

ASBM Journal of Management

International Journal of ASBM University

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Volume XVII, Issue 1, January - June, 2024

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Purchase Decisions in the Digital World –
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**Corporates Driving Zero-Harm Objectives:
Safety First or Business First ?**

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.....

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Full text included in EBSCO Host Database (USA), ProQuest (USA), and J-Gate

Volume XVII, Issue 1, January - June, 2024



Shiksha Vihar, Bholā (Chandaka), P.O. ASBM University

Bhubaneswar - 754012, India

Phone: 0674-2374801/02/03/04/05

Email: editorajm@asbm.ac.in

www.asbmjournal.org

ASBM Journal of Management

International Journal of ASBM University

Full text included in EBSCO Host Database (USA), ProQuest (USA), and J-Gate

Volume XVII, Issue 1, January - June, 2024

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ASBM University,

Shiksha Vihar, Bhola (Chandaka), ASBM University P.O., Bhubaneswar 754 012, India

E-mail Id: Editor – editorajm@asbm.ac.in; Circulation Manager – librarian@asbm.ac.in

Published by: ASBM University, Shiksha Vihar, Bhola (Chandaka),

ASBM University P.O., Bhubaneswar 754 012, India

Website: www.asbmjournal.org

From the Desk of the **Editor-in-Chief**

The landscape of market and marketing has gone through dramatic change because of the digital revolution in the world. The digital marketing platforms have become powerful vehicles of sales and marketing. Consumers' engagement in social media and digital platforms has determined the target consumers of FMCG companies. In fact, marketing strategies have been reoriented to catch this segment. Consumers also carry out online research before deciding to buy and so their buying behaviour gets influenced by such research. Kurian and Asavalertpalakorn have undertaken an interesting exploratory research on the effect of the zero moment of truth on consumer purchase decisions in the digital world on 300 respondents of Bangkok, Thailand. The findings highlight the significance of zero moment of truth (ZMOT) and its elements in shaping consumer behaviour with electronic word of mouth and search engines emerging as the most influential factors. Interestingly, digital advertising did not exhibit significant influence. The authors have given certain recommendations that will help the FMCG business to achieve the competitive advantage.

Indian organised retail sector has undergone a complete transformation process and has grown substantially in the last decade. In the fiscal year 2022, the organised retail sales volume was 52 billion US dollars in India and it is likely to increase to 136 billion US dollars by the fiscal year 2028. Hence, retail plays a very important role in Indian economy. Pratihari and Pati have attempted to create a tool to understand customers' perspectives focusing on the organised retail in Odisha. They have proposed a customised model which suggests six key factors like customer centricity, customer convenience, quality, service excellence, accessibility, and reliability.

The rise of e-commerce in India has thrown several challenges to meet customer satisfaction. Technology plays an important role in creating a circular economy which helps to minimise waste and maximise resource efficiency. Raul and Dash have explored the imperatives of achieving excellence in the reverse logistics process within the clothing rental industry through strategic deployment of technology. They present a comprehensive framework encompassing technology-enablers and implementation strategies which can promote sustainability. This, in turn, can reduce operational cost and drive profitability.

In the war of profitability, nurturing and driving a responsible business is a real challenge. While profitability cannot be overlooked, responsible business always focuses on creation of customer value in the most ethical manner. Sahoo, Pattanayak, and Niranjana have explored the importance of HR analytics and its applications in creating and sustaining a responsible business through their study "HR Analytics : A Data-driven Approach towards Responsible Business".

Responsible business also needs to focus on safety. It has been invariably observed that the organisations and practitioners are tempted towards adopting short-cuts which might bring temporary gain in the short-term that will not be sustainable in the long-run. Hence, safety has to be integrated with the culture of the organisation rather than being confined to safety manuals. Kaila has attempted to answer the question – Safety first or business first ? – through a qualitative study comprising field visits to ten sight locations from where 250 managers and 235 contractor staff were sampled across diverse Indian locations. This study has thrown interesting findings which will help the industries at large to create a safety culture.

This issue of the journal will be interesting and resourceful for the readers and researchers.

Biswajeet Pattanayak

Editor-in-Chief

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The Effect of the Zero Moment of Truth on Consumer Purchase Decisions in the Digital World – An Exploratory Study in Thailand

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Abstract

In the digital age, consumer behaviour has been revolutionised by the zero moment of truth (ZMOT), a critical phase in the decision-making process where consumers engage in online research before making purchase decisions. This research examines the impact of ZMOT on consumer purchase decisions within Bangkok's digital fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) market. The study addresses the gap in understanding how ZMOT affects consumer behavior within the specific context of Thailand's FMCG industry. Through an exploratory approach, incorporating quantitative surveys and data analysis, this research investigates the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), search engines, social media endorsements, and digital advertising on consumer purchase decisions. A sample of 300 respondents from Bangkok, Thailand, participated in the study, providing insights into their preferences and behaviours during the ZMOT. The findings underscore the significance of ZMOT and its elements in shaping consumer behaviour, with eWOM and search engines emerging as the most influential factors. Positive eWOM was a dominant driver of purchase decisions, while search engines facilitated information acquisition. Social media endorsements also played a role, albeit slightly weaker. In contrast, digital advertising did not exhibit significant influence. Consequently, the study recommends that FMCG businesses prioritise fostering positive eWOM, optimising search engine visibility, and leveraging influencer collaborations to enhance consumer engagement. While acknowledging limitations such as sample size and narrow focus, this research contributes insights for businesses to tailor strategies aligned with the digital era and ZMOT's pivotal role. Future research directions include exploring the evolving dynamics of ZMOT over time through longitudinal studies and encompassing a broader range of variables to gain a comprehensive understanding of its multifaceted effects on consumer behaviour. By embracing these insights, FMCG businesses can effectively adapt to the evolving landscape and achieve a competitive advantage in Bangkok's dynamic digital market.

Keywords: Zero moment of truth (ZMOT), Purchase decision, FMCG, Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), Search engines, Online endorsements, Digital advertising

Customer Perspectives on Organised Retail – An Indian Study

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Abstract

This study aims to create a tool to understand customers' perspectives, focusing on the organised retail sector in Odisha (India). Drawing from the RSQS (Retail Service Quality Scale) model by Dabholkar, Thorpe, and Rentz (1996), a customised model tailored to the Odisha context is proposed. Using a questionnaire, 298 usable responses were collected through convenience sampling. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed six key factors: customer centricity, customer convenience, quality, service excellence, accessibility, and reliability, which together explain 54.564% of the total variability. These findings have implications not only for the retail industry in Odisha but also for organised retail in other Indian states.

Keywords: *Organised retail, Consumer perception, Quality, RSQS*

Introduction

The Indian retail sector plays a vital role in the country's economy, contributing 10% to the GDP and employing 8% of the population, making it the second-largest employer after agriculture. Traditionally, unorganised retail, including local grocery stores and owner-managed shops, dominated the market until the 1990s, when India introduced free-market reforms, leading to the rise of organised retail. Supermarkets, hypermarkets, and retail chains, collectively referred to as organised retail, have gained popularity in major cities and metropolitan areas. Global retail giants are establishing their presence in India, while domestic corporate giants like Aditya Birla, Reliance, and Tata have also ventured into the organised retail sector.

The retail sector encompasses various categories such as food and groceries, clothing, healthcare, appliances, and jewelry. Despite occasional economic downturns, organised retail in India is still in its early stages but holds significant potential. The country's large population, growing middle class, and increasing urbanisation contribute to the sector's rapid expansion. Projections suggest that by 2030, the middle class will

Reverse Logistics in Clothing Rental

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Abstract

This paper explores the imperative of achieving excellence in the reverse logistics process within the clothing rental industry through a strategic deployment of technology. The clothing rental sector plays a pivotal role in promoting sustainability and circular fashion, making efficient reverse logistics processes essential. Leveraging technology in this context is not only a necessity but also an opportunity to enhance customer experiences, reduce operational costs, and drive profitability. This article presents a comprehensive framework encompassing technology enablers, implementation strategies, case studies, benefits, challenges, and future trends, providing a valuable resource for clothing rental businesses aiming to excel in reverse logistics.

Keywords: *Clothing rental, Reverse logistics, Technology strategy, Sustainability, Circular fashion, Fashion industry*

Introduction

In recent years, the fashion industry has undergone a transformative shift, primarily catalysed by consumers' growing awareness of the environmental impact of fast fashion. This heightened consciousness has given rise to alternative consumption models, notably clothing rental services, which offer a more sustainable and economically viable approach to fashion. Within this landscape, the reverse logistics process has emerged as a linchpin, holding the power to shape the success and sustainability of clothing rental businesses. The purpose of this study is to delve deep into the fabric of this dynamic industry, dissecting the role of technology as a strategic imperative, and outlining a comprehensive framework that elucidates the intricate connections between technology enablers, implementation strategies, real-world case studies, the manifold benefits reaped, the formidable challenges faced, and the promising future trends that promise to reshape the industry's horizon. In order to pave the way for excellence and a more sustainable future in fashion, this study aims to unravel not only the complexities but also the enormous potential lying within the seamless fusion of technology and sustainability in the reverse logistics processes of clothing rental.

HR Analytics: A Data-driven Approach towards Responsible Business

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Abstract

A responsible business is one that creates a positive impact on society. In other words, responsible business ensures creation of customer value while meeting the concerns of people, ethics, equity, and the environment without forgetting the requirement of profitability. If that is not enough, the fast changing business climate in a VUCA world today has made running a business organisation much more complex. The human resource jobs and commitments have become rather clouded making man management very challenging. HR needs to rise to the occasion by forsaking the mechanical headways of the yesteryears and adopting new methods to suit the fast-changing business scenario. HR Analytics (HRA) helps in such a situation by providing data-driven insights for quick, responsible, and effective decision making. The objective of this research paper is to investigate and figure out the significance of HR Analytics and its applications towards a responsible business.

Keywords: *HR Analytics, data-driven approach, responsible business*

Introduction

“The purpose of a business”, wrote Larry Fink, the Founder & CEO of the world’s largest asset manager BlackRock, “is to create a positive impact on society”. Thus the responsibility of business, which at one point of time was thought of as only making profit, has changed over the years to creating surplus, to creating stakeholder value, and to creating a positive impact on the society. In other words, a responsible business ensures creation of customer value while meeting the concerns of people, ethics, equity, and the environment without forgetting the requirement of profitability. Fink adds, “A responsible business is essentially one that benefits society and addresses negative impacts it might have on society, people, and planet” (Impactgarden, 2024).

Corporates Driving Zero-Harm Objectives: Safety First or Business First?

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Abstract

Like the oft quoted Shakespearean adage, 'To be or not to be', the safety conundrum always poses a dilemma – to adhere or not to adhere to the safety norms – as Indian culture is not basically safety-oriented and safety is not in our mindset. This gets further complicated by the eternal question that a businessman faces – safety first or business first – which greatly impacts the way the corporates drive their Zero-Harm objectives. There are differentials in definition of safety observations and safety culture among managers, directors, contractors, and engineers. For an employer, the safety consideration should be an incident-free environment; but for the employees, it should be injury-free. This makes a vast difference in what we look for while being on a field visit in plants. If our outlook is injury-free, we observe at-risk behaviour and spot-correct it, whereas an incident-free bent of mind would focus not necessarily on the person but on the targets, profit, plant, production etc. Safety culture in any corporate needs to be adopted as procedures that are communicated, demonstrated, reinforced and celebrated, not merely raising messages of safety-first by managers or directors. The present qualitative study comprised of field visits to 10 site locations from where 250 managers and 235 contractor staff were sampled across diverse Indian locations. It concludes that safety culture is a big turning point for corporate businesses; behaviour is not only a science but also a collective wisdom, and companies are increasingly embracing safety culture.

Key words: *Safety, Business, Corporates, Zero-harm, Safety-first*

Introduction

Building a culture of safety-first is the buzzword in most organisations. But many a time it remains only on paper or speech as most companies use it as a slogan, not as action on the ground. This article reviews the myriad aspects of safety-first scenario in the corporate and reinforces this concept proactively to be an important factor towards zero-harm or vision zero objective.

Research on 'safety-first' among corporates in India reveals interesting aspects in view of business preferences and organisational dynamics. This concept originated in

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