



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CLICKBAIT: THE INFLUENCE OF SENSATIONALIZED HEADLINES IN E-COMMERCE APPLICATIONS ON CONSUMER'S PURCHASING DECISIONS

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History:

Received 29 October 2022
Revised 02 December 2022
Accepted 04 January 2023
Available online 09 January 2023

ABSTRACT

Clickbait is a sensationalized headline prevalent online, aiming to entice people to click a link, an advertisement, or a headline. The study intends to find out how such a phenomenon is perceived by consumers and the extent of its influence on purchasing decisions through the combined approaches of structured survey questionnaires containing factors of clickbait and an interview using unstructured questionnaires inquiring about how it has influenced purchasing decisions. Fifty (50) respondents were conveniently selected for the survey, while ten (10) were similarly selected for the interview. The results gathered through the statistical application of Pearson-r correlation suggested that consumers consider the visual and psychological aspects of clickbait and are influenced by their purchasing decisions. Interview responses implied the apparent influence of a sensationalized headline in their purchases through various factors such as convenience, visually pleasing images or content, and the credibility and adequacy of the information being presented. The researcher recommended that online shops focus more on improving their virtual advertisements and utilize online survey questionnaires containing questions assessing customer satisfaction regarding their product, experience, and visual presentations. It is also advised that online shops conduct thorough research and in-depth application of the current trends. Consumers should be reminded and aware of those enticing advertisements that provide fake content.

KEYWORDS

Clickbait, sensationalized headlines, customer satisfaction, purchasing decisions

1. INTRODUCTION

Each click and page visit on sensationalized websites generates advertising revenue. More clicks boost the income of a website. Yellow journalism, sometimes known as "sensationalism," has been utilized in marketing for decades. It is employed to evoke the reader's emotions. New tactics to entice Internet users to visit websites are growing in popularity. Media websites frequently utilize "clickbait" to lure Internet users. A clickbait title employs provocative language to encourage visitors to click the link and utilize the website's e-commerce applications. The purpose of clickbait is to get website users to click on a specific link.

Clickbait is a crucial marketing strategy since it attracts and interest readers. According to some study, "forward reference" in news headlines contains a significant amount of shocking information (Potthast et al., 2016). Clickbait encourages consumers to click on a sales headline and make a purchase. According to Statista, Shopee and Lazada had 54.6 million monthly users and 38.3 million monthly page views in the Philippines in 2021. Ronquillo reports that 14% of Shopee (2021) poll respondents said they browse more than usual (2021). The fact that users click on adverts with appealing headlines indicates that the majority are aware of clickbait's deception. It focuses on human feelings and decision-making. A clickbait title that promises a high reward and includes an image encourages humans to click a link because the headline has already made a significant impression before the web page loads (Potthast et al., 2016).

The ubiquitous availability of the internet enables people to easily buy and sell things. Its expansion has altered consumers' buying practices, customer service standards, and sales techniques. This study tries to

determine how sensationalized headlines or "clickbait" influence consumers' purchasing decisions on e-commerce applications, whether as company platforms or shopping platforms. Before clicking a link, the researchers want to know what the clients' thoughts are. The purpose of the study's findings is to increase customer awareness and encourage businesses to use internet marketing tools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The meticulously organized and presented prior literature and studies served as inspiration for the study's design. Initially, Molyneux and Coddington explained and cited the psychology of (Clickbait, 2019). A group of researchers mention the emotional and inquisitive appeals to customers (Wanda et al., 2004). Dukes and Liu described the customer interest in click baits (Dukes and Liu, 2021). According to some studies, advertisements and promotions enhance consumers' attention (Febrilla and Warokka, 2021; Katawetawaraks and Wang, 2011). In other studies, they have highlighted research regarding customers who conduct research (Laudon and Tracver, 2009; Amati, 2020). According to some study, purchase decisions are aided by internet resources (Banerjee, 2022; Moshref Javadi, 2012). The objective quality of an e-commerce website is crucial, according to some researchers defined clickbait advertising and investigated its beneficial results and attributes (Wells et al., 2011; Dharta et al., 2021; Buteau et al., 2020). According to a study, cognitive and emotional factors are two of several indicators of user engagement (Kormelink and Meijer, 2018). According to Tenenboim and Cohen (2015) and Kormelink and Meijer (2018), customers click on clickbait in order to pique their curiosity and gain personal experience (Tenenboim and Cohen, 2015; Kormelink and Meijer, 2018). According to Kormelink and Meijer

Quick Response Code



Access this article online

Website:
www.csmj.com.my

DOI:
10.26480/csmj.01.2023.01.05

even if customers find an article or title intriguing, they do not click on it (Kormelink and Meijer, 2018).

Moreover, before making a purchase decision, an online business must evaluate consumers' various purchasing behaviors (Vreder, 2016; Rahman et al., 2018). According to Stankevich, investigations have already been undertaken to address their decision-making process and buying intentions (Stankevich, 2017). 84% of the total number of articles studied in the study conducted were favourable, demonstrating that sales marketing has a significant impact on consumers' perceptions of a particular product (Falebita et al., 2020). Moreover, according to the likelihood of making an impulsive purchase increase when an individual is unable to think rationally due to a strong emotional drive (Burton et al., 2018). According to Gogoi and Shillong, the environment of the store, the product's happiness, and self-esteem are other crucial variables (Gogoi and Shillong, 2020).

3. METHODS

Using a mixed-methods research approach, the study interpreted both quantitative and qualitative data inside a single study. According to [5] Creswell and Plano Clark, the overall objective of this research design and the underlying notion that combining quantitative and qualitative methodological results in a superior understanding of complicated research issues or challenges than a single approach alone (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). For the quantitative and qualitative elements, respectively, descriptive correlational research design and phenomenology research design will be used. The objective of descriptive correlational research is to characterize the relationship between independent and dependent variables without influencing or modifying them (Nora 2021). Phenomenology research design, on the other hand, seeks to examine an individual's experience and transform it into empirical evidence (Neubauer et al., 2019).

3.1 Statistical Treatment and Analysis of Data

The survey questionnaire results are tallied and analysed using the following statistical methods:

1. Frequency and percentage are employed to depict the demographic profile of the respondent
2. The weighted mean and standard deviation, along with their linguistic interpretations, are utilized to express the verbal and psychological content of clickbait and its impact on purchasing decisions.
3. Pearson-r correlation is utilized to measure the significance of the association between the demographic profile of respondents and their perception of the influence of sensational headlines in E-commerce applications.

The interview data, on the other hand, is evaluated using approach to phenomenological research, as cited (Moustaka's, 1989; Aguas, 2022). This method includes the structured parts of bracketing, horizontalization, textural and structural descriptions, and the overall essence.

3.2 Data Analysis

Table 1: Age of Respondents		
Age	Frequency	Percentage
17 – 24 years old	37	74.0%
25 – 34 years old	7	14.0%
35 – 44 years old	3	6.0%
45 years old and above	3	6.0%
TOTAL	50	100%

The age distribution of respondents is shown in Table 1. Seventy-four percent (74%) of respondents are between the ages of 17 and 24, fourteen percent (14%) are between the ages of 25 and 34, while respondents between the ages of 35 and 44 and those older than 45 share the same percentage, which is six percent (6%). In conclusion, the majority of responders were between the ages of 17 and 24. In contrast to the findings of Global Web (2020), which are cited by this study reveals that the majority of Filipino online shoppers, 45%, are between the ages of 25 and 35, 22% are between the ages of 18 and 24, 16% are between the ages of 35 and 44, and 17% of the Filipino shoppers are aged 45 or older (Masigan, 2020).

Table 2 reveals that, with a total of 64%, the majority of responders were female. This is reinforced by the findings of Global Web quoted which indicate that, in terms of demographics, 72% of Filipino consumers are female and 28% are male (Global Web, 2020; Masigan, 2020).

Table 2: Sex of Respondents		
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18	36.0%
Female	32	64.0%
TOTAL	50	100%

Table 3: Monthly Income of the Respondents		
Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below P5,000	24	48.0%
P5,000 - P9,999	7	14.0%
P10,000 - P14,999	4	8.0%
P15,000 - P19,999	5	10.0%
P20,000 or above	10	20.0%
TOTAL	50	100%

The respondents' monthly income is detailed in Table 3. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the respondents have a monthly income of less than P5,000, twenty percent (20%) have P20,000 or more, fourteen percent (14%) have a monthly income between P5,000 and P9,999, ten percent (10%) have P15,000 to P19,999, and eight percent (8%) have a monthly income between P10,000 and P14,999. In conclusion, the majority of respondents have a monthly salary of less than P5,000.

According to the iPrice Group, the average Filipino customer spends at least P1,311 per month on online purchasing applications (Romualdez, 2020). This was P628 more than the average daily household expenditure, according to recent data from the Philippine Statistical (Authority, 2019; Inquirer Business, 2019). That is more than one thousand pesos a day spent alone on consumer goods. This year, the average basket size climbed by 10% as more Filipinos began shopping online.

The indicator with the greatest weighted mean is number ten (10) in table 4, which states, "I find pop-up adverts or headlines uninteresting if they are not well-designed." It is perceived linguistically as a factor to be considered. The indications for the numbers 4, 6, 3, 7, 8, and 5 have lower weighted averages of 2.92, 2.78, 2.70, 2.68, and 2.64, respectively, and are each read verbally as a factor. Both indicator number 9 and indicator number 1 have lower weighted averages of 2.44 and 2.36, respectively, and are understood orally as a moderately evaluated component. Last but not least, Indicator No. 2, which indicates, "I click on pop-up adverts or headlines if their font style is something I enjoy or aesthetically pleasant," has the lowest weighted mean of 2.26, which is evaluated orally as somewhat regarded.

The indicator with the highest weighted mean is supported which was cited by who stated that while the objective quality of an e-commerce website is essential, understanding the consumer base's innate impulsiveness is essential to comprehend how and why consumers react to varying degrees of website quality (Wells et al., 2011; Dharta et al., 2021). Consequently, consumers with high impulsivity are more likely to be positively affected by a high-quality website. On the other side, impulsive clients are more negatively affected by poor-quality websites.

As seen in table 5, indicator number nine, which states "I typically ignore pop-up adverts or headlines that do not match my choices," has the highest weighted mean of 3.52, which can be read orally as significantly impacted. The number five indicator has a weighted mean of 3.28 and is also vocally interpreted as being heavily affected. The indicators numbered 1, 10, and 6 have respective lower weighted averages of 3.12, 3.06, and 2.58. These indicators are regarded verbally as influenced. The lower weighted means for indicators numbered 2, 3, 8, and 7 are 2.48, 2.42, 2.36, and 2.30, respectively. These indicators are evaluated verbally as moderately affected. Indicator number four indicates that when a respondent finds a pop-up advertisement or headline intriguing, they promptly purchase the item. It has the lowest weighted mean with a value of 2.12, which is perceived orally as somewhat impacted.

The results of table 5 are backed by assertion that cognitive and affective factors are two of a number of additional predictors of user interaction with sensationalized headlines (Kormelink and Meijer's, 2018). Additionally, they stated that even if customers find an item or title intriguing, they do not click on it. It appears that a certain item has already offered adequate information or that there is an associative gap, which means that the headline does not provide enough information for the reader to want to click it. Consequently, to convince a user to click on a headline, there must be a balance between offering enough information to

satisfy the viewer's interest and making the user desire to learn more about a given topic.

For added validity and reliability of the results, a focused group discussion with an unstructured questionnaire is employed to investigate and

perceive varied and diverse information sources from a variety of perspectives. The interview data is evaluated based on Moustaka's method to phenomenological research (Moustaka's, 1989; Aguas, 2021). This method includes the structured parts of bracketing, horizontalization, textural and structural descriptions, and the overall essence.

Table 4: Visual and Psychological Content of Clickbait

Statements	Mean	STD. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. I tend to click on pop-up advertisements or headlines that are mysterious and pique my curiosity.	2.36	1.025	Slightly Considered
2. I click on pop-up advertisements or headlines if its font style is something I like or pleasing to my eyes	2.26	1.026	Slightly Considered
3. I tend to click on pop-up advertisements or headlines when the image included is something or someone I like (e.g celebrity) or is familiar to me.	2.70	0.931	Considered
4. I tend to click on pop-up advertisements or headlines that contain something that appeals to my emotions.	2.92	0.966	Considered
5. I tend to click on pop-up advertisements or headlines that are artistically made and have the right color usage.	2.64	1.005	Considered
6. Clicking on shopping headlines can lead me to make a good purchase.	2.78	1.130	Considered
7. I tend to click on pop-up advertisements or headlines that show a certain item that is under a well-known brand.	2.70	1.055	Considered
8. I more likely purchase a certain item shown in a pop-up advertisement or headline if it is believable enough.	2.68	1.039	Considered
9. Pop-up advertisements or headlines written in question form piqued my curiosity which made me want to click it.	2.44	1.072	Slightly Considered
10. I find pop-up advertisements or headlines not interesting enough if it is not well-designed.	2.94	1.038	Considered
Weighted Mean Response	2.64	0.777	CONSIDERED

3.26 - 4.00 Highly Considered, 2.51 - 3.26 Considered, 1.76 - 2.50 Slightly Considered, 1.00 - 1.75 Not Considered

Table 5: Influence of Clickbait on Purchasing Decision

Statements	Mean	STD. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Seeing a shopping headline showing a big discount on a certain item makes me want to purchase it.	3.12	0.895	Influenced
I tend to purchase in any online shopping app more than usual after seeing a certain pop-up advertisement or headline	2.48	1.015	Slightly Influenced
I find clickbaits helpful when I am having a hard time choosing a good deal	2.42	1.032	Slightly Influenced
I immediately purchase a certain item I saw on a popup advertisement or headline whenever I find it interesting	2.12	0.982	Slightly Influenced
I assess an item shown on a pop-up advertisement or headline first before actually clicking it and making a purchase	3.28	0.970	Highly Influenced
I most likely recommend the product shown on a popup advertisement or headline to my friends, family, or colleagues that I think is interesting for them.	2.58	0.928	Influenced
Pop-up advertisements or headlines led me to buy things that I do not need at all.	2.30	1.035	Slightly Influenced
I impulsively prioritize purchasing an item that I saw on a pop-up advertisement or headline that I find more interesting than the items that have been in "my cart" for a very long time.	2.36	1.120	Slightly Influenced
I usually ignore pop-up advertisements or headlines that do not suit my preferences.	3.52	0.789	Highly Influenced
I find clickbaits quite annoying as it distracts me from purchasing the product I need.	3.06	0.793	Influenced
WEIGHTED MEAN RESPONSE	2.72	0.564	INFLUENCED

3.26 - 4.00 Highly Influenced, 2.51 - 3.26 Influenced, 1.76 - 2.50 Slightly Influenced, 1.00 - 1.75 Not Influenced

Table 6: Substantial Statements of Participants' Lived Experiences on Purchasing a Product They Saw from a Clickbait

Substantial Statements of Participants' Lived Experiences on Purchasing a Product They Saw from a Clickbait
1 - I bought the product out of curiosity
2 - The item is on sale so I took the chance and bought it
3 - The product seemed to be effective and convenient, so I tried it.
4 - The product's visual and technical features are well-presented, which is why I purchased it.
5 - I find clickbaits tempting especially when the product is interesting to me.

The majority of participants reported that they immediately became inquisitive when they saw a pop-up commercial or a headline, however, some of them ignore it since they find the headlines intriguing. On the other hand, some participants claimed they purchased the product advertised in a clickbait headline because it was on sale, and others said the products appeared to be useful and convenient for them. In addition, the product's visual and technological features are well-presented, which encourages customers to purchase it (Kumar, 2009).

3.3 Essence

Given the epidemic, the researcher was compelled to explore this phenomenon, as it is apparent that individuals are becoming accustomed to online buying today. Thus, the researchers determined that the participants' purchasing decisions are influenced by sensationalized headlines.

The p-value of 0.012 in Table 7 is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that there is a significant association between the respondents'

age and their perception of the influence of spectacular headlines in E-commerce applications. In terms of its strength, it is moderate, thus as an individual's age increases, so does their perceived influence on sensationalized headlines.

According to Table 7, there is no correlation between the gender of respondents and their perception of the influence of sensationalized headlines in E-commerce applications. The p-value, 0.707, is above the significance threshold, 0.05. This suggests that the gender of respondents has no bearing on their impact when it comes to viewing such sensationalized headlines, regardless of whether they are male or female.

The p-value of 0.016 is below the significance threshold of 0.05, indicating a significant association between the respondents' monthly income and their perception of the influence of sensationalized headlines in E-commerce applications. Its perceived strength is moderate, which indicates that as a person's income increases, so does its perceived effect on sensationalized headlines.

Table 7: The Significant Relationship Between the Respondents' Age and Their Perceived Influence of Sensational Headlines in E-Commerce Applications

	Age	r-value	Strength	p-value	Sig
Perceived Influence of Sensationalized Headlines	17 - 24 years old	.352	Moderate	p = 0.012 < 0.05	S
	25 - 34 years old				
	35 - 44 years old				
	44 years old and above				

Table 8: The Significant Relationship Between the Respondents' Sex and Their Perceived Influence of Sensational Headlines in E-Commerce Applications

	Sex	r-value	Strength	p-value	Sig
Perceived Influence of Sensationalized Headlines	Male	.055	Very Weak	p = 0.707 > 0.05	NS
	Female				

Table 9: The Significant Relationship Between the Respondents' Monthly Income and Their Perceived Influence of Sensational Headlines in E-Commerce Applications

	Monthly Income	r-value	Strength	p-value	Sig
Perceived Influence of Sensationalized Headlines	Below P5,000	.340	Moderate	p = 0.016 < 0.05	S
	P5,000 - P9,999				
	P10,000 - P14,999				
	P15,000 - P19,999				
	P20,000 or above				

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, interpretations, and implications of the study's findings, the following conclusions were formed for each research topic.

1. Most responders were between the ages of 17 and 24, the majority were female, and their monthly income was less than P5,000.
2. Before clicking on a headline, customers examine whether it is original, entertaining, tailored to their preferences, and emotionally compelling. Other considerations include headlines that can lead to a good buy, convincing and intriguing headlines and headlines that involve a product already suggested by friends or co-workers.
3. The effectiveness of a particular pop-up advertisement or headline influences the respondent's purchase decisions. If it does not appeal to them, they will likely disregard it, but if it contains discounts or anything they enjoy, they may consider purchasing it.
4. There is a considerable correlation between the age and income of respondents and their perception of their influence on sensationalized headlines. However, there is no correlation between the respondent's gender and their perception of the influence of sensationalized headlines. This implies that as the age and income of a consumer increase, so does their perceived influence.

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