



A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Social Media Marketing (SMM) refers to any form of marketing that takes place on social media platforms. SMM is playing a key role in the marketing industry with its interactive social networks. This study aimed towards identifying various factors which affects consumer attitudes towards SMM. A well-structured questionnaire is used as a research instrument to gather the primary data from the graduates & post-graduates, aged between 20-23 years & also gathered secondary data from existing literature reviews. And applied SPSS for data analysis for output. Finally, 5 factors which affects consumer attitude towards SMM were identified.

Key words: Social Media Marketing, Interactive media, Social networks, Consumer attitudes, SPSS.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social Media Marketing (SMM) laid its path with the usage of social media platforms to promote a company and its brands/products. This style of marketing & promoting a brand on social networking sites can be viewed as a subset of online marketing (Barefoot & Szabo 2010). Consumers preferring social media platforms not only to search for information but also able to create their own messages & sharing their opinions based on their personal experiences. The audience perceived this as more reliable information than ads done by companies. Thus, consumer personal opinions are acting as a strong influencing factor on buying behavior (Ammo & Romero 2010). Electronic word-of mouth communication on social media networks has become a dominating factor that influence consumer attitude (Lee & Thalami 2009). Social media platforms are transforming customers as advertisers with their positive or negative word of mouth virtually (Roberts & Kraynak 2008). Reviews & ratings generated by consumers on

social media platforms serve as a reliable source of information that develop a positive attitude to customer towards product choices in online (Ipeirotis & Li 2009), have a great impact on e-commerce (Forman & Wisent field 2008) following the emergence of Web 2.0 technology.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF SMM

Social Media Marketing is playing a vital role in marketing the products through its user generated content generated by its users. Most of the content and connections in an online community are created by users, not by the brand. Thus SMM has a significant impact on a firm's marketing strategy. SMM is dominating over the traditional methods at most of the companies. For example, traditional methods of marketing, such as direct & indirect marketing are one-way with push strategy rather than pull strategy, which are directed from the company towards the customers. But the SMM applies the pull strategy, where the customers come towards a company/brand by seeing the reviews & ratings of their products. In today's techno-savvy environment, social media platforms have become an outlet where retailers can apply their marketing strategies to a broader spectrum of customers. With the intro of SMM, the techniques for interacting with customers have become easier & faster. Thus the corporates can cope up with the techniques of SMM to reach their target customers in right time. SMM act as a virtual venue for connecting brands with consumers.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media with its dynamic nature adopted advanced tools like User Generated Content (UGC) which encourages users to share their comments in the form of ratings & reviews for products (Filho & Tan 2009). Marketers started to analyze the use of social media as a strong component in their marketing strategies and ad campaigns to reach the target customers. They recognized the significance of social media platforms & how they affect their marketing performance in terms of sales maximization (Stephen & Galyak 2009). SMM uses social media platforms to enhance an organization's virtual visibility for presenting its products and services. Social media creates social networks for exchange of information (Ontario 2008). Chen et al. (2008) in his study analyzed about the relationship between SMM and brand attitude. They revealed that interpersonal reliability, information exchange & two-way communication has positive effects on brand attitude. SMM provides sufficient information about various brands not only from company side but also from the experiences of used customers through various social media platforms via virtual comments & opinions (Clemons 2008). At the time of decision making about a product purchase, the consumers start depending on this virtual comments & opinions repeatedly (Aakar 2010). As per the metrics of Nielsen Buzz, the reviews, comments & opinions posted by experienced customers had been trusted by more than 65% of the viewers (Black Shaw and Nazzaro 2008). Red Bridge Marketing (2008) revealed that nearly 75% of consumers are influenced & depended on this consumer generated content. Kotler & Keller (2007) defined attitude as "a person's evaluation either being favorable or unfavorable towards any item." Attitudes mold people's mindset, towards like or dislike of an item, making them to move for or against from that item. Hence, the buying behaviors are influenced by consumer attitudes towards a brand. A positive consumer attitude towards a brand influences him/her much in purchase decision making of that product. (Chiou et al. 2006). The users' attitude towards SMM may transform in the future, because of the changes in the features of the SMM (Lampe, Ellison, and Stein field 2005)

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the attitude of consumers' toward social media marketing.
2. To analyze various factors that influence the consumer attitude towards SMM

5. METHODOLOGY

The following methodology has been adopted in the study by the researcher:

Type of data used: Primary data & Secondary data

Method of Data collection: Online sample survey

Data collection instrument: A well-structured questionnaire

Sample size: 150 respondents

Sampling method: Convenience sampling

Scaling technique: 5-point Likert scale

Statistical Tools used: Descriptive statistics & and exploratory factor analysis in SPSS

6. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis and findings of the study are represented in the form of tables & interpretations given below:

Table 1 Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-23 years	111	74
	24-32 years	30	20
	33-45 years	6	4
	Above 45 years	3	2
Gender	Male	105	70
	Female	45	30
Education	Intermediate	24	16
	Under Graduate	84	56
	Post Graduate	42	28
Income levels	Less than 10,000/-	102	68
	10000 -25000/-	24	16
	25000 – 45000/-	15	10
	Above 45000/-	9	6
Occupation	Student	112	75
	Employee	23	15
	Others	15	10

Table 1 displays the respondent's demographic information. From the table it is clear that majority of the respondents were students and they are from the age group of 18-23 years, as huge part of users of internet comes from this group and researchers used convenience sampling technique. However, representatives from variety of demographic profiles were included in the sample.

Table 2 Factors of SMM and the value factors

	1	2	3	4	5
It is necessary for companies to use SMM platforms like Facebook for marketing.	0.807				
It is a good idea to market with applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media	0.774				
I think that companies should take part in social networking sites such as Facebook.	0.713				

I find it useful to market with applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs usually known as social media.	0.697				
It is necessary for companies to use video sharing sites like YouTube for marketing.	0.646				
I think that marketing with social media is the future of marketing.	0.464				
I like using applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media.		0.758			
I use social networking sites such as Facebook regularly		0.771			
Blogs are important in today's marketplace.			0.759		
Social networking sites are important in today's marketplace.			0.667		
Ads from the Internet affect my purchasing decisions.				0.809	
Reviews for products on the Internet affect my purchasing decisions.				0.594	
I follow photo sharing sites as Flickr regularly.					0.791
I follow blog sites regularly.					0.698

Table 2 reveals that there exists a significant relationship between use of social media and positive attitude toward social media as a strategic communication; also revealed that consumers' knowledge of social media affects their attitudes towards marketing with social media.

7. CONCLUSION

The study had specified the factors which affects the attitude of consumers towards SMM. A consumer-based scale has been developed for this purpose. In the study carried out, it was found that the consumer's gender is not effective in determining consumer attitudes towards SMM. The study also revealed that there exists a good relationship between the consumer's income & their attitudes towards SMM. It was found that a very high percentage of consumers are frequently using social networking sites, and this affected their attitudes toward SMM. Thus, it may be useful for marketers to design promotion strategies by using social media in creating consumer communities. One of the significant results of the study is that consumers' use of social media, their knowledge of social media, their following of social media, and their fears about marketing with social media all affect their attitudes towards SMM. The consumers following social media may significantly affect their attitude towards SMM, by considering this, it will be benefit able for marketers in developing applications and content that helps consumers in continuously following social media and help audiences become participants. It is clear that the independent variables "use of social media," "social media knowledge," "being affected from Internet and social media," "following/monitoring social media," and "fears about marketing with social media" are important factors for explaining the dependent variable "attitudes of consumers toward marketing with social media". Finally concluded that SMM as an emerging trend can create a market space, which attracts a wide range of social media users.

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