

A Study on Consumer Behaviour in the Era of Digitalization

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Abstract

Digitalization is in trend now a days and everything is going online. Looking at the convenience of the consumers, businesses are getting online and no wonder the responses are positive towards the digitalization. Digitalization has changed the way of business processes and the consumers both. In fact digitalization has profoundly changed the concept about e-commerce businesses. Earlier many responders failed to understand how the things can be easy through digitalization but as of now people are preferring online processes which gives clarity and a fast way to reach the marketers. Organizations have an opportunity to grab and enlarge its market share by making their business online. Digitalization not only facilitates an ease to consumers but also to the organizations as well. Organizations can build strong relations with the customers by interacting online. Internet has become a popular source to connect people all over the world and an exquisite opportunity to be known amongst those who are still not familiar with the particular product and services. In this paper I have tried to study the online consumer behavior. How the digitalization has changed the behavior, attitude and the thought process of the consumers? And what influences the consumers to go online to buy. The aim is to study the behavior of consumers in the era of digitalization.

Key words:

Digitalization, digital marketing, online consumer behavior, website visits, technology

Introduction

In the era of digitalization, converting processes and management to digital form has opened up enormous opportunities for the marketers to conduct their businesses. It is the platform where the marketers can create a brand new image for their business and can earn a competitive advantage through it. The use of web2.0 has helped the marketers to facilitate an interactive platform creation which provides an equal opportunity to know about who all are their potential buyers and consumers. In this digital environment, digitalization stands for integration of the technologies with the business processes and converting them into digital format which is known as digitalization. The technology has played a crucial role in getting the business processes to e business processes, marketing to e marketing etc.

Due to the emergence of internet, everything has been converted into online system and the most benefited people are those who are doing business with a motive to earn profit. As it is very important to analyze the external environment and to grab the forthcoming opportunities at the right time is what the call for any businessman is and if the businessman is able to identify the upcoming opportunities then in the true sense it is a

mark of a true businessman. Here, the companies who all are updated with the current technologies are the ones you will find them easily online and fortune companies. Hence the internet has given the opportunities to the marketers to create a whole new way to establish a brand value and the customer relations so as to retain them for longer period of time. In today's scenario more than half of the population in the entire world uses internet and visit various websites with a motto to gain knowledge, entertainment purposes etc. there is no age barriers on the usage of internet that is anybody in this universe has the accessibility to the internet and can use it anytime, anywhere. The companies who are selling their products online are the one who are earning profit. Due to digital marketing, companies targets their potential customers and sell products online by customization and learning the attitude of the customers in order to gain the competitive advantage. Digitalization builds an interaction between the customers and the marketers so that they can learn about the buying patterns of the customers to create value and relationship. Mostly companies acquire their customers online and develop strategies to retain them smartly by understanding the needs and customizing the products accordingly and that's how relationships can be established. So far if we look at the relationship building it is the most difficult task which hampers the growth of the organizations. Well if any company wants to build a good customer relationship then the marketer needs to understand what the customer is actually seeking for, which can only be identified by understanding the consumer behavior. Now a days in order to earn profit or to survive in the competitive edge one must go under the study of consumer behavior and their satisfaction level. The traditional approach which talks of marketer centric approach has now converted into customer centric approach which keeps customers and their needs in the Centre. Marketing is now centered on generating the engagement between the customer and the marketer in the virtual world. With the help of virtual world, marketers are approaching consumers directly and creating a network with them. It is crystal clear with the organizations that the online world has shaped the behavior of the consumers.

Online consumer behavior

Consumer behavior is the study of the behavior of the individuals, groups of people who tends to be the potential customers to satisfy their wants and desires with the idea to buy to something. Consumer behavior involves the study of the behavior of how a consumer responds or reacts to any product. All the individuals in this universe are different and born with the different personality traits, attitude and learning which majorly formulates the buying decision. So in other words we can say that buying decision is totally dependent on the personality, attitude and the learning which an individual is carrying. It is not only confined to this factors only there are many others factors which hinders the buying decision and those factors are: sociology, anthropology, psychology etc. when it comes to the understanding the behavior of the consumers, it is the most difficult task to trace the behavior of the individuals. Digital marketing has influenced the behavior of the consumers and stressed the marketers to go for the study on online consumer behavior. In the world of ongoing competition it has become important for the company to study how a consumer behaves or responds to the advertisements and the marketing being done online. If the traffic is not with your product, then you are on the edge where cutting cost will be the next challenge which a company might face. The preferences of the consumer's overtime has shown a drastic change because of the virtual world. Many of them have replaced their newspapers to e newspapers, offline shopping visits to online shopping. The technology has made people so dependent that they don't want to put some extra efforts in doing their work. Internet has played a crucial role in reaching the

customers and to collect data. Companies these days design their websites keeping in the mind the behavior of the consumers so that they can attract huge traffic.

Any company who comes into existence only establishes itself for one motive and that is to earn profit. It is very important to survive in the competitive world and the only mantra to sustain is to be customer centric. Many people all over the world visits various websites with the intent to purchase. E- Commerce provides the accessibility to the consumers to look and buy the product online. Reaching the customer expectations can only be done by understanding the consumer behavior. On the other hand if the website fails to meet the expectations then the count of the customer may lessen by one. Any website which is designed ought to satisfy the purpose of the consumer. The online consumer behavior is the behavior which can be defined as how the consumer responds to the product online.

- How often the consumer visits the website and clicks on the product?
- How frequently the consumer keeps visiting?
- What is the purpose of visiting the website?
- Is the website be able to meet the expected demand?
- How much time a consumer spends on the particular website?
- What are the keywords which a searcher uses while searching for the product?
- How many times the seeker logs into the website and fills the online registration form?

These are some of the parameters which depicts the online consumer behavior well and put at ease to understand the behavior possessed by the consumer while entering and exit the website. It is very common phenomenon for an individual to track the websites but who can predict that their frequent visits are also recorded at kept as a database to track ahead.

Insight toonline consumer behaviors

The study of online consumer behavior segregates the consumer behavior into following categories which a consumer generally possesses

- **Task directed behavior**
These are the consumers who visits websites very frequently and it explains the same visits for the particular period of time. These type of consumers are the consumers who visits websites for the particular purpose and want to accomplish the task. They are task driven and seeks for the information with a motive. They are not those consumers who randomly visits the websites while surfing internet. They particularly login into the website and try to gain useful information, if the website is able to meet the expectations of the consumer then they proceed towards the next decision otherwise they prefer visiting somewhere else. They are always judging the credibility and appropriateness of the information. They also focus on balancing their time and effort because they don't prefer to leave.
- **Experiential online behavior**
These are the consumers who likes to visits the websites randomly. They keep on visiting by clicking the links and reaching onto the other websites randomly. They tends to exit the page soon

if it doesn't benefit their purpose. They don't visit websites for seeking some kind of specific information. They explain the consumers of the different length. They don't put so much effort on one webpage for a longer period of time and can shortly exit soon. They do not weigh some motive to search for the information. They like to explore, shopping etc.

- **Explicit behavior**

In this kind of behavior, the user or the customer himself enters the data about himself and then the data is recorded in the database system of the marketer. Here the user makes the registration and fills up the information either by logging in or by filling up the forms generated on google. Moreover sometimes they also subscribe to the e- newsletter.

- **Implied behavior**

It is the behavior which the marketer judges by the observation when the user logs in or visits the website. The marketer keeps a watch on the activities of the user and tries to derive the data from the observation and judge the behavior of the consumer. This kind of is implied behavior.

Reasons which influence consumer behavior to go online:

There are various reasons which influence the behavior of the consumers to go online and seek for the product instead of offline shopping. Everything happens for a reason so there are reasons behind why the consumer's behavior changed drastically and turned into an online consumer in the virtual world. The following are the reasons:

- **Convenience** – the very first reason why consumers prefer to go online instead of offline is their convenience part. Now a day's people are so busy with their work schedules and lack in time to go to markets and spend hours in shopping. Shopping online is the very convenient way which consumers find. They can access various shopping sites at a time just with a few clicks.
- **Time saving**- online visiting the websites saves time which a person uses to spend on travelling. So online shopping is time saving.
- **Cost effective** – the third reason why the consumers go online is the cost factor. Every rational consumer thinks about the cost spent in attaining the product. Consumers get the product at a lower price than the offline which puts the customer at ease.
- **Facilitates comparison** – a consumer is now able to facilitate comparison between the prices and the product specifications offered by different brands on the various e-commerce sites. Before making the pre-purchase decision, consumers facilitate comparison by visiting numerous sites to make the buying decision which eventually evokes an individual to go online.
- **Availability of information**- internet is the technology which provides a lot of data at a time and when it comes to seeking information about something yet it is easily available just a click away. Consumer is able to find the appropriate information about the product online before making the buying decision. Every consumer wants mental satisfaction while making the buying decision and also post buying decision which he can get online.

- Easy to pay – now people don't want to carry cash. They prefer to pay online through debit, credit cards which put consumers at ease to pay. Online payment can be made within fraction of seconds without being tensed.
- Products variety- when you seek products online consumers get large variety of products of the various brands which facilitates a consumer to make appropriate buying decision. Here the consumer doesn't sacrifices his wishes for the product. Large variety on just one click and lot many options to select is the feature of visiting online shopping sites, irrespective of checking the availability at the stores.
- Facilitates in c2c interaction- consumers can check the reviews and are access to c2c interaction. It gives the consumer a vision of what to do?
- Privacy factor- if the consumer want to purchase which he ought to keep private then online shopping is the best suited option for him.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to study how consumer behavior has changed in the decades due to the transformation of businesses into online. What are the influencing factors which leads consumers to go online and the dynamics of the online visit of the potential consumers? The aim is to study how the consumers sees the products and understands the online information

Methodology

The method of the study used is qualitative and descriptive research and it focuses on the online consumer behavior and the change in the behavior of the consumers in the past decades. The data has been collected from the secondary sources which includes various websites, books, research papers and discussions. The sources through which the relevant information has been extracted have thoroughly been analyzed to make this study more informative in order to develop an understanding about the impact on the consumer behavior due to the digitalization and the reasons behind why the consumers prefer to go online.

Literature review

Many researchers have stated their papers on the impact of digital marketing on the consumer behavior and have talked about how the consumers make their purchase decision after getting influenced by the advertisements posted online on various website and some of them have examined how the consumers go online and visits websites for shopping purposes or to gain knowledge. The recent study has shown that now a days consumers are preferring online sources to fulfil their needs and also the changed buying pattern of the consumers due to the digitalization. Rational consumers have started facilitating the comparison between the offline and the online products available. Moreover they are also considering certain factors which put them at ease to make the purchase decision. However some people are still not convinced by this online buying patterns. All the researchers have focused on the buying patterns and studied how digitalization has create an impact on the buying decision of the potential consumers. This paper shows the benefits and the reasons due to which the consumer's behavior has transformed from traditional buying to the modern buying methods. Digitalization has played an important in transforming the consumers to online consumers and their lifestyle.

Findings

In the era of digitalization many people who have constraints of time go for online shopping which has changed their buying patterns and behavior towards the products and the marketer. They often buy products which benefits their match within the limited time.

Because of the change in the technology and the emergence of digitalization has lead consumers to seek for convenience and turn them on towards the online retail shopping which make them to visit the online websites every day, every min and so on. it is hard to predict the behavior of the consumers in respect to visits for the particular websites who deals in online retails.

Every consumer these days has become rational in making purchase decisions as the consumers have so many options to look forward to make comparison between the brands and the websites too. Digitalization has led to change in the behavior of the consumers from traditional thinking to modern thinking against the buying decisions.

As the digitalization has provide an ease to the consumers they are now aware of the ongoing trends for the products and the brands which has changed the perception of the consumers through the blogs, social media websites, word of mouth etc. the factor of awareness in the consumers is the effect of the digitalization.

Digitalization has benefited the consumers undoubtedly and has an impact on the consumer behavior as well. Many factors has contributed and has brought the major change in the lifestyle and buying patterns of the consumers.

Now a days consumers are preferring online shopping because of the easy payment options which has eliminated the long queues and the frequent problem of visiting stores for return and exchange. The digitalization has transformed the thought process of the consumers and has built the trust between the marketers and the consumers.

Conclusion

In the previous years, the digitalization has played a significant role. Consumer behavior is very sensitive to understand in order to gain competitive advantage. This study on the consumer behavior in the digital era has suggested the need for understanding the online behavior possessed by the consumer. In the coming years everything would go online which are left out so the marketers who all are missing out the call for understanding the behavior of the consumers, is what a marketer needs to focus on. This paper shows how a consumer responds in numerous ways and what are the factors which are influencing them towards the online processes.

Recommendations & suggestions:

- This study has helped to get onto conclusion by providing an insight of how a consumer responds to the market in the era of digitalization. it is recommended and suggested that grabbing the market online is a sign of excellence but e- retailers or marketers must not overlook people who live in rural areas because till now many people who all are living in

rural areas are not well aware of the internet. They don't know much how to operate which shapes the behavior of the consumers and make them feel not interested in the product yet, the marketer should take it as a challenge and must work for them in order to acquire them as potential customers.

- When any company launches its new product or any existing product it gets out of stock soon which makes a consumer unable to put orders online which can lead to shifting of consumers and the change in their behavior as well, So the marketer must look and consider at the stocking option also.
- Many people who access internet regularly still don't believe in shopping online because of the trust factor. People fails to rely on the websites so it is recommended to maintain more reliability.
- A company must put customer at ease and design website by keeping in the mind the convenience and the behavior of the consumers so that consumers strives for visiting again and again.

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