

ONLINE SELLING: EFFICACY, SELLERS' MARKETING STRATEGIES, AND CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOR**Jayram B. Javier**Capiz State University, roxas@capsu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

The advent of online selling in Capiz has revolutionized the operations of local businesses by offering a platform to exhibit products to the global market, thereby promoting economic development in the province. This research study sought to determine the effectiveness of online selling, the marketing methods employed by sellers, and the buying behavior of consumers. This study used a descriptive correlational research design to gather information. The study included a total of 110 online consumers and 15 online sellers in the province of Capiz. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. A researcher-made survey questionnaire and interview guide were used in this study. The data were analyzed and interpreted using the percentage, mean, and Pearson r. The findings of the study showed that the level of efficacy of online selling as a whole and in terms of accessibility, convenience, price, product selection, and customer reviews was very effective. Moreover, the level of the sellers' marketing strategies was very effective. However, the overall level of consumers' buying behavior was moderately good. Consequently, when categorized according to socio-demographic profile namely, age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and monthly income, consumers' buying behavior was average. Lastly, a low relationship but significant was observed between the efficacy of online selling and consumers' buying behavior.

Keywords: Online Selling, Efficacy, Consumer Buying Behavior, Marketing Strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

The number of people going online in the Philippines has gone up quite a lot in recent years and so has use of smartphones which has also led to an expansion of activities such as e-commerce. As per Statista (2021), the population of internet shoppers in the Philippines will be 53.8 million by 2025, showing the significance of online commerce for Philippine businesses. The face of traditional retailing is being changed radically by e-commerce. By 2020, global e-commerce sales grew to \$4.28 trillion with expectations that they will continue growing further. This rapid increase can be attributed to many factors including more internet usage, better availability of digital gadgets and the ease and convenience associated with it among others.

Various factors influence the effectiveness of online selling. The design of a website and the user experience it provides are essential factors in both attracting and maintaining online customers (Gupta et al., 2019). Intuitive navigation, comprehensive product information, and safe payment choices are key factors that enhance the user experience, resulting in higher sales and greater customer satisfaction.

Moreover, the utilization of personalized marketing strategies has demonstrated to improve the efficiency of online sales. By tailoring product recommendations, providing customized promotions, and

employing targeted advertising, it is feasible to have a substantial impact on customer purchasing behavior and increase conversion rates (Li et al., 2020).

Online selling has significantly influenced consumer behavior. It has changed how consumers search for and evaluate products, make purchase decisions, and interact with brands. The ability to read product reviews, compare prices, and access a wide range of options has empowered consumers, making them more informed and demanding (Verhoef et al., 2015).

The success of online selling relies not only on the quality of products or services but also on strategically aligning marketing efforts with the evolving preferences and behaviors of online consumers (Chaffey et al., 2019).

Online selling in the province of Capiz has been steadily increasing, driven by the growing availability of internet access and the popularity of social media platforms as key channels for selling goods. Many local entrepreneurs and businesses have embraced online selling as a way to reach a wider market beyond the province. However, challenges such as limited internet infrastructure in rural areas and competition from larger online retailers exist. Overall, there is potential for further expansion and innovation in the online selling marketplace in Capiz.

One of the primary motivations driving this study is the personal interest to ascertain the efficacy of online selling in terms of accessibility, convenience, price, product selection, and customer reviews, along with the diverse marketing strategies employed by sellers to capture consumer attention and drive sales, and the behaviors of consumers towards online purchasing. Through this study, the researcher aimed to provide valuable insights that can guide local entrepreneurs, businesses, and consumers in optimizing their online selling practices, marketing strategies, and enhancing their competitiveness in the digital marketplace in the province of Capiz.

This study aimed to ascertain the efficacy of online selling, sellers' marketing strategies, and consumers' buying behavior of DTI-registered online sellers in the province of Capiz. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the level of efficacy of online selling?
- 2) What is the level of sellers' marketing strategies?
- 3) What is the level of consumers' buying behavior in general and in terms of their demographic profile?
- 4) Is there a significant relationship between the efficacy of online selling and consumers' buying behavior?

2. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the efficacy of online selling and sellers' marketing strategies. The researcher employed a descriptive correlational research design to gather information. It is a method used to investigate the relationship between two or more variables without changing or manipulating them (Creswell, 2014).

The descriptive research method systematically observes and records the characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena of a specific subject or group, without attempting to establish cause and effect or manipulate variables. It commonly employs techniques such as surveys, interviews, observations, and document analysis. Researchers then use statistical analysis to summarize and interpret the data, and to present a detailed description of the topic under study. This method is widely utilized in social sciences, psychology, and education to understand the traits, attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or trends of a population or phenomenon. It helps organize data, identify patterns, and inform future research or investigations.

The study was conducted in the Province of Capiz, which is known to have a significant number of online consumers and sellers. The participants for the online sellers were selected based on the list obtained from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in Roxas City, ensuring that they are registered with the DTI.

To determine the efficacy of online selling and sellers' marketing strategies, a researcher-made questionnaire with some adopted and modified items from Maraz et al. (2014) and an interview guide were used as the data gathering instrument. The researcher formulated and grouped the statements according to the topics in the variables of the study and presented in comprehensible and simple language.

In this research, all collected data underwent computer processing using the Statistical Package for Social Science Software (SPSS). For the quantitative data, frequency counts were used to determine the

number of participants within each class or category of the independent variables. The mean was calculated to describe the average response for each category and item of the questionnaire.

3. DISCUSSION

Level of Efficacy of Online Selling

When all the 125 participants were taken as a whole group, the grand mean score on their perception of the level of efficacy of online selling was 4.77. The result further implied that online selling had a “very effective” level of efficacy as perceived by the participants.

On the other hand, in terms of accessibility, there was a total mean score of 4.90 which was verbally interpreted as “very effective”. In the same manner, in terms of convenience, it was verbally interpreted as “very effective” as reflected by a total mean of 4.84. The same, in terms of price, product selection, and customer reviews, there was a total mean score of 4.69, 4.73, and 4.66 which were verbally interpreted as “very effective”.

The results implied that the online selling in Capiz was remarkably productive. Its accessibility allowed the sellers as well as the consumers to avail themselves of products and services at the tip of their fingers. It also offered a variety of choices for products and services that are not available in their local market.

Online selling offered convenience among the sellers and consumers of Capiz as they save time in shopping and marketing on the digital platform. The vast options on products and services of the online world offered sellers and consumers of Capiz the opportunity to sort according to prices which saves them time and money in ordering to examine products and services. The customer reviews associated with the products and services best helped the sellers and consumers in decision making.

These results conformed with Zialcita (2019) that online businesses successfully grow in the market creating bigger opportunities for entrepreneurs to create their own business in the online world. Consequently, Pedroso (2015) from the Philippine Daily Inquirer cited that Filipinos find ease and convenience as well as satisfaction in online shopping through their mobile phones.

Level of Efficacy of Sellers’ Marketing Strategies

When all the 110 consumers were classified as a group, the grand mean score on their perception towards the level of efficacy of online selling was 4.73. This result implied that consumers perceived online selling as “very effective”. Consequently, online selling was perceived as “very accessible” (mean = 4.88), “very convenient” (mean = 4.82), “very affordable” (mean = 4.65); “very good” in terms of product selection (mean = 4.70) and have “excellent” customer reviews (mean = 4.62).

The results implied that the online selling business in Capiz was successful in addressing the demand of consumers on business services and product delivery. In terms of accessibility, consumers find online selling very helpful since purchasing products and services is available anytime and anywhere as long as there is internet connectivity. Online selling has provided Capizeños digital venues to access products that are out of stock or not available in the local area.

Online selling provides convenient shopping activities as consumers can save time and multitask since there is no need to roam around the market to look for the products and services they would like to avail. The algorithm of the internet in sorting out products and services according to prices helps Capizeño consumers to save money and time for finding affordable and discounted products at the tip of their fingertips.

The online platform offered and classified products according to consumers’ system of choices. Consequently, through the published reviews of buyers on the product and services, future consumers are guided on their buying activities.

The results agree with Pedroso (2015) from Philippine Daily Inquirer that Filipinos find ease and convenience as well as satisfaction in online shopping through their mobile phones. Consequently, this study supported the claim of Maala et al. (2018) that the rise of online shopping has significantly simplified the process of acquiring everyday necessities and desired goods for Filipinos.

Consequently, many Filipinos prefer buying from local online stores to ensure faster delivery and reduce the risk of lost orders. Overall, Filipino consumers value goods and services that offer convenience and make their lives easier, qualities that online shopping provides (Tomlinson, 2015).

The results agreed with Brizfeel, (2018) that roughly one-third of consumers cited the ability to shop anytime, 24/7, as the primary motivator for online shopping. This was followed by a combination of factors influencing online purchase decisions, including lower prices, increased convenience, and the

potential to save time. This means that, millennials opt for online shopping because it offers them convenience and makes their lives easier, distinguishing their preferences from those of older generations (Drenik, 2019).

Level of consumers' buying behavior in general and in terms of their demographic profile

The buying behavior of 110 consumer-participants was found to be moderately good, with a mean score of 2.61, as illustrated in Table 7. Among the buying behaviors exhibited by consumer-participants, the statement 'I buy things even though I cannot afford them' received the lowest mean score of 1.85, interpreted as 'Poor'. However, the statement 'Online shopping is fun!' received the highest mean score of 4.01, which was interpreted as 'Good'.

The results implied that consumers shop through online platforms because of the happiness they feel when purchasing products especially when offered in lower price, receiving exclusive discount coupons and loyalty rewards points. Consequently, buyers tend to avoid products that are too expensive or exceed their shopping budget, which reflects positive spending behavior. This buying behavior helps online sellers strategize their marketing practices to sustain business operations and expand their coverage.

The results affirmed the claims of Islam (2018) that customer purchase intention was induced most by the online marketing activities of the online retailers, followed by pricing strategy implemented and sense of security provided. Consequently, Thakur and Chetty (2019) confirms that flexibility in price is one of the most important factors

Relationship Between the Efficacy of Online Selling and Consumers Buying Behavior

The relationship between the efficacy of online selling, sellers' marketing strategies, and consumers; buying behavior is presented in Table 8. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between online selling efficacy and consumers' buying behavior. However, the level of relationship between these variables was low.

The r – value of 0.277 with p – value of 0.011 was lesser than the 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between the efficacy of online selling and consumers' buying behavior. However, the level of relationship was low.

The results implied that the success or efficacy of online selling business is affected by the customers' buying behavior. This means that for online business to continue its operation, consumers' buying behavior must be observed. However, the relationship was found to be low since online selling does not only depend on the buying behavior of the consumers but also on the marketing techniques that the sellers use and consumers' financial capabilities.

The results supported the claims of Castillo (2018) that Filipino consumers buying behaviors evolve over time. The buying decisions of typical Filipino buyers are dependent on their budget to some extent. Consequently, purchase behavior is affected by the consumer's perception. Tubio et al., (2016) affirm that perception affects the buying behavior of consumers. Consumers make wise and logical decisions in buying products which offer the greatest benefit or satisfaction. Furthermore, the increase of consumer perception of online shopping led to an increase in purchase behavior. Therefore, the test of relationship between the efficacy of online selling and consumers' buying behavior, which is found significant, suggests that the null hypothesis forwarded is rejected. This hypothesis implies that there is a correlation between how well products are sold online and how consumers make purchasing decisions.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Online selling has become a key aspect of commerce in the province of Capiz, contributing significantly to its economic growth and development. It has opened a new business venue for macro and microentrepreneurs, enabling consumers to shop with ease due to its accessibility, convenience, and fast transactions. Sellers have found a convenient platform to showcase their products and services, allowing them to strategize their marketing techniques based on excellent customer reviews.

For consumers, online selling has become the "new normal" of shopping, making it easy, fast, and convenient to find specific prices and product preferences. Customer reviews provide valuable background information about products in the market, influencing purchasing behavior.

Moreover, online sellers' marketing strategies are effective in increasing sales and marketing horizons. They were not just able to cater and do business with the local customers but also others outside the province. The effective marketing strategies adopted by online sellers in Capiz contributed to the success and continuous development of e-commerce.

Online selling has a similar level of influence on purchasing behavior as traditional business transactions. However, the buying behavior of Capizeño consumers was significantly influenced by their demographic factors, such as sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, and monthly income.

The findings indicate that educated female adults, married individuals, and those with lower monthly incomes tend to exhibit more favorable buying behavior compared to their counterparts. This implies that consumers are more responsive to the marketing strategies and offerings of online sellers in Capiz.

The effectiveness of online business transactions depends on the buying behavior of consumers. Online selling and consumers' buying behavior are significantly related, the correlation between the two is relatively low. This suggests that the effectiveness of online selling strategies employed by sellers does not necessarily translate to a strong or direct influence on the buying behavior of consumers.

Several factors that shape consumer buying behavior in the online context, beyond just the marketing strategies of sellers. These include socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, and income level, as well as consumer perceptions of trust, risk, and convenience associated with online shopping.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in the light of the findings and conclusions. Building on the success of online selling in Capiz, it is important to focus on continuous improvement and innovation. Sellers may regularly update and improve online platforms to make them more user-friendly and efficient. By staying ahead of the curve and adapting to changing trends and technologies, online selling platforms can remain competitive and appealing to both sellers and consumers in Capiz.

On the consumers' side, despite the convenience online selling provides, they may always look into the feedback and the authenticity of these comments to ensure quality and a safe shopping experience.

Online sellers' marketing strategies may be made flexible to address the demands of consumers effectively. By incorporating flexibility into their marketing approaches, sellers can adapt to changing consumer preferences and market trends, ensuring that their strategies remain relevant and impactful. Moreover, collaborating with local online influencers can be a strategic move for sellers to promote their products and attract a larger audience of shoppers.

Partnering with influencers who have a strong online presence and influence can help sellers reach a wider demographic and increase brand visibility. This collaboration can leverage the influencers' credibility and reach to enhance the marketing efforts of online sellers, ultimately making more sales to their platforms.

Online consumers may be susceptible to overspending and identity theft when engaging in online transactions. To prevent this, consumers may set a budget, use secure payments methods, monitor bank statements, shop on reputable websites, use strong passwords, and enable two-factor authentication. These measures may help manage spending and protecting against fraud.

Consequently, sellers may ensure the confidentiality of consumers' identities and implement strong security measures to prevent phishing and identity theft, in order to gain the trust and confidence of their customers.

Furthermore, business entrepreneurs and educators may educate consumers about the benefits and safety of online shopping is crucial for increasing confidence and encouraging more people to shop online. This may involve running campaigns and workshops to raise awareness about online shopping best practices and security measures. By empowering consumers to make informed decisions, online sellers can help create a more trusting and supportive environment for online commerce in Capiz.

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