

To Study the Role of Social Media Marketing in Consumer Buying Behavior

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ABSTRACT - The aim of the study is to examine the awareness of social media marketing in consumer buying decision and to find out that the consumers are aware of digital and social media marketing and the digital channels influence in their purchase decisions. Marketers use social media to promote the brand and business, tell customers about their goods and services, find out what customers think of their business, attract and engage new customers and build stronger relationships with existing customers. Every business or marketer tries to generate new leads or to attract new customer base by means of social media platform through like SEO, conducting online campaign and strategizing of price with competitor etc. Digital marketing or creating social media platforms has many advantages. It will have larger number of reach, specified targets and can also target particular groups, cost efficient, fast and easy, word to word communication with individual customers and groups. Today customers expect top level content, attracting posts and profile of the companies while clicking on the links of social networking websites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. The growth in the social media has a strong effect on marketers as things are moving so fast in this era that they must stay busy on keeping and upgrading of the latest developments and trends by using the proper social media mix to capture the target market. In this study, the attempt is to understand the emerging roles and trends of digital and social media marketing. This study can highlight the significance of social media and internet marketing in business. This study/research analyzes the online consumer behavior, customer expectations and strategies driven by marketers for attracting and retaining new customer base through social media by conducting a survey.

KEYWORDS: Consumer buying behavior, Digital marketing, Social media marketing, social media trends and roles.

I. INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing has been considered a new form of marketing and provides new opportunities for companies to do businesses. Marketing activities conducted through digital channels enable advertisers to directly communicate with potential customers in a rapid form and regardless of the geographical location where the marketers can expand their business worldwide and can achieve their targeted audience or groups. Digital marketing has been referred as one of the best means of communication for marketers and interact directly with the consumer. While taking in view of digital channels, the recent channel is mobile marketing. The mobile market in India is growing faster due to the increase in the number of middle-income consumers, and can be set to results in millions of users in the upcoming era. Therefore, research on these digital channel advertising will leave a great impact on how business can be done. When we talk about digital channels, what comes to intellect are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and similar social networks that are used online and platforms like web sites, search engines etc. Clearly, people are exposing themselves to more and more digital and social media. This is for many purposes, including in their roles as consumers as they search for information about products,

purchase and consume them, and communicate with others about their experiences. Marketers have acquired these digital channels in an increasing way to grow their business. Consumers will largely occupy these digital settings, particularly social media and mobile. Therefore it will be necessary for researcher to examine and understand consumer behavior in digital environments. To improve and overcome on these digital marketing channels engagement, marketers are focusing on customer relationship-based interactions. From a consumer's perspective, the use of information communication technologies offers a number of benefits, including efficiency, convenience and richer information, a broader selection of products, competitive pricing, cost reduction, and product diversity for selection of products.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

Objective:

1. To study the awareness of social media marketing in consumer buying behavior.
2. To study the emerging roles and trends of social media marketing and internet marketing.

Scope:

Social media marketing is a tool that helps businesses to

increase their brand awareness. With this tool businesses can reach to more and more customers.

- The suggestion from the study is based on the responses given by the respondents.
- This study is based on social media marketing in consumer behavior.
- This study will be helpful in getting an insight into the impact of social media marketing in customer buying decision.
- This research is helpful to identify the exact suggestion and conclusion with regards to social media.
- This research helps to understand the awareness of digital and social media channels in customer's view.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Forbes (2013) proposed a study on "Does social media influence consumer buying behavior? An investigation of recommendations and purchases" Most of the products purchased were recommended through social media platforms. Social media marketing has given a surprisingly effect and overwhelmed with amazement for customers through contacts, friends, link etc (Forbes, 2013). A total of 249 customers were interviewed to investigate the types and characteristics of products that are being recommended and purchased by social media users, highlighting Facebook and Twitter. Highly involvement of Facebook and Twitter was seen as the respondents were more active on these platforms. Respondents for this survey were highly active on social media. The result of the study was analyzed on the following themes i.e. Use of Social Media, Type of Product recommended, Purchase Location. Out of all respondents, 59% of respondents were using Facebook as their social media tool when they received a product recommendation and 37% users were using Twitter. The result showed that customers were easily urged by the quick and easy purchase and shifting of trend through social media from traditional media.

Ioană & Stoica, (2014) gave a comprehensive overview on "Social media and its impact on consumers behavior" It described that social media has left a tremendous impact on consumer that has impacted on their purchase behavior (Ioană & Stoica, 2014). The consumers are more likely to view the products from their peers reviews, contacts, Facebook accounts etc before purchasing of the products. The virtual environment, exposure of products and variety of information given etc through social networks has influenced the consumer behavior for purchase of products or services. For marketers point of view social network sites could strengthen the relationship between potential buyers.

Social media allows customers and prospects to communicate directly to the brand representative or about the brand with their friends. "The Effects of Social Media Marketing on Online Consumer Behavior" proposed by *Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu & Tichindelean*, (2013). This

paper aimed for the solution of, people who are interacting online and how engaged are they in online activities, and it also aimed the respondents' perception on online advertisements and to discover the engagement of different types of audiences in order to maximize the effect of the online marketing strategy. The study examined empirical investigation on different type of social media users' appreciation and had a positive outlook regarding advertising on social networking websites. The findings were out with a new way to classify online customers namely engagers, expressers and informers, networkers, and watchers and listeners which served as a basis for psychographic segmentation, based on respondents' activities on different online platforms.

Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi (2012) gave an overview on "Social media marketing" The social media phenomenon has a profound impact. Social media has transformed research methods. This allows brands to communicate better with their consumers, and intensify their association with them. The advertising world has not been spared from social media influence (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). The study says about social media marketing on how ordinary people finding their way better to get their collective voice together to get what they want and different forms of social media platforms. It also identified about the similarity of internet-based marketing and non internet-based marketing thus making social media the better platform for marketing.

The study conducted by *Ramanathan, Subramanian & Parrott* (2017) "Role of social media in retail network operations and marketing to enhance customer satisfaction" was on a brand, promotional offers, service operations; and their interaction through social media reviews on customer satisfaction levels. And to understand on how the retail network leverage the potential of social media reviews to satisfy the customers. The study shows the importance of social media platforms for the retail sector to be viewed by the customers, also suggests the retailers how to create value and loyalty in the network using social media review in the digital era.

Pate & Adams (2013) "The influence of social networking sites on buying behaviors of millennials" this study states about the millennials who are highly active on social media sites. Stating that social media sites are the promotional mix for any product, it is important to understand the consumer buying behavior and their motivation behind the purchase of products and services and whether social media is influencing these buying behaviors. The study was specifically focused on whether friends, followers, family, or celebrities influenced buying behaviors of this millennial generation and also on the social media advertising if it motivates the buyer to buy the product. The result was stated in acceptance that the millennials are more likely to purchase the items through getting influenced from the social media advertising.

Salunke & Prasad (2020) Digital Marketing and Its Impact on Buying Behaviour of Youths in Bengaluru reveals that there has a greater influence on the youths for their buying behavior. Most the youngsters have access to the digital channels but are not avail of the optimum utilization. The attitude of the youngsters differs from other in the buying behavioral aspects, so the study is focused on youths. The study was conducted on age between 15-35. The youngsters are more likely to purchase the products by getting influenced through the social media channels.

Grover & Mandan (2017) imposed a study on “Analysing Role of Social Media In Consumer Decision Making For Purchase of Auto brands In India” the study examined about the consumer decision model on how the consumer are influenced by social media on their pre purchased decision by the feedback and experience but prefer to buy offline. Reputation of the auto brand followed by specifications of the product impacts more when consumers evaluate different auto brands. Authenticity or quality of information provided online motivates consumers to buy online followed by ease of navigation and recommendation for the product by others. Young people are spending more and more time on social media and are using it for gathering and authenticating information about various products and brands.

Ansari, Ghori, & Kazi (2019) examined a study on “Impact of Brand Awareness and Social Media Content Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decision” which states that social media content marketing has a moderate positive significant relationship with the consumer purchase decision whereas brand awareness has a weak positive significant relationship with consumer purchase decision (Ansari, Ghori, & Kazi, 2019). The study examined on the purpose of brand awareness and social media content marketing. Social media plays an important role in creating brand awareness. The strong content can leave an impact on consumer for making a purchase decision. Social networking sites can communicate more for the brand awareness.

Chandrasekaran & Narayanan (2020) analyses a study on the “Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decision in Madurai City” Digital marketing has set a great impact on consumer mind for every buying decision. In spite of the educational background every customer is aware of the digital and social media channels and uses it to purchase any sought of goods. Mostly people prefer shopping and electronic goods to buy through digital channels. Effective reach of advertisements for convenience goods will increase the sales of those goods through digital channels.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Statement of Problem

The problem statement of the report is “To study the role of Social Media Marketing in consumer buying behavior”

Research Design

The research design used for this research is Descriptive Research.

Descriptive research is defined as a research method that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon that is being studied. Descriptive analysis involves gathering of information that describes the events and so organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection. There are 3 main data collection methods in descriptive research, namely; observational method, case study method, and survey research. In this research, survey research has been use with a set of questionnaires. Survey research can be carried out both online and offline and in this research online survey has been done for collection of data.

Research Tool

Quantitative methods involve the collection and analysis of objective data, often in numerical form. The research design is determined prior to the start of data collection and is not flexible. The research process, interventions and data collection tools (e.g. questionnaires) are standardized to minimize or control possible bias.

A structured questionnaire is designed to collect primary data for the research. A total of fourteen questions were asked to the respondents, which consists of their basic details, awareness of digital and social media marketing, types of products they bought through different digital channels, questions with statements regarding the opinion of respondents on social media for advertisement of the products and services.

Type of Research

The type of research used for the study is Quantitative Research.

Quantitative research is defined as a systematic investigation of phenomena by gathering quantifiable data and performing statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. Quantitative research collects information from existing and potential customers using sampling methods and sending out online surveys, questionnaires, etc., the results of which can be depicted in the form of numerical.

Sampling- Sample Size

A sample size of 116 was taken for the research purpose and a survey containing series of questions was circulated to them. The age group focused was from 21 to 50.

Sample Frame

A sampling frame is a list or other device used to define a researcher's population of interest. The sampling frame defines a set of elements from which a researcher can select a sample of the target population. The sampling frame includes people which are aware of social media as well as users.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used is non-probabilistic convenience sampling.

In a statistical study, sampling methods refer to how the researcher selects members from the population to be in the study. If a sample isn't randomly selected, it will probably be biased in some way and the data may not be representative of the population.

In Convenience sample, the researcher chooses a sample that is readily available in some non-random way. Convenience sampling is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate. It is a type of sampling where the first available primary data source will be used for the research without additional requirements. In non-probability (non-random) sampling, researcher does not start with a complete sampling frame, so some individuals have no chance of being selected. Consequently, the researcher cannot estimate the effect of sampling error and there is a significant risk of ending up with a non-representative sample which produces non-generalisable results.

Data –Type of Data with method/sources

1) Primary data:

Primary data is first hand information collected through observation, interviews and questionnaire. In this research primary data is collected through questionnaire. Questionnaires consist of some open ended as well as close ended questions for the proper survey.

2) Secondary Data:-

Secondary data is the data that have been already collected by and readily available from other sources. Such data are cheaper and more quickly obtain and in this research secondary data is collected through the websites, journals, relevant literature reviews from the internet.

Data Collection

Data was collected through Google form with a structured questionnaire having multiple options for each answer. A set of questions is used for basic information like name, gender, age, income, occupation, education. Questions on awareness of digital marketing and social media marketing which covers what type of digital channel does the respondent use for purchasing of product, channels that influences the respondents in their buying decision also asked the type of products the respondent buys. A question with statements that covers the opinion of the respondents from a scale of 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the study as mentioned in the research methodology. Below are the results obtained from the analytics tools;

Fig.1.1. Chart showing classification of respondents according to their gender:

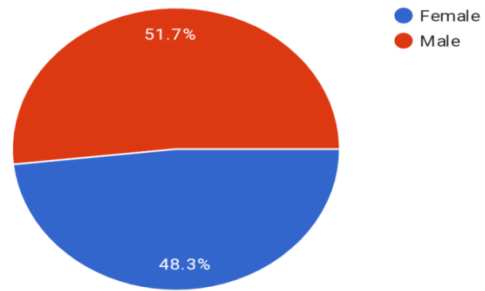


Figure 1: Gender of respondents

Interpretation:

From the above fig 1.1 it is observed that, 52% of respondents are male and 48% of respondents are female.

Fig.1.2. Chart showing classification of respondents according to their age:

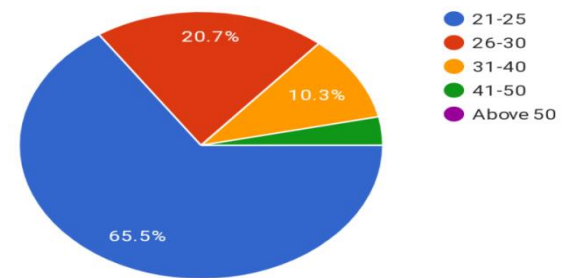


Figure 2: Age of respondents

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 65% of respondents are related to age group between 21 years to 25 years, 21% of respondents are related to age group between 26 years to 30 years, 10% of respondents are related to age group between 31 years to 40 years, 4% of respondents are related to age group between 41 years to 50 years.

Fig.1.3. Chart showing classification of respondents according to their education:

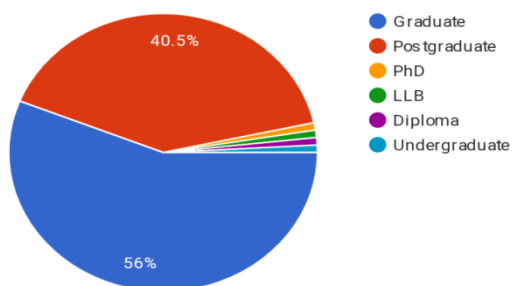


Figure 3: Education of respondents

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 56% of respondents are graduate, 40% of respondents are postgraduate, 1% of respondents have done PhD, 1% of respondents have done LLB, 1% of respondents are undergraduate, 1% of respondents have done diploma.

Fig.1.4. Chart showing classification of respondents according to their occupation:

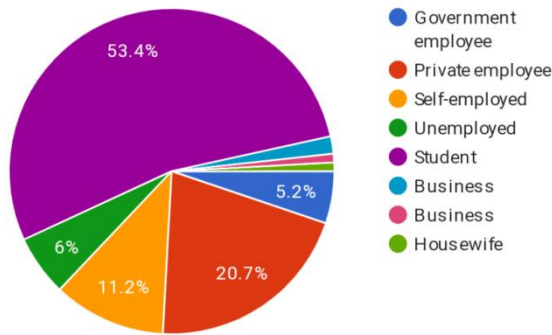


Figure 4: Occupation of respondents

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 53% of respondents are students, 21% of respondents are private employee, 11% of respondents are self-employed, 6% of respondents are unemployed, 5% of respondents are government employee, 3% of respondents are doing business, 1% of respondents are housewife.

Fig.1.5. Chart showing classification of respondents according to their Family income:

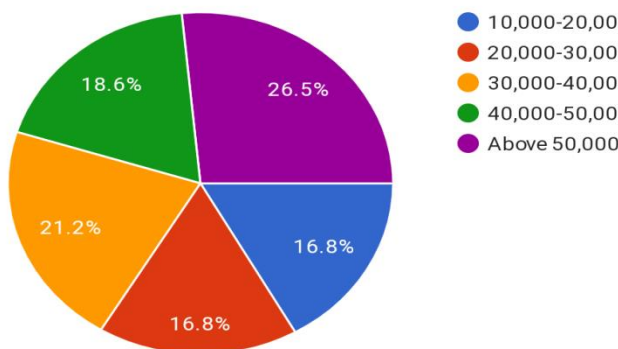


Figure 5: Family income of respondents

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 17% of respondent's family income is in between 10000-2000, 17% of respondent's family income is in between 20000-3000, 21% of respondent's family income is in between 30000-40000, 19% of respondent's family income is in

between 40000-50000, 26% of respondent's family income is above 50000

Fig.1.6. Chart showing classification of respondents regarding the awareness of digital channels (Social media, Websites/blogs, E-mail)

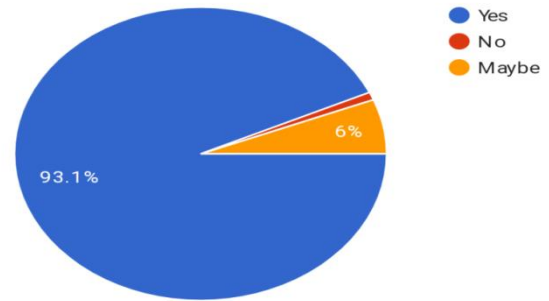


Figure 6: Awareness of digital marketing

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 93% of respondents are aware of the digital channels, 6% of respondents maybe aware of the digital channels.

Fig.1.7. Chart showing classification of respondents according to digital or social media channels, they bought the products:

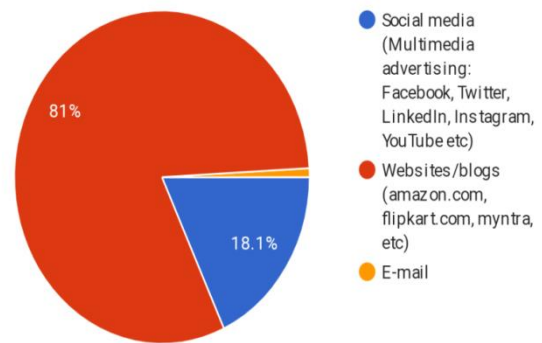


Figure 7: Products brought through digital and social media channels

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 81% of respondents have brought the products through Websites/blogs (amazon.com, flipkart.com, myntra, etc), 18% of respondents have brought the products through Social media (Multimedia advertising: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube etc) and only 1% of respondents have brought the products through e-mail.

Fig.1.8. Chart showing classification of respondents according to digital or social media channels that influenced them more to buy the product:

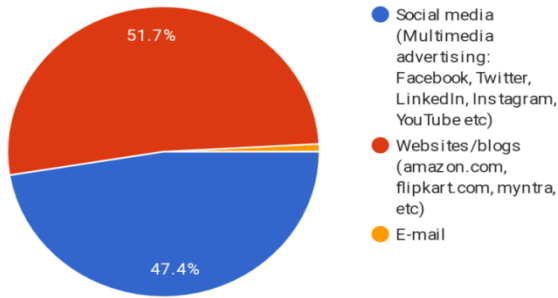


Figure 8: Digital channels influence more to buy products

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 52% of respondents were influenced by Websites/blogs (amazon.com, flipkart.com, myntra, etc) to buy the products, 47% of respondents were influenced by Social media (Multimedia advertising: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube etc) to buy the products and only 1% of respondents were influenced by e-mail to buy the products.

Fig.1.9. Chart showing classification of respondents, whether their buying decision was influenced by any social media advertisement:

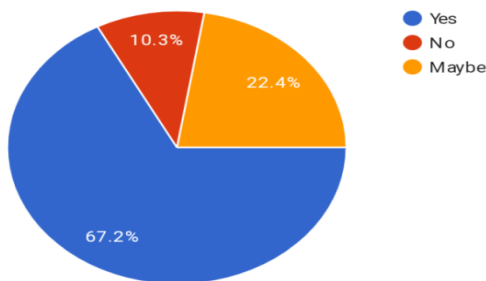


Figure 9: Influential of social media advertisement

Fig.1.11. Chart showing classification of opinion of respondents on social media regarding advertisement of products and services:

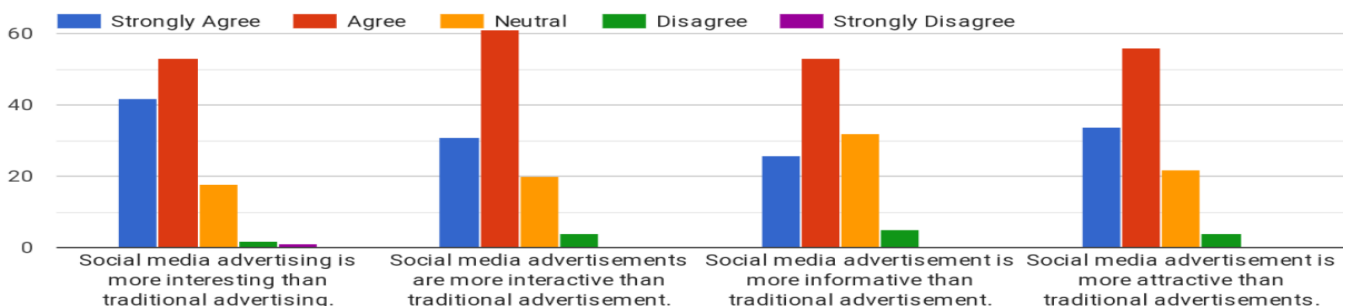


Figure 11: Opinion of respondents on advertisement

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 67% of respondents buying decision were influenced by social media advertisement, 10% of respondents buying decision were not influenced by social media advertisement, and 22% of respondents think that social media advertisements have influenced them in their buying decision.

Fig.1.10. Chart showing classification of respondents on what kind of products they prefer to buy using digital or social media channels:

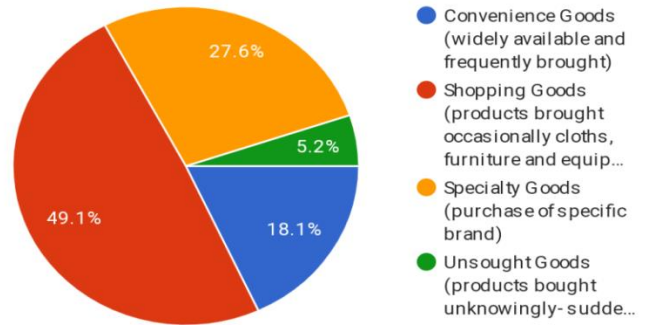


Figure 10: Products prefer to buy using digital channels

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 49% of respondents prefer to buy shopping goods, 27% of respondents prefer to buy specialty goods, 18% of respondents prefer to buy convenience goods and only 5% of respondents prefer to buy unsought goods.

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 46% of respondents agree that social media marketing is more interesting, interactive, informative and attractive, 36% of respondents strongly agree that social media marketing is more interesting, interactive, informative and attractive, 15% of respondents have neutral opinion that social media marketing is more interesting, interactive, informative and attractive 2% of respondents disagree that social media marketing is more interesting, interactive, informative and attractive and only 1% of respondents strongly disagree that social media marketing is more interesting, interactive, informative and attractive.

Fig.1.12. Chart showing classification of statement that drives respondent attention more, in digital or social media for purchasing a product:

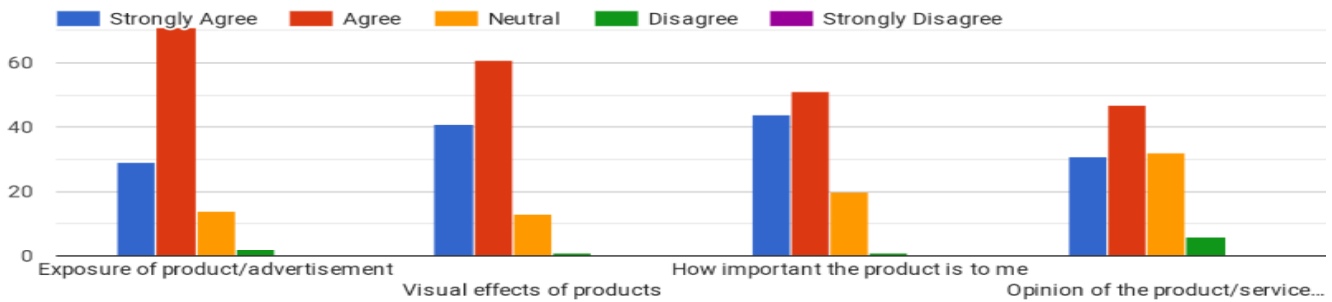


Figure 12: Classification of respondent’s attention on purchasing a product

Interpretation:

From above pie chart it is observed that, 61% of respondents agree that their attention drives through exposure, visual effects, importance of product to them and opinions by others in social media, 25% of respondents strongly agree that their attention drives through exposure, visual effects, importance of product to them and opinions by others in social media, 12% of respondents have neutral opinion that their attention drives through exposure, visual effects, importance of product to them and opinions by others in social media and only 2% of respondents disagree that their attention drives through exposure, visual effects, importance of product to them and opinions by others in social media.

- 5) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 26% of respondents’ income is above 50000 and only 17% of respondents’ income is 10000 to 20000.
- 6) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 96% of respondents’ are aware of digital channels (social media) and only 1% of respondents’ are not aware of digital channels (social media).
- 7) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 81% of respondents’ have brought the products through Websites/blogs (amazon.com, flipkart.com, myntra, etc)and only 1% of respondents’ have brought the product through email.
- 8) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 52% of respondents’ were influenced by Websites/blogs (amazon.com, flipkart.com, myntra, etc) to buy the products and only 1% of respondents’ were influenced by email.
- 9) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 67% of respondents’ buying decision were influenced by social media advertisement and 10% of respondents’ buying decision were not influenced by social media advertisement.
- 10) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 49% of respondents prefer to buy shopping goods and only 5% of respondents prefer to buy unsought goods.
- 11) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 46% of respondents agree on social media marketing is more interesting, interactive, informative and attractive and only 1% of respondents strongly disagree on social media marketing is more interesting, interactive, informative and attractive.

VI. OBSERVATION AND FINDINGS

- 1) It is observed that from 116 respondents 52% of respondents are male and only 48% of respondents are female.
- 2) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 65% of respondents’ age is between 21 years to 25 years, and only 4% of respondents’ age is between 41 years to 50 years.
- 3) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 65% of respondents’ are graduate and only 1% of respondents’ have done diploma.
- 4) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 53% of respondents are students and only few respondents that is 3% of respondents’ are doing business.

12) It is observed that a maximum of respondents that is 61% of respondents agree that their attention drives through exposure, visual effects, importance of product to them and opinions by others in social media and only 2% of respondents disagree that their attention drives through exposure, visual effects, importance of product to them and opinions by others in social media.

VII. SUGGESTION

In today's era social media marketing has boost-up in consumer behavior; social media builds the relationship between businesses and consumers. For the business under social media marketing, it is important for the marketers to understand how the consumers react to their communication. It highly influences the consumers' buying decision for pre-purchase of the products/services. The marketers has a wide opportunity in social media marketing, so the marketer must turn up to the social media marketing (platforms) in every aspects of their products and services. In this study almost all respondents are aware of the digital or social media marketing, so the marketers should implement more of the social media campaign to spread more awareness. The marketers should bring more contrast in their digital marketing through social media as the respondents are more likely to view the products with its exposure and visual effects. The marketers should focus on convenience and unsought goods to be advertised or exposure of the products more on social media platforms.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This research report aims at studying the role of social media marketing in consumer behavior. Social media has totally changed the world of advertisement and has moved a far away from traditional advertising. For the marketers, social media marketing is the effective tool to promote their products and create brand awareness through it. This study tells about how social media has changed the perception of consumer in their buying behavior. In coming era digital and social media marketing will give a new look for the marketers as well as to the consumers in view of purchasing any products or services. The emerging trends of social media marketing has attract many consumer's attention towards the brand or product, as seen is this report that consumer prefer digital and social media more over traditional marketing. Social media marketing can give an immense attribute to small business enterprises to get more reach for their products and services, to acquire the targeted audience and explore their brand.

From this report we can say that the customers are more aware of the digital and social media channels. Mostly respondents prefer to buy shopping goods and specialty goods through digital and social media channels and its came to known from the study that there is a rise in purchase of convenience goods through these channels.

Effective reach of advertisements for convenience goods on social media will increase the sales of those goods.

With the help of this report it is observed that social media plays an important role in pre purchase decision as it influences the customers more to buy the product. The role and emerging trends of social media such as visual advertisement, exposure of products with its feature and characteristics, other persons' view on the products influences the customer to buy the products through social media marketing. Overall the role of social media marketing has a great influence in consumer buying behavior. The use of social media will also help the company website to be appeared in more searches.

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