Editorial: Crowd behaviour and consumer consciousness

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Collective intelligence is an outgrowth of crowd behaviour, which guides the consumer consciousness and consumption patterns across the products, services and markets. Crowd perceptions significantly contribute to the consumer knowledge and decision-making abilities today. A crowd typically refers to a large agglomeration of people, who tend to focus on convergence of divergent perspectives of a given customer-centric strategy emerging as a social or market transformation agent. Though the crowd relationships are less strong as compared to a well-organised focus group, its deliberations significantly impact the consumer intentions (Sanchez et al., 2020). It has been observed that the social consumption patterns are widely influenced by the crowd behaviour. Green consumption has become a social concern and emerged as a growing crowd debate over time, which made a significant shift in the consumption pattern and consumer consciousness towards sustainable products and services. The experiences of collective action have led to several psychosocial changes, which are driven by the group support and collective communication (Drury, 2020).

Crowd cognition helps in developing social behaviour towards buying green products and services. Collective communication motivates customer perceptions on new products and the value propositions. Consequently, social consciousness evolves around the experience shared across the consumer communities on digital platforms. Such peoples' action serves specific organisational goals and determines the consumer perceptions on products and services in the marketplace (Rajagopal, 2021). Crowd contributions serve as a significant resource for firms in finding new ideas and solutions to the problems of existing products and services. Collective intelligence drawn from user generated contents offer potential payoffs in the long-term, which are valuable to the community and firm. Such payoffs have strategic effect on the market performance and business growth of the firms. Crowdsourcing information requires firms to establish adequate digital infrastructure and human resources. Verbal and non-verbal information is collected from the crowd through social media channels by facilitating virtual interface among participants. However, the collective intelligence is panoramically dispersed across personal preference of consumers (Geiger and Schader, 2014).

Crowd behaviour on social and sustainability perspectives leads to conscious consumption and socially responsible behaviour. Consumers often seek peer or crowd endorsement on shifts in social behaviour from conventional wisdom to acquired knowledge on sustainable or green consumption. However, at times consumers exaggerate their willingness to purchase green products with environmental consciousness. Previous research studies reviewing on psychosocial factors affecting the

consumption choices revealed that external influences (social and crowd behaviour) affect the conscious consumption behaviour among consumers (Tsarenko et al., 2013). Nonetheless, social networks often perplex consumer knowledge driven by the speed of crowd communication and volatility of the ideas, which form behavioural inconsistency on consumption of green products. Sustainable consumption has evolved as a social phenomenon than a personality trait induced by the self-concepts and individual value-based decisions. Consumer attitude, crowd behaviour, and perceived behavioural control influence purchase intention towards social and sustainable products. The changing trend of health-based consumption, social consciousness, and increasing crowd-based interventions in consumption patterns is shifting behavioural orientation of consumers gradually towards green consumerism (Defourny and Nyssens, 2017).

Besides, crowd behaviour there are various other touch points that affect the conscious consumption behaviour. In addition, crowd influence, self-reference, social and ethnic values, continuous learning, and family orientation influence consumers towards streamlining their perceptions and attitudes towards consumption culture. Due to the increasing accessibility of information technology, consumer behaviour tends to shift geo-demographically (Zook and Allen, 2003). Customer-centric companies, therefore put efforts to develop corporate strategies to create consumer behaviour considering AATAR approach to induce adaptable consumption pattern. The AATAR elements constitute developing *awareness* (communication), providing comprehension on *attributes* (constitution of product and prescribed values), *trial* (sharing consumers experience), *availability* (supply chain responses), and inculcating *repeat buying* (conscious consumption) behaviour among consumers (Rajagopal, 2019). Accordingly, consumer consciousness towards social concerns and consumption behaviour is significantly affected by the social and crowd endorsements. The purchase intention for socially conscious products is driven by the collective and individual perceptions on product attributes, prescribed value (corporate value of the product), consumer experience and the perceived use value (Sheu, 2010).

Social motivations are contextual to the social self-concept, which also drives consumption behaviour within the social system. Therefore, in upscaling social brands, marketing firms tend to develop positive consumer perceptions through the crowd communications and reorient consumerism across geo-demographic segments. Consequently, most consumer-centric companies implement campaigns to educate consumers on social needs and the role of business in delivering the socially conscious products and services. The social media and informal networks reinforce the ethical, environmental, and societal benefits of sustainable consumption (McEachern and McClean, 2002). Nonetheless, consumers take liberty to share their experience with the community interactions (within social niche and crowd at large) through social media and stimulate new ideas on social marketing of products and services (Zhang et al., 2017). Convenience and connectedness have been the principal driving forces that influence consumption behaviour and provide updated information to consumers to make decisions for acculturation of transformed consumption patterns, beyond the conventional wisdom and social niche. With the increasing crowd connectivity of consumers through the digital platforms, the socially conscious consumption behaviour has significantly affected (Yu et al., 2019). Consequently, consumerism today is co-created with the extensive social interactions, intensive self-cognition, and discrete association with the corporate advocacy on the consumption shifts and transformational consumerism. The cross-cultural attribute of consumerism significantly affects the social value and lifestyle

of consumers through the collective intelligence, crowd voice, and social views and validity with liberal ethos as observed by the consumers.

This issue of the journal includes five research papers that address green consumption, interactive marketing, corporate governance, corporate social responsibility and leadership styles. The papers included in this issue of the journal broadly discuss contemporary research on consumer behaviour, digital interactions, and transformations in the contemporary businesses. I hope the collection of research papers appearing in this issue will enrich the existing literature on the topic and stimulate future research.

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