INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR WITH REFERENCE TO CLOTHING IN CHENNAI CITY

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Abstract

This article explore "**Influence Of Electronic Word Of Mouth On Consumer Buying Behaviour With Reference To Clothing In Chennai City**" Electronic Word of Mouth communication through electronic media allows consumers to not only obtain information related to goods and services from the few people they know, but also from a vast, geographically dispersed group of people, who have experience with relevant products or services. They are expected to be honest as they are real life experience of the product usage. There are also paid reviews, where a professional or a company give mostly positive reviews as they have been paid.

Shopping for clothes online and joining social networks are becoming increasingly common activities among people all over the world. The objective of this research is to study purchasing behaviour of customers who buy clothes online as a result of eWOM. They exchange information about clothes on the internet by reading information from other users. The most important reason to buy clothes online is convenience.Based on the data collected, the statistical tools adopted for the analysis and interpretation arePercentage analysis., Chi-Square analysis., Mean and Standard Deviation., RankCorrelation

INTRODUCTION

Word-of-mouth, in general, refers to any oral or written recommendation made by a satisfied customer to the prospective customers of goods and services. It cannot be considered as a means of advertising as advertising is a paid and non-personal communication. In this fast moving world, almost everything is being purchased or rendered online. Technology has given the easiest way to access goods of any country, of any brand. When it comes to online shopping, the customers will seek the support of othercustomers.

In a time where Web 2.0 applications are starting to infiltrate every aspect of our lives, retailers are looking for the opportunities to unleash the power of this new marketing channel to promote their products and services. In particular, the web has created the opportunities for Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) communication through electronic media, such as online discussion forums, electronic bulletin board systems, newsgroups, blogs, reviews sites and social networking sites (Goldsmith, 2006)

One type of eWOM is online consumer reviews, it consists of analyses and commentaries generated and posted by the end users of products who have spent their money on the product and indeed used it. It is credible source of consumer insight and it can be used by businesses to make corrective or improvement measures on their products and services. Through online reviews and, different customers share their shopping experiences. Online shoppers always undertake a review of other shopper's comments and experiences before they buy products online. Online reviews provide an essential component of online shopping decisions as the amount of perceived risk involved is extremely high. Many potential shoppers frequently wait for comments of other shoppers before taking up anoffer.

Electronic Word of Mouth communication through electronic media allows consumers to not only obtain information related to goods and services from the few people they know, but also from a vast, geographically dispersed group of people, who have experience with relevant products or services. They are expected to be honest as they are real life experience of the product usage. There are also paid reviews, where a professional or a company give mostly positive reviews as they have been paid.

Shopping for clothes online and joining social networks are becoming increasingly common activities among people all over the world. The objective of this research is to study purchasing behaviour of customers who buy clothes online as a result of eWOM. They exchange information about clothes on the internet by reading information from other users. The most important reason to buy clothes online is convenience.

Many researchers have undertaken survey on such impacts that e-WOM has created in consumer buying decision with reference to Clothing. Some of them have concluded, with the knowledge they were able to gather that e-WOM have positive as well as negative impact. Marketers tend to increase the creativity of the marketing strategy by improvising on their product, in order to sustain the available loyal customers.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

- To know the importance of Electronic Word of Mouth on the purchase decision of the consumers
- To have a better understanding of the customer purchase pattern of online shopping of clothes
- To provide a better scope for further researches with regard toeWOM

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the Positive and Negative effects of Electronic Word ofMouth

- To study whether there is association between the Factors of Electronic Word of Mouth and the Age of theconsumer
- To examine the association between purchase attitude of clothes and the Gender of the consumer as a result ofe-WOM
- To understand the reliability of e-WOM while making purchase decision based on the Income of thecustomers

HYPOTHESIS

- **Ho:** There is no significant association between the Age of the respondents and the factors of eWOM that influence them to purchase clothesonline
- **Ho:** There is no significant association between the Gender of the respondents and the influence of eWOM as regards purchase attitude ofClothes
- **Ho:** There is no relationship between the change in reliability level of eWOM with the change in income of theconsumer

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- This research study is undertaken to understand the prevailing effects of e-WOM both positively andnegatively
- This study analyses the extent of the impact of e-WOM on Men and Women and its influence on their Purchase pattern ofClothes
- The research aims to provide suggestions on the healthy use of Electronic communication

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research has adopted both descriptive and analytical methodologies. Descriptive methodology is relevant since the research has been carried out with the review of literacy background relating to consumer buying behaviour. The adoption of analytical methodology has become an assemble factor in this research since it involves study on the influence of eWOM on consumer buying behaviour with reference to clothing.

SAMPLING

SAMPLING METHOD

Convenience sampling method is used for the purpose of selecting the respondents. It is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects

are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the research.

SAMPLE SIZE

Size of the sample means the number of sampling units selected from the population for data collection. The sample size of present study was drawn from 50 consumers who purchase clothes online as a result ofeWOM.

SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

For the present study both primary and secondary data is used.

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data was collected by using structured questionnaire. This was distributed to the customers who shop clothes online in Chennai. This was used for the analysis and interpretation of the study.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data collected from Articles, websites, journals.

TOOLS APPLIED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The data for the study is collected through Questionnaire which was closed ended.

Multiple choice questions are used. Websites and Articles of earlier studies were referred.

STATISTICAL TOOLS APPLIED

Based on the data collected, the statistical tools adopted for the analysis and interpretation are

Percentage analysis., Chi-Square analysis., Mean and Standard Deviation., RankCorrelation

LIMITATIONS

☐ The responses were collected from the online purchasers of Chennai cityonly

☐ One of the major constraints was time due to which the samples had to be restricted to 50only.

☐ The respondents were reluctant to disclose their purchasebehaviour

☐ The purchase pattern may vary for different products and for different geographical locations

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media, Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchase Intention

Abu Bashar et al (2012)., The author conducted a study on 150 online respondents who are active on social network. The responders review the social media before making purchase decision. The authors discuss how fast the social media bought change in entrepreneur and marketers marketing method from traditional to technology change. Following the online marketing on social media has become mandatory key connection for all kind of business in modern days otherwise the marketers will be outdated. The E Commerce and Internet has wider role how the business has brought drastic changes in adapting social media technology. People collect and share information on social media and became organic marketers. The users for to brand page to review more information about the brand, offer, peer to peer information about the product and service. Social media user engagement on brand page, create brand advocacy and loyalty. The brand followers become brand purchaser in social media.

Amal Dev Sarma & Basav Roy Choudhury (2015)., they found that social media build social network which influence word of mouth on user buying decision. The enlargement of online social network and user created content, word of mouth changes to electronic WOM which propagates to huge extent. Social media are accessed by normal people to bring the information to obtain what they want in real time. Social media shifted the way user read, search and trust the content. The users also furnish the market information of goods, services and more though user-generated content. Personal communication propagates online reviews (recommendations and experiences) and eWOM as result influence on purchase decisions andbehavior.

Carla Ruiz-Mafe et. al (2018)., they found that positive eWOM has wider social influence among large online user communities. Users connect in positive eWOM by integrating the communication between the social environment of a website and social influences. From 262 online users' communities respondents the authors found social presence is the predictor of positive eWOM. Higher the impact of interpersonal influences the stronger relationship between eWOM and social presence. This paper review how online communities review and

recommendation has impact on tourism industry. Positive online comment made by existing and potential customer on online user communities has a significant role on tourism services and empowered consumer. The online user communities stay connected in product related eWOM and have emerged as promotional tools for ecommerce and marketing.

Ismail Erkan and Chris Evans (2016)., They found how social media websites electronic word of mouth conversation direct to consumers purchase intention. Social media created useful opportunity for eWOM conversation. Individual discuss about products and services of any brand with their friends and associates.

Information Acceptance Model has impact on social media Electronic word of mouth and behaviour of consumers. They found positive information influence on consumer's purchase intention from the survey result conducted among 384 university students who accessed social media.

P. Yu. Michelle (2018)., The author studied (i) review of customer, (ii) personality of the reviewer, (iii) characteristics of the website obtainable in reviews, (iv) characteristics of product review, (v) influence of environment and (vi) interpersonal to find which factor has more influence on purchase intention. Among three hundred and thirty-seven universities students the data was collected. The author found that there is a positive impact of six factors of eWOM on purchase intention. Customer review factor is most dominant factor that influence purchase intention of consumer.

Electronic Word of Mouth, Trust and PurchaseIntention

Devkant Kala and VD.S. Chaubey (2018)., The authors found that the marketer should follow eWOM to increase the brand popularity which will persuade consumer purchase intention. With the expansion of internet customer interact with one another and to create known fact as electronic word of mouth about product/services. The fastest and easiest communication eWOM messages create brand image and influence purchase intention. Among 313 social media online respondents the authors found that brand image act as mediator between eWOM and purchase intention. WOM communication is trustworthy and non-commercial basis of information which has huge effect on consumer purchase behaviour and approach formation. People trust the other people positive recommendation which influence consumer's behaviour and direct to affirmative purchase intention.

Francesca Di Virgilio and Gilda Antonelli (2017)., they found that Web 2.0 technology allow user to create and exchange user-generated content. Online word of mouth/ eWOM is sharing the information about product and services on various online environments. eWOM and Trust are mediating variable on user behaviour intention of online buying. Consumer become more familiar with product and product related information shared on various social network sites. Social media Electronic WOM communication and trust have impact on purchase Intention.

Noraini Sa'ait et. al (2016)., They conducted a study among 361 respondents to find the influence of positive eWOM on purchase intention. They found eWOM element like accuracy, comprehensiveness, relevance and timeliness have significant connection with customer purchase intention. The teenagers are more aware of product or services, they trust the customer review shared through eWOM before making purchase decision. The eWOM information is from unpaid source and honest reviews are shared by

prior purchaser. The eWOM receiver who received prior purchaser information will have purchase intention after reviewing various reviews.

Electronic Word of Mouth, Brand Awareness and PurchaseIntention

Civelek, M., & Ertemel, A. (2018)., They examined Millennials have more substantial purchasing intention compared with other age group. Social media users communicate with family, friends, known and unknown peer community. Electronic word of mouth is peer to peer interaction. Positive peers comment influence on brand awareness direct towards brand trust. They concluded social media eWOM peer to peer communication among Millennials influence on purchase decision

Eun-Ju Seo and Jin-Woo Park (2018)., They highlighted that people search and retrieve eWOM information shared on social network to reduce anxiety before making a purchase decision. The users trust the eWOM information shared by experience users who have purchased the product online. They found brand awareness and trust have impact on eWOM. Brand awareness refers to a brand where the user recognizes a particular brand from multiple brands available online as a result the user trust is connected with brand. Online users have purchase Intention after reviewing Positive Electronic word of mouth in social network. Electronic word of mouth had a direct effect on trust among user in social media

Maryam Tariq et al (2017) they studied eWOM and brand awareness influences on customer purchase intention with brand image as mediator effect. The customers look for brand information before deciding to purchase the product or not to purchase the product. User reviews various suggestions and opinions from the expert who purchased online before making purchase decision. Electronic information also helps offline user to make purchase decision. As the eWOM information are shared and accessed worldwide at any time which is stored in internet rich socialmedia.

OBSERVATION

From the various researches earlier regarding electronic Word of Mouth, it can be observed that e-WOM has a greater influence on the purchase behaviour of the people. E-WOM reaches the customers through various network where Social Media plays a key role. Various aspects like situations where Social Media manages to create trust about the product among the people, Positive e-WOM which creates a wider platform for socially active users, the user-friendly attitude of these social networks for the marketing of the product are all well understood. The Web technologies have created opportunities for e-WOM communication. Various researchers have undertaken studies and came to an understanding that elements of e-

WOM like Accuracy, Comprehensiveness, Relevance and Timeliness have a significant connection with customer purchase intention. It is well observed that social media users communicate with family, friends, known and unknown peer community which creates Brand Awareness which in turn inflicts trust on the brand. User reviews, suggestions, opinions online influence the Purchase Behaviour. Hence, it can be concluded that Electronic Word of Mouth has a great impact on the customers as well as on theE-Commerce.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Today's new form of online WOM communication is known as electronic word-of-mouth or eWOM (Yang, 2017). This form of communication has taken on special importance with the emergence of online platforms, which have made it one of the most influential information sources on the Web (Abubakar and Ilkan, 2016). Today's new form of online WOM communication is known as electronic word-of-mouth or eWOM (Yang, 2017). This form of communication has taken on special importance with the emergence of online platforms, which have made it one of the most influential information sources on the Web (Abubakarand Ilkan,2016)
Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) is a form of buzz marketing and It can become viral if the message is persuasive or funny enough. In eWOM we focus on person-to-person contacts that happen on the internet. You may think this is new but in fact it's the oldest type of marketing we know. You come across something new, odd, funny or relevant and you tell your friends or the people you meet at the gym about yourdiscovery.

This framework has four main classes. The objects of these classes are:

➢ Participants are consumers- Senders orReceivers

➢ Actions are the activities that a participant performs on WOM units, such as reading a blog spots, replying or composing a comment, or recommending or suggesting content toothers

> ➢ A WOM unit is a consumer generated message found in channels such as posts, comments anddownloads
> ➢ Venues are locations where WOM activities take place, such as social media or virtual communities

DATA ANALYSIS ANDINTERPRETATION

Purchase pattern of consumers regarding clothes

Purchase Pattern	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Frequency of online purchase	Yes	23	46
	No	27	54
Occasion of purchase of clothes online	Festivals	14	28
	Discounts	20	40
	Buy 1 Get 1	13	26
	Birthdays	3	6
Type of dress bought frequently online	Casuals	21	42
	Traditional	11	22
	Western wear	11	22
	Designer wear	7	14
Average Amount spent on purchase online	Rs.500-1000	17	34
	Rs.1001-2000	19	38
	Rs.2001-3000	11	22
	More than Rs.3000	3	6

From the table it is observed that,

23 respondents contributing 46% of the total respondents purchase clothes online frequently, whereas 27 respondents of 54% do not purchase clothes online frequently.
For the pattern of online purchase occasion, 14 respondents answered Festivals which gives 28%. 20 respondents have answered in favour of Discounts with 40%. 13 respondents selected Buy 1 Get 1 offer which contributes 26% of the total responses and only 3 responses were in favour of Birthdays which only gives6%.

From the table, for the type of dresses purchased online frequently,

about 42% of the respondents selected Casuals. There is an equal distribution of the responses with 22% for Traditional wear and Western wear. The respondents who bought Designer wear were 14%.

The majority of the respondents spend, money on an average for buying clothes online, Rs.1001-2000 with 19 responses in favour, followed by Rs.500-1000 which was agreed by 17 respondents, 11 responses for Rs.2001-3000 and only 3 responses for More than Rs.3000.

Purchase pattern	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Online source of awareness	Retailer App	31	62
	Brand App	5	10
	Social Media	14	28
Reference of online reviews and ratings	Always	30	60
	Occasionally	11	22
	Rarely	7	14
	Never	2	4
Number of reviews referred	1 – 2	10	20
	3 – 4	16	32
	5 – 6	10	20
	7 or more	14	28
Rendering of Feedback online	Often	6	12
	Sometimes	26	52
	Never	18	36

From the table above, the following are observed

For the awareness of various brands, the online sources preferred are Retailer App with 62% responses followed by Social Media with 28% responses and Brand App has only 10% responses.

The data collected regarding the reference of reviews and ratings while buying clothes online, the responses were 60% of the respondents have Always referred. Respondents who refer Occasionally were 22%. About 14% of the respondents Rarely refer them whereas 4% people Never refer reviews and ratings.

The above table shows that about 32% (16 responses) respondents would read 3-4 reviews before buying clothes online. 28% (14 responses) people would read 7 or more reviews followed by 5-6 and

1-2 reviews equally with 20% (10 responses) each.

The majority of the respondents have agreed that only Sometimes they would give feedback after purchasing clothes online with 52% of them. Around 36% of the respondents had Never given feedback online. Only 12% of them have given feedback often.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive E – WOM creates trust	50	1	5	3.22	1.148
Intention to try	50	1	5	3.62	1.123
Reviews show Brand Loyalty	50	1	5	3.40	1.010
Satisfaction leads to recommendation	50	1	5	3.70	0.995
Exploration of variety of brands	50	1	5	3.52	1.015
Valid N (list wise)	50				

From the table above, it is understood that the mean value for the factor Satisfaction leads to recommendations is the highest with 3.70. It is followed by the factor eWOM creates an intention to buy with a mean value of 3.62. The third highest is the factor that eWOM enables Exploration of variety of brands with a mean value of 3.52. It is understood that mean values of all the factors are closely related to each other.

Therefore, Satisfaction of eWOM leads to recommendations to others is the most agreed upon factor.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
E-WOM exaggerates	50	1	5	3.14	1.178
Difference in products in real	50	1	5	2.92	1.291
E-WOM does not prove quality	50	1	5	2.92	1.175
Reviews may not be true	50	1	5	3.08	1.322
Valid N (list wise)	50				

From the above table, it can be determined that the factor, eWOM exaggerates a product, has the highest mean value of 3.14. It is

followed by the mean value of 3.08 for the factor Reviews may not be true. The third highest mean value of 2.92 is shared equally by two factors that there will be difference in products in real than seen in the website and eWOM does not prove quality.

Therefore, eWOM exaggerates the products is the most agreed upon

factor.

FINDINGS

The findings from the study are as follows:

➢ Most of the respondents (54%) do not purchase clothes online often. Only 46% of them do online shoppingfrequently.

➢ Majority of the respondents (40%) have agreed to purchase clothes when there are discounts. This shows that even when they do not have intention to buy, they tend to buy because of discounts for their favouriteclothes.

➢ The type of clothes bought frequently is Casuals. This shows that even when there are discounts, people don't buy formalattire.

➢ The income spent on the clothes seems to be much high (Rs.1001-2000). This reveals the effect of e-WOM on the standard of living of therespondents.

➢ About 62% of the respondents have answered in favour of the Retailer App for their awareness about various brands. This is one factor to prove that eWOM keeps people up-to-date with the changing trends.

➢ Majority of the respondents (60%) always refer online reviews and ratings before buying clothes. This shows that they are being cautious of onlineshopping.

➢ The number of reviews that the respondents refer for their purchase decision is in majority for 3-4 which gives 32%. The respondents pay attention to the different opinion of others. If they are not satisfied with a product they seem to change their purchaseidea.

➢ About 52% of the respondents give feedback only sometimes, because they are reluctant in disclosing their opinions toothers.

➢ From the analysis and interpretation, it is observed that the factors of eWOM have no impact on the purchase attitude of the respondents based on their age. Irrespective of what age they are, they makepurchase.

➢ The various factors of eWOM does not have a varying impact on the Gender of the respondents. Men and Women make purchases online not because of the factors but because ofdemand.

SUGGESTIONS

When it comes to Fashion, People are now able to collect and disseminate information about trendy Clothes via a variety of platforms including e-mail, blogs, forums, online communities and review sites. Information is shared not only among friends and relatives but alsostrangers, as communication networks are extended through the involvement of increasing number of contributors and audiences. Electronic Word of Mouth is regarded as a special form of

Word of Mouth because, in contrast to direct oral communication in Word of Mouth, eWOM comprises an anonymous act by a past, present or future consumer on theInternet.

- Though there are various positive impacts of eWOM, negative aspects of eWOM cannot beignored.

- eWOM is vast platform where social media, online advertisement, marketing takes place. The proper use of the platform will lead to the enjoyment of benefits.

- Though there are fraudulent activities taking place on both the seller's and the reviewer's side, one cannot deny the fact that eWOM has its ownperquisites.

- One concept of eWOM, i.e., Social Media itself provides various other scopes to further the project study, where various issues concerning the correct usage of the social media sites can beaddressed.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the analysis is conducted to understand the various aspects of Electronic Word of Mouth and the role it plays in the decision making of the prospective buyer regarding clothing. This paper discusses the main characteristics of eWOM and how it differs from the traditional WOM. In this paper, we focus particularly on ratings and reviews, i.e., the numerical or star evaluations and the feedbacks given by the existing consumer and how they influence the purchase decision of the buyingconsumers.

The objective of the study is to review prior studies to provide a better understanding of eWOM's effect on the consumers. The authors after reviewing various literatures concluded that electronic word of mouth made by anonymous, family and friends on social media via various social networks sites like Facebook, twitter and more have influence on purchase intention of user. The eWOM is shared by unpaid user and they became organic promoter for product/services. The influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) even changes the life style of consumers and it has brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges for Marketing activity.

Hence, from the study it can be clearly determined that irrespective of the Age, Gender, Income of the respondents, the use of eWOM platform is still increasing, especially when it comes to Clothing, with the developments in the technology.

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Ethical Clearance

This Is To Certify That The Article Entitled "Influence Of Electronic Word Of Mouth On Consumer Buying Behaviour With Reference To Clothing" is originally done by us.

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