

Gold as an Asset for the Indian Investor

Gold is a much sought-after asset by investors, being especially popular among Indian investors, who look at gold for security, returns as well as for investment risk diversification. Investing in gold is integrated into the Hindu tradition, and strict followers of the tradition invest in gold with consistency at least twice a year. However, investing in physical gold has its downsides. The booming Indian economy with a well-regulated financial sector has developed a number of alternatives for investing in gold without holding it in its physical form. This paper examines the alternatives accessible to investors in India so that investment in gold is made possible without the complications associated with holding physical gold, and the expected future products that will widen the choices available to Indian investors. Among the alternatives discussed are Gold ETFs, Sovereign Gold Bonds, Gold Futures and E-Gold.

Keywords: Physical Gold, Gold ETFs, Sovereign Gold Bonds, Gold Futures, E-Gold.

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Brand Switching in Telecom Sector: An Insight into Switching Behaviour and Switching Factors

Brand is a promise, an assurance by the producer to the customers to maintain the quality of the products and services purchased. Most of the times, it is the name and good image of the company. Brand failure leads to brand switching. This paper looks at the issue of brand switching as a growing problem in telecommunication service. Telecommunication possesses a high rate of brand switching due to its nature of service and growing competition in this sector. This is a serious threat to creating loyal customers for the firms. This paper is basically a review paper on switching behaviour of customers in telecommunication sector and the various factors influencing it. Research work of different scholars on brand and brand switching has been reviewed to outline the main factors of brand switching. Literature on brand switching of telecommunication suggests that some areas need to be taken care of for retaining the customers and reducing switching intentions. The paper concludes with some suggestions for the management to view the problem in a positive way.

Keywords: Brand Switching, Telecommunication, Switching Behaviour, Switching Factors, Switching Cost.

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Consumer Perception towards Effectiveness of Green Communication Strategies: An Exploratory Study

Organizations worldwide are focusing on developing green marketing strategies with a specific focus on communicating the ecological safety component of green products to the consumers and thereby creating awareness regarding the benefits of green products in the society. Effectiveness of green communication strategies lies in their ability to ensure the ecological safety of the product. The present study was carried out to investigate consumers' perception regarding effectiveness of green communication strategies used by the companies for promoting green products. For this purpose, the present study considered four communication strategies viz. 'Advertisements using Green Themes', 'Self Explanatory Labels', 'Educational Campaigns' and 'Certifications'. Educational Campaigns were perceived as the most effective green marketing strategy. The study also explored major factors affecting effectiveness of the green communication strategies.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Green Communication Strategies, Green Advertisements, Environmental Labels, Educational Campaigns.

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Efficiency of Private Banks in India – A Critical Inquiry

The focus of this study is efficiency of fifteen private banks operating in India. The study for 2005-2016 applies the two-input, two-output Data Envelopment Approach (DEA) under the variable returns to scale assumption. The study finds dominance of the three leading banks, namely HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank. The overall sector shows tremendous resilience during the period with mean efficiency not falling below 90 Percent in any of the years. IndusInd Bank, Karnataka Bank and South Indian Bank are 'poor performers' in the group and have immense scope for improvement. The application of Welch test shows the existence of significant difference in the efficiency score among the three groups of banks (based on their size) which is again confirmed in the pair-wise result obtained through Scheffe test. The conclusive part of the analysis shows lack of σ -convergence of efficiency score during the period.

Keywords: Private Bank, Efficiency, DEA, Welch Test, Scheffe Test

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Theoretical Review of Growth of E-Commerce in India and its Relevance in Future Business Sustainability

Globalization and the resultant changes in technology and business environment have also caused a paradigm shift in tastes and preferences of the Indian consumers. Such situation it has made it necessary for marketers to understand how customers react to these changes. Interestingly, it has been observed that E-commerce provides a sustainable business future for companies over the conventional business practices. Online business helps companies to enhance awareness of their offerings by reaching various group of consumer. With its low costs, maintenance, and high potentiality of increases consumer awareness, e-commerce is an inherent component of both the present and future for business operations in India. The question, however, is how to integrate e-commerce strategies and sustainable development principles for the success of company. This paper also aims to discover factors which influence consumers in their buying decision by the companies' preoccupations for sustainable development.

Keywords: E-commerce, Online Retailing, Internet, Sustainable Marketing, Technology Acceptance.

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Impact of Socio Cultural Variables on Impulsive Buying Behaviour in Selected Product Category in Uttarakhand

The social and cultural factors have always been a source of dominant influence in determining the buying decisions of the Indian consumers. Here we attempt to understand the role that these factors play in impulsive buying of some selected category of products. The societal influences shape up the personality of individuals and culture, beliefs and values are the reflection of an individual's true self. Impulsive buying is a purchase decision without contemplating the consequences. The influence of different socio-economic variables on impulsive buying in different product category is studied with the help of a well-structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 309 respondents. The various social-cultural factors are understood with the help of twenty-five constructs. The dimensionality of these constructs is reduced using factor analysis, where eight factors are identified. Further analysis is conducted using sophisticated statistical tools like ANOVA, cluster and regression analysis. Using a comprehensive list of the different categories of items in modern retail, the degree of impulsiveness and the influence of the eight constructs of socio-cultural factors on impulsive buying is explored.

Keywords: Socio-cultural Factors; Impulsive Buying Behavior; Indian Consumer; Retail Environment; Product Category.

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Board Level Gender Diversity and Firm Financial Performance - Evidence from India

The present study investigates the effect of gender diversity on firm performance of Indian companies and whether higher proportion of independent women directors significantly and positively moderates the effect of gender diversity on firm performance. The study has been conducted on BSE 100 companies for a period of 9 years. Firm performance has been measured by two accounting measures viz. ROA and ROCE. Gender diversity has been measured by Blau's index and as proportion of women directors on board. Various other control variables viz. age, CEO duality, leverage, size, etc. have been used. Panel data regression analysis on the data reveals that gender diversity positively but insignificantly affects firm performance of Indian companies. Firms having higher proportion of independent women directors as compared to non-independent women directors earn higher returns. Higher proportion of independent women directors positively moderates the effect of gender diversity on firm performance, though the moderation is not significant.

Keywords: Corporate Governance, Gender Diversity, Women Directors, Independent Women Directors, Firm Performance

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