Getting Together On the Web; Finding Suitable Alternatives and Generating More Options (A Study on Online Marketing)

Mrs. Prerna Nair & Dr. Sonali Malewar

Management Department, MATS University, Raipur, C.G, India.

Abstract

It has been more than a decade since the e-commerce first evolved. Researchers and practitioners in the electronic commerce constantly strive to obtain a better insight in consumer behavior in cyberspace. With the development of the retail E-commerce, researchers continue to explain E-attitude of consumers of different perspectives. E-commerce is the buying and selling of the goods and services online; internet is the best source to use this tool. Today the amount of trade that is conducted electronically using e-commerce has increased with a wide spread usage of internet and technology.
The Study is about understanding the utilities of On-line marketing. An attempt has been made to realize the perceptive behind the consumer's thought process as well as a marketer's approach. The data has been collected through a structured questionnaire to realize the objectives of the study. The findings of the study are purely based on the responses obtained from the questionnaire and has been qualitatively analyzed.

Framework

Internet was used as a tool to study as well as a tool to research. It has become the way to improve the overall surveys and social science, instead of relying on the web for mere communication needs (Michigan State University, 2009). Marketers also, after understanding the applications and utilities of internet, have used the web space to explore consumer's tit-bits. So it can also be said that besides its basic use of communication, web has also been used by researchers and also by marketers for selling and advertising to enhance the overall interactivity today. In order to cease the potential, marketers are using online space known as digital marketing, web marketing or e-marketing. On-line (or inbound marketing) is about attracting your target market using web space.
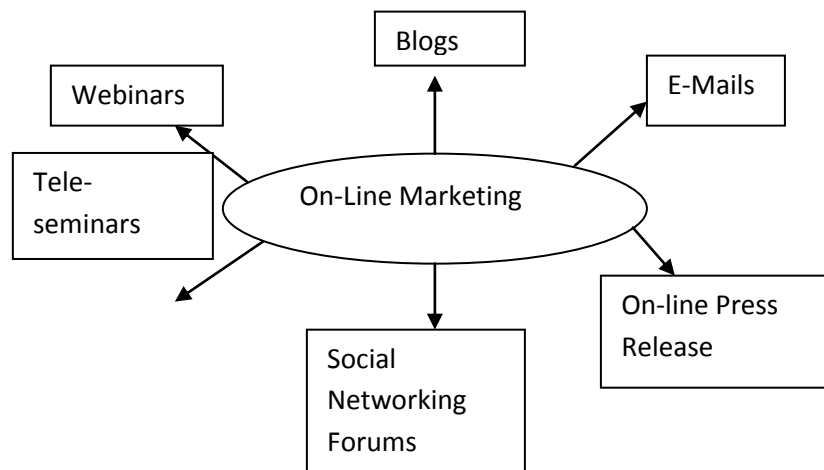
Rationale behind the Study

It has been noticed that no consumer has a same mindset throughout. He keeps on changing his preferences. He never notices a product from one angle, sometimes price attracts him and sometimes something else. It is really very difficult to say that which point does the consumer notices each time when he makes a decision to buy the product.
In the era of on-line marketing, where the consumers get to see and choose their utilities on their own computers and Smartphone screens, it has become even more challenging to trap the ever changing preferences of consumers. It is often noticed that, when a coupon is provided by on-line marketer to boost his sales, even though the product is not currently demanded by the consumer, just to avail the offer; the consumer ends up purchasing the product. All these experiences of different consumers gave provocation to study this particular topic.

Objectives of the Study

The study is an attempt to understand the point of view of the online consumers as it tries to find answers to the following questions?
1. What kind of products do the consumers feel are suitable to be purchased on-line?
2. What are the basic requirements they feel are necessary to trust the on-line marketer?
3. Do promotional discount coupons give rise to impulsive buying amongst on-line consumers?

The study also attempts to find out:
4. Do demography affects the consumer behavior on-line?

Discussions

Just as the success of any innovation in product or technology depends on its ultimate advantage; the success of any e-store depends upon the advantage it provides to its customers. Peterson, Balasubramaniam and Bronnenberg (1997) indicates that the internet shares several characteristics with other marketing and also adds a number of other features and capabilities which are unique to the internet medium. These characteristics include the following (Peterson, Balasubramanian &Bronnenberg (1997);Varadarajan and Yadav, (2002):

1. Storing larger amounts of information at relatively low costs and providing information interactivity and customizably.
2. Providing powerful and simple ways such as search engines to search, distribute and organize such information.
3. Providing perpetual experiences in the form of images, video previews etc.
4. Serving as transaction as well as physical distribution medium.
5. Establishing presence a low costs.

From the studies marked above (in 1997 and 2002), it can be said that E-Marketing is seen as promotional as well as communicational tool.

According to the survey done for the purpose of the study, major websites offering different products in India is:

1. ebay.in
2. Myntra.com
3. Fashion and You
4. Yebhi.com
5. Yepmee.com
6. Snapdeel.com
7. Jabong.com
8. Junglee.com
9. Homeshop18
10. Naptol.com
11. Olx.com
12. Flipcart.com
13. Shopping Indiatimes.com
14. Rediffshopping.com
15. Indiaplaza
16. Amazon.com
17. Future Bazaar.com
18. Starcj

According to an article of Derek Fredickson (dated: 20th Dec, 2011), the on-line marketers offer any or combination of the following strategies:

1. Marketers try to improve their free offers to make then irresistible for the consumers.
2. They often try to grab the attention of on-line consumers by launching a new product on-line or Re-launching can also be targeted to improve or boost on-line sales.
3. They also try to establish themselves better by connecting with a good local partner or with another well known brand.
4. Being more active on social media can also help to get a better response from the prospective customers.
5. Sometimes when the product is really good or expensive, one can also look for pay per click advertising campaign. This can be quite expensive but has a plus point that different websites will try to generate more responses.
6. Marketers add videos to better demonstrate the product and to provide more content.
7. They also take care of their search engine ratings.
8. They often e-mail their product offers and product lists to their perspective customers and do also send messages on their phones to boost responses for their offerings.

Research Methodology

The research is based on the responses obtained by those respondents who shop on-line. The data is purely collected by using a structured questionnaire with an aim to identify the attitude of the respondents towards shopping on-line. The questionnaire was served to 126 respondents for the purpose of generating the primary data whereas, secondary data was gathered through various websites where the on-line marketers display their products to fish their target consumers and other informational websites available on-line.

Profile of the Respondents:

Male	59
Female	67
Total respondents	**126**

Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents
Post-graduate	58
Graduate	48
Under-graduate	18
PhD	2
Occupation	**Responses**
Employed in Corporate Sector	49
Teaching in Schools/collages	50
Studying in various collages	27
Total Responses	126

Monthly income:

| Less than 15000	28
Rs.15,000- Rs.30,000	25
Rs.31,000- Rs.45,000	32
Rs.46,000- Rs.60,000	19
Rs.61,000 and above	22

Outcome of the Study

As the data obtained is qualitative in nature, therefore the findings can be highlighted as below:

1. The on-line marketers has to go a long way as off-line shopping is still preferred than online shopping due to various odd reasons like seeing and touching the product, ease of exchange etc. The mindset has still not much changed and on-line stores despite of all the luring schemes have to do a lot to expand their markets.
2. The respondents usually preferred to shop CD's, DVD's, and Clothes on-line. 74.60% of the respondents preferred to buy movie or theatre tickets online and 77.77% always chose to buy Air or Rail tickets online followed by 53.96% showing their preference to buy accessories online against the products like that of groceries, fast food, cosmetics, Books, baby toys, furniture, which the respondents liked to buy from the stores.
3. The respondents were of the view that certain products like that of furniture, grocesories etc need to be touched and felt to determine the suitability before you end up purchasing them.
4. Most of the respondents used internet to fetch the information before going for the final purchase.
5. The online consumers spend approximately Rs.1500 and above every month for their suitable purchases.
6. If given a choice, the respondents intend to buy electronic appliances, computer related solutions or products, movie or concert tickets, rail or air tickets on-line. Financial or investment related products seemed too unpopular among the online consumers.
7. Most of the shoppers believed that online shopping saves time.
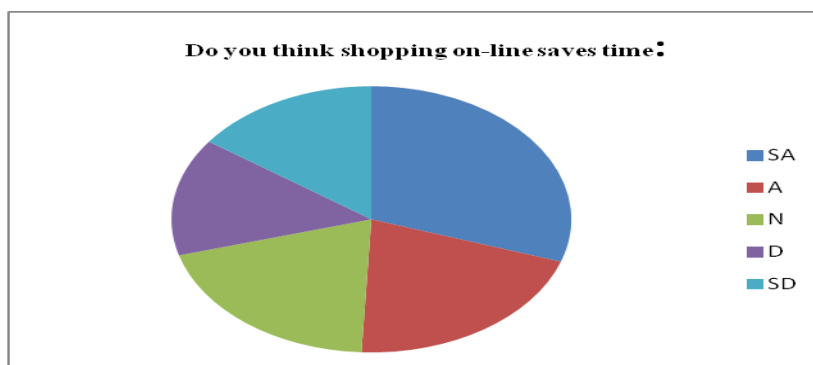
8. Most of the consumers feel that the online marketers take time to deliver the products.
9. It was acknowledged by most of the respondents that sometimes they get to buy such products which they don't get in their own cities or only in metros. This has turned out to be the most positive point for online marketers.

10. The respondents did believe that the offers online and discount coupons provided boosted the impulsivity amongst them. But the impulsive buyer's population seemed to be quite at par with that of smart buyers.
11. Earlier maybe it was the perception that shopping online can be risky as far as money transactions are concerned but now it is no longer perceived by most of the respondents and they consider it to be safe.
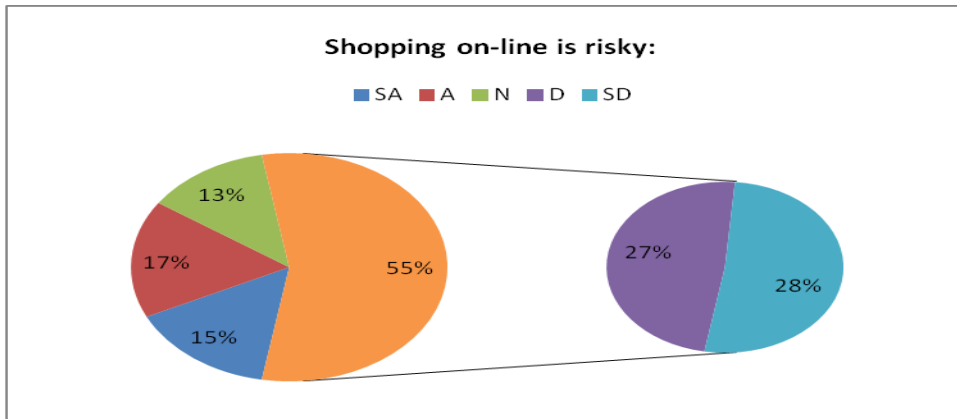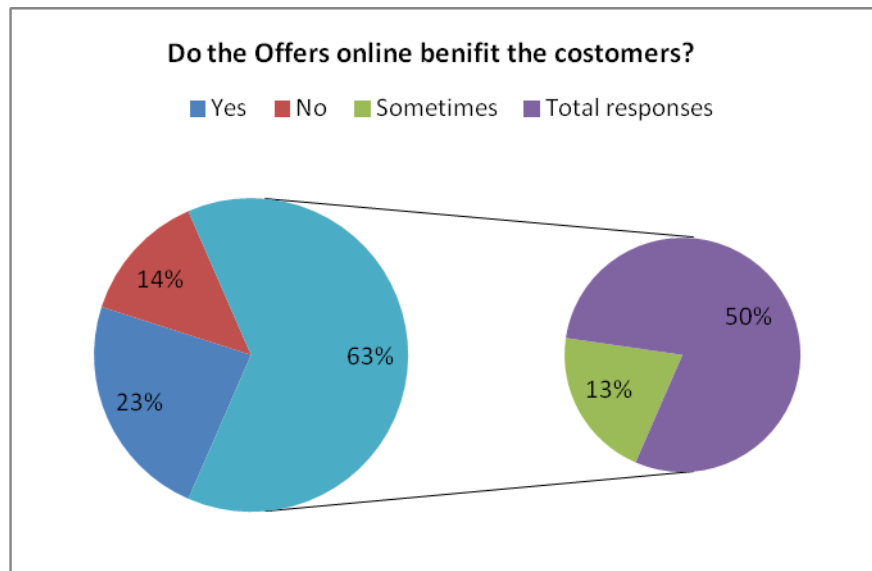

12. It is also believed by most of the respondents that the information and description provided by the online stores is sufficient and they can make out that how the product will be like?
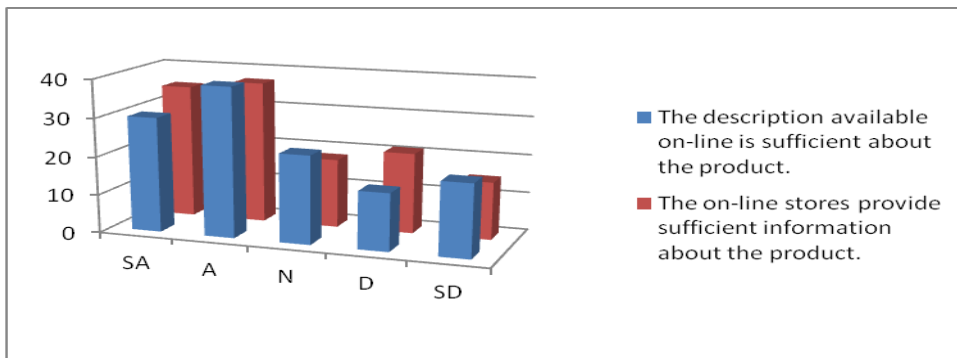
13. Non availability of cash on delivery facility is one of the factor which refrains a consumer to shop online followed by the risk of not able to return or exchange the product if found unsuitable. Not able to get what the consumer actually paid for or it can also be said that lesser value for money is also one of the factor which is hindering the sales to boost up online. Consumers sometimes want to feel the product before they end up finally purchasing it, so it is also one of the factors pulling back the sales to boost online. Mostly women in the product category like that of accessories and home décor were of the view that online stores sometimes charge high as compared to the off-lines stores.

14. It was quite interesting to know that the consumers consider that the offers provided by online marketers do benefit the consumers. The offers have made a positive impact on the shoppers online.

Do the Offers online benifit the costomers?

Legend: Yes, No, Sometimes, Total responses

14%, 23%, 63%, 50%, 13%

Conclusion

The paper discussed the various perspectives adhering to on-line marketing. It has also attempted to find out the approach of an on-line shopper to find his appropriate product.

From the point of view of on-line consumers, it is important to notice good and beneficial products to enhance their standard of living. And on the other side, the on-line marketers need to understand that web needs to be used as an interactive medium for establishing a connection between them and the consumers. Consumers need to be given such offers that should sound more meaningful for both the sides. No doubt, the online marketing has given more choice and liberty to the shoppers and most amongst us use it for getting information as well as to compare the prices of various products. We can compare various products online as their description and comparison is readily available online on various websites. Therefore, to conclude we can say that internet is not only a medium where we can buy things; rather we can sell, collect information, and compare the products as well. The techniques and the innovations in on-line marketing have made this platform evocative not only for the marketers but even for the consumers.

References

1. I. Kursan, M. Mihić: Business Intelligence: The role of the Internet in marketing research Business Intelligence: The Role Of The Internet in Market Research and Business Decision-Making, Journal of Management, Vol. 15, 2010, 1, pp. 69-86

2. Michigan State University (2009): Internet emerges as social research tool, retrieved from www.physorg.com/news153834869.html (accessed March, 2010).

3. Peterson, Robert A., Sridhar Balasubramanian, and Bart J. Bronnenberg (1997), "Exploring the Implication of the Internet for Consumer Marketing," Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 25 (4), 329-346.

4. Rashad Yazdanifard1, Melissa Venpin2, Wan Fadzilah Wan Yusoff 3, Mohammad Rabiul Islam4, "Internet Marketing: The New Era of Innovation in E-commerce" 2011 International Conference on Software and Computer Applications, IPCSIT vol.9 (2011) IACSIT Press, Singapore.

5. Varadarajan, P. Rajan and Manjit S. Yadav (2002), "Marketing Strategy and the Internet: An Organizing Framework," Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 30 (4), 296-312.