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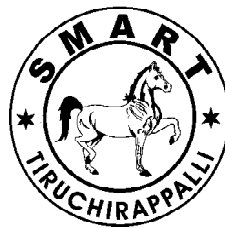
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**SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMERS BUYING
BEHAVIOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO APPAREL INDUSTRY
IN BAREILLY REGION**

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Abstract

The growth of internet is as rapid and pervasive as any technological breakthrough in the last century. Internet is becoming a part of more and more Indian lives across the spectrum of online activities. Social media is a phenomenon that has drawn a lot of attention both to companies and networking landscape. Social media has increasingly become a constant in our lives. The study examined the extant literature on social media and consumer buying behavior. A simple random sampling methodology was used, to collect the primary data from 100 respondents. The findings show that impact of social media, on consumer purchase decision, did not significantly relate to gender and the impact of social media promotional tool i.e. movie celebrity association, did not significantly relate to occupation.

Keywords: Social Media, Consumer Buying Behavior, Apparel Industry

JEL Code: D11, N3, P46

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1. Introduction

Social Media is defined as a second generation of Web development and design, that aims to facilitate communication, secures information sharing, interoperability and collaboration on the World Wide Web (**Paris, et al., 2010**). The term, Social Media, refers to the collection of technologies that capture communication, content, and so on, across individuals, their friends and their social networks. Examples of social media include social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, blogging technologies like type pad and word press, crowd sourcing products like Wikipedia, photo and video sharing like Flickr and YouTube and others. These technologies help users to easily create content on the internet and share it with others. Social media is the infrastructure that helps users become publishers of content that is interesting to them and their friends. Social Media, today, is among the 'best opportunities available' to a brand for connecting with prospective consumers. Social media is the medium to socialize. These new media win the trust of consumers by connecting with them at a deeper level. Social media marketing is the new mantra for several brands since early years. Marketers are taking note of many different social media opportunities and beginning to implement new social initiatives at a higher rate.

2. Review of Literature

Social marketing is a popular and effective way of getting vital information, that is essential to the success of one's business (**Skul, D., 2008**). Indian consumers are becoming more transactional online. The growth of online activities in India has grown nearly five times, from 7.1 million in January 2010 to 34.2 million in November 2012 (**IAMAI, Technopak analysis, Marketing White book 2014-15**). The purpose of brand promotion on social media

platform, has emerged as the latest tool due to the advent of internet users where companies can approach the consumers directly and provide visibility of their product and brand image. Social networking sites are the source of almost inexhaustible views of clients and situations and the challenge is to control this information in an appropriate manner and in a meaningful way, for the company to gain real benefits for them. Social networking is also a suitable framework for core activities in marketing on the Internet. Social networks provide the opportunity to talk with customers on a personal level, which is usually difficult to achieve or impossible through traditional channels. Marketing on social networking sites is not a substitute for traditional marketing. It should be treated as an additional channel, with unique characteristics, that can complement other marketing activities. Social media is important for marketers because it allows them to dialogue directly with consumers, which, in turn, helps consumers to engage directly with company brands (**Hanlon, et al., 2008**). Many companies, such as Audi and Dunkin' Donuts have used social media very effectively to reach consumers. Out of all other brands on Facebook, Audi's fans are the most engaged of all major corporate brands on Facebook. A study was conducted on the influence of brand equity on consumer responses (**Martí'nez Eva et al., 2009**). The study found that brand equity dimensions inter-relate. Brand awareness positively impacts perceived quality and brand associations. Brand loyalty is mainly influenced by brand associations. The study done, by Winer, 1986, provides a synthesis of the extant online brand communities (OBC). A conceptual framework is provided that extends our understanding of online brand communities and consumer engagement. Four key online brand communities, dimensions (brand orientation, internet-use, funding and governance) have been

identified and three antecedents (brand-related, social and functional) have been proposed for consumer and OBC engagement. Though a number of research has been conducted on the use of social media for advertisement and promotion, no study has been undertaken about the consumer buying behavior, with reference to apparel industry on social media, in the Indian context.

3. Statement of the Problem

This paper is focused on the behavior of consumers on social media, with reference to apparel industry. Now a days, consumers feel more comfortable to purchase online and on social media platforms. The apparel industries link their promotional activities with their advertisement. This study of consumer preferences could establish the framework within which the consumers make their choices and ultimately help the industry increase the sales of apparels, through social media networking sites.

4. Need of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of social media on consumer purchase decision and to find out whether it varied with gender and occupation through social media, as compared to traditional media.

5. Objective of the Study

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- a) To examine if the impact of social media on consumer purchase decision varied with gender.
- b) To examine if the impact of social media on consumer purchase decision varied with occupation.

6. Hypotheses of the Study

NH-1: The impact of social media on consumer purchase decision does not significantly relate to gender.

NH-2: The impact of social media promotional tool i.e. movie celebrity association, does not significantly relate to occupation

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Sample Selection

The sampling units included self employed, private sector employees, public sector employees and students as respondents. Convenient sampling was used. The sample size was 100.

7.2 Sources of data

The primary data were collected, using self-administered questionnaires. The pilot study was also conducted on 20 respondents and based on the feedback, the questionnaire was revised. The final data were collected from 100 respondents. The initial survey instrument had 20 questions, covering demographic, consumer preference, most favorite apparel brand on social media platform, which were measured across a five-point Likert scale.

7.3 Period of the Study

The period of the study was from January 2017 to December 2017.

7.4 Tools used

One way ANOVA and T-Test were used and SPSS software was used to analyse the data.

8. Data Analysis

A paired t-test was used, to compare two population means, where observations in one sample can be paired with observations in the

other sample. The test was conducted to judge the influence of different social media promotional tools like special discount, ad campaigns and celebrity associations. The test resulted in a P value of 0.492 (**Table-1**). As the P value was much higher than 0.05, it indicated that the difference did exist across the gender as far as influence was concerned. Hence the null hypothesis, **NH-1(The impact of social media on consumer purchase decision does not significantly relate to gender)**, is accepted.

As revealed in the **Table-2**, the study examined the influence on different social media promotional tools, on consumers, belonging to different occupations. The respondents of the study were divided into four groups, namely, students, private sector employees, public sector employees and self employees. One-way ANOVA was employed to study the difference and the impact of promotional tools on consumers (**Table-2**). The condition of homogeneity of variance was found to be violated. Hence the robust test of equality of means had to be conducted. Welch and Brown-Forsythe Test (**Table-3**) indicated that difference existed across categories as the impact of variable 'movie celebrity association' was concerned.

Table-4 shows that the Post HOC Test was further conducted to see the difference of impact across the categories and it was found that the impact of movie celebrity association was higher on private sector employees and students as compared to that of self-employed respondents. Hence from the **Table-5**, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference between the movie celebrity association and occupation as significance level was 0.380, which was greater than 0.05. Thus, **NH-2 (The impact of social media promotional tool i.e. movie celebrity**

association does not significantly relate to occupation), is accepted.

9. Findings of the Study

The study found that promotional tools on social media like special discount, had no association with gender. There was no significant difference across the category of male and female users as far as the influence of special discount was concerned.

10. Suggestions

Today people are very much influenced by the social media. Therefore, this emergent tool might influence the consumer buying behavior. The managerial implications are that apparel industry need to take the initiative to improve the visibility of their product, discount and promotions should be highlighted and also make the customer interactions a pleasant experience as this is what consumers expect from online retailers also. This can be achieved by improving customer relationship capabilities to improve the ease of interactions.

11. Conclusion

Through this research, we conclude that there are broadly a few factors which impact consumer purchase decision on social media. Impact of various promotional tools, offered on social media, is the same across the category of male and female as far as the influence of special discount, ad campaigns, events, occupation were concerned. Consumers across the world, while choosing product or services, have preferences based on the factors which are inherent to their decision making process. Internet is a new medium to sell the products and there are different demands of the consumer. Hence it is crucial for online-retailers to know what factors influence the purchase decision of a consumer. The study would help to understand the behavior of customers towards social media.

12. Limitations

The study considered only the feedback of 100 respondents and it was confined to the apparel industry only.

13. Scope for Future Study

The study could be extended to other industries and more number of respondents and other aspects of consumer behavior could be included.

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Table-1: Result of t-Test for equality of means on the basis of Gender

Variable	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Ad Campaigns	1.908	0.17	-0.69	98	0.492	-0.05769
Special Discount	0.28	0.598	-0.576	98	0.566	-0.08654
Movie celebrity association	0.443	0.507	0.048	98	0.962	0.00641

Table-2: ANOVA

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.875	2	0.438	0.976	0.380
Within Groups	43.485	97	0.448		
Total	44.360	99			

Source: Primary Data using SPSS (version 16).

Table-3: Robust Tests of Equality of Means

Test	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	1.585	2	36.039	0.219
Brown-Forsythe	1.175	2	74.360	0.315

Source: Primary Data using SPSS (version 16)

Table-4: Multiple Comparisons

Occupation (I)	Occupation (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Student	Private sector employee	0.04545	0.14275	0.946	-0.2943	0.3852
	Self employed	0.30303	0.21805	0.350	-0.2160	0.8220
Private sector employee	Student	-0.04545	0.14275	0.946	-0.3852	0.2943
	Self employed	0.25758	0.21805	0.467	-0.2614	0.7766
Self employed	Student	-0.30303	0.21805	0.350	-0.8220	0.2160
	Private sector employee	-0.25758	0.21805	0.467	-0.7766	0.2614

Source: Primary Data using SPSS (version 16).

Table-5: Movie Celebrity Association with Occupation

Method	Occupation	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05
			1
Tukey HSD ^{a,b}	Self employed	12	3.3333
	Private sector employee	44	3.5909
	Student	44	3.6364
	Sig.		0.275
Waller-Duncan ^{a,b,c,d}	Self employed	12	
	Private sector employee	44	
	Student	44	

Source: Primary Data using SPSS (version 16).

Note: Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 23.294.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used.

Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

c. Type 1/ Type 2 Error Seriousness Ratio = 100.

d. There are no homogeneous subsets for alpha = 0.05.