THE IMPACT OF PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES ON THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF ONLINE GARMENT BUYERS

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ABSTRACT

One may define persuasion as the process of communication in which a person who persuades sends a persuasive message to the other person with the intention of creating an impact on the recipient's behaviour or attitude. Various technologies are used by the online apparel retailers to persuade the website visitors to buy the products. There are several other factors such as rewards, reminders that add to the overall persuasion strategy and can have a deep impact on the purchase intention and the buying behaviour of the users. The main objective of the study was to focus on the specific factors that are used by the online apparel retailers to persuade the users to buy specific products. The objective of the study to create a model that would explain the level of influence of each of the persuasion strategies on the purchase intention of the website visitors. . The study shows that there are several factors that affect the purchase intention which are related to the various forces of strategies that are used by online retailers of apparels to persuade the customers to buy the product. The model shows that using technology in persuasion and having a higher social networking presence can affect the purchase intention of the website visitors to a considerable extent. The model also shows that various privacy issues, trust and overall website quality also have a major impact on the purchase intention of the buyers. In the end, the study also shows that the purchase intention of the buyers is highly positively correlated with the buying behaviour.

Introduction

One may define persuasion as the process of communication in which a person who persuades sends a persuasive message to the other person to create an impact on the recipient's behaviour or attitude. It should be noted that the recipient has the power of making the decision. The value of the messages is differentiated by the media channel and the message content that is used to deliver such messages. Several other technologies including the web, mobile phones and other online platforms provide great opportunities for a persuasive interaction between the buyers and sellers. Persuasive technology can be used to communicate with specific individuals as well as masses. There has been a very limited amount of research that has been conducted on the use of persuasive techniques used by online retailers which are used to persuade the buyers to add things to their cart and finally check out. Therefore, it can be said that information technology that is interactive and designed to change or ship a particular person's attitude or behaviour is always persuasive technology. Persuasive technology involves the interaction of humans and computers and studies how people are persuaded when they interact with different kinds of technologies.

The online apparel retailers use various technologies to persuade the website visitors to buy the products. The following is a list of some of the persuasive strategies that are used:

- Reduction: online retailers use a reduction strategy by simplifying the complex activities and making it easier to buy the product. For example, instead of going through in the process, they can facilitate the buyer to buy a particular item with a single click. For this purpose, websites often offer the visitors who visit for the first time to save their card information or remember that choice/ mode of payment which speeds up the buying process and also persuade the users to buy quickly. This strategy is especially useful in the case of people who make impulsive purchases.

- Tunnelling: tunnelling is a process by which websites offer free trials. However, this method is not applicable to the online apparel retailers. The strategies used by websites that provide certain types of services such as antiviruses, spyware protection and special-purpose websites that provide specific information to certain users.

- Tailoring: based on the browsing history of the users, their potential interests, the usage context and other factors that may be borrowed from the external environment can be used to tailor out the information and persuade the users to buy a particular product.
- Personalisation: in this strategy, based on the user's previous buying history, the websites offer personalised content and recommendations to the users so that they can make buying decisions quickly.
- Self-monitoring: it allows the customers to keep attract of their own status and performance. This strategy enables the customers to check the current status of the orders and track them. This creates a sense of excitement as customers want to know where exactly the product that they ordered is. Faster deliveries and detailed delivery related information also play an important role in persuading the customers to buy more from a particular website.
- Simulations: this technology is relatively new and a particular person can be provided with the means of observing the link between the cause and effect. For example, a mobile application can be developed that captures the photograph of the user and suggests the right size and also provide a virtual fitting room where the person can see how they look after wearing a particular apparel.

There are several other factors such as rewards, reminders that add to the overall persuasion strategy and can have a deep impact on the purchase intention and the buying behaviour of the users. According to Oinas-Kukkonen and Harjumaa (2009), other factors include trustworthiness, suggestion, third-party endorsements, etc. that contribute to the overall persuasiveness of the website. According to the authors, websites often offer up-to-date information and statements from famous personalities or people with a certain level of authority that increases the trustworthiness of a particular website. When a particular website has a very competent feel and look and the design reflects the context of the website, it certainly ends in persuading the person to buy specific products.

In the context of electronic commerce, the current paper focuses mainly on the design of the e-commerce websites that sell apparel. It also discusses several strategies used by e-commerce websites to change the attitude or behaviour of the consumers. Due to the advent of Internet technology and the availability of higher broadband speeds, e-commerce websites are becoming increasingly functionally persuasive. They are implementing dynamic persuasion techniques to increase their site visits and sales. These technologies are used by online retailers to enhance the overall system credibility and facilitate the process of buying online by motivating the consumers to adopt certain systems. For example, people write reviews about products. Positive reviews motivate the users to buy the product. At times, when a particular person adds a product's wish list, a few days later the price of that particular product is reduced by applying a deliberate discount and the information about the price drop is aggressively hammered on the users with the help of mobile phone short text messages, emails and at times, even phone calls. This is done to persuading the users to buy the product they added earlier to their wish list. Thus, it can be said that online retailers employ various techniques and methods in order to affect the sale of certain goods and services online by using persuasive techniques. The next section of the paper deals with the review of literature that is relevant to the current study.

Review of Literature

Captology is the study of computers as devices that promote persuasive technologies. In 1996, Dr. B.J. Fogg, the director of the Stanford University Persuasive Technology Lab, derived the term in 1996 from an acronym. According to him, the full form of CAPT is "Computers as Persuasive Technologies (CAPT)".

Captology involves the research, design and analysis of various computing products that are interactive in nature. Various devices such as mobile phones, websites, wireless technologies, computers, mobile applications, video games, et cetera can be used to persuade people to buy certain products and services. Therefore, it can be said that the technology has the potential of creating an influence on its

own right. The concept of Captology (persuasive technology) has been around for more than 2 decades. However, there is very limited research on Captology and its impact on the purchase intention and purchase behaviour of people who surf the Internet to buy specific products. Each product requires a different way of persuasion. For example, if a particular person wants to sell insurance in the way of persuading a potential client will be completely different as compared to a person wants to sell sports goods. Persuasion is extremely relevant for the design of interactive electronic communications. Nonlinear messages make it difficult to orient and direct the reader with traditional graphic strategies conceived for linear message sequencing.

An Internet site's visitors can choose their own paths, browsing the key content, and may be diverted by links to other sites on the Web. Persuasive communications strategies can persuade the website visitors to follow comprehensible reading paths, and to make the most expected responses by using different kinds of devices. Thinking of persuasion in this way, the smallest graphic moves can also mount to persuasion. For example, the users can be directed to click the okay button that is highlighted a flickering with attractive colours (McCoy, 2000).

Persuasive technologies work without deception and attempt to shape an individual's attitude and behaviour concerning an object, issue or action (Fogg, 2003). The literature that is available on the current study provides various guidelines for evaluating the performance of various purses of systems that are implemented by the retailers in order to persuade the customers to buy the products. Kaptein and Duplinsky (2009) have studied the use of persuasive technology in e-commerce. However, they have overemphasised on the aspect of the users adapting purses are messages. The study that is done by Felfernig and Burke (2008) explores the various factors that contribute to the success of e-commerce websites. However, the authors have not emphasise on the purses are aspects of such websites. This demands a study that would help in gaining a deeper understanding about the purses are expects of the design of e-commerce websites. Several researchers have used the persuasive system design (PSD) model (Oinas-Kukkonen & Harijumaa, 2009) is a theoretical foundation. However, none of the researchers seem to have used the various factors that have been mentioned by the technology acceptance model.

Online shopping has become a routine of life especially owing to the pandemic situation that the world is currently going through. Therefore, the proficiency in design and functionalities of a particular website play a monumental role in providing a competitive advantage to the E retailers. Websites are often the first point of contact and generally it is said that the first impression is the last impression. Therefore, it is necessary for a particular website to be good enough to present a favourable image of the entire organisation and attract more users. The website must have the ability of converting people who are surfing the Internet to potential shoppers. There are several features which are purses of extensively applied in designing e-commerce websites that result in improving the quality and help companies to deploy their marketing strategies more effectively. Such features also contribute to the credibility of the website (Fogg et al., 2003, Kaptein and Duplinsky, 2009).

Winn and Beck (2002) performed a study as to how the different visual elements operate in persuading the users to buy the products online. However, the study was performed in 2002 and technologies have changed since then and websites have become more interactive due to the availability of higher broadband speeds and faster computing devices.

Overall, the literature available suggests that there is very less work done on the impact of persuasive technology on the purchase intention and buying behaviour of individuals who buy specific products. The current study courses on apparels and probes into the various persuasive technologies and strategies that have a certain amount of impact on the buying behaviour and purchase intention of the visitors of your retelling websites that sell apparels.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the various factors that are used to persuade the website visitors of online apparel retailers to increase their sales.

2. To measure the influence of the key factors that are used to persuade the potential customers of online apparel retailers.

Hypothesis

H1: The website quality (WQ) is significantly positively correlated with trustworthiness (T) of a website.

H2: Privacy (PRI) is significantly correlated with purchase intention (PI).

H3: There is a significant positive correlation between Persuasion Technologies (PT) and the purchase intention (PT).

H4: The social networking presence (SNP) of the website is positively correlated with the purchase intention (PI).

H5: Trust (T) and Privacy (PRI) are significantly positively correlated with the buying behaviour.

H6: Purchase intention (PI) and buying behaviour (BB) are positively correlated.

Research Methodology

The main objective of the study was to focus on the specific factors that are used by the online apparel retailers to persuade the users to buy specific products. The objective of the study to create a model that would explain the level of influence of each of the persuasion strategies on the purchase intention of the website visitors. Exploration methods were used to obtain the necessary data to online questionnaires. The question is mainly included close ended questions where most of the questions were designed for the respondents to react on a five-step Likert scale. The questionnaire was created among the respondents using social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. There are over 2 billion users of the Internet. The survey was conducted on 252 respondents. However, some of the respondents had given polarised Reponses and not seem to have seriously participated in the research. 22 such irrelevant questionnaires were cancelled and finally, 230 responses were considered for the purpose of the study. For the purpose of dimensional reduction, and exploratory factor analysis was conducted.

Analysis of Data
Profile of the Respondents

Table 1: Age and Gender Cross-tabulation					
			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Age	18-30	Count	30	48	78
		% within Gender	26.3%	41.4%	33.9%
	31-40	Count	44	40	84
		% within Gender	38.6%	34.5%	36.5%
	41-50	Count	23	20	43
		% within Gender	20.2%	17.2%	18.7%
	51-60	Count	14	7	21
		% within Gender	12.3%	6.0%	9.1%
	Above 60 Years	Count	3	1	4
		% within Gender	2.6%	0.9%	1.7%
Total		Count	114	116	230
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The table shows that maximum number of respondents (36.5%) were from the age group of 31 to 40 years followed by 33.9% of the respondents belonging to the age group of 18 to 30 years. Overall, 116 respondents were female whereas 114 the respondents were male. A very few number of respondents belonged to the age group of 60 years and above. This suggests that apparel purchases are not that popular among the people who are having ages 51 years and above.

Table 2: Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Masters and above	120	52.2	52.2	52.2
	Graduate	98	42.6	42.6	94.8
	10+2 and below	6	2.6	2.6	97.4
	Diploma/ Other	6	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that 94.8% of the respondents were graduates. Only 2.6% of the respondents were having an education of 10+2 and below.

Table 3: Most preferred brand for online purchases of apparels

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Amazon	35	15.2	15.2	15.2
	Flipkart	84	36.5	36.5	51.7
	Myntra	91	39.6	39.6	91.3
	Ajio	20	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

Flipkart and Myntra seem to be more popular as compared to Amazon and Ajio for the purpose of purchasing apparels. 36.5% of the respondents stated that the card is the most preferred Brand whereas 39.6% of the respondents stated that Myntra is the most preferred brand as far as their online apparel purchases are concerned.

Table 4: Online Shopping proficiency (Self Evaluation of the respondents)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Newbies	10	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Beginner	36	15.7	15.7	20.0
	Basic	46	20.0	20.0	40.0
	Intermediate	65	28.3	28.3	68.3
	Expert	73	31.7	31.7	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

For the purpose of the study, online shopping proficiency refers to the level of expertise that users have regarding the various issues that are related to online shopping. Experienced users can do online shopping more proficiently as they may know the different issues that can arise during the online shopping experience. Only 4.3% of the respondents were newbies and 15.7% of the respondents were beginners. However, 20% of the respondents expressed that they had basic knowledge of online shopping, 28.3% of the respondents expressed that they had intermediate proficiency and 31.7% of the respondents stated that they are experts as far as online shopping is concerned.

For the purpose of checking the internal consistency among the variables, the Cronbach's Alpha Value was calculated, and for all factors that have been considered in the model, the Value was above 0.7. For the purpose of testing the hypothesis, correlation analysis was used and the results were as follows.

Table 5: Correlations

		WEBSITE QUALITY	SOCIAL NETWORKING PRESENCE	PRIVACY	TECHNOLOGY IN PURSUASION	TRUST	PURCHASE INTENTION	BUYING BEHAVIOUR
WEBSITE QUALITY	Correlation	1	.242**	.286**	.418**	.248**	.245**	.465**
	Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	231	231	231	231	231	231	231
SOCIAL NETWORKING PRESENCE	Correlation	.242**	1	.403**	.402**	.443**	.454**	.547**
	Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	231	231	231	231	231	231	231
PRIVACY	Correlation	.286**	.403**	1	.476**	.329**	.483**	.619**
	Sig.	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	231	231	231	231	231	231	231
TECHNOLOGY IN PURSUASION	Correlation	.418**	.402**	.476**	1	.349**	.505**	.773**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	231	231	231	231	231	231	231
TRUST	Correlation	.248**	.443**	.329**	.349**	1	.364**	.472**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	231	231	231	231	231	231	231
PURCHASE INTENTION	Correlation	.245**	.454**	.483**	.505**	.364**	1	.610**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	231	231	231	231	231	231	231
BUYING BEHAVIOUR	Correlation	.465**	.547**	.619**	.773**	.472**	.610**	1
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	231	231	231	231	231	231	231

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above table it can be seen that

1. The website quality (WQ) is significantly positively correlated with trustworthiness (T) of a website.
2. Privacy (PRI) is significantly positively correlated with purchase intention (PI).
3. There is a significant positive correlation between Persuasion Technologies (PT) and the purchase intention (PT).
4. The social networking presence (SNP) of the website is positively correlated with the purchase intention (PI).
5. Trust (T) and Privacy (PRI) are significantly positively correlated with the buying behaviour.
6. Purchase intention (PI) and buying behaviour (BB) are positively correlated.

The model can be represented as follows:
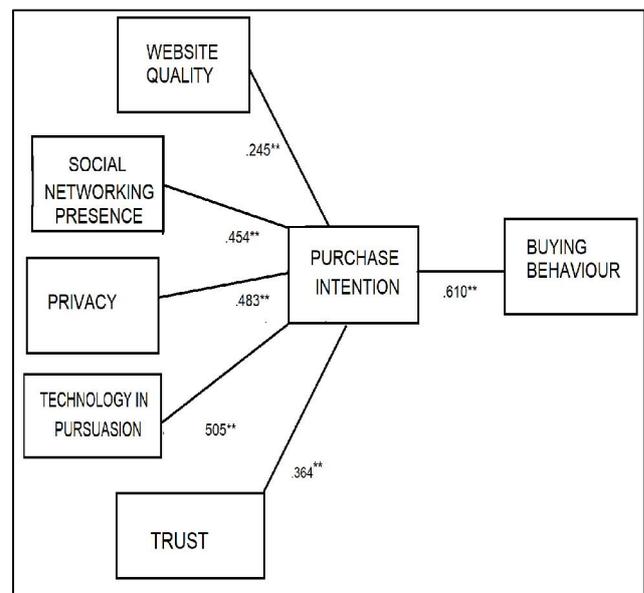
Figure 1: Correlation between Purchase intention (PI) and buying behaviour

Conclusion

The researchers have explained a model where building a new concept in the set of factors that are specifically applicable for the online apparel customers. Therefore, the study contributes category to the scientific work already done on the subject matter. The study shows that there are several factors that affect the purchase intention which are related to the various forces of strategies that are used by online retailers of apparels to persuade the customers to buy the product. The model shows that using technology in persuasion and having a higher social networking presence can affect the purchase intention of the website visitors to a considerable extent. The model also shows that various privacy issues, trust and overall website quality also have a major impact on the purchase intention of the buyers. In the end, the study also shows that the purchase intention of the buyers is highly positively correlated with the buying behaviour.

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