

A Review of Social Media Marketing on Digital Savvy Brand Shoppers

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Abstract. Social Media (SM) has recently become a platform and a tool for both individuals and companies to communicate in a virtual platform. E-retails is another virtual platform where creates cybernetic communication between brands and customers. Companies create effective marketing strategy through both platforms to influence their customer behavior. On the other hand, digital savvy customers who prefer to take the advantage of saving time and have a convenience shopping experience, buying their desired products through e-shopping is another fact that makes digital marketers to implement new strategies to communicate with their customers. Thus, social media has become an effective tool to create an interaction to influence digital savvy shoppers. The purpose of this paper is to examine different aspects of social media as a tool that can develop marketing strategies and how they influence individuals who prefer to buy products through e-retails. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive review of the impact of social media marketing on digital savvy brand shoppers. The scope of this review encompasses various literature reviews that has been done to illustrate a framework design to represent the impacts that social media has on a specific target audience. The research methodology used for this review involves a systematic literature review of relevant academic and industry publications. The contribution of this paper lies in providing insights into the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies for engaging digital savvy brand shoppers and improving brand loyalty. The findings of this paper represent how social media can influence e-shoppers and have impact on their decision-making process. On the other hand, the findings suggest that social media marketing can enhance brand awareness and influence consumer purchase decision through advertising, user-generated content, and social media influencers. The review also identifies key challenges and limitations of social media marketing for digital savvy brand shoppers.

Keywords: Social Media (SM), SM Marketing, E-Shoppers, E-Retail Supply Chains, Decision Making Process

1 Introduction

Traditionally, going to malls and do even a simple window shopping was a habit where people would like to take it as a hobby. With the raise of digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok and other social medias, people started to spend most of their time, even at malls on surfing into their social media pages. By the rise of social media platforms, comes the digital retails and shops, where it gives the opportunity to customers to experience digital shopping rather than physical ones (Laur, 2019). This trend is not only being limited to digital buyers, but it has been observed that even digital screen shopping is also taking place by customers, no matter if they add any product to their cart or not.

Social media as a strong tool has made its way in a fast phase to communicate with customers. On the other side, companies have also come to the reality of its effect on customers, especially when it comes for them to decide on buying a specific product. thus, other than creating a digital shop, a social media page by companies have also been created and a platform on digital shops, to communicate in a faster way with their customers, hence the communication leads them to influence their decision making. Examples of these types of digital shops can be Amazon, E-Bay, Noon, Alibaba, and others, where different types of trades, B2C, B2B, C2B and even C2C is also being seen in these platforms. Different brands that are selling their products through these platforms are not only limiting themselves in providing digital shopping to their customers, but they also create an awareness of their products being existent in these digital retailers through social media. Thus, the brand's social media has become a place to familiarized and aware customers of the product availability in certain digital shops (Weinberg, 2019).

1.1 Introduction to the Research

The presence of social media has changed customer's decision making in an outstanding way. Not only social media but surfing in digital shops and retails have also brought a considerable shift in customer's decision-making process. Traditionally, customers would realize the need of a certain product, though going to shopping malls or the retail shop, searching for their desired product, trying it, evaluating it with other shops, and finally leading to act of buying, makes customers to go through a long process of decision-making process (Goh *et al*, 2020). Meanwhile, evaluation is somehow complex and complicated when physical shopping takes place as customers require to spend lots of time searching for the product, they want to be able to compare and evaluate variety of products with each other, thus making the final decision of buying to take place.

As a result of this, social media comes to the picture to make customers realize and find more products while saving time and at the same time customer's feedback and comments under each post would make it faster for them to evaluate the products through digital word of mouth. Digital shops and retails have also brought this process faster for customers as customer would be able to compare, evaluate and make their final purchase through digital shops in a specific category in this platform (Kim, 2019). Hence, decision making process has faced a great shift and phase comparing to traditional buying in digital retails and shops and social media is a tool where customers can get more feedback and increase the speed of product evaluation through digital word of mouth in this platform. This paper will examine the impact that social media has on customers who are digital savvy shoppers' decision-making process and identify the influences that this digital platform can have on customer's purchase behavior in decision making phases.

1.2 Research Objectives

With rise of digital retails, comes the digital platforms for shopping and social media as another platform where can make customers decision making process easier, yet complex in buying a specific product. Thus, some questions would stand out to clarify how customers, who prefer online shopping over physical shopping decision making process would be influenced by social media. Below objectives are aimed to be reached by this research paper:

1. To identify the power of social media on customer's decision-making process
2. To study the effectiveness of social media tools on customer's shopping behavior
3. To determine the impact of social media on e-shoppers purchase behavior.

Social media, comparing to other traditional marketing communication tools implied different marketing strategies to communicate and reach their customers. Thus, this paper will examine the impacts that this communication tool has on digital savvy shopper's decision making in purchasing products through digital platforms.

1.3 Research Objectives

While there is extensive literature available on the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the specific influence of social media marketing on digital savvy brand shoppers. Most studies have focused on the broader impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior, without specifically examining the behavior and preferences of digital-savvy consumers.

This finding highlights the need for further research that specifically explores the relationship between social media marketing and digital-savvy brand shoppers, including their attitudes towards different social media platforms and the effectiveness of various marketing strategies in engaging this audience. Such research can provide valuable insights for marketers seeking to optimize their social media marketing efforts to better reach and engage with this tech-savvy consumer segment.

1.4 Research Contribution

From a theoretical perspective, this paper highlights the importance of understanding the behavior and preferences of digital savvy consumers in the context of social media marketing. The review identifies key factors that influence the effectiveness of social media marketing, including platform selection, content creation, and influencer marketing. These insights can inform future research in this area and help marketers better understand how to engage with this tech-savvy consumer segment. From a methodological perspective, this paper provides a systematic and comprehensive review of the available literature on social media marketing and digital savvy brand shoppers. The rigorous approach ensures that the review is comprehensive and reflective of the most up-to-date knowledge in the field. From a practical perspective, this paper provides valuable insights and recommendations for marketers seeking to optimize their social media marketing strategies to engage with digital savvy brand shoppers. The review identifies key challenges and opportunities in this area, and provides guidance on effective marketing strategies, such as user-generated content, influencer marketing, and targeted advertising. Overall, this paper's contribution highlights the importance of understanding the behavior and preferences of digital savvy brand shoppers in the context of social media marketing. By providing valuable insights and recommendations for marketers, this paper can help businesses better engage with this increasingly important consumer segment and ultimately improve their bottom line.

2 Literature Review

Talking about marketing strategy makes us think of a traditional marketing strategy that takes place as a first step in all businesses. Starting of finding the right target customer to create positioning strategy requires considerable attention. Before, traditional marketing strategy steps were taking place in a long period of time, whereas with the existence of digital world and Internet, the process has become faster, easier, and more accurate. Companies can use digital platforms to find their target market and practice a benchmarking by comparing what their competitors are doing as the same time. Thus, this is where digital marketing comes into picture to create a new strategic function and approaches, designing, planning, and implementing marketing strategies (De Veirman *et al.*, 2019).



Fig. 1. Overview of Digital Marketing (DM) Tools

Conventional marketing is the first approach where being given to digital marketing as a definition that all its function and strategies takes place on the Internet. However, the tools and functions are suitable for digital world, but it has become appropriate for marketing purposes to develop channels, languages and formats that leads companies to design their marketing strategies. Today, digital marketing has become a tool that brings customers, suppliers, and distributors all together and make the communication process faster, easier, and more effective. On the other hand, not only communication process has become a function in digital marketing, but all other marketing functions, such as pricing, branding, advertising, competition virility and other functions that are taking place in digital marketing. As the word, “Digital” implies all activities that is related to marketing purposes can happen through a virtual platform.

However, the system requires a technological updates and advances, it has become a trendy and vital tool for all marketing purposes. As a result of this, all organizations must ensure that their company and function is meeting all technological advances and updates to maintain this trendy, significant and vital tool, and platform for their business function. Other than organization’s functions in all areas through virtual platform, communicating with customers has also become easier and now it is a necessity for all companies to create awareness, communicate, retail, and maintain their relationship with customers, though lacking it can bring a lot of inevitable results (Harsono, 2019). Meanwhile that digital marketing has become a platform where organizations can have all the necessary functions in relation to their customers, a digital marketing plan is a strategy where it requires an organization to take into consideration to implement the right digital marketing strategy to the right customer target segment. Social media platforms have become a place where all marketing strategy functions can easily take place. This platform has given the space and ease to marketers to design and plan the right

strategy to reach out to their customers, through the right platform and in a right time. At the same time, this platform has made it different for customers as well. Digital marketing has impacted customer decision making process as well, while new digital marketing strategies is required to be implemented (Snyder, 2018).

2.1 Social Media Marketing

Social medias are mainly known as a social networking platform, where individuals can create a profile, upload pictures, write blogs, podcasting and participate in different virtual social functions. The main purpose behind social medias were the networking, however, the platform now is being used for other purposes as well. Social media platforms were used by computers and laptops, and now all individuals can have access to it through their phone, and even have more than one account.



Fig. 2. Social Media Marketing Practices

On the other hand, not only an individual personal profile is being made by individuals, but people started to create pages and profiles where they can present their small business, talent, art works or any other capabilities they have, and this is where it comes the greatest social media bloggers who have millions and millions of followers (De Veirman *et al*, 2019). As a result of this trendy increase, bloggers started to create marketing campaigns, dealing with brands to advertise them. This has become an income source and a kind of career for bloggers in a way that companies use them to advertise their products to a great mass number of audiences. Traditionally, a celebrity was being used in media advertisement, using a specific product to influence customers, whereas now social media bloggers and their activity in social media platform is replacing the traditional way of celebrity advertisement. With the growth of fast trending marketing activities in social media, companies started to create new social media marketing campaigns and strategies to influence their target audience, and this is where brands underway creating their own social media page and have social media events. This strategy has made customer's engagement to be more and visible with the respective brand, hence decision-making process of customers is also being impacted.

As mentioned earlier, the whole process of decision making in physical shopping were being divided into different stages. Now, with the existence of social media, the stages in decision making have also faced an incredible shift. The complexity of decision-making process where companies and brands must take into consideration is that now customers have lots of information, comparison, and evaluation substitute through their social media, and even negative or positive word of mouth can be created through this platform. As a result of this, we can say that social media is a strong and powerful tool where consumer behavior phases and elements has been significantly changed and impacted and this is where marketing strategy should implement major changes and strategic plans (Snyder, 2018). This is exactly where new Social Media Strategy comes into picture where companies and brands need to carefully apply it and not forget to update it with the trending activities taken place in social media due to the strong impact that social media has on customer's behavior, and it can easily lead them to make the final purchase or create a negative impact on their attitude.

2.2 Impact of E-Commerce on E-Retail Supply Chain (E-RSC)

A supply chain is defined as a three or more organizations that are directly linked with each other to drive the product manufacturing flow or service providing to customers. Managing the supply chain is essentially important as it is related to all the activities that takes place among the chain members and organization. These relationships vary from a single transaction between different elements to the complex one, as it can also be related to direct or indirect channel of distribution (Harsono, 2019). An indirect channel will lead customers to get the product or service needed through different channels such as physically visiting a retail shop and purchase the product, while the indirect channel is more of a customer and producers' relationship directly with each other and this is where so many channels are not participating in the transformation and delivering of the product or service to the end user. With the existence and revolution that technology has created in all aspects of the business, supply chain is another sector that has been influenced greatly by the industry 4.0 revolution. This is where the impact of e-retail and e-commerce comes into the picture and has shifted the supply chain and distribution channels function to face a great shift in their transformation of the product to delivering the final product to customers. Thus, this revolution requires the supply chain management to implement a new strategy, tools and techniques that can be unique (emarketer.com, 2015).



Fig. 3. E-Commerce and E-Retail Supply Chains (E-RSC)

One of the main changes that technology and 4.0th industrialized revolution has brought is the important role it has on reducing supply chain costs. If the manager creates an effective and efficient tool, using technology and e-commerce, it can lead the supply chain function to reduce lead time, increase rate of information availability, delivering the products to the right customers at the right time (Just-in-Time- JIT). This method and the usage of technology can also influence the inter-organizational communication and reduce time interims with further cooperation of the channels with other sectors. Due to the revolution and impacts that technology and 4.0th industrialized revolution has brought into the supply chain, this has affected the consumer's purchase behavior as well, thus, the location where customers were getting the final product from the producer is also transformed to be through online platforms (Snyder, 2018) This is where the entire process of producing a product to giving to final customers has faced lots of changes with the existence of industry 4.0 revolution.

2.3 E-Retails and E-Shops

4.0th Industrialized Revolution is characterized by new and innovative technologies that brings a shadow or better say blur the lines and connections between physical and digital worlds. E-Retailing is a subdivision of e-commerce where all business trading happens through the Internet. The place where selling a product through online shopping and an Internet is what E-Retail is being defined. Comparing E-retail or shops to traditional stores is that the customers will not get the tangible experience of touching the products when making their purchase, while on e-shopping customer can only evaluate the product by looking at their pictures but have all the information needed included underneath the product.

The main purpose behind all e-shops and e-retails were to save time, cost and space and make it more convenient for customers to order any product they want online. Problems were still there as customers might not trust the online platform as were afraid of phishing or identity thefts, thus it was not a very practical manner taken place by customers (Rohrs , 2013). As technology started to dominate all business functions, customers underway practice using online platforms as well, and this is where social media practical behavior has come into the picture. So that is why we can say that the existence of social media made customers to be ready and be more aware of buying products through online platforms and online stores. Amazon and E-Bay were the first online e-shops that customers were aware of it and would trust, and then with the social media promotions, other e-retailers and e-shops started to penetrate customer's awareness and market to sell different products and brands. This is where other e-retails started to collaborate with brands and sell their products to customers online (Sunil *et al*, 2013).

Meanwhile, as the customer's awareness regarding e-retails and e-shops increase, here it comes to brands to see the cost effectiveness of selling their products online, thus collaboration with online e-retails and e-shops started to boost. As a result of this, new marketing strategies by e-retailers requires to be implemented. Some e-retailers and e-shops would provide the brand an exclusive marketing strategy and branding to maximize their e-shop brand customer's engagement and the product or brands awareness. One of the examples of this strategy can be given to company named Noon in UAE. Noon started to collaborate with brands and created its online shopping application and e-store. After a while of being successful in getting customer's trust and become successful, Noon started to have its own brand selling in its e-shop and e-retail. E-shops and e-retails were not that much popular long a long and right now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the image and usage of e-retails and e-shops has been seen significantly. The global pandemic caused e-shops and e-retails to be more visible and this is where customers started to realize that online-shopping through e-retails and e-stores can also be a good, easy, cheap, and reasonable option. Thus, the global pandemic brought the new opportunity for e-retailers and new customer behavior and engagement with customers. On the other hand, comes customer decision making process, where the steps and phases in the process has faced changes through e-retails and e-shops. This is where traditional decision-making process of customers varies when a brand or a product is going to be purchased through e-shops. And again, this can be implied as a shift and change that digitalization brings into customer's behavior.

2.4 Digital Savvy Shoppers

Digital Shoppers are being defined as customers who are technologically savvy and most of their purchases are with interaction through online platforms with retailers. The

whole purchase behavior process for e-shoppers, including awareness, choosing, transaction, delivery, and aftersales support take place on digital channels. Thus, the whole purchase journey for digital shoppers occurs through digital technologies. Since this segment is technologically savvy, their purchase behavior and even decision-making process is different from regular customers. This type of shoppers would get more information about the desired product as they know search engines and finalize all the reviews and comparison online. On the other hand, product features and characteristics or any other relevant information about the product is very important for them to be seen in the online platform (Lee and Fung, 2019). This type of customers is known as a different target segment for companies and brands as approaching strategy would be of a difference, thus relevantly, the marketing strategy would be also diverse from regular shoppers. E-shoppers have also given a new and novel way to retailers to track their demographics, behavioristic and physiographic background without them noticing it. Hence, a great deal of customer data would be available for e-retailers and brands that are collaborating with them for future marketing purposes.

2.5 E-Shoppers Decision Making Process

As mentioned earlier, digital shoppers are in different purchase journey from regular shoppers. Such difference, make digital shoppers decision making process to be different from regular physical shoppers. Before explaining this, let us have a quick glance of the whole decision-making process comparing to regular physical shoppers and e-shoppers. Below figures compare the two types of decision-making process in which figure 4 illustrates the physical shopper's decision-making process and the e-shopper's decision-making process. When talking about decision making process, the first step is realizing or recognizing the need. This recognition can take place either in advance, as an individual realize that he needs a specific product or by surfing on the Internet or going to shopping malls, an impulse or real need of a product will be raised.



Fig. 4. *Flow of Decision-Making Processes*

Information search is the second step-in decision-making process where a customer would search for the information relevant to the need or a product or service of his need. Different platforms are being in used for these purposes as now Internet has made it easier for customers to search for all alternatives that they are looking for. Once alternatives are being found, the customer would rather evaluate and compare them with each other, and this is where the step leads the customer to take the final step of purchasing. Being satisfied or not satisfy would direct the customer to have post-purchase evaluation and behavior. The whole decision-making process of a physical shoppers can happen during a specific period, and even some of the steps such as evaluating the alternative, and search for information would be different. This is where physical tangible comparison of product would take place (Rohrs, 2013). In contrast with physical

experience and decision-making process of buying products, comes the digital shoppers' decision-making process. The same steps would take place by digital savvy shoppers whoever the amount of time that a person would spend in each step might be different (Sunil *et al*, 2013). On the other hand, the method and information search and evaluation would be different. In this case, the digital savvy shoppers would make all his information research through online platforms where users feedback and reviews would be also taken into consideration, while a physical shopper might not have this much of information and references as he would be able to get his surrounding people's and old users as a reference of feedback. As a result of this, evaluating products through online platforms would be easier while competitive for brands.

2.6 Social Media and E-Retails

Both social media and e-retails and e-shops have something in common with each other and that is the Internet platform. Both are tools that are communicating with people through online podiums and all individual interaction is happening in a virtual way. The difference that social media has with e-retails is that social media is not mainly focusing on purchasing products or services and it has other purposes as well, however e-retail's main and core purpose is to create an online shopping experience. Thus, customer's interaction and engagement through both platform is different from each other (emarketer.com, 2015). Since social media is an online platform for networking, brands have taken this into consideration and have taken advantage of this platform in a sense that having customer interaction and engagement has become easier and in different way. On the other hand, e-retails are also into the phase to create a social media page and make this interaction even more. The main core purpose of both platforms is to have as much as customer awareness, interaction and changing their attitude or creating a positive word of mouth among their users and followers. On the other side of the story, here comes the bloggers where recently, they have become a third party to create relation and interaction between brands and their targeted customers. E-retails have also used bloggers as a mean to increase purchase traffic through their platform where the bloggers would promote the e-retail shopping behavior (Harsono, 2019).

Taking decision making process into consideration is also another factor that both social media and e-shops are in common, while the only difference is that sharing and reading reviews and feedback from a specific product would be in different methods. The decision-making process in social media consist of an influence (bloggers) while e-retailers are mainly a platform where people can buy and even evaluate different product with each other. The purchase behavior in e-shops is quite different from social media as social media is the main platform that can influence customer's information search, evaluation, and purchase action in different way while e-retail will lead customers to the final purchase action. As a result of this, we can conclude that both social

media and e-shops can be a complementary platform for each other in a sense to enhance more customer interaction, engagement, and participation.

2.7 COVID-19 Pandemic and Online Retails

Since the hit of global pandemic of COVID-19 and its effects on the whole world, the plague brought a new trend and way of living in all sectors, such as business, airline and tourism industry, education, and consumer behavior. The pandemic force has shift everyone's life to adapt their behavior from having physical connection and behavior to have an online adjustment in all sectors. Purchase behavior is one of the areas that the pandemic has significantly influenced. People, disregard of their generation group had to adapt themselves with the usage of digital platforms. Social medias on the other hand, has emerged their existence more than before (Lee and Fung, 2019). Since people had to stay at home, have less physical communication, they started to increase their communication manner and networking through social media, and this is where brands, companies and all sectors get the opportunity to develop a new strategy reaching to their target audiences. This is exactly where people started to get to know online shopping platforms more than before and now even social media's impact has become substantial more than before. As a result of this, we can conclude that with the pandemic phenomenon, the impact of social media on e-shoppers has reached its maximum.

3. Research Findings

Reading through excessive literature review on social media and online shopping behavior we can conclude that social media has become a significant tool and platform influencing customer's behavior, specifically the e-shoppers. Social media is now a complementary platform for e-retailers to reach, communicate and engage customer's behavior toward purchasing a specific product, especially its influence has become more outstanding during COVID-19 pandemic.

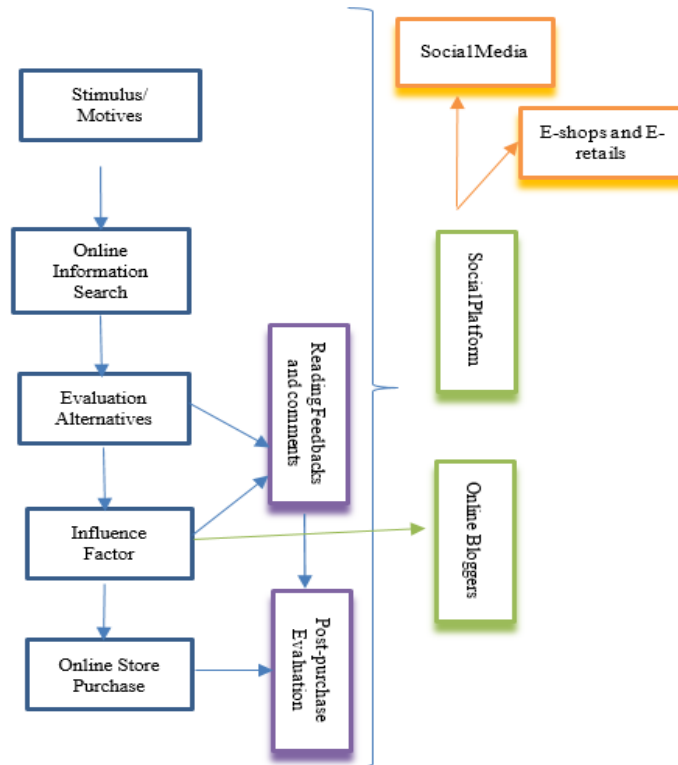


Fig. 5. *Impact of Social-Media on E-shoppers Decision Making Process*

Moreover, customer's decision-making process has also impacted by social media and e-shops. Figure 5 illustrates the final literature review framework of this paper where it shows the relationship between social media and e-shops, and the decision-making process of customers through e-retails and e-shops. Summarizing the above framework can lead this paper for the bellow findings:

- Social media has brought more option of information search and evaluation progression in the decision-making process.
- Social media and e-retails are now in parallel use by e-shoppers.
- Social media and e-retails can significantly influence customer's decision-making process.
- Post purchase evaluation through social media and e-retails is being evaluated and influenced by online bloggers and other customer's feedback and comment.

4. Conclusion

For business, brands, and shops to be able to sell their products to their customers, they must know their potential customer behavior very well. Not only the knowledge of their behavior is enough, but decision-making process is an important element where brands and marketers can find ways to influence each step-in order to attract, retain and create customer loyalty. Due to the technological advancement, the creation of social media and e-shops has made it easier, yet complicated for companies to reach their customers, communicate with them, and influence their purchase behavior. Social media is an effective tool where online shoppers are using this platform as a first and main tool to buy products and get influenced through it. This paper makes a significant contribution to the field of social media marketing by providing a comprehensive review of the impact of social media marketing on digital savvy brand shoppers. The paper's theoretical contribution lies in synthesizing and analyzing relevant literature to identify key trends and insights related to the effectiveness of social media marketing for engaging digital savvy consumers. The paper's methodological contribution lies in the use of a systematic literature review approach, which ensures a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the available literature. Finally, the paper's practical contribution lies in providing valuable insights and recommendations for marketers seeking to optimize their social media marketing strategies to engage with digital savvy brand shoppers.

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