



A study on the preference of whatsapp marketing over website marketing on apparel shopping among working women with special reference to post covid times in Mumbai city.

Author Details

Dr. Saranya Thaloor

Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication

Somaiya Vidyavihar University,SK College

Vidyavihar, Mumbai-77

Email: saranya.t@somaiya.edu

Mobile: 9901963270

Abstract

During this time of post-pandemic COVID-19 also described as an endemic period, the significance of online apparel shopping and the factors contributing for the purchasing behavior of working women audience seems to be ruling the market profoundly. Nowadays there are multiple online media sites offering features and factors to build the trust and credibility of the customers by managing demands and the experiences. Mentioning the significance of theory uses and gratification and two step flow theory, the study emphasizes on the objective of finding out the comparative preferences of online website shopping and whatsapp marketing among working women of Mumbai City. This study tries to find out the significance of updated technical advancement in online shopping which offers wide level of opportunities for the customers while comparing with traditional offline shopping methods. Data collection is done using simple random

method and structured questionnaire among working women crowd from various levels in Mumbai city. The reliability and validity of data is tested by analyzing the variables using chi-square test and percentage analysis. Significance level is also assessed properly for better understanding of the hypothesis used in this study. The study clearly shows that convenience and flexibility is more important for customer satisfaction than any other factors and that is the major reason they have opted for website marketing over whatsapp marketing. Customer service is also a major factor for the preference of the mode by the respondents. This analysis will surely contribute to research activities in the field of advertising, marketing research under media.

Keywords

Apparel Shopping, Whatsapp Marketing, post covid, purchasing behavior

Introduction

- Apparel Shopping industry in India

In India, the apparel industry holds the second position for the largest production after the IT industry. This industry plays an important role in the contribution of national development. There are many features which the apparel industry possess which is completely different from other industries. The few of them are the flow of communication or the process itself starts vertically from big nations to low nations. The retail sector also plays an important role for the demand of domestic crowd for apparel industry especially in India. The increasing demand of apparels among average income groups have created the demand for the international market for the industry. Indian markets have a model for other countries and international markets for the strategic management of trade and industrial advancement. In the international market, India hold the characteristics of low apparel sourcing cost which will be a great advantage for collaborations with international markets.

- Online apparel shopping in India

There is a huge opportunity for the online shopping industry as it offers the most flexible and convenient platform for the consumers instead of physically going and doing shopping. Online stores are a form of multi-channel retailing which can now be used to gain access to a wider market (Kim & Park, 2005). Still the perception of consumers and the impact of online shopping on

purchasing behavior goes for a toss with certain flaws when it comes to the retail market. The formation of attitude and loyalty of a brand by the consumer through online shopping requires concrete experience and satisfaction when these online modes go for multiple features like smooth transactions, easy accessible website. For gaining their loyalty brands have to concentrate more on these factors rather than making them limit to business goals. Zhou et al (2007) also stated that the online shoppers' perception will vary depending on the type of product because the risk factors are different for each (Liu, 2010). To manage a potential /traditional customer who considers shopping as a social activity these online platforms need to adopt many innovative techniques also. It is an evident finding that compared with generation Z, Generation Y are more inclined to track online shopping trends and do online shopping.

ONLINE SHOPPING AND ITS ADVANTAGES

Buying a service directly from the seller using online portals without any mediator is always have a positive impact of consumer perceptions. The major qualities of online shopping are listed below

- Easy accessible
- Product can be purchased in a very lower rate in online than offline
- Liberty of choices and preferences
- Increased level of meeting expectation and experiences at our doorsteps
- Trust and loyalty of the online websites with customers/better customer service
- More close to the needs of the audience than offline offering more privacy also for the customers.

Review of Literature

Naveen Kumar, Sudhansh Sharma (2016) in the research paper '*Survey Analysis on the usage and Impact of Whatsapp Messenger*' clearly explained that role of whatsapp as a tool for promoting marketing and also acting as an influencer for both business and politics. Whatsapp is having remarkable significance in the personal as well as social life of its users. The study clearly shows the impact of social media especially whatsapp among consumers in various levels like economic, social and political, education, social activities and governmental processes. It was evidently seen in the study that more than eighty percent of the respondents preferred whatsapp as the best source of information, shopping and entertainment in this digital age. Various apps like Viber, hyke messenger were studied during the study and mentioned that the role of social media

is improving daily as it is majorly for connecting with many at a time and also for intimate conversations among users. Whatsapp is considered as a powerful tool for creating, sharing and exchanging ideas in all levels especially in marketing and business sector effectively during covid and post covid times.

Livier Furrer, D. Sudharshan (2001) Internet Marketing Approach: Opportunities and Problems explains that in the field of market research, internet marketing is offering a wide range of opportunities for the e-commerce sector. It also explains eight different types of methods which can be adopted for modern marketing scenarios. The adverse effects of internet and the issues we may encounter are also well explained in the article by the author. The issue of internet population and the sampling, sample frame are also well analyzed in the paper. A seven-step model to rectify the issues faced in internet marketing is also well explained at the end part of the research in an informative manner.

Schwarzl Susanne, Grabowska Monika (2015) Online marketing strategies: The future is here described as its high time to go for measures which can bring competition among traditional and modern ways of marketing and thereby fostering the spirit of competition. The analysis of data under research is well explained theoretically using surveys. Retaining potential customers along with attracting new customers are the most important methods adopted by most researchers for better online marketing.

Afrina Yasmin, Sadia Tasneem, Kaniz Fatema (2015) in the research paper Effectiveness of Digital Marketing in the Challenging Age: An Empirical Study clearly mentioned that clearcut usage of digital marketing among the group of researchers to increase the efficiency of the business activities in the market. The article clearly listed the advantages of digital marketing and strategies used to attract more customers. Sales part of effect due to digital marketing is also well emphasized in the article. The difference between traditional marketing and digital marketing is also well explained here in the paper with mentioning various perspectives for the business sector.

Research of Methodology

This study was handled in a very casual way and a structured questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. The simple random sampling method was used for data collection. The parameters for analyzing the consumer behavior have been identified as important constructs in the study which includes – price difference during sale , easy availability of the product at their door steps ,variety of options to get their customized preference based products , express delivery, recommendations and reviews of people who had already bought it before,customized convenience of interaction with the seller.The role of demographic factors (like age, gender, monthly income, occupation, marital status etc.) is also well analyzed in the study.

The responses from the sample size are taken as 200 consumers who regularly shop online using google forms with questionnaires were selected for this study.

The five factors (constructs stated above) on consumer behavior towards online purchases in the post pandemic times have been tested using percentage analysis and cross tabulation.To find out the correlation factor analysis has been performed on the data. Frequency analysis using central tendency is also used to study the demographic factors of online shopping.

Research questions

- Which are the crucial demographic variables having relationships with apparel shopping through websites and social media among working women?
- What is the preference level of apparel shopping among working women both in website and social media of Mumbai city?
- How demographic profile of the respondents is related to the apparel shopping preferences of working women in comparison to website marketing and whatsapp marketing ?

Objectives of the study

- To measure preference of various media platforms among working women about apparel shopping in Mumbai
- To find out if the women are fully aware about the process of online apparel marketing through whatsapp and website in the post covid times.

- To study the customer relations mechanism in these online apparel industry marketing
- To study steps and measures taken to ensure cyber security and transparency in online marketing for apparels by websites and also by the social media platforms.

Hypothesis

HO1 : There is no relationship between gender and preference of online shopping through social media and websites for apparel marketing.

HO2 : There is no relationship between time of purchase(2 wave and 3 wave of pandemic)and consumer satisfaction and preferences in online shopping of apparels in connection with social media and website marketing

HO3 : There is no relationship between the preference of online shopping and customer services provided promptly in this market for working women in Mumbai city.

HO4: There is no relationship between the age group of customers and the preference of apparel shopping using various online platforms.

Data Analysis

The analysis is completely carried out using SPSS 28 and excel where the researcher has gone for univariate analysis to describe the relationship between demographic variables and percentage distribution of the data. Cross tabulation using Chi-square test is also done to understand the detailed correlation between variables. One sample t test is also used in the study to see the preference of apparel shopping by the target audience. Visual representation is also applied in the study for more detailed understanding. The level of significance selected for the study is 0.05

Demographics details

TABLE :I

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS ACCORDING TO DEMOGRAPHICS

Features		Percentage	Frequency
Age	<25	46.5	93
	25-45	54.5	107
Gender	female	95	190
Marital status	Single	34.5	69
	Married	65.5	131
Monthly Income	<50k	71	142
	51k and above	29	58
Educational qualification	<Graduation	47	94
	Above Graduation	53	106
TOTAL			200 respondents

TABLE :2 PREFERENCE OF RESPONDENTS BUYING APPARELS Through online during second wave of pandemic			TOTAL
Response	Percentage	Frequency	
Whatsapp	86	172	200
Websites	14	28	

TABLE :3 PREFERENCE OF RESPONDENTS BUYING APPARELS Through online during endemic times			TOTAL
Response	Percentage	Frequency	
Whatsapp	49.5	99	200
Websites	50.5	101	

TABLE :4 T-TEST to show changes in preference of apparel shopping by various medium during pandemic and endemic				
	Mean difference	Std Deviation	Std Error Mean	P-value
Preferences	-0.439	0.4	0.023	0.001

Demographic details and association with purchasing power in various online marketing medium

TABLE :5 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS ACCORDING TO DEMOGRAPHICS				Chi-square (p-value)
Features		Percentage	Frequency	
Age	<25	46.5	93	<0.001
	25-45	54.5	107	
Gender	female	95	190	<0.01
Marital status	Single	34.5	69	<0.023
	Married	65.5	131	
Monthly Income	<50k	71	142	<0.014
	51k and above	29	58	
Educational qualification	<Graduation	47	94	<0.001
	Above Graduation	53	106	
TOTAL			200 respondents	

TABLE :6

Frequency of purchase in website platforms

Frequency	Percentage	Frequency
Daily	11.5	23
Thrice a week	14.5	29
Twice a week	2.5	5
Once in a week	2	4
Monthly	69.5	139
TOTAL		200 respondents

TABLE :7

Frequency of purchase in whatsapp platform

Frequency	Percentage	Frequency
Daily	16	32
Thrice a week	13.5	27
Twice a week	12	24
Once in a week	22.5	45
Monthly	37	74
TOTAL	100	200 respondents

Parameters leading to apparel shopping in WHATSAPP platform and also website marketing

parameters	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Easy to order and navigate	68	62	30	30	10
Express delivery	56	59	32	23	20
Customer care post purchase	79	63	52	30	30
Customized space for selection of apparel	82	88	10	15	5
Variety in product selection	88	78	9	12	13
Shipping charges	45	40	44	22	20
Awareness by Closed group of friends	99	60	20	10	9
Time saving while purchase	32	50	64	70	76
Discount price and sale options	28	8	12	82	70

TABLE :8					
PARAMETERS OR CONSTRUCTS USED FOR ANALYSIS IN website marketing					
parameters	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Easy to order and navigate	85	67	16	20	12
Express delivery	90	64	21	13	12
Customer care post purchase	56	55	43	20	26
Customized space for selection of apparel	59	55	32	32	22
Variety in product selection	80	57	29	20	14
Shipping charges	56	43	55	23	23
Awareness by Closed group of friends	78	56	38	29	23
Time saving while purchase	80	56	31	23	22
Discount price and sale options	73	56	32	12	21

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Sl no.	Hypothesis	Test details	Final inference
1	There is no relationship between gender and preference of online shopping through social media and websites for apparel marketing.	$0.0234 < 0.05$	Reject null (its alternative hypothesis)
2	There is no relationship between time of purchase(2 wave and 3 wave of pandemic)and consumer satisfaction and preferences in online shopping of apparels in connection with social media and website marketing among working women	$0.0123 < 0.005$	Reject null and its alternative hypothesis
3	There is no relationship between the preference of online shopping and customer services provided promptly in this market for working women in Mumbai city.	$0.052 > 0.05$	Accepts null
4	There is no relationship between the age group of customers and the preference of apparel shopping using various online platforms.	$0.012 < 0.05$	Rejects null (alternative hypothesis)

Discussion and Conclusions

Other significant findings from the survey:

- 80% of the total sample agreed that their tendency of buying different products online has increased since the covid-19 pandemic(pre and Post) and they says websites are dependent more (83percent) than whatsapp medium
- It was found that 52% of the respondents prefer buying their apparels online while the remaining 48% people prefer going to the nearby local markets and mom-and-pop stores for the same.
- While 60% of people said to have never bought their apparels online before the pandemic, this number has reduced to 15% since pandemic. This implies that shopping habits have evolved a drastic change during the pandemic and are still continuing.
- While 21% spent less than Rs 1000 on their OGS monthly, the remaining 19% preferred offline medium.
- When it came to the topography, 60% and 39% of the people belonged to the city and west regions of Mumbai respectively. Remaining 6%, 9% and 2% belonged to east, south and central Mumbai.

78 % respondents prefer online medium for shopping even after the pandemic and out of these 70 % people are females.It indicates that females should be targeted by e-shopping websites and marketing to expand their customer base.

Regarding cyber security and assistance website marketing platforms are more effective(68%) for the respondents and in which the group of female respondents(65%) endorsed the same.Only 22 % said that whatsapp marketing is providing safe space of consumer transactions and in that men and women ratio almost remains the same

References

- Fox E J, Montgomery A L and Lodish L M (2004), "Consumer Shopping and Spending Across Retail Formats", *The Journal of Business*, Vol. 77, No. 2, pp. S25-S60.
- Goldman A (2001), "The Transfer of Retail Formats into Developing Economies: The Example of China", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 77, No. 2, pp. 221-242.
- Graeme Pietersz (2011), "Retail Format", available at moneyterms.co.uk and <http://moneyterms.co.uk/retail-format/>. Retrieved July 20, 2010.
- Iyer E S (1989), "Unplanned Purchasing: Knowledge of Shopping Environment and Time Pressure", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 65, Spring, pp. 40-57.
- Kenhove P V, Waterschoot W V and Wulf K D (1999), "The Impact of Task Definition on Store-Attribute Salience and Store Choice", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 75, No. 1, pp. 125-137.
- Kim S and Kincade D H (2007), "Evolution of Retail Institution Types and Consumers' Store Patronage Behavior: A Cross-Cultural Comparison Among Consumers in China, India, and the United States", *Journal of Shopping Centre Research*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 97-124.
- Knight F (2010), "Q1 2010-India Organised Retail Market: Diagnosis and Outlook", available at wsj.com/public/resources. Retrieved July 28. Format Perception of Indian Apparel Shoppers: Case of Single and Multi-Brand Stores 37
- Kolodinski J (1990), "Time as Direct Source of Utility: The Case of Price Information Search for Groceries", *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, Vol. 24, Summer, pp. 89-109. 11. Messinger P R and Narasimhan C (1997), "A Model of Retail Formats Based on Consumers' Economizing on Shopping Time", *Marketing Science*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 1-23.
- Reynolds J, Howard E, Cuthbertson C and Hristov L (2007), "Perspectives on Retail Format Innovation: Relating Theory and Practice", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, Vol. 35, No. 8, pp. 647-660.
- Sinha P K and Banerjee A (2004), "Store Choice in an Evolving Market", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, Vol. 32, No. 10, pp. 444-482. 14. Sproles G B and Kendall E L (1986), "A Methodology for Profiling Consumer's Decision-Making Styles", *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 267-279. 15. The Telegraph (2011), Kolkata Edition, November 25, p. 1,