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Website content and consumer buying behavior: The mediating role of electronic word-of-mouth

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Abstract

Objectives: The aim of this study was to examine the mediating role of Electronic word-of-mouth (EWM) between Website Content (WC) and Consumer Buying Behavior (CBB). The working people may differ in their behavior due to time constraints and prefer to buy goods and services online. **Methodology:** Primary data was collected with the help of adopted questionnaires from working men and working women from Hyderabad, Pakistan. The total number of respondents was 200 and for the hypothesis testing, various statistical tests were applied such as Reliability Test, Factor Analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling in SPSS and AMOS. **Findings:** The present study, confirmed the partial mediation of EWM between WC and CBB. **Implications:** This study suggested that marketing companies of Hyderabad, Pakistan should focus on EWM along with WC for better market share in the future.

Keywords: Website Content; Consumer Buying Behavior; Electronic Word of Mouth

1 Introduction

From the last 5 to 6 years, buying and selling trends in the market seen changes due to adaptation of electronic platforms. People mostly use the online platform, where they spend one-third of their daily time surfing on the internet[1] . In today's era, everyone has access to the internet where they find thousands of ads on a daily basis and this influences their buying behavior[2].

Digital marketing and online purchasing has dramatically increased as most of the people get influenced and attracted due to the pictures of goods [2]. The content in the online platforms is the marketing technique that has played a major role in building a strong connection and engaging with the consumers, it helps the company in enhancing its market shares by posting content on their social networking platforms [3,4]. In digital marketing, brands are so conscious about their negativity through word of mouth as the digital media provides them a huge number of customers but a minor mistake will lose thousands of their precious consumers and negativity through word of mouth can disastrous for their business. Well, digital marketing has been an amazing marketing model through which many business opportunities have been discovered and it has a big impact on our apparel industry specifically because it saves customer's time and with a one-click, they can see the thousand different varieties at a time. In the past studies, only the marketing mix had been emphasized in the context of Consumer Buying Behavior (CBB). Numerous Businesses have put-in extraordinary efforts to take help from the Internet to grow their trades. Website Content (WC) has unsurprisingly become the foremost critical matters for companies that want to make the most of the benefits.

1.1. Theoretical framework

Understanding consumer Behavior is crucial to marketers, hence active consumerism as stated in principle or rule of Online Consumer Behavior can be influenced by many factors according to past researches. These factors are website, perceived risk and behavior control on online buying behavior of consumers [5,6]. This study helped to identify the positive and negative factors influencing the behavior of buyers.

1.2. Online buying behavior — Apparel brands

Social media is a highly effective platform through which most people and societies exchange their views and interests as well as to share user-generated content [7]. Commercial units can employ digital media as a strategic tool for the promotion of business marketing [8]. It is crucial to discover the role of social media in consumer consumption with the marketing of services and products. In Pakistan, the top 5 industries on Facebook are Fashion, Telecom, E-commerce, Retail and Service. Among these, the fashion industry is the topmost industry with sum of 19,724,721 fans [2]. But, when it comes to the top 5 brands by number of interaction on Facebook, two women fashion apparel brands namely "Sapphire" and "Sana Safinaz" come on 3rd and 5th place consecutively. Whereas, almost all top women fashion apparels brands like Gul Ahmed, Khaadi, J., Satrangi, Sapphire, Generation and Stylo, etc., have their own e-stores.

1.3. Mediating role of electronic word-of-mouth

Electronic word-of-mouth (EWM) is considered more of a consumer-dominated promotional channel in which sellers or manufacturers are free to showcase and get validation for their products [6]. The contemporary word-of-mouth (WOM) on the social media platforms is recognized as electronic WOM [9]. This communication has taken on uncommon significance with the rise of online platforms that have made it one of the foremost influential information sources on the Internet [10]. Another research differentiates EWM from conventional WOM is the as fastest means of communication as EWM is accessed by large population [11]. Moreover, EWM gives Businesses an advantage over conventional WOM to understand the type of variables that persuade buyers to post their feedback online and the effect of feedback on other potential buyers [12]. In any case, consumers' use of innovation to share feedback about products or services, may create a risk for the Businesses because consumer feedback or electronic WOM cannot be regulated [9].

1.4. Website content

A reasonable retail website ought to have some kind of standard features. The websites must show the correct and appropriate material since clients will be able to compare information that was conveyed to them by means of diverse media [13]. Product specifications and site layout are basic requirement for adequate consumer involvement [14]. The online store provides importance to making a purchase decision based on the informational dynamics of websites and the location of the potential consumers [13]. The effect of online stores on online buying behavior may be smaller than the physical store on purchase. It is a matter of fact that, physically the stimulus works more effectively so the finding is not surprising [15]. Based on the above theoretical framework and literature review following alternative Hypothesis and Conceptual Framework has been developed.

H1: There is a significant impact of Website Content on Consumer Buying Behavior.
H2: The Electronic word of mouth mediates relationship between website Content on Consumer Buying Behaviour.
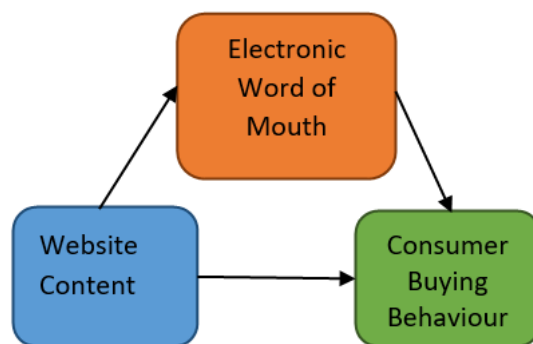
Fig 1. Conceptual Framework

2 Material and Methods

This research is based on primary data collected from a well-structured questionnaire[16]. A total of 225 questionnaires were dispersed using a random sampling method. During the data screening phase, unfilled (25) printed questionnaires were not considered for analysis due to missing values and outliers. The target population were both working men and working women of Hyderabad, Pakistan, who had experience of online buying of apparels. It has been practically observed that both working genders, could not find the time to visit the physical outlets for shopping, they mainly relied on online purchase of goods and services. Five Likert scale was used where 1 showed strong disagreement and 5 showed strong agreement. Data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and AMOS software for analysis. The sample size was determined with the thumb of rule each item should have at least 10 cases[17]. In this study, there were 3 variables and each variable had 4 items aligned to them. Therefore, the required sample size with respect to the thumb of rule was 12*10=120, but in order to get more reliable results sample size was increased to 200. The response rate was 89%.

3 Results

3.1. Respondent profile

The Respondents' characteristics such as gender, age, income and working hours were categorized in order to achieve the objectives of this study. The demographics of respondents are shown in below Table 1.

3.2. Construct reliability

Table 2 shows the value of construct reliability and convergent validity in terms of the Factor loading, Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's Alpha Value (CAV) and Average Variance Extraction (AVE). The Value for CR and CAV should be greater than 0.70, and AVE should be greater than 0.50. For three variables which include, dependent variable (CBB), Independent variable (WC) and Mediating variable (EWM) have greater than suggested value[18,19]. The highest value for CR is 0.91 (EWM), whereas the lowest value of 0.87 (WC). The highest value for CAV is 0.88 (CBB), however lowest value 0.78 (EWM). Furthermore, in Table II, it can be noted that AVE starting from 0.63 (WC) to 0.70 (CBB).

3.3. Discriminate validity

The recent approach for discriminate validity is suggested by Henseler et al., (2015) via Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Table 3 indicates the value of the HTMT Test for validity, threshold value of HTMT is 0.85 and 0.90. All the values of variables such as CBB, WC and EWM are lower than recommended values, so the author of this study concluded the discriminate validity of data.

Table 1. Respondent profile

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	110	55
Female	90	45
Total	200	100
Age		
18-28	80	40
29-39	72	36
Above-40	48	24
Total	200	100
Income		
20,000-30,000	75	37.5
31,000-40,000	80	40
Above-40,000	45	22.5
Total	200	100
Working hours		
5-7	65	32.5
8-10	40	20
Above-10	95	47.5
Total	200	100

Table 2. Construct reliability and convergent validity

Factor	Items	FL	CR	CAV	AVE
Consumer Buying Behavior	CBB1	0.86	0.90	0.88	0.70
	CBB2	0.79			
	CBB3	0.77			
	CBB4	0.88			
Website Content	WC1	0.87	0.87	0.85	0.63
	WC2	0.69			
	WC3	0.72			
	WC4	0.88			
Electronic Word of Mouth	EWM1	0.82	0.91	0.78	0.72
	EWM2	0.80			
	EWM3	0.89			
	EWM4	0.87			

Table 3. Discriminate validity

Factor	CBB	WC	EWM
CBB	0.65		
WC	0.55	0.56	
EWM	0.75	0.62	0.59

3.4. Simple regression (hypothesis testing)

The Simple regression results can be noticed in Table 5, the independent variable (WC) and the dependent variable (CBB), the value of beta= 0.560 and significant value =0.000. Based on these values, it has been revealed that WC has a positive and significant impact on CBB in the context of Hyderabad, Pakistan. Furthermore, the value of R-square indicates that the independent variable explains that dependent variable as 0.75 or 75 percent. In the social sciences field, CBB and Attitude is being measured, the suggested value should be at least 0.10 or 10 percent. Therefore, proposed hypothesis 1 has been proved.

Table 4. Simple regression

Factor	B	Sig-value	R^2
Constant	——-	0.000	
Website Content	0.562	0.002	0.75

3.5. Mediating results (hypothesis testing)

Table 5 shows the mediation results, there are three factors that can be checked in this table such as, Total effect, Direct Effect and Indirect Effect (mediating effect of EWM between WC and CBB). First, total effect between WC and CBB is positive (β=0.52) and significant (sig-value=0.004) with respect to R-square value (R^2=0.34). Second, direct effect between WC and CBB is positive (β=0.41) and significant (sig-value=0.000) with respect to R-square value (R^2=0.16). Third, the indirect effect between WC and CBB in the presence of the mediation effect of EWM is positive (β=0.32) and significant (sig-value=0.012) with respect to R-square value (R^2=0.08). However, in the presence of mediator (EWM), the beta value reduced from 0.41 to 0.32. Hence, the partial mediation has been revealed. The proposed hypothesis 2 has been supported.

Table 5. Mediating results

Effect	Path direction	Path beta	R^2	Sig-value
Total Effect	*WC->CBB	0.52	0.34	0.004
Direct Effect	**WC->CBB	0.41	0.16	0.000
Indirect Effect	**WC->EWM->CBB	0.32	0.08	0.012

4 Discussion

The findings of this study suggested that the WC and EWM have influenced their CBB in Hyderabad, Pakistan. First, a direct effect of WC and the indirect effect of WC in the presence of EWM are found to have a positive and significant impact on CBB. These findings are similar to previous studies, in Spain[12], which concluded that WC and EWM has a significant influence on the final decision of consumer in regards of buying goods and services from the online platforms. In Turkey[10] the EWM has a significant influence on travel intention and destination selection. Further findings confirmed that both gender equally responds to EWM in the context of the final decision. A research study also examined the quality of WC in order to purchase apparel, in their study they enforced that the information and response time in each transaction is a matter for online shoppers[6,20]. Lastly, product information on the website creates loyalty among consumers and helps manufacturers in order to get more market share in the future[9,21].

5 Conclusion and practical implications

The present study focused on the Consumer buying behaviour (CBB) while purchasing apparel online in Hyderabad, Pakistan. There are certain uncontrollable factors such as personal and external, usually these affect the CBB. This study gives insights that traditionally not only 4 Ps of marketing is important, also WC experience cannot be ignored with regard to CBB. The recent development of market space and development in technology and literacy rate of consumers enforce the manufacturers to develop an informative website along with physical stores. This innovation facilitates the e-marketers in influencing the consumer behaviour, online shopping and positive feedback, these help in retaining the consumer for future purchases and for the future purchase and recommendations to the potential consumers. The WC experience and EWM are important for the marketers and academia. This study will help apparel clothing companies to develop their website with all possible information and ensure websites and online presence as the best platforms for marketing their goods at Hyderabad, Pakistan. For academia,

the researchers can develop new objectives and hypotheses in regard to online consumer behaviour particularly WC and EWM. This framework also can be extended to other industries and respondents too in order to confirm the existing findings of this study, develop new literature and discussion forum for the future.

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