A Critical Evaluation of Internet as a Change Agent in Trending Consumer Behavior

Varun Singh Yadav*

Assistant Professor of Commerce, Govt. PG College, Sector-01, Panchkula, Haryana

Abstract – On the present scenario, online shopping is one of the preferred modes of shopping among the people who are in the practice of using mobile phones and personal computers. This scenario has changed in just a span of 10 or 15 years and a number of factors are responsible for the same like spread of education in the country, mobile technology made easy and even the cost of using the same has been brought down. From the rural parts of the country to the metro cities most of the people are somehow connected to the drive of online shopping. This present study is focused on how the easy availability of internet and use of mobile devices has changed the face of shopping concerns of the customers and also identify the reasons for which the customers are finding online shopping more convenient.

Jaipur the capital city of Rajasthan, India is considered for the study and 200 carefully selected respondents were contacted. The data is collected with the help of a scale based questionnaire and data is analyzed by using SPSS ver. 23.0.

Keywords: Internet, Technology, Marketing, Consumer Behavior.

- *X* -

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the Internet has transformed the world we live in. It has become an effortless exercise to access information, converse with people all over the globe and share articles, videos, pictures and all types of media contents. The Internet has come to play a vital part in the lives of individuals as well as organizations all over the globe. It has been rightly termed as the third wave of revolutions after agriculture and industries **Gangeshwar (2013)**. It is essential for any organization, or business individual to make use of it to attain greater profits and success in their ventures. It has become an omnipresent tool the businesses will be indulging in, which will act as a competitive advantage in the near future. The businesspersons are availing it to give better services to the consumers and to advertise their product designs. The internet has helped both the seller and the buyer. The seller finds online advertising and marketing cost effective and he is able to approach consumers residing in far reaching places across geographical boundaries. After the advent of internet, other conventional means of communications like newspapers, magazines, television and radio are on the wane.

Evolution of Internet

Internet is dubbed to be the most recently developed, and modern medium that has come to its present form in barely 20 years (Fig. 1.1). United States in the late fifties developed information technologies to counter the nuclear attacks. This gave birth to Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA). In 1967 ARPA University, together with private service providers, had a meeting with defense units to discuss procedures regarding sharing of information using computers. In 1969, the forerunner of the Internet, ARPANET, came into existence. Later in the year, 1971 other techniques like network and email started emerging and intercontinental links were established in the year 1973. The word "internet" originally came into usage in 1971 and in the eighties it was accepted as the foremost online protocol.

In the early nineties Tim Berners-Lee, who is rightly recognized as initiator of the internet, developed on his previous work and launched URL protocol, web application software, and World Wide Web. By the year 1993, business organizations got interested in the internet and began using it for commercial purposes in 1995.
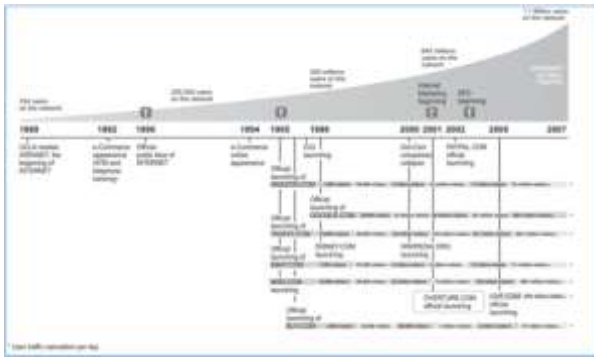
Source: - Internet Timeline and History of Computers, 2008

In 1998, Google launchednew search engines and the precision and ease with which it operated took the newsearch engines to greater heights. A funny quote goes that "nothing not in Google does not exist". The worldwide marketable potential of the internet came to be recognizedand many more websites, like eBay, started operations to capture the online market.In 2004, the "web 2.0", which was supposed to be a user-friendly web, came into being.It helped to browse the web faster and distribute information in a cheaper andreasonably accessible way. This made it easier for the business fraternity to advertisetheir products more easily.

Evolution of internet in India

Internet, in India was introduced by Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) in the year1995. It introduced the Gateway Internet Access Service (GIAS) that was accessible tothe public on Fourteenth of August 1995. GIAS was operational from Mumbai, Delhi,Kolkata, and Chennai and directly connected to Pune and Bangalore. It was initiallyunder VSNL, a government enterprise, but was later acquired by Tata group andrenamed as Tata Communications Ltd. on 13th February 2008. Many people are notaware that internet in the form of Educational Research Network (ERNET) wasintroduced in India years before VSNL's GIAS.

Cyber Cafe

It is a place where internet is accessible to the public. These business franchisees areusually snacks and drinks corners hence the suffix of café to their names. Theseenterprises charge a fee for accessing the computer generally at a time-based rate.Travelers and students are the usual acquaintances of these cafes. After the advent ofmobile internet, the businesses of these cafes are on the decline.

Rediff.com

Rediff.com is an internet site providing access to other sites. It was the first on lineportal registered in India in 1996 with head office in Mumbai and branches in Bangalore,New Delhi, and New York City in USA. It is an entertainment, shopping, and newsprovider.

Hotmail.com

Jack Smith along with Sabeer Bhatia, fondly known as the poster boy of the Indiansuccess story at Silicon Valley, established the first e- mail service on the internet calledthe Hotmail on July 4, 1996. Later he sold it to Microsoft at a whopping 400 milliondollars. At present Google's Gmail tops the list as the world's largest e-mail providerwhile Hot Mail occupies the second position.

ICICI Bank

ICICI bank has the distinction of being the first bank to launch online banking site inIndia in 1997. Customers were delighted to have multiple facilities at the tip of thefingers from the comfortable domains of their homes. Recharging of mobile balances,payment of landline phone bills, payment of school and college bills, and transfer ofcash from one account to another without going to the bank or standing in long queuesand the facility to trade in demat accounts without going to the exchange office was all aboon to the common people, especially to the senior citizens.

Webdunia, India's first largely successful Hindi portal came into being in the year 1999.The year 2000 saw the setting up of foreign portals like Yahoo and MSN in India, thusgiving it a unique ID. It was in the same year, Bazee.com; the Indian version of E-Baywas launched. The same year saw the birth of online journalism in India. IndianTobacco Company (ITC) gets the credit of taking internet to rural India by introducing e-chaupal. In 2001, the Indian Railways launched the irctc.com where online railway tickets can bebooked. This site has become India's largest revenue earner. Airways did not lagbehind and in the year 2003, Air Deccan made available the booking of air tickets viainternet.

MARKETING GOES ONLINE

Online advertisements comes into existence

The year 1995 saw a boom in web –marketing and web-advertisements because of therelaxation of policies over the internet. In 1995, there was a growth in internet retailingand web advertisements. In 1994, US spending on internet advertising was nil, but by1996 it shot up to more than $300 million. In 1997, it rose to $1 billion. Soon thecompanies started buying online advertising space along with data collecting techniquesby requesting consumers to share their contact details.

Online search portal Yahoo was quick to capitalize on this movement and developedsoftware to monitor consumer likes and dislikes and plan advertisements accordingly. Italso offered display and advertisement space on its immensely popular web page. Itmay be mentioned here that it was one of the "dotcoms" that made good financial gainsin this field. Google too borrowed this concept and upgraded the technique of

targetingadvertisements. In 2000, it introduced "AdWords", a promotional service that requiredmarketers to pay only for advertisements clicked by a consumer. This policy has pavedway for more than 90% of Google's present earnings and is a classic example of searchengine advertising methods.

The Dotcom Boom and Bust

The vast development in internet based technologies and novel business propositionsgave rise to the "dotcom boom" in the nineties. During this time, many naïve and eagerindividuals started creating new online companies by availing loans, investments fromventure capitalists and advertisements. Since the Information Technology (IT) industrywas in its infancy, many of them were compelled to shut down because of implementingof strategies that were never tested before. This led to severe financial loss to many ofthem. Finally, Google came up with search engine advertising and salvaged the ITindustry.

Social Media Growing into a Behemoth

Despite some failed marketing strategies – the online marketing improved anddeveloped speedily with the introduction of web 2.0, an online technology used forsharing of information. With the growth of auction websites, e-tailing and internetbanking, financial transactions also started taking place over the internet.The final and the most important development that revolutionized the online marketingdomain was the invention of the social media, which started gathering momentum fromthe year 2006. With the growth of social media platforms, individuals started connectingwith each other and the idea of viral marketing came to the fore. The Social Jumpstartobserved, "In 2012, 50% of all Internet users globally, had signed into a social network;about 63% visited a social network at least once a month, in 2013 it went up to 68% andin 2014 it reached 71%".

Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and LinkedIn are now buzzing with new ideas andinnovations. Big companies engage "online community managers" etc. to manage andimprove online awareness. Customers too have become aware of these social mediaplatforms and started interacting with them.
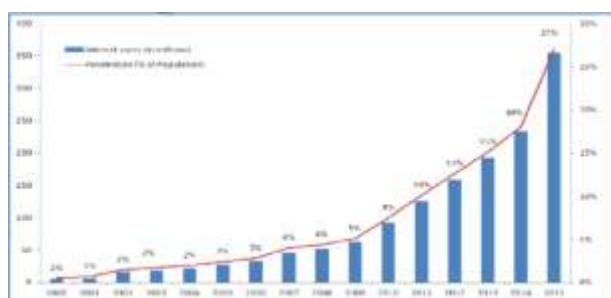

Figure 2: Internet Penetration in India

Effect of Internet on Consumer Behavior

The present state of technology in the country has made the life easier for people and same has provided them with unlimited opportunities. Now days the possession of mobiles (*smart phones*), tablets, etc. is very common and there is a new world of information in front of people who are using the same. Apart from the educational and informative role the people are using these devices to shop online as well. At the initial level this was limited to only trade enquiries and order processing for wholesale items but the time changed and the term '*Online Retailing*' became the talk of the town.

It is not so that it is only good enough for the customers but this is a whole new market place for the companies as well and the in the lieu of the same the respective consumer behavior is also altered as the customer not dependent on the physical store for their purchases and even the purchase has not remained time bound. High variety of products and services, fast processing of orders, secure online payments and other features had made the online shopping more handy, presently if any of the given customer thinks to buy any product or avail any service he/she first log on to a online shopping website and find the respective cost and variety and then go for the physical store to buy the same.

The transparency of the market has made it easier for the customers to believe on the online availability of the products and even buying them with full confidence. Companies are even attracting them with easy return and exchange policies, demo, money return and many other facilities. Most of them are not available with the physical brick and mortar models of marketing.

Consumer Decision Making in Digital Age
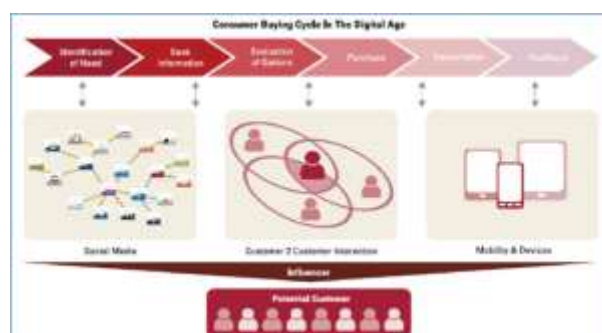
Source: KPMG

I. Need recognition

In this digital world the need is created through Facebook, Twitter etc. Friends sportinga new wrist watch or a nice pair of shoes, entice the consumer to buy the product.Different companies promoting the brands based on the individual characteristics ontheir

Facebook's home profiles, lure the consumers to at least scan through theofferings. Friends liking a particular YouTube video, showing the demo of a product,create a buzz among the consumers community about the brand / product.

II. Information search

Social media acts as a tool to search information regarding various products andservices. This is the stage where consumers are looking for different brands andproduct options. Consumers seek recommendations from their friends on socialnetworks and also consult experts' advice on brands and products. They also search fordifferent blog posts and read other customers' reviews for assessment before buying aproduct.

III. Evaluation of the choices

This stage acts as an important part of the consumers' decision making process.Consumers evaluate the products on various parameters and then decide on thepurchasing of the product. The social media acts as a catalyst in influencing the buyingbehavior of the consumers. Testimonials about the product and recommendations byother people help in the assessment of the product.

IV. Purchase

Social media influences consumers' decisions because the links, acquaintances andfriends that they have online, can assist them in searching for the brand or to buy theproduct. The various online communities also help in finding out the best way to pay forthe product.

V. Post-Purchase Evaluation

After the product is bought the consumer generally evaluates whether the product isperforming according to the desired satisfaction or not. If the consumer is not satisfiedwith the product then he will express his anger on various social media platforms,thereby making sure that the other consumers become aware of the problemspertaining to the product. However if the consumer is happy with the product, he willshare his positive reviews and comments of the same. This will help in creating a goodbrand image for the company. A good review always creates a good viral marketing atno cost.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Iranmanesh & Najafabadi (2013) this study was conducted to know about the factors that are closely related to the online purchase intentions of the customers and even the influence of social media on decision making process of the customers. The findings of the study stated that even though the social media is playing an important role in decision process of the customer but then again the customers are still getting better stimuli from the traditional modes of advertising. Their study also disclosed that the use of social networks in advertising and e-communication were likely to modify consumer's attitude towards products and services.

Kumar and Singh (2014) this study focuses on the need of ongoing research related to the online mode of shopping and to find out how the behavior of the customer is influenced by the facilities and luxury of this mode. Moreover, online shopping with reference to female consumers is under researched and very few published contents are available on this theme.

Kim & Byramjee (2014) this study was based on the evaluation of online shopping and the perceived risk of the customers in making online payments. Even the related objectives of the study were to know the security level of the payment gateways used and exercised by the customers and the respective customers. The findings of the study stated that more than 35% of the respondents were not convinced with the mode of online payments and generally drop the purchases where cash on delivery is not available. Then the researcher also stated that in many of the case it was found that the customers are making online payments to only those websites with whom they are familiar with and drop the deals for other websites.

OBJECTIVES

i. To know the factors that is driving the customers to go for the online shopping.

ii. To know about the thought process of the customer while comparing about the products and services on online mode.

HYPOTHESIS

H_0: There is no relationship between Shopping Enjoyment and attitude towards online shopping.

H_1: There is a relationship between Shopping Enjoyment and attitude towards online shopping.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study tried to explore the consumer's behavior towards the online shopping and the respective relationship between marketing persuasion of online sellers and effect of the same on customers. To serve the purpose, the researcher has taken Jaipur, Rajasthan as the research location.

The sample size of the study is 200 respondents, which are being carefully selected from the different areas of Jaipur. The approach of the study was to locate the delivery boys in the respective areas and contact the person to whom the goods are delivered; of course the contact was at the will of the respective customer.

Varun Singh Yadav*

Both secondary and primary data have been compiled and analyzed with a view to examining the research objectives.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Hypothesis I

Sr. #	Particulars	Mean	S. D.	Variation Coefficient
1	I shop online as I can shop in privacy of home	2.79	0.41	1.35
2	I shop online as I can shop whenever I want	2.98	0.63	2.08
3	I shop online as I can save myself from market crowd	2.34	0.72	6.01
4	I shop online as I get broader selection of products online	2.91	0.61	2.31
5	Online shopping gives facility of easy price comparison	2.88	0.58	9.07
6	I shop online as I get user/expert reviews on the product	3.19	0.63	1.72
7	I shop online as I can take as much time as I want to decide	2.54	0.71	7.04
8	Online shopping makes my shopping easy	1.98	1.02	3.61
9	Online shopping gives me better control on my expenses	2.74	0.62	8.34
10	I find online shopping compatible with my life-style	2.01	0.91	3.42

Interpretation

As can be seen from the above table that the first 5 points of the assessment present an average score of 3 at the LikertScale of 1 to 5, for these particular points the respondents were strongly agreed to the point in question and the same is evident from the low standard deviation and the coefficient of variation.

Then again for the components of review from experts, ease of shopping and the life style component are not equal on an average basis and the same can viewed from the large gap between standard deviation and coefficient of variation.

The above stated variation in the responses it is clear that in most of the cases the customer are having a favorable attitude towards the online mode of shopping it is also evident that the respondents generally find online shopping easier and apparently matching to their respective lifestyles.

On the basis of above analysis and interpretation it can be stated that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis i.e. '*There is a relationship between Shopping Enjoyment and attitude towards online shopping'* is accepted.

CONCLUSION

It was empirically ascertained that consumers tend to shop more on the internet because of the convenience of ordering the product from home, reducing the effort to travel and stand in queue, easy usage of website and comparing many products at one place. Convenience, positively impacts the attitude of female consumers who buy online. Thus, it is logical to state that those consumers, who recognize the benefits of

online shopping and feel that the websites are simple to use and traverse, consider 258 online shopping to be attuned to their buying needs. These consumers exhibit a favorable attitude towards internet shopping and are more motivated to buy online. This study also empirically proves that variety of products displayed, the efficacy of services provided by the online vendors, the deals offered by online companies, lower prices of the products offered and adequate security measures taken by the web stores make online shopping an enjoyable and satisfying experience. This has a positive influence on the online shopping behavior of the female consumers. It was also found that social influence had a negative impact on the online shopping intention.

REFERENCES

1. 2012 Global Retail Development Index. (2012).

2. CRISIL Opinion - e-tail eats into retail. (2014).

3. Email Statistics Report, 2015-2019. (2015).

4. Evolution of e-commerce in India - Creating the bricks behind the clicks. (2014).

5. Gangeshwer, D. K. (2013). E-Commerce or Internet Marketing: A Business Review from Indian Context. International Journal of u-and e-Service, Science and Technology, 6(6), 187-194.

6. Gnanasambandam, C., Madgavkar, A., Kaka, N., Manyika, J., Chui, M., Bughin,J., & Gomes, M. (2012). Online and upcoming: The Internet's impact on India.

7. Hui, L. Y. (2012). 1 Billion Facebook Users On Earth: Are We There Yet?

8. India Internet Users. (2015).

9. Jones, A. T., Malczyk, A., & Beneke, J. (2011). Internet Marketing: A highly practical guide to every aspect of internet marketing.

10. Murali, B. (2011). Evolution of Internet in India: The Indispensable Visage of Media.

11. Zimmermann, K. A. (2012). Internet History Timeline: ARPANET to the World Wide Web.

12. Kim, S. H., & Byramjee, F. (2014). Effects Of Risks On Online Consumers' Purchasing Behavior: Are They Risk-Averse Or Risk-Taking?. Journal of Applied Business Research, 30(1), 161.

www.ignited.in

13.   Kumar, V., & Singh, R. (2014). Women Online Shopping: A Critical Review of Literature.

Corresponding Author

Varun Singh Yadav*

Assistant Professor of Commerce, Govt. PG College, Sector-01, Panchkula, Haryana

Varun Singh Yadav*