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The Digital Snare: Analyzing Marketing Entrapment Strategies And Consumer Awareness On Amazon

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Abstract: This study explores the transformational shift from traditional retail to digital marketplaces, where advanced algorithms and psychological triggers now define consumer interaction. It examines the emergence of "marketing entrapment"—a set of manipulative tactics including misleading advertisements, scarcity techniques, and hidden charges designed to subtly influence purchasing decisions. Focusing on a demographic of digital natives, the research identifies that monetary-based incentives, such as aggressive discount strategies, serve as the primary catalyst for consumer engagement and entrapment. While many respondents demonstrate a conscious awareness of these maneuvers, a substantial portion of the population remains oblivious or neutral, highlighting a significant gap in consumer knowledge. To counter these influences, consumers are increasingly adopting a defensive posture by relying on peer-validated metrics like buyer and seller ratings rather than corporate assurances. Ultimately, the study concludes that mitigating the ethical concerns of AI-driven manipulation requires a combination of enhanced consumer education, stricter governmental monitoring, and the adoption of ethical business practices.

Keywords: entrapment, online shopping, consumer behaviour

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, online shopping has emerged as one of the most transformational trends in the global retail environment. The internet and advances in digital technology have transformed the way people browse, choose, and buy goods and services. Online shopping systems, powered by advanced algorithms and user-friendly interfaces, have enabled consumers to purchase at any time and from any location. The transition from traditional brick-and-mortar storefronts to digital markets has altered consumer behavior, producing a highly competitive environment for businesses. Online marketing has grown at an exponential rate, driven by increased internet penetration, the spread of smartphones, and customers' growing trust in digital transactions. From humble beginnings in the early 2000s, e-commerce has grown into a multi-trillion-dollar global sector.. Consumer marketing methods used by online shopping platforms are broad and complex. These techniques are based on studying consumer psychology and using big data analytics to forecast and influence purchasing decisions. Personalized recommendations, dynamic pricing, flash deals, loyalty programs, and tailored ads are standard strategies for attracting and retaining customers. Furthermore, platforms use techniques such as

gamification, social proof, and influencer marketing to foster trust and a sense of urgency among customers.

However, with the rise of these marketing strategies, the issue of customer knowledge has become more pressing. Many consumers are ignorant of the complex psychological and technological methods employed to sway their decisions. The possible consequences of marketing entrapment strategies highlight the importance of increased consumer understanding. Consumers may be dissatisfied and lose money because of misleading product descriptions, hidden charges, and deceptive advertising. Furthermore, the ethical implications of manipulating customer behavior using artificial intelligence and data tracking raise serious concerns regarding privacy and consent. Addressing these concerns calls for a combination of consumer education, governmental monitoring, and ethical company practices. This study intends to analyze the dynamics of online marketing methods and their impact on consumer awareness, with a special focus on understanding how consumers navigate and respond to the tactics used by major online purchasing platforms.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The shift from traditional retail to digital platforms like Amazon has introduced sophisticated algorithmic and psychological triggers that fundamentally alter consumer behavior. These "marketing entrapment" strategies—including misleading ads, scarcity tactics, and hidden charges—subtly manipulate shoppers into making unintended purchases. Despite the prevalence of these complex technological methods, many consumers remain oblivious to how their decisions are being swayed. While some "digital natives" adopt defensive postures using peer-validated metrics, a significant gap in awareness persists. Furthermore, the ethical implications of using artificial intelligence and data tracking raise serious concerns regarding privacy and informed consent. Consequently, there is an urgent need to analyze these dynamics to determine how education and monitoring can mitigate exploitative e-commerce practices.

III. OBJECTIVES

- To examine the factors effect consumer decision-making and purchasing patterns.
- To evaluate consumer awareness and their ability to recognize and resist these tactics.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Sample:** The sample of the study consists of 50. The correspondents were randomly selected from different places in Thrissur district. Selected based on time and convenience.
- **Data Collection:** A structured Questionnaires were provided to 50 respondents in Thrissur district and it is framed in such a way that all the questions could provide information as per the survey requirements such as attitudes, behaviour and satisfaction. Various journals, books and websites helped to create a base of the study.
- **Data analysis:** Percentage analysis and graphs used to analyse and present the data.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Santosh Kumar, G. (2021)** the thesis "A Study on Marketing Strategies of Online Shopping Portals: A Comparative Study on Flipkart and Amazon India" offers a comprehensive analysis of the marketing strategies adopted by two major e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart in India. It effectively highlights their distinct approaches in areas like pricing, advertising, and customer engagement. However, the study could benefit from more in-depth analysis of emerging trends like social

commerce and AI-driven personalization. The focus on consumer behavior insights is commendable but could have been extended to cover rural markets more extensively. Overall, it is a valuable resource for understanding the Indian e-commerce landscape.

- **Shaloo, Khare (2019)** says with the changes in technology buying goods have become faster, smarter and convenient. Any product can be purchased just by one click on their smartphone and can have product at doorsteps. Now a day's shopping has been redefined. Younger generation are very much inclined towards online shopping. Online shopping attracts everyone but it attracts youth more and majority of online shoppers are students and the study was conducted to see how satisfied the customers are with Flipkart. The survey revealed that Amazon was the best. According to author, Amazon India understands Indians well and stronger in India. Flipkart is fighting hard with Amazon even though it is a new company compared to Amazon.
- **Kamp, R. M. (2019)** in his research paper explores the psychological and economic mechanisms employed to influence consumer behavior. The study examines how marketers utilize manipulation tactics, such as emotional appeals, scarcity, and social proof, to create a desire to purchase. It highlights the role of subconscious triggers in decision-making and the ethical implications of these strategies. Kamp also analyzes how these tactics shape consumer perceptions and purchasing habits, emphasizing the fine line between effective marketing and exploitation. This work provides valuable insights into the intersection of consumer psychology and marketing practices.
- **D'Agostino, J. (2018)** This thesis examines the influence of e-commerce on brands by looking at the world's largest e-commerce company, Amazon. Amazon's success is dependent on the existence of the brands it carries, yet its business model does not support its longevity. This research covers the history of retail and a description of e-commerce in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of our current retail landscape. The history of Amazon as well as three business analyses, a PESTEL analysis, a Porter's Five Forces analysis, and a SWOT analysis, are included to establish a cognizance of Amazon as a company. With this knowledge, several aspects of Amazon's business model are illustrated as potential brand diluting forces. However, an examination of these forces revealed that there are positive effects of each of them as well. These factors have been termed as Amazon's Collective Intent. After this nomenclature, the Brand Matrix, a business tool

VI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Consumer awareness, in this context, is defined as an individual's ability to recognize and understand various marketing approaches employed by businesses to affect their decision to consume certain products. Marketing entrapment techniques are manipulative marketing approaches employed to subtly influence consumers to buy products or services from businesses. Marketing entrapment techniques, in most cases, utilize psychological and emotional impulses, and consumers are forced to believe that they are making independent decisions, while in fact, they are being subtly manipulated.

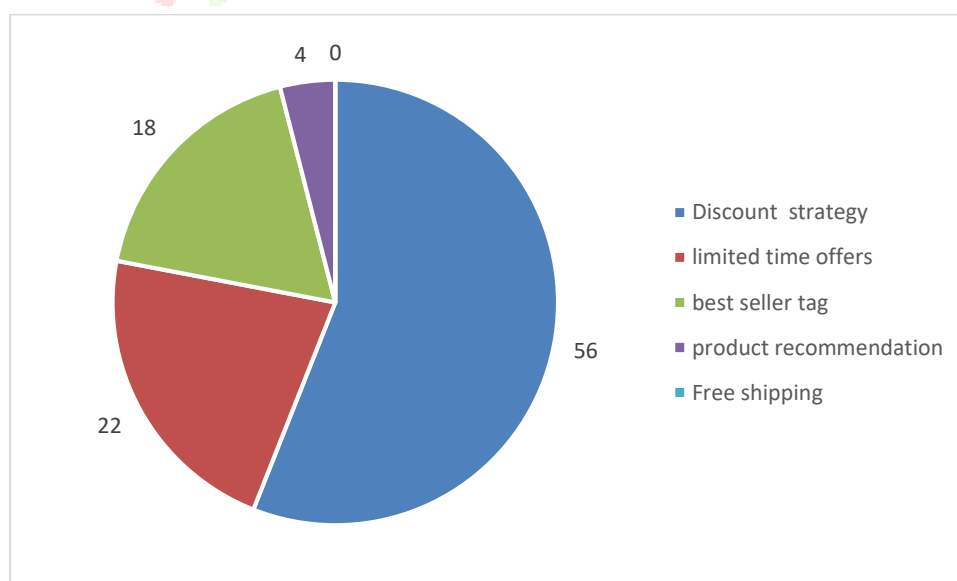
Various marketing entrapment techniques employed by businesses to entrap consumers into making purchases include misleading advertisements, additional costs charged to consumers, scarcity techniques, and pre-checked options during online transactions, among others, which often result in unintended purchases by consumers. Other marketing entrapment techniques employed by businesses to entrap consumers into making purchases include combining products that consumers may not require and offering consumers with misleading ideas regarding products.

Consumer awareness regarding marketing entrapment techniques is, therefore, fundamental in ensuring that consumers are able to make independent decisions and avoid being exploited by businesses. Informed consumers, in this context, are able to analyze marketing approaches, recognize marketing

entrapment techniques, and select products or services that can effectively satisfy their needs. Consumer education.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic		Percentage %
Gender	Male	48
	Female	52
Age	20-30	45
	31-40	38
	41-50	12
	Above 50	5
Frequency character		
Factors that lead entrapment	Discount strategy	56
	limited time offers	22
	best seller tag	18
	product recommendation	4
	Free shipping	0
Rate your awareness level of entrapment tactics of Amazon	Aware	56
	Neutral	30
	Not aware	14
Resisting strategies against entrapment	Reviews/buyer rating	50
	Seller ratings	30
	Product description	8
	Warranty clause	12



VIII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The participant pool exhibits a relatively equitable gender distribution, though a marginal majority of female respondents is observed. From a generational perspective, the sample is heavily skewed toward young and early-middle-aged cohorts, suggesting that the findings predominantly reflect the experiences of "digital natives." This demographic concentration is particularly significant, as it represents the consumer segment with the highest frequency of platform engagement and, theoretically, the greatest exposure to sophisticated algorithmic marketing interventions.

Regarding the psychological efficacy of platform-driven incentives, the data underscores a hierarchy of influence where monetary-based triggers—specifically aggressive discount strategies—act as the primary catalyst for consumer entrapment. While a slight majority of the surveyed population expresses a conscious awareness of these tactical maneuvers, a substantial portion of the cohort remains either ambivalent or entirely oblivious to such psychological framing. To mitigate these influences, consumers appear to adopt a defensive posture rooted in decentralized trust; there is a clear preference for peer-validated metrics, such as buyer and seller ratings, over centralized corporate assurances like product descriptions or warranty clauses. This shift suggests that in the face of pervasive marketing stimuli, collective consumer intelligence serves as the primary bulwark against impulsive acquisition and platform-guided consumption patterns.

IX. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights that the transition from traditional storefronts to digital marketplaces has fundamentally altered consumer behavior, creating a highly competitive environment where platforms utilize advanced algorithms and psychological triggers to influence purchasing decisions. While online shopping offers unprecedented convenience, it has introduced sophisticated "marketing entrapment" techniques—such as misleading advertisements, scarcity tactics, and hidden charges—that subtly manipulate consumers into making unintended purchases. The research findings, derived from a demographic heavily skewed toward "digital native" cohorts in Thrissur, reveal that monetary-based incentives like aggressive discount strategies are the primary catalyst for consumer entrapment. Furthermore, while a slight majority of respondents expressed awareness of these tactical maneuvers, a substantial 44% remains either ambivalent or entirely oblivious, highlighting a critical gap in consumer knowledge. To mitigate these influences, consumers are increasingly adopting a defensive posture rooted in decentralized trust, prioritizing peer-validated metrics like buyer and seller ratings over centralized corporate assurances. Ultimately, addressing the ethical implications of manipulating customer behavior through AI and data tracking requires a concerted effort involving enhanced consumer education, stricter governmental monitoring, and the adoption of ethical company practices to ensure individuals can make truly independent and informed decisions in the digital age.

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