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THE INFLUENCE OF PURCHASE ATTITUDES AND REVIEWS ON USERS' PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA SETTINGS

Abstract

The rapid growth of social media provides businesses with a new venue for users to make a purchase, as well as the opportunity to post their reviews and comments on products, which can greatly influence the purchase decision process of potential users. The social media platform generates both positive and negative reviews and comments that can influence users' purchase behaviour. In order to gain a deeper understanding of consumer purchase behaviour on social media, the study examines how positive and negative reviews and comments can affect purchase attitudes and pre-purchase behaviour. It also examines how social media users' purchase attitudes contribute to their specific purchase behaviours such as pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviours. The research instrument was a questionnaire, and data were collected through social media platforms using Google forms. Descriptive statistics and Spearman correlation coefficients were used to achieve the objective of this study. The research sample consisted of 162 social media users. The results suggest that there is a positive relationship between purchase attitude and pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviour. The results also suggest that there is a positive relationship between positive and negative reviews and comments, purchase attitude, and pre-purchase behaviour.

Keywords: purchase intentions, purchase behaviour, reviews and comments, social media

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a digital platform that allows users to find new information, share comments, rate their buying experiences, and create better communication and collaboration with businesses. While social media allows effective and instant communication for personal, business, and entertainment purposes, it also creates a very effective access to consumers for businesses (Estiri et al., 2018). As a result, social media has quickly become a focal point for digital marketers to reach and interact with individual consumers (Ryan et al., 2017). They have changed the way we communicate and offer many opportunities to improve the relationship between businesses and consumers and influence their purchase behaviour (Jin & Ryu, 2019).

In line with Tuten and Solomon's (2017) study, one of the main objectives of using social media for promotional activities and communication is to influence consumers' decision-making process. Consumers use social media to search for additional information about a product or to make a purchase. Seeking information before making a purchase is one of the main motivations for consumers to use media (Punj & Staelin, 1983). Studies show that consumers often use social media to search for information before making a purchase decision (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). There are many factors that can influence consumers' purchase decisions, such as writing reviews on social media, which provide consumers with the opportunity to use this information in their purchase decision. Nowadays, more and more users are using social media not only for communication, but also to share their buying experiences through comments and reviews. Social media allows consumers to access information and reviews about products and services. Through social media platforms, consumers independently create, share, and consume information or reviews (Leist, 2013). Before making a purchase decision, they often not only search for product information but also read reviews posted by others (Utz et al., 2012).

Social media has transformed users from passive to active users who generate content about products, services, and consumption experiences, strongly influencing their purchasing behaviour (Duan & Dholakia, 2017). Therefore, users are increasingly engaging in social media, especially when they want to search for information or share buying experiences that help them make the right and risk-free product choices (Park et al., 2009). Social media allows them to instantly express their thoughts and confirm their experience with a product or company (Chiosa, 2014). These online reviews serve as consumers' primary source of information for their purchase decisions (Baek et al., 2012, Jiang et al., 2016), and users who are interested in social media posts also read and post reviews (Kietzmann & Canhoto, 2013). Consumers read, view, or watch product-related information in various media to make a considered purchase decision (Muntinga et al., 2011). Therefore, users' main motivation for seeking information is to make a quality purchase decision without risk. In social media nowadays, users often rely on the recommendations and opinions of other users, which can significantly influence their future purchase decision. Collecting comments and suggestions from other users in social media can be useful to compensate for the information deficit (Tomek et al., 2012; Valenzuela et al., 2009).

Nowadays, users can search for information or rate a product on social media and leave a review or comment about their purchase. Consumers like to read comments and feedback from other users, and these comments can affect the decision to purchase products. Social media is a place where consumers can make their opinions known and get a large amount of valuable information about the products they want, which can affect their purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation. Therefore, reviews and comments are crucial factors that allow people to access a wide range of information about their previous buying experiences.

Sharma and Rehman (2012) find that positive or negative information about a product or brand available on social media has a significant overall impact on consumer purchase behaviour. Reading positive/negative posts before making a purchase can influence users' purchase decisions. This study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of consumer purchase behaviour on social media. The study examines how positive and negative reviews and comments can influence purchase attitudes and pre-purchase behaviour. It also examines how social media users' purchase attitudes contribute to their specific purchase behaviours, such as pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviours.

The main objective of this study is to investigate how positive and negative reviews and comments can influence purchase attitudes and pre-purchase behaviour. It also examines how social media users' purchase attitudes contribute to their specific purchase behaviours, such as pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviours. The paper is organised as follows. The next section focuses on users' social media reviews. Methodology and research results are presented in the third and fourth sections, while the last section provides concluding remarks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is an important venue or communication channel for disseminating information and a place where consumers can provide useful information and previous buying experiences about products and services. As a result of the development of the concept of social media, many companies are trying to take advantage of the growing trend of using social media to connect with their customers. As a result, companies are using social media to communicate with consumers about their products to create product awareness and positive associations, spark conversations about a product, and ultimately drive purchases (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018). Unlike traditional media, social media environments are environments where user-generated content is directly confronted without any control (Kiliçer, 2022). Therefore, users make many purchase decisions based on the information shared on social media. Some of the benefits of using social media include making it easier for users to obtain information and increasing customer awareness and loyalty to products. Today, many companies are aware of the value of online reviews and offer dedicated web-based platforms where consumers can communicate and post their online reviews (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Jiang et al., 2020; Jiang et al., 2020).

Reviews on social media are defined as a valuable source of information and evaluation of products or services (Mo & Fan, 2015). Social media allows consumers to provide reviews and recommendations about products and buying experiences. Therefore, reviews on social media can provide valuable information to potential customers based on previous consumer experiences. When it comes to writing an online review, consumers have three main reasons for leaving a comment (Cheung & Lee, 2012). First, users want to share their positive experiences with a particular product and help others in their purchase decision. Second, users want to improve the reputation of products to change other users' opinions. Finally, users have a sense of belonging to the products they use, and they want to write their experiences to show their commitment (Poturak & Turkyılmaz, 2018). Reviews on social media are expected to have positive information that can increase consumers' purchase intentions because users respond more to information on social media than on traditional media. Therefore, users searching for reviews and information about products on social media may ultimately influence consumers' purchase decision processes.

Social media content has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention (Astuti & Putri, 2018; Poturak & Softic, 2019). Consumers read, view, or observe product-related information in various media to make a considered purchase decision (Muntinga, et al., 2011). Consumer online engagement is the participation and interaction of individuals on social media, such as responding to content by liking, sharing, and commenting (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020). Social media allows users to raise awareness and share information or ideas about specific products and services (Culnan et.al, 2010). Users tend to trust information posted by users rather than the company or marketer (Chi, 2011). In addition, users feel more confident interacting with other users as they increase trust, decrease perceived risk, and develop positive attitudes toward purchasing products (Astuti & Putri, 2018). They prefer content created by other consumers to product information created by companies (Alkhamees et al, 2021). Therefore, social media users tend to trust content created by other users more than content created by companies.

Social media allows users to interact with friends and share memorable moments that help them communicate their identities while disseminating product information (Wang et.al, 2021). This is one of the most important roles that social media platforms play in users' purchase behaviour. One of a consumer's motives for posting reviews and opinions on social media is also to try to help other users in their purchasing decisions, whether through positive reviews to help others have the same positive experiences or negative customer reviews to help others avoid problems, thus helping other consumers reduce the risks associated with their purchasing decisions (Fu et al., 2018). On social media platforms, users are willing to purchase or share valuable purchasing information with others.

Users' positive and negative communications on social media can influence consumers' purchase attitudes and behaviours. Users often make purchase decisions based on reviews and

comments on social media and rely on this information from other users to make purchase decisions. Reading negative and positive reviews and comments could lead users to change their decisions. When users share positive information more frequently, it often leads to activities such as posting commercial activities on social media (Leung et al., 2015). The positive and negative experiences are posted on different social media, and users who share positive experiences post mainly on Facebook, while users who share negative experiences post more on Twitter (Kietzmann & Canhoto, 2013). Users' purchase behaviour also shows that the likelihood of buying and recommending a product is higher when the number of likes on Facebook is higher (Bhattacharyya & Bose, 2020). By sharing purchase experiences on social media, consumers co- create "value-in-use", which includes the benefits derived from consuming products and services (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). Other research also mentions the positive effect of the number of likes (Lee & Lee, 2015), the expression of subjectivity in online reviews (Liu et. al., 2018), online recommendations (Ryu & Park, 2020), reviews from other consumers (Xu et.al., 2021), and endorsements from influencers (Weismueller et al., 2020.) to make purchases on social media.

Most users obtain their desired information through social media, especially in the initial stages of the purchase process (Agnihotri, 2020). Many users are interested not only in the information about the products, but also in the reviewers' comments about the purchase experience (Alzyoud et al. 2021; Jiang et al., 2020). Social media platforms are gaining popularity among consumers as a useful place to search for information (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Naylor et al. 2012; Goodrich & de Mooij, 2014; Barreda et al. 2015; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016; Erkan & Evans, 2018). Social media influences consumer behavior from information gathering to post-purchase behavior (Vinerean et al., 2013) and can impact consumer perceptions, attitudes, and intentions (Narangajavana et al., 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Seeking information before purchase helps consumers reduce the perceived risk of a purchase and supports them in making the right purchase decision (Ha, 2002). Seeking information is an important motivation for consumers to use social media (Kim et al., 2011; Valenzuela et al., 2009).

In the context of social media, user reviews and comments have an important function as a valuable source of information for future purchasing behaviour. Posting user reviews, opinions, and comments on social media is a way to improve communication and social interaction, which helps to motivate other users to search for the information and share the content on social media (Kilicer et al., 2018). Consumers' decision to buy or not to buy a product is mostly based on the personal experiences of other users, whether it is positive or negative information about a product. Therefore, social media is a useful place to find useful information about desired products and services and to leave valuable reviews for other users.

3. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was developed based on the results of the literature review. A questionnaire was designed to collect the necessary data from a convenience sample of consumers who have already used social media platforms. The research sample consisted of 162 social media users. The required data was collected between July 2021 and October 2021. A convenience sampling approach was used for data collection.

The survey questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section included questions, "How often do you use social media?", "I mainly use social media?", measured with an ordinal scale with closed questions. The question "Do you use social media for shopping?" was measured with a nominal scale (1 - Yes, 2 -No). The second part included statements about purchase attitudes, review intentions, and pre- and post-purchase behaviours. The statements were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with respondents expressing their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement (1=completely disagree, 5=strongly agree). In addition, the questionnaire included demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education level, and monthly income of the respondents.

Data collection was done by distributing questionnaires to respondents via Google forms shared on social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Descriptive statistics and Spearman correlation coefficients were used to achieve the objective of this study. The collected data were analysed using SPSS 25 statistical software package.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to examine how positive and negative reviews and comments can influence purchase attitudes and pre-purchase behaviour. It also examines how social media users' purchase attitudes contribute to their specific purchase behaviours, such as pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviours. Considering the research objective, 24.1% of respondents who do not use social media for shopping were excluded from further data analysis, so the total sample consists of 123 respondents. Further processing of the data is done using Spearman correlation coefficient. Table 1 shows the results of the correlation matrix between the purchase attitude and the number of reviews and the intention to review.

Table 1 Correlation matrix between the purchase attitudes, the number of reviews and the intention to review

Spearman's rho	I like purchase on social media.
I often leave positive reviews on social media	,349**
	,000
The number of negative reviews influences my purchase decision	,219
	,000
The number of positive reviews influences my purchase decision.	,327**
	,000

** Correlation is significant at 0,01

Source: Research findings (N=123)

Statistical analysis of the data presented in Table 1 revealed a statistically significant, moderately weak, but positive correlation between purchase attitude and intention to review. The results show that users' purchase attitude affects their post-purchase behaviour. Thus, if users have a positive attitude toward buying on social media, they are more likely to have the intention to review products after purchase. In addition, the results show a small, but statistically significant, positive relationship between attitude toward purchase and the number of reviews. This means that negative reviews posted on social media have a greater impact on users' purchase attitudes than positive reviews. This suggests that consumers may be influenced by the reviews and comments posted by other users during the purchase process. However, users rated negative reviews as more trustworthy compared to positive reviews on social media. This suggests that social media users tend to post positive reviews and opinions on social media to help other users make purchase decisions. This indicates that users like to purchase products on social media and share their knowledge on social media, which affects other purchase decisions. Similarly, users are more inclined to post negative reviews because they are afraid of making a wrong purchase decision. Another analysis shows the correlation matrix between purchase attitude and pre-purchase behaviour using Spearman's correlation coefficient.

Table 2 Correlation matrix between purchase attitude and pre-purchase behaviour

Spearman's rho	I search for information about a product on social media.
I like purchasing on social media.	,476
	,000

** Correlation is significant at 0,01

Source: Research findings (N=123)

Table 2 shows the results of the correlation matrix between attitude toward purchase and pre-purchase behaviour. The Spearman correlation coefficient values show a positive, statistically significant, but only moderately strong relationship between attitude toward purchase and pre-purchase behaviour. The results suggest that respondents who have a positive attitude toward purchasing on social media also seek information on social media. In addition, users purchase products through social media because it saves them time in searching for products and helps them find more valuable shopping information. Users tend to trust the information posted on social media, especially if it helps them reduce the perceived risk of a purchase in order to make a correct purchase decision. Therefore, it can be concluded that social media helps users to do preliminary research and leads them to make a low-risk purchase decision. The next table shows the correlation matrix between pre-purchase behaviour and the number of reviews and intention to review.

Table 3 Correlation matrix between pre-purchase behaviour, number of reviews and intention to review

Spearman's rho	I search for information about a product on social media.
The number of negative reviews influences my purchase decision	,479**
	,000
The number of positive reviews influences my purchase decision	,444**
	,000
I often leave positive reviews on social media.	,197**
	,000

** Correlation is significant at 0,01

Source: Research findings (N=123)

The Spearman correlation coefficient values show a statistically significant, moderately strong, but positive relationship between pre-purchase behaviour and the number of reviews. This suggests that negative or positive reviews have an impact on pre-purchase behaviour on social media. The results show that consumers perceive positive or negative reviews as a useful tool during the purchase process. As can be seen, negative reviews have a greater impact on pre-purchase behaviour, which is likely due to consumers' fear of making a wrong purchase decision. Reviews, whether negative or positive, have a positive influence on consumers' pre-purchasing behaviour on social media. This means that consumer trust in reviews influences buying behaviour, as social media users trust online reviews and comments. The results also show that there is a statistically significant, small, but positive relationship between pre-purchase behaviour and intention to leave a review. Users searching for information on social media usually do not intend to leave a positive review. It can be concluded that pre-purchase behaviour does not have a strong effect on post-purchase behaviour, i.e., in most cases they will not leave a review about a satisfied purchase experience.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Social media is an important influencer of consumers' online behaviour. One of the main features of social media today is that users can share their opinions about products or previous buying experiences with other users. They actively create and share information on social media because they believe that every user needs reliable and good information to make a purchase decision. They perceive social media as a credible source of information. Consequently, users tend to trust reviews and comments on social media as a reliable source of information. Moreover, reviews and comments on social media help to develop consumers' positive attitude towards purchase by reducing the risks associated with their purchase decision. Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of consumers' buying behaviour on social media. The study examines how positive and negative reviews and comments can influence purchase attitudes and

pre-purchase behaviour. It also examines how social media users' purchase attitudes contribute to their specific purchase behaviours, such as pre- and post-purchase behaviours.

The results show that users' purchase attitudes affect post-purchase behaviour. When users have a positive attitude toward buying on social media, they are more likely to intend to rate products after purchase. In addition, the results of the statistical analysis show a small, but statistically significant, positive relationship between attitude toward purchase and the number of reviews. This means that negative reviews posted on social media have a greater impact on users' attitude to purchase than positive reviews. This suggests that consumers may be influenced by the reviews and comments posted by other users during the purchase process. However, users rated negative reviews as more trustworthy compared to positive reviews on social media. In addition, social media users tend to post positive reviews and opinions on social media to help other users make purchase decisions. Similarly, users are more inclined to post negative reviews because they are afraid of making a wrong purchase decision. In addition, the results showed that respondents who have a positive attitude toward purchasing on social media also seek information on social media. In addition, users buy products on social media because it is based on real experiences of real people and it helps them save time in searching for products and find more valuable purchase information. In addition, users are more interested in reviews on social media, probably because they are based on real experiences. Users tend to trust information posted on social media, especially if it helps them make a low-risk purchase decision. The statistically significant, moderately strong, but positive relationship between pre-purchase behaviour and the number of reviews suggests that negative or positive reviews affect purchase behaviour in the social media environment. Consumers perceive positive and negative reviews as a useful tool during the purchase process, but negative reviews have a stronger effect on pre-purchase behaviour, likely due to the fact that they reduce perceived risk during purchase processes. Moreover, users searching for information on social media usually do not intend to leave a positive review. It can be concluded that pre-purchase behaviour does not have a strong impact on post-purchase behaviour, i.e., in most cases they will not leave a review about a satisfied purchase experience.

The results also have important practical implications. The results of this research offer some insights into the impact of reviews on social media buying behaviour that will be useful to practitioners and scholars interested in social media. Social media plays an important role in providing valuable information and helping users interact with others. The implications of this study for marketing practice suggest that reviews and comments on social media influence buying behaviour. The results of the study suggest that companies should use social media as a tool to improve the conversation between their loyal customers with buying experience and potential customers. In addition, companies should communicate with their customers and provide more information and knowledge about their products to reduce potential customers' uncertainty and the time cost of product research. In this context, social media managers should provide more interesting activities to encourage users to participate more in social media and share their knowledge and opinions. In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights for social media users and marketers, institutions, international companies, and future researchers.

This study has several limitations that provide opportunities for future research. For future research, it would be necessary to collect a larger sample in order to obtain data that are more consistent and achieve greater generalizability of the results. In addition, future research should consider including additional variables in the research questionnaire, such as trustworthiness, credibility, etc. Another contribution for future research could be to add additional variables to this survey to gain a comprehensive insight into users' social media activities.

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