

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING DECISION PROCESS: A CASE STUDY OF JAIPUR

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ABSTRACT

Widespread use of Internet and social media is changing consumer behavior as well as affecting their buying decision making process. A study is done for this paper to offer an overview on how social media is used by consumers in the various stages of the decision making process. For the purpose of this paper a survey of 150 consumers which were selected randomly in the capital city of Rajasthan i.e Jaipur was conducted, in order to find out to what extent they are impacted by social media usage and what role does social media plays in their decision making process. Around 45% of the respondents reported unplanned buying decisions which were based on the information provided on the internet, while 55% of them stated that they were motivated to buy after going through the reviews on social media by their friends.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Consumer Buying Decision Process, Survey, Consumer Behavior.

Introduction

The widespread use of social media shows that the conventional or the traditional media is almost dead. Social media is highly influencing the behavior of consumers and their decision making process. A study is made, in this paper, to study the impact of Social media on consumer's buying decision process with special reference to the population of Jaipur city of Rajasthan. It is observed that these days almost all companies use social media as a tool for advertising and for the promotion of their products and services, making online sales, attracting new potential customers, connecting with current buyers and sellers, brand support, contact business and many more. The way of communication between consumers and marketers has been changed by social media as it has become much easier and faster for the users, buyers and consumers to connect with each other with the availability of modern digital smartphones and social media. Peer reviews and recommendations play a considerable role in their buying decision process. Social media here refers to the online channels of communication. Various forms of social media include social networking sites, forums and social book marking such as Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and many more while the 'traditional mass media' refers to conventional channels of communication which includes radio, TV, newspaper etc. Consumer decision making process involves five stages such as:

- Need /Problem recognition
- Information search
- Alternative evaluation
- Purchase decision
- Post purchase behavior.

The major focus of the study is to investigate the impact made by social media on the above mentioned stages of the consumer buying decision making process.

Literature Review

In the current era, social media is influencing very strongly on perceptions, attitudes and opinions of the common man. Some studies are presented as follows which show the Impact of social media on consumer's buying decision process. Further review of literature is done keeping in mind mainly the keywords mentioned earlier.

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Duangruthai Voramontri and Leslie Klieb, (2019) Their study analyzed that social media usage influences consumer satisfaction in the stages of information search and alternative evaluation, with satisfaction getting amplified as the consumer moves along the process towards the final purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation.

Sudha M. and Dr, Sheena K. (2019) In their study they explained that the spread of social media has changed buying and selling techniques. With platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Youtube, consumers are able to comment on their experiences with products and companies and to share them with their friends. Companies need to generate positive customer experiences in order to minimize negative word-of-mouth messages, which would easily be spread within the social media platform to other, potential customers.

Jill Nash (2019) In his study on exploring the influence of social media on consumer decision in retail sector revealed that social media is not only source that motivates their consumer decision making process and with the proliferation of active users on social media these platforms are and will continue to have an ever more increasing impact on consumer decision making.

Gupta Swati, Agarwal Atul Kumar, Chauhan Ajay Kumar (2018) In the findings of their study they stated that the impact of social media on consumer buying decisions did not significantly relate to gender and the impact of social media promotional tools i.e movie celebrity association did not significantly relate to occupation.

Tapinfluence (2017) Based on the tenets of influencer marketing, companies generally invite social media influencers such as bloggers with thousands of followers in their social media accounts as their brand ambassador.

Tapinfluence (2017) According to a Nielsen marketing survey, influencer marketing yields returns on investments (ROI) 11 times higher as compared to digital marketing.

Abdel Qader (2015) performed research to examine the effect of social media on buying decisions of customers by using the internet. Different descriptive and analytical techniques have been applied to obtain the results and tried to develop the relationship between variables under study. It has been revealed from results that social networking dimensions such as exchange of information and evaluation have a strong impact on purchasing decisions of customers.

Bhalla (2015) has performed research on "Facebook Advertising: Lifeline for Small Business." He tried to explore during the shopping process how consumers exchange their views about producers using social media, especially Facebook.

Social Media

In simple language, social media refers to the practices, behavior and activities among communities or the groups of people who gather online to share information, knowledge and opinions using Web based applications are used to share information published on Internet to their friends, so that, they can inform more people for a product or event, through photos, videos etc.

Consumer Decision Process

Five stages of consumer decision making process are:

- Need/ problem recognition, which occurs whenever the consumer sees a significant difference between his or her current state of affairs and some desired or ideal state. Social media content motivates new consumer needs. Every photo, video, comment, review and other content posted on social media to which consumers are exposed plays a vital role in stimulating or recognising a new need.
- Information search: Is the second stage in the decision-making process by which the consumer surveys his or her environment for appropriate data to make a reasonable decision. The Internet, these days, is the most commonly used source of information search.
- Alternative evaluation: Almost everyone searches for online reviews and gets more detailed, accurate and reliable information, because that information is from people who have already tried those alternatives. This way, consumers come to know the positive and negative sides of each alternative and decide to choose the best one.
- Purchase Decision: The reviews of others tend to change consumers' mind regarding a product and push them to buy or not to buy something.

- Post purchase behavior: social media provides different alternatives for people to react in case of dissatisfaction after purchase, like writing messages to the company, posting on the social media companies accounts, commenting in public posts and writing negative reviews.

Research Methodology

Objectives of the Study

- To study how social media impacts consumer behavior?
- To measure the change in perception of the consumers through the content and involvement on social media.
- To study the changes social media has brought to consumers in different stages of their decision making.

Keeping in mind these objectives two types of data i.e primary and secondary are collected for this study. Secondary data presented as Literature review was reviewed and studied in order to get a better understanding on consumer decision making process and social media. This paper is mainly based on primary data, collected through a survey questionnaire conducted with consumers of Jaipur city of various age groups through mail.

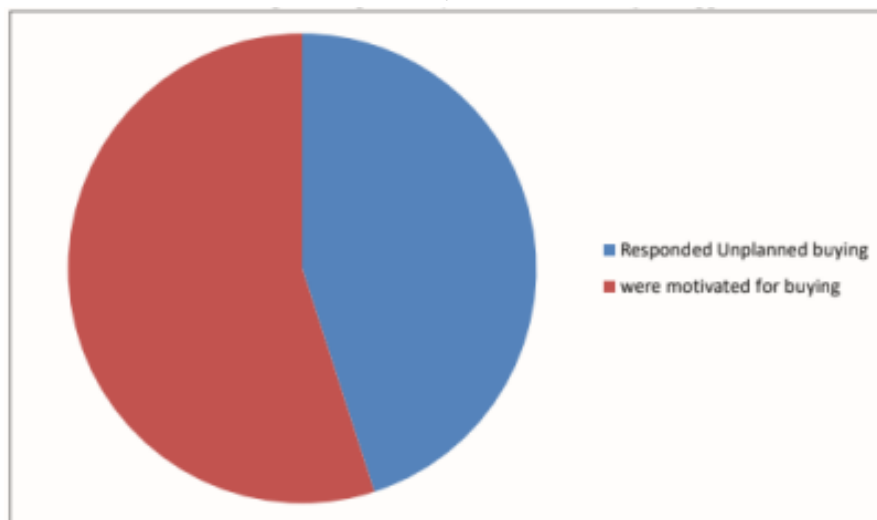
The sample consisted of 150 participants. The questionnaire was sent to all of them, but there were 120 of them that participated. All the respondents were residents of Jaipur city.

The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions, including Yes/No questions. Filter questions, closed questions with alternatives, closed questions with possibilities of adding more responses through the box "others" and six point Likert scale, asking respondents to evaluate their responses with rates from 0 to 5. All questions were simple, understandable and clear. The questionnaire was easily accessible to the respondents. The respondents received the link online via e-mail and were politely asked to complete it. Once they pressed the "Done" button their responses were automatically recorded. The data collected from the survey was analyzed and presented in numerical figures. The results are interpreted and presented by using charts, bar diagrams, pie charts and descriptions by words in order to have a clear presentation.

Analysis and Results

Impact of social media on buying decision making process is analyzed as follows from the data collected through questionnaire;

- The most affected stage is searching for information with 35% of the respondents declaring that they are mostly affected by social media in some way or the other. The use of social media by respondents of Jaipur can also be noticed by the results of the question, according to which they were asked, "If social media ever caused them to buy anything unplanned, that they really did not need? Around 59% responded positively and 41% declared the opposite.

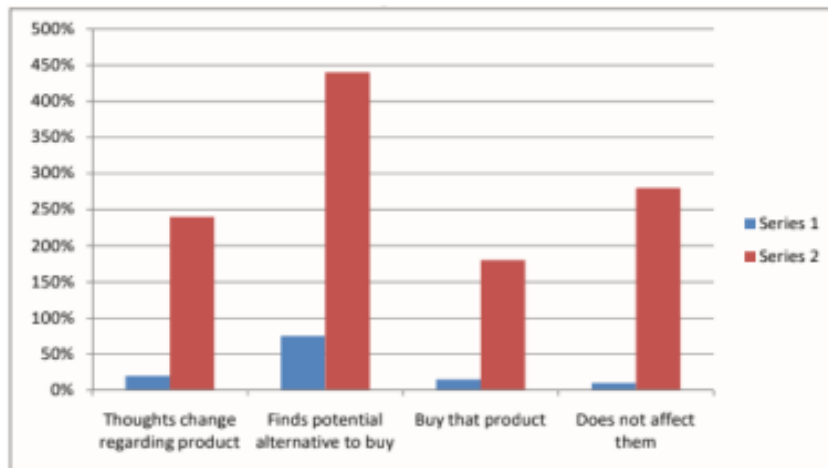


An impact is also noticed in the stage of evaluating alternatives or selecting the products with 15% of respondents evaluating this stage as the most affected one by social

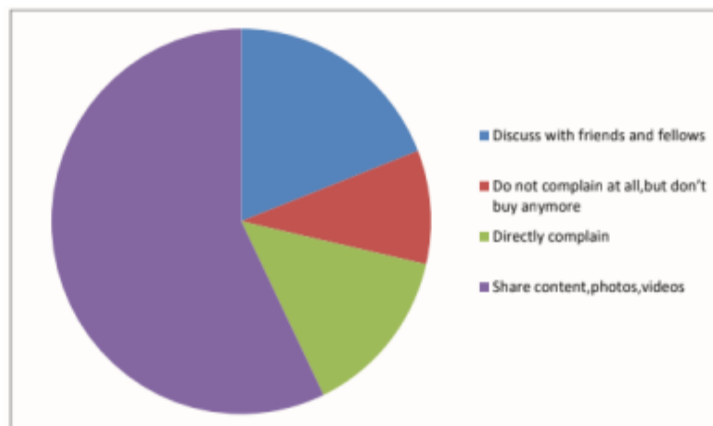
media. The findings further show that the respondents are affected by social media while searching for information and social media was most commonly used to do so. When asked “which are the advantages of using social media as information sources as compared to traditional mass media?” 85% of the respondents have easy access and a huge quantity of information as the greatest advantage of using social media. Almost 50% considered time saving as an advantage.

45% higher credibility of information, due to being provided by the users.

- Purchase decision: Social media impacts buying, even if it is unplanned. This is due to the frequent exposure of consumers towards the products and advertisements in the social media and their sharing. When asked about “ the impact of a product going viral in social media in their behavior ,” their results were - 20% thoughts change regarding the product.
 - 75% find potential alternatives to buy.
 - 15% buy that product.
 - 10% does not affect them. The following chart shows this



- **Post Purchase Behaviour:** The literature review of this paper showed that social media provides different possibilities of showing dissatisfaction. This study shows that 40% of the respondents after purchasing, discuss their dissatisfaction with their friends and fellows, and 20% of them do not complain they just do not buy the product anymore, whereas 30% directly complain and 18% of them complain via the social media in different ways like sharing content, photos, videos etc. Results of respondents on post purchase dissatisfaction is shown as follows:



Conclusion

Consumers included in the survey from Jaipur city use a lot of Internet and social media and spend considerable time. The majority of the respondents have Internet access via mobile phones or any other device like tablet, desktop and use social media. Social media users are mainly the young upto 40 years old which is due to the knowledge about digital technology. The study showed that the most commonly used social media platforms are social networks like Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, LinkedIn. The respondents use social media mainly to search for information as they find the information reliable and it saves their time. It also enhances their knowledge related to different products and services.

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Appendix – Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to identify the impact of social media on the decision making process. I assure you that your responses will remain safe, anonymous and will be used only for research purposes. Thank you for your participation.

- Question 1. Age:
- Upto 20 years old
 - 20-40 years old
 - Over 40 years old.

- Question 2. Gender
- Male
 - Female
- Question 3. Do you use the Internet via your personal phone?
- Yes
 - No
- Question 4. Do you use social media? (if yes, then continue further) o Yes
- No
- Question 5. How much time do you spend on social media? (per day) o Upto one hour a day
- 1-3 hours a day
 - More than 3 hours.
- Question 6. Which social media platform do you use?
- Blogs
 - Twitter
 - Facebook
 - Youtube
 - All of the above.
- Question 7. Before buying a product where do you search for information?(continue further if you select social media)
- Traditional media
 - Social media
- Question 8. Which of the following sources do you use for searching information before buying? (Rate your answer from 0-5)
- | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Network (Facebook,LinkedIn) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Twitter | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Instagram | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Google | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Youtube | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
- Question 9. Do you find social media advantageous for your purchase decision making? 0 0 0 0 0 0 (if yes, continue further)
- Yes
 - No.
- Question 10. If yes, what are the advantages of social media over conventional media? o Easier access
- More information
 - Saves time
 - Reliable Information
 - Easy and other communication with other consumers
 - Others.
- Question 11. Have you ever purchased unplanned due to social media exposure?
- Yes
 - No

Question 12. What motivates you to buy products exposed in social media? o Positive comments of the previous users

- Friends and fellows
- Photos and videos of product
- The desire to be like others
- How To change others opinion about me
- Others

Question 13. How do you consider the social media impact in each of the stages of your consumer decision making process? (rate your answer from 0-5) 0 1 2 3 4 5

- Need recognition 0 0 0 0 0
- Information search 0 0 0 0 0
- Alternative evaluation 0 0 0 0 0
- Purchase decision 0 0 0 0 0
- Post purchase behavior 0 0 0 0 0

Question 14. How do you show your dissatisfaction if not satisfied after buying a product?

- I directly complain to the company
- I discuss with my friends and fellows
- I comment regarding the product
- I post videos and photos showing my dissatisfaction
- I do not complain, I just do not buy that product anymore
- Others

Question 15. How does it affect you when a product goes viral in social media? o My thoughts and attitude changes

- I buy it
- I find it as a potential alternative to buy in future
- Does not affect me.

Thank You for your participation.

