IMPACT OF eWOM ON THE BEHAVIOR OF INDIAN CONSUMER

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Abstract: In a developing country like India, purchasing over the internet has become a frequent occurrence. Online consumer evaluations published by co-customers, often known as electronic word of mouth, have an influence on consumers' online buying decisions. It is becoming increasingly vital to understand client behaviour on online platforms. The research is carried out using primary data. The purpose of the study is to learn about the different components of e-Wom and its influence on prospective buyer's clothes selection. Through this article, we may focused on ratings and reviews, which means numerical or star assessments and comments, which are provided by existing customers, and is impact the purchasing decisions of new customers. After studying numerous literatures, it is concluded that e-Wom spread by family, friends and others on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and others has an impact on a user's buy intention. With the advancement of technology, it is evident that the usage of the eWOM platform is continuing to grow, particularly when it comes to clothing.

Keywords: e-Wom, Consumer behaviour, Online shopping,

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Our lifestyles have changed dramatically with the advent of internet technology in the previous decades. The number of internet users is quickly rising; in June 2019, 45.36 billion internet users were estimated among the world's 77.16 billion people. Asian internet users account for 23.0 billion people, or 50.7 percent of the world's population, with China accounting for 8.29 billion people, or 37.7 percent of Asian internet users. E-commerce provides a potential in web marketing that has been overlooked, with global e-retail sales expected to exceed 27 trillion dollars by 2020 in terms of online purchasing. Practitioners and organisations must understand customers' behaviour in the online purchasing system in order to expand the online market place

to product diversity, online advertising, retail techniques, and market segmentation. Before the internet, people shared or obtained information about a product or service from known persons before making a decision, which played an important role in determining consumer behaviour and is known as word of mouth (WOM) [1].

Consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions are influenced and formed in large part by word-of-mouth (WOM) communication. In terms of internet usage, India is ranked second in the world. The number of individuals accessing the internet on their cell phones is rising as smart phones get more advanced. E-commerce is also on the rise. In a growing country like India, online buying has become a frequent occurrence. Electronic word of mouth, often known as online customer evaluations published by co-consumers, has an influence on consumers' online buying. It is a novel mode of communication that has proven crucial for obtaining consumer feedback. Traditional WOM communication has been shown to be less successful than e-Wom. As internet technologies improve, more customers are turning to the internet for information on a product or a firm, resulting in the emergence of e-WOM. e-WOM is defined as "any good or negative comment made about a product or firm by potential, existing, or past consumers that is made available to a large number of individuals and institutions over the Internet [2-5]."
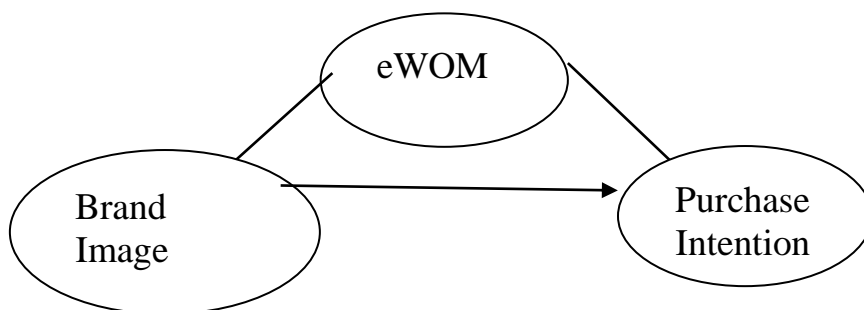
Source: Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012

Consumers are increasingly turning to internet platforms (such as social media and blogs) to voice their thoughts on the products and services they use and to learn more about the firms that offer them. These tools are drastically altering everyday living as well as customer-business

relationships. Word of mouth (WOM) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) have attracted academic attention due to the rapid proliferation of online communication via social media, websites, blogs, and other kinds of online communication [7-9].

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature survey determines consumer behaviour based on the previous research[1-15]:

Chatterjee (2001) studied the impact of unfavourable views toward a shop on assessment and purchase intent was explored. According to the study, unfavourable evaluations had a negative impact on the retailer's dependability as well as the inclination to buy. Furthermore, unfavourable reviews had a higher impact on less renowned businesses than on merchants with a high reputation.

Sen and Lerman (2007) investigated how customer attitudes are influenced by reviews that are stated by users online. They found that the valence of a review, or the negativity or positivity of a review, had a significant impact on consumer attitudes toward the product that was reviewed.

Keller (2007), WOM review from main consumers has a predisposition of sharing information that is favourable related to what they have been engaged in, as they prefer connecting favourable information with what they have been involved in.

Bashar et al (2012) performed a survey of 150 online respondents who use social media. Before making a purchasing choice, respondents look at social media. The authors highlight how quickly social media has influenced entrepreneur and marketer marketing methods, which have shifted from traditional to technology-based. In today's world, following internet marketing on social media has become a necessary essential link for all types of businesses; else, marketers would become obsolete. E-commerce and the internet have played a larger part in how businesses have adapted to social media technologies. People become organic marketers by collecting and sharing information on social media.

Armstrong and Kotler (2013) explored the impact of friends' remarks and recommendations on the purchase behaviour of individuals, acquaintances, and other customers According to Pride and Ferrell (2014), word-of-mouth (WOM) is the personal communicational exchange of consumer information about goods, brands, and organisations that is shared with others.

Sarma&Choudhury (2015) established that social media fosters the formation of social networks, which influence user purchase decisions through word of mouth (WOM). Word of mouth turns into electronic WOM, which spreads worldwide, thanks to the expansion of online social networks and other user-generated content. Ordinary people utilise social media to gain real-time information and receive what they desire. As a result of social media, the way individuals read, search for, trust information has changed. Market information on products, services, and other commodities may also be found in user-generated content. Through human communication, online reviews (recommendations and experiences) and eWOM propagate, impacting purchasing decisions and behaviour.

Sharma et al (2015) determined that the online community has developed fast as a result of social networking sites and social app-based groups of individuals. The author looked at the impact of social networking sites and the strength of social app usage. The user can communicate electronic WOM information with peer to peer groups through social networking sites. As the use of social media grows, social media network developers create more appealing and user-friendly features. Users' confidence in social app communities is built and strengthened. Through electronic word of mouth, social app usage on social networking sites has a beneficial impact on purchasing decisions for digital and virtual items.

NorainiSa'aitet. al (2016) performed a survey of 361 people to determine the impact of positive eWOM on purchase intent. They discovered that eWOM elements like correctness, completeness, relevance, and timeliness are all important factors to consider, which had a strong link to consumer purchase intent. Teenagers are more knowledgeable of products and services, and they rely on eWOM consumer reviews before making a purchase decision. Prior purchasers have given honest evaluations and the eWOM information is from an unpaid

source. The eWOM receiver who has obtained past customer information will have a purchasing intention after reading multiple evaluations.

Erkan and Evans (2016) discovered how electronic word-of-mouth conversations on social networking websites lead to customer purchase intent. Social media has provided a helpful platform for eWOM discussion. Individuals talk to their friends and acquaintances about any brand's products and services. Social media, electronic WOM, and consumer behaviour are all affected by the model of information acceptance.

According to the results of a survey performed among 384 university students who used social media, good information had a favourable impact on customer purchase intent.

Tariq et al (2017) investigated the impact of social media on brand awareness and image on customer buying intent. Before selecting whether or not to buy a product, buyers search for brand information. Before making a purchasing choice, the user considers numerous ideas and opinions from internet experts. Offline users can also benefit from electronic information when making purchases. Because eWOM data is kept in internet-rich social media, it may be shared and viewed from anywhere at any time.

Civelek, Ertemel (2018) discovered that Millennial have a higher purchase intention than other age groups. Users of social media connect with their families, friends, and peers, both known and unknown. Peer to peer contact is what electronic word of mouth is all about. Positive peer comments have a direct impact on brand recognition, which leads to brand trust. They concluded that Millennial's buying decisions are influenced by social media eWOM peer to peer contact.

Seo and Park (2018) highlighted People seek out and get eWOM content released on social media to reduce their anxiety before taking a purchasing decision. Users believe the advice provided by experienced customers who have purchased the items online. They observed that brand recognition and trust had an impact on eWOM. Brand awareness is a circumstance in which a user of a product recognises a certain brand among a plethora of others accessible online and, as a result, places their faith in that brand. After reading Positive Electronic word

of mouth on social media, online customers have purchased Intention. Users' confidence in social media was directly influenced by electronic word of mouth.

Ruiz-Mafeet. al (2018) found positive eWOM has a bigger social influence across large online user communities. Users form good eWOM connections by combining communication between a website's social environment and social influences. The authors discovered that social presence is a predictor of good eWOM in 262 online user groups. The stronger the connection between eWOM and social presence, the greater the impact of inter personal factors. This research examines the influence of online community reviews and recommendations on the tourist sector. Positive online comments from current and future customers in internet user forums have a big impact on tourist services and empowered cons.

Michelle (2018) determined which element has the most impact on purchase intention, the author looked at I customer reviews, (ii) reviewer personality, (iii) website characteristics accessible in reviews, (iv) product review characteristics, (v) environmental influence, and (vi) interpersonal factors. The information was gathered from 337 students from institutions around the country. The author discovered that six eWOM variables had a favourable influence on purchasing intent. The most important aspect that influences a consumer's purchasing intention is the customer review component.

 T. Nuseir(2018) found that consumers' online purchase intents and brand image are both affected by E-WOM, according to the study. a crucial marketing tool, as well as a more deliberate allocation of resources to acquire new consumers Originality/Value – E-WOM is the most widely utilised and successful method of disseminating thoughts and reviews about various items and services on the market. Understanding how it affects customer purchase intentions is critical and has significant marketing consequences.

3. NEED OF THE STUDY

The way people shop has drastically altered as a result of the internet. WOM in digital form, also known as eWOM, has grown in relevance and is considered a relatively new field of study. Before purchasing any goods or service, a rising percentage of potential customers like to check consumer evaluations. As a result, it becomes critical to comprehend customer behaviour on online platforms. India is becoming a popular destination for internet travel purchases. Because India is such a diverse country, it was fascinating to watch how customers would react in this evolving eWOM environment.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To learn about the current effects of e-WOM on customer behaviour.

2. Make recommendations about how to utilise electronic communication in a healthy way.

5. RESULTS (ANALYSIS) AND DISCUSSION

Sampling Methods:
Primary data is used for the purpose of the study. For the aim of choosing respondents, the convenience sampling approach is utilised. The non-probability sampling method is used for the purpose of the study. Participants are chosen conveniently and closeness to the study. The sample size of 50 customers is taken, who bought clothing online as a result of eWOM.

Data Analyses and interpretation:

Table 1.Pattern of of consumers regarding clothes

Purchase Pattern	Responses of customers	Frequency of response	Percentage
Purchases made online on a regular basis	Yes	23	46
	No	27	54
The occasion for making an online clothing purchase	Festivals	14	28
	Discounts	20	40
	Buy 1 Get 1	13	26
	Birthdays	3	6
Type of dresses often purchased on the internet.	Casuals	21	42
	Traditional	11	22
	Western wear	11	22
	Designer wear	7	14
The average amount paid on an internet purchase	Rs.500-1000	17	34
	Rs.1001-1500	19	38
	Rs.1501-2000	11	22
	More than Rs.2000	3	6

Source: Data collected through questionnaire

It is evident from the Table no 1 that 23 respondents, or 46 percent of all respondents, buy clothing online regularly, whereas 27 respondents, or 54 percent, don't buy clothes online frequently. For the pattern of online purchase occasion, 14 respondents answered on the occasion of the festivals which gives 28%, 20 respondents answered in favour of Discounts which is 40% , 13 respondents selected Buy 1 Get 1 offer which is 26% of the total responses and only 3 responses were in favour of Birthdays which only gives6%. About 42 percent of the respondents chose Casuals as the style of outfit they buy online most often. The replies are evenly distributed, with 22 percent preferring traditional attire and 22 percent for western wear. Designer clothing was purchased by 14% of respondents. The majority of respondents spend, on average, Rs.1001-1500 for online clothing purchases, with 19 replies in favour, followed by Rs.500-1000, with 17 responses in favour, 11 responses for Rs.1501-2000, and just three responses for more than Rs.2000.

Table 2: The awareness of various brands

Purchase pattern	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Online source of awareness	Retailer App	32	64
	Brand App	3	6
	Social Media	15	30
Reference of online reviews and ratings	Always	29	58
	Occasionally	12	24
	Rarely	6	12
	Never	3	6
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
	Sometmes	26	52
	Never	18	36

Source:Data collected through questionnaire

From the Table no 2. The awareness of various brands is observed and it is found that Retailer App is the favourite online source, with 64 percent of replies, followed by Social Media with 30 percent, and Brand App with only 6 percent. According to the data obtained about the use of reviews and ratings while purchasing clothing online, 58% of respondents have always used them. There were 24% of respondents who said they just refer once in a while. About 12% of respondents say they seldom recommend them, while 6% say they never refer reviews and ratings. According to the chart above, around 32% (16 answers) of respondents would read 3-4 reviews before purchasing clothing online. People would read 7 or more reviews 28 percent (14 replies), followed by 5-6 and 1-2 reviews with 20 percent (10 responses) apiece. With 52 percent of respondents agreeing that they would only offer comments after purchasing clothes online, the majority of respondents agreed that they would only do it occasionally. Around 36% of those polled have never provided comments online. Only 12% of them have provided frequent feedback.

FINDINGS:

- The majority of respondents (54%) do not frequently buy clothing online. Only 46% of them purchase online on a regular basis.
- The majority of respondents (40%) said they would buy clothes if there were discounts. This demonstrates that even when people have no intention of purchasing, they are compelled to do so due to discounts on their favourite clothing.
- Casuals are the most often purchased clothing. This demonstrates that consumers do not purchase formal attire even when discounts are offered.
- The amount of money spent on clothing appears to be rather substantial (Rs.1001-1500). This shows how e-WOM has affected the respondents' level of life.

- Approximately 64 percent of respondents said the Retailer App helped them learn more about different companies. This is one example of how eWOM keeps people informed about shifting trends.
- Before purchasing clothing, the majority of respondents (60%) consult internet evaluations and ratings. This demonstrates that people are wary about internet buying.
- The majority of respondents refer to 3-4 reviews while making a purchasing choice, accounting for 32 percent of the total. The responders pay attention to other people's differing viewpoints. If people are dissatisfied with a product, they appear to alter their minds about buying it.
- Because they are hesitant to share their thoughts, about 52 percent of respondents only provide comments on occasion.

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to better understand the different components of electronic word of mouth (e-Wom) and its impact in a prospective buyer's apparel selection. Through this article, we try to focus on ratings and reviews, i.e., star assessments and comments provided by current customers, and how it impact buying consumers' purchase decisions. It can be plainly determined from the research. With advancements in technology, the use of the eWOM platform is continuing to grow, particularly in the area of clothing.

SUGGESTIONS

People may now acquire and spread knowledge on Clothes via several channels, like online communities, blogs, e-mail, and review sites, when it comes to fashion. As communication networks expand due to the engagement of a growing number of contributors and viewers, information is exchanged not just among friends and family, but also with strangers. E-WOM Because, unlike direct spoken communication in Word of Mouth, eWOM consists of an anonymous act committed on the Internet by a past, present, or future client, it may be distinguished as a different sort of Word of Mouth. Though eWOM has many good effects, it also has certain drawbacks that must be considered.

- eWOM is a large platform for social networking, internet advertising, and marketing. The platform's appropriate utilisation will result in the enjoying of advantages. Despite the fact that both the seller and the reviewer may engage in fraudulent behaviour, it is impossible to deny that eWOM has its own set of standards.

- One idea of eWOM, namely, Social Media, presents a variety of different possibilities for furthering the project research, such as addressing numerous concerns about the use of social media sites.

- While eWOM has a lot of great effects, it also has a lot of negative effects.

- • eWOM is a large platform for social networking, internet advertising, and marketing. The platform's appropriate utilisation will result in the enjoying of advantages.

- Despite the fact that there are fraudulent actions on both the seller's and reviewer's sides, one cannot dispute that eWOM has its own set of advantages.

- One idea of eWOM, namely, Social Media, gives a variety of alternative scopes for furthering the project research, such as addressing various difficulties related to the use of social media sites.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Responses were gathered from only Delhi city online purchasers.
- One of the primary restrictions was time, thus the samples had to be limited to only 50.
- The respondents were hesitant to reveal their shopping habits.
- Distinct goods and geographical areas may have different purchasing patterns.

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