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Research Article

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: A STUDY OF CONSUMERS AND MARKETERS

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Abstract

Social media, which began as a means to connect people, has turned into the most significant platform for marketers, supporting them in all facets of marketing. It is a powerful tool for businesses to reach and engage with their target audiences, promote their products and services, and achieve their marketing goals. Social media marketing refers to the utilization of tactics and technologies by marketers to analyse consumer behaviour and acquire knowledge on their preferences and interests via diverse social media platforms. It is the process of promoting a product or service through websites and social media platforms. As marketers continue to experiment in the area to meet the demands of their customers and prospects, social media marketing, which is still in its infancy, will undoubtedly grow and develop. Researchers are also interested in it, and they are looking at its implications and utilisation from a variety of perspectives. Through this research an effort has been made to understand the profile of the consumers using social media according to age, gender and other demographic characteristics. Along with that the study has tried to investigate the social media platforms most widely used by the consumers. It has also attempted to identify the consumer awareness, degree of confidence and trust while purchasing products marketed via social media platforms. Further it has provided insight to determine as to what extent social media influences consumer purchase decisions and also the attitude, perception and responsiveness of the customers towards social media marketing and the ways in which a marketer can make his communication more effective. This research has also shed light on the organisations which are employing SM by categorizing the businesses into various segments according to their social media usage pattern, the activities they undertake online and the benefits they seek from social media marketing. In addition to that efforts were also made to identify the SM platform most widely used by the businesses to target their specific audience. Furthermore, an effort has also made to understand how businesses are using SM in their business practices to enhance effectiveness of relationship with customers. The study also gauged into the advantages and impact of SMM on business routine.

Keywords: *SM in their social media platform and demographic characteristics*

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate social media marketing, a brand-new instrument in the marketing industry that has the potential to alter how customers buy and how businesses market their goods. The title of the study is social media marketing a study of consumers and marketers. The first chapter of this study gives a general introduction and conceptual framework of the topic. This chapter begins with the background of the study. Then, a brief about the concept of marketing & how it amalgamates with social media has been discussed. Further, it

highlights the benefits of social media marketing. Additionally, the Social feedback cycle and tools available for SMM have been discussed. The study then discusses social media engagement, factors affecting consumer social media engagement and measures to improve the S.M. engagement rate. The study extends to explain social media as a Modern age electronic marketing tool. Moreover, the study goes into detail about the history of business through social media and the different social media marketing channels. Finally, an overview of global social media has been given in the last section.

Social Media Marketing

SMM encompasses the utilization of methods and technologies by marketers to analyze consumer behavior and get insights into their preferences and interests across diverse SM platforms. It is a sort of internet marketing strategy that leverages SM applications as a means of promoting products or services. The advent of this latest breakthrough has brought about a substantial transformation in the marketing industry, offering an alternative to conventional marketing strategies for efficiently targeting specific target audiences. Nevertheless, despite its relative youth, there are predictions that it will serve as the focal point of the forthcoming marketing transformation. SMM serves as a digital platform facilitating direct interaction between customers and companies, enabling discussions pertaining to the goods and services presented by the firm. S.M. plays a crucial role in enabling two-way communication. S.M. profiles offer advantages to both consumers and businesses. Prior to making a purchase, shoppers exhibit a desire to peruse the social media accounts associated with the product or brand. The utilization of S.M. in India is closely intertwined with even the slightest changes observed in the nation's digital landscape. In addition to its cost-effectiveness, marketers now have the opportunity to investigate other suppliers at a significantly reduced expense compared to previous periods.

Consumer Buying Behaviour Process

It refers to the sequential series of activities that individuals do in order to make a purchase decision regarding a particular good or service. The process entails the identification of a problem, the acquisition of relevant information, the evaluation of several alternatives, the act of executing a purchase, and the subsequent assessment of post-purchase satisfaction.

Social Media Marketing Channels

SMM channels encompass the various platforms and websites employed by marketers to facilitate the promotion of their products or services, as well as the creation and dissemination of content. Additionally, these channels serve as a means for marketers to engage with their consumers and prospects inside the realm of SM. SMM platforms have the

potential to assist marketers in accomplishing a range of objectives, including enhancing brand recognition, attracting potential customers, boosting sales, and enhancing consumer loyalty.

The S.M. industry is a substantial medium that can be broken down into numerous channels. Each marketer has a unique method for separating one social media from another. Each variety has a distinct usage and purpose. Social media platforms vary greatly in terms of their nature. These platforms employ user data to provide extremely relevant ads based on user interactions on a particular platform. Target market matching with social media platform user demographics can result in enormous gains in conversions and revenue at a far cheaper cost of acquisition. Businesses and marketers search for various social media platforms that they may utilize to target and convert their consumers in light of these channels' popularity, requirements for the marketing mix, and power. Numerous scholars have assigned distinct categories to social media.

Literature Review

In the context of music events, Hudson and Hudson (2013) deployed the case study methodology to inspect the influence of SMM on consumers' decision making. In addition, this study strengthened the existing body of knowledge on events and festivals management by deploying the social media marketing model. They used a multimethod case study methodology to examine SM's uses at three big music festivals. The results indicate that "the music festivals profile are proactive in their use of social media, connect with consumers throughout the consumer decision journey".

Furthermore, the results argued that social media marketing facilitates better consumer decision-making in the context of festival events.

In context of US, Milewicz and Saxby (2013) developed a model to predict the motivating forces of organizational leaders' intention to use S.M. for in-bound consumer's communications about a political marketing.

Gupta et al. (2013) clarified the utilization of online media advertising in wellbeing advancement and schooling and talk about different mediations done, utilizing

web-based media showcasing instruments in advancing general wellbeing.

Chikandiwa et al. (2013) examined "social media adoption models" and "social media implementation models" implemented by institutions when adopting "social media marketing". In addition, this study also acknowledges the challenges and opportunities encountered by banks to implement the SMM strategies.

Durkin et al. (2013) tried to enquire about the adoption strategy of SMM. The authors engage eight firms over 2 years (2009-2011). By deploying action research methodology, they investigated the challenges SMEs encountered to adopt the SMM for gaining competitive advantages. Further, the experiences from the case organizations showed a wide range of way to deal with web-based media selection which regularly changed by authoritative setting and staff competency level.

Research Methodology

The study under consideration was conducted to explore and investigate Social media marketing: a study of consumers and marketers. There was a need to apply scientific research methods to achieve the desired objectives. Research methodology explains the purpose and goals of the study, sample size, variables employed and data sources, techniques used for data collection, hypotheses formulated and statistical tools used for analysis. It determines several diverse methods implemented in terms of quantitative and qualitative techniques for the pool & analysis of data. This chapter attempted to design and define the research methodology adequately implemented for the research investigation.

Problem Statement

The advent of social media first aimed to foster interpersonal connections, but it eventually developed into a highly influential platform for marketers, providing comprehensive support across various marketing domains. SMM refers to marketers' techniques and strategies to analyze consumer behavior and get insights into their preferences and interests across different social media platforms. In the last few years, SM usage in India as well as in the world has increased dramatically, with more people using it every day to establish their own brands, share

their experiences and ideas with the world, and discover new people through content that their peers or themselves have posted.

Objectives of the Study

Present study has taken up to achieve the following research objectives.

Profiling the consumers 'using the social media for purchase information purposes.

To identify the consumer awareness, extent of usage, degree of confidence and trust while purchasing products marketed via social media platforms.

To determine the extent to which social media influences consumer purchase decisions.

To investigate consumers' perception, attitude and satisfaction towards social media sites and effectiveness of communication through social media platforms.

To identify, compare and contrast businesses using social media for marketing in terms of social media used, activities, usage pattern, benefits envisaged and suitability to business

To identify the social media platforms most used by Businesses to target specific audience.

To understand how businesses use social media in their business processes to enhance relationship effectiveness with customers.

To study the advantages and impact of social media marketing on business performance.

Research Hypotheses

To measure the impact of S.M. benefits on consumer purchase decision and to determine the extent to which benefits received from S.M. influences "consumer purchase decisions"; to study the relationship between CRM and CRP; to explore the relationship and then an impact of SMM capabilities on business performance,

Research Design

As per Creswell (2015), the concept of research design entails "the overarching plan that a researcher opts for in order to harmoniously and logically blend the different elements of a study." A Research Design represents "A structured framework or plan for executing research. It outlines the methodologies and

approaches utilized to amass, gauge, and scrutinize data aimed at resolving the research quandary" (Malhotra & Dash, 2010). The phrase "research methodology" pertains to the organized methodology and diverse techniques employed to obtain and assemble necessary information, facilitating the development and resolution of a research issue while deriving well-reasoned and evaluative conclusions. A robust research design necessitates two fundamental prerequisites: firstly, delineating the problem, and secondly, processing it—entailing data collection via appropriate technical methods, followed by meticulous data analysis and informed decision-making.

It specifies the details and lays the foundation for conducting the research project (Malhotra & Birks, 2006). A great care has to be done while preparing whole research design. Since there is no optimal research design, choosing the appropriate one for a given study is challenging. There are different types of research in social sciences. In general, research design is of three types i.e. exploratory analysis, descriptive research & experimental research. Exploratory study is valuable for gaining insights and comprehending various phenomena under investigation. The research process exhibits a degree of flexibility and lacks a rigid framework, allowing for adaptability and responsiveness to changing circumstances. The data analysis phase encompasses qualitative and quantitative approaches, enabling a comprehensive examination of the research findings. The potential outcome of this study could yield definitive and conclusive results, serving as valuable input for future research endeavours. However, descriptive study is more formalized and typically structured with clearly stated hypothesis (Malhotra, & Birks, 2006).

Data collection

In research process, the result will be good if the data put in is good. If poor and unrelated data are collected, naturally poor and misleading conclusion will be drawn. Therefore, due consideration should be given to the type and method of data collection

Sampling Design

For the study people from Cuddalore region having an account on social media platform were considered. All the social media

users of Cuddalore region who are engaged in SM marketing were the population of the study. It includes all the consumers who are purchasing products marketed via social media platforms and all the marketers involved in SMM. A marketer for the study is someone who uses social media to promote their business or corporation.

Significance of the study

After the industrial revolution in the 20th century, industry growth has been at a massive rate. Major corporations have developed and either expanded into previously untapped markets or created whole new ones. During our lifetime, we have witnessed the era of digitalization, and currently, we are seeing the age of networking. In the contemporary era of interconnectedness, there has been a notable surge in internet utilisation, accompanied by a corresponding increase in individuals' engagement with SM platforms. The proliferation of SM platforms has exhibited an unprecedented expansion rate, to the extent that some prominent sites now boast user bases surpassing the populations of several sizable nations.

Data Analysis for Consumers

The objective of this research was to profiling the consumers using the social media for purchase information purpose; to identify the consumer awareness, extent of usage, degree of confidence and trust while purchasing products marketed via social media platforms; to study the usage pattern of social media by consumers and the benefits they derive from social media marketing of products; to determine the extent to which social media influences consumer purchase decisions; to investigate the perception, attitude and satisfaction of consumers towards social media sites and effectiveness of communication through social media platforms; to identify, compare and contrast businesses using social media for marketing in terms of social media used, activities, usage pattern, benefits envisaged and suitability to business; to identify the social media platforms most used by Businesses to target specific audience; to understand how businesses are using social media in their business processes to enhance effectiveness of relationship with customers and to study the advantages and impact of social media marketing on business performance.

In this section of the present study an attempt has been made to reveal the results of analysis of collected data. The primary data that were gathered through the field survey are analysed, presented, and interpreted in this chapter. Software called SPSS was used to analyse the data. Numerous statistical techniques had been employed in the study. Analysis part begins with the descriptive analysis of respondent 's profile. The profile of respondents was analyzed and presented in the form of tables.

It was followed by the testing of the hypotheses formulated for this study and presented in the order of the objectives. Each hypothesis was formulated on the basis of variables adopted for the study. The testing of the hypotheses was carried in the light of the desired objectives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to investigate social media marketing, a relatively new tool in the field of marketing that has the potential to change how consumers buy or choose products and how companies promote their products. The study is titled "Social Media Marketing: A Consumer and Marketer Study."

The whole study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter of this thesis gives a general introduction and conceptual framework of the topic. This chapter begins with the background of the study. Then, a brief about the concept of marketing & how it amalgamates with social media has been discussed. Further, it highlights the benefits of SMM.

Additionally, the Social feedback cycle has been discussed. The study extends to explain SM as a Modern age electronic marketing tool. Moreover, the study details the business history through SM and the different SMM channels. Finally, an overview of global social media has been given in the last section. The second chapter provides an extant literature review on SMM.

Furthermore, this chapter discusses the previous studies on SMM usage in different organizations and countries' context. It attempts to review of past studies in connection to influence of SMM usage and capabilities on business performance. The chapter identifies and explains the knowledge gap based on the literature review. The third chapter focuses on

research methodology adopted for the present study. The fourth chapter deals with analysis, presentation and interpretation of primary data, which have been collected by conducting the field survey. The last chapter, i.e., fifth, represents a summary, conclusion, suggestions and recommendations, significance, contribution to knowledge and scope for future research. In this chapter objectives of the study are restated, followed by the hypothesis and methodology. Based on analysis, major findings of the present study are discussed. Then the results of the current research work were represented. After that, suggestions and recommendations are presented, which can be employed by policymakers, researchers, businesses and marketers. Then the significance of the study is discussed. This chapter ends with providing the contribution to knowledge and in line with this; the scope for future research is also given.

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