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"The Effective Use of Social Media Platforms and its impact on Buying Decision and Enhancement of Brand Equity in the category of Electronics Durables with Special Reference to Selected Cities of Gujarat State"

JAVED S. J. KHORAJIA

Research Scholar, Shri D.N. Institute of P.G. Studies in Commerce, Anand – 388001 Email: khorajiajaved@gmail.com

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Abstract

Purpose

The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of effective use of social media on purchasing decisions and brand equity.

Design/methodology/approach

The study was conducted in selected cities of Gujarat and data were collected using convenient sampling. Structural equation modeling was used to evaluate the impact of social media marketing on purchasing decisions and brand equity.

Findings

Research shows that the use of social media has a positive impact on brand equity and also positively contributes to purchasing decision making.

Research limitations

The relationships investigated in this study requires more research on this subject. This is because there are many more products other than durable electronics. Therefore, further research is needed before drawing any general conclusions.

Practical implications

Based on the study, we found that the effective use of social media can create and enhance brand equity, and positively influence purchase intentions.

Originality/value

Emphasizing and improving the body of knowledge relating to Brand Equity and purchase intention in Electronics Durables.

Introduction

Social media and web technologies help customers interact and communicate. Businesses are now using social media to drive brand awareness. Big brands want to connect with their customers through social media channels. Internet-based social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, etc. have a huge impact on the lives of customers. These social networks have a direct impact on the way consumers communicate, exchange information, maintain profiles and connect with friends. It is the top social media described by the emergence of technologies that allow people to easily communicate with each other, share knowledge and form communities on the Internet. But the big question today is not what social marketing is, what it means and how beneficial it is for businesses and consumers. While social marketing began as a personal prerogative, businesses are now trying to capitalize on this trend to leverage specific strategies and tactics. Research shows businesses are investing more in social media. As social media sites continue to grow, businesses no longer rely solely on traditional media to raise public awareness of their products. The organization uses information from social media to identify the most influential users and motivate its members to develop products and increase brand awareness. Customers are at the heart of any business, and social media marketing allows businesses to build honest and mutually beneficial relationships with these customers. However, for organizations to benefit from their business, they need to better plan, manage, measure, and update their social media marketing activities. Here, customer relationship management intersects with social media marketing. People spend most of their time gossiping, playing games, and chatting with friends on social media. In busy city life, they don't have time to meet. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube provide consumers with tremendous opportunities to share and distribute branded content and product usage information globally. Consumers are now more educated and interested in searching for product features online before purchasing a product. So, social media marketing plays an important role in providing information to people and shaping buying choices and choices. Social media marketing plays a long-term role in purchasing strength as 61% of respondents are more likely to buy after seeing an engaging campaign on social media. The success and growth trends of these social media sites allow organizations to jump into this new area to market their brands. Social media gives businesses the opportunity to sell their products and services through a variety of marketing tools. In this age of competition, brands are competing in the minds of consumers. Brands today rely on more than just traditional social media. Marketing on social media is just a fashion statement right now. By using websites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube, these sites attract more than 5 million users every day. Companies use social media to interact with customers to improve relationships. Social media and networks have provided organizations with opportunities to improve customer-to-self relationships. We conducted a study to analyze the effectiveness of social media marketing as the use of social media increases as a marketing medium for durable electronics.

The purpose of this research paper is to understand the impact of social media on brand equity and durable electronic purchasing decisions. Electronics companies increase brand equity by doing marketing on social media to build relationships with customers, facilitating lucrative buying decisions. This essay is divided into 4

main sections. The first part is a review of the literature from previous studies conducted in connection with this study. The second part describes the research methodology for this study. The third section describes the results, conclusions, and discussion. The fourth section is the conclusion of the whole study.

Literature Review Social Media

The marketing landscape has changed drastically over the past decade. Previously, businesses and customers were not directly related to each other's world. The advent of social media has changed the way consumers interact with each other and with companies. Consumers with an increasing use of social media and word of mouth are now having a stronger and greater impact on their peers. Social media platforms and tools allow consumers to share content, recommend products, and inform companies about positive and negative relationships with consumers (Felix et al., 2017).

Research shows that social media has a significant impact on purchasing decisions. A new type of media has emerged because of the social characteristics that have a great influence on the purchasing decision process. Today, more and more customers are using social media to communicate with each other as well as brands. This plays a pivotal role in social media and influences customers' buying decisions. Social media gives marketers more opportunities to interact with customers than traditional marketers. Research shows that virtual society is becoming an important network of consumer information, influencing consumer behaviour (Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012).

Virtual social media has opened up a new channel for branding. The biggest advantage of social media on the Internet is the marketer's ability to choose from a variety of options to offer a brand to a specific buyer. Marketers can use social media marketing effectively to gain a competitive advantage, increase sales and build profitable customer relationships. Its main purpose is to learn more about customer needs and assess the potential of your brand to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage in a timely manner and protect against competition in social networks. There is an important relationship between network and brand attitude, brand buying attitude and brand recommendation attitude (Alalwan et al., 2017).

Many organizations use social media to reach millions of potentials and returning customers. Companies in many service industries are constantly in touch with their customers and are using a new century of interactive media channels for marketing and promotion. Gaurav discusses changes in consumer perspectives on various social media channels that have influenced purchasing decisions and brand loyalty (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012).

The rise of the Internet and technology has encouraged people to interact with each other, share knowledge and build relationships, and social networks have introduced new forms of communication through social networks that allow people to interact and communicate with each other. Social media gives marketers the opportunity to influence consumer buying decisions through online marketing and social media. Consumer social engagement has a significant impact on marketing because marketers need to know what factors influence their customers' buying decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2015).

It is said that managing social customer relationships is completely customer centric and requires customer attention and relationships. Social media is starting to have an undeniable impact on customer service. Social communities attract customers and have far-reaching consequences for customer loyalty. Barry et al. Customers who interact with companies on social media are more loyal than other customers and spend 40% more on these companies (Alves et al., 2016).

Social media platforms allow customers to form a kind of community around users of a product or brand. In many businesses today, social networks are the largest on the Internet through corporate websites and email programs. Thus, social media has changed the way businesses interact and communicate with customers and the way they establish and implement customer relationship policies. Social media channels provide marketers with tremendous opportunities for oral feedback or referrals (Erdoğmuş & Cicek, 2012).

Brand Equity

Social media influences brand equity in four main ways. Social media has opened up new ways of communicating directly between your brand and your audience. Social media increases brand awareness and influences customers' daily lives. Social media indirectly accelerates customer engagement in brand advertising through a variety of content sharing features. Social media helps brands build relationships with potential customers (Hoang et al., 2019).

Social media has grown exponentially over the past decade. Social media influences brand engagement and behavioral outcomes. Social media is having a positive impact on the behavioral performance of brands. These results are brand awareness, word of mouth, purchase intent, and satisfaction. Brand commitment and motivation mediate the relationship between social media and brand behavior. Businesses are now using social media to build relationships and connect directly with their audience. Social media is providing information to more users that were previously unavailable (Kim & Ko, 2012).

Facebook's brand engagement opens up significant new opportunities for marketers. These are the tools brands use to communicate and interact directly with their customers. This communication and interaction focus on developing brand equity. Brands use social media for three main purposes. Promote events and visits, increase sales, build relationships and build communities with customers. All of this contributes to the development of CBBE (Stojanovic et al., 2018).

Brand equity is a measure of a brand's popularity or success compared to other similar brands. Social media has opened up a huge market for brands. More than two-thirds of Internet users connect through social networking sites. Facebook, Twitter and Myspace. Social media and businesses unlock tremendous potential by personalizing brands and increasing capital. Social Media Marketing influences the buyer's willingness to buy. Social media sites play a very important role in building brand equity. It was also mentioned that brand equity mediates the impact of CRM campaigns on purchase intention (Lim et al., 2020).

This study shows that social media has a positive effect on brand equity. Social media content has a positive impact on two aspects: trademark law, trademark loyalty and perceived quality. These two aspects of trademark sharing are closely related to the buyer's willingness to buy. The results of this study show that customers are highly dependent on the views of friends, family, and community

members. Thus, social media plays an important role in building brand trust and credibility, thus acting as a trademark appeal verifier (Algharabat et al., 2020).

Buying Intention

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the factors contributing to the effectiveness of online advertising from the perspective of developing countries and influencing consumers' buying interests. Due to the rapid development and proliferation of online technology, the Internet has become an important business asset to gain a competitive advantage (Sin et al., 2012)

Social media is a very important tool for youth networks. The unique features of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc. are used to build brand awareness and word of mouth. There is a growing trend among young people to buy durable electronics through social media. Currently, apparel companies use a variety of marketing strategies to market apparel brands on social media sites to influence purchase intent (Alalwan, 2018).

Businesses are now willing to use social media to interact with their customers. Social Media Marketing delivers direct benefits to businesses, from social commerce to cost savings. You can spread your offer quickly and verbally through social media. These offers are attracting customers' attention, and their purchase intent is increasing (Balakrishnan et al., 2014).

Researchers are also investigating consumer attitudes toward blogs and the impact of blogs on purchase conversions. Brands are now better visible on blogs on social media. This is an increasingly fun way to not only improve customer relationships, but also attract potential buyers online. Their research shows that blog users' credibility, usefulness, and friendliness trigger a positive attitude toward their blog and positively affect their purchase intentions (Hutter et al., 2013).

Options on social media such as websites, online chat, email and email discussions influence customer buying decisions. Social media describes the many new sources of online information created, initiated, distributed and used by consumers. Now, customers want to share with each other about products, brands, services, personality and issues through human interaction to generate exchanges and opinions about content in networks and virtual communities. These researchers plan to investigate the impact of social media on the intentions of cell phone buyers in India (Wang et al., 2019).

Researchers are also investigating factors influencing students' intentions to shop online at higher education institutions in Malaysia. Compatibility, usability, ease of use, and security have proven to be important predictors of online shopping attitudes. He said a key component of consumer electronics retail is providing information on product attributes, relative prices, availability and overall value-added services (Chu et al., 2013).

Significance of the Study

Social media marketing is a way to send and receive information with people around the world. The rapid adoption of social media has forced organizations to change the way they respond to the needs and desires of consumers and how they respond to their competitors. Social media provides marketers with broader communication opportunities to reach a larger audience and allows marketers to tap into valuable information to help them build and maintain consumer relationships.

The advent of social media and word of mouth allows consumers to interact with each other in a virtual world and share their impressions and feelings about durable electronic brands distributed and advertised on social networking sites. In order to achieve the above goals, the following work has been developed.

- **1.** To develop a model for buying intention and brand equity based on social media marketing.
- **2.** To investigate the relative impact of factors of social media marketing on brand equity and customer's buying intentions.
- **3.** To explore how social media marketing significantly affect the buying intentions of the customers in electronics durables.

Methodology

Respondents used Google Forms to collect data to investigate the impact of social media marketing on purchase intent. We researched social media users to understand consumer behaviour. This survey is based on respondents' views on purchasing information, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand relationships, influence of others on purchasing decisions, YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, etc.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 presents a proposed model for outlining the Hypothesized relationships among Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Word of Mouth, Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention.

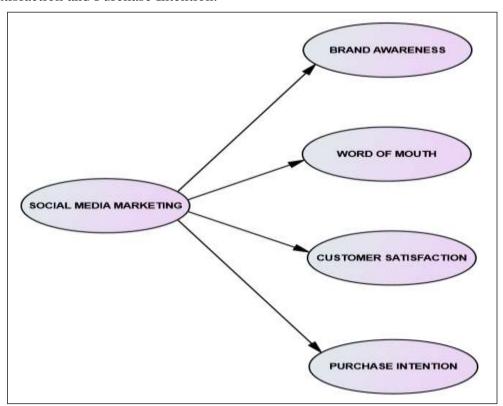


Figure 1:Theoretical Framework Model

Preliminary test, sampling and data collection

The survey was piloted prior to the final development of the survey with 30 respondents actively engaged in purchasing durable electronics through social

media. SPSS 17.0 was used for this. Cronbach alpha was calculated to validate the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha value was 0.938, indicating high confidence in the survey data.

Participants and survey instrument

After validity, the entire data collection process continued. In the districts of Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara, Valsad, Gandhidham and Kheralu, we collected data from respondents using soft selection via Google Forms. The questionnaire on Google Forms was distributed to 314 people, with a total of 145 responses received.

Measurement

The questionnaire consists of four parts. The first part of the questionnaire measured the brand's marketing activity on social media. Social networks interact with customers on the Internet. Social media is a basic internet tool for sharing and discussion. Any website where users can share content, views, opinions and encourage interaction and community building can be classified as social media. The Social Media Marketing section consists of 4 tasks.

The second part of the questionnaire measures the impact of social media marketing on brand equity. Brand equity is the total value of the brand as a single asset. Brand equity is a measure of the strength of a customer's connection to a particular brand. Brand equity is a description of a shopper's relevance and beliefs about a brand. Brand equity measures brand awareness, customer satisfaction, and word of mouth. Four topics are covered in this section. The third part describes purchase intent and the impact of social media on purchase intent. Seven items have been developed to measure a customer's purchase intent. Demographic factors were also included at the beginning of the research tool. Demographic characteristics of the sample included gender, occupation, family income, place of residence, and education. Gender is a two-valued binary function, male and female. Males have code 1 and female 2. Education is divided on a 6-point scale. All statements were rated on a 5point Likert scale. Positive factor analysis was used to confirm the theory. It was used to ensure that the dimensions of a drawing or element match the design or researcher's understanding of the element. CFA's mission is to ensure that the data conforms to the intended measurement model. Theoretical models are usually based on theory. CFA is most commonly used in social research. The SEM method is a combination of random statistics and assumptions used to test and evaluate random relationships. SEM is used to determine whether the proposed model is valid. SEM is a combination of CFA and regression analysis.

Hypothesis development

H1: SMM Social media marketing will have 'significant positive' influence on Brand Awareness.

H2: SMM Social media marketing will have 'significant positive' influence on Word of Mouth.

H3: SMM Social media marketing will have 'significant positive' influence on Customer Satisfaction.

H4: SMM Social media marketing will have 'significant positive' influence on Purchase Intention.

Results and discussion

Half of the respondents were male and the response rate of male 51.8% and 48.2% female. 67.5% respondents are those who belong to Urban area and 32.5% belong to suburban area. The information is also about the education level, 0.9% SSC, HSC and less than that, 53.0% having Graduation, 42.5 percent having Postgraduation, 3.6% having M.Phil. and 0% having PhD degree. The details about the occupation in which 11.14% of the respondents belong to student-category. The people employed in self-employed category were 50.3%, Education field 7.46%, Industry 6.4%, Business 18.9% and others 5.8%. Further information which we collected from respondents was their family income. More than fifty percent of the respondents (54.97%) fall in category of income from Rs 60,000 to Rs 1,20,000 and on the other side 21.2% family income fall in Rs 120,000-240,000, 11.7% respondent's family income were Rs 240,000 to Rs 360,000, 9.13% respondent's family income was Rs 360,000 to Rs 480,000 and remaining 3.0% respondent's family income was above Rs 480,000.

CFA Confirmatory factor analysis

Model Fit of CFA: χ2= 159.8, df= 46, p=.000 AGFI=.91, GFI=.98, NFI=.91, IFI=.93, CFI=.98, RMSEA=.02

The model fit stated above are within the limit prescribed by Global Fit Indices.

SEM Structural equation modeling

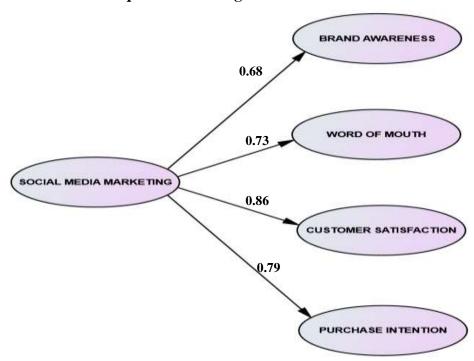


Figure 2: Output of SEM

Model FIT of SEM: χ2= 154.17, df= 43, p=.000 AGFI=.93, GFI=.91, NFI=.96, IFI=.93, CFI=.92, RMSEA=.03

The model fit stated above are within the limit prescribed by Global Fit Indices.

Conclusion

This study examined the effects of social media marketing of electronics durable products on brand equity and purchase intention. Research objectives and theories have been developed to achieve the research objectives. The model was developed according to the brand equity model. Structural equation modeling is used to determine the properties of relationships and the corresponding effects of variables. The results of this study indicate that the most important factor affected by social media marketing is customer satisfaction with a factor loading of 0.86. The results show that social media marketing has a positive impact on brand equity and purchase intention. Brand awareness is getting affected with a factor loading of 0.68, followed by word of mouth with 0.73. Buying intentions were positively influenced by a factor loading of 0.79.

Limitations of the Study

- 1. Only Electronics durables are considered for the study whereas there are many products on which this model could have been applied to.
- 2. The study was conducted only in the selected cities of Gujarat State.
- **3.** There are other factor of Brand Equity Model like Imagery, Performance, Judgements and Feelings which are not considered in this study.
- **4.** Sample could have been more to make SEM results more reliable.

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