THE INFLUENCE OF MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

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Abstract

Today, the advertisers have to focus on the changing perceptions of the consumers towards the brands along with the impact that the multicultural dynamics play in their purchasing decisions. This paper tries to comprehend the impact that social media has on the buying behavior of consumers in a multicultural scenario in India. A quantitative and descriptive approach is used. The study tries to reveal that social media promotion has a strong impact on the behavior of the medium age group of 26–45 years is the age group most influenced by social media advertising consumer in respect with its cultural background. 51% of the respondents have 'pre-judgement about the advertising media based on the cultural scenario'. Emotions, attitude and preferences of a consumer are the factors, which controls the buying behavior of a product or a service in a multicultural environment. The religious and cultural paradigm governs the intricacies of an individual consumer choice.

Key words: Multicultural, communication, social media, consumer.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nations worldwide are experiencing a rising multiculturalism. In countries such as the U.K., U.S. and Canada, a complex and multidimensional market has replaced the average consumer, where minorities are the new majority[1]. Talking about India, which is an amalgamation of 29 States and 8 Union Territories, the situation is no different [2]. People here are much more culture centric and culture sensitive, and thus culture has a major influence on the outlook that people have towards various brands and products . As a marketer, it becomes even more important to understand these intricacies, as they have a bearing on how the brand will be positioned in the minds of the customers [3]. If a marketer fails to understand these multicultural nuances, the product or brand that they are trying to create is deemed to fail. But considering the current dynamics wherein the country as a whole has become much more intertwined, the prevalence of cultural diversity has become much more dominant [4].

This growing diversity has had an indispensable political, social and economic impact. Extensive advertising research has provided rich insights into the effectiveness of such targeting practice [5]. However, as the cultural diversity of the nation grows, and the distinction between minority and majority groups blurs, managing the effects of target and non-target markets becomes increasingly challenging for the advertisers[6]. Due to this, there is a need to bring innovation into their practices in order to stay competitive and have a more refined targeting in place. It allows for more specific target market catering[7]. The advertisers need to change their perspective and assess the market as a large

heterogeneous group divided into smaller nuclear homogenous groups. This existence of groups is what the multicultural scenario in the Indian context is really about[8].

Under this multicultural scenario, the advertisers with different types of advertisements aim to simultaneously reach culturally diverse target audiences through the use of cultural representations consisting of multiple cultural backgrounds[9] [10]. Such advertisements need to have a very targeted approach and should take into account the bits and nuances of that specific culture, and at the same time should also be culture tolerant[11]. Portraying anything that might hurt the sentiments of that specific culture is something that advertisers should take into account[12]. Advertisers should understand that having an emotional impact on the targeted audience by conveying the right message should be the priority goal, as people as a cultural group are much more likely to get affected by such advertisements [13].

Internet, social media, mobile apps, and other digital communications technologies have become part of everyday life for billions of people around the world [14]. Social media usage has become an integral element to the lives of many people across the world. Digital and social media marketing allows companies to achieve their marketing objectives at relatively low cost[15]. Consumer behavior has significantly changed due to technological innovations and ubiquitous adoption of hand-held devices, directly contributing to how we interact and use social commerce to make decisions and shop online[16] [17].

The present research addresses the attractiveness of consumers towards social media and how often consumers focus on their cultural scenarios while seeking for the products/services on social media [18] [19].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A consumer's buying decision gets influenced by the positive and negative reviews about the product or services which he plans to buy. Consumers use social media as a credible source of product reviews and often get influenced by it [20].

It has been showcased the research done on social media advertisements and customer's buying behavior in theoretical form. The research revolves around the responses that customers give after being targeted with social media advertisements with reference to their purchase intention [21].

It is important to talk about the role of various groups, customer advocacy, online customer targeting and publicity on a customer's buying behaviour and how it helps in building a good brand image. It concludes that in order to reach the young customers, a marketing manager needs to exploit social media platforms for maximum reception [22].

Researchers informed that when buying a product or service, consumers generally come to social media platforms looking for relevant and authentic information in comparison to any other mass media [23].

A viewer's cultural distinctiveness is responsible for how they perceive a multicultural advertisement. Taking a practical approach, this research suggests that adding various source cues and other non-source cues that resonate with a distinctive buyer's identity and a non- distinctive buyer's knowledge base is the key to targeting various minority groups without any backlash from the majority [24].

Researchers have show-cased that mostly it is the teenagers who share the most amount of information, which amounts to 20 per cent of the total amount of content shared. They also are more dedicated and loyal to the brand in comparison to the older generations, mainly because the latter doesn't keep up with the changing trends that religiously and trusts visiting the store or marketplace for purchasing items [25].

Advertisements through social media are very impactful and have the potential to influence a customer's purchase decision especially for the ones who are buying for the first time. Social media as a platform also provides analytical tools and allow for product comparisons [9].

The language in which a message is conveyed plays an important role in the attitudinal changes of a consumer. Consumers are much more receptive to the cultural manifestations incorporated into the websites [26].

The multicultural groups spread across India makes the job of marketers more complex. After the increase in the internet usage due to low data rates, the amount of content that people watch has increased exponentially[27]

Now they have the freedom to watch whatever content they feel like watching through multiple service providers like satellite service providers, internet service providers etc.

Cultural diversity is not just about the varied linguistics, but also about studying the cultural differences and the norms that exist around those cultures. Marketers need to curate messages that have a targeted approach and cater to a specific cultural audience[28]. Ideally, there isn't one right way of reaching a customer whether it is a homogenous large group or smaller multicultural group or both. As marketers, we need to understand the various differences that exist across cultures and their importance[29].

Today, it is possible to get information about the rate of reception that a particular advertisement receives and its impact on a customer's purchase decision. Various web analytical tools have made this a reality. By using these tools, the marketers can formulate targeted and precise message which is adaptive to the media on which it is shared. It is important to create an emotional connection with the audience for maximum positive response[30].

III.   Research Methodology

Research methodology adopted in the present study is quantitative and descriptive research to understand the cultural dynamics of people participating in buying products or services with respect to their multicultural differences. The aim of the research is to acquire relevant information about the impact that social media marketing has on a customer's perception of the brand and how it transitions them into loyal customers, considering the cross-cultural dynamics.

The survey method is used by circulating the questionnaire through electronic method for understanding a customer's thought process, his interests, specific needs and his overall buying behavior.

The size of the sample is 100. Convenience sampling technique has been used in the present study. Primary data is obtained for the study. A survey has been conducted and SPSS- T-Test is applied for the analysis.

A questionnaire was sent by electronic mail to the. A questionnaire was made with 20 questions. Section A includes questions based on the personal information of the respondents; section B includes the questions based on the influence of social media promotion in a multicultural consumer behavior. Data was collected through convenient sampling. 105 responses were received out of which 100 responses were considered for analysis. The respondents were from the age bracket of 15 years to 55 years plus of age, making online shopping and using social media.

The respondents were from different states of India and they were segregated according to their native language and culture. Out of 100 respondents, 85% are from the age bracket of 15-25. 64 % respondents are male and 36% are female. 37 % respondents are under graduate. 94 % respondents have a social media account. 49% respondents' uses 'WhatsApp', 46% respondents' uses 'Twitter' and 44 % respondents are using 'Instagram'.

The data has been analyzed by using the SPSS method with One-Sample T-Test, the responses were based on 5 points Likert scale. In the t-test, the test statistics is defined as, where n, $\bar{x}$=sample mean, μ=population mean, SD = standard deviation mean. In one sample T-test, two types of hypotheses are the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis shows that there is a difference between the mean (μ) and the assessment value (m0) while the null hypothesis shows that there is no difference. The objective of using a one-sample T-Test is to find out whether the null hypothesis has to be rejected while analyzing the collected data. The confidence interval is 95% and the significance level is (α) for the proposed hypothesis test is 0.05 that

correspondence to the probability of observing the extreme value of the test. The two-tailed hypothesis is used to measure the difference in the objective despite the direction and written as H1: $\mu \neq m0$. The hypotheses can be mentioned as follows:

  1. The null hypothesis is written as (H0), which presume that the difference between the assessment value (m0) and the mean (μ) is equal to zero.

2. The alternative hypothesis (H1) presumes that the difference between the assessment value (m0) and the mean (μ) is not equal to zero.

## IV. **Result analysis & findings**

The findings of this case study wanted to reveal the answers to the following questions:

The influence of social media on the buying behaviour of consumers in a multicultural scenario.

Impact of communication and marketing strategies on decision-making capacity towards product and services in a multicultural scenario.

As shown in Figure-1.1, the result of the survey shows that 34% people are able to seek the products and services information from their preferred advertising media.
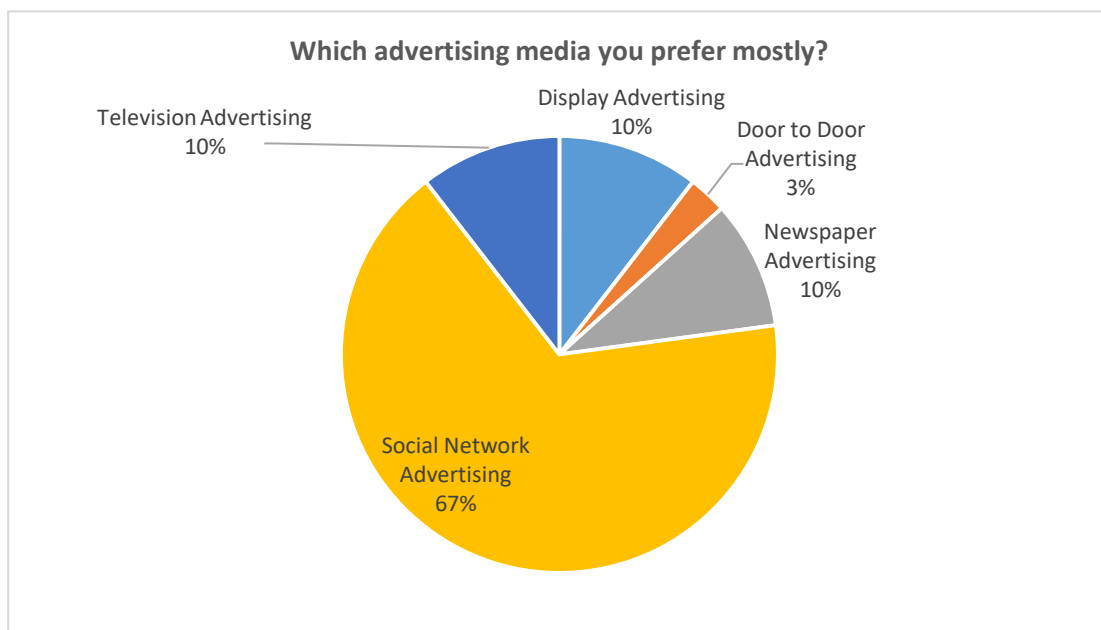
Figure-1.1

In Figure-1.2

While seeking for the products/services how often do you focus on your cultural scenario?
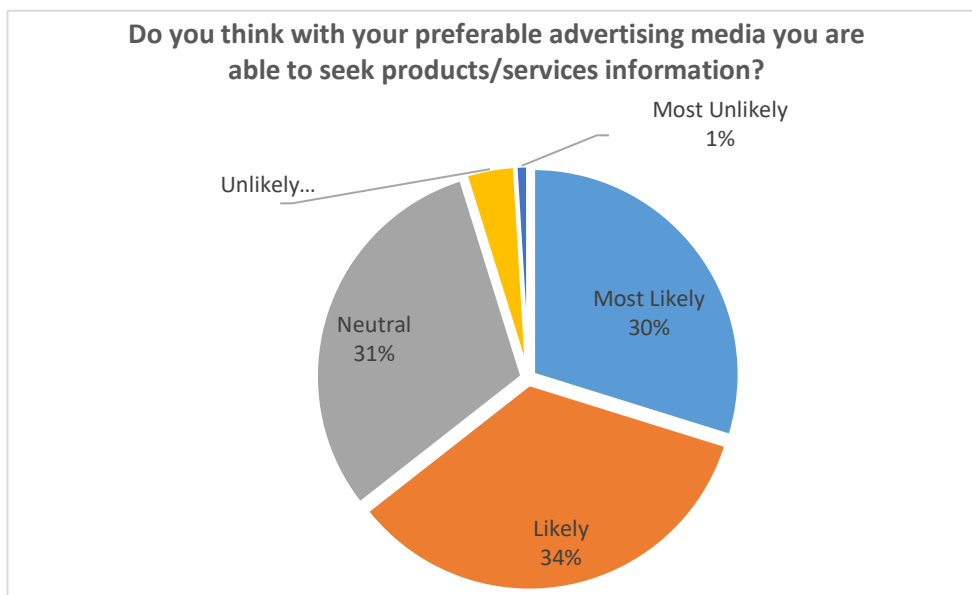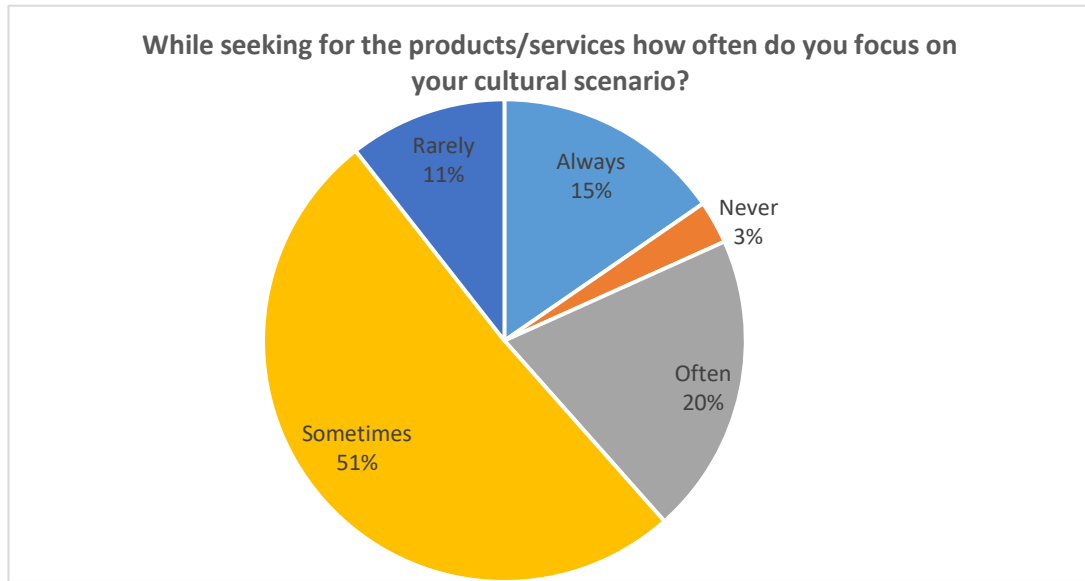
In Figure-1.2, It is clearly visible that 51% of the respondents have 'pre-judgement about the advertising media based on the cultural scenario'.

In Figure- 1.3

Which advertising media you prefer mostly?

In Figure- 1.3, the results shows that the 67% of the respondents strongly recommended 'the social network advertising for buying'.

V.   Conclusion

This study concludes that social media advertising has a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions. When it comes to purchasing, the majority of Indians use various social media platforms. Social media advertising has been shown to be more effective than other traditional marketing methods such as newspapers, television, and radio stations. This is because social media marketing is less expensive and easier to access than traditional marketing media, and it contains more content and information that influences consumer buying decisions. The customer's gender, age, and culture have impacts on the relationship between consumer purchasing decisions and social media advertising.

Female customers are more likely than male consumers to be influenced by social media advertising, according. Females spend more time at home than males, according to Indian tradition, and so have a greater potential to spend time on the internet and receive online adverts.

The findings also reveals that the medium age group (26–45) is the age group most influenced by social media advertising. This is due to the fact that this age group has both greater purchasing power and greater decision-making independence than the other age groups. Furthermore, the study reveals that culture continues to influence the content of social media advertising. To make social media advertising a profitable strategy, disparities in gender, income, and cultural values should be taken into account in a way that considers the social media advertising contents and information that are appropriate for each customer stratum.

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