



HOW DO STUDENTS PERCEIVE SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS? : AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT Social media is changing the way information is communicated to and from people around the world. The use of social media in our daily life has increased nowadays especially with the youth. It also serves as a great medium of advertisement for marketers to target the exact population for their products. Internet is the fast developing medium, the customers and the online retailers have to understand the importance of analyzing and identifying the factors influencing the customers, what/when they decide to purchase on the internet is vital because the new virtual market will bring significant difference to the customers. The social media sites target customers and provide service globally by using various websites. While advertisements on social media are very popular nowadays, it is a question how the users perceive them. This research attempts to investigate the perception of social media marketing through the social media sites. The present study is undertaken to determine the consumer perception towards social media advertisements with special reference to the students.

KEYWORDS : Social Media, Advertisements, Perception, Behaviour, Students, Marketers

I. INTRODUCTION

While social media has completely changed the way, the world interacts today. It also acts as a powerful medium for advertising. Social media advertising is a term used to describe online advertising that focus on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The advertisers can take advantage of the user's demographic information and target their ads appropriately to advertise on social networking sites. The rapid use of social media advertisement changing the way firms respond to consumer's needs and wants and changing the way they respond to their competitors. Social media advertising, or social media targeting, are advertisements served to users on social media platforms. Social networks utilize user information to serve highly relevant advertisements based on interactions within a specific platform. Marketers now have the opportunity to engage in broader and more innovative forms of online mass media communications by using the social media marketing tools. In many instances, when target market aligns with the user demographics of a social platform, social advertising can provide huge increases in conversions and sales with lower cost of acquisition.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Russell S. Winer (2008)¹ in his research article described the different kinds of new media which was used by companies to engage customers that is social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, Second Life, and You Tube etc. have generated perhaps the most publicity and also describe challenges that these media were present from the perspectives of the marketing manager where Marketers have been cautious in using this new medium because of the risk that members of a community will become offended from an over-commercialization of the site. The data collected from 250 respondents and 222 respondents were valid to the study. This study also shows that the growth of these sites has led to the notion. Importance of Web 2.0 era where user generated content and discussions can create powerful communities that facilitate the interactions of people with common interests.

Rohan Miller and Natalie Lammas (2008)² in their research study described about the Social media presents potentially seductive opportunities for new forms of communication and commerce between marketers and consumers. As advertisers typically want to find some way to follow their target audiences, many new media opportunities are presented to advertisers. However, we are still social media pioneers. While the boom in social marketing appears persuasive with an estimated 70% of consumers visiting a social website for information, other research points out that 90% of WOM conversations still occur face to face or by phone, and only 7 percent occurs online. In contrast to traditional advertising media such as television, there is measurement and consumer behavior modeling issues that will need to be addressed before marketers that measure and manage their media investments will be able to fully embrace the opportunities and navigate the risks presented by social media. Ultimately, advertisers will be forced beyond the "old school"

approaches to adopt many of the principles and techniques of relationship marketing in order to effectively use social media and likely the multiple niche co-creations of products and services.

Kyle Hansel et al., (2010)³ in this study he is explain benefits and disadvantages of uses of social media. The traditional marketing model was being challenged and was continually evolving in ways of communicating, generating leads, and increase awareness has been implemented. This study attempt with 156 respondents and this Study suggested that strategies of social media must be used to check the importance of online businesses in market this will help the marketers to check and to take precautions about degrading the brand value in market through negative publicity by client.

R.A.Gbadeyan (2010)⁴ in this research article he is explained that there are opportunities for businesses in the market businesses can grow with the help of social media marketing. The study was conducted through questionnaire with 196 respondents. Uses of social media explored that organization can do direct marketing for online social network there are people who spend more time on social media. Study also finds the reasons for people were using social networking sites due to safety concerned reason, technically inexperience due to lack of confidence in using internet, intellectual rejecters who feel waste of time.

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Amrita Pani & Mahesh Sharma (2011)⁶ in their study revealed that Social networking sites like twitter , Instagram , LinkedIn, Pinterest & Facebook were widely used. To get influenced by Gen-next consumers in India, there should be changes in their brand choices, shopping behavior and lifestyle pattern which resulting through their social media. Marketer should implement well designed marketing campaign for penetrating new media segment.

Mehmood Rehmani (2011)⁷ in his study the social media it is easier for ecommerce marketers to communicate directly with their target audiences. This is due to people can take complete information of product also make comparison with different brands which results to buying of product as per choice which leads to brand commitment. This Study explored due to increasing number of mobile phone users and internet users, people tend to get influence for purchasing of products. The study intends to explore the impact of social media on purchase intention of mobile phone customers in Pakistan.

Leslie Martinka (2012)⁸ in his study explain to how social media communities' impact consumer behaviour considering Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism influenced one's section's and helped to create our cultural norms and ideologies. By using Mead's theory, objectives was to determine how Facebook & Twitter communities influenced consumer online purchases. Concluded that Facebook communities a significant influence while twitter has no influence on consumer online purchase behaviour.

Mathur Pooja, et al, (2012)⁹ in this study to explored the new medium of communication that is social media, for marketing professionals, which can be used potentially to increase the interest in product and services. The objective was to find out overall impact of social media on buying behaviour. The study concluded that wider scope available for advertiser and other marketing planners to use social media as a beneficial marketing tool to influence consumer purchasing behaviour, as well as to access and affect customer value.

From the above literature review, it is evident that many studies have been done in order to assess the effectiveness and success of social media marketing. Research in the area of perception of the users regarding the social media advertisements has been less explored and that are why this research focuses on these areas.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken to observe the perception of the students regarding the social media advertisements with the following objectives:

1. To analyse the users' perception regarding social media advertisements in general.
2. To analyse the differences in the users' perception regarding social media advertisements based on their demographic profile.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A) Research Design

The design used in this study is descriptive type of research where the researcher has no control over the variables.

B) Pilot Study

Pilot study was carried out before collecting the original data. For this purpose a structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to 50 active users of social media in the age group of 18 to 28. From the study made through the pilot study, few changes were made in the questionnaire and finally a well structured questionnaire was developed for the study.

C) Sources of Data Collection

To accomplish the objectives of the study, the researcher gathered data from primary data from students who were actively involved in social media.

D) Area of Study

The study area is limited to Coimbatore in the state of Tamil Nadu, India.

E) Sample

The sample size of research is 256 respondents who are in the age group of 18 – 28 actively using social media. The study specifically focuses on the perception of the students and hence the other age groups were not taken into account.

F) Statistical Tools applied

The collected data have been analyzed with the help of statistical tools such were Mean Score and Analysis of Variance.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Different people perceive same things differently and it may be due to the individual differences or could be situational. Different users have different opinion about social media advertisements. An insight into the perception of the students with regard to social media advertisements might help the advertisers in better targeting their market. For this research study, thirteen variables were taken for consideration based on literature review which explained the most common perception of the respondents. The respondents were asked to record their opinion in these variables on a five point scale as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Scores were assigned to these five points as 5,4,3,2 and 1. For the purpose of reduction in the number of variables, factor analysis was applied and thirteen variables

were broadly classified into four categories namely informative, entertaining, indifferent and irritating.

Mean scores were calculated to assess the users' perception to social media advertisements and presented in the following tables:

Perception Regarding Social Media Advertisements

Mean scores were calculated to assess the users' perception to social media advertisements and presented in the following tables:

Table: 1 Perception regarding Social Media Advertisements - Mean Score

Users' Perception regarding Social Media Advertisements	Mean Score	Rank
Source of Information	3.45	1
Indifferent	3.41	2
Irritating	3.24	3
Entertainment	3.23	4

The above table shows the users perceived social media advertisements as follows: Information factor secured the first place with a mean score of 3.45, indifference factor in the second place with a mean score of 3.41 followed by irritating factor with a mean score of 3.24 and finally entertainment factor with a mean score of 3.23.

Differences in User's Perception Regarding Social Media Advertisement – ANOVA

In order to analyse the differences in the perception on social media advertisement of the respondents grouped according to their demographic variables, in this section the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test were performed for the four Users perception factors like informative, entertaining, indifferent, irritating were taken to analysis with respondents demographic profile like gender, educational qualification, family income and the place of residence.

Difference in Perception on Social Media Advertisement among the gender groups

The following table shows the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test that was performed based on the data collected about the users' perception to social media advertisement and demographic profile in the group gender.

H₀₅ There is no significant difference in the perception regarding social media advertisements among the respondents grouped according to gender

Table: 2 Difference in Perception regarding Social media Advertisements among the gender groups-ANOVA

Perception		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Informative	Between Groups	.035	1	.035	.18	.668
	Within Groups	48.41	254	.191		
	Total	48.44	255			
Indifferent	Between Groups	1.000	1	1.00	3.03	.083
	Within Groups	83.75	254	.330		
	Total	84.75	255			
Entertainment	Between Groups	1.78	1	1.78	5.16	.024*
	Within Groups	87.49	254	.34		
	Total	89.27	255			
Irritating	Between Groups	.118	1	.118	.34	.563
	Within Groups	89.38	254	.352		
	Total	89.50	255			

*Significance at 5% level of confidence

The result of the analysis of variance test performed in order to analyse the differences in the users' perception to advertisement in social media among the male and female respondents is presented here.

The result reveals that with respect to entertainment factor, the f value is significant at 5% level of confidence; In this case, the hypothesis is rejected, there is significant difference between male and female respondents in their perception regarding advertisement in social media.

With regards to the information, indifference, irritant factors, the f value is not significant and hence the hypothesis is accepted. There is

no significant difference between male and female respondents in their perception towards social media advertisements.

Difference in Perception on Social Media Advertisement among the educational groups

The following table shows the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test that was performed based on the data collected about the users' perception to social media advertisement and educational qualification group.

H₀₆ There is no significant difference in the perception regarding social media advertisements among the respondents grouped according to educational qualification

Table: 3 Differences in Perception on Social Media Advertisements based on the Educational Qualification-ANOVA

Perception		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Informative	Between Groups	1.629	3	.543	2.923	.035*
	Within Groups	46.815	252	.186		
	Total	48.444	255			
Indifferent	Between Groups	2.973	3	.991	3.053	.029*
	Within Groups	81.777	252	.325		
	Total	84.750	255			
Entertainment	Between Groups	1.593	3	.531	1.526	.028*
	Within Groups	87.678	252	.348		
	Total	89.271	255			
Irritating	Between Groups	.981	3	.327	.931	.426
	Within Groups	88.518	252	.351		
	Total	89.499	255			

*Significance at 5% level of confidence

The result of the analysis of variance test performed in order to analyse the difference in the users' perception towards social media advertisements among the groups of respondents classified based on their education is presented here.

The result reveals that with respect to informative, entertainment, indifferent factors the f value is significant at 5% level of confidence; In this case, the hypothesis is rejected, there is significant difference in the users' perception towards social media advertisement among the groups of respondents classified based on their education.

With regard to the irritating factor the f value is not significant and hence the hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in the users' perception towards social media advertisement among the groups of respondents classified based on their education.

Difference in Perception on Social Media Advertisement among the income groups

The following table shows the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test that was performed based on the data collected about the users' perception regarding social media advertisement and monthly family income.

H₀₇ There is no significant difference in the perception regarding social media advertisements among the respondents grouped according to monthly family income

Table: 4 Difference in Perception regarding Social media Advertisements based on the monthly family Income – ANOVA

Perception		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Informative	Between Groups	1.643	3	.548	2.949	.033*
	Within Groups	46.801	252	.186		
	Total	48.444	255			
Indifferent	Between Groups	4.240	3	1.413	4.424	.005**
	Within Groups	80.510	252	.319		
	Total	84.750	255			
Entertainment	Between Groups	9.308	3	3.103	9.778	.000**
	Within Groups	79.963	252	.317		
	Total	89.271	255			
Irritating	Between Groups	1.367	3	.456	1.303	.274
	Within Groups	88.132	252	.350		
	Total	89.499	255			

**Significance at 1% level of confidence

*Significance at 5% level of confidence

The result of the analysis of variance test performed in order to analyse the differences in the users' perception to advertisement in social media among the respondents grouped based on their monthly family income is presented here.

The result reveals that with respect to informative factor the analysis of variance 5% level of confidence, in case of indifferent and entertainment factor the f value is significant at 1% level of confidence; In this case, the hypothesis is rejected, there is significant difference in the users' perception towards social media advertisement among the different income groups.

With regard to the irritant factors, the f value is not significant and hence the hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in the users' perception towards social media advertisement among the different income groups.

Difference in Perception regarding Social Media Advertisement and Place of residence of the respondents

The following table shows the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test that was performed based on the data collected about the users' perception regarding social media advertisement and place of residence.

H₀₈ There is no significant difference in the perception regarding social media advertisements between the rural and urban students.

Table: 5 Differences in Perception regarding Social Media Advertisements based on the Place of Residence – ANOVA

Perception		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Informative	Between Groups	.108	1	.108	.566	.453
	Within Groups	48.337	254	.190		
	Total	48.444	255			
Indifferent	Between Groups	2.969	1	2.969	9.222	.003*
	Within Groups	81.781	254	.322		
	Total	84.750	255			
Entertainment	Between Groups	2.764	1	2.764	8.116	.005*
	Within Groups	86.507	254	.341		
	Total	89.271	255			
Irritating	Between Groups	.881	1	.881	2.524	.113
	Within Groups	88.618	254	.349		
	Total	89.499	255			

*Significance at 5% level of confidence

The result of the analysis of variance test performed in order to analyse the difference between the place of residence of the respondents and users' perception regarding social media is presented here.

The result reveals that with respect to indifferent, entertainment, the f value is significant at 1% level of confidence. In this case, the hypothesis is rejected; there is significant difference in the users' perception towards social media advertisements between rural and urban students.

With regard to the informative and irritating factor, the f value is not significant and hence the hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in the users' perception towards social media advertisements between rural and urban students.

Difference between the Perceptions regarding Social Media Advertisements across the different social media platforms

The following table shows the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test that was performed based on the data collected about the social media advertisement perception of the respondents across the different social media platforms.

H₀₉ There is no significant difference in the social media perception among the respondents across the different social media platforms.

Table: 6 Differences in users' Perception regarding Social media Advertisements across the different social media platforms – ANOVA

Perception		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Informative	Between Groups	2.639	3	.880	4.839	.003**
	Within Groups	45.806	252	.182		
	Total	48.444	255			
Indifferent	Between Groups	2.649	3	.883	2.711	.046*
	Within Groups	82.101	252	.326		
	Total	84.750	255			
Entertainment	Between Groups	8.305	3	2.768	8.616	.000**
	Within Groups	80.966	252	.321		
	Total	89.271	255			
Irritating	Between Groups	.536	3	.179	.506	.679
	Within Groups	88.963	252	.353		
	Total	89.499	255			

**Significance at 1% level of confidence

*Significance at 5% level of confidence

The result of the analysis of variance test performed in order to analyse the difference between the users' perception regarding social media advertisements across the different social media platforms.

The result reveals that with respect to indifferent the f value is significant at 5% level of confidence; the informative and entertainment the f value is significant at 1% level of confidence. In this case, the hypothesis is rejected, there is significant difference in the users' perception towards social media advertisements across the users of different social media platforms.

With regard to the irritating factor the analysis of value is not significant and hence the hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant in the users' perception towards social media advertisements across the users of different social media platforms.

VI. CONCLUSION

The analysis regarding the perception of the students regarding social media advertisements revealed that they used it as a main source of information about products and services with a good number of respondents being indifferent towards them and even quite a few of them being irritated with such unsolicited advertisements. Only a very small percentage of respondents used the advertisements for entertainment purposes.

The variance analysis revealed that the groups of respondents classified based on education, income and the social media they used differed in their opinion regarding their perception towards advertisements in the information, indifference and entertainment factor. Male and female groups differed in their perception in the entertainment factor and rural and urban groups differed in their perception in the indifference and entertainment factors.

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