

Social Media Communication: Influencer in Apparel Brand Selection

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(Received 9 September 2018; Revised 30 September 2018; Accepted 18 October 2018; Available online 26 October 2018)

Abstract - Apparel brands have been utilizing social media marketing to engage with prospects and thereby influencing sales for few years in the past in India. Quality content competitions and automation in social media advertising has discovered many marketing methods to promote a brand on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and YouTube. Companies are revolutionizing the way they interact with customers by adopting social media as platform that has become an important aspect in marketing mix. The findings presented in this study conclude that social media communication cannot be implemented in isolation without extending it with other forms of traditional advertising channels even though; social media is more effective than some of the traditional advertising channels. Using social media for marketing of apparel brands has gained importance in the success of any effective online marketing campaign coupled with creativity in content, design and unique style to help brand stand out and differentiate from competitors. This research study has concluded that marketers need to focus on directive appearance on social media with interesting, catchy, entertaining, and appealing content as consumer apparel brand selection is dependent on their perception, quality and frequency of social media communication.

Keywords: Social Media Communication, Online Advertising, Apparel Brands, Consumer Perception

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media elements and other online marketing activities such as search engine advertising as stand-alone are frequently used by companies although they leverage social media platforms such as Facebook to engage with customers. Therefore, it is essential to scientifically recognize how specific elements of social media, signifying and representing behavioral appearances of brand engagement, relate to other online activities. The study was taken over by Yang, Shuai & Lin, Shan & Carlson, Jeffrey & T. Ross, William. (2016) to know how three types of brand engagement on social media that is affiliation, conversation and responsiveness influence search engine advertising effectiveness, including click-through rate and conversion rate. Researchers found that affiliation, conversation and responsiveness increase click-through rate and conversion rate and relationships between advertisement and brand engagement on social media strengthens the rank and search engine advertising effectiveness.

In the study taken over by (trackmaven.com in 2018) in recent report analyzing the social media impact of B2C

industries it is found that apparel brands have attracted the largest audiences on social media platforms. The report has disclosed that 3,50,000 posts from 213 brands across 10 B2C industries on five social media channels from January through October, 2015. In the fashion and apparel industry, we based our analysis on the top 27 apparel brands in the Global 500 and leading apparel brands on social media as identified by the TrackMaven platform.

Pornpitakpan, C. (2004) stated that user-generated social media communications have a better outcome on consumers' overall perception of brands than firm-created social media communication because consumers typically judge the information provided by other individuals to be trustworthy. Researcher also discovered that the effect of brand attitude is almost twice as strong as the effect of brand equity on consumer purchasing decisions but managers prohibited user-generated communication by marketing action programs while maintaining an active profile of social media advertising.

According to Lane and Jacobson (1995), Morgan and Hunt (1994), "brand attitude is defined as a "consumer's overall evaluation of a brand". Brand attitude is commonly conceptualized as a global evaluation that is based on favorable or unfavorable reactions to brand-related stimuli or beliefs related to the brand promoted on social media.

I. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) had developed Multi attribute attitude models hypothesize that the "overall evaluation of a brand is a function of the beliefs about specific attributes of the brand/product". The accumulation of brand attitude to the conceptual framework anticipated in this study aims to enhance our understanding of the effects of social media communication on consumer perceptions of brands.

Munshi (2012) have said that the digital marketing is an umbrella term for all online marketing efforts. Today, repetitive marketing techniques have given a way to digital and social media marketing. Businesses influence digital channels such as Google search, social media, email, and their websites to connect with their current and prospective customers. Promoting products via social media influencers can be considered as a form of subconscious marketing. For ages, brands and advertisers have been seeking to shape consumers' thoughts, attitudes, and behavior, without us even being aware of it.

Article published on www.meltwater.com has highlighted that the rise of the influencer is one of the biggest shifts in high fashion influencers with large and dedicated consumer base. Fashion bloggers prefer to link their outfits, allowing a consumer to see somewhat they like and immediately purchase it. Apps like “LIKE to KNOW it” or clickable links through Pinterest allow you to shop directly from social media, and have pieces delivered directly to your door.

Bidyanand Jha (2015) has stated that the influence of firm created social media communication & user generated social media communication on brand attitude which in turn influencer of brand equity and afterwards purchase intention by making explicit the mediating role of learning style on the antecedents of brand attitude.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND SCOPE

This research study is an attempt to estimate the relationship between consumer perceptions about social media communication for apparel brands in order to find out the impact of social media communication on apparel brand selection. A survey consist of netizens from various social media was conducted to note the opinion of social media users regarding their experience and perception about social media communication related to apparel brands. Individuals who have given response in this survey were from various demographic classes as there was no any barrier in data collection via internet only.

So the result of this study may be applicable to any set of geographical location and any demographic segment of individual throughout the India. 840 responses were taken from social media users with the help of convenient sampling considering Morgon’s table as thumb rule for sample size. Descriptive data analysis was done to frame the demographic profile of respondents with the help of frequency analysis whereas ANOVA, regression and correlation analysis was performed to test hypothesis as inferential statistical proofs.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study consumer’s perception about brands communicated on social media
2. To study the social media communication impact on apparel brand selection

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data was collected through convenience snowball sampling method under the descriptive research design in order to test hypotheses of this research. Respondents were

selected with the help of individuals who are subscribers and active on various social networking sites. A google survey link was spread through various social media platforms with the help of socially connected individuals. Various magazines, journals, research articles and internet sources were discovered in order to set theoretical background of this research. Secondary data helped to define objectives and hypotheses of the study. Variables measuring the opinion for dependent and independent variables related to hypothesis testing were collected on five point Likert scale.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

Collected data was processed and entered in SPSS software for statistical analysis. Various parametric and non-parametric tests are performed on the data in order to justify the objectives and test hypotheses as below:

VI. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Descriptive analysis was performed to know various percentages and distribution characteristics of data collected which also helped in tabulation, meaningful formulation and graphical representation of data. It is found that most of the respondents (50.6%) who have taken part in survey were from 27 years and above group representing mature and professional netizens showing affinity towards social networking sites. Against the common belief of teen-agers being highly social media savvy, only 12% respondents were found active in this category.

Male has overtaken female by 62.3% over 37.7% in social media use. 76.9% respondents are using social media for more than 5 years and only 2% are using since a year which indicated the longer association and popularity of social media. 64.8% means a very big segment of social media user’s daily log-on to their profiles and very negligible people has less frequency of social media use. 59.6% respondents’ use social media up to 1 hour daily and 18.4% people use it for up to 4hours daily. This profile of social media users gives clear picture on usage pattern and popularity of social media.

Mean analysis is performed on the variables measured on Likert scale for the agreement level of respondents where 1 is measured as strongly disagree, 2 is disagree, 3 is neutral, 4 is agree and 5 is strongly agree. Mean less than 3 indicate the disagreement of respondent and mean more than 3 indicated agreements. The table below indicates that the mean for all variables is more than three and hence it is clear that social media communication has very high impact on consumer perception and brand selection.

TABLE I DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Came across to apparel advertisements	840	1	5	3.99	0.878	0.771
Seen various offers and schemes	840	1	5	4.23	0.83	0.688
Seen many sales drives	840	1	5	4.02	0.938	0.879
Apparel brands have high presence on social media	840	1	5	3.51	1.127	1.271
E-commerce websites promote apparel brand on social media	840	1	5	3.99	0.879	0.772
Various pop-up and google ads appear on social media frequently	840	1	5	4.23	0.83	0.689
Apparel brands are promoted to my social media accounts related to my search history	840	1	5	4.02	0.938	0.879
I like to check apparel brands advertised on social media	840	1	5	3.51	1.127	1.271
I find social media apparel advertising interesting	840	1	5	3.99	0.878	0.771
Brand advertised on my profile are highly suitable to my interest	840	1	5	4.23	0.83	0.689
Social Media advertisements have interesting content	840	1	5	4.02	0.938	0.879
Social Media advertisements are entertaining	840	1	5	3.9	1.007	1.015
Social Media advertisements affects your brand selection	840	1	5	3.79	0.992	0.984
Valid N (listwise)	840					

A. Hypotheses Testing

H_0 : Brand selection is not dependent on the social media communication.

H_1 : Brand selection is dependent on the social media communication.

This hypothesis is intended to check the dependency of apparel brand selection by consumers on the social media

communication efforts, frequency and appearance by companies in consumer perception. Regression statistics is estimated to test the significance and the strength of dependency among brand selection as dependent and measurement variables as shown in the model summary table. Normality of dependent variable was tested by estimating Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test which is absolutely significant with alpha value as shown in table below.

TABLE II TESTS OF NORMALITY

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Social Media advertisements affects your brand selection	.285	840	.000	.850	840	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

TABLE III MODEL SUMMARY

Model Summary ^b											
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson	
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change		
dimension0	1	.654 ^a	.428	.425	.752	.428	124.943	5	834	.000	1.902

a. Predictors: (Constant), Apparel brands are promoted to my social media accounts related to my search history, Various pop-up and google ads appears on social media frequently, Apparel brands have high presence on social media, Came across to apparel advertisements, Seen various offers and schemes

b. Dependent Variable: Social Media advertisements affects your brand selection

TABLE IV ANOVA SUMMARY

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	353.727	5	70.745	124.943	.000 ^a
	Residual	472.230	834	.566		
	Total	825.957	839			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Apparel brands are promoted to my social media accounts related to my search history, Various pop-up and google ads appears on social media frequently , Apparel brands have high presence on social media , Came across to apparel advertisements, Seen various offers and schemes						
b. Dependent Variable: Social Media advertisements affects your brand selection						

TABLE V ANOVA SUMMARY

Residuals Statistics ^a					
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.19	4.69	3.79	.649	840
Residual	-1.418	2.659	.000	.750	840
Std. Predicted Value	-2.469	1.381	.000	1.000	840
Std. Residual	-1.884	3.534	.000	.997	840
a. Dependent Variable: Social Media advertisements affects your brand selection					

TABLE VI CORRELATION MATRIX

Correlations							
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		Social Media advertisements affects your brand selection	I like to check apparel brands advertised on social media	I find social media apparel advertising interesting	Brand advertised on my profile are highly suitable to my interest	Social Media advertisements have interesting content	Social Media advertisements are entertaining
Social Media advertisements affects your brand selection	Pearson Correlation	1	.653**	.227**	.147**	.242**	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0	0	0
	N	840	840	840	840	840	840
I like to check apparel brands advertised on social media	Pearson Correlation	.653**	1	.307**	.181**	.342**	.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0	0	0	0
	N	840	840	840	840	840	840
I find social media apparel advertising interesting	Pearson Correlation	.227**	.307**	1	.320**	.367**	.207**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0		0	0	0
	N	840	840	840	840	840	840
Brand advertised on my profile are highly suitable to my interest	Pearson Correlation	.147**	.181**	.320**	1	.188**	.185**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0		0	0
	N	840	840	840	840	840	840
Social Media advertisements have interesting content	Pearson Correlation	.242**	.342**	.367**	.188**	1	.223**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0	0		0
	N	840	840	840	840	840	840
Social Media advertisements are entertaining	Pearson Correlation	.498**	.569**	.207**	.185**	.223**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0	0	0	
	N	840	840	840	840	840	840

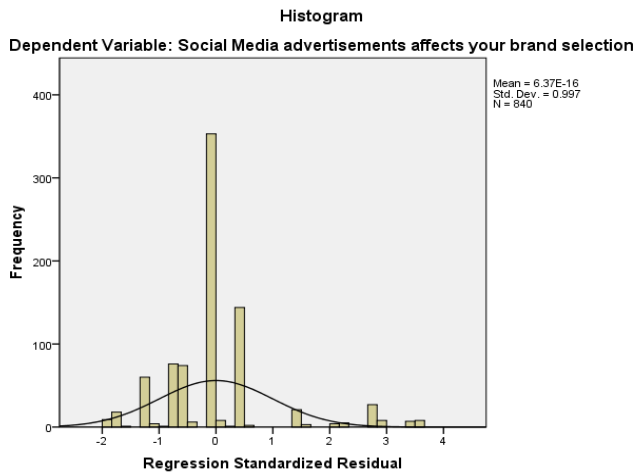


Fig. 1 Probability Curve

R Square Change value indicates that the dependent variable Social Media advertisements affects your brand selection is 42.8% dependent over the list of predictor variable. The model summary is found significant indicating that the hypothesized model is acceptable and null hypothesis should be rejected as ANOVA statistics is significant. The graph shown above indicates the perfect bell curve fit for model as per hypothesis and hence null hypothesis is rejected.

H_0 : There is no significant positive relation between consumer perception about social media communication for apparel brands and apparel brand selection.

H_1 : There is significant relation between consumer perception about social media communication for apparel brands and apparel brand selection.

The hypothesized relation is tested with the help of Pearson's correlation test and it is found that Social Media advertisements affects the brand selection and is positively correlated with interest in checking apparel advertising, liking of apparel advertising, perception about advertisement content and entertaining capabilities of social media apparel advertising as shown in above table. Negative correlation value indicates the inversely proportional relationship among variables and positive indicates the directly proportional relation. Values close to +/-1 indicates the percentage changes among variables by change in other

variable. All correlation values are positive and significant in above table for hypothesized model proves that the null hypothesis is not supported.

VII. CONCLUSION

This research study discovered that apparel brand selection is affected by the frequency of social media communication, quality of advertised content, emotional appeal and entertaining capacities of advertisement and social media communication. It also provided an insight that not only teen agers but also elder people are using social media frequently and they should be considered while designing social media campaigns for apparel brands. Further research can be focused to check the level of impact by social media communication in various geographical segments of country and the impact of non-social media communication over apparel brand selection among netizens.

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