



Social Media Advertisements and Buying Behaviour: A Study of Indian Working Women

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ABSTRACT

Advertising patterns are making significant shifts towards social media from their traditional format. Social media has become a norm for the majority of companies due to progressive change in the mindset of consumers. In the current scenario, working women play an important role in the purchase decision of the family. Moreover, some studies revealed that in some cases working women solely make product purchases. According to the Pew Research, women (73%) lead over men (65%) in the use of social media. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that are influencing the working women purchase behaviour. The paper witnessed that demographic variables such as age and income of working women do play a significant role in online purchase. The key contribution of this paper is to provide the corporate houses an assessment of the extent to which the working women in India are influenced by social media in their online buying behaviour.

KEYWORDS

Consumer Behaviour, Digital Media, Digital Revolution, Factor Analysis, Influencer Marketing, Online Purchase, Social Media Advertisements, Working Women

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media in recent times has created an avenue for decentralized communication channel and opened the door for all to have a voice across the globe. It has provided a platform to participate in a democratic fashion. It is undeniable that social media plays an important role in impacting culture, economy and peoples overall view of the world. It is a new forum that brings society to exchange idea, connect with, relate to, and mobilize for a cause, seek advice, and offer guidance. The global social media users figure has reached to be 3.5 billion¹ as of October 2019. With over 460 million internet users, India is the second largest online market, behind China. It is estimated that by 2021, there will be approximately 635.8 million internet users in India².

As more than one-third of the global population uses social media, both corporate and consumers at the present time by means of social networking sites are desperately trying to make themselves more apparent and effective in the market³. It is estimated that the worldwide digital advertising will expand almost to \$517 billion in 2023 from \$333.3 billion in 2019⁴. As the sphere of social media keeps on revamping itself with new features, businesses need to progress with the same pace to make

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themselves more visible in this competitive market. Today the consumers research products and services online before making any purchase. According to ROBO Economy (2018), 82 per cent of smartphone users consult social media about the purchases they are about to make in-store and 45 per cent read reviews before making a purchase⁵. Hence, social media has made a significant impact on the concept of sell and purchase across the globe. It has not only become a new marketing channel but it has also created a new paradigm for the way in which consumers connect with brands and each other.

In line with the global technological advancements in communication, the Indian economy is also undergoing a paradigm shift in its socioeconomic and cultural structure in recent years. These changes have not only been reflected in the business scenario, but also in the attitude of the people. The country witnessed more independence in the decision-making power of women and also in their improved social and economic status. In fact, the numbers of women entrepreneurs are also increasing significantly in recent times. According to the report of Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2017), women in India are nearly one-third more likely to start a business out of necessity than men. It is predicted that under same necessity and proper digital skills, women can do wonders in the business. As a result, the social media usage has been increasing exponentially among women. Indeed, studies revealed that in India women spend significantly more time on social networking sites than men (Sultana and Nayeem, 2015). The awareness of women consumers' cognizance during recent years also indicates a remarkable shift in the pattern of consumer buying behaviour. Researchers has identified several factors which affect females buying behaviour: need, style, rising income, concern for self, wide variety of products and multiple brands available in the market, among others (Furqan, 2018; Voorveld, et. al, 2018). The messages in different advertisements are also created strongly to attract the women consumers. The most vulnerable group who are more attracted to the message is young women. Thus, this study critically evaluates the role of social media advertisements and factors that shape consumers' buying behavior. The purpose of this study is to uncover the effects of social media advertisements on young women's buying behaviour. In order to determine the more prominent reasoning amongst a sample size, the following objectives are being observed: (i) to study the impact of positive reviews on social media advertisements on the buying behaviour of Indian working women; (ii) to examine the impact of income on their purchase behaviour; and (iii) to identify the factors that significantly influence their online purchase.

This research draws and builds on findings from an extensive primary survey and also from the various empirical and conceptual studies subject to secondary analysis. As this study explicitly examines interrelationships between social media buying behaviour and female professionals in the Indian context, it is definite that this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge towards social networking and its influence on consumer behaviour. The organization of the paper is as follows. Section 2 provides a brief literature review. The research methodology used in the paper is discussed in Section 3. The research findings are provided in Section 4, followed by managerial implications of the study in Section 5. The concluding remarks are provided in Section 6.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media in broader term can be defined as online service with the aid of which users are empowered and enabled to not only create but also share different content (Shantanu et al., 2017). It comprises of social networking sites, online communities, user generated content, video sharing sites, online review and virtual games, where consumers can publish, or edit, generate and design content (Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008). Indeed, online social networks have profoundly changed the transmission of information by making it incredibly easy to share and assimilate information on the internet (Akrimi and Khemakhem, 2012). Trusov et al. (2009) defined social networking sites as network of friends for social or professional interactions. A study by Bannister, et al. (2013) on tech-savvy young adults, evaluates their attitudes towards social media advertisements. It revealed that Facebook users are active site participants but unlikely to click-through advertisements to make

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