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Assessing the Impact of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brands Switching

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Abstract: *The increasing amount of electronic word of mouth has significantly affected how consumers purchase. Customer behaviour known as "brand switching" gives them the opinion to select a product or service that best suits their needs. Individuals who are dynamic and relate to social media are free to comment on a good or service. With the rise of social commerce, has become an essential reference for users to make purchase decisions. A survey was conducted on a general audience, including both males and females, by using a questionnaire technique. A total of 199 respondents filled out the questionnaire. The result indicates that only one independent variable has been proved acceptable under the assumption: the other variables, brand image, brand attachment, and environmental effect comparative advertisement approved by the analysis. The study proves that electronic word of mouth plays a vital role in brand switching. Individuals who are dynamic and relate to the social network.*

Key Words: Brands Switching, Social Media, Electronic Word of Mouth

Introduction

Pakistani fashion reflects the nation's culture, demographics, and regional culture. Each region's and culture's attire reflects the local climate, way of life, and specific fashion, giving it a distinct identity from other civilizations. This study aims to know about factors of brand switching due to comparative advertisement impact on consumers' purchase intentions. Consumption patterns reflect the desire to own specific brands as a means of achieving status and self-actualization.

Literature Review

Language or vocalization is not always necessary for communication. It can be expressed through body language and

gestures like eye contact. That demonstrates that communication is the verbal or nonverbal exchange of information and knowledge between one person and another. Many brands use social media to connect with consumers. When a product is marketed, potential customers interpret the message, customers then respond with their comments. This response may be a result of a previous purchase, a subsequent purchase, or just a decision not to buy the item. the knowledge of the customer, the demand for the product, brand loyalty, friends and family, and electronic word of mouth all have an impact on the entire process, including the interpretation of the message. Word of mouth is communicating information among people about the performance of the product. Electronic word of mouth is considered to be

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the most common form of communication. For example, if the user who posted it has given permission, we are able to read what our friends' friends write on our friends' Facebook walls. This is how we and our friend's friend communicate in an indirect manner. There has been an increase in interest in learning how online word-of-mouth (EWOM) is generated and how it affects consumers' purchase decisions. A significant method of customer connection online is the electronic word of mouth. Existing searches could not account for and assess the purchases brought about by electronic word of mouth. It is a technique of marketing that is getting more and more significant.

Fulfilment (O' Cass and Siahtiri, 2013) This paper helps explain the actions of brand switching in the Pakistani community and illustrates the variables that significantly affect customer engagement in fashion clothing. Consumer makes their purchase decision according to their feasibility, and they are more conscious before making any shopping decision. Everyone's effort is to look better and more attractive. Lower middle class and unemployed people believe that buying high-end brands can improve their standards (Saeed et al. 2013). Further, he explains that although they cannot afford that brand, they do it to satisfy their needs and self-esteem and to satisfy their social demand. Previous studies show that customers prefer brands because of climate and social patterns. However, the issue is how brands can persuade the customer to purchase the product of those specific brands, again and again, taking into account various social and economic problems to avoid brand switching. Social media and TV channels also play a vital role in attracting customers and consumers to buy again through advertising through celebrity endorsement. After seeing their favourite celebrity advertising any product, people prefer to buy that. Any number of factors may cause brand switching. These factors are not limited to a lower price, negative experiences with the first purchase, or better positioning of another brand in the market. However, it occurs most frequently when there is low

brand awareness since consumers rarely notice quantitative differences between products. Brand recognition increases daily, so new brands and their competitor brands try different strategies to hold their loyal customers. Brand loyalty is related to brand trust. Loyalty helps the business achieve sustainable competitive advantages. One interesting issue is why customers buy certain branded products and why they choose to switch away from a preferred choice. It has been acknowledged that objects do not represent a purpose or biological role in optimizing usefulness solely. Therefore, academic researchers and marketing professionals should not approach products and brands from a solely practical point of view. Brand switching motivations are essential in brand switching, mainly for marketing managers due to the cost of acquiring new consumers, negative word of mouth, or decreases in market share. Word of mouth is the ability of online users to share views and experiences about a brand or product with others outside their immediate social networks.

Human psychology causes consumers to purchase something when they read positive reviews, but they will switch brands if they only hear terrible things about it. When companies allow their customers to focus more on the cognitive dimensions by providing personalized products or services, the result will increase the practical dimensions. It is reasonable to infer that demographic features are related to brand switching and that lifestyle also affects consumer behaviour as an aspect of segmentation. The study discusses the literature review on how long-term customers can be sustained through advertisement strategies. The literature discusses Clothing and Fashion. Choice and Demand, customer satisfaction, comparative advertisement, and their impact led customers to switch brands. Fashion is all about clothing and accessories to show something different from others.

Problem Statement

Every five years, half of all businesses lose their customers, but most managers fail to analyze the reality behind customers left (Shukla, [2009](#)). The above literature shows that in the context of loyalty and satisfaction, the main problem lies in the switching factors of brands, including the latest trends and styles, cheap items, sales and promotions, poor quality or services and inflations, etc. The factors behind consumer brand switching also include negative experiences of consumers due to poor product quality or services (Shujaat et al., [2015](#)). Inflation is also a big problem behind brand switching. The Pakistani inflation rate in the clothing sector is (9.18 per cent vs. 8.68 per cent) and consumer prices are increased by 1.0 per cent every month.

Research Limitation

The research investigates inflation's impact on consumers, national brands, and the fashion industry. Due to the target group, this research's extendibility to international brands and other cities may be limited.

Aims and Objectives

This paper started with the aim to study the Pakistani fashion clothing industry with regards to brand switching behaviour of people living specifically in Hyderabad, Sindh region of Pakistan. In order to investigate the brand-switching behaviour of the people of Hyderabad, the author integrated five predictors, i.e., brand image, brand attachment, word of mouth, environment effect, and comparative advertisement

Research Methodology

Research Methodology adopts the mixed method approach to assess the reasons among the local public that at what capacity the comparative advertisement impacts their shopping behaviour and switching brands activity. The research will be done through a Likert scale Questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire was distributed among the youngsters that are aware of the brands. We chose the young generation as the respondent in this analysis, distinctive as they have a unique attitude toward marque. The

modules used in the questionnaire were ratified through a preceding study. Two halves of the questionnaire consisted of general demographic inquiries, and more were related to the research's varying. Overall, 200 applicants comprised 34.7% of males and 65.3% females. Most of the respondents were undergraduate students. SPSS and MS Excel are used to analyze data.

Data Analysis and Elucidation

Clothing and Fashion

Cheap fashion is introduced as fast fashion. Fast fashion clothes are not durable, but they fulfil the fashion requirement of those conscious consumers. The latter buy the cloth for a short consumption as customers buy them at a low price to fulfil their fashion desires. After a few washes, customers throw them in the clothing bin, and companies can recycle them again. It also reduces manufacturing costs (Cline, [2013](#)). However, these clothes are not durable but are cost-efficient for both companies and consumers in countries like Pakistan, where consumers nowadays suffer from high prices and taxation (Naseem et al., [2019](#)). Fast fashion production focuses on time-based products, while slow fashion focuses on quality-based products (Fletcher, [2008](#)). Manufacturing cost increases when the industry focuses on quality (Giroux, [2006](#)). Fast fashion is also the best philosophy for companies for rapid production with a low manufacturing cost and affordable prices for the consumer (Joy et al., [2012](#)). Cline ([2013](#)) describes consumers as frenzied shoppers, those who are attempting to find clothing at a discount price at the expense of fabric, fit, and quality (Saeed et al., [2013](#)) state that the lower middle class and unemployed are the targets of complexity because they believe that by buying a good brand, they may improve their standards. Despite the fact that these brands are not in their array. Social degradation is the most vicious issue for the nation of Pakistan. According to Cline ([2013](#)), all facets of the apparel industry have been impacted by this consumption habit. Some consumers select quantity over quality. However, consumers cannot compromise on trends.

Further, Cline (2013) suggests we revise clothing consumption wearables and expectations of the current generation's consumption patterns. Nowadays, if a brand does not fulfil its social responsibility, it may reduce its sales (Saeed et al., 2013). People change their selection of favourite brands if the price goes arises. When they purchase, they consider the price and buy according to their affordability (Cline, 2013).

Brands Switching

According to (Veloutsou et al., 2013), the brand is defined as "the acknowledgement to provide emotional benefits to the customer that provide the joyous feeling when consumer use their product, the customer also buys the brand to enhance their positive sense of self-esteem, that largely depends on customers behaviours and attitude. It is well known that the cost of acquiring a new customer is higher than that of maintaining existing ones. Compared with brand loyalty motives, many uncertainties are found in customer behaviours, such as variety seeking, resistance, happiness, or dissatisfaction. Other factors, such as sales, advertisements, word of mouth, and friends' gifts, influence variety-seeking behaviour. For instance, one might think a satisfied consumer remains loyal to a brand, and the dissatisfied consumer switches the brand. This satisfaction and dissatisfaction might be from the quality side or pricing strategies. Once the customer is attracted to a competitive product through a better price offer or shelf location, he/she will prefer to turn to the more appealing brand. It does not seem fair to be loyal to a particular brand as the competition will always find a way to beat the current deal and introduce new, improved, cheaper goods with more advantages that better meet customers' needs. Perceived quality is also highly subjective in how consumers judge the product's overall superiority. For example, in a competitive environment, it is unclear whether service quality impacts customer-based factors to switch brands. Why do customers show this tendency to switch, and which factors alternate the tendency to switch?

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an ultimate objective of companies worldwide, which is the psychological response of customers generated from the positive examination of consumption results connected with customers' expectations (Oh, 1999). Lack of customer satisfaction is the core reason for customers' brand switching and disloyalty. Several studies have proved the direct and positive connection between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Anderson & Mittal, 2000). Customer loyalty and not switching to other brands refers to buying a particular brand without any doubt willingly and repeatedly, and customer satisfaction is the foremost determinant of customer loyalty that stops them from switching brands. Literature shows several causes of customer dissatisfaction, such as material quality, fluctuation, embroidery, product performance, durability, etc. Customers make judgments by comparing their expectations with perceived brand performance, and satisfaction enhances when the customer finds perceived performance more excellent than initial expectation (Shukla, 2009).

Last but not least, some environmental factors, including internal and external factors, also influence the switching behaviour of customers. Internal factors are mainly a company's strengths that determine how a particular firm will move forward and respond to external threats and opportunities. In contrast, external factors are the factors outside of the firm and not in the control of a firm. Literature shows several studies proving environmental factors' negative/positive influence on brand-switching behaviour. Saeed et al. (2011) have proved no significant influence of the environment on the switching behaviour of the customers from Sahiwal (Saeed et al., 2011). The current study also revealed that the environment does not significantly influence customer switching behaviour. Therefore, brand managers need not consider environmental effects when the objective is to enhance brand loyalty and customer retention.

Comparative Advertisements

Businesses globally lose half of their customers every five years, but most managers fail to analyze the actuality of customers left (Shukla, 2009). One of the main problems lies in the contributing factors of brand switching, including comparative advertisements working under the factors of the latest trend and styles, cheap items, sales and promotions, better quality or services, etc. comparative advertising is a potential strategy because according to studies it encourages more in-depth discussion of the commercial than non-competitive advertising as it dramatically affects the customers buying power.

Different studies have shown that comparative ads are typically more attentive and more nostalgic than non-comparative advertising when focus and memory are used as measures of ad effectiveness. Comparison advertisements, whether convincing or informative, aim to reduce the value of competing brands compared to the mark on the market; several comparative formats are used to express an argument, direct comparisons, for instance, similarities made inadvertently or comparisons of extensive supremacy.

The Hierarchy of the Comparative Advertising Effects model is based on three main goals cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive function of the ads is based on facts and knowledge to raise consumer awareness of the brand. The valuable feature generates a correlation and inclination (favourable attitudes) towards the brand. However, the conative role of the advertisement triggers customers' appetites and ultimately leads them to buy the brand. Furthermore, the researcher discussed it consumers would attend to comparative ads more than non-competitive ads. This is because comparative advertising aims to provide new and different information from non-comparative ads. While some researchers say, comparative ads produce more counterarguments than non-comparative ads and are perceived as less credible. Consumers can interpret a comparative ad as a brand assault, leading

them to argue against the message or take the focus away from the source. Comparative adverts enable consumers to distinguish between brands. Further that a more significant relationship exists between the attitude toward a supported brand and the decision to buy comparative advertising than non-comparative ads. Comparative ads can efficiently control the switching ratio and the brand against inspired new clients.

(Williams et al., 2013) describe the pros and cons of comparative advertisement. Comparative advertising Reduces market uncertainty about the relevant features and encourages comparison shopping. It may also generate brand name confusion on the part of the audience or decrease rather than increase the sponsoring brand's reputation and popularity, or Customers may perceive the ad as bad manners and switch the brand.

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Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)

The growing use of electronic word-of-mouth EWOM has significantly impacted how consumers choose products to buy. Although empirical research has shown that EWOM impacts sales, they disagree on the online services, goods, and EWOM indicators that help to reduce this effect. EWOM

generally has a positive correlation with sales, although the success of EWOM varies depending on the platform, the product, and the metric. In contrast, these homophily details do not affect the success of EWOM for e-commerce platforms. For instance, the effectiveness of EWOM on social media platforms is more robust when EWOM receivers can judge their similarity to EWOM senders. However, the quality of the information shared by EWOM on all significant platforms varies, negatively impacting the platform's reputation and user trust in EWOM. Therefore, this study adds the social psychological distance of consumers to examine the effects of WOM on trust and its additional influence on purchase intentions from the standpoint of information quality. . EWOM is generally measured to be one of the main variables affecting consumer behaviour. With the introduction of online platforms, this kind of communication has grown in significance, making it one of the most important sources of information on the internet.

Consumers' perceptions of a brand are built on their memories and are reflected in brand associations. Brand switching is a complex and complex challenge for the continuous development of service

providers. According to this brand, customers must be happy with them and maintain a positive perception in their minds that creates a positive image for customers. Their loyalty stays with them, and they become their loyal buyers. This shows that brand image is essential for maintaining brand loyalty. When brand loyalty is compromised, brand switching occurs. When a customer refuses to use any other brands and sticks with a particular brand for years. It may be concluded that brand switching is a psychological action taken by customers who change from one brand to another based on how they perceive the good or service, which influences their decision to buy it. Price, customer satisfaction, service quality, inconvenience, poor service, and ease of switching influence brand loyalty.

Comparative Advertisement in Pakistan Context

The study discusses the literature review on achieving, and how long-term customers can be sustained through advertisement strategies, the literature discusses Clothing and Fashion, Choice and Demand, customer satisfaction, comparative advertisement, and its impact that leads the customers to brands switching.

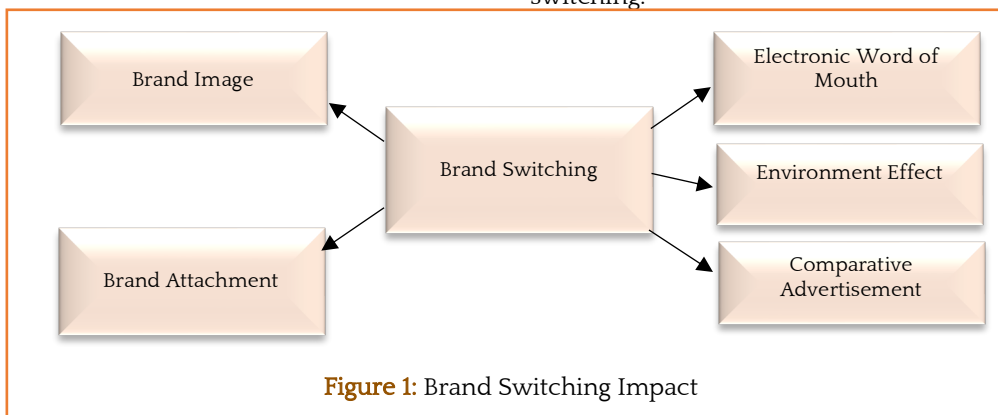


Figure 1: Brand Switching Impact

Readings and Findings

Following are the results and findings of the research; how electronic word of mouth may affect the user/buyer. A questionnaire survey has been taken with around 200 respondents, and only 179 responded back.

The effective data is given below:

Awareness Among People

The below charts show the awareness ratio among people.

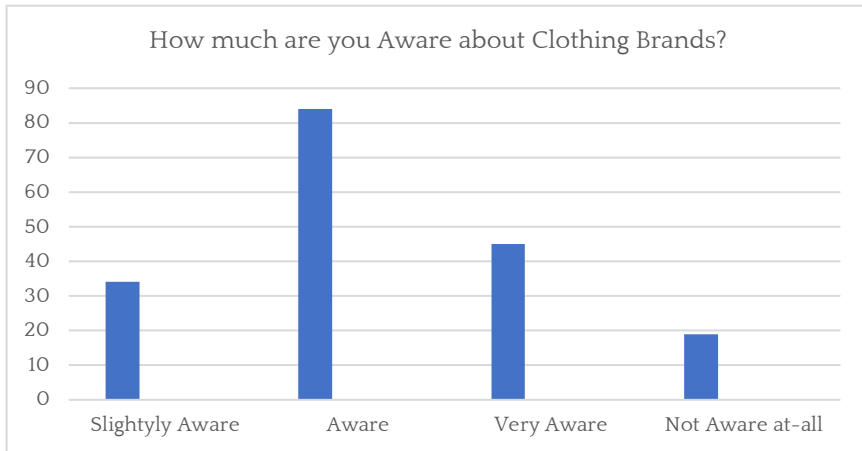


Chart 1: Brands Awareness

Whereas charting no. 01 shows only 34% of respondents are slightly aware of clothing brands, 84% are aware of clothing brands while 45% of respondents are very aware of

clothing brands, and the remaining 16% are unaware.

The below chart shows the involvement and concerns of people for the brand as a priority.

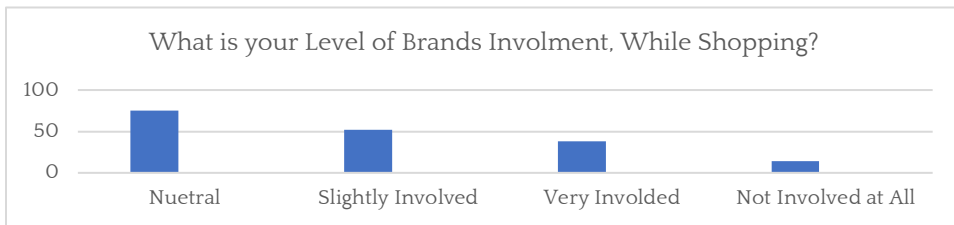


Chart 2: Brands Selection

Chart no. 02 shows that the key finding as 75% of respondents has a neutral level of brand involvement, demonstrating the relatively weak brand attachment or relationship. While shopping, 52% have involvement

slightly while 38% are very involved, and 14% are not involved at all involvement is frequently described as such prepurchase actions.

Quality Concerns Among People

The Following Chart shows the Product Quality Consideration While Buying the Product.

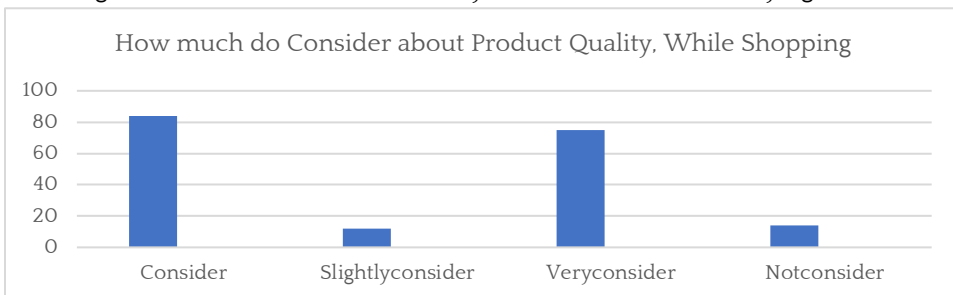
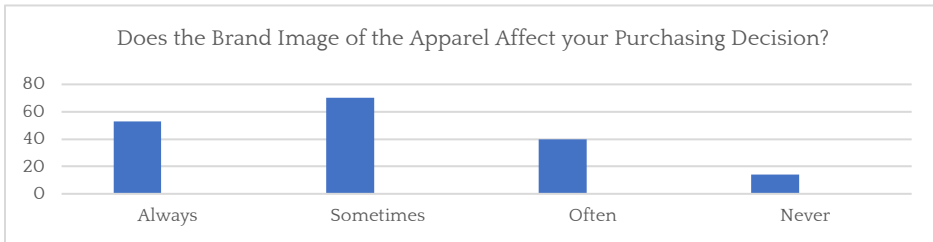


Chart 3: Product Quality

Chart no. 03 shows that 80% of respondents consider the product quality while shopping, 75% of respondents very consider the product quality while 10% slightly consider

Where the below chart shows the brand image apparel effect on user decision-making;



and the remaining 10% do not consider the product quality at all.

Chart 4: Impact on Purchasing

Chart no. 04 shows It shows, 53% of respondents said that the brand image of apparel always affects their purchasing decision, 70% of them sometimes get affected

while 40% of respondents are often affected, and the remaining 16% of respondents said that brand image of apparel never affected their purchasing decision.

Societal Effects on User

Cultural and Societal Effects of User Decision May also Put Deep Concerns among People/users, and the Findings Shows as;

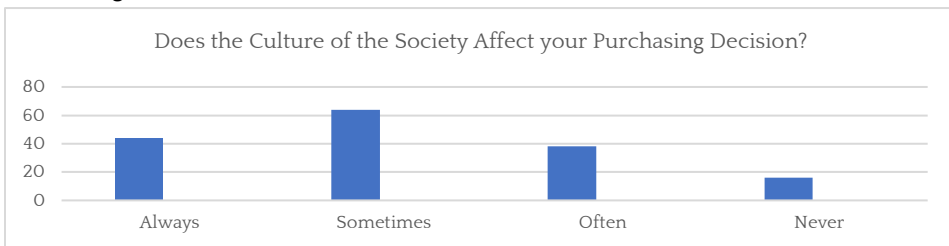


Chart: 5 Societal Impact

Chart no. 05 shows Only 38% of respondents said that their purchasing decision is often affected by society's culture. In comparison, 64% said that their purchasing decisions are sometimes affected by society's culture. On the other hand, 44% of respondents said they are always affected, and the remaining 33% said that they never get affected by the culture

of the society in their purchasing decision. This shows that people occasionally change their brand as a result of social and cultural aspects of Pakistani society.

Building an image to belong to any class/status among people is one kind of influential factor, its responses are as under;

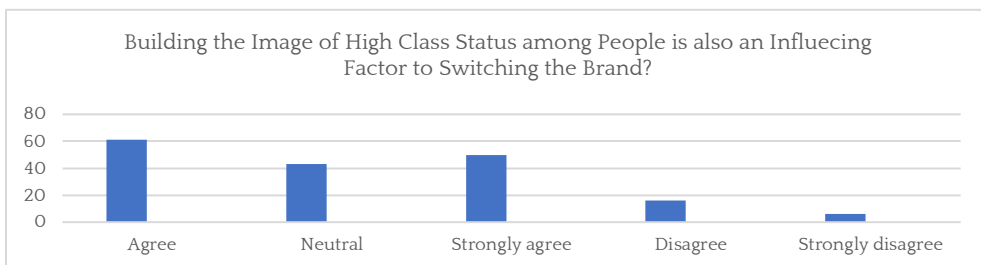


Chart 6: Representation

Chart no. 06 shows 61% of respondents agreed that building an image of high-class status among people is also an influencing factor to switch the brand, 43% of them gave a neutral response while 50% of them

strongly agreed on this point, 19% of respondents disagreed on this and remaining 6% respondents strongly disagreed that building high-class status among people is an influencing factor in switching the brand

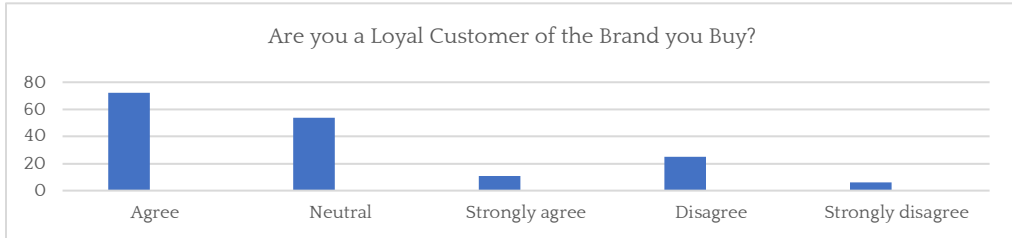


Chart 7: Loyal Customer

Chart no. 07 shows 72% of respondents agreed that they are loyal customers of the brand they buy, 64% neutral response, and 11% disagreed that they are not loyal customers of the brand they buy. In comparison, 26% of respondents strongly

agreed that they are loyal customers, and the remaining 6% strongly disagreed.

Whereas the cellular telephone also plays an important role to users, and responses are as under.

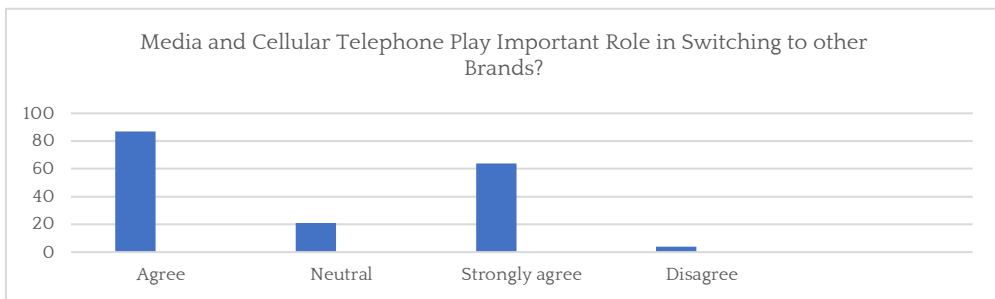


Chart 8: Cellular Telephone

Chart no. 08 shows, 64% of respondents strongly agreed that media and cellular telephones play an essential role in switching to the other brand, 87% of them just agreed

while 24% of them gave a neutral response, and the remaining 4% said that media and cellular telephones play not an essential role in switching to another brand.

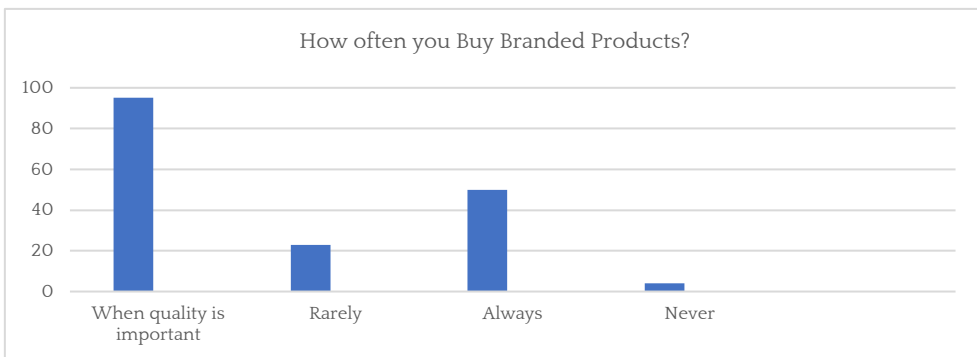


Chart 9: Buying Impact

Chart no. 09 shows, 96% of respondents said that they only buy branded products only when quality is essential, 23% of respondents rarely buy branded products while 56% of

them always buy branded products remaining 4% of respondents never buy branded products.

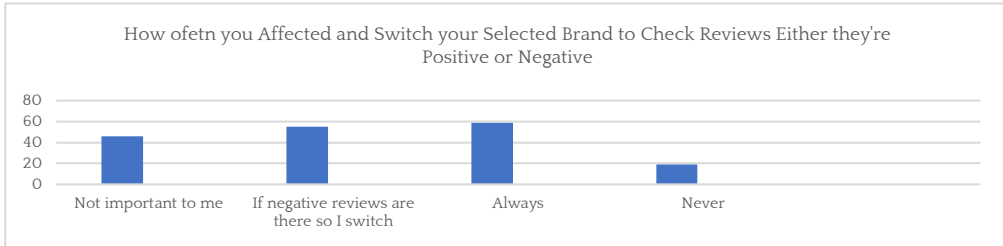


Chart 10: Brand Switching

Chart no. 10 shows, 46% of respondents said that checking positive or negative reviews of their selected brand is not essential, while 59% are continuously affected by their positive or negative reviews. That shows that positive and negative reviews from social media play an important role in creating

brand-switching behaviour in Hyderabad society. On the other hand, 55% of respondents, after checking negative reviews, switch to another brand, and the remaining 19% are never affected by positive or negative reviews of their selected brand.

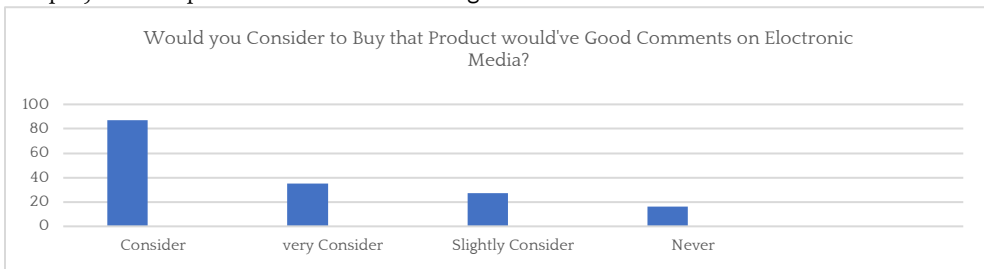


Chart 11: Electronic Media

Chart no. 11 shows, 87% of respondents said that they would consider buying a product that has excellent comments on electronic media the results show Electronic Word of Mouth influence the consumers' brand perception, 39% of them said that they would

highly consider products having good comments on electronic media, while 37% of them said that they would slightly consider and rest 16% will not consider any good comment before buying that product.

Impact of Advertisement

The advertisement also has an impact on user decision-making:

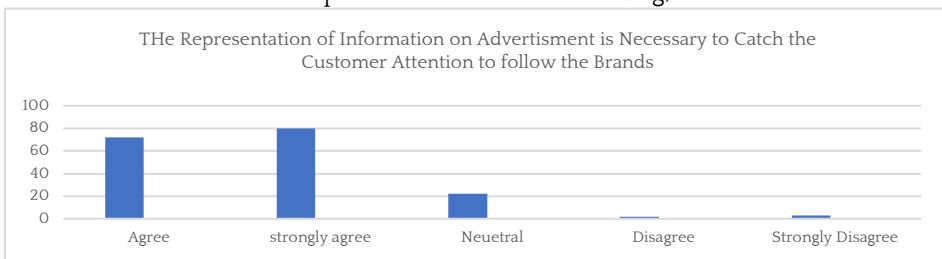


Chart 12: Customer Attraction

Chart no. 12 shows, that 80% of respondents strongly agreed that the representation of information in advertisements is necessary to catch the customer's attention to follow the brand, 72% of them just agreed on this point while 22% of them gave a neutral response on the other hand 3% of respondents strongly

disagreed and 2% disagreed that representation of information on advertisement is necessary for grabbing customers attraction towards the brand

The involvement of television has a direct impact on the user.

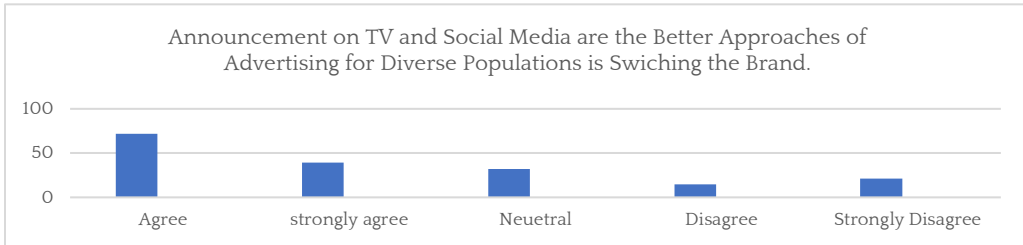


Chart 13: Advertisement

Chart no. 13 shows as, 72% of respondents agreed that announcements on TV and social media are better approaches to an advertisement for a diverse population in switching the brand that shows various ways in which people communicate information about brand quality and how this influences

their decision to switch brand, while 39% strongly disagreed on this point, 32% gave neutral responses and 15% disagreed, and the remaining 21% strongly agreed that advertisement on TV and social media are better resources for the population to switch brand.

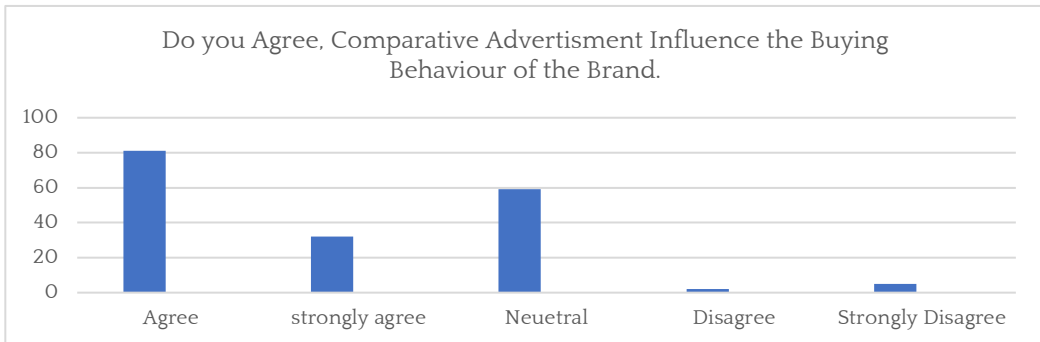


Chart 14: Comparative Advertisement

Chart no. 14 shows, 81% of respondents agreed that comparative advertisement influences the buying behaviour of a brand, and 59% gave a neutral response on this. In

comparison, 32% strongly agreed on this point, 5% disagreed that comparative advertisement does not influence the buying behaviour of brand, and 2% disagreed.

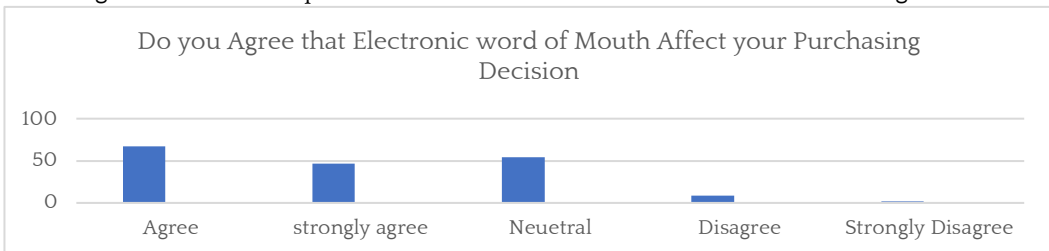


Chart 15: Electronic Word of Mouth

Chart no. 15 shows, 67% of respondents agreed that electronic word of mouth would affect their purchasing decision that shows that electronic word of mouth has a greater impact on Pakistani women's purchasing decisions than recommendations from relatives and friends, 47% of them strongly agreed while 54% gave a neutral response, 2% of them strongly disagreed on this point, and the remaining 9% disagreed.

Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the brand-switching behaviour of the people living in Hyderabad city of Sindh and to determine the factors affecting brand-switching behaviour. The descriptive study focused on Pakistan's fashion industry and conducted survey research in the targeted market segment. It was a confidential survey requiring person-to-person visits with the respondents. The survey was directed through a survey questionnaire divided into three sections, i.e., demographical information, influencing factors on shopping, and brand-switching behaviour.

The study delivered results very close to reality and expectations and paralleled the literature. The study revealed the influence of different proposed factors on customer brand-switching behaviour in Hyderabad city of Sindh. The results are pretty much like the literature available in the context of brand-switching behavioural analysis. However, the study contributed to the literature effectively and provided the results, ensuring the accuracy of other studies available. In general, the current study contributes to the main areas of knowledge related to buying behaviour and buying decision process, i.e., proved the influence of contextual factors on brand switching behaviour and brand loyalty and revealed the positive/negative influence of brand image, brand attachment, word of mouth, environment. In comparison to taking advice from friends, family and social media, users are more flexible in taking online opinions regarding clothes, when compared there is a significant difference in the proportion of consumers that rely on online recommendations for their purchasing decisions, the validity of an opinion is very important especially when it involves spending money.

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