

EMOTIONS ATTACHED TO SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS: A STUDY OF AWARENESS, ATTITUDE AND RESPONSIVENESS OF YOUTHS OF AHMEDABAD

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Abstract

Social media marketing has become very popular these days and has brought about a paradigm shift in the way marketers and advertisers used to promote their products and brands and affect the buying behavior of target customers. However, research on advertisements placed on these Social sites or mobiles apps and the level of awareness, attitude and responsiveness of its uses are still developing, especially within the youths of Ahmedabad. Amongst various social media platforms, Facebook has grown exponentially and has become the biggest and most popular today. This study thus investigates the level of awareness, attitude and responsiveness of Facebook advertising on the part of Ahmedabad Youths who are believed to be active social media users. This study draws a sample size of 150 from some selected universities in Ahmedabad, and it finds high awareness of Facebook advertisements amongst the youths. However, it was found that this youths experience some “attention challenges” in noticing and observing the ads. Their attitude to the ads also indicates a cause for worry: although they are extravagant and see Facebook ads as useful, majority of them don’t buy the product or visit the website for more or even “Like” products or services liked by their friends. Demystifying the Uses-and -Gratification theory to some extent, the study supports the social cognitive theory of communication and recommends that social media advertisers make their ads more assertive, eye-catching, detailed, brief and concise, more visible and position properly,”among others

Keywords: social media, Facebook, advertising, emotions, marketing, Ahmedabad youths.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Till date, advertisers and marketers have always glamorized with the help of traditional media to reach their target audience, and to defend advertising war against themselves. However, this has changed rapidly. Recent study indicates that the audience is turning towards the new media from the mass media for information and gratification of certain communication needs (Rudloff, S. and Frey, B., 2010). This indicates the change from conventional media to the young generation media i.e. social media (alternative media). These days if you are not on the social networking sites, you are not on the internet. This is true for both – the consumer as well as the advertiser. And marketers are well aware about this fact. As the Web has advanced to 2.0 version, the internet has also advanced with it. The social media today facilitates two-way interaction and user-generated content has become the centerpiece of this development. Social networking sites (SNS), enables users to present themselves, establish and maintain social connections with others, and articulate their own social networks (Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C. & Lampe, C., 2007) (Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M., 2010) (Meerman Scott, 2010). IAB platform status report (2008) shares that:

User Generated Content (UGC) and Social Networks are transforming the media ecosystem. Traditionally, the power rested in the hands of few content creators and media distributors. Marketers used to control the communication and path between advertisements and consumers. But today, it is collaborative, collective, customized and shared. Today consumer is the creator and distributor of content. There are over a billion

content creators and hundreds of millions of distributors. The rapid change in the quality, affordable technology and the popularity of social networks and UGC sites have forever changed the media scene. We can see the paradigm shift in the way advertisers' approach to target audiences with the help of social media, leading them to put more effort into communicating with consumers through online social networking. This social engagement thus provides marketers and advertisers with the opportunity to promote their goods and services and affect the purchase decisions of their customers and targets through online marketing and social media (Evans, 2010) (Rudloff, S. and Frey, B., 2010).

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Among the social media and SNS, Facebook sits at the top with 2.5 billion monthly users and still counting. It has grown to the most popular social networking site today with the above figure. In Gujarat, and parts of India, the diffusion of new digital technologies and their uses are increasing by the day. Internet penetration in India currently stands at about 42% with over 446 million internet users (Mckinseys' Report 2019). As per the report of NITI Aayog June 2019, 42 internet users are there per 100 people in Gujarat. This figure replicates the nations internet users' figure. Social network sites such as Facebook may have become a medium for advertisers and market practitioners to engage their customers and consumers. However, research studies on these social network sites and how its users perceive it are relatively limited.

This study therefore becomes apropos when we recall that as new information technologies are evolving globally, advertisers in turn are increasingly relying on various modes of interactive technology to advertise and promote their products and services. Recent observations indicate that advertisers have turned the way of the social media in a bid to reach their targets, by taking advantage of the ubiquitous social networks with their multiple platforms. However, understanding consumers attitude towards advertising has always been one of the goals of advertisers. The message should be well delivered and at the same time well received by the intended audiences, then only it can be said that advertisement was successful. Therefore, it becomes crucial to check out to what extent these advertising messages on the social network's platforms have been received by the audience and by the extended help to promote and build the awareness on offerings. This study comes handy to unveiling to what extent the popularity and proliferation of social media (Facebook in this instance) advertising is in congruence with the expected awareness, attitude and responsiveness among the youth in Ahmedabad.

It is expected that insights gained from this study will be valuable for advertisers and marketers who apparently spend too much money targeting people through the social media. This study may help the to better understand about the effectiveness of their advertisements and online marketing strategies, and of course allow them to take better decisions for best policies and practices for improvement. This study promises to be another useful addition to the already existing body of literature in the area of new media, social media and emotions amongst 21st century Amdavadi youths.

This study in a nutshell undertakes an in-depth investigation to determine whether the youths who from observation make more active use of social media like Facebook, are even aware of the existence of social media advertising positioned by advertisers and to explore their attitudes and responsiveness towards these advertisements. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- 1) Find out if and to what extent Ahmedabad youths make use of Facebook (social) media;
- 2) Determine the extent to which they are aware of advertisements posted on Facebook;
- 3) Ascertain the perception of these youths to the advertisements encountered on Facebook; and
- 4) Investigate their attitude and responsiveness towards such advertisements.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Uses and gratification theory of Mass communication and Social Cognitive theory of Psychology and Mass Communication forms the basis for this study. The basic concept of Uses and Gratification approach is to analyze media adoption and use pattern in studies. It states that people make an active and goal directed choice between the different media, base don their needs and the different gratifications these media provide them with (Katz, E., Blumler, J., & Gurevitch, M., 1974) (Roy, 2008) (Cauwenberge, A.V., d'Haenens, L., & Beentjes, H., 2010)

Uses and Gratifications approach sets the role of concerning need gratifications and media choice clearly on the sideways of audience members in the mass communication process. It proposes that people's needs impact what media they would pick, how they use certain media and what gratifications the media give them. Uses and gratification approach also assumes that the media strive with other information sources for audience's need fulfilment (Katz, E., Blumler, J., & Gurevitch, M., 1974). Uses and gratification theory is pertinent in understanding patterns of use of the diverse media forms by audiences, most fundamentally in view of the change of the new media, since the choice between new and traditional media will in future depend more on how well these technologies please exact interests and needs of individual consumers than on the existing social circulation of essential equipment and skills (Cauwenberge, A.V., d'Haenens, L., & Beentjes, H., 2010).

Uses and gratification approach, as analyzed by Kocak and Terkan (2009) “takes the use of mass media as a process of the satisfaction of the needs and takes the media audiences as individuals that are active, rational, and resistant to the effects and makes choices according to their preferences” (p.2).

Seeing from the new media outlook, a varied range of new theories, approaches, and methodologies have been projected as an answer to the variations stirring in the digitization of content, the creation and distribution of digital relics. These new movements have also inspired researchers to come around traditional theories in the field of mass communication and journalism, which could support in examining digital communication. Hereafter, in defining the media use activities and motives of the youths of Ahmedabad who steadily engross and interact with the emerging social media, the uses and gratification approach gives some important data. Also, the protagonists of uses and gratification argue that the technique is appropriate for learning new communication technologies. As Ruggiero (2000) puts it, “since new technologies present people with an increasing number of media choices, motivation and satisfaction become even more crucial components of audience analysis” (p.14).

The uses and gratifications approach (U&G) are accessible as a theoretical lens and experiential means for studying how audiences engross with new media. U&G offers a exclusive outlook on new media as it stresses the significance of media in the context of daily life, investigating uses, gratifications pursued and obtained, and media practices over time. To be precise, with the increasing implementation of social media, the U&G approach seems promising in providing a theoretical framework from which to examine what kinds of social media are implemented by what segments of the population, and what gratifications individuals obtain from their use of various social media platforms, sites, and services. This will help us better comprehend what motivates users to spend large amounts of time on these sites sharing, liking/disliking, forwarding, adding, and broadcasting content. In other words, each of the new media concepts – interactivity, richness, demassification, asynchronous, etc. – offers a vortex of communication behaviors to inspect, using the uses and gratification theory. Media researchers have also suggested that traditional models of Uses and Gratification may still deliver a valuable context from which to begin to study Internet and new media communication (Kuehn, 1994) (December, 1996) (Morris, M., & Ogan, C., 1996).

Nevertheless, in speaking around social media advertising, the U&G theory will better elucidate why and how certain segments of the population originate gratification from any type of advertising positioned on the social media. It would also elucidate why and how other contents of the social media, apart from advertising compete for the audiences' attention and thus could make certain advertisements less needed and less effective.

On the other hand, the Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive theory (1986) which states that people are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, not just sensitive creatures shaped and driven by conservational events or internal forces, might be informative here too. This attribute might accidentally contribute in making people grow certain kinds of attitude to (social) media content and respond to them in certain ways, even when they are aware of and exposed to the certain media content.

LITERATURE REVIEW

By definition, social media is a set of several web services that can be unified for social communication using extremely handy and accessible communication techniques. Those web services refer to user's capacity to create, publish and share contents that are accessible in various platforms – basically webs and mobiles. (Mayfield, 2008) explains that social media is online or electronic media which enables sharing, directness, chat, community and related ness amongst online users. The essential of social media as described by Trusov et al. (2009) lies in fact that users can have individual profiles and personal images, users are able to communicate their opinions, feelings, interests (music, hobbies, preferences) and relation to affiliated profiles (friends or professional fan pages).

Many social media apps exist that allow the formation, alteration and conversation of online content. According to Hausmann & Poellmann (n.d.), the most pertinent types of social media apps at present-day are summarized and superficially discussed below:

- Joint projects encompass knowledge communities like “Wikipedia”, bookmarking sites like “Mr. Wong” or review sites like “Yelp”. While knowledge communities enable users to add, remove, and change text-based communities, bookmarking and review sites allow a group-based collection and rating of Internet links, media content or products and services.
- Weblogs (Blogs) represent the earliest form of social media and are regularly updated websites on which contributions are published in reverse chronological orders. In general, blogs allow extensive interaction between blogger and readers via a comment function.
- Microblogs like Twitter are seen as a hybrid of blogging, instant messaging and status notifications. They allow people to publish short text messages (restricted to 140 – 200 characters) using a multitude of various communication channels such as cell phones, instant messaging, e-mail and the Web.
- Content communities like YouTube, Flickr or Slideshare focus on content and file sharing between users. Content communities exist for a wide range of different media types like text, photos, songs, videos and PowerPoint presentations.

- Social Networks like Facebook connect users with similar background and interests who create personal, fully customizable profiles displaying their identity and then share these with so-called friends or fans. Profiles can include any type of information, i.e. photos, videos, audio files and blogs.
- Virtual Worlds comprise virtual games and social worlds where a three-dimensional computer-based environment replicates the “real world”. In games like Warcraft user can appear in the form of a personalized avatar and interact with the community.

For the present study, focus is on social network sites; Facebook being a popular example. (Finin, T., Ding, L., Zhou, L. and Joshi, A., 2005) define a social network as an “explicit representation of the relationship between individuals and groups in the community”. Additionally, Raacke and Bonds- (Raacke, J. & Bonds-Raacke, J., 2008) indicate that social networks provide a virtual platform where people of similar interests may gather to communicate, share and discuss ideas.

An exclusive and outstanding feature of social networks is the users’ profile. This profile is the important point of one’s social networking experience. Each profile page is exclusive to the owner and allows its user to exactly “type oneself into being” (Sunden, 2003). Each member is encouraged to upload their personal profile photograph and share a range of personal information such as where they go to school and details about their personal tastes, such as favorite movies and music (Boyd D. M. and Ellison N. B., 2007). As users have total control over the content that they choose to share and the applications they place on their pages, they can, and usually do, opt to portray themselves in the most positive light. This means that a user can desire to an ideal self through his/her SNS profile. Apart from the inclusion of personal details and photographs, there are two further main components of the social networking profile – friends and comments (Boyd D. M. and Ellison N. B., 2007). Friends also play a vital role in the composition of SNSs. On joining a SNS, users are encouraged to identify others with whom they wish to form relationships. Once the connection is made, the relationship will be visually represented on each user’s profile page, under the friends section, within which there is a facility to nominate one’s top or best 8, 12, 16 or 20 friends, to be listed as such on the user’s main profile page (Boyd D. M. and Ellison N. B., 2007). Research to date in this area has focused overwhelmingly on one’s profile page, primarily regarding how people portray themselves through their profile page and how they connect with friends and acquaintances via the network (Boyd D. M. and Ellison N. B., 2007) (Tong, S., van Der Heide, B., Langwell, L. and Walther, J., 2008) (Liu, 2008).

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Social media advertising (SMA) is defined as to the process of gaining traffic to website or attention through social media websites. SMA campaigns usually focus on efforts to produce content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. Old-style campaigning approaches are outshined not only by rising social media but also due to increasing difficulty to create an outstanding campaign due to very competitive market. Impact of social media can be seen in television advertisements which sign off with a plea for consumers to visit their websites, Facebook or Twitter page with the promise of an exciting online experience, fun incentives and a sense of community that people actually want to get involved with (Kaushik, 2012). (Bajpai, V. Pandey, S. and Shriwas, S., 2012) says that Social media has become a platform that is effortlessly available to anyone with Internet access. Improved communication for organizations raises brand awareness and often, improved customer service. Furthermore, social media aids as a quite reasonable platform for organizations to implement advertising and marketing campaigns.

With the dawn of the Internet and the progress of Web 2.0, there is a tangible shift in the control of communication and of course, advertising. The web has successfully transferred the power of control from companies to the customers. Consequently, customer chooses what he/she wants to see, read, or listen to, so the companies compete in getting people’s consideration and delivering their messages. When companies join these social networking sites, people can interact with the company and their products. This interaction makes users feel personal because of their previous experiences with social networking site. Social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube, Pinterest and blogs allow individual followers to “retweet” or “repost” comments made by the product being promoted. By repeating the message, all of the users’ connections are able to see the message, therefore reaching more people. Social networking sites act as word of mouth. Because the information about the product is being put out there and is getting repeated, more traffic is brought to the product/company. Besides, most advertisements on Facebook for instance invite users to simply “Like” the product or the company by simply clicking the “Like” button. What follows such action is that the company henceforth starts sending such user contents, information and other interactive posts that market the product or the company so “liked”.

Nevertheless, and undoubtedly, the use of social networking sites such as Facebook and user generated content (UGC) has presented both opportunities and challenges to the advertisers, marketers and the overall advertising landscape. (Report, 2008) concedes that “In the larger eco-system, social networking and UGC sites have provided high-value advertising inventory and audience segments needed to capture more of the market share and targeted audience reach that advertisers demand, e.g. Microsoft’s investment in Facebook, Google’s acquisition of YouTube...” The report continues that,

“Traditionally, marketers have been able to buy time or space on fixed media in a controlled context. They knew where their ad would appear, what it would look like, and perhaps most important, in what context it would be seen. In other words, they could be guaranteed their message wasn’t being delivered in a hostile or inappropriate environment. Today, such guarantees are harder to make, and that lack of control can be a source of great anxiety for marketers.”

Bearing in mind the above, it is therefore significant that advertisers and marketers be prompted that a new method is believed critical in their use of social networks. Instead of disseminating one-way messages at their audiences, advertisers are forced to involve customers in a discussion. Instead of inviting individual consumers into an environment of their own making, marketers advertising on these sites are entering a discussion initiated, maintained, and “owned” by consumers themselves. Doing so carries risks, but failure to do so carries more.

On impact of social media advertising and or marketing on consumers purchase decisions, Fauser found that consumers felt that info sharing, association and relationship building was necessary to support enduring communication; social media marketing permitted organization’s the opportunity to be in the position to offer added bases of info regarding product benefits, product features and provide real time response to consumers; social networks, particularly Facebook were found to be most suitable info sharing platform at the beginning of the consumer purchase decision as many consumers relied on social recommendations; and many consumers used Facebook reviews and ratings (“likes”) as the means to seek recommendations, peer advice and find product information.

(Bati) studying “attitudes of young consumers towards social media marketing, surveyed a total of 124 students at some universities located in Istanbul. He found that 66.9% of the participants think that using a social media tools for advertising is useful; 50% of the participants are fans of at least one company or brand; 54% of the participants follow of at least one company or brand; 57.2% of the participants trust recommendations from people they knew personally about brands; 42.8% of the participants trust brand websites and mini-sites; and 47.5% of the participants like social network advertising very much. Similarly, (Chi, 2011) analyzing User Motivation and Social Media Marketing Responses in Taiwan found that social networking online is the main reason users keep spending time with social media such as Facebook”. Therefore, users perceive and respond to marketing venues, such as advertising and brand communities, in a different way than they do to traditional media. The findings also indicate that user motivations generate complex effects for responses to social media marketing, differing across Facebook advertising and virtual brand communities. (Yaakop, A. Y., Annar, M. M., Omar, K. and Liung, A.L. K. (n.d.)) who studied consumers’ perceptions and attitudes towards advertising on Facebook in Malaysia suggest that there are three online factors that significantly influence consumers’ attitudes towards advertising on Facebook. The factors are perceived interaction, advertising evasion and privacy. Surprisingly, according to them, credibility was not a significant factor predicting consumer’ attitudes towards advertising on Facebook.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted quantitative methodological approach and thus used the survey method as the study design. The questionnaire was used as the survey instrument. Therefore, questionnaires were distributed to young people between the ages of 19 and 30 in selected institutes in Ahmedabad. The universities include: GLS University and Gujarat Technological Universities. The sampling techniques used is non probabilistic convenience sampling. In total 85 respondents filled the questionnaire through google forms. The basic condition to be respondent was to have Facebook account. Out of the total respondents 7 were disqualified as they didn’t have Facebook account. The analyses of the valid ones were done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Hereunder are the details of data analysis based on the research objectives/research questions. However, for the sake of comprehensibility, the data presentation and the discussion of relevant findings are hereunder merged together.

Table 1: Demographic Variables

DEMOGRAPHICS		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER	Male	54	65.9%
	Female	28	34.1
AGE BRACKET	18-21	27	32.9%
	22-25	54	65.9%
	26-30	1	1.2%
QUALIFICATION (PURSUING)	Postgraduates	82	100%

From the above demographic data, 65.9% of the respondents are males whereas 34.2 % are females. Data also shows that most of the age group is between 22-25. This indicates that these young people are between the

ages adjudged by the United Nations to be the ideal definition of youth - between the ages of 15 and 25 (United Nations 2003) – as only 1.2% were between the ages 26-30 years. In the same vein, data shows that the percentage of the level of study for the surveyed postgraduate students were almost equal.

Uses of Facebook Social Media

VARIABLE		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
OWNERSHIP OF FACEBOOK ACCOUNT	Yes	75	91.5%
	No	7	8.5%
YEARS OF USING FACEBOOK ACCOUNT	7-10 years	27	36%
	4-6 years	40	53.3%
	1-3 years	8	10.7%
	Less than a year	0	0%
HOW OFTEN RESPONDENTS FACEBOOK	Once in while	19	25.3%
	Once a week	10	13.3%
	Several times a week	14	18.7%
	Everyday	32	42.7%
TIME SPENT WHEN SIGNED IN	Others	1	1.3%
	Less than 1 hour	64	85.3%
	Average of 1-2 hours	9	12%
	Average of 3-5 hours	1	1.3%

Table 2: Showing data on the respondents' use of Facebook social media

From the data presented above, majority of the respondents (91.5%) owns Facebook accounts. Only an insignificant 8.5% do not have account. However, data at the same time indicates that majority of respondents (53.3%) have account from 4-6 years followed by 7-10 years (27%). Majority of respondents (42.7%) uses Facebook every day, followed by 25.3% respondents using it occasionally. This makes it difficult to consider both the extreme ends. Though there are a greater number of youths using Facebook every day or several times in a week. However, when asked about the amount of time spent when signed in, it is shocking to note that 85.3% of the respondent spend less than an hour on Facebook, even though it is one of the most popular social media. Though the everyone believed they are logged in Facebook app round the day.

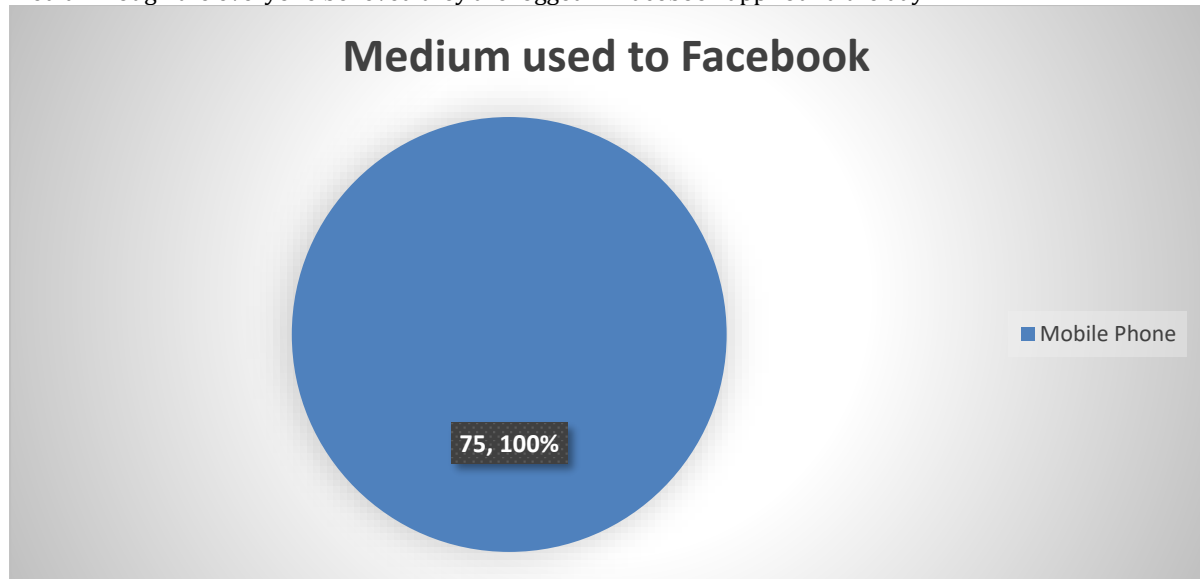


Fig 1: Showing the medium used to 'Facebook' and their percentage

As expected, all the respondents use mobile phone to connect with Facebook social media platform. Facebook has its own mobile application to connect with the world. The application offers respondents to log in their Facebook accounts and stay logged in 24/7. It notifies the users about the updates and happenings in the profile.

Table 3: Awareness of Facebook Advertisements

VARIABLE		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ENCOUNTERED ADVERTISEMENT ON FACEBOOK?	Yes	65	86.7%
	No	10	13.3%
HOW OFTEN?	Never	9	12%
	Accidentally	9	12%

NOTICEABILITY	Sometimes	34	45.3%
	Always	23	30.7%
	They take time and effort to notice	19	25.3%
	They are easily noticeable	56	74.7%

After understanding the fact of their use of Facebook social media, another thing is to ascertain the extent to which they are aware of Facebook advertisements. Total 86.7 percent respondents agree that they have at one time or the other have encountered advertisement positioned on Facebook. While 13.3 percent claim they haven't had any such encounter. Still, 45.3 percent of the postgraduates claims that their encounters with Facebook advertisements happens "Sometimes" (that is not always), whereas a considerable 30.7 percent respondents says that they encounter them always and only 12 percent are there who accidentally encountered advertisements or never encountered any advertisement on Facebook. To understand furthermore with this context, a question was asked about the noticeability of the advertisements. Almost 75 percent of respondents claim that these Facebook advertisements "are easily noticeable" to them just as only 25 percent of them allege it "takes them time and effort to notice". This brings up certain incongruity. Majority of them claim they do not always encounter advertisements on Facebook and yet turn around to say that the advertisements are easily noticeable to them. Because there is never a time these days when advertisements are not always displayed on Facebook, this contradiction might go to show that these youths might simply be suffering from 'attention problem'.

Table 4: Perception & Attitude of Respondents to Facebook Advertisements

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception towards use of Facebook					
Using Social media for advertising is useful and good	75	2	5	4.19	.711
I like Facebook advertisement very much	75	1	5	3.12	.821
I enjoy watching advertisement on Facebook	75	1	5	2.95	.957
I am a fan of at least one company/brand on Facebook	75	1	5	3.13	1.044
Compared to other media, advertisement on Facebook are more eye catchy	75	1	5	3.15	.996
It's easier for me to recall brands advertised on other media than those on Facebook	75	1	5	3.25	.988
The position of these advertisements is the biggest factor that prevents me from noticing them	75	1	5	3.27	.859
Attitude towards Facebook					
If I am a fan of a brand on Facebook, I'll buy the product	75	1	5	2.96	1.006
I will visit a product website after seeing an advertisement on Facebook	75	1	5	3.29	.997
When you are told your friend likes a product/brand, do you click 'like' as well?	75	1	5	3.19	1.074
I always look out for Facebook advertisements because they tell me what's new and popular	75	1	5	3.12	1.102
Valid N (listwise)	75				

Coming to how these postgraduate students perceive the whole idea of Social media/Facebook advertising and advertisements themselves, seven[7] statements were put forward to them in order to prompt diverse responses pertaining perceptions. This question was posed in the form of Likert scale to understand the perception and attitude of users. Interestingly, most weightage was given to "Using social media for advertising is useful and good", with the highest mean value of 4.19. There is clear indication that users not only notices but also enjoys watching advertisements on Facebook. They also feel like these advertisements help them recall brand better. We can see some contradiction over enjoying watching advertisement on Facebook as it has got the least weightage of 2.95 only. This gives credibility to our earlier proclamation in Table 3 that these youths might be suffering what could be called as 'attention challenges' in their use of Facebook.

Considering the above revealing data on perception of Facebook advertisements, what remains is to ascertain their attitude and responsiveness to these advertisements. To gauge this, four statements were asked to the respondents. The highest weightage is given by the respondents to “I will visit a product website after seeing an advertisement on Facebook” with the mean value 3.29. Yet, data analysis shows strongly that majority of them would not buy the product even if they are fan of brand on Facebook as it is the least weightage of 2.96. There is common practice on Facebook where users are updated about what products and brand their “Friends” ‘like’ and could be fans of; the idea being that user can decide to as well ‘Like’ the brand or product as they are likely to want to associate with. But this study shows that very low weightage is given to this. They also look for advertisements to keep themselves updated about new and trending products.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper set out to tackle four research objectives – to find out if and to what extent Ahmedabadi youths make use of Facebook (social) media; to find out the extent to which they are aware of advertisements posted on Facebook; to investigate their attitude and responsiveness towards such advertisements. The study finds that Facebook phenomenon and its use is popular among the surveyed youths of Ahmedabad – postgraduate students and that over 60 percent of them either use it every day or several times a week. This use is however facilitated by their internet-enabled mobile phones. This recalls what George Dixon, Manager of Mobile and Digital media, Mediacom UK said about social media and advertising:

“Mobile is amplifying consumer usage of the social media, due to the quick access to content it offers. Our target audiences can engage with friends and brands far more often and more easily than previously possible of the desktop web....with more time spent on Facebook via mobile, than via the traditional web.”

More so, it is found that majority of the surveyed youths are aware of advertisements on Facebook as many of them have encountered as well as have been able to name of the various advertisements they have encountered. However, it is concluded that youths might be experiencing what has been termed “attention challenge” in their displaced use of Facebook. This is apparently so because although 75 percent allege that the advertisements are easily noticeable to them, almost 60 percent still claim they do not always encounter advertisements on Facebook whereas we know that Facebook platform is almost always patronized by very many advertisers, companies and marketers, these days. This attention challenge is further reinforced by the fact that the youths say that the placing of the advertisements on Facebook does not in any way contribute to their inability to notice the advertisement ‘Always’. In the same context, while majority of the youths acknowledge that using social media to advertise is good and useful and that they like Facebook advertising very much as well as enjoy viewing them. Also, the attitude and responsiveness of young people to Facebook advertising in general indicate a cause of worry. While majority claim that if they are fans of a brand on Facebook, they will buy the product, many of them insist they would visit a product website after seeing an advertisement on Facebook and that they do not necessarily have to ‘Like’ the brand their friends ‘Like’ on Facebook. However, it is interesting that majority of them still say that they always look out for advertisements on Facebook because of one prominent efficacy: they tell them what’s new and popular.

The prominent findings of this study have revealed an interesting argument about the Uses-and-Gratifications theory. Advertisements and marketing contents proliferate on Facebook. This is a time-tested fact. However, while media scholars might be quick to assume that advertisements and marketing stunts comprise as being among the media users’ needs and gratifications and reasons for ‘Facebooking’, this study has found a minor incongruity to this. As far as the surveyed young people are concerned, advertisements, though noticeable and appealing, do not form part of their more serious gratification sought from Facebook usage. This is explained by the fact that they could be distracted by a host of other gratifications they are seeking after on Facebook to notice the bombardment of advertisements that continue to ‘fight’ for spaces on Facebook. This has exposed the existing assumption and theory of Uses and Gratifications in relation to the social media and advertising. Again, the social cognitive theory of Psychology and Mass communication seem to have played out in this scenario as well. The fact that people are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, not just reactive organisms but can call up certain psychological schemas to bring to bear in their decision-making, is indeed informative here. The fact that although most of the young people like, enjoy, and view Facebook advertisements but still have attitude and response challenges lends weight to this. Possibly, the diverse responses which originated from the open-ended question posed to the respondents about what they think advertisers ought to do to increase the effectiveness of their Ads on Facebook, might be a sure way to close this discussion. For these youths, they believe

“advertisers should make these social media ads more eye catchy; brief and concise; have better visibility, include more useful details that can aid potential buyers; take note of the positioning, make ads more creative and thought-provoking; be more persuasive; make ads larger and less inconspicuous; be truthful in delivering their ad communication; consider using pop-up ads as well...” Shouldn’t we rather agree with them?

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends, in conjunction with those suggested by the students themselves future research directions. A study involving a larger sample size drawn from more than one geographical zone in Gujarat is hereby suggested. Additionally, further examination on the relationship between social media consumption and attitude and responsiveness to advertising/marketing communication should be explored using a qualitative methodology such as focus group discussion.

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