

Online selling: efficacy and marketing strategies

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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

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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.

Statement of the problem

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?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online selling

E-commerce involves the buying and selling of goods and services, as well as the exchange of data, conducted over the internet or within intranet systems. Online shopping has become increasingly prevalent, establishing a new norm in consumer behavior. This trend has proven highly lucrative for businesses, with e-commerce platforms reaping substantial benefits. For instance, Amazon witnessed a 14% growth in its online retail sector between the second quarters of 2018 and 2019, as reported by Internet World Stats. Additionally, Lazada Philippines, serving as both an online department store and a marketplace for retailers to showcase their products, recorded an impressive 25 million visits to its e-commerce website in 2019, as noted by Eusebio et al. (2022).

Online selling, a facet of e-commerce, empowers retailers and business owners to market and sell their products and services to customers via the internet, representing the contemporary norm in consumer behavior. Its popularity is steadily rising among consumers due to its inherent convenience and enjoyable shopping experiences, as highlighted by Sarkar and Das (2017). Moreover, with the internet deeply integrated into the social fabric of nations worldwide and Filipinos displaying high levels of engagement on social media platforms, notably Facebook, the internet serves not only as a means to connect with friends and acquaintances, Rodriguez and Trujillo (2014).

E-commerce platforms enhance consumer decision-making by offering a richer information environment compared to traditional brick-and-mortar retail settings. This abundance of product data, readily accessible to consumers, empowers them to achieve a high level of knowledge without the need for further independent research. Online retailers provide a larger inventory than traditional brick-and-mortar stores, so customers have a wider range of options. Online sales are available 24 hours a day, allowing customers to shop whenever they want (Nolasco et al., 2022).

The rise of e-commerce has demonstrably reshaped the economic landscapes of numerous nations. Saxena (2020) disclosed that the internet economy in Southeast Asia, driven in large part by e-commerce and ride-hailing services, experienced a threefold increase over a four-year period, reaching \$100 billion in 2019. These findings explained the multifaceted advantages that e-commerce offers to both enterprises and the broader national economy.

Filipinos are becoming more involved in the internet. The Philippines ranked first in the world regarding social media usage and time spent online (Zialcita, 2019). Furthermore, from 2 million internet users in 2000 Q4, the country has 79 million internet users in 2020 Q1, representing a 3,950 percent increase in internet usage (Internet World Stats, 2019).

Furthermore, as of 2019 Q3, 91 percent of internet users in the Philippines stated that they visited an online retail store, searched for, and purchased a product or service online (Internet World Stats, 2020). E-commerce has proliferated, and online shopping is now a standard method of purchasing goods (Yan et al., 2016).

Filipinos are increasingly engaging with the internet, characterized by the Philippines' position as a global leader in social media engagement and internet consumption (Zialcita, 2019).

Moreover, the country has witnessed a remarkable growth in internet usage, soaring from 2 million users in 2000 to 79 million in 2020, marking a staggering increase of 3,950 percent (Internet World Stats, 2019). In 2019, 91% of internet users in the Philippines reported visiting online retail stores, searching for, and making purchases online (Internet World Stats, 2020). This surge in internet activity has fueled the popularity of e-commerce, making online shopping a prevalent practice (Yan et al., 2016).

The pandemic's strict limitations have led to a surge in online purchases, prompting business owners to further embrace the internet trend (Arreola, 2020). The implementation of travel restrictions has facilitated the utilization of online shopping platforms by clients due to their pre-existing development, which has resulted in a significant surge in the demand for online retailing caused by the pandemic. Ledesma (2020) predicts that the internet selling industry will grow its GDP contribution from 10% in 2015 to 25% in 2018. The rapid growth of internet shopping has significantly boosted economic activity due to its convenience. An increase in GDP is a strong indicator of sustained economic health.

The importance of online sales in meeting the demands of both customers and sellers, as well as the ease with which they can be conducted in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's restrictions. Accordingly, more and more Filipinos are relying on Internet sales to fulfill their everyday requirements (Xinhua, 2020). Reaching a worldwide audience through online means is advantageous because it boosts sales prospects. Due to the outbreak, a large number of individuals lost their jobs, despite the fact that millions of people are now even more eager to making money online.

Additionally, most Filipinos access the internet primarily through their mobile phones because it is a reliable and affordable means of doing so, and online payment is a convenient way for sellers to accept orders (International Trade Administration, 2021). Online shopping is becoming more and more popular since it's easily available to a large audience and provides the quickest, easiest way to make payments, and most convenient way to make

purchases. Furthermore, Masigan (2020) reports that since the onset of quarantine measures, e-commerce has surged, enabling Filipinos to buy food and other essentials online and opening e-commerce stores where they offer a wide range of goods.

The utilization of the internet and involvement in the online selling sector have garnered significant attention. In addition to being secure and simple to use, it offers the fastest, easiest manner possible to do tasks like making payments and making purchases. Gomez (2015) clarified, meanwhile, that the Philippines' internet selling market is still quite young. Furthermore, he mentioned that a lot of Filipinos place a high value on the Internet. The Philippines has a large number of internet users, ranking 16th globally and 3rd in Southeast Asia. While the user base might appear smaller compared to China and the US, Filipinos are known for their high level of online activity and engagement. The fact that many people in the Philippines are active online indicates that the online shopping industry in the country is expected to keep getting bigger in the next few years (Cruz et al., 2022).

Marketing strategy

A marketing strategy constitutes a comprehensive blueprint designed to realize predetermined marketing goals. In today's digital age, technology influences all aspects of our lives, often in overwhelming ways. Digitization impacts both industrial and consumer marketing, making it crucial for researchers and practitioners in industrial marketing to understand this dynamic. Recognizing and practicing it is essential for understanding the current capabilities of digital marketing (Tabuena et al., 2022).

Digital marketing can then assist online businesses in reaching a worldwide audience. Social media and digital marketing are increasingly emerging as the most effective marketing tactics. Nowadays, many people perceive digital marketing as the cornerstone of marketing strategies (Mandal et al., 2017). By gaining a deep understanding of their customers, e-commerce businesses can save expenses, target a wider range of people at a more affordable rate compared to conventional marketing methods, and cultivate strong customer allegiance to their brand.

The rise of online shopping is undeniable. Digital marketing, as the term implies, refers to various methods and processes used for promoting and marketing brands, products, or services online. It essentially involves building and developing a brand's presence in the digital space. Within digital marketing, inbound marketing has become a critical element. By understanding why customers create and share content related to brands, we gain valuable insights into their motivations. Digital marketing has a significant and often cost-effective impact on businesses. Notably, inbound marketing plays a key role within digital marketing by fostering customer loyalty and trust (Atienza & Tabuena, 2021; Bersin, 2016).

Online marketing encompasses various strategies aimed at driving consumers to specific websites to make purchases of goods or services. Therefore, establishing an online presence is a fundamental goal of online marketing. This can involve offline methods as well, such as displaying a website's URL on a banner atop an aircraft (Lammenett, 2014).

Online advertising refers to the act of displaying a company's banner on the webpage of another company. The evolution of what first started as basic banners has occurred over time. Foreign websites utilize various advertising techniques such as layer ads, interstitials, and videos, in addition to banner adverts, to attract the attention of visitors. Performance marketing include strategies aimed at eliciting a quantifiable response from customers, such as clicking on a banner, making a purchase, or registering on a website (Schwarzl and Grabowska, 2015).

The fundamental goal is to establish a strong connection with the consumer to influence their decisions. As a subcategory of internet marketing, search engine marketing encompasses all methods of acquiring customers through online search engines. Google's approach to

delivering search results has made search engine marketing more challenging (Lammenett, 2014).

The increase in internet users is one of the main markers of the development of online marketing. The general population has had access to the internet for almost 25 years. It has been a constant process of innovation and development ever since. With a computer, people can almost do anything: shop, make reservations, conduct research, communicate, etc. The increase highlights the significance of the internet in today's world and the need for businesses to be active in this particular sector, the online market. Nonetheless, the aforementioned statistics highlight the potential and expanding audience of online marketing strategies.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

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.

Locale of the study and respondents

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.

Research instruments

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.

Data analyses procedure

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.

FINDINGS AND 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).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

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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