

IMPACT OF MINDFULNESS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTIONS FOR FMCG PRODUCTS

– An exploratory study

¹Ayushi Jain, ²Sharad Gupta

¹ Client Services Specialist, 3.14 Digital

^{2*} Associate Professor, Delhi School of Business, VIPS-TC & Ph.D. Scholar, FMS, DU

Abstract

In a world full of buzz and surface interactions, consumers seek more depth and meaning. This intensity can also come from a very different angle, in the form of mindfulness. Consumers think about and take responsibility for the ethical status of brands they buy and support. The shopping that they do is now more mindful and not just throwing items into basket without thinking twice. Companies always desire to follow consumerism orientation that portrays consumers as consuming anything and everything. This trend is changing now. More and more consumers have started to consume and spend just apt to their needs. Even in this age of internet, they feel paying through cash rather than card is a better option. It is something tangible and they do not want to hand more of it than is strictly necessary. In case of FMCG products, they now prefer to go to nearby markets where they get better value for money rather than big names. This is an exploratory study to determine influence of Mindfulness on social media promotions for FMCG products. Main purpose is to determine whether the promotion on social media platform helps mindful consumers in decision-making. Study also gauges whether social media promotion persuades them to buy a product that does not have much use to them by making them less mindful. This study assists companies to decide what type of promotion should be done to attract mindful consumers and to check whether the money spent on social media promotion generates revenue from mindful consumers. Study also guides marketing managers to make changes in its promotional methods to attract customers with different preferences. Above all, the study supports that market can be segmented based on mindfulness and give companies more ammunition to target customers.

Key words: Mindfulness, Mindful Consumers, Social Media, Promotion, FMCG products

I. INTRODUCTION

In a world full of buzz and surface interactions, consumers seek more depth and meaning. This intensity can also come from a very different angle, in the form of mindfulness. Consumers think about and take responsibility for the ethical status of brands they buy and support. The shopping that they do is now more mindful and not just throwing items into basket without thinking twice. Companies always desire to follow consumerism orientation that portrays consumers as consuming anything and everything. This trend is changing now. More and more consumers have started to consume and spend just apt to their needs. Even in this age of internet, they feel paying through cash rather than card is a better option. It is something tangible and they do not want to hand more of it than is strictly necessary. In case of FMCG products, they now prefer to go to nearby markets where they get better value for money rather than big names (Leszczyc, Sinha, & Timmermans, 2000).

Mindfulness is a meditative practice which sets out to enrich our attention and awareness in everyday life. It has its roots in Buddhist philosophy, but has enjoyed a recent resurgence of secular popularity, due in large part to a rising need for tranquility and reflection in modern society (Brown and Ryan, 2003). Our aim is to explore the potential of mindfulness in countering the over-bearing consumerism, which characterizes modern society. As per Sheth, Sethia, & Srinivas (2011), the current strategies of sustainability have three main insufficiencies- they do not focus on the customer directly, they do not acknowledge the impending pressures from rising global over-consumption, and they do not take an all-inclusive approach. They further the concept of Mindful Consumption that recasts the sustainability metric in order to emphasize the results of business actions holistically in term of environmental, personal and economic well-being of the consumers. Mindful Consumption is premised on a consumer mindset of caring for self, for community, and for nature, that translates behaviorally into tempering the self-defeating excesses associated with acquisitive, repetitive and aspirational consumption.

The focus of this research is on consumers of daily care products. Daily care products mean the products consumed by a person a regular basis. It can be anything such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste etc. They can include both skin care and home care products. They are the products usually consumed by every household and the expenses incurred on them are on regular basis so the consumers have become more mindful in consuming them. They think before spending unnecessarily on them and prefer to pay a reasonable amount for them. The research was carried out on the mindfulness of consumers of daily care products. Other studies have also focused on Mindfulness and social media (Charoensukmongkol, 2016).

Social media marketing programs usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it across their social networks. The resulting electronic word of mouth refers to any statement consumers share via the Internet about an event, product, service, brand or company, especially on social media platforms. The main social media platforms that have been considered in the study are Facebook, Twitter, E-mail, blogs and forums. Mindfulness emphasizes slowness, deliberation, and unwavering focus on one thing, non-judgment (Ampofo, 2014). Social media, emphasizes relies on speed, constant connection and relentless sharing. So this study helps to know whether mindfulness and social media promotion can be linked or not.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Consumers choice process is a complex phenomenon. Making a decision to buy a product or services involves many processes. Objective of this study is to determine whether growing promotions on social media have any effect on decisions of mindful consumers of daily care products. Main purpose is to determine whether the promotion on social media platform helps mindful consumers in decision making. Study also gauges whether social media promotion persuades them to buy the product which is not even of much use to them i.e. making them less mindful.

The main objectives of the study are to find out the influence of Mindfulness on:-

- The impact of social media at different SEC levels.
- The mindfulness scale at different SEC levels.
- The impact of social media on different levels of mindfulness.

This study can also be helpful in knowing the current state of our consumers market. It also aims to categorize the consumers based on their mindfulness and creating a segment for them. Its objective is to assist managers in making the decision related to social media promotions based on their mindfulness.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based prominently on primary data. The study has focused on the consumers using social media in Pitampura, Delhi. The research was carried out by asking the respondents to fill the questionnaire attached.

MAAS i.e. Mindful Attention Awareness Scale was used for measuring the level of mindfulness of a consumers. Consumers were categorized on the basis of SEC i.e. Social Economic Classification of India. Demography questions as recommended by Market Research Society of India (MRSI, 2011) were included.

The size of the sample for study was 100 respondents from Pitampura, Delhi. They were selected using convenient sampling technique. Researchers use convenience sampling because in pilot studies, convenience sample is usually used. It allows the researcher to obtain basic data and trends regarding his study without the complications of using a randomized sample. The analysis and interpretation are made with the help of standard tools like percentages, averages, bar graphs using MS Excel 2016 and SPSS 20. Field survey was conducted during the months of february & march, 2016.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most respondents belong to socio-economic classifications of A1 and A2. This is expected from the demography of the sample region. Details are shown in the figure below.

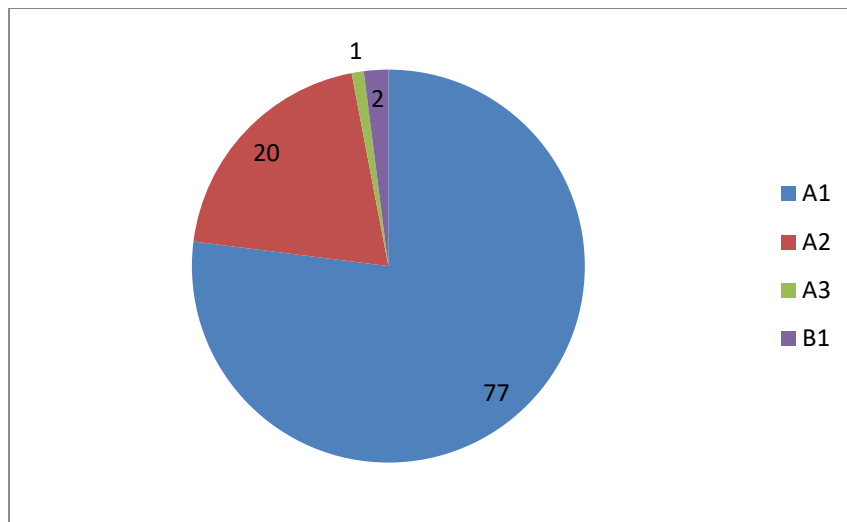


Figure 1: Consumers from different socioeconomic classes

The next figure presents mindful consumers in predominant socio-economic classes of A1 and A2. Since the data of A3 and B1 category is very less, so we have ignored that data and considered the data of A1 and A2. For categorizing the consumers on the basis of mindfulness, we divided consumers with a score more than the middle value as “More mindful” and others as “Less mindful”.

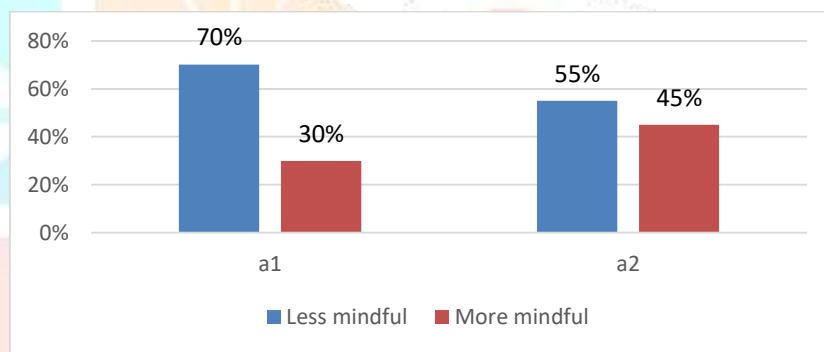


Figure 2: Mindful consumers in A1 and A2 socio-economic classes

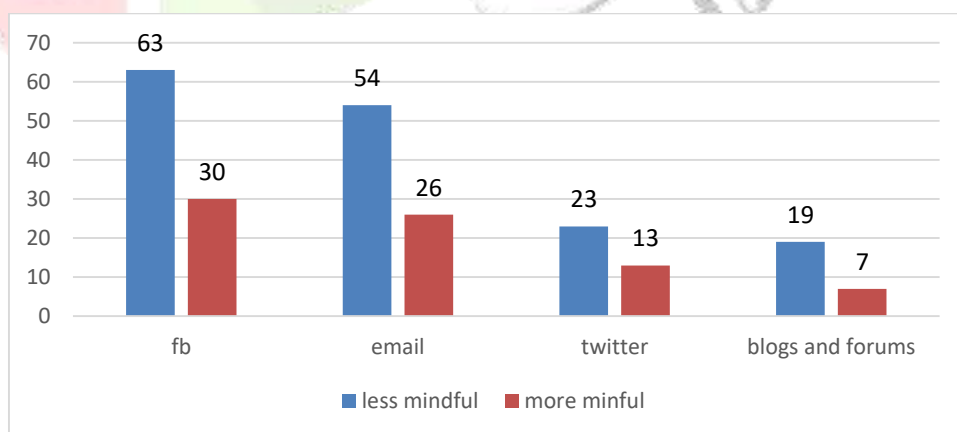


Figure 3: percentage of consumers active on social media platforms

The above graph represents the percentage of consumers active on different social media platforms based on their mindfulness.

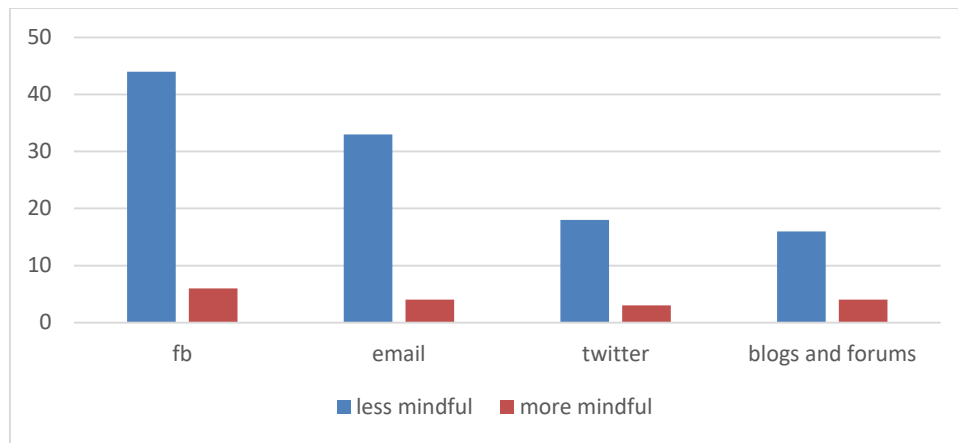


Figure 4: percentage of consumers considering social media promotions

The above graph shows the percentage of consumers who consider different social media platforms while purchasing a daily care product based on their mindfulness. We have taken the views of consumers who consider social networking sites always, very often and often.

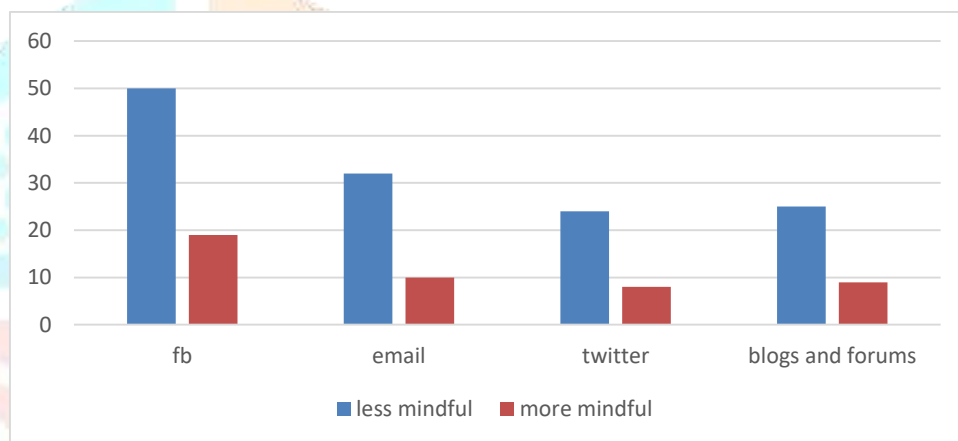


Figure 5: percentage of consumers who get influenced by social media promotions

The above graph shows the percentage of consumers who get influenced through promotions on different social media platforms while purchasing a daily care product based on their mindfulness.

a. Interpretation

The following interpretations can be made from the data analysis-

- More mindful consumers are not very active different social media as compared to less mindful consumers. Thus, for social media promotion focus should be on less mindful consumers.
- More mindful consumers do not consider social media promotions before buying the daily care products as compared to less mindful consumers. Thus, a different way of promotion can be devised for more mindful consumers.
- More mindful consumers get influenced by promotions on Facebook and email to some extent as compared to other media. Thus, Facebook and email should be used as preferred mode of promotions for targeting more mindful consumers.
- Consumers in A1 category of SEC consider social media platforms before buying daily care products more as compared to A2 category. Also, consumers in A1 category of SEC get influenced by social media promotions as compared to A2 category. Thus, social media promotions should be created to target consumers from A1 category.

- Consumers in A1 category of SEC are more active on all the social media platforms as compared to A2 category. Thus, social media promotions can also be created such that consumers from SEC categories other than A1 can also relate to promotions in order to increase their on social media platforms.
- A1 category includes only 30% mindful consumers whereas A2 category includes 45% mindful consumers. This implies that consumers of A2 category are more mindful as compared to A1 category.
- The study shows that higher mindfulness is associated with lower exposure and reliance on social media. It may mean that people with higher social media addiction tend to be less mindful which is supported by earlier studies (Sriwilai & Charoensukmongkol, 2016).
- The percentage of less mindful consumers is more as compared to percentage of more mindful consumers. This may be due to now increased focus on the concept of mindfulness. Gradually, more consumers are becoming aware about this concept.

b. Managerial Implications

This study can assist companies to decide what type of promotion should be done to attract mindful consumers and to check whether the money spent on social media promotion generates revenue from mindful consumers. Study also guides marketing managers to make changes in its promotional methods to attract customers with different preferences. Above all, the study supports that market can be segmented based on mindfulness and give companies more ammunition to target customers. The companies should target more towards less mindful consumers as the percentage of less mindful consumers are more than the more mindful consumers. Since mindfulness increases awareness of consumers (Sagula, & Rice, 2004), more mindful consumers do not get influenced by social media promotions. Therefore, they should devise some other way to promote products for these customers.

c. Limitations of Research

Following limitations are identified in the current study –

- One of the main limitations of this research is that sample population consisted of predominantly A1 and A2 category of SEC consumers.
- The data was collected through convenience sampling, so it may not be the representative of whole population.
- If data was collected over longer duration, the analysis could have become better.
- Data of consumers considering the social media promotions very few times has been ignored.

d. Future Scope of Research

Future studies may be conducted with a more representative sample that can consist of larger sample size and covers all socio economic classes. Longitudinal studies may also be conducted. More social media platforms may be considered for future studies. With a larger data, future studies may compare between consumers in 1st and 4th quartile on their Mindfulness. This may give more contrasting results.

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APPENDIX

1. I am active on following social media platforms

Social media	Yes	No
Facebook		
E-mail		
Twitter		
Blogs and forums		
Others		

2. I consider promotions on following social media platforms for buying daily care products

Social media	Always	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Facebook					
E-mail					
Twitter					
Blogs and forums					
Others					

3. Following shows how much following social media promotions impact my buying decision of daily care products

Social media	Strongly influences my decision	Influences my decision	Does not influence my decision
Facebook			
E-mail			
Twitter			
Blogs and forums			
Others			

4. What is the education of highest income earner in your family?

Illiterate	
Literate but no schooling / School up to 4 years	
School up to 5-9 years	
SSC / HSC / 10 TH / 12 TH	
Some college (not graduate)	
Graduate (12+3) / Post graduate (12+3+2) or higher	
Professional graduate (12+4) / Professional post graduate (12+4+2) or higher	

5. Which of the following items do you or your family members use at your home?

Electricity connection	
Computer / Laptop	
Ceiling fan	
Two wheeler	
Color TV	
LPG stove	
Air conditioner	
Refrigerator	
Washing machine	
Car / Jeep / Van	
Agriculture land ownership (only if used for cultivation)	

6. Below is collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the scale below, please indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each experience. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be. Please treat each item separately from every other item.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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