A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON SOCIAL MEDIA BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS

MREDU GOYAL
RESEARCH SCHOLAR,
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF RAJASTHAN

1. ABSTRACT: The advent of social media has brought remarkable changes to both marketing and consumer behavior. Consumers have tremendous opportunities to engage in social interactions on the internet. Hence, understanding consumer behavior in the context of social media marketing has become vital for companies that aim to better influence consumers and harness the power of social media. The research on this topic is new and largely fragmented, it will be theoretically important to evaluate what has been studied and derive meaningful insights through a structured review of the literature. In this study, a systematic review of social media studies is conducted to explicate how consumers behave on social networking sites. The article also tries to study different social media marketing strategies by reviewing various books, journals, studies, published papers, researches, etc. The review of literature has been collected from both national and international secondary resources.

2. KEYWORDS: Social media marketing, consumer behavior, review of literature.

3. INTRODUCTION

The recent developments in digital and social media landscape has shown that marketers are more embracing social media to attract, engage and transact with their customers. Social media marketing has become more popular with the increased fame of websites such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Social media marketing refers to marketing done through social media or social networking websites. Presence on these social networking websites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter helps the organizations to easily reach the users who does not know about it. As these social networking websites already have large established online communities, exposure is gained by simply making their presence felt on these websites. Thus it provides a low cost opportunity to reach large numbers of users and gain the brand recognition. Although social media marketing is an influential online marketing tool, it is usually used to supplement other marketing methods rather than replace them. That's why most companies still rely on Web advertising and search engine optimization to generate traffic to their websites. Social media marketing strategy usually emphasize on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages users to share it with their social networks. Social media is earned media instead of paid media, as the corporate message spreads from user to user and presumably reverberates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself. Hence, this entirely new avenue of marketing has replaced the traditional word-of-mouth publicity to word-of-web.

Consumers are progressively heading to social media sites before making a purchase decision, which greatly influences their buying behavior. The feedback and reviews from existing customers found on these social networking sites are more influential with consumers than a one-sided website. Moreover, the human interaction that's the core of social media marketing has usurped advertisements in building a level of trust with the present and potential customers. Present consumer is more likely to trust those who give an impartial description of a product rather than a celebrity who is paid to endorse the product. Social media allows people all over the world to form a community of consumers. Thus it would be a mistake to think that traditional marketing material will be enough to influence the way consumers think about the brand and products in the present social networking world.

4. Review of Literature

A study by PricewaterhouseCoopers [18] in 2017 asked digital buyers about how they make purchase decisions online. Nearly half reported that reviews, comments and feedback on social media impacted their shopping choices.

According to a recent research conducted in April 2017 of 1,003 consumers by Sprout Social [17], most consumers want brands to be honest and friendly on social media, not snarky and trendy. Some 86% of respondents say they want brands to be honest in their social posts; 83% want brands to be friendly, 78% want them to be helpful, and 72% want them to be funny. Most consumers like it when brands use social media to respond to questions, join conversations, and talk about timely events. Less than half of consumers want brands to be trendy (43%), politically correct (39%), or snarky (33%) on social media. More than two-thirds of consumers find it annoying when brands use social media to make fun of competitors, post slang, talk politics, and make fun of customers. Some 83% of consumers feel comfortable with brands' showing personality in Facebook posts. However, less than half of consumers like brand personality on YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Snapchat.

The rapid development of technology, and the reach of such technologies at affordable costs, have revolutionized the ways in which businesses operate today. The Internet is being used by millions of people at this very moment; therefore, these technologies have led to a paradigm shift in the way that communication happens. Business reputation and presence in a market is more driven by 'social media'.

1. **D. Lakshmanan and Dr. S. Rabiyathul Basariya** [7] **(2017)** have studied the effectiveness of advertising through social networking sites. The study finds that social media marketing effectiveness is highly influenced by its messages or contents quality, the company's involvement, and its association with the other marketing platforms. In addition, a complex and detailed analysis of the strategy is needed in order to accurately

measure the return on investment of the social media marketing. The study also finds that generation Y might be the main users of social media sites, but they are not the main target audience of the social media marketing.

2. **Dr. Priya Grover and Rama Krishna Mandan** [9] **(2017)** investigates the buyer behavior matrix of auto products and social media. Looking into the strategic role of social media in promotion of passenger cars in India, the paper tries to understand the changing consumer perception towards social media and its role in consumer decision making. At the same time, it also empirically derives a consumer–centric methodology for social media marketing by car manufacturers in India. The paper concludes with reference to the consumer decision making model, consumers are influenced by social media only till evaluation of alternatives and there also the mass media still dominates, though the post purchase behavior of consumers is seen online when they share their feedback and experiences.

3. **Chintan H Rajani and Dr. Ashvin Solanki** [6] **(2016)** in their research paper identifies key motivating factors behind use of social media among Indian users. The study reveals that feedback and personal utility, entertainment and socializing, content sharing and networking as key motives for using social media. This study followed uses and gratification approach to identify above mentioned key motives for using social media. The study concludes that preliminary people use social media platform for personal benefit to review and share feedbacks followed by satisfying their entertainment and socializing needs. Content sharing is key feature which helped in driving masses towards social media. Networking and finding new people is an add-on benefit which people seek while using different social media platforms.

4. **Sadia Afzal et al.,** [12] **(2015)** discussed in his paper the impact of online and conventional advertisement on consumer buying behavior of branded garments. The results revealed that quality, design, content of advertisement, loyalty of consumer towards brand and previous buying experience of consumer are significant factors which influence consumer buying behavior.

5. **Simona Vinerean, Iuliana Cetina, Luigi Dumitrescu & Mihai Tichindelean** [13] **(2013)** in their research paper discovered how to engage with different types of audiences in order to maximize the effect of the online marketing strategy. The study identifies different types of users, a segmentation of these users and a linear model to examine how different predictors related to social networking sites have a positive impact on the respondents' perception of online advertisements. The conclusions obtained from the research derived four new types of social media consumers, namely Engagers, Expressers and Informers, Networkers, and Watchers and Listeners. This research presents new ways to classify online consumers, which served as a basis for psychographic segmentation, based on respondents' activities on different online platforms. Also, this study contributes to the existing knowledge of customer behavior in an online environment, in general, and on social media websites, in particular, by providing insight through an examination of seven influential variables on developing positive reactions to online advertisements.

6. The study made by **Bhagwat and Goutam et al.** [3] **(2013)** assert the need for social networking sites in a business. They found that social technology is connecting people in ways to share information and other things to each other. From their study they establish that Facebook to be the leading Social media networking site. They have also provided with statistical data which shows that social media sites are growing and providing facilities to both business organizations and the people. Their reputation in short time is in lieu of their requirement in society for communication and also for business as well.

7. **Vij & Sharma (2013)** [14] has done a study on social media experience of consumers and marketers in the State of Punjab. The paper suggested the measures for effective Social Media Marketing (SMM) strategies that social media marketing content should be 'interesting', 'informative', 'interactive' and 'reliable'. Marketers should align their social media marketing effort with the changing tastes and preferences of customers.

8. **Yadav** [15] **(2012)** has made an attempt to set up the significance of social networks as an advertising medium and evaluated the existing advertising methods that are in trend via certain case studies and concluded that social websites are not just a tool to interact with the different people but also medium to reach the prospective customers.

9. **Bashar, Ahmad & Wasiq** [1] **(2012)** has done an empirical research to understand the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool and an effort has been made to analyze the extent social media helps consumers in buying decision making. Results of paper suggested that the medium is growing very fast and holds huge potential but is still in its nascent stage in India. Therefore, it is time for the companies to make effective strategies and execute them to win larger share of business through this revolutionary medium and become the innovative firm of coming future.

10. **Bhakuni & Aronkar** [4] **(2012)** tried to understand the usage pattern of social media among the students of Gwalior city and also assessed the influence of social media advertising on the purchasing intention of the students. The study concluded that social media is a rapidly growing area with large number of young students associating with it and there is a strong positive relationship between purchase intention and social media advertising.

11. **Berthon et al.** [2] **(2012)** believes that the latest interactive technologies are changing lifestyle patterns and corporate innovative practices. Organizations have begun to understand the importance of and have taken control of the internet demonstrating both interest and involvement in online communities.

12. **Loredana Di Pietro and Eleonora Pantano** [11] (2012) states that social networks are becoming an efficient tool for IT-based business, by providing several services for both consumers and marketers. The aim of this paper is to investigate to what extend social networks, as Facebook, influence consumer's purchasing decision through a quantitative analysis, which integrates a revised technology acceptance model. The findings confirm that enjoyment is a key determinant of social networks usage as tool for supporting the purchasing decision. This research moves beyond

social networks usage to factors related to the Facebook-mediated marketing communications, by providing significant data on the weight of this channel for the development of new direct marketing strategies.

13. A research study conducted by **Mass Relevance** [16] that provides a social media curation platform to clients found that 59% of consumers will more likely trust a brand that has presence in social media and 64% of the consumers interviewed have already made purchases based on social media presence and reviews.

14. Sliva, Bhuptani, Menon & D'Sliva [8] **(2011)** has made an attempt to understand the usage pattern of social media among youth in the city of Mumbai. It also aimed at assessing the influence of social media on the consumer buying behavior. Results from the analysis indicated that social media is a very important tool for networking among youngsters.

15. A study for Harvard Business Review by **Edelman** [10] (2010) highlights how the Internet and social marketing has changed not only the way businesses operate but also how consumers choose their products. It discusses how market has moved to a more open-ended approach whereby consumers no longer follow a methodical approach of selecting products. It stresses how important it is for brands to connect with consumers and it also studied the consumers' decisions across five different industries, namely automobile, skincare, insurance, mobile telecommunications and electronics, across three different continents. Based on the results of the study, it proposed a four-stage model that focuses on today's consumers using social media for advocating products and also purchasing based on the reviews and backing received.

16. Borges [5] **(2009)** finds that today's buyers want to be engaged differently than in years past and many traditional marketing tactics simply do not work anymore. Social media marketing is a revolutionary way to build social relationships with buyers. Low cost, brand building, staffing advantages, loyalty and level playing field are key benefits of social networking sites as a successful marketing media.

5. Findings and Conclusions:

This review of literature is systematic critical analysis of the literature on social media consumer behavior. The review found that modern marketers are using a well-integrated social media marketing strategy along with traditional medium to communicate about their products to the consumers. Consumers are finding social media advertisements as more interesting, innovative and interactive as social it has become easier to use social networking sites with the aid of information and modern communication technologies. Besides the trust of the consumers about the information gained through these sites is also increasing gradually. However, the trend towards purchasing is not much, but users who purchase they are satisfied with the purchases. Hence, the use of social networking sites for brand communication is gradually proving effective for the marketers but still there is a long way to go for them. Major findings of the study and suggestions for effective marketing strategy are as follows:

1. Majority of Internet users are aware about social media and they are using it also, so marketers should move their promotional efforts from traditional tools to social media tools and must use a well-integrated social media strategy considering different platforms.
2. Social media not only make customers' aware about brands, but customers also prefer the brands advertised through social media while making their final purchase. They purchase now-a-days to get, so called "like". So marketing strategy must be more comprehensive including informative and shareable content as well as a proper consumer engagement policy to build relations is to be adhered.
3. Customers have positive perception towards social media marketing practices; they consider social media advertising more comprehensive, communicative, creative and dependable in comparison to traditional advertising. Therefore, more of the business promotion budget should be earmarked to it.

4. It cannot be said certainly that whether customers refer to the opinion of experts on social media sites while considering any product or service or not but they definitely refer to their friends and other customer reviews. So steps to boost the customer referrals must be taken such as incentives, easy referral policy, automated referral program, etc.

5. A very few of the consumers are subscribed for notification alerts of marketers. So they should be encouraged to do so.

6. The respondents taken under study feel comfortable in sharing their information on social media websites so it can be said that while advertising on social media websites, marketers can also get additional information about prospects which can help them to target customers in better way.

To conclude social media marketing has become a necessity, one that is blessed to the business by the overall presence and impact social networks have on the users. This is the reason that social media marketing is no longer considered to be on probation, but instead it has become an important part of the business world.

References

[1] Bashar, A., Ahmad, I., & Wasiq, M. (2012). Effectiveness Of Social Media As A Marketing Tool: An Empirical Study, International Journal Of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research, 1(11), 88-99.

[2] Berthon, P., Ewing, M., Pitt, L., & Naude, P. (2003). Understanding B2B and the web: the acceleration of coordination and motivation. Industrial Marketing Management, Vol.32(7), pp.553-561. http://isiarticles.com/bundles/Article/pre/pdf/23507.pdf

[3] Bhagwat, Shree and Goutam, Ankur (2013). Development of Social Networking Sites and Their Role in Business with Special Reference to Facebook, IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) ISSN: 2278-487X. Vol. 6(5) (Jan. - Feb. 2013), pp.15-28.

[4] Bhakuni, P., & Aronkar P. (2012). Effect of Social Media Advertising on purchase Intentions of Students-An Empirical Study conducted in Gwalior city. International Journal of Applied Services Marketing Perspectives, 1 (1), 73-79.

[5] Borges B (2009). Marketing 2.0. Wheat mark, pp. 45-63.

[6] Chintan H Rajani and Dr. Ashvin Solanki, Motivations For Using Social Media: An Exploratory Study. International Journal of Management, 7(4), 2016, pp.123–129.

[7] D. Lakshmanan and Dr. S. Rabiyathul Basariya, "The Role of Social Media On Enhancing Advertising Effectiveness". International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology, 8(9), 2017, pp. 1042–1047. http://www.iaeme.com/IJCIET/issues.asp?JType=IJCIET&VType=8&IType=9

[8] D'Silva, B., Bhuptani, R., Menon, S., & D'Silva, S. (2011). Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Choice Behaviour among Youth in India: An Empirical Study, presented in International Conference on Technology and Business Management, March 28-30, 756-763.

[9] Dr. Priya Grover and Rama Krishna Mandan, "Analysing Role of Social Media In Consumer Decision Making For Purchase of Auto brands In India". International Journal of Management, 8(1), 2017, pp. 73–83. http://www.iaeme.com/IJM/issues.asp?JType=IJM&VType=8&IType=1

[10] Edelman, D.C. (2010) Branding in the digital age: You're spending your money in all the wrong places, Harvard Business Review, [Online], Available: http://hbr.org/2010/12/branding-in-the-digital-age-youre-spending-your-money-in-all-the-wrong-places/ar/1 [15 May 2014]

[11] Loredana Di Pietro, EleonoraPantano(18-29 (July/September 2012). "An empirical investigation of social network influence on consumer purchasing decision: The case of Facebook", Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice 14, 18-29 (July/September 2012) | doi:10.1057/dddmp.2012.10

[12] Sadia Afzal,Javed Rabbani Khan. (2015). Impact of online and conventional advertisement on consumer buying behaviour of branded garments. Asian Journal of Management Sciences & Education

[13] Simona Vinerean, Iuliana Cetina, Luigi Dumitrescu, Mihai Tichindelean, "The Effects of Social Media Marketing on Online Consumer Behavior", International Journal of Business and Management, ISSN 1833-3850 (Print), ISSN 1833-8119 (Online) Vol 8, No 14 (2013)

[14] Vij, S., & Sharma, J. (2013). An Empirical Study on Social Media Behaviour of Consumers and Social Media Marketing Practices of Marketers, presented paper in 5th IIMA Conference on Marketing in Emerging Economies, 9-11 January 2013, 1-19.

[15] Yadav, N. (2012). "Social Networking Sites-A New Vehicle for Advertising". MIMT Journal of IT & Management Research, 2 (1), 38-48.

[16] www.spreadfast.com

[17] https://www.marketingprofs.com/.../2017/.../more-honesty-less-snark-how-consumers-want-brand-to-act-on -social-media

[18] www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/retail.../consumer-insights-survey.html