

MARKETING ON SOCIAL MEDIA-ADVERTISEMENTS ON FACEBOOK: MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

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ABSTRACT

Social Media marketing is growing and has created an excellent avenue for marketers to reach out to consumers. However, the technique, strategy, and appeal of social media marketing are quite different from traditional promotional marketing. This study has investigated consumers' attitudinal behavior toward social media marketing through three brief case studies.

Keyword: Social media marketing, Viral marketing, Advertisement, Promotional marketing, Digital marketing, Consumer behavior, Attitude

INTRODUCTION

From the end of the last century, marketing managers were striving to reach out to mass customers with new and innovative marketing tools which can serve the essential nature of effective marketing, i.e., the scope of two-way interaction (Shareef et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2011). At the same time, the effect of traditional marketing was being faded out to create effective impressions on the consumer's mind (Taylor et al., 2011). Like Shareef et al (2019) remarked, "The use of traditional one-way communication to promote consumer perception and boost their favorable attitude for the product value has been dramatically losing its persuasive influence due to the introduction of Facebook as a connection for peers and its overarching appeal".

Several scholarly studies (Chu, 2011; Goraya, et al., 2019; Hayes and King, 2014; Logan et al., 2012; Shareef et al., 2018; Shareef et al., 2018) were engaged to explore new marketing strategies and identify customer relationship marketing which can effectively promote products. Digital marketing brought the solution of this extensive research which is now widely promoted through social media, named as viral marketing (Chu, 2011; Goraya, et al., 2019; Hayes and King, 2014). Nowadays, marketing managers are now competing among themselves about how to use this promotional marketing through social media more efficiently than others to capitalize market benefits and capture huge consumers with continuous interaction (Shareef et al., 2016). Social media marketing is regarded as one of the most effective and widespread marketing tools of the twenty-first century (Barnes and Mattson, 2009; Chu, 2011; Hayes and King, 2014; Logan et al., 2012). In reference to several social media marketing researchers (Akar and Topcu, 2011; Kim and Ko, 2012), Shareef et al (2019) revealed that, "Marketers and consumers are at present extending their communication through a dynamic new media called the social network. This is the latest development in advertising products and communicating with consumers. Facebook, in particular, is one of the fastest growing social media which encompasses enormous spontaneous brainstorming among its network members for developing any opinion".

Advertisement through social media has created a new way to promote products and reach out huge customers as well as to establish informal relations with them (Barnes and Mattson, 2009; Chu, 2011; Logan et al., 2012; Shareef et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2011). In this regard the type, pattern, and procedure of promotional marketing have been changed in social media. While attempting to create exposure, attention, and persuasion, marketers of social media use not only traditional aspirational reference group but also associative reference group who have entirely informal influence on the peers of their group to build up shared views about any

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product or service (Barnes and Mattson, 2009; Taylor et al., 2011). “Fundamentally, a general peer of a network in Facebook can informally generate an influential statement, disseminate it as a regular network activity among loop peers, and substantially influence a favorable attitude towards the product” (Shareef et al., 2019).

Heuristically, general users of social media, while collecting information from their peers as a customer, act differently in comparison to regular customer (Barnes and Mattson, 2009; Chu, 2011). Several researchers (Goraya, et al., 2019; Hayes and King, 2014; Logan et al., 2012; Shareef et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2011) have postulated that source derogation and type of statement (either formal or informal) have compounding effect on consumers mind to pursue their favorable attitude toward group opinion (Chu, 2011; Goraya, et al., 2019). In this regard, the real experience gained after purchasing plays a vital role among group members of any social media (Hayes and King, 2014; Shareef et al., 2019). As a result, it is very important for marketing managers to explore and understand the group behavior of social media users to create positive opinions about their products. This study, as its objective to understand social media users’ group dynamics to create percussive perception about any product while sharing the views of their peers, has conducted three case studies in a social media group under the context of promotional marketing.

METHODOLOGY

Three brief case studies were conducted to fulfill the objective of this research. With the help of three research assistants who are members of the same Facebook network, the researchers of this study artificially launched a statement about post purchase experience of one research assistant. The first statement which was injected by the research assistant himself (he is an active member of that group) was about purchase of a new smart phone from Samsung. It was “Last week I have purchased the Samsung Galaxy A51. I’d like to say that it is an awesome phone. I’m enjoying using it. It is really fast and has a great camera!

This review was viewed, shared, and passed-on among other members. A week after the circulation of this review, a total fifty peers of that group (randomly selected) were briefly interviewed by the researcher with the help of that research assistant through a mobile. They were asked two simple questions about the mentioned statement regarding post-purchase experience:

1. Do you trust the review/opinion?
2. Why?

Majority of the members in the social media group who have seen and shared the statement replied positively, i.e., they have favorable view on the product after reviewing the aforementioned statement (82 percent). Their reasoning for this trust on that statement was because the person who has shared this view is their group member and they share similar views. In this context, the research assistant, being a close member of this group, worked as an associative reference.

One month after this experiment, the second research assistant shared a statement with the same group, quoting a Bangladeshi popular cricket player’s comment regarding one Internet package of Grameen phone. This statement was viewed, shared, and passed-on among other members. One week later of the circulation of this statement, a total of fifty peers from that group (randomly selected) were briefly interviewed by the researcher with the help of that research assistant through a mobile call. They were asked the same two questions about the mentioned statement:

This time 51% of the members from the social media group who have seen and shared that statement replied positively. Their reasoning behind their moderate trust on that statement is because the person who has shared this view is a popular cricket player. The cricket player in this context, worked as an aspirational reference.

One month after the second study, the third research assistant shared a statement with the same group, providing an advertisement of Banglalink about their Internet package. This statement was viewed, shared, and passed-on among other members. A week after the circulation of this statement, a total of fifty peers from that group (randomly selected) were briefly interviewed by the researcher with the help of that research assistant through a mobile call. They were asked the same two questions about the mentioned statement:

This time only 16% of members in the social media group who have seen and shared that statement replied positively and most of the respondents do not have trust on that statement because the advertisement has a commercial purpose. Therefore, we can assume, this advertisement worked as a dissociative reference.

CONCLUSION

Several interesting conclusions can be drawn from these brief case studies. These are listed:

1. Appeal of traditional advertisement is changing, because consumers' attitude toward any commercial advertisement is not positive.
2. Consumers are now very much suspicious in the era of modern social media interaction.
3. In social media, peers have more influence on their group members than any external celebrities.
4. Social media group dynamic is effectively cohesive.
5. Consumers now prefer post-purchase experience to develop their buying attitude.
6. In social media, promotional marketing is spontaneous and not fully controlled by the company itself.
7. Marketers should develop different promotional marketing strategy for social media advertisement

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

The finding of this research can provide a deep insight about social media marketing. In that sense, it has potential contribution for future research. Nevertheless, this is a very brief study. From a research point of view, this finding can be advanced, but should be validated more systematically with detail empirical study.

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