

**CONSUMER SOCIAL MEDIA BEHAVIOUR AND MARKETERS' SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING STRATEGIES: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

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Abstract

This paper aims to find social media experiences of marketers and consumers in Rajasthan. The study is based on two simultaneous surveys that were carried out in the first quarter of 2023: one for consumers (N=211) and one for marketers (N=101). A self-created questionnaire has been used to gather information regarding marketers' perceptions about social media marketing-related goals, attitudes, regulations, particular behaviours, and experiences. Customers' perceptions of the factors influencing social media behaviour and reasons behind their presence on social media have been recorded using another self-developed online questionnaire that includes indicators about their motives, beliefs, and experiences. Media planners and marketers can use the study's conclusions to achieve successful marketing outcomes.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Social Media Marketing Approach

Introduction

Digital media (social media platforms) offers a simulated community where users are allowed to freely express and share their thoughts, as well as distribute and manage communications from any location at any time. Social media comes in many forms, viz., Facebook and LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram etc. When the World Wide Web first appeared, the internet was made all pervasive, and as use of internet grew, social media—particularly after 2003—emerged and became popular. By the conclusion of the early ten years of 21st century, marketing through social media, had also gained popularity worldwide. According to Vij (2012), India is not an exception. Unlike conventional media, social media speeds up the communication by spreading content in just few clicks. Brands are vying for consumers' attention in the cutthroat world of today. Even while they still account for a substantial portion of the budget for advertising, conventional marketing and advertising media like television, print, and outdoor media cannot be depended upon alone to guarantee that the target demographic is reached. The importance of using social media in the form of blogs and networking sites, for marketing is rapidly growing. Social media gives marketers possibilities to improve their current interactions with customers through dynamic communication venues. Social media comments made by customers about a product can influence consumers' decisions to buy and create either positive or negative brand buzz.

Initially after the introduction of World Wide Web (WWW) in India in 1990s only 0.2% of people were internet users. Most internet users follow social media channels, and the internet has gradually expanded to reach about 10% of the Indian population today. It is anticipated that by 2015, 19% of Indians will be internet users, and by 2020, 25%. For marketers, social media marketing is bringing both new opportunities and challenges. Firms and marketers are

searching for a variety of means to engage with their prospects. Social media marketing (SMM) is the newest buzzword in the markets. Firms are taking its advantage to engage with their customers and boost productivity. Marketers' insufficient understanding of behaviour of consumers on social media is the issue they face when it comes to social media marketing. Marketers also struggle to decide what sort of material to share on social media. Which performance metric and how should they use to evaluate SMM's effectiveness? It's also unknown what Indian consumers are motivated by and how they react to social media communications and ads. Finding solutions to several issues like these is the goal of this study work.

Review of Literature

Research on social media is still in budding stage. These days, there is a lot of interest in investigating the problems associated with social media. Numerous topics related to SMM are written about in recent years by scholars and industry professionals. Studies have looked into the measurement and effectiveness issues linked with digital media word-of-mouth (For instance, Trusov et al. (2008), Smith et al. (2007), and Fogel, 2010). According to Diffy and Kearns (2011), Hensel and Deis (2010), Kyle and Michael (2010), and Chung and Austria (2010), researchers have studied how consumers act and feel about social media platforms and the implications for marketers. Social media and the promotional mix have been the subject of several authors' analyses (Vij, 2012; Spiller, 2011; Markus and Markus, 2010; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Others have focused on things like figuring out how much money social media investments will yield (Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011); Hoffman and Fodor (2010)), predicting how well products will do on social media (Humerman and Asur, 2010; Tuta and Lica, 2011), the effectiveness of blogs (Colliander and Dahlen (2011); Singh et al. (2008)), and the mix of social media (Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011), Haenlein and Kaplan (2009), and Lewis et al. (2008)).

As stated by Mangold and Faulds (2009), social media is considered to be a part of promotion mix since, conventionally speaking, it helps businesses to connect with their clientele, but in a modern way, it helps clients to communicate with each other directly. Marketers have less direct influence over the frequency, substance, or timing of consumer conversations on social networks. This stands in contrast to the strong authority of control found in the conventional integrated marketing communications mix. Managers must thus have the capability to persuade customer discussions in in this way that It is consistent with the goals and mission of the company. Sites for social networking are meant to help the organization's largest supporters communicate with one another. Providing platforms to clients and engaging them with blogs, social media tools, and promotional materials are some ways to achieve this. Giving customers product knowledge strengthens the bond between them and the business.

To increase advertising marketers should consider social media claim Hensel and Deis (2010). Prior executing a specific strategy for social media, It is crucial to assess the benefits, disadvantages, and challenges of each one. Businesses need to assist in promoting the discussions and contributions on social media. To check a firm's online presence and make sure that customers are not dejecting the brand's value, social media tactics should also be employed. Through social media, a person can now confer products and services. As a result, communications between consumers have a much bigger impact.

Traditional media and social media have been compared on the basis of publicity of brands by Dahlén and Colliander (2011). 7 well-known blogs and publications have examined how consumers react to a brand. They have shown the underlying causes of social media's increased efficacy in publicity. They have looked at the results of perceived writer-brand relationships, writer credibility, and PR effectiveness. Brand attitudes, buying intentions, and social connections are the variables considered when comparing magazines with blogs. They discovered that blogs increased consumers' intentions to buy and their brand sentiments. This

was because, in comparison to traditional publications, blogs have a larger ParaSocial Interaction (PSI) with their readers. Given that readers consider bloggers to be friends, it would seem reasonable that their evaluations would differ from those of magazines. While online publication users only engage with the content written, readers engage with bloggers in addition to reading their posts. This study demonstrated how the relationship between the writer and the brand, as well as the reputation of the writers, affected readers' perceptions of brand publicity on blogs.

The potential long-term effects of social media trends on advertising, as well as mobile marketing and social media opportunities, have been examined by Elizabeth et al. (2010). 90% of marketers feel that social networking is crucial for their organisation, according to a Stelzner (2011) survey of 3300 marketers. A third of marketers are interested in learning how to track and evaluate the ROI of their social media marketing. More than a third (34%) of marketers spend more than 11 hours a week on social media, while the majority (58%) use it for six hours or more. 77% of marketers want to spend money on YouTube-style video marketing. 69% of them were more interested in learning blogging, and seventy percent were more interested in learning Facebook. By adopting SMM, 62% of marketers have raised their search ranks and 72% have gained visitors. These marketers claimed that Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and blogs were major social media platforms for SMM.

One of the main issues facing any marketing executive is how to allocate marketing budgets as efficiently as possible. To make the appropriate impression on the general public, the executive must decide between online advertising and search engine marketing, as well as traditional or classic advertising through radio, television, and newspapers. Internet methods are often preferred in practice because they are directly accountable in form of cost per click. In order to demonstrate the real worth of many channels, Markus and Markus (2010) examined the effect of several routes of communication as well as the role of outside factors that affect website usage. They have shown how the Internet has given companies new opportunities to become more visible and relevant to target audiences with similar needs through research models such as SEO, which confirms a high ranking in search engine. Additionally, compared to TV leads, SEM exhibits a conversion success rate that is almost three times higher from a registration to a paying membership. But they contend that building a brand online isn't enough; you also need to go offline.

To ascertain the variables associated with social media satisfaction and mindset towards social media marketing messaging, Chung and Austria (2010) carried out a study. The study's findings indicate that opinions regarding messages from social media marketing are highly connected to the advantages of social media use in terms of information and interaction, but not with the pleasure of entertainment. Asur and Huberman (2010) have shown how real-world results can be predicted from social media material. Their research shows how sentiments taken from Twitter can be used to increase social media's capacity for forecasting. Likewise, Lica and Tuta (2010) demonstrate social media usage to predict a product success.

Executives should follow these six stages to waltz with social media and viral marketing, as demonstrated by Kaplan and Haenlein (2011). A marketing message about a company, brand, or product that spreads exponentially more widely through e-WOM—often through social media applications—is known as viral marketing. Along with outlining 4 types of campaigns on social media (nightmares, lucky breaks, do-it-yourself problems, and victories), they also suggest three requirements that must be fulfilled in order to create a viral marketing epidemic (i.e., reaching the right people with the right message). Managers who want to launch their own viral marketing campaign should be mindful of these five red flags: (1) Viral marketing depends on the quality of the rest of the marketing; (2) traditional forms of communication must be used to support viral marketing; (3) extreme planning and interference ruins campaign of viral marketing; (4) extremely aggressive and

daring messages are hard to execute; and (5) a little bit of luck and intuition are needed for viral marketing to be successful.

Kunz and Hackworth (2011) investigated social media marketing (SMM) practices of leading retailers. During the few weeks that the number of subscribers to each retailer's social media accounts was monitored, a notable shift in sales was observed. Additionally, the study discovered that consumers are happier as members of a community than as the object of a marketing effort and react more favourably to marketing when they have control. Social media usage has grown dramatically, and many users of social media networks desire businesses to communicate with them using social media apps. Retailers are rapidly integrating incorporating platforms of social media into their marketing communication plan, as seen by utilisation rates and data. To take advantage of exclusive deals and discounts amid festivities time, businesses organised events to entice clients to visit their websites. This appears to have boosted seasonal sales for certain retailers.

The use of social media by function in interactive and direct IMC have been studied by Spiller (2011). In addition to discussing its new advancements in digital channels, the paper provides a brief overview of the development of direct and conversational IMCs. Social direct IMC is latest innovation, which makes use of social CRM to facilitate interactive and direct marketing communication applications. Rather than using social media as a direct response channel, the study examines how marketers utilize it for branding and awareness tool. Additionally, it looks for ways to employ social media as a medium for relationships and sales.

Diffley and Kearns (2011) investigated how focused groups of various ages perceived social networking sites. They contend that businesses should aim to engage customers and incorporate ads rather than infringe on their privacy or annoy them. Users dislike loud advertisements, pop-ups, and rollovers because they mostly utilise social networking sites to converse with their friends. Customers will choose to listen to the words being conveyed and may even spread them to others if a business can engage them. Engaging customers in social media marketing is one way that social networking sites (SNSs) have the potential to be used as an efficient promotional instrument.

Businesses that "pull" customers relatively "push" marketing messages upon them need to take a different strategy. Platforms for social networking are employed by customers to express themselves and be heard. Online, customers can let marketers know what they need. The firm satisfies the client's specified needs. Therefore, the client's role shifts from "consumer" to "prosumer." Businesses and their brands now work with consumers to develop marketing collateral. Online social media marketing campaigns are being used by businesses to reach consumers where they live and easily engage them with their marketing operations. However, despite acknowledging the necessity of social media activity, many businesses struggle with knowing how to do it effectively or which performance metrics to employ. Furthermore, as companies develop social media strategy platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, these are all frequently considered as individual parts instead as a part of a bigger arrangement. Online social media can be systematically understood and conceptualized as an network of interconnected elements that encompasses both modern and conventional media, claim Hanna et al. (2011). Regarding the tactical incorporation of social media marketing into a company's marketing plan, they have exchanged numerous ideas and insights.

Research Methodology

This study is predicated on the experiences of marketers and consumers in Rajasthan with social media. It is predicated on two concurrent polls that were carried out in the first quarter of 2023: one for consumers (N=211) and one for marketers (N=101). A self-created survey (an email requesting completion of the online survey) has been used to gather information regarding marketers' perceptions of their goals, values, policies, particular behaviours, and experiences with social media marketing (SMM). Customers' perceptions of the factors (using

EFA) influencing their social media behaviour and the reasons behind their presence on social media have been recorded using another self-developed online questionnaire that includes indicators about their motives, beliefs, and experiences. Online surveys created with Google Documents were given to the respondents to complete.

Objectives

1. To investigate how customers behave on social media.
2. To research marketers' behaviour on social media.
3. To offer methods for improving social media marketing's efficacy.

Social Media and Customer behaviour

Social media advertisements persuade their decisions to buy is agreed by 36% of consumers, which is good news for marketers. According to the results, social media is used for networking by 74.4% of consumers. But as Table 1 shows, more than 35% of respondents also admit to using social media to look through online advertisements and read reviews of products and services before buying.

Table 1: Reasons for usage of social media

Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
I am a regular reader of blogs on internet.	5.2	9.5	34.6	35.5	15.2
I use social media to write blogs.	10.9	10.4	26.1	21.3	31.3
I use social media to view online advertisement.	9	25.6	24.6	21.8	19
I use social media for interacting with others	39.3	35.1	15.2	9	1.4
I use social media to seek opinions about product/services	12.3	26.1	21.8	23.7	16.1

Dimensions of Consumers Behaviour towards Social Media

Regarding their experiences on social media, consumers were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with 13 assertions. 211 respondents' answers to these 13 statements were put through an exploratory factor analysis in order to determine the aspects of their social media usage. Overall, the sample adequacy measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was determined to be .777 and as per Bartlett's Test of Sphericity the data was suitable for factor analysis (Chi-Square = 704.096; significance = .000; df = 78). These analyses all showed that the information was appropriate for analysis. Factors were extracted using Principal Component Analysis. The "Latent Root Criterion," which states that elements with an Eigen value greater than one have been chosen, was used to determine how many factors will be retrieved. Varimax was used to perform orthogonal rotation. After 25 iterations, the rotation converged. Every component of orthogonal rotation is either independent of or orthogonal to every other component. The factors are identified based on their association. For additional analysis, any consideration has been given to factor loadings which are greater than .40 (ignoring the signs). 60.735% of the variance is explained by 4 factors that have been identified collectively. Table 2 depicts the results of Principal Components Analysis by using Varimax Rotation. According to the research, there are four primary elements or factors that affect how consumers act on social media.

Factor 1: Beliefs about Social Media Advertisements: With a factor loading of 0.850, it contains the following claims: "Social media advertisements are more engaging than traditional advertising," "Social media ads are more interactive than traditional advertising," "Social media advertising is more informative than traditional advertising," and "Social media is more dependable than traditional media like newspapers, TV, radio, etc." (0.641).

Factor 2: SMM Effort of Marketers: Statements like "I subscribe to updates and alerts regarding a brand or product through social media networking sites" (0.663), "I refer to the opinion of experts on social media sites while considering any product or service" (0.717), "I refer to the number of likes/dislikes while considering any product or service" (0.693), and "I respond to queries and promotional offers received through social networking sites" (0.595) all reflect this.

Factor 3: Organizational adaptability of SMM: It has the following claims: "Opportunities that use social media for marketing purposes are more reputable than those that do not" (0.808) and "Organisations that use social media for marketing purposes are more innovative than those that do not" (0.823).

Factor 4: Comfort level of consumers : This is the fourth aspect of customers' social media experiences. The comments "I know that companies are tracking my activities on social media sites" (0.718), "I feel comfortable sharing my information on social media sites," and "Tracking of my activities on social media sites by companies is not an issue for me" (0.472) are among them.

Table 2: Consumers' behaviour on social media-Factor structure (PCA using Varimax rotation)

STATEMENT	FACTOR				Communality
	1	2	3	4	
Advertisements through social media are more interesting than traditional advertising.	.850				.749
Social media advertisements are more interactive than traditional advertising.	.790				.739
Social media advertising is more informative than traditional advertising.	.722				.632
Social media is more reliable as compared to traditional media like newspaper, TV, Radio etc.	.641				.477
I refer to the opinion of experts on social media sites while considering any product or service.		.717			.563
I refer to number of likes/ dislikes while considering any product or service.		.693			.557
I am subscribed to updates and alerts regarding a brand or product through social media networking sites.		.663			.511
I respond to queries and promotional offers received through social networking sites.		.595			.507
Organizations that use social media for marketing purpose are more innovative than others who are not using it.			.823		.737
Organizations that use social media for marketing purpose are more reputed than others who are not using it.			.808		.725
I feel comfortable in sharing my information on social media sites.				.771	.660
Tracking of my activities on social media sites by companies is not an issue for me.				.718	.519
I know that companies are tracking my activities on social media sites.				.472	.446
Eigen Value	3.786	1.739	1.240	1.130	7.895
% of Variance	29.124	13.375	9.540	8.696	
Cumulative	29.124	42.499	52.039	60.735	

SMM Practices of Marketers

An overview of the marketers' answers about their company's social media marketing experience can be found in Tables 3 through 7 below. According to a survey of marketers, 79% of them say they use social media to advertise their companies. In order to "give information about existing and upcoming products/services," "attract new customers," "develop business awareness," "create word-of-mouth for products/services," and "understand consumer behavior," marketers primarily use social media.

Table 3: Marketers' Reasons for Using SMM

Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
We use social media to give information about existing products/Services.	37.6	48.5	6.9	5.9	1
We are using social media to attract new customers.	39.6	45.5	7.9	5.9	1
We use social media to create awareness about our business.	33.7	48.5	11.9	4	2
We use social media to give information about latest products/Services.	30.7	50.5	11.9	5.9	1
We are using Social Media Marketing for our Business.	38.6	40.6	15.8	3	2
We depend on social media to create word-of-mouth for our products/services.	24.8	45.5	20.8	7.9	1
We use social media to understand the customer behaviour.	28.7	35.6	28.7	4	3

A sizable percentage of marketers have a dedicated department to manage social media marketing (54%), allocate a separate budget for social media marketing (59.4%), and seek advice from social media marketing specialists (59.4%).

Table 4: SMM Guidelines for Advertisers

Statements	Yes %	No %
We have our own separate department to handle Social Media Marketing activities.	54.4	45.5
We make separate budget for Social Media Marketing activities.	59.4	40.6
We are taking the guidance from Social Media Marketing Experts.	59.4	40.6

According to 85.1% of marketers, social media and conventional marketing media will complement one another. Marketers need to follow social media as it's need of hour, according to 79.2% of respondents. However, 63.3% of marketers disagree that social media marketing is just a fad.

Table 5: Beliefs of Marketers about SMM

Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Social media and traditional media of marketing are going to work together.	29.7	55.4	11.9	1	2
Social media is a new trend in the market, so we have to follow it.	37.6	41.6	13.9	5	2
Social Media Marketing is just a fad. It will not work in the long run.	5.9	11.9	18.8	17.8	45.5

To put their SMM strategy into practice, marketers engage in specific activities such as "giving proper feedback to customers' queries received through social networking sites (74.2%)," "giving information about latest offers and discounts through social media (71.3%)," "running advertisements on social media (71.3%)," "accepting queries through social networking sites (67.3%)," "updating blogs on a regular basis (62.4%)," "uploading interesting videos and images (62.4%)," "conducting customer survey.

79% of marketers concur that social media marketing is a successful strategy for promoting their company. The fact that SMM is highly cost-effective is acknowledged by 72.3% of marketers. Of those surveyed, 57.4% concur that social networking is useful for identifying devoted clients. However, managing the unfavourable feedback from clients on social media platforms is extremely challenging (56.5%), and calculating return on investment for social media marketing is impossible (40.6%).

Table 6: Specific Actions of Marketers

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We give proper feedback to customers' queries received through social networking sites.	27.7	46.5	17.8	5	3
We give information about latest offers & discounts through social media.	3.7	39.6	18.8	8.9	1
We are running Advertisements on" OC media.	29.7	41.6	18.8	7.9	2
We accept queries through social networking sites.	25.7	41.6	21.8	8.9	2
We update our Blogs on regular basis.	29.7	32.7	26.7	8.9	2
We upload interesting videos and images.	22.8	39.6	28.7	5.9	3
We conduct customer surveys and research through social media.	22.8	31.7	20.8	19.8	5
We conduct open group discussions through social media.	18.8	34.7	25.7	14.9	5.9
We do chat on net with our Customers.	22.8	24.8	27.7	13.9	10.9
We are running Competitions on Social Media.	20.8	23.8	31.7	15.8	7.9
We conduct Corporate Social Responsibility (SSR) Campaigns on social media.	11.9	21.8	38.6	20.8	6.9

Table 7: Social Media Experience of Marketers

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We are finding Social Media as an effective tool of marketing for our business.	35.6	43.6	15.8	3.0	2.0
Social media marketing is very COST effective.	29.7	42.6	22.8	2.0	3.0
Social media helps us identify our loyal customers.	19.8	37.6	28.7	10.9	3.0
It is very difficult to handle the negative response of customers on social networking sites.	11.9	44.6	30.7	9.9	3.0
Measurement of Return on Investment is not possible in case of social media marketing.	4	36.6	42.6	13.9	3.0

Strategies for understanding the effectiveness of Social Media Marketing

Considering the study's findings and the researched literature, we recommend the following actions to ensure social media marketing is implemented successfully:

1. Set clear goals. Regarding the monetary or non-monetary outcomes you hope to achieve from your SMM campaign, your goals should be crystal clear.
2. Provide adequate financial, human, and temporal resources. It should have its own budget and department dedicated to social media marketing.
3. Carry out an investigation to determine the areas that need to be the focus of the campaign.
4. Create an SMM campaign plan that includes the What, When, Where, and How of the campaign, such as:
 - What type of content will you provide to the audience? (Recommendation: Reliable information and high-quality material are essential; topics and content can be tailored to specific days and occasions.)
 - When is the best time to target social media traffic? (Recommendation: Data gathered during the research phase should be analysed to determine the frequency, reach, and yield of social media marketing campaigns.)
 - Where should you concentrate your energy? It is suggested that the target audience and networking sites be chosen based on the data analysis results from the initial market study.
 - How should you use social media platforms to interact with the target audience? (Recommendation: use fan pages, contests, information updates, and video ads, among other things).
5. Establish Internal Collaboration: The SMM plan should involve every employee in the company. They are the true evangelists for the business and the SMM initiative.
6. Coordinate and integrate social media marketing with alternative online and offline marketing communication messaging.
7. Establish connection: (Suggested Do's: Interact with customers first, be honest, listen to them, make them feel special, offer customer service, respond promptly, involve and engage them in co-

creating marketing events and content, include them in your organisation, give them appropriate feedback and rewards, and respect their privacy and interests).

(Suggested Don'ts: Don't bother your customers without their consent or interest; don't annoy them by sending them pointless pop-ups, videos, comments, or advertisements; don't share customer data and information without their consent; and don't meddle in their other social media activities on social media platforms).

8. Oversee the SMM initiative:

(Recommendation: Assign technically qualified personnel to monitor competitors' SMM activity, manage unfavourable word-of-mouth, maintain round-the-clock oversight of SMM content, and display your material in a distinctive manner.)

9. Keep an eye on the outcomes.

(Recommendation: Track how sales and revenue vary throughout the SMM campaign. Continue to monitor the non-monetary metrics, such as search engine optimisation (SEO) ranks, comments, likes, unique visits, and the number of fans.

The most important qualities for social media marketing material are "interesting," "informative," "interactive," and "reliable." Since 75 percent of millennials (those born in the 1980s) are reported to embrace social networking, compared to 50 percent of Generation X members and only 30 percent of Baby Boomers, marketers should adjust their social media marketing efforts to reflect the shifting tastes and preferences of their target audience.

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