The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behavior in the Guruvayur Municipality of Thrissur District

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ABSTRACT

As consumers allocate more of their time to social media, it inevitably affects their purchasing decisions and preferences in item selection. The process of a consumer's purchasing behavior is influenced by various factors, such as personal, psychological, social, and more. Through social media platforms, consumers can conveniently order goods and satisfy the needs of themselves and their families. These factors hold significant weight in shaping a customer's purchasing behavior. In order to comprehend the factors that affect the purchasing behavior of social media users, primary data was collected.

Key Words: Consumer, Buying Behavior, social media

INTRODUCTION

Due to its user-friendly features, social media has become a popular tool that enables people to connect with each other across distances, making the whole world available at our fingertips. Social media refers to online communication media that allow community-based input, interaction, and content sharing. It includes different types of platforms such as websites and applications dedicated to forums, social networking, social bookmarking, etc.

Organizations use social media marketing as one of the popular channels to communicate their brands. It involves the use of social media platforms and websites to promote a product or service. Social networking websites provide an opportunity for individuals, businesses, and organizations to interact with each other and build relationships online. Through social networking sites, companies can stay in touch with individual followers. Over the years, some examples of popular social networking websites include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and YouTube. By making use of these platforms, companies can reach wider audiences than traditional print/TV/radio advertisements, often at a fraction of the cost.

Statement of Problem
The advent of the internet has brought about a notable shift in consumer attitudes. Nowadays, the majority of people utilize technology in multiple ways, and social media has become an important factor in modern society. The conventional methods of marketing have become obsolete, as people rely more on online methods to fulfil their requirements. Social media platforms and apps have gained immense popularity in recent times. In addition to being a marketing platform, social media is also viewed as a creative marketing approach. As a result, it is crucial to examine the impact of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Scope of the Study
The study was conducted among consumers residing in the Guruvayur municipality of Thrissur District in Kerala. A sample of 120 consumers was conveniently selected to participate in the study.

Research questions
    1. What are the determinants which influence the buying behaviour of consumers?
    2. Which is the most preferred social media by the customers?

Objective of the study

1. To determine the factors influencing buying behaviour of consumers.
2. To understand the most preferred social media app by consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is both descriptive and analytical, and involves gathering primary and secondary data through a structured questionnaire. A group of 120 consumers from Guruvayur municipality in Thrissur District of Kerala were selected using convenience sampling.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was analyzed using methods such as percentage analysis, ranking, Likert scale, and t-test, and was presented in the form of tables and charts.

Table No. 1, Reliability Test

(Source: Primary data)

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.851	0.852	12

Interpretation: The table above shows that the alpha value is 0.851, which is considered good reliability among the variables as any value above 0.70 is deemed reliable. Therefore, the 12 variables exhibit good consistency and internal reliability among them.

Table No. 2, Test of Normality of Buying Behaviour

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Buying Behaviour
N		120
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	3.6076
	Std. Deviation	.70887
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.113
	Positive	.071
	Negative	-.113
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.237
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.094
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		

(Source: Primary data)

The above tabledepicts that, one sample Kolmogorov- Smirnov test shows the test value is higher than the required (Sig.050), hence the data possess the normality in the collected variable under the study.

Table No. 3 - Explorative Factor Analysis Table (EFA)

Rotated Component Matrix			
Variables	Component		
	Factor1	Factor 2	Factor 3

Less Time Consuming	0.823		
Door-to-Door delivery	0.662		
Selection of Large varieties of products.	0.616		
Recent trends and Fashion can Identify	0.572		
Social media Advertising	0.549		
Convenient Purchase		0.889	
More offers and Discount in Social media		0.855	
Attractive design of Web pages		0.478	
Easy payment options :Cash and Installment		0.452	
Review and Trends			0.814
Recommendation from others			0.755
Privacy and Good Customer Services			0.752
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.			

(Source: Primary data)

An Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted to identify the variables that influence buying behaviour in social media purchases. Only variables with an Eigen value greater than 1 were included in the analysis. Principal Component Analysis was used to identify three factors. The first factor (Factor 1) included 5 variables, Factor 2 included 4 variables, and Factor 3 included 3 variables. The twelve variables were grouped into three dimensions.

Hypothesis of the Study
H0: There is no significant difference between the sample mean and population mean of the different factors influencing social media.
H1: There is a significant difference between the sample mean and population mean of the different factors influencing social media.

Table No. 4, One Sample T test

One-Sample Statistics						
Dimensions	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**D.f***	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Buying Behaviour_1	120	3.7267	0.80123	9.935	119	0.00**
Buying Behaviour_2	120	3.5500	0.87363	6.896	119	0.00**
Buying Behaviour_3	120	3.4861	0.94666	5.625	119	0.00**
Buying Behaviour	**120**	**3.6076**	**0.70887**	**9.390**	**119**	**0.00****
** @ 1% significance level , *df : degree of freedom (n-1)						

(Source Primary Data)

The t-value for Buying behaviour is 9.390, which gives a p-value of 0.00** , and each factor also has a p-value of 0.00** at a 1% significant level. This result is significant for any realistic alpha level. The standard alpha level is 0.05, and 0.00** is smaller than 0.05. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis, which assumes no difference between our sample mean and the population mean. Technically, the result shows that assuming the null hypothesis is true, a difference as significant as the one we have found between our sample mean and the population mean is highly unlikely to occur by chance. This result provides evidence that the difference between our sample group and the population as a whole is real.

Table No. 5. Preference of social media for shopping

	Social media sites	W	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Mean	Rank
1	Facebook	F	32	23	25	27	13	120	2.72	2
		FX	32	46	75	108	65	326		
2	WhatsApp	F	24	42	29	20	5	120	2.5	1
		FX	24	84	87	80	25	300		
3	Twitter	F	1	4	24	22	69	120	4.28	4
		FX	1	8	72	88	345	514		
4	Instagram	F	39	26	21	24	10	120	2.5	1
		FX	39	52	63	96	50	300		
5	YouTube	F	24	25	21	27	23	120	3	3
		FX	24	50	63	108	115	360		

(Source: Primary Data   2019)

The above table indicates that consumers mostly prefer using WhatsApp and Instagram for shopping through social media. Facebook and YouTube rank second and third, respectively. Twitter, on the other hand, is the least preferred social media platform for online shopping.

Major Findings
All the selected respondents use social media during their leisure time, with 38% spending 2-3 hours and 7% spending more than 5 hours on social media daily. 27.5% of respondents equally use Instagram and YouTube for leisure activities. In terms of shopping behaviour, 92% of respondents use social media for shopping, while 8% do not. The collected variables show a normal distribution with reliability and consistency.

The exploratory factor analysis indicates that there are three dimensions influencing buying behavior in social media purchasing, with a total buying behaviour mean value of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 0.71. WhatsApp and Instagram are the most preferred social media platforms for shopping, with Facebook and YouTube following in second and third place respectively. The most commonly purchased items on social media are clothes and shoes. The main benefit enjoyed by social media users is quick accessibility.

Suggestions
Social media sites should provide accurate information to consumers and improve their credibility and reliability. By offering more advertisements and attractive offers to consumers, they can boost their sales. To win over consumers, sites should adopt prompt delivery and fair return policies. It's crucial for consumers to select credible sites and avoid unnecessary media influences by being mindful of the personal information they share.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the research that consumers in Guruvayur municipality are actively utilizing social media platforms as tools for validating their purchase decisions. The main objective of the study was to find out the influence of social media on consumer buying behaviour. By analyzing the information collected through primary data, it is clear that a considerable number of respondents use social media for their purchases. Most of the respondents prefer Instagram and WhatsApp for buying products and prefer to buy clothes/shoes through social media sites. The respondents ranked quick access as the primary benefit of social media purchasing, and publishing private information while purchasing through social media as the primary challenge of social media purchasing. There are also a large number of factors that influence the buying behaviour of consumers, including less time consumption, convenient purchases, reviews, and trends, etc.

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