SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING THROUGH SELFIES

S.Gayathri
Assistant Professor,
Department of Commerce
Ethiraj College for Women,   **&**
Chennai-600 008.

Dr.A.S.Saranya
Associate Professor,
Department of Commerce,
Ethiraj College for Women,
Chennai -600 008.

Abstract

The tendency of taking Selfie has turned into a phenomenon of recent culture in the society. This study tried to bring the impact of Social Media marketing through Selfies. The study attempts to explore how Gen Y users identify the act of uploading selfies with branded products, as an expression of self-presentation for social approval. 100 Gen Y brand conscious women consumers in the age group of 18-21 years constituted the sample for the study. Frequency table reveal about the perception of respondents towards selfie and Factor Analysis reveal the factor influencing Psychological Enhancer, Societal Enhancer and Brand Community Enhancer.   The results of the study show that posting of selfies is used as a tool for self- presentation by Gen Y people.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Selfies.

Introduction

"Selfie" was named the "word of the year" in 2013 by Oxford English Dictionary. It refers to a self-portrait picture taken by one using a digital camera or a smart phone for posting on social networking sites. When taking a selfie, individuals can view how they look in the picture and decide what they want to show in the picture. Millions of selfies have been posted on various social networking sites. The tendency of capturing own images has turned into a phenomenon of recent culture in the society. This enormous amount of self-portrait images captured and pooled on social media is modernizing the way individuals introduce themselves to the globe. Thus, Selfie, a modern day tool for self presentation, has turned into a global pop-culture phenomenon.

Furthermore, selfies are often posted on social media platforms used for self-presentation to create socially desirable self image. (Bazarova, Taft, Choi, Cosley 2013). Individuals have been found to promote themselves and obtain positive feedback from their social networks via profile pictures. (Manago, Graham, Greenfield, 2008).

The crucial challenges facing Gen Y is one of self-definition and identity formation (Erikson, 1968). David Elkind (1967) discussed how people at this point of life experience egocentrism, which leads to self-consciousness due to the belief in an imaginary audience. According to his theory of the looking-glass, Cooley (1902) believes that individual's self is created through the ideas and opinion that others have about him. His theory stated that people learn who they are from others and from their imagination of how they appear to others. As per his theory, people use the self as a mirror and today selfies are being utilized as mirrors. Thus a selfie is an expression of an individual's identity of discovering oneself.

Past researches have shown that traces of people's personality can be found in their environments and belongings. Studies have also found cues such as facial expression and body posture in photos that are related to personality (Borkenau, Brecke, Mottig and Paclecke,2009). Therefore personality expression in selfies is likely to be different than those in other types of photos.

Branding

Tucker stated that consumers can be defined in terms of either the product they purchase or use or in terms of the meaning products have for them. Therefore, the meaning of brand is also an important factor of consumer decision making. Hence they look for products that fit with their own or ideal self-concept. Various findings from social psychology can be applied to understand consumer's brand behaviour on social networking sites, which leads to the assumption, that people have a preference toward brands with personalities similar to their own.

Need for the study

Research has shown that personality expression differs in different contexts (Gosling et al., 2002). One of the very recent ways of expression through social media is where Generation Y consumers who are extremely brand conscious, post their selfies showing off by wearing branded products. They seem to seek attention, approval and acceptance from their friends, relatives, peers and others through such posting of selfies on

social media in order to enhance their social status and belongingness with a brand community.

There are a number of implications of the Selfie Syndrome, regarding the effects of social media use on self-views from a selfie-presentational perspective. Do selfies reflect their owners' personality traits and affinity towards their brand? Are selfies used as an impression management strategy? Answers to these questions can help the marketers understand the status of their brands among Gen Y customers through their selfies portrayed in social media.

The study attempts to explore how Gen Y users identify the act of uploading selfies with branded products, as an expression of self-presentation for social approval. Review of literature indicates that there is a lack of research with respect to the concept of social media marketing through selfies.

Review of Literature

Wickel (2015) carried out a study aimed to investigate how social media has modified our developmental and behavioral personalities, and how, specifically the act of taking and posting selfies, is deemed to be a main contributor to the rise in narcissistic behaviors in recent generations. The study highlights that 73.5% of 93 Elon University, respondents reported that they check or update their online profiles more than five times a day, 90.2% of the participants reported that they post pictures of themselves on social networking sites for the sole reason of receiving "likes" and comments from their online friends, 87.8% responded that the use of social networking platforms as a way to maintain and build social relationships has changed how society interacts and perceives others and 55% of participants agreed that posting of selfies to different social networking platforms encouraged their narcissism and selfish behaviors. Nemer, and Freeman (2015) in their research findings, suggest self-portraits as a way to hear the voices of some of the inhabitants in poor and marginalized regions.

Sorokowski and others (2015) in their study examined three categories of selfies: own selfies; selfies with a romantic partner; and group selfies, controlling for non-selfie Photographs. Women posted more selfies of all types than did men. The findings of the study provided the first evidence that the link between narcissism and also selfie-posting behavior

is comparatively weak among women than men, and also provided a novel insight into the social motivations and functions of online social networking.

Objectives

i)   To examine the frequency of capturing selfies

ii) To examine the preferred social media sites for posting of selfies

iii) To examine the respondents general perception about selfies

iv) To identify the factors relating to brand marketing through posting of selfies on social media.

Methodology

Primary Data was collected from 100 brand conscious Gen Y women students belonging to UG (50) and PG (50) through a structured questionnaire by adopting purposive sampling technique. Cronbach Alpha test done for the questionnaire revealed a score 0.73, indicating the reliability of the questionnaire. To analyze and interpret the data, the statistical tools used were percentages and factor analysis.

Limitations

i)   The results cannot be generalized as the sample is only a small portion of the population and does not fully represent all Gen Y consumers.

ii) This study merely provides a jumping off point relating to social media marketing through selfies.

Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile

100 Gen Y brand conscious women consumers in the age group of 18-21 years constituted the sample.

Table 1 Frequency of taking selfies and posting on social media

Frequency	No. of respondents	Percentage
Regularly (> 6 times a day)	70	70%
Sometimes (3-6 times a day)	20	20%
Rarely (< 3 times a day)	10	10%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is clearly seen that majority (70%) of the respondents take selfies and post them on social media sites more than six times a day and only 10 % of them take selfies less than 3 times a day and post them on social media sites.

Table 2 Preferred Social Media Sites

Social media sites used	Frequency	Percentage
Whatsapp	26	26
Facebook	28	28
Instagram	25	24
Twitter	10	10
Others	2	2
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Primary data

From the above Table it is clearly seen that the social media site used prevalently is facebook since 28% of the respondents take selfies and post them on facebook followed by whatsapp (26%), instagram (24%), twitter (10%), and others (2%.) .

The respondents perception about how selfies are different from traditional photos is depicted in the below table.

Table 3 – Perception about Selfies

Purpose	No. of respondents	Percentage
Taking selfie feels more real than traditional portraits	24	24%
Selfies turn everyone into storytellers	20	20%
Selfies define our uniqueness	19	19%
Taking selfies is fun	3	3%
Selfies allow me to control how to present myself	12	12%
Selfies are empowering	10	10%
Selfies help in making a fashion statement	12	12%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Primary data

The above table clearly depicts that 24% of the Gen Y respondents opined that taking selfies feel more real than traditional portraits, followed by 20% who state that selfies turn everyone into storytellers. This is followed by 19% who state that selfies define their uniqueness and 12% of them opined that selfies help the respondents in making a fashion

statement and also controls how to present oneself. 10% of them opined that taking selfies are empowering and a mere 3% stated that taking selfies is fun.

The next part of the analysis deals with analyzing the factors relating to brand marketing through posting of selfies on social media sites, by using a structured questionnaire of 20 statements measured on a 5 point Likert Scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', the results are which are depicted below.

Factor Analysis

Table 4 Factor 1 - Psychological Enhancer

S.No	Statements	Factor Loadings
1	I feel more popular when I post my selfies on social media with my brand	0.751
2	I and my brand gain enormous attention by sharing my selfies on social media	0.741
3	Posting different selfie poses with my brand helps increase my social status	0.733
4	I am able to express my brand preference through selfies	0.685
5	I gain more acceptance among my peer group when I post selfies social media	0.675
6	I am able to reduce my stress level by taking and posting Selfies	0.639

Source: calculated value

All the above mentioned statements relates to gaining attention and acceptance in social media to increase popularity when the respondents express strong brand preference which results in increased social status and decreased stress level. Therefore the factor has been named as **"Psychological Enhancer".**

Table 5   Factor 2 - Emotional Enhancer

S.No	Statements	Factor Loadings
1	Taking selfies with my brand provides better memories about the occasion and the experience	0.790
2	I take selfies as trophies for future memories	0.758
3	Posting selfies with my brand instantly improves my mood	0.687
4	Taking more and more selfies makes me feel happy	0.647
5	I feel confident when I take a selfie displaying my brand	0.626
6	I become more positive about my brand when I take selfies	0.599
7	By posting selfies, I expect my friends to appreciate me and my brand	0.491

Source: Calculated value

The respondents seem to post selfies on social media to have better memories of occasions and experiences (0.790) and also as trophies for future (0.758). They feel that selfies with their favourite branded products modifies their mood making them feel happy, confident and positive especially when their friends appreciate them and their brands. Therefore this factor has been named as **"Emotional Enhancer".**

Table 6   Factor 3 - "Societal Enhancer"

S.No	Statements	Factor Loadings
1	Posing selfies with my brand gives me a good feeling	0.726
2	Sharing my selfies creates healthy competition with my friends and colleagues	0.642
3	I use photo editing tools to enhance my selfie to look better than Others	0.633
4	I post frequent selfies along with my brand to get more likes and comments on social media	0.581

Table 7   Factor 3 - "Brand Community Enhancer"

S.No	Statements	Factor Loadings
1	I take more selfies and I feel excited when my brand community acknowledges it	0.651
2	When I don't post selfies, I feel detached from my brand and my peer group	0.650
3	I have become a strong member of my brand community through selfie postings	0.516

Source: Calculated value

The respondents have expressed that they feel excited when their brand community acknowledges and appreciates them and their brand. Therefore this factor has been named as "**Brand Community Enhancer".**

Scope for Further Research

i)   More research should be done about the various brand concepts portrayed through selfies.

ii)   An in depth study can be done using a more representative sample.

iii)   Large surveys and comparative analysis with different variables like gender, age income etc., would give broader results.

iv)   Other brand concepts could be considered for future research.

Conclusion

In the current digital age, it is important for marketing professionals to explore how a Gen Y person uses selfies, social media, and digital communication as an important tool to express their brand preference. This can helps the marketers to understand the status of their brand in the market so that they can strategize their promotional activities accordingly in order to beat their competitors. In conclusion, the results of the study show that posting of selfies is used as a tool for self- presentation by Gen Y people.

References

- Bazarova, N. N., Taft, J. G., Choi, Y. H., & Cosley, D. (2013). Managing impressions and relationships on Facebook: Self-presentational and relational concerns revealed through the analysis of language style. Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 32(2), 121–141.

- Borkenau, P., Brecke, S., Möttig, C., & Paelecke, M. (2009). Extraversion is accurately perceived after a 50-ms exposure to a face. Journal of Research in Personality, 43(4), 703–706.

- Cooley, Charles Horton. 1902. "The Looking-Glass Self" (189).

- Elkind, D. *Egocentrism in Adolescence. In Readings in Developmental Psychology, 2nd Ed.*, pp. 383-90. Eds: Gardner, Judith Krieger and Gardner, Ed. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

- Erik H. Erikson. Identity, youth and crisis. New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1968

- Gosling, S. D., Ko, S. J., Mannarelli, T., & Morris, M. E. (2002). A room with a cue: Personality judgments based on offices and bedrooms. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82(3), 379–398

- Manago, A. M., Graham, M. B., Greenfield, P. M., & Salimkhan, G. (2008). Self presentation and gender on My Space. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 29(6), 446–458.

- Nemer, D., & Freeman, G. (2015). Empowering the Marginalized: Rethinking Selfies
- in the Slums of Brazil *International Journal of Communication, 9*, 1832-1847.

- Sorokowskia, P., Sorokowskaa, A., Oleszkiewicza, A., T. Frackowiaka, A. Huka, &
- Pisanski, K. (2015). Selfie posting behaviors are associated with narcissism among
- men. *Personality and Individual Differences 85*, 123-127.

- Wickel, T. M. (2015). Narcissism and Social Networking Sites:The Act of Taking
- Selfies. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications, 6*(1), 6-12.

- G Vengatesan, MR Sudarshan, USAGE OF WHATSAPP AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN COIMBATORE CITY, GLOBAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH ANALYSIS, 2018