Cyber Culture and E-Shopping Behaviour of Millennial Generation in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) with Special reference to Big Five Personality Trait Theory – A case study

Dr. K. Vijaya Kumar
Department of Media and Communication
Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences
Dr Challa Ramakrishna
Chairman, Board of Studies
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
Andhra University
Dr. Challa Krishnaveer Abhishek
Dr. D. Bhanupriya
Dr. Bonda Ramakrishna

Introduction

Human culture is said to consist of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, works of art and other factors; and it also includes behaviours peculiar to mankind together with material objects that are found to be part of these behaviours. One of the classifications of human culture is that of primitive and non-urban culture. These cultures of societies are informed to be characterized by their small size and simple structure and by the absence of cities and towns. They are referred to people who live by foraging for wild food such as hunters, those who are found to maintain garden as horticulturalists and those who tend live-stock and peasant societies devoted to agriculture. In the present day scenario, such differences are diminishing due to the many technological and scientific developments. The impact of these developments has totally revolutionized the thought patterns and life styles of the human society which is reflected in the change of their basic concept of needs. The concept of gratifying the biological needs have been altered to seeking higher order needs. Thus we witness in the twenty first century that humankind has journeyed a long evolutionary path from the stone-age to the internet-age.

Internet age in turn has resulted in the birth of various cultures among people and society all over the world. One common culture that currently exists across the earth is the cyber culture. Hence this research study done among the millennial generation studying in degree and post graduate level aims to ascertain their online shopping behaviour while they spend most of the time on the internet.

According to UCLA Center for Communication Policy (2001), online shopping has turned to be the third most sought out activity on the internet, followed by e-mail communication and web browsing. Online shopping is becoming more popular than seeking entertainment, information and news among people who are online. During the recently concluded marketing symposium conducted by Gartner Inc that took place virtually in America from December 1 to 3 2020, Gartner analysts said that marketing leaders should consider like consumer values and behaviour during the current pandemic situation. Many delegates observed that companies should make suitable changes with regard to modes of marketing and communications from now on to attract the online shoppers.

"In 2020, marketers have been tasked with a relentless cycle of reassessments due to the global pandemic," said Kate Muhl, vice president analyst in the Gartner Marketing practice. "Already in a fragile and uncertain place, they must pause, yet again, to take note of the key shifts in consumer values over the last year and what those shifts mean for their decision-making in 2021."

This study uses the Big Five Personality theory propounded by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa. Three factors namely Openness, Conscientiousness and Extroversion were selected among the five existing factors in the big five personality theory. The respondents were subjected to answer the structured questionnaire prepared by the researcher and the data was analysed using the factor analysis method.

Openness

People with personality trait quality "Openness" possess a nature for appreciating art, value emotion, look for adventure, have strange ideas, curious and seek new experiences. People who are open to experience are curious with sharp mind, open to emotion, sensitive to beauty and willing to try new things. They tend to be, when compared to closed people, more creative and more aware of their feelings. They are also more likely to hold unconventional beliefs.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement against measures or outside expectations. It is related to the way in which people control, regulate, and direct their impulses. High scores on conscientiousness indicate a preference for planned rather than spontaneous behavior. The average level of conscientiousness rises among young adults and then declines among older adults.

Extroversion

Extroversion is characterized by breadth of activities (as opposed to depth), assurgency from external activity/situations, and energy creation from external means. The trait is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world. Extroverts enjoy interacting with people, and are often perceived as full of energy. They tend to be enthusiastic, action-oriented individuals. They possess high group visibility, like to talk, and assert themselves.
Introverts have lower social engagement and energy levels than extroverts. They tend to seem quiet, low-key, deliberate, and less involved in the social world. Their lack of social involvement should not be interpreted as shyness or depression; instead they are more independent of their social world than extraverts. Introverts need less stimulation than extroverts and more time

alone. This does not mean that they are unfriendly or antisocial; rather, they are reserved in social situations.

Review of Literature

Online shopping is one of the commonly found activities of human behaviour in the current times. How did this trend set in? Many are the causes identified. Rajalakshmi (2015) says "India is witnessing an unprecedented economic boon and there has been an exponential rise in consumer spending in recent years. At the same time more and more consumers are looking for easy ways to shop due to time constraint, the panacea is online shopping." In this regard the scope for the expansion and development of the system of online marketing is expected to be remarkable. According to Anandan, (The Economic Times, 28th Jan 2013), Google India MD & VP, growth of online shopping could come from outside of the top eight cities in India as was evident in the 'Great Online Shopping Festival' which saw over 51% of traffic from nonmetros. With rising Internet penetration and adoption of mobile devices across the country, companies selling products and services through websites are looking at smaller cities for expanding business. Further it is mentioned that big brands don't find it viable to open shop in small towns and e-commerce is the perfect route to deliver their products to those who can afford from non-metros. (PTI February 5th 2012).

In the area of research one of the subjects that is gaining momentum in the present day context is with reference to online shopping behaviour. The fundamental question has to be answered as to why people resort to online business transaction. Various studies have been taken up by professionals, business concerns, public and private organizations, educational institutions, and the studies have been conducted on multifarious issues ranging from traditional shopping, online marketers, consumers and related factors.

Various interpretations are provided by researchers in this regard. Some of the reasons are envisaged in the following opinions.

For business promoters "Online marketing is an opportunity to stay in contact with their consumers, provide satisfaction and hold loyalty; besides, opportunity in online shopping is huge because of a large population base, changing consumer lifestyle and lack of infrastructure for bigger brick and mortar stores." The impact of online marketing is witnessed to create an impact not only nationally, but this culture of online shopping is found to prevail universally. It is mentioned that online shopping has indeed made large strides in the global market and its level of growth is realized in the report by The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) which states "online shopping currently affecting $30 billion of urban consumer spending, is expected to greatly accelerate over the next four years as the number of internet users in India is expected to nearly triple from 125 million in 2011 to 330 million by 2016" (The Times Of India, April 26th 2013)'.

Researcher's findings with relation to decision-making

According to Haubli and Trifts (2000) potential consumers appear to use a two stage process in reaching purchase decisions. Initially, consumers typically screen a large set of products in order to identify a subset of promising alternatives that appears to meet their needs. They then evaluate the subset to greater depth, performing relative comparisons across products based on some desirable attributes and make a decision. From the researcher's observations it is to be added that while a purchase is made, reflections are made by the purchaser on two aspects namely, 1. The criteria of the level of intimacy of the person for whom the purchase is intended, and 2. Nature of the cause for expense: whether the expense incurred while purchase is for a personal cause or a social cause. It is observed that these two aspects are debated by the purchaser with reference to the cost factor and it is noticed by the researcher that, when a purchase is done for a close associate and a close friend or relative, the money value is more and the cost is overlooked. Similarly when the

purchase is for the self, the amount of expense is unconditionally met whereas in the case of expense incurred for a general welfare or meant for a group, the cost is calculated and minimized. Hence it can be stated that two behavioural traits as unconditional behaviour and restricted behaviour in the expense mode, in relation to the intimacy level and in accordance with the nature of the cause of expense are involved in decision making. (Personal communication). This above study that pertains to the three factors namely Openness, Conscientiousness and Extroversion reveals through data analysis that the first factor has greater influence on making buying decisions followed by Conscientiousness and Extroversion.

Conclusion:

The indispensability of such studies on cyber culture and psychogenic needs of the consumers and marketers' concepts and applications have become the prime study for the researchers as well as focal areas for the development of marketing research and communication. Research findings also signify its importance for the commercial world which is made emphatic in the following expressions that the continuous growth of online marketing has stimulated great interest in studying online consumer behaviour. Given the significant growth in online shopping, better understanding of consumers allows better marketing strategies to be designed. In spite of the growing shopping mall culture in the country, more and more net savvy Indians are now shifting towards online shopping. The exponential increase in online shopping and the fast rate of growth in the number of retailers selling online have created an extremely competitive market place. Further emphasis says that in this scenario, it becomes essential for online marketers to understand the factors affecting online Indian buyer to further develop their marketing strategies to convert potential consumers into active ones, while retaining existing online shoppers.

Thus the knowledge of online consumer behaviour is a vital component in not only stabilizing the business but it is also a determiner of the economic progress. The intimation on the economic progress will enable to decipher the financial conditions in terms of its growth or fall and assist to contemplate on the measures to be followed for modifications in order to develop the global economic standards.

As concluding remarks it is noteworthy to record the observations of the personality theorists who observe that understanding the human mind and determining the human behaviour cannot be totally claimed on the basis of the theories of personality. They specify that the studies have not reached finality as they declare that the formal course work in that field may be ending, but the attempt to understand personality is not. They add that although it is true that enormous progress has been made in charting personality and dealing the factors that shape it, the challenge of the field remain active and dynamic. They contend that perhaps the question "what is personality"; is the most important of all, for it reflects the attempt to understand ourselves.

Selected Bibliography

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