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## Users' Opinion Regarding Advertisements on Social Networking Sites with Special Reference to Facebook

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### ABSTRACT

*Social Networking websites are becoming one of the best ways to reach customers and clients easily and effectively. Many businesses have begun to notice the potential for reaching out to their target audiences through this new medium. Today, businesses prefer to actively participate on social networking sites and allocate a share of budget pie towards it. The advantages that social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and Orkut provide over traditional media advertising are low cost, unlimited access, simplicity, global reach, contact building, flexibility and measurability. This paper attempts to ascertain the alertness of facebook users towards social media advertisements. It also focuses on the impact created by such advertisements on the consumer's buying behavior. Facebook users seem to be aware about advertisements placed on the Facebook and tag "Like" option of various brands.*

**Keywords : Social Media Marketing, Facebook, "Like" option, Brand recall**

### INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing a process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products, or services through on-line social channels and to communicate with and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional advertising channels.[1] Social Networks are the websites that you use to let individuals know exactly who you are or establish a profile to find others with similar interests.[2]

Studies show that a substantial majority of US young adults age 12-24 use Facebook and certain types of mobile technology. The 2010 American Youth Study" indicates that 74% of young adults use Facebook to some degree. By frequency of use, this figure breaks down to 55% actively using Facebook and 19% occasionally using it. Of the remaining 26%, only 4% are unfamiliar with Facebook.[3]

**Talking about India, there are 46 million Facebook users in the India, which makes it #3 in the ranking of all "Facebook statistics by Country", with United States Ranking at first followed by Brazil and India.[4]** Facebook monitors its user base through the number of Monthly Active Users (MAUs), among other metrics. An MAU is a registered Facebook user who logs in and visits Facebook, shares content or indulges in other activities in the last 30 days as of the date of measurement. As per Economic Times on Feb 3, 2012 "We experienced growth across different geographies, with users in Brazil and India representing a key source of growth," Facebook said. India had 46 million MAUs in India as of December 31, 2011, an increase of 132 per cent from December 31, 2010, when it had 845 million MAUs." According to a study, the top 5 'Liked' brands on Facebook are Tata Docomo, Kingfisher, Fastrack, Vodafone Zoozoos and Pepsi India respectively.[5]

### LITERATURE REVIEW

P. Sri Jothi, M. Neelamalar and R. Shakthi Prasad (2011), concludes that Social networking sites users of Face book, Twitter and Orkut have become a personal, product and corporate branding hub in India nowadays in digital era. Every brand that exists on social networking sites has the same core features and benefits, such as the ability to create a page, share resources, add multimedia and much more. Social networking sites are filled with potential users who are mainly young adults. They spend more time in these networking sites

due to heavy commercial contents, entertainment and social gathering. So, product or service communicators through their ads in these areas with more and more interactive and with fascinating factors so that their brand identity is developed among the right choice of focused audience. Advertisers and brands uses social networking sites as the major resource for their promotion and developing brand identity among the focused market.[6]

David Joshua Perdue (2010) says while hundreds of millions of Internet users are flocking to social media sites, businesses everywhere still struggle to find ways of reaching out to them in order to expand their audiences. And the best way to connect with online consumers in social media is to focus on the four core principles: community, content, conversation, and transparency.[7]

McLennan and Howell found that Social networking sites are proving a powerful medium to public relations practitioners as they have the capacity to encourage brand awareness, develop consumer relations and increase brand loyalty. If effective, social networks can enable practitioners to facilitate positive conversation, develop trust-based relationships, influence consumers and engage users in a brand, becoming a mutually beneficial relationship.[8]

Shih (2009) says that there are hundreds of millions of active users across sites like Face book, Hi5, Orkut and MySpace. 2.6 billion min are spent on Face book each day. These websites are enabling brands to engage the right people in the right conversation at right time. Marketing the brands through social media is becoming precise, personal, interesting, interactive and social.[9]

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the users' opinion regarding advertisements on Facebook
- To study the consumer awareness regarding advertising on social networking websites.
- To study whether consumers recall advertising at the time of buying the product.
- To study the acceptability of the advertising on Social Networking Site-Facebook.

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

1. Respondents believe that advertising on social networking site (face book) makes influence on buying behavior.
2. Respondents click on "Like" option of various brands.
3. Respondents have brands recall during the purchase of the product.
4. Respondent believes that lack of virtual existence deter them to buy the product.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Sample Size**

For the purpose of the study, samples of 150 students from two colleges were taken. There were 90 students from MBA semester IV and 60 students from Pharmacy semester VI. However, it was noticed that only 135 respondents were user of the Facebook. Hence, the data of only 135 respondents was taken into consideration for analysis.

**Sampling Unit**

Students of MBA and Pharmacy college, who use internet.

**Sampling Method**

For the purpose of the study, convenience sampling method was adopted.

**Data Source**

Primary as well as secondary data were used for the collection of information. Primary data were collected through questionnaire from the students and the secondary data were collected from the available sources like Internet, Journals, etc.

**Research Instrument**

Primary data was collected with the help of a questionnaire with closed-ended questions to elicit relevant information from the Facebook users. Proper care was taken for sequencing the questions and ambiguous questions were avoided.

**Tools for Analysis**

Microsoft excel, Tables, Graphs and Minitab (For Z-Test) were used as tools for analysis

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**Applying Z-Test**

**Hypothesis 1**

Ho: 80% of respondents believe that advertising on social networking site (face book) makes influence on buying behavior.

H1: less than 80% of respondents believe that advertising on social networking Site (face book) makes any influence over buying behavior.

Test of  $p = 0.8$  vs.  $p < 0.8$

SAMPLE	X	N	SAMPLE P	95%UPPER BOUND	EXACT P-VALUE
1	75	135	0.555556	0.628139	0.000

Here p value is 0.000 is less than alpha value 0.05 so null hypothesis is rejected. It means less than 80% of respondents believe that advertising on social networking site (facebook) makes influence over buying behavior.

**Hypothesis 2**

Ho: 90% of the respondents click on "Like" option of various brands.

H1: less than 90% of the respondents click on "Like" option of various brands.

Test of  $p = 0.9$  vs.  $p < 0.9$

SAMPLE	X	N	SAMPLE P	95% LOWER BOUND	EXACT P-VALUE
1	123	135	0.911111	0.947908	0.708

Here p value is 0.708 is more than 0.05 so null hypothesis is accepted. It means 90% of the respondents click on "Like" option of various brands.

**Hypothesis 3**

Ho: 70% of respondents have brands recall during the purchase of the product.

H1: less than 70% of respondents have brands recall during the purchase of the product.

Test of  $p = 0.7$  vs.  $p < 0.7$

SAMPLE	X	N	SAMPLE P	95% UPPER BOUND	EXACT P-VALUE
1	83	135	0.614815	0.684973	0.021

Here p value is 0.021 is less than 0.05 so null hypothesis is rejected. It means less than 70% of respondents recall advertising before buying.

**Hypothesis 4**

Ho: 60% of the respondent believes that lack of virtual existence deter them to buy the product.

H1: more than 60% of the respondent believes that lack of virtual existence deter them to buy the product.

Test of  $p = 0.6$  vs  $p > 0.6$

SAMPLE	X	N	SAMPLE P	95% UPPER BOUND	EXACT P-VALUE
1	29	69	0.420290	0.319457	0.999

Here p value is 0.999 is greater than 0.05 so null hypothesis is accept. It means that 60% of the respondent believes that lack of virtual existence deter them to buy the product.

**Findings**

Most of the students are aware about the advertisement which comes on social networking site - Facebook. 95% of respondents have noticed advertisements which are frequently displayed on facebook. 25% people do not trust those ads and have a critical eye to relevance of such information. Around 91% of students click on "Like" option of the brands which are put on profile page of face book. People who click on the "Like" option have not necessarily experienced the products and services. They tag it as "Like" since their friends have tagged "Like" on their profiles. 56% respondents says that advertisement on facebook do not influence their buying behavior. Though most of the respondents click on the "Like" option, merely 39% recall brand at the time of buying the product. A major factor that comes into light of non-influence over respondents' buying behavior is lack of virtual existence of the product. Around 42% respondents consider touch, feel and physical existence as a vital feature in buying a product.

**CONCLUSION**

This research aimed to explore how young adult i.e. students respond to advertisement on social networking websites, and their behavior toward such ads. The study found that most of the students notice ads on social networking site-Facebook. Majority of facebook users are skeptical towards the information in the advertisements. They try to verify it with other sources. It has been noted that advertisements create negligible influence on consumer's buying behavior due to lack of virtual existence of the product. The brand recall during the purchase that product is very minimal. The major reason respondents tag "Like" to the brands is their 'Friends' influence. They have not experienced the product nor do they have a special interest in the brand. So, I would like to conclude that the opinion leaders and Friends on social networking sites influence the psychology of the consumers.

There is scope for conducting similar research on advertisement viewing/avoiding habits of people in the social networking site. Further, specific advertisements like job portal ads, tourism ads etc can be taken into consideration rather than generalization of advertisements on social networking sites.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The focus of this study is only on graduate and post gradu-

ate students. The sample size used in the studies was small and convenience sampling method was adopted for the study purpose. It might have impacted in generalizing the findings to some extent.

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