

Social Media Habits of Rural Consumers Influencing Online Consumption

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

RECEIVED: 04-Jun-22

REVISED: 01-Aug-22

ACCEPTED: 16-Aug-22

PUBLISHED: 15-Sep-22

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Citation: Koppala Venugopal and Saumendra

Das (2022). Social Media Habits of

Rural Consumers Influencing on Online

Consumption. Horizon J. Hum. Soc. Sci.

Res. 4 (S), 39–47. [https://doi.org/10.37534/](https://doi.org/10.37534/bp.jhssr.2022.v4.nS.id1189.p39)

[bp.jhssr.2022.v4.nS.id1189.p39](https://doi.org/10.37534/bp.jhssr.2022.v4.nS.id1189.p39)



ABSTRACT

Digital media are being exponentially developed and expanded to rural places which has become an important part of public lives without being influenced by any geographical discrimination. Besides entertainment, the business activities such as sales promotions, advertising, publicity and public relations are quite evident in all Digital networking sites, blogs, online forums, and discussion boards. Rural consumers are also slowly getting much accustomed with digital media, particularly with certain social media sites i.e. Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram. Online shopping being slowly crept to rural places by meeting all challenges, the promotion of products through online can better be fine-tuned through social media since the habitual dexterity is found significant. The objective of the study is assessing the impact of social media on consumer intentions towards online shopping. Methods used for the study were descriptive design, blended approach of both qualitative and quantitative, convenience sampling strategy and cross sectional with multistage sampling. The conclusions were made out of interpretation with respect to the predictors and its strength explaining the rural consumers' intention.

Keywords: Social media, Rural Consumer, Media Habits, Online Consumption, Srikakulam

Introduction

Digitalization, used by the marketers for products' promotion and consumer motivation, is making waves and gaining credibility from time to time. The technological revolution and adaption are seen in this sector, both for urban as well as rural marketing.

Technology adaption was slower in the olden days where telephone took 75 years, radio took 38 years and TV took 13 years to get adapted and be popular but internet has taken only four years and derivatives have been explored with innumerable services. In this race, the transition and technology transfer from traditional channel to digital channels is significantly high. Certain mandatory services to be processed through online alone have enabled most of the rural people getting

accustomed with online processes. Nevertheless, the rate of increase of online usage in rural places is not highly significant.

People during pandemic have been habituated to online shopping to some extent major online giants like Amazon and Flip cart have started their logistic service operations rural recently and there is a slight increment which shows that adaption of online services or not completely used. The causes for this slow usage might be the inability knowledge and practice. Many studies revealed that online shopping is much influenced by social media habits of people. It is observed by the researchers that most of the rural people are occupied with traditional medias such as news Papers, Radio and television. The factors which generally influenced to buy any product through online are customer reviews,

security assurance, operational efficiency, content presentation, e-WOM communications and exceptional promotions.

There is a research gap of identifying and assessing the factors of social media habits especially by rural to know better how these factors will increase their online shopping behavior. The study area of high rural density was determined as sample unit from Srikakulam district, an economically backward district of Andhra Pradesh.

The study was carried out to fill the gaps of social media habits by rural at the standpoint of their usage pattern of Face book, Whatsapp, Instagram etc. In addition to the commonsense applications, the smart phone holders in rural places are expected to have an account on the above said popular social media but to what extent they watch the reviews, they need security, they evaluate operational efficiency, they attract content presentation, they participate in e-WOM communications and they watch promotions is researched in this study.

Study Objectives

1. To ascertain the social media factors influencing rural consumer behavior in Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh.
2. To assess the factors of social media habits influencing on rural online shopping in Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh.

Literature Review

Reviews from consumers recommend the product to others by providing complete information about the traits, which could also be considered as one type of e-WOM Communications and most of the new customers follow these online reviews before taking a decision to purchase the product (Lee et al., 2008).

Judgment on the purchase of any product without having personal experience is task some for the consumer who may depend on the reviews of the consumers who have already experienced it. A survey of Opinion Research Corporation revealed that 61 percent of consumers totally rely on the reviews and feedbacks coming from blogs, websites and other sources. Werbler et al. (2008) also expressed the same opinion by emphasizing the

Customer Reviews would influence 80 per cent of purchase decision.

Yoo et al. (2009) also acknowledged that the online opinions of the experienced customers have a noteworthy impact on the buying behaviour, conversely, this kind of venues may have all the chances to be practiced wrongly and misused for the deception also.

The reviews from consumers can be expressed without any reservations in complaining which could in turn helps the consumers with respect to the expression reliability which is high whether the review is either positive or negative. Since the face-to-face communication can avoid through internet, the mental costs are decreased (Hong et al., 2005). Some researches proclaim that the rating of 5-star is reliable and the anything beyond 4 and below 5 is said to be good. Another study of Womply declared that 4 to 4.5 rated products gain 28 per cent of revenue.

Technology adaption model by Gilbert et al. (2004) as an alteration in the environment of online business includes the extension of technology to the government sector at the stand point of the instrument developed with appropriateness, validity and data operations which all root to the adaption of information security principles.

Besides the benefits of website traits most of the people shop through online by looking into the design, reliability and services of the website with a very important feature of web security. The perception of web security with respect to the buying decision of online hopper is found significant. (Shergill et al., 2005)

Velmurugan (2009) acknowledged certain determinants of website attractions such as appeal, offering, brand and service. Besides the credibility out of transaction, content, product, technology and organization, anticipation of trust and security for the customer is found imperative. Consequently, Szymanski et al. (2000) also emphasized on financial security which plays vital role in the assessment of e-satisfaction.

Rural people have been slowly habituated to online operations. The pace of usage from youth is more than the rest since the operational efficiency is found very less. Most of the villages are confined to the highly relevant deeds of online such as the mandatory transactions of government schemes where they have the least possible chances to get the operational efficiency (Venugopal, 2013).

The causes for the operational efficiency with respect to online shopping are the increased opportunity profile of products, schemes, offers and the great lot of additional services, which are cluttered. Unless the customer is efficient in operating either the website or any other sources, he cannot optimize the order processing inclusive of wholesome benefits (Vakamullu, et al., 2021).

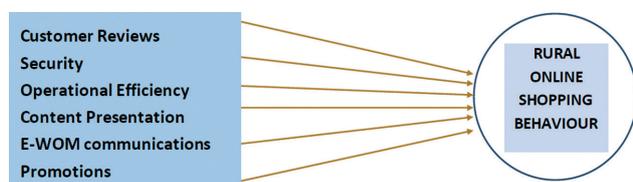
As per Rowley (2006) the digital content incorporated and distributed through electronic channels is managed well with an appropriate matching to customer demands and gain profits. Andaç et al. (2016) stated the quality of content at basic level could be easily sharable, understandable, profitable and accessible. Milhinhos et al. (2015) explored the formats of content that influence and attract the customers by modifying blogs info graphics, decks, cases, videos, memes, e books, images, white papers etc.

Firms try hard for selecting specific media for the promoting their brands with the help of marketing communications prevailing in order to attract the new customers and retain the existed customers. Customers are now a day’s looking for the attractive features of the channels of any kind where the companies should focus at. More over the information needed by the customer is to be carried forwarded by the organizations to the extent of their ambiguities ate swept away. The trendy social media can be taken as a vehicle for reaching the targeted customer which can serve better with 24/7 customer support (Korenkova et al., 2020)

Nevertheless, Miller et al. (2010) revealed that social media marketing played a vital role in inducing consumers to purchase online. He observed that 70 per cent of consumers visit Social Media to acquire beneficial information wherein, 49 per cent make the decision to buy certain product and 60 per cent of consumers choose to share their information relating to products with others online. Eventually, only 7 per cent of consumers are accounted for the actual transactions.

Methodology

The study was carried out with the following method mix.



Study Area: Rural places of Srikakulam which have been slowly operative of online shopping.

Research Design: The study is descriptive as well as exploratory with mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative.

Sampling: Convenient sampling of non-probability was adapted since the population is unlisted and very hard to stratify. The size of the sample was determined – to collect the data from the sample unit of rural consumers who access social media.

Data Collection: Primary as well as secondary data was collected. But the data collected majorly was the primary from the respondent target population through a self-administered questionnaire measured with validity and reliability.

Data Analysis: Data was collected through multi stage sampling and ANOVA, Correlation, Factor Analysis (Principal component analysis) were carried out to test hypothesis. Tabulated analysis and interpretation have been carried out and further conclusions were made out of management implications.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Comparing Means

The comparing means between the gender and the dependable variable i.e. Increase in online consumption is portrayed in the table with the mean values of 3.67 and 3.57 for male and female respectively.

It is understood that there is not much variance between male and female in the social media habits and the perception of how they will increase the online consumption in rural places.

As shown in the Table 2 the value of The KMO Measure indicates the variance proportion in the

Table 1: Comparing the means of Gender

I believe that my social media habits will increase online consumption

Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Female	3.67	58	.803
Male	3.57	58	.957
Total	3.62	116	.881

variables triggered by underlying factors is 0.755 which is good enough to undergo factor analysis with the data. Significant level of 0.005 signs sound to get along with factor analysis which may be useful with the data.

As can be seen in the table, the communalities specified as the variance estimates in all variables accounted for by the components. It can be understood that the communalities are moderately high and thereby shows extracted components representing variables to the considerable extent. Communalities of “Reviews in social media are highly helpful”, and “Information about security through social media is reliable”, are

comparatively low in principal components extraction with 0.455 and 0.477 respectively.

There is a clear understanding that the requested extracted initial eigenvalues greater than 1 has resulted into seven first components extending 66.809 percent of cumulative initial eigenvalues. Among the 23 listed variables, seven components show the variability of 67% approximately. So, the complexity of the dataset can be reduced through these seven components with almost 33% of lost information.

The first rotated factor is highly correlated with habit of forwarding information, product related information to friends, forwarding after usage, buying the product forwarded to me and attractive social media promotions. These variables are not specifically correlated with other components.

Second component correlated with awareness of mobile operations, social media apps, mobile options, search and buy and content presentation

Table 2: Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis

KMO and Bartlett’s Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.755
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1.050E3
	df	253
	Sig.	.000

Table 3: Reviews on Social Media

Communalities	Initial	Extraction
I search for reviews to buy the products through online shopping	1.000	.790
Positive reviews will lead to purchase	1.000	.553
Negative review for the products will lead to non-purchase behavior	1.000	.552
Most of the reviews are reliable	1.000	.569
Reviews in social media are highly helpful	1.000	.455
Information about security through social media is reliable	1.000	.477
There is clutter of information which creates confusion	1.000	.718
Information relating to security from social media lead to either purchase not to purchase the product	1.000	.667
I am aware of all operations in my mobile	1.000	.696
I don’t need to depend on someone to learn about social media apps	1.000	.758
Information about new options in mobile is well known	1.000	.653
My operational efficiency leads to search and buy any product through online.	1.000	.809
Content presented in social media related to products are known to me	1.000	.651
Product related content such as videos and ads are attractive	1.000	.671
The product related content is advantageous to me to know reliable knowledge about the product	1.000	.692
Product related content motivates me to click and leads to purchase the product	1.000	.703
I have a habit of forwarding information	1.000	.691
I forward product related information to my friends	1.000	.740
I forward the product related information after I use it	1.000	.693
I also prefer to buy certain products that are forwarded by someone to me	1.000	.669
Product promotions through social media are attractive	1.000	.762
Promotions through social media are exceptional	1.000	.669
Comparatively promotions through social media are easily accessible	1.000	.730

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 4: Principal component analysis of social media impact

Component	Total Variance Explained								
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.408	27.862	27.862	6.408	27.862	27.862	3.282	14.271	14.271
2	2.381	10.352	38.214	2.381	10.352	38.214	2.775	12.067	26.337
3	1.729	7.516	45.730	1.729	7.516	45.730	2.447	10.638	36.975
4	1.339	5.822	51.552	1.339	5.822	51.552	2.055	8.934	45.909
5	1.254	5.453	57.005	1.254	5.453	57.005	1.761	7.655	53.564
6	1.137	4.944	61.949	1.137	4.944	61.949	1.525	6.629	60.193
7	1.118	4.860	66.809	1.118	4.860	66.809	1.522	6.617	66.809
8	.926	4.028	70.837						
9	.849	3.692	74.530						
10	.686	2.984	77.514						
11	.666	2.897	80.411						
12	.618	2.687	83.098						
13	.583	2.534	85.632						
14	.529	2.301	87.933						
15	.512	2.227	90.160						
16	.459	1.996	92.156						
17	.395	1.715	93.872						
18	.345	1.502	95.373						
19	.282	1.224	96.598						
20	.245	1.064	97.662						
21	.215	.936	98.598						
22	.172	.749	99.347						
23	.150	.653	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Third component is correlated with non-purchase behaviour of negative review, helpful reviews, reliability of product related content and motivation of product Related content

Fourth component is correlated with positive reviews r, reliability of reviews and social media security

Fifth component is correlated with videos and ads, exceptional promotions through SMM and accessibility of promotions through SMM.

Component six is correlated with the opinion of searching reviews to buy the products through online shopping.

Seventh component is correlated with information clutter creating confusion and security information from SMM leading to purchase

As shown in the Table 6, R Square value is .232; it means all the levels of items contributing 23.2. Per cent in the increase in online purchase by rural people. The

remaining 76.8 per cent is being contributed by other unknown variables

Table 7 shows the relationship among social media habits (Independent Variables) and increase in online purchases (Dependent Variable). The F value between dependent variable and predictors is 5.452, and the p value is 0.00. Which is highly significant at 0.05 and 0.00 level? Contrariwise, we may settle if there is an increase at one level in item, an increase of 68.438 will be observed.

$$\text{Increase in online Consumption (IOC)} = 1.066 + (0.064) \text{ SMH1} + (0.110) \text{ SMH 2} + (- 0.006) + \text{SMH3} + (0.177) \text{ SMH4} + (0.145) \text{ SMH5} + (0.232) \text{ SMH6}$$

Increase of online consumption by rural consumer being influenced by social media habits with respect to the first variable, SMH1 (Reviews) is 1.130 (1.066+0.064); if SMH1 is increased by one unit, the overall online consumption will be increased by 1.130. Likewise, if the predictors SMH2, SMH3, SMH4, SMH5 and SMH6 are increased by one unit, the level of rural online consumption is increased for

Table 5: Component matrix of Social media habits

	Rotated Component Matrix ^a						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I search for reviews to buy the products through online shopping						.614	
Positive reviews will lead to purchase				.575			
Negative review for the products will lead to non-purchase behavior			.520				
Most of the reviews are reliable				.716			
Reviews in social media are highly helpful			.424				
Information about security through social media is reliable				.592			
There is clutter of information which creates confusion							.811
Information relating to security from social media lead to either purchase not to purchase the product							.501
I am aware of all operations in my mobile		.733					
I don't need to depend on someone to learn about social media apps		.806					
Information about new options in mobile is well known		.697					
My operational efficiency leads to search and buy any product through online.		.357					
Content presented in social media related to products are known to me		.603					
Product related content such as videos and ads are attractive					.531		
The product related content is advantageous to me to know reliable knowledge about the product			.778				
Product related content motivates me to click and leads to purchase the product			.799				
I have a habit of forwarding information	.791						
I forward product related information to my friends	.818						
I forward the product related information after I use it	.740						
I also prefer to buy certain products that are forwarded by someone to me	.711						
Product promotions through social media are attractive	.620						
Promotions through social media are exceptional					.510		
Comparatively promotions through social media are easily accessible					.841		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.482 ^a	.232	.190	.796

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reviews, Security, Operational Efficiency, Content presentation, E-Word of Mouth Communications, Product promotions

SMH2 (Security) by 1.116; SMH3 (Operational Efficiency) by 1.060; SMH4 (Content Presentation) by 1.243; SMH5 (E-Word of Mouth Communications) by 1.211 and SMH6 (Product promotions) by 1.298

Increase of rural online consumption is explained by all the independent factors social media habits with almost similar weightings, in which the substance explained by Product promotions is the highest with

Table 7: ANOVA analysis of factors affecting social media habits

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.727	6	3.455	5.452	.000 ^a
	Residual	68.438	108	.634		
	Total	89.165	114			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reviews, Security, Operational Efficiency, Content presentation, E-Word of Mouth Communications, Product promotions

b. Dependent Variable: I believe that my social media habits will increase online consumption

1.298 followed by “Content Presentation” with 41.243. It is explained by “Operational Efficiency” with 3.97.

Conclusions

In expectation with the rural consumer behaviour through online increase in a considerable way the research has

Table 8: Coefficients of social media habits determinants

Model		Coefficients			t	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.066	.539		1.978	.051
	SMH1- Reviews	.064	.094	.061	.685	.495
	SMH2- Security	.110	.098	.105	1.124	.263
	SMH3- Operational Efficiency	-.006	.087	-.007	-.073	.942
	SMH4- Content presentation	.177	.111	.165	1.597	.113
	SMH 5- E-Word of Mouth Communications	.145	.097	.155	1.497	.137
	SMH 6- Product promotions	.238	.111	.227	2.146	.034

a. Dependent Variable: I believe that my social media habits will increase online consumption

been continued in order to identify the influence of mobile usage at the stand point of social media specifically due to the higher site of usage by all in common. The conclusions out of interpretation amalgamated with management implications are as follows.

Reviews pertaining to entertainment zones such as cinemas, videos, TV programs are highly participated by rural people with deterministic involvement. The same could be continued if the product reviews are also given by ambassadors and though leaders through social media channels

Though the security levels of surviving personal data are very low through any mode of online people comparatively feel better secure in social media since there is loss of money and the common people like consumers do not have a chance of getting vulnerable consequences unless someone is either famous or politicised. So social media habits are like addiction and people care the least about security.

People either from rural or urban are found to be the fast learners of mobile operation exceptionally while browsing social media channels. This has lead to have no apprehensions regarding operational efficiency. But, the modified and updates of different channels are not well educated due to communication gap.

Content presentation attracts a lot to the rural consumers since the features are always tried by them. Product promotions with innovative content presentations will lead to attending online clicks and purchases.

Social media channels are set be viral at the stand point of any information specifically the conspiracies in the same way marketers should make the best use of social media channels by making their USP information more viral provided the news should be highly interesting. Even

rural people who generally have more leisure time would naturally be attracted to the same.

Product promotions, such as advertisements, publicity, sales promotions and demonstrations are frequently viewed categorically by the rural people. The appropriateness of selecting the rightist channel would be stimulating online buying behaviour.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the editors and reviewers of Horizon JHSSR Journal which provided us an opportunity to publish in their scholarly journal.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article. This article is the sole work of the authors and has not been presented or published elsewhere.

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He has contributed 5 Projects, 2 patents, 10 books, 70 publications, 48 paper presentations, 56 resource talks and 12 memberships.

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