

The Study of Impact of Social Media Platforms on the Brand Awareness, Buying Decisions and e-Sharing in the North Gujarat Region.

Javed S. J. Khorajia

Research Scholar, Shri D.N. Institute of P.G. Studies in Commerce, Anand – 388001

Dr Sejal Christian – Research Guide

HOD, Shri D.N. Institute of P.G. Studies in Commerce, Anand – 388001

ABSTRACT

Social media is becoming increasingly important day by day for the enhancement and improvement of Business in the 21st century. Marketers are trying to link the families with their products and services through social media. However, in an attempt to create a market niche for their businesses, marketers have to tread carefully with regard to the marketing practices they undertake as a wrong step can backfire and sent the sales and market share of the business dwindling. Companies with the use of social media can communicate with the consumers real-time, solve their genuine issues, and create a sense of belonging for the consumers with the products and services they manufacture. This research paper addresses the very impact that the social media platforms have on creating awareness of their brands, helping consumers to take buying decisions and enabling the same consumers to spread the message of the brand to the other potential consumers with their ratification.

Keywords: *Social media, Brand awareness*

Paper Type: Research Paper

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, with the advent of 4G revolution, internet connectivity for most of the people have made the world of IT quite reachable. Businessman is making optimum utilisation of this prospect available and have found a new arena of showcasing their branded product and services even as trying to get the most out of ever-increasing market share. India is a country with a billion plus population and with affordable data packs available from the mobile and internet service providers nowadays, use of social media platforms have increased manifold in the recent years. To launch a product and services and making consumers aware of them have never been easier. Had it not been for social media platforms, things would have been much more challenging than what it is now. Familiarising the consumers about the brand, that what we term as Brand Awareness, has gained momentum. The rapidity at which consumers become aware about the branded goods and services is noteworthy. The decisions of choosing the right platform for the right products solely lies with the marketers who may weigh their options and pick for the right channel and media. The micro-blogging site like twitter and social networking giants like Facebook are increasingly irresistible for the companies to target brand awareness.

There is a significant amount of advertising undertaken on social media platforms where the use in the past years has increased exponentially. Consider YouTube, where number of ad generating videos have become ubiquitous, thereby consumers using this platform becoming aware about the brand even if they do not intend to because of the forced ad viewership before the actual video starts playing. NETFLIX, Airtel, Dettol, Amazon, etc. are few of the ad giving companies on YouTube. Similarly, twitter is a potential micro-blogging sites where most of the world celebrities, news channels, companies, amongst others are active bloggers.

In India, interaction with even government and police department is facilitated for ease of reporting and soliciting. Although difficult to find one, the companies which do not use the social media platform are the ones who lose out on many opportunities and become vulnerable to the onslaught of competitors. Business owners have maintained time and again that social media marketing has a very enriching and positive impact on the success of business, and it is a time-tested method to take on the challenges of business world in the current market scenario. Modern business world uses social media platform to successfully nurture and expand their business horizon and to get the advantage of word of mouth in an incredible way. The most effective and impactful marketing approach is the one that uses the rich dividends of social media in tandem with that of the traditional marketing approach as seen with the brick and mortar businesses. Marketers have become well versed with the power of social media to reach out to consumers and stimulate their buying decisions and make them potential future consumers. Social media is also one of the few chosen cheapest mode of branding and advertising. Social media marketing is not synonymous to hard selling and aggressive marketing practices, but it is about establishing relationship with consumers who will eventually be your potential source of future sales and solving their queries, problems and challenges, thereby creating a sense of belonging for the consumer. Social media is also one of the pivotal zones to engage consumers to have fruitful discussions and to educate them about the branded product and services that the business offers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- To understand the impact of social media on brand awareness in the North Gujarat Region.
- To understand the impact of social media induced brand awareness on buying decisions.
- To understand the impact of social media on transmission of message about the brand to other consumers through e-sharing.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The paradigm shift of brand creation has been created by the social media like Facebook and Twitter (Lim, Chung, & Weaver, 2012). The use of social media as a platform to promote awareness of brands and sell them has been the buzz word. The likelihood that a consumer has heard about the brand through one of the social media platforms is very high. The techniques the marketers use to promote their brands on social media with specific objectives has become a subject of intense research for companies across the globe. To get the desired and favourable response from consumers is a challenge that needs to be pondered upon (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015). As the time passes by, use of high-speed internet connectivity in developing nations like India and China is ever-increasing. Smart Phones have pre-installed apps like Facebook and Twitter bundled with the operating system. A large number of people have become users of social media and with each passing day the numbers are going up. Social media can have both positive and negative effect on branding. It can make the brand but it can also mar the brand if not wielded and used properly (Sivertzen, Nilsen, & Olafsen, 2013). Traditional media like TV, daily newspapers were merely delivering the message. However, branding and marketing with social media is about establishing a relationship and having a meaningful conversation with the target consumers (Drury, 2008). Social media enables consumers to network with each other on various levels (Witkemper, Lim, & Waldburger, 2012). The social relationship between brands and consumers is made concrete and measurable with social media (Carah, Brodmerkel, & Hernandez, 2014). Consumers of all age group do visit the social networking sites or use their apps at least once daily and this is a source of attraction for majority of companies to promote their brands and win hearts of consumers. The congregation of people on social media makes a habit for them which in turn can be a

potential source for collection of vital information for brands. Every day, as per the research, users spend 135 minutes on social media for their daily needs ("Global time spent on social media daily 2017," 2019). Sharing of resource content in the form of PowerPoint presentations, videos and photographs on – *SlideShare, You Tube, Vimeo, Flickr and Picasa* – is a leading component of social media platform (Blakeman & Brown, 2010). Users who are addicted to social media do explore much more than an average user. Consumers who are active on social media tend to take a look at the branded products and services, try to remember them and even consider them for future purchase. This brand awareness also may result into spread and dissemination of brand information to other people. The marketing practices that has evolved in the current times does give a considerable significance to the social media-based branding, advertisement and product-promotion related affairs. The artistic form of launching a brand with the help of social-media based brand awareness gives impetus to companies for reaching out to people, consumers and every stakeholder that matters.

3. METHODOLOGY

It is imperative to know about the effect of social media on brand awareness because of e-networking's growing use and accessibility. Which is why, this research paper explores the avenues and possibilities where the intensity at which it affects brand awareness and the resultant buying decisions coupled with the spread of message about the brand are at the forefront.

The researcher conducted a survey wherein a questionnaire was given to 150 respondents of North Gujarat region. These 150 respondents were chosen by way of convenient sampling which included the ones who use any social media platform for at least 10 minutes daily. They were asked to list the brands they became familiar with only through social media platform in the last seven days. If they have become aware of brand through social media, the next question would be to know if they were willing to buy on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being most certainly and 1 less likely to buy the branded product or services. Next, the question was about the frequency at which the respondents share about the brand with others on the social media in a week.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Hypotheses

To materialise the research undertaken and to realise its objectives, the Hypotheses framed for the current study are as follows:

1) H0: There is no significant impact of social media on brand awareness.

1) H1: There is significant impact of social media on brand awareness.

2) H0: There is no significant impact of social media induced brand awareness on buying decisions.

2) H1: There is significant impact of social media induced brand awareness on buying decisions.

3) H0: There is no significant impact of social media on transmission of message about the brand to other consumers through e-sharing.

3) H1: There is significant impact of social media on transmission of message about the brand to other consumers through e-sharing.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data Collection: The researcher selected 30 respondents from every area namely Biliya, Patan, Kamlivada, Chanasma, and Vadani. Respondents were asked to share the average time spent in minutes on social media on a weekly basis in the prior week. In continuation with this question, respondents were also asked to list the brands that they became aware of during the prior week while using social media.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to give details about the transmission of message – *related to the brands they became aware of on social media* – to other consumers through e-sharing. Convenience sampling was used to get the preferred respondents who were familiar with and were using social media platform.

RESULTS

Places	Average use of social media platform (in minutes)	Average no. of brands familiarised in the prior week	Buying decisions 1 – 5 scale	Average no of e-sharing of brands
Place 1	54 min	8	2.8	3
Place 2	79 min	12	2.1	6
Place 3	68 min	9	1.7	4
Place 4	76 min	14	3.1	7
Place 5	59 min	6	1.2	2
MEAN	67.20 min	9.8 brands	2.18	4.4 brands

Correlation Matrix – Use of Social Media & Brands familiarised

	Column 1	Column 2
Column 1	1	
Column 2	0.856615	1

Covariance Matrix – Use of Social Media & Brands familiarised

	Column 1	Column 2
Column 1	91.76	
Column 2	23.44	8.16

Correlation Matrix – Brands familiarised & Buying Decisions

	Column 1	Column 2
Column 1	1	
Column 2	0.671154	1

Covariance Matrix – Brands familiarised & Buying Decisions

	Column 1	Column 2
--	----------	----------

Column 1	8.16	
Column 2	1.336	0.4856

Correlation Matrix – Use of Social Media & e-Sharing

	Column 1	Column 2
Column 1	1	
Column 2	0.89606	1

Covariance Matrix – Use of Social Media & e-Sharing

	Column 1	Column 2
Column 1	91.76	
Column 2	15.92	3.44

- The researcher has rejected the null hypothesis if the correlation is more than or equal to $r \geq 0.50$.

Because the results derived from the computation of correlation and covariance show a clear relationship between the social media and brand awareness the first null hypothesis is rejected. ($r=0.85$)

There is also a relationship between brand awareness and buying decision, the second null hypothesis is rejected as well. ($r=0.67$)

The third null hypothesis is rejected as there is relationship between use of social media and e-Sharing. ($r=0.89$)

5. CONCLUSION

The study gets to the core of what social media can be in the modern times for a marketer. This is a case of vindication where a company has to consider the potentialities of social media to get their brands in the main stream of consumers most preferred platform. The strategies of marketing has to be designed with the right blend of traditional and modern approach. As observed previously, the zone of e-networking is a path to be taken with care and sensitivity. Companies must use a variety of platforms available for the right job of brand awareness and familiarising the consumers about the same. Addressing, connecting, networking and establishing relationship are some of the dimensions that needs to be incorporated for an optimum utilisation of the social media.

6. REFERENCES

Blakeman, K., & Brown, S. (2010). Part II: Social media: Essential for research, marketing and branding.

Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 37(1), 47–50.

Carah, N., Brodmerkel, S., & Hernandez, L. (2014). Brands and sociality: Alcohol branding, drinking culture and Facebook. *Convergence*, 20(3), 259–275.

Drury, G. (2008). Opinion piece: Social media: Should marketers engage and how can it be done effectively? *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9(3), 274–277.

Global time spent on social media daily 2017. (2019, January 27). Retrieved January 27, 2019, from

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/433871/daily-social-media-usage-worldwide/>

Kohli, C., Suri, R., & Kapoor, A. (2015). Will social media kill branding? *Business Horizons*, 58(1), 35–44.

Lim, Y., Chung, Y., & Weaver, P. A. (2012). The impact of social media on destination branding: Consumer-generated videos versus destination marketer-generated videos. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 18(3), 197–206.

Sivertzen, A.-M., Nilsen, E. R., & Olafsen, A. H. (2013). Employer branding: employer attractiveness and the use of social media. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(7), 473–483.

Witkemper, C., Lim, C. H., & Waldburger, A. (2012). Social media and sports marketing: Examining the motivations and constraints of Twitter users. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 21(3).

