (2011) have investigated about the parameters of social media as online chats, e-discussion, e-mail etc. that have influence over the purchase decision of consumers.

The above researches have given a clear idea regarding the proposed study done by the researcher regarding the examination of influences of social media on the students in their purchasing decisions through online shopping. It assist in deciding the objective of the study to explore the areas of online shopping pattern of the users of social media.

Statement of the Problem:

In this crucial competitive market, each and every company would like to represent itself on social media platforms and employ the management practices to achieve this objective. The marketers encourage the users by their activities to make their purchase decision over social media and other online platforms. By observing the detailed review of literature, the researchers obtained that how consumer purchase decision is tremendously affected by the social media and how purchase intention of the consumers are having positive significant relation with word of mouth and e-advertising. However, influences of social media through word of mouth and e-advertising in the purchasing pattern of the students through online must be emphasized and taken into consideration for more research.

This study will assist the marketers to know about their target market and will lead to capture them effectively through applying marketing strategies that will include online marketing and shape on social networking sites. The outcome of research questions are –

- To observe the influence of social media advertising as a marketing tool on the purchase intention of students in business perspective.
- To find out the mostly used social media among thestudents.

Objectives of the study:

- To access the most purchasing product through online shopping via social media by the students with special reference to gender.
- To analyze the impact of social media platforms on the purchasing intention of the students.
- To analyze the frequency of users using social media sites on the ground of demographic characteristics.

Research Methodology:

Social media users affect significantly to the social commerce while interacting with each others on social networking sites (Liang et al. 2011; Yadav et al. 2013). Hence, it is essential to be in connection of social commerce that is to use social media. Most of the students of colleges

(98%) are the users of social networking sites (Griffin, 2015) and indulged in the process of buying i.e. before and after purchase experiences are being shared through social media while they are in interaction among themselves and through social commerce products are directly consumed.

The target of this present research paper is to analyze the effect of social networking sites in online shopping with special reference to college going students (Undergraduate and post graduate students) in Northern India. The following hypotheses have been developed by the researcher on the ground of research questions and objectives-

H_1 **:** There is a significant relationship between dependent and independent variables.

H_2 **:** There is significant relation with independent variables the frequency of using social media.

Survey Instruments:

This research paper is quantitative in nature. For the sampling purpose, convenience sampling technique has been applied. For the survey instrument, an structured online questionnaire was framed and sent to 298 students of different colleges and universities and only 264 responses selected as these were filled up properly by the respondents and ready for further analysis. The rest responses were eliminated due to insignificant data or responses given by the respondent or not received from the end users. The respondents were active social media users as they shown their interest in participation of the survey.

As the questionnaire was framed in structured way which contains from question 1 to 4 demographically associated questions like age, gender and education of the respondents whereas; question 5-10 illustrate about the social media platforms, frequency of use by the respondents, influence of social media, purchasing process and selection of advertising media. Question 11 is the dependent variable which illustrate about purchase intentions and this question contains five items whereas; question 12 is independent variables containing two variables word of mouth having four items and e-advertising containing three items. These items have been taken from the existing studies such as from Toor et al. (2017); Sunita Mehla et al. (2015); and Mikalef et al. (2012) for measuring each construct and it has been slightly improved by the end of the researcher. Except the demographic information all the scale items were measured using five point Likert's scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree).

Techniques Used for Data Analysis:

The analysis was carried out using MS Excel. Descriptive analysis (Frequency) was applied to analyze the demographic variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for assessing reliability and test discriminate construct validity. To test the independent variables (word of mouth and e-advertising) and their association with frequency of using social networking sites among the students, ANOVA was used by the researcher. For comparing purchasing products with gender factor column and chart were used. To assess the significant relationship between independent and dependent variables that consist word of mouth and e-advertising and purchase intention respectively, regression analysis was applied.

Conclusion and Recommendation:
The proposed hypotheses have been taken from considering the past literatures in detail. This research report tried to investigate in depth customer behavior in relation to the technology of the internet as a purchasing medium. The paper inferred a strong linkage between social media users and online shopping and analyzed the significance relationship between the factors of social media platforms and its effect on purchase intention of the students. It was revealed by the researcher that there was significant relationship between purchase intentions of the students and E-Advertising on the other hand no significant relation was observed for word of mouth. No significance relations existed between the frequency of using social media and gender factors of the college going students. In the compliance of an objectives, it was inferred that female students were more habitual to buy apparel and cloths through online rather than male students whereas; male students are addicted to buy electronic gazettes and items in online and fewer females given their consent regarding this in online shopping. The outcomes of this paper reveal that the purchase intention of students is greatly influenced by E-Advertising on various social media sites that assist the sellers to increase their sales.

The products reviews given by the social media users are trusted by the users on the same platforms. It was also observed that product review has positive effect on the consumers' purchase intentions. Hence, there must be discounts and coupons for those users who are indulged in recommending the products on social media. Marketers should encourage the customers to share positivity about their products and services.

The findings reveal that, in addition to utility and convenience of use, there are other elements that can influence a consumer's online shopping habit. This research paper has attempted to study in depth the behavior of consumers regarding the technology of internet as a shopping medium. The most important component in influencing consumers' attitudes toward internet purchasing is its utility. Because of the tight link between these two variables, marketers can choose for techniques that emphasize the entire utility of the online purchasing system/process. If individuals believe that using the internet as a shopping medium requires little physical or mental work, this will have an impact on customers' general attitudes toward the online shopping phenomena.

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