Online Apparel Buying Behavior: The Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Academic Practitioners and Researchers had been interested in online buying behavior as online shopping taken momentum. It is a platform where consumers’ buy the product virtually rather than traditional forum of shopping. Some search online and buy in physical stores some search in physical stores and buy online. Whateover, with different mode of purchases the purchase pattern, process, factors considered becomes different. The shift in mode results in the changes in buying behavior too. This attracted the attention of marketers’ researchers and academicians towards it. This paper objects to provide the detailed knowledge of online apparel shopping behavior by analyzing various research work literature in this field. This paper provides different aspect of online apparel shopping behavior and constructs. A wide variety of journal papers, research works were referred to review the works of various research frameworks. This paper will prove as to be useful source for marketers, researchers and retailers, scholars for understanding the online apparel shopping behavior.

Keywords-- Online Shopping, Online Apparel, Buying Behavior

Paper Type-- Literature Review

I. INTRODUCTION

Internet is rapidly grasping the pace in modern communication landscape, technology and for business convenience. One of the most important applications of internet is online shopping arena for business as well as customer facilitation. The internet has wide scope as it provides different bundle of experiences from traditional shopping (Sharma and Sheth,2004). In Indian context, it is evidenced with Google India survey of internet on women, particularly on their decision making on buying online which envisaged it. Search histories of internet disclosed that most Indian women bought clothing and accessories online (International Business Times, 2013). India stands at third in internet user population with 5.7% internet users as compared to China, which has 22.4% and stands first followed by the U.S. at 10.2% (Internet World Statistic 2012). As the internet user increases the number of online shoppers has also grown rapidly over the years. An apparel purchase is one of the fastest growing segments of virtual buying in India. A survey done upon apparel consumers in India admits 50% of them go online for better deals and variety of choices. Online payment security is reason of worry for almost 20% buyers who use this as payment system (PwC Study, 2013). Thus, it gives significant insights to better understand online apparel shopping behavior and space for study on the reluctances.

In the changing trends of Indian retail environment online Shopping has emerged as the focal area of research for academicians and marketers. In this scenario understanding the buying behaviour and analyzing the different dimensions of their buying decision process assumed significantly an important role. The researcher has reviewed varying aspects of online shopping and consumers’ buying decisions online. This paper presents systematic review of literature on Online Apparel Buying Behavior on the basis of different researches. The review has been segregated in different parts like; Online Shopping, Youth Online Shopping Behavior, Online Apparel Shopping, Technological Aspects of Online Apparel Shopping. The paper commences by summarizing online shopping and youth online buying behavior. Then describes online apparel shopping and different dimensions. The final section carries the discussion of the weaknesses and gaps in the current research and makes suggestions for further research in the field.

II. ONLINE SHOPPING

Bhatnagar, A., S. Misra, and H. R. Rao (2000) posit about risk and convenience associated with internet shopping. The degree of risk acceptance varies in individual to individual. Gender, age of individual, number of years the respondents had spent on the internet, marital status etc were analyzed. The article was based on the
results obtained by analyzing Security of transacts, opinion of vendors, purchasing behavior and general demographics through online survey. The findings shown that convenience provided by internet got overshadowed by risk associated with product and internet. Marketers need to take some steps in terms of overcoming it. Likewise, gender, marital status and age were also bases for segmentation to be considered.

III. YOUTH ONLINE BUYING BEHAVIOR

Gupta, N. M. Handa and B. Gupta (2008) intended to explore the online behavior of young adults of India and acceptability of internet as mean of online shopping. The study focuses on to exploring whether Indian youth only surfs through internet or are actual internet shoppers too Research result shown the use of internet for email and entertainment followed by other categories like job search, entertainment and research work were popular among the youth. There seems resistance to shop online due to lack of touch-feel-see aspect. Trust factor also plays vital role in online shopping.

Khare Arpita & Rakesh Sapna (2011) analyzed the antecedents like; online shopping attitude, utilitarian and hedonic values, online information search, and gender towards online shopping through web sites. The primary objective of selecting online shopping Web sites as purchase a decision by students was ease of use, convenience, and flexibility to compare information. Students are heavy internet user and are luring segment for online buying. Male and female students’ online buying behavior found significantly different in terms of attitude, normative beliefs, age and gender on online buying behavior. Use of internet for shopping is more likely in youth than older consumers; as youth are more technology savvy. Social norms influence online shopping behavior. Due to virtual attribute of online shopping web sites, risk perception of consumer is high. Traditional formats appear more secure due to their existence. Perceived usefulness and ease of use factors of web sites determines the online consumers’ attitude in terms of convenience of online shopping. Likewise, gender and age also shapes the online consumers’ behavior. Comfort’s viewpoint, men are in upper hand in terms of internet usage than women. Social affiliation plays important role in acceptance of online shopping.

IV. ONLINE APPAREL SHOPPING

Goldsmith & Goldsmith (2002) posits that retailing online needs much of marketer’s attention towards security aspects, rapport between virtual buying & real world distribution. Online processes technology & promotion are dealt on great whereas less is explored about the real online consumer. Real buyer and surfer of apparel, marketers know very less about them. Further, said that online non-buyers lack of trust part at online buying as medium. Variety of other activities like gathering information, communication, games etc are core of consumers’ online presence but marketers at the same time need to take care of online retailing as trustworthy mean of e-commerce. On the fear part some of the suggestive measures like product and service guarantees; payment on delivery rather than payment with order, featuring low-risk entry products, no quibble return policies, product endorsement by real consumers, testimonial and prize draws, free gifts and other order incentives were sighted. Yoh et. al. (2003) explored that buyers who had more positive attitudes toward internet apparel had greater intention to purchase apparel through the internet. The buyers who do apparel purchases apart from physical mode had more belief on buying apparel over internet. Theory of Reasoned action explains belief-attitude –buying intentions relationships for internet apparel shopping. Likewise, Innovation, Adoption Theory justified the explanations of consumers’ decision process for internet shopping adoption. Touch-Feel aspect if added by visual experiences will contribute to consumers’ interest and orientation for internet apparel shopping. Social implications through interpersonal channels and word-of-mouth strategy should be taken in considerations by marketers.

Goldsmith and Flynn (2004)’s study suggested that online clothing purchase is inspired more by Web innovativeness than by apparel creativity. The motivation behind this study was to analyze the demographic and psychological qualities that lead buyers to buy apparels on the web. Study surveyed the relative impact of a few key variables on measure of web attire purchasing. Demographic variables (age, sex, and pay) played a minor part in clarifying web attire purchasing. Predictors like enthusiasm and adventure someness are better in general and history marked by purchasing garments from catalogues. Fashion innovativeness has slight relation with online buying but fashion involvement has not. It creates the impression that being a Web trailblazer and an accomplished catalogue customer are more prescient of online apparel shopping than an enthusiasm for fashion. Three major implications of the study were; first, a shopper with catalogue shopping history is more prominent shopper in online apparel context. Second, innovativeness has some role to play. Online Apparel shopping will pace momentum as Online shopping overall grows. Third, if shoppers involve more in particular category does not assure more shopping in that category irrespective of online apparel shopping being a new medium.
Agrawal et al. (2009) posit that India is a country where shopping is counted as an entertaining activity. People go to the same shops with trust and value from generation to generation. To cater their needs apparel shoppers should focus on the friendliness easy operation and presentation of websites. Better websites designs, quality of service delivery and feedback system at one hand keep the existing e-consumers satisfied, will also create greater trust and comfort for new e-consumers. Enhanced website designs will result in giving better ideas about product complaint system will generate better security. Increased trust, comfort and security will to higher extent eliminate touch feel-hear aspect.

**Technological Aspects of Online Apparel Shopping**

Kim, J., & Forsythe, S. (2007) described about the technology adoption. Virtual try-on in online apparel shopping is being popularized. The result shown that virtual try on is rather than mandatory an entertainment and enjoyable feature for online shoppers. Adoption of virtual try on is not gender specific. The anxiety and innovativeness has significant role over virtual try on technology.

Park & Cho (2012) analyzed about social network communities affect information seeking behaviour and decision making for apparel shopping. Further posit the significant views for apparel e-shoppers who use social network community as a platform to boost their brands. Apparel e-shoppers started virtual communities of brand on online communities, like; Facebook. The motive behind creating these communities is to advertise, sale promotion and sale the products. As well suggested, companies aiming to achieve the above goals should focus on different ways of communication in to the community members. Text, Chat, Emails, Bulletin Boards were suggested as well. Effective way of communicating is not only giving good results but brand identity and feeling of membership to a community member is higher as well. Online Communicating will boost the site visits and simultaneously the positive attitude for the online community and brand as well.

Jeong et. al. (2009) examined the experience economy concept in the virtual buying atmosphere. The 4 E scale (viz; entertainment, experience, education, experience) prescribed in the study. And, further explored whether these scale factors get affected by website features. These 4 Es affected consumers’ emotional components of pleasure and arousal. And, further the outcome pleasure and arousal. And, further the outcome pleasure and arousal led to enhanced web site patronage intention. This study further add up the significant and sights to popularly increasing phenomenon of SOR (Stimulus, Organism, Response) framework in a way that indentified organism variables affecting emotion and subsequent response variables. One of the Es of 4 E framework, i.e. educational experience strongly gets affected by product presentation but does not influence emotion. The rest 3Es of framework namely entertainment escapist and esthetic experiences too have strong direct effect on pleasure. Among the 4 Es experience has the strongest influence on pleasure. Among the 4Es experience has the strongest influence on pleasure and arousal and suggested that should be taken apparel web site designers.

Kwon & Noh (2010) investigated the relationship between mature consumers’ perceived risks and benefits and purchase intentions with reference to online apparel shopping. As well the impact of demographic factors like age and different experiential factors towards online apparel shopping phenomenon. The study contributed in a larger amount by carrying different aspects like perceived risks and benefits and prior internet and online shopping experiences to explore consumers’ online purchase intentions. Study provided managerial insights to online apparel retailers that efforts should be enhanced towards variety of product offerings and price benefits. As well creating awareness for consumers for these benefits via web presentation and advertising risks associated and different online shopping benefits are carried experiences of online shoppers and these get mature with influences.

V. DISCUSSION

Several areas of research extract from the current review, and support the argument of this paper in that they represent issues and research agendas that appear to be more on par with the features and processes of industrial/commercial/business and services marketing rather than with the particular features and processes of online apparel shopping. This paper has focused on exploring, categorizing and comparing empirical research studies on online and online apparel shopping in Indian and international context. This discussion draws together the key findings, identifies and presents an analysis of the gaps in research in light of the major argument of this paper. J. Kim and Sandra Forsythe (2008) and Merle et.al (2012) studied Virtual Try On in online apparel shopping. Which is more evidenced in Indian context with the new technology solution in virtual fitting (the facility of online fitting room to check size and fit), being provided by Myntra.com (A popular online apparel shopping website) has provided the facility of online fitting room. Sam Abraham 2013. The impact of virtual try or fitting room may have impact on consumers’ online apparel purchases. As cited by Goldsmith, R.E. & Goldsmith, E.B. (2002), online buying is gaining momentum it is expected that consumers who have previous experience in online buying will be more likely to buy apparel online than those who lack such experience. Likewise, demographic & specific categories of apparel can be studied. Further Kwon Wi-Suk & Noh Mjeong (2010) had also carried research regarding prior experience. These studies had been carried in UK and US consequently. Experiential aspect is important in online apparel shopping; research may fill the
gap by studying the same for the consumers of Rajasthan. Basic Apparel Vs Fashion Apparel or Basic Vs Seasonal Apparel can also be area of study sighted by Park, J.H. & Stoel, and L. (2002). Khare et. al (2010) studied fashion clothing involvement of Indian youth while buying from brick shops. These insights can be utilized in the research to see the preferences of the customers for different type of apparel category in the online apparel shopping precisely in Rajasthan. J. Kim and Sandra Forsythe (2008) and Merle et.al (2012) studied Virtual Try On in online apparel shopping. Which is more evidenced in Indian context with the new technology solution in virtual fitting (the facility of online fitting room to check size and fit), being provided by Myntra.com (A popular online apparel shopping website) is providing the facility of online fitting room. Sam Abraham 2013. The impact of virtual try or fitting room may have impact on consumers’ online apparel purchases, which provide scope for future researchers. Park, Huiju Cho, Hira (2012) had studied social network online community influences apparel consumers’ decision making and information search behavior. In Indian context, precisely in Rajasthan, the impact of social network can be seen on the apparel consumers’ decision making and information search behavior.

VI. CONCLUSION

The web world is like a social channel which facilitates two way communications with customers, provide detailed information about products or services, and implement various promotional tools to enrich the buying experience. The era of internet is not far from reality where the virtual merchants would dominate the market and perhaps the electronic players would play an increasingly important role. Although the patronage of online stores is at paramount, still there are some issues that need to be addressed by web retailers. Some of similar issues are also manifested by study which portrays that anxiety and perceived risk from passing on personal information and security in online payment transactions refrain customers’ from online shopping.

Online Shopping is facilitating manufacturers to connect the large consumer bases without location limitations, avoiding traditional channels of distribution reduce the final consumer price and facilitate quicker service. Online Shopping is new and growing in India. Though, lot is yet to be achieved. Internet accessibility to the whole population will see paramount difference in development and growth in the nation. The major growth indicators like; demographics, economy, changing lifestyle, exposure to new ideas is in favor of the further development of online shopping in India. With improved supply chain, new models of business, accessible payment facilities online shopping and apparel as a category will be paramount success.

This review paper has sighted significant gaps which can be further expanded as research area. Apparel as category in online buying is taking momentum (PwC Study, 2013). Therefore, the different gaps sighted in this research paper like social network, demographics, categories of apparel, experiential aspect etc could be focal research area for marketers and research scholars.

REFERENCES