The Role of Search Engine Optimization in Influencing Consumer's Information Search Behavior

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Abstract

The aim of the project is to study the relationship between search engine optimization and consumer online information search behavior. Deriving upon this relationship one can understand the importance of it and like any other attributes for example, how email marketing, online marketing effects consumer behavior, we can use Search Engine Optimizations (SEOs) also to influence the consumers buying behavior and how effectively it can be used to understand the patterns of consumer buying behavior. Thus, this paper studies the importance of (SEOs) in understanding consumer's information search behavior and analyze the influence of search engine marketing on consumer information search behavior.

Keywords: Search Engine, Optimization, consumer's online information, consumer buying behavior.

1. Introduction

Every company selling products or services, big or small will make sure to develop their websites to better reach both targeted and potential customers. It is a must to have a well-developed website in this online era of sales. The most efficient websites know how to play with algorithms and gain more visibility through Search Engine Optimization (SEO) here in after SEO will be used, which is a type of internet marketing.

SEO is short form of search engine optimization, here in after SEO will be used for. Search engine optimization is a methodology of strategies, techniques and tactics used to increase the number of visitors to a website by obtaining a high-ranking placement in the search results

page of a search engine (SERP) – including Google, Bing, Yahoo and other search engines.

It is the process of maximizing the number of visitors to a particular website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine. Websites improve search engine optimization by improving content, making sure that the pages are able to be indexed correctly, and ensuring that the content is unique. Going through the search engine optimization process typically leads to more traffic for the site because the site will appear higher in search results for information that pertains to the site's offerings.

2. Overview of Literature

Spais, G. S. (2010) Search Engine Optimization (SEO) as a dynamic online promotion technique: the implications of activity theory for promotion managers,- The author inspected the likelihood of an expansion of Bedny's viewpoint of 'activity' theory as a system for the elaboration of new online promotion channels, for example, the search engines. This conceptualization was drawn closer as a structure for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) logical issues, which can be utilized to help the plan and examination of the SEO promotion procedure examinations. The keywords are web crawler, SEM, SEO promotion system, activity theory, web-mediated advertising. The examination of advancement supervisors can consider SEO to be a dynamic online advancement procedure under Bedny's movement hypothesis is a non-inquired about region. It is utilizes both quantitative and subjective investigation. The research gap in this

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paper, theoretical examination of the proposed model under the parameters influencing the information-seeking behavior of those online customers, which use searching engines.

Ron Berman, Z. K. (2011) The Role of Search Engine Optimization in Search Marketing- The paper studies the economic incentives of Web sites to invest in SEO and its implications on search engine and advertiser payoffs. The results show that, under certain conditions, a positive level of search engine optimization improves the search engine ranking and the satisfaction of its visitors. The goal is to investigate how search engine optimization affects the revenue of sponsored links. They used a quantitative analysis of the data in the document. The results are, the SEO budget, the effect of SEO on the Internet and the welfare of the consumer, the effect of the SEO on the profits of advertisers. It's only in terms of income

Przemyslaw Jeziorski, I. S. (2010) What makes them Click: Empirical Analysis of Consumer Demand for Search Advertising? - The author wants to study users' response to sponsoredsearch advertising using data from Microsoft's Live AdCenter distributed in the Beyond Search" initiative. They estimated a structural model of utility maximizing users, which quantiles user experience" based on their revealed preferences," and predicts user responses to counter actual ad placements. Keywords are search engines, data and consumer demand. As mentioned in the title. they provide an empirical analysis of the demand for search advertising. In search of the heterogeneity and uncertainty of the user regarding the relevance of the ads for them. The tests are provided using reduced test and some structural user models that maximize the expected utility.

Bo Xing, Z. L. (2005) The Impact of Search Engine Optimization on Online Adverting Market-This study aims to analyze the condition under which SEO exist and further, its impact on the advertising market. With an analytical model, several interesting insights are generated. The results of the study fill the gap of SEO in academic research and help managers in online advertising make informed advertising decisions. The keywords are search engine, online advertising, search engine marketing, search

engine optimization, sponsored links, paid placement. They have used an analytical model of search engine market. Thus, they have used a self-developed model use measure the search engine optimizations.

According to the author the SEO optimization of a site is a long process, very complex, and involves many components that must be considered. The competition in the online environment is very big and inventive. A process of Su, B.-c. (2008) Characteristics of Consumer Search On-line: How much do we search? - This study examines the effect on consumer search intention of ease of on-line search for price, nonprice product information, and store. The results show the significant main effect of both crosssite search and in-site search on both price search and non-price product information search for books (search goods) and MP3 players (experience goods). The Keywords used are Electronic commerce, experimental design, information search, in-store search, search cost. The study used a 2×2 design examining all possible combinations of cross-site search and in-site search.4 The three dependent measures were price search, nonprime product information search, and store search. Statistical tools like ANOVA is further used to analyze the data.

Chin-Feng Lin, Y.-H. L. (2009) Guiding the content of tourism web advertisements on a search engine results page- This study aims to focus on the following: uncover consumer preferences regarding tourism packages in China; revealing the differences between consumer knowledge related to these tour packages; identify the similarities between the websites of the travel agencies; and establish a cognitive framework to help marketers design content written to show them in search engine results. The study adopted the medium-end chain theory as a theoretical basis. Comparing the contents of tourism, the search engine and the search engine, search engines and search engines. Advertising, tourism, China, search engines are used in this study. The highest level of the agency providing discount incentives. More information on the consequences of travel and value satisfaction.

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Lourdes Moreno, P. M. (2012) Overlapping factors in search engine optimization and web accessibility- The purpose of this document is to show the search for a web page. Search engine optimization (SEO), search engine optimization (SEO) to achieve this goal. The reasons for this phenomenon seem to be the many similarities and characteristics superimposed between SEO and web accessibility guidelines. Accessibility is described, the specific overlapping factors between the two are identified and the precise nature of the overlaps is explained in greater detail.

The available literature provides firm evidence that the overlapping factors not only serve to ensure the accessibility of a website for all users but are also useful for the optimization of the website's search engine ranking. The research demonstrates that any SEO project undertaken should include, as a prerequisite, the proper design of accessible web content, inasmuch as search engines will interpret the web accessibility achieved as an indicator of quality and will be able to better access and index the resulting web content.

3. Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To evaluate the influence of search engine optimization on consumer's information search behavior.
- To identify the relationship between search engine optimization and consumer's information search behavior.

4. Research Methodology

The study was exploratory in nature. Data obtained for this study is through the primary and secondary sources using structured questionnaires to obtain relevant information from users of internet banking. The 5-point Likert scale format used to measure factors affecting entrepreneurial development (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = strongly agree). Responses to several Likert questions have been summed up and the scores have been used to analyze and interpret the data. Correlation and regression analysis techniques were used for show the result. A total of 100 questionnaires were correctly completed, retrieved and analyzed.

5. Result and Discussion

5.1 Demographic Analysis

It is a technique used to develop an understanding of the age, sex and the income source of the data collected. Also, to know the number of internet users and the number of travelers from the data collected. The following tables and pie charts give the composition of the demographic factors of the responses of this study.

Table1: showing the percentage value of Gender Composition

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Decline to state	1	.6	.6	.6
	Female	60	39.0	39.0	39.6
	Male	92	59.7	59.7	99.4
	Transgender	1	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	154	100.0	100.0	

Source: Filled data

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Inference:

From this analysis we can interpret the gender composition of the data, 59.7% of male respondents, 39% of female respondents and one

transgender. From this we can analyze that both male and female have almost equal saying for this study.

Table 2: showing the percentage value of Age Composition

AGE				_	
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24 years old	131	85.1	85.1	85.1
	25-34 years old	13	8.4	8.4	93.5
	35-44 years old	4	2.6	2.6	96.1
	45-54 years old	6	3.9	3.9	100.0
	Total	154	100.0	100.0	

Source: Filled data

Inference:

From this analysis we can interpret that the age composition, 85.1% of respondents between the age group 18-24 years. From his we can interpret

that maximum of the respondents are millennial and few belonging to the age group 25-34 years.

Table 3: showing the percentage value of Income Source Composition

Income Sou	irce				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business	2	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Businessman	1	.6	.6	1.9
	Employed for wages	16	10.4	10.4	12.3
	Homemaker	2	1.3	1.3	13.6
	Military	1	.6	.6	14.3
	Retired	1	.6	.6	14.9
	Self employed	1	.6	.6	15.6
	Student	127	82.5	82.5	98.1
	Unemployed	3	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	154	100.0	100.0	

Source: Filled data

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Inference:

From this analysis we can interpret that the composition of income source of the respondents, 82.5% of the respondents are

students and 10.4% are employees. This results that majority of the respondents belong to millennials.

Table 4: showing the percentage value of Internet Users

Use internet for information search								
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative			
					Percent			
Valid	Agree	52	33.8	33.8	33.8			
	Disagree	3	1.9	1.9	35.7			
	Neutral	4	2.6	2.6	38.3			
	Strongly Agree	95	61.7	61.7	100.0			
	Total	154	100.0	100.0				

Source: Filled data

Inference:

From this analysis we can interpret that this pie chart captures how many of the respondents use internet, 61.7% and 33.8% of the respondents together are internet users. As most of them being millennials, total 95% of the respondents use internet for information search.

Statistical Analysis and Interpretation

The correlation and regression analysis are done using the IBM SPSS 23. The following tables and graphs are generated from this application. A reliability check was done to verify if the data collected can be reliable for further progressing with the study.

Table 5: Shows Cronbach's Alpha

Reliability Statistics				
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items			
.849	37			

Source: Filled data

Inference:

First, the reliability of the data was analyzed to check if the data can be reliable to conduct the study. From this table as the Cronbach's alpha is 0.849, it can interpreted that data collected from the questionnaire is reliable and thus can be used to conduct the study.

Table 6: Shows the correlations of independent variables with the dependent variable.

		Websites	Content	Speed	Links	Social Media
Average of	Pearson					
consumer	Correlation	.513**	384**	.136	.231**	.151
behaviour	Sig. (2-	.000	.000	.094	.004	.062
	tailed)					
	N	154	154	154	154	154

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

^{*.} Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

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Inference:

This table shows the correlations of the five variables; Websites, Content, Speed, Links and Social Media with the dependent variable that is the consumer buying behavior. From the table we can interpret the following:

- The significance level is .000, which is less than 0.01 and it means that correlation is highly significant. Pearson correlation coefficient denotes the association between two variables. The value of the coefficient (r) is 0.513. this indicates that 51.3% positive relationship exists between the two variables.
- The significance level is .000, which is less than 0.01 and it means that correlation is highly significant. Pearson correlation coefficient denotes the association between two variables. The value of the coefficient (r) is .384. This indicates that 38.4% positive relationship exists between consumer buying behavior and content.
- The significance level is .004, which is less than 0.01 and it means that correlation is highly significant. Pearson correlation coefficient denotes the association between

- two variables. The value of the coefficient (r) is .231. This indicates that 23.1% positive relationship exists between consumer buying behavior and links.
- The significance level is .094, which is more than 0.01 and it means that correlation is insignificant. Pearson correlation coefficient denotes the association between two variables. The value of the coefficient (r) is .136. This indicates that 13.6% relationship exists between consumer buying behavior and speed but low.
- The significance level is .062, which is more than 0.01 and it means that correlation is insignificant. Pearson correlation coefficient denotes the association between two variables. The value of the coefficient (r) is .151. This indicates that 15.1% relationship exists between consumer buying behavior and social media but low.

Table 7: shows Regression of websites on dependent variable

Model Summary								
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the				
				Estimate				
1	.513 ^a	.264	.259	.35383				

a. Predictors: (Constant), Websites.

Inference:

This variable website includes all components like, numerous websites the consumer checks, numerous pages the consumer checks on the search engine, top of the page websites and websites with relevant titles.

R-square coefficient ranges from 0 to 1 and can also be expressed as percentages in a scale of 0% to 100%. In this study R Square (R) value is

0.264 which is 26.4% in the percentage scale. This means that the behavior of the dependent variable is explained by the behavior of the independent variable being studied. That is, behavior consumer buying behavior of can be explained by the behavior of websites to some extent.

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Table 8: shows the significance level of the Websites

ANOVA ^a							
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	6.810	1	6.810	54.394	.000 ^b	
	Residual	19.030	152	.125			
	Total	25.840	153				

- a. Dependent Variable: Average of consumer behavior.
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Websites.

Inference:

From the table, the significance level is 0.01 and the (p= 0.000) which is less than 0.01. This

implies that change in one variable result in change in dependent variable.

Table 9: shows Regression of speed on dependent variable

Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the			
				Estimate			
1	.136 ^a	.018	.012	.40850			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Speed

Inference:

This variable speed includes two components, the fast loading speed of the web page and easy processing websites. R-square coefficient ranges from 0 to 1 and can also be expressed as percentages in a scale of 0% to 100%. In this

study R Square (R) value is 0.18 which is 1.8% in the percentage scale. This means that the behavior of the dependent variable is explained by the behavior of the independent variable being studied. But the influence is moderate.

Table 10: shows the significance level of Speed

	$\mathbf{A}\mathbf{N}\mathbf{O}\mathbf{V}\mathbf{A}^{\mathbf{a}}$								
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1	Regression	.475	1	.475	2.847	.094 ^b			
	Residual	25.365	152	.167					
	Total	25.840	153						

- a. Dependent Variable: Average of consumer behavior
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Speed

Inference:

From the table, the significance level is 0.01 and the (p= 0.094) which is more than 0.01. This implies that change in one variable does not

influence significantly in the change of a dependent variable.

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Table 11: shows Regression of links on dependent variable

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the		
				Estimate		
1	.231 ^a	.053	.047	.40116		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Links

Inference:

This variable links includes components like the URL's recommended on other pages, shorter URL's and recurring links R-square coefficient ranges from 0 to 1 and can also be expressed as percentages in a scale of 0% to 100%. In this

study R Square (R) value is 0.053 which is 5.3% in the percentage scale. This means that the behavior of the dependent variable is explained by the behavior of the independent variable being studied. But it is very less.

Table 12: shows the significance level of Links

			ANOVA ^a			
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.379	1	1.379	8.568	.004 ^b
	Residual	24.461	152	.161		
	Total	25.840	153			

a. Dependent Variable: Average of consumer behavior.

Inference:

From the table, the significance level is 0.01 and the (p= 0.004) which is less than 0.01. This

implies that change in one variable results in change in dependent variable.

Table 13: shows Regression of social media on dependent variable

Model Summary								
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the				
				Estimate				
1	.151 ^a	.023	.016	.40758				

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social media.

Inference

This variable social media includes the website's activeness on social network sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and so on. It also includes blogs R-square coefficient ranges from

0 to 1 and can also be expressed as percentages in a scale of 0% to 100%. In this study R Square (R) value is 0.023 which is 2.3% in the percentage scale. This means that the behavior of the dependent variable is explained by the behavior of the independent variable being studied. But it is very less.

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b. Predictors: (Constant), Links.

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Table 14: shows the significance level of Social Media

ANOVA ^a									
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
1	Regression	.589	1	.589	3.548	.062 ^b			
	Residual	25.251	152	.166					
	Total	25.840	153						

- a. Dependent Variable: Average of consumer behavior.
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Social media.

Inference:

From the table, the significance level is 0.01 and the (p= 0.062) which is more than 0.01. This implies that change in one variable does not influence significantly in the change of a dependent variable.

Testing Hypothesis

- H01: There is no possible impact of search engine optimization in consumer buying behavior.
- H1: There is a significant possible impact of search engine optimization in consumer buying behavior.

From data analysis, null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted because there is correlation between the independent and dependent variables.

- H02: SEO does not influence the consumer's information search behavior.
- H1: SEO does influence the consumer's information search behavior.

From data analysis, null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted because the regression analysis shows that the independent variables have influence on dependent variable.

- H03: There is no relationship between SEO and consumer's information search behavior.
- H3: There is a relationship between SEO and consumer's information search behavior.

From data analysis, null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted because the independent variables have influence on dependent variable as both correlation and regression analysis resulted positive.

6. Summary of Findings

This research paper describes the effective influence of the search engine optimization (SEO) on consumer information search behavior. Thus, the importance of this modern marketing tool, SEO is analyzed in the entire project and how SEO should be used to attract more traffic on your websites. SEO is a tool in Search Engine Marketing (SEM) which has various components that increases the SEO of the website of a Travel and Tourism Company.

First, the objectives of the paper are to find the significant impact of SEO on consumer behavior, the influence of SEO and the relationship of SEO with the consumer information search behavior. Based on the objectives, found the variables of SEO with the help of literature review and clubbed them into five independent variables; Websites, Content, Speed, Links and Social Media.

The collected data was analyzed using correlations and regression with the help of IBM SPSS 23 to find the effective relation and impact of the independent variables and the dependent variable consumer information behavior. Each

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variable's influence was measured on the dependent variable using tables and graphs. Third, this data was interpreted from the tables and graphs giving the results as follows:

- Websites: This variable includes all components like, numerous websites the consumer checks, numerous pages the consumer checks on the search engine, top of the page websites and websites with relevant titles. This independent variable has a significant relation and a positive impact on consumer information behavior.
- Content: This variable includes four components relation to the content on the web page, simple language, high quality content, informative videos and images. This variable has a significant relation and positive impact on consumer information search behavior. This implies that consumers prefer web pages which have good quality content which is available with videos and images.
- Speed: This variable includes two components, the fast loading speed of the web page and easy processing websites. This variable has a moderate relation and very low impact on consumer information behavior. This means that consumers are not much influenced by the web pages which have fast loading speed and easy procedures.
- Links: This variable includes components like the URL's recommended on other pages, shorter URL's and recurring links. Links has a significant relation and positive impact on the dependent variable. This implies that consumers do refer the links of the websites recommended on other web pages and shorter URL's, so it is easy to remember while searching. Even the recurring links are visited for information search.
- Social Media: This variable includes the website's activeness on social network sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and so on. It also includes blogs. It has a moderate relation and very less impact on the dependent variable. This shows that consumers are less influenced by the presence of websites on social media and blogs.

Overall, from the above results the following can be stated:

- First null hypothesis says; H01: There is no possible impact of search engine optimization in consumer buying behavior. From the above interpretation three variables have a significant relation on the dependent variable because they have correlation, and this means that if two variables have correlation, one variable effects the other variable. Thus, there is importance of these three variables on consumer information search behavior. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and say that there is significant impact of search engine optimization in consumer buying behavior.
- Second null hypothesis H02: SEO does not influence the consumer's information search behavior. From the above interpretation, three variables website, content and links have influence on the dependent variable because the regression analysis these variables have significant influence on the consumer information search behavior. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis; SEO does influence the consumer's information search behavior.
- Third null hypothesis H03: There is no relationship between SEO and consumer's information search behavior. From the above interpretation, three out of two variables of SEO had significant influence on the dependent variable. Thus, the null hypothesis can be rejected; there is a positive relationship between SEO and consumer's information search behavior.
- The negative finding is that the two variables speed and social media don't have a significant influence on the dependent variable; they have only a moderate effect on consumer's information search behavior.

Therefore, out of five variables three variables; websites, content and links have significantly high influence on the consumer information search behavior. The other two variables have less influence. Thus, the different company websites should focus on these variables while creating their websites, this will help then increase the SEO of the web page and ultimately attracting larger target audiences and even the

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potential consumers. SEO is one such marketing tool which helps the company website to easily gain awareness and attention from the consumers, the first step of AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action) pyramid is achieved. Also, this is cost effective, as it requires only manipulating the keywords & data while creating a webpage and can be updated whenever required.

7. Recommendations

The following are some recommendations which could be followed to make this study better;

- This study included sample frame which dint have people who had technical expertise, because of which the responses might not in technical preference.
- The sample size can be increased to get better and more reliable results.
- Convenient sampling cannot cover all types of samples, thus different type of sampling method should be used to get more precise results.
- Other statistical tools can be used to understand this topic better.
- Geographically only Haryana was covered, thus other places can also be covered.

8. Conclusion

The primary objective of this research project was to determine the significant impact of SEO on consumer information behavior. It is proven in the paper by rejecting the null hypothesis that is, there is an effective importance of SEO in influencing the consumer behavior.

The secondary objective was to determine if SEO has influence on the consumer information search behavior, from the data collected and analysis, it resulted that three out of five variables have an effective influence on consumer information behavior and the rest two had less influence. The third objective was to find a relationship between SEO and consumer behavior, and there is positive relationship between these two.

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