



BRAND COMMUNICATION'S IMPACT ON CONSUMER ONLINE SHOPPING INTENTIONS

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Abstract:

E-commerce landscape has witnessed a significant shift in consumer behavior, with online shopping becoming increasingly prevalent. In this context, understanding the pivotal role of brand communication in shaping consumer intentions for online shopping is of paramount importance for businesses and marketers. This review delves into the multifaceted relationship between brand communication and consumer online shopping intentions. It encompasses an exploration of the key elements of brand communication strategies, including advertising, social media engagement, storytelling, and visual identity. The study also investigates how these elements contribute to consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions in the digital marketplace. This review examines the factors that influence the effectiveness of brand communication in online shopping contexts, such as consumer trust, brand authenticity, and perceived value. It sheds light on how these factors can either bolster or hinder the impact of brand communication on consumer intentions. Additionally, this review discusses recent trends and emerging technologies, such as augmented reality and influencer marketing, and their role in augmenting brand communication's influence on consumer online shopping intentions.

Key Words: Engagement, Storytelling, Visual, Identity

Introduction:

In the era of digital transformation, online shopping has become an integral part of consumers' lives, offering convenience, variety, and accessibility like never before. With the rapid growth of e-commerce, businesses face fierce competition to capture the attention and loyalty of online shoppers. In this dynamic landscape, effective brand communication emerges as a pivotal factor that can significantly influence consumers' online shopping intentions. The concept of brand communication encompasses a wide array of strategies and tactics aimed at conveying a brand's identity, values, and offerings to its target audience. These strategies often include advertising campaigns, social media engagement, storytelling, visual identity, and the consistent reinforcement of a brand's message across various touchpoints. In the online sphere, where consumers are inundated with choices and information, brand communication plays a central role in differentiating one brand from another and in shaping consumers' perceptions and decisions.

This review seeks to delve deeply into the intricate relationship between brand communication and consumer online shopping intentions. It explores how various elements of brand communication can impact consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and ultimately, their intentions to engage in online shopping. A critical aspect of this examination is the role of trust in brand communication. Consumers are more likely to shop online when they trust the brand. Trust is built through transparent and authentic communication, reliability in delivering promised benefits, and consistent messaging across various channels. Therefore, understanding how brand communication fosters trust is essential to comprehending its impact on online shopping intentions. This review considers the influence of perceived benefits and risks in the online shopping context. Effective brand communication can convey the value proposition of products or services, highlighting benefits such as convenience, cost savings, or unique features. Simultaneously, it can mitigate perceived risks by providing assurances of data security, quality, and after-sales support. We will explore emerging trends and technologies in brand communication, such as the utilization of augmented reality, virtual showrooms, and influencer marketing, to gain insights into how these innovative approaches are reshaping consumer intentions in the digital marketplace.

Online Shopping Intentions:

Online shopping intentions are a critical aspect of modern consumer behavior. With the convenience, accessibility, and vast array of choices offered by e-commerce platforms, consumers are increasingly inclined to explore and engage in online shopping activities. The competitive pricing, discounts, and the influence of user-generated content, such as product reviews and recommendations, are factors that shape their intentions. Effective brand communication strategies, including personalized marketing messages and social media engagement, play a significant role in guiding consumers towards specific online retailers. Trust and security considerations, along with transparent return policies, also impact whether consumers are willing to convert their intentions into actual online purchases. Furthermore, societal trends that favor online shopping as a normative behavior contribute to the overall landscape. For businesses and marketers, comprehending these factors is crucial for tailoring strategies and creating a seamless online shopping experience that not only captures consumer intentions but also fosters brand loyalty and long-term customer relationships in the dynamic world of e-commerce.

Perceived risks, it means the amount and nature of risks a consumer perceives when planning a certain purchase decision. Before making the purchase decision, a consumer typically recognises the different risks linked with the purchase. This involves financial risks while conducting any financial contract through the internet. Consumers usually falter to shop online when they have worries about financial risks like loss or theft of credit card information or overcharge. Product risks refer to the difference between a perceived and delivered product. This results from the value of the product explanation or pictorial depiction of the

product. Convenience risks are referred to as dissatisfaction that comes while shopping through the internet (Bhatti and Rehman, 2020). Discomfort is linked with the stages needed to complete the process of completing personal details for check-out forms. The comfort of shopping at a retailer's website has a positive effect on the perception of customers.

Service and infrastructural variables, India's lack of telecommunication networks and the least qualified staff affect consumers' purchasing intention. These concerns are linked with the delivery of ordered products like delayed delivery, shipping fees, not receiving the ordered product, etc. Further, the comfort of the return policy is also an important concern for online shoppers. Hence, the details of the procedure must be included while designing the company's website.

Technology-specific innovation, it is the degree to which a person is comparatively former in adopting innovation as compared to other members. Thus, in the setting of online shopping, consumers get a wide variety of products on a single platform; hence it also needs them to obtain new technological skills to seek, acquire and evaluate products. It is nothing but an attitude towards the individual's personal characteristics and online environment. Innovative consumers are inclined to try new things and activities (Ganguly et al. 2010).

Subjective norm, according to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) given by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), human behaviour is headed by intents, which are shaped centred on the attitude of consumers towards the behaviour and the supposed subjective standards. Subjective norms identify consumers' perception, which is influenced by others like family, authority, peers, media, figures, etc. In India, subjective standards have a great influence on influencing the purchase decision of the general public.

Attitude, attitude in online shopping has been applied in different ways, and adopting new technology is one of the important attitudes towards it. It means the acceptance of consumers of the online shopping channel.

Perceived behavioural control, this is a determinant of behaviour and behavioural intention. It means the perception of consumers of their capability to do an assumed behaviour. Perceived behavioural regulation shows insights of interior restraints like self-efficacy and external restraints on behaviour such as resource accessibility. It directly touches on online shopping intention and has a stout association with real Internet purchasing.

Need of the Study:

E-commerce, social media, and online advertising playing increasingly prominent roles, understanding how brand communication can effectively engage and influence online shoppers is crucial. Intense competition characterizes the online marketplace, making it imperative for businesses to gain a competitive edge through effective brand communication. This research also recognizes that trust is foundational in online shopping, and consumers are more likely to choose brands they trust. Brand communication serves as a key tool in building trust by conveying authenticity and commitment to customer satisfaction. Additionally, the study delves into how brand communication shapes perceived benefits and risks, addressing the crucial factors that consumers consider when making online shopping decisions. It also acknowledges the role of emerging technologies and innovative approaches in brand communication, providing insights into how businesses can leverage these tools. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to both practical decision-making in the business world and academic understanding of the intricate relationship between brand communication and consumer behavior in the online shopping context.

Literature Review:

Almoussa, M. (2011), In the context of buying apparel online, consumers face various uncertainties, including concerns about product quality, sizing, and the overall shopping experience. This research seeks to delve into these perceived risks from multiple angles, offering a comprehensive understanding of the challenges that online apparel shoppers encounter. By taking a multi-dimensional perspective, this study promises to shed light on the nuanced nature of perceived risk in apparel e-commerce. Such insights can aid online retailers in tailoring their strategies to address specific dimensions of risk, ultimately enhancing consumer trust and satisfaction. Moreover, this research contributes to the broader field of online consumer behavior by expanding our knowledge of how different dimensions of risk influence purchase intentions in a specific context, offering valuable guidance for both businesses and scholars.

Purchase intention means the possibility that in near future the consumers will buy the product and service. As the consumer intention to purchase increases the possibility of buying the product also increases (Dodds, Monroe et al. 1991). As per the theory of reasoned action the behavior of a consumer can predicted more accurately from his intentions behind it (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). The consumer's online shopping intention found to be a good method of checking of intention to use a shopping web site. As online shopping involves various activities like sharing of information, comparing products, purchase action and others, so purchase intention of consumer will depend on various factors (Pavlou, 2003). The marketers focus on these factors for the purpose of creation of online shopping intention among consumers. The online shopping website quality is considered to be the one of the important factor that motivates the peoples to use the particular website to shop online. The website quality is considered to be internal factor to the website, which mainly focuses on what retailer offering to its customers. Here the website quality is judged on the basis of four factors i.e. website design, fulfillment/reliability, customers services and security/ privacy (Kim and Lennon, 2013). According to Chen, Hsu and Lin (2010), the attractiveness of a shopping website enhance the consumer purchase intention to purchase the product. It was found that if the appropriately designed websites; it will increase the consumers' willingness to use the website for purchase of the product (Chang and Chen, 2008). The studies also investigated that website design (navigation, color, graphics, in-depth information) is a important factor of online retail it positively affect the reliability, privacy concerns, purchase intention of the buy of the product (Dang and Pham, 2018). Kim defines the perceived benefits from online perceptible "as a consumer's belief about the extent to which he or she will become better off from the online transaction with a certain Web site." The online shopping attitude of the customers is positively influenced by the benefits they perceive from the online shopping, namely, price, conveniences and product variety (Arora and Aggarwal, 2017)

Ariff, M.S.M et al (2014) Understanding how consumers' attitudes are shaped by their perceptions of risk is crucial, as attitudes can significantly impact their online shopping behavior. This study delves into the complex interplay between these variables, offering insights into how risk perception influences attitudes towards online shopping, and subsequently, how these attitudes translate into actual purchasing behavior. By examining these dynamics, the research contributes to our understanding of online consumer behavior, providing valuable insights for businesses aiming to optimize their online strategies. It helps businesses

identify and mitigate perceived risks, foster positive attitudes, and ultimately drive desirable shopping behaviors in the digital marketplace. Moreover, it adds to the academic body of knowledge by advancing our comprehension of these complex interactions, making it a significant contribution to both theory and practice in the field of e-commerce.

In spite of various benefits from online shopping, there are some problems and challenges faced by consumers regarding the security of payment, data protection, insufficient information disclosures, and validity. Perceived risks negatively affect consumers' intention to purchase; these risks can be defined under headings such as price risk, product risks, time risk, social risk, financial risk, and psychological risk (Ariffin, Goh, and Mohan, 2018). The risks involved in online transactions give rise to the trust and privacy issues in the minds of consumers. Trust is defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another" (Rousseau et al., 1998). The risk involved in online transactions gives rise to the trust and privacy issues in the minds of consumers. Trust is considered a very important factor for the creation of customer relationships (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Along with these attributes of website brand communication, it also affects the consumer's perception and attitude towards the website. Brand communication is the way by which companies inform, persuade, enlighten, teach, and remind their customers about their product. The latest interactive technologies have changed the ways of communicating the brand to its customers. Organizations, by understanding the importance of innovations in technologies, use the internet or social media for interacting with the customer (Berthon et al., 2012). As compared to traditional ways of communication, social media covers the mass population with wide demographic appeal (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media networks provide new ways of engaging both firms and customers with each other. There are two kinds of communications: firm-generated and user-generated. Needs to be distinguished from each other, the firm-generated communication is managed by the marketing companies, whereas the user-generated communication is not under the control of companies (Vanden Bergh et al., 2011).

Further, the personality traits, state of mind created by the website quality, perceived credibility, and benefits of online review, e-service quality, shoppers' brand attachment, perceived value, and customer satisfaction play a vital role in the formation of consumers' online shopping attitude, and to transform the online shopping attitude into the intention to use online shopping platforms by consumers is a big challenge before online marketing firms. Researchers find it a crucial issue because the online shopping environment influences attitudes of consumers towards online shopping and its attributes significantly impact the online shopping behavior of consumers (Ariff et al., 2014).

Consequently, the purpose of this study is to understand the role of the shopping website design and quality, perceived benefits and risks, as well as the trust and privacy concerns in the formation of consumers' attitude for online shopping, and how the online shoppers' attitude affects the intention to use online shopping platforms; examine the specific personality traits, website qualities, and the perceived credibility and benefits of online reviews that cause impulsivity in the online shoppers' purchase behavior; explain the online shopping platform from a "brand" perspective by analyzing the effect of e-service quality, shoppers' emotional attachment, perceived value, and satisfaction on online consumer-based brand equity; and finally evaluate the relative impact of firm-created and user-generated brand communications on brand equity through online social media as compared to traditional media and how these communications influence the shoppers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitude components, and in turn, online shopping intention.

Research Problem:

The research problem concerning the impact of brand communication on consumer online shopping intentions is a multifaceted and dynamic field of study. It seeks to unravel the intricate relationship between how brands communicate with their audiences and the resulting effects on consumers' decisions to shop online. In this complex digital landscape, understanding the extent and various modes of brand influence, such as trust-building, emotional connection, and information accessibility, becomes paramount. Additionally, exploring the role of social proof, personalization, and social media engagement in shaping online shopping intentions sheds light on contemporary marketing strategies. By addressing these aspects, the research aims to provide valuable insights for businesses striving to differentiate themselves, engage consumers effectively, and ultimately thrive in the competitive realm of e-commerce.

Conclusion:

The influence of brand communication on consumer online shopping intentions is undeniable in the digital age. Successful brands are those that effectively convey their values, maintain trust and credibility, and foster emotional connections with their audience. By providing accessible information, ensuring consistency across various channels, leveraging social proof, and personalizing the shopping experience, brands can drive consumers' intentions to shop online. Furthermore, the power of social media and consumer education cannot be underestimated in this context. In an ever-competitive e-commerce landscape, brands that prioritize their communication strategies stand the best chance of attracting and retaining online shoppers, ultimately achieving long-term success in the digital marketplace.

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