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Topic of Research: Effect of eWOM on Brand Equity and Purchase Intention: An Empirical Study of Apparel Brands

Findings

Since internet usage has become so widespread, consumers can freely share their post-purchase online reviews about any products or services due to the exponential rise of social media and the use of applications on smart devices. Additionally, it is evident that online consumer feedback has an impact on consumers' purchasing decisions, from the gathering of information to post-purchase behaviour, such as online comments. Through the lens of Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), this study explores how e-WOM or online reviews influence consumers' purchase decisions towards apparel brands. The proposed model encompasses the elements of brand equity and examines the impact of brand equity on an individual's purchase behaviour on social media. It also investigates how marketers and customers can collaborate to create more value by developing superior products through ongoing feedback via e-WOM.

The study revealed valuable findings regarding the significance of customer engagement on online platforms, specifically in the context of apparel brands. This study not only adds to the existing body of research on e-WOM but also advances the understanding of brand equity by examining its relationship with e-WOM and purchase intention, which has not been previously studied in the Indian context. Along with the dimensions of brand equity, the impact of e-WOM is also reflected in the purchase decisions of consumers who are scattered over different parts of India. As a matter of fact, the present study has provided relevant input to the marketers about the positive impact of user-generated e-WOM on social networking sites and the importance of effectively managing it. As such, marketers should prioritize consumer advocacy and strive to offer relevant and detailed information to customers in order to encourage positive e-WOM, which will foster a favourable attitude towards their brands.

Besides, this study will also benefit manufacturers and marketers by identifying key brand dimensions to focus on and in forming strategies for effective e-WOM management ultimately enhancing brand strategies in the Indian apparel industry, which caters to a diverse population. The shift in buying pattern is a matter of concern, as Indian consumers, previously considered offline buyers, are increasingly preferencing to purchase online.