

Digital Transformation-Effect of Social Media on Digital Buying Behaviour of Teenagers

Jaya Beri*, Pallavi Kumari

ICFAI University, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India

ABSTRACT

Internet and social media have become an integral, inseparable and definite part of our lives and thus it plays an important role in purchase decision of varied kinds of products online where teens are considered to play a crucial changing factor. This study attempt to reveal the various factors of Internet and social media that influences the purchase decision among teens of Patna and Ranchi considering online peer communication, social networking groups, Brand/company pages online and several other factors. In-depth literature reviews reveals the growth of social media and internet as a key to teenager socialization and teen profiling remains a challenge along with several other factors e.g.; Brand interaction through social media page, online social groups of brand influencers along with cultural effect on teen socialization.

Hypothesis testing is done using ANOVA suggests a significant trend in involvement of demographic/environmental factors as a key influencer in purchase decision making style of the teenagers. Socialization process is analyzed among 330 respondents. The result shows a positive influence of antecedent variables like age, social media and peer involvement in purchase decision making and product involvement in family decision making. The study is significantly important for companies who are attempting to make a mark in minds of the teenagers who are not only a potential future consumer but is also a lucrative present costumer. This study will be useful for business operating online, researchers and for all those business that are connected with E-commerce.

Keywords: Internet, social media, Teenager socialization, Family decision making, Product involvement, Peer communication.

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INTRODUCTION

India has fifths of the world's youngest population and is growing exponentially with half of its population of 1.3 billion below the age of 25, and a quarter is below the age of 14. With such a huge population of teenagers India is surely a marketing paradise for companies, because teens are not only the present consumers of products but also are the future prospective of any product based companies..Hence, the companies have to make their strategies in line with the present consumption trend taking care of the future consumption pattern which are effected by various factors both cognitive and environmental factors. Traditional learning theories of socialization assumed that a developing child is a passive recipient who is non-reactive in the learning process, and to the exposure to the socializing agent, such as media, directly influences attitude (Moschis and Churchill 1978, Villiani 2001). Taking about the various factors the most rapidly growing factor apart from the already existing factors like Parents, Peers, Radio, T.V, is the Internet clubbed with social media.

Corresponding Author: Jaya Beri, Research Scholar, ICFAI University Jharkhand, Ranchi, India,, e-mail: jaya.mehrotra@gmail.com

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Internet has been a very dynamic and influential space that effects the teen's purchase decision process .Internet has been growing rapidly without the gender and age gap. It has transformed the retail marketplace and now this has become a cyber marketplace with various retail chains companies having their own website and selling the products online. Teenagers are also called "net generation or cyber-teens", due to higher use of internet and fast adoption of technology in this age group (Lee, 2003, Ward, 1974). Youngsters use Internet as platform to interact in a better way or to improve daily life activities. As the usage of internet

is growing among the teens, the influence of social media & internet is on a high. Teens exert a strong influence on elders in purchase and preference of brands and products. The purchase decision in a family is influenced by young teens because of their ability to gather product related information especially from the Internet and also the growing space of cyber influencers whom these teenagers follow as a source of information to get hands on information about the product utility, its performance and other related features. As teens mature teens develop sophistication in garnering information, processing it and developing responses to products and services. Teens's consumer socialization according to Scotward refers to the, "process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their functioning as a consumer in the marketplace". Internet provides easy, accessible information and thus has altered the way purchase decisions are made in families these days. Earlier parents were considered as the main decisive element for purchase decisions. The family has long been considered by marketers as the most important consumer unit in the consumer market (Sondhi&Basu 2014, Kaur &Medury 2013, 2011,Shoham &Dalakas 2005).But the way Internet and social media have shown a significant shift is seen in the purchase decision process wherein the teens are involved in the decision making at various stages of the purchase decision process starting from choice of food, gadgets and accessories, fashion accessories the purchases are mostly associated with products for their own use, or products for family use, but with a lower purchase value and lower family involvement (Commuri& Gentry 2000, Beatty &Talpade 1994).Thus in this paper focus shall be more on the demographical/environmental factors as a key influencer in purchase decision style of the teenagers. This shall also involve the study of factors like Internet and social media on the digital buying behaviour of the teenagers in Tier-II cities like Patna and Ranchi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender and Influence of internet on Teenagers

Today's younger generation shows higher internet skills in comparison to their parents. . Halling and Tufte, (2002) says that Gender of children also matter on influence on family decisions and there is also variation in pocket money and internet usage of children on basis of gender; children purchase decisions also vary on the basis of Gender. Moschis and Mitchell (1986) and

Caruana and Vassallo (2003) described the consumer socialization and its impact on children and view that There are various factors which influence children for to take a part in family purchasing decisions and give their point of view, these factors include friends and family members and different types of electronic media.

So, the use of the internet by adolescents is a subject of great interest and lacking the greatest depth for academics and marketers (Kaur &Medury 2011, Belch et al. 2005). The study of the effects of the socialization of teenagers by agents such as the internet is an area of great interest in recent times. The use of Internet as a communication tool makes it a socializing agent with high potential (Lee et al., 2003). From adolescents' point of view, internet is considered as a physical and social space, alternative to the traditional physical environment, allowing people to talk, form relationships, discuss issues, and perform many tasks (Kaur &Medury 2011). The internet should constitutes a potential socializing agent with a major impact on adolescents' behavior (Barber 2013), particularly related to his/her role in decision making (Kaur &Medury 2011). Thus, it is expected that teens with higher internet exposure will have more influence on family purchase decisions than those adolescents with lower internet exposure.

Teenager's Influence in Family Buying Process & Product Involvement

Researchers have studied that for almost all product categories, Teenagers have an important role to play in terms of purchase decisions (Akter, 2017; Martensen & Gronholdt, 2008). Teenagers have high influence on the purchase of the product for which they are a primary consumer, like breakfast cereals, snack foods, toys, children's clothes and school supplies (Mangleburg, 1990). Children may have less influence on the products which require large money transactions like television, refrigerator, car (Mangleburg, 1990). Teenager's influence in the family buying process also varies across decision stages. The Buying process has three stages: problem recognition, search for internal and external information and final decision (Davis &Rigaux, 1974). Baía (2018) found that adolescents actually revealed a relevant participation on decisions when their knowledge is higher. Thus, the product knowledge should lead to greater adolescents' influence attempts and also to more parental receptiveness (Chitakunye 2012, Belch et al. 2005, Shah & Mittal 1997, Beatty &Talpade 1994). Problem recognition is the stage of need identification. Needs usually arise because of



some problem, for example, your new water bottle is lost and you need to buy a new one. The Second stage is to search for internal and external information. In this stage, you start to search and gather information about potential product choices. And the last stage you decide to buy or not to buy the product you evaluated.

Social Networking Sites and Purchase Decisions

Social media marketing represents communication opportunities for marketers to reach wider audiences (Kweskin, 2007) and allows for marketers to access valuable information which affects building and maintaining consumer relationships (Evans, 2010). The growth of social media has allowed for increased situational awareness in global online environments (Mayfield, 2011) thus social media marketing is playing an increasingly important role in marketing strategy (Cuming, 2008). With advent of a number of social media portals like Facebooks, Twitter, Google, You tube, Instagram and so on. This research shall find whether all the social networking sites are equally preferred by consumers for buying decisions.

OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of this study are as follow:

- To study the influence of social media and internet exposure among the teens and their influence in purchase decisions.
- To study the major differences between the genders and influence of Internet and social media on purchase decisions.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H_1 : Gender will have varying effect on purchase decision and will depend on factors that influence purchase decision

H_2 : Social Media is positively related to teenager's role in purchase related decision making.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design is Descriptive cum causal in nature.

Target Population for the Study

Teenagers belonging to the age group 13 to 19 in the cities of Patna and Ranchi.

Sampling Frame and Unit

A purposive sampling strategy was used to gain participants for this study; following this strategy meant that it was necessary for all participants of this study to be actively involved in the internet, so that they could

then articulate their experiences with the internet .Thus, participants chosen were teenagers male or female aged between 13 years to 19 and who currently had accesses of internet at home through computer / Laptop/Smartphone's and work on it for at least 1hour per day (on average) uses .

Sample Size of the Study

In each center male and females would be in equal proportion. The total size of the study was 330.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The most important objective of the study was to find the varying effect of gender on the purchased decision of the teenagers. During the study it was brought to light that the gender shows a varying effect in case of certain factors which influence the decision of purchase, There are numerous factors that effect the online shopping more attractive for the teenagers namely as Variety of Products, Anytime &anywhere availability,Ease of price comparisons among various e-commerce websites. Discounts and offers, ease of return and exchange and lastly ease of mode of payment.

H_1 : Gender will have varying effect on purchase decision and will depend on factors that influence purchase decision

Table 1 show that the p value of most of the factors influencing purchase decision of teenagers are above 0.05 i.e. $p < 0.05$ thus, one should accept the null hypothesis and conclude that Gender effect will have varying effect on purchase decision and will depend on factor influencing purchase decision. Since most of the factors have higher p value, thus we accept the null hypothesis. Genders seem thus to play a role in the degrees of the influence of Social Media at this stage.

H_2 : All social networking sites are equally preferred by consumers for buying decisions.

Table 2 show as that the p value of all the SNS are above 0.05 i.e. $p > 0.05$ thus, one cannot reject the null hypothesis and conclude that all social networking sites are not equally used by respondent, some social networking sites are used more frequently than others services and brands.

FINDINGS

Gender Impact and purchase decision:

- The study indicated that the females are more likely to recognize new needs on Social Media. Girls usually find factors like discounts and offers attractive factor when thinking of making purchase online.

Table 1: ANOVA of gender effect on purchase decision

		<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Variety	Between Groups	19.497	1	19.497	6.553	.011
	Within Groups	975.836	328	2.975		
	Total	995.333	329			
Anytime & Anywhere	Between Groups	33.983	1	33.983	12.497	.000
	Within Groups	891.923	328	2.719		
	Total	925.906	329			
Ease of price comparison	Between Groups	9.672	1	9.672	3.980	.047
	Within Groups	797.083	328	2.430		
	Total	806.755	329			
Discounts and offers	Between Groups	31.447	1	31.447	12.034	.001
	Within Groups	857.087	328	2.613		
	Total	888.533	329			
Return and exchange	Between Groups	3.944	1	3.944	1.771	.184
	Within Groups	730.629	328	2.228		
	Total	734.573	329			
Ease of payment i.e. COD	Between Groups	48.239	1	48.239	18.582	.000
	Within Groups	851.485	328	2.596		
	Total	899.724	329			

Source: SPSS analysis output

Table 2: Comparison of different social networking sites

<i>ANOVA</i>						
		<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Facebook	Between Groups	29.164	3	9.721	2.431	.065
	Within Groups	1303.409	326	3.998		
	Total	1332.573	329			
Microblogs_Twitter	Between Groups	26.734	3	8.911	4.669	.003
	Within Groups	622.263	326	1.909		
	Total	648.997	329			
Blogs	Between Groups	16.174	3	5.391	3.074	.028
	Within Groups	571.778	326	1.754		
	Total	587.952	329			
Google	Between Groups	10.825	3	3.608	3.330	.020
	Within Groups	353.299	326	1.084		
	Total	364.124	329			
You tube	Between Groups	8.771	3	2.924	3.377	.019
	Within Groups	282.202	326	.866		
	Total	290.973	329			

Source: SPSS analysis output

The e-commerce website do launch some schemes like Big Billion day, Amazon big festivals which have huge ,attractive offers and discounts female teens did prefer these over their male counter parts and

took active participation in such *offers and discounts*. Girls also agreed that *the ease of return and exchange* term and conditions were a point of difference which did mattered them the most ,as the ease of return



and exchange suggested value of money and trust on e-commerce sites.

- *Mode of payment i.e. COD:* This facility is the most attractive point for teens as it is evident that the source of their online purchases are mostly their parents, followed by pocket money given to them and the grandparents and sibling to join.
- In case of male counterparts *variety of products* to look for was a major influencing factor.
- *Anytime and anywhere shopping:* High use of Smartphone's have made this feature viable and easy for male teens to shop anytime and anywhere feature. Thus it is clear from the study that the Gender will have varying effect on purchase decision and will depend on factor influencing purchase decision. Factors namely Variety of products, Ease of exchange /return of products, Ease of payments, anytime anywhere shopping, Discounts and offers are effected by gender as per the results of ANOVA .Therefore, there is a need for marketers and managers to understand what these teenagers want. Only then can the companies be able to direct their marketing strategies to fulfill this teenager segment.

Internet and various tools of Social Media are equally preferred by consumers for their purchase decisions.

The study also revealed that if a wide variety of Social Media types are available to the teenagers together to find information, the teenagers used certain Social Media platforms and tools more than others. Reviews sites, Social Network platforms, forums and Multimedia sharing, are among the most used by consumers unlike other types such as Blog or Micro blogging that seem to be less or almost not used by the teenager's consumers in their information search stage. Around 65% of the respondents used Google search engine the most followed by you tube with about 50%.Thus, the influence of Social Media at the information search stage seems to have different degrees depending on the Social Media types used for this purpose. It is now clear that Social Media's influence at the information stage differs and depending on their types.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

- The study clearly supports the literature review that said that companies should use the opportunity of interacting with the teenager consumer with the means of Social Media handles to engage with their present and prospective customer's community of followers.

- The gender notation as proved by the study can be helpful for companies in planning to attract the female customers by working upon their needs and factors that influences their purchase decision process namely variety of products, ease of return/exchange policy, ease of payments .
- In order to expand their customer base web promotion or paid promotions can be a game changer if collaborated with the famous online influencers who are being followed by the youth/teens on a regular basis, since the E-WOM plays a crucial role in increasing the search, this comes as the social media and internet influence is on a high and plays crucial role on product information search, evaluation of alternatives as well as product purchase.
- New product development and bring technological ease in their websites by companies along with removing hassles of toll-free and introducing more of what's app /messenger generated interactions also helps the young customers to return back to such companies for repeat purchases as well because of prior ease of communication .

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

- The present study is based on the reliability of the primary data. The sample units were selected from the population having multidimensional features of a large group.
- It is important to note that this research intended to see whether the increasing influence of Social Media on Teenagers' purchasing decision-making process differed or not according to age,gender,family income in relation to the usage of social media and internet by the teenagers of these two cities Patna and Ranchi. Along with the various stages of consumer decision process. Few limitations have been encountered when drawing conclusions from this study.
- The sample used cannot be representative of the entire population and the conclusions are thus difficult to draw on a small sample like this one. Indeed, the sample is not representative enough of all categories of age since it is more focused on the 13-19 year old categories, which are not the only ones that can be influenced in their purchasing decision-making process by Social Media.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Research can be done in rural areas where the mobile penetration is not as high as in urban areas to get an

idea of e-commerce penetration there. College students can also be researched for identifying more factors and deeper research can be done to find the factors influencing the decision of teenagers. Social media and other form of communication model (i.e., T.V., Radio, Print Media) can be studied together to see the diverse effect on minds of teenagers and their purchase decision ability along with them acting as the biggest influencer in family purchase decision as well. Brands can use this as an opportunity to tap the young customer's mind and design their website in a better manner with ease of flow of information relevant for customers can be easily traced and customer can find and compare products according to its needs and requirements.

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