



CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL MEDIA MARKETING IN THE POST COVID 19 ERA

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Abstract

Today, more than any other time in recent history, social media platforms have become the main source of information surpassing print and other digital media platforms. Further the current situation (COVID-19) has acted as a catalyst to the ever-increasing rise in social media adoption. The use of the internet and social media have changed consumer behavior and the ways in which companies conduct their business. We have watched rapid developments for branding in social media and digital media in the last couple of years and the use of these platforms is stronger than ever these days, Social media can be an opportunity for business to: raise brand awareness, increase sales, generate brand loyalty and to overall better communicate with customers. Social and digital marketing offers significant opportunities to organizations through lower costs, improved brand awareness and increased sales. Social media allows people to freely interact with others and offers multiple ways for marketers to reach and engage with consumers.

Keywords:

Social Media Strategy, Digital media, COVID 19, Future of marketing, Branding.

I. Introduction

Social media has become an indispensable component in our daily life. Home-bound with little to do Covid-19 has led to a spike in online media consumption. In this regard, community support is crucial. Practical support such as providing food or sanitizing equipment to those in need will render a human face to your business. Internet, social media, mobile apps, and other digital communications technologies have become part of everyday life for billions of people around the world. According to recent statistics for January 2020, 4.54 billion people are active internet users, encompassing 59 % of the global population (Statista, 2020a). Social

media usage has become an integral element to the lives of many people across the world. In 2019 2.95 billion people were active social media users worldwide. This is forecast to increase to almost 3.43 billion by 2023 (Statistica, 2020b). Digital and social media marketing allows companies to achieve their marketing objectives at relatively low cost (Ajina, 2019). Facebook pages have more than 50 million registered businesses and over 88 % of businesses use Twitter for their marketing purposes (Lister, 2017). Digital and social media technologies and applications have also been widely used for creating awareness of public services and political promotions (Grover et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2018; Kapoor and Dwivedi, 2015; Shareef et al., 2016). The outbreak of Covid-19 gave it an unexpected boost, by making the people locked down at home with less or no work hand and influencing a fast paced behaviour shift towards digital platforms, digital media, and digital content. Digital marketing strategies involves efforts to adopt the advertising to different platforms, and to customize the advertising to different buyers and also to different devices rather than a large coherent audience. People spend an increasing amount of time online searching for information, on products and services communicating with other consumers about their experiences and engaging with companies. Organizations have responded to this change in consumer behavior by making digital and social media an essential and integral component of their business marketing plans (Stephen, 2016). The internet and especially the Social Media has changed how marketers and consumers communicate. Various platforms such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram, blogs and YouTube have been created in recent years The results showed that social media has brought about a huge positive change in the e-marketing world by influencing the involvement of people online, facilitated trust through review, recommendations, feedbacks and ratings that consumers read online, created a cheaper marketing strategy avenue for marketers and also created a relationship between consumers and marketers even without physical contact

II. Literature Review

Everyone has had to rely more on technology over the past few weeks. From video meetings to curbside delivery - every company has had to pivot in some way to keep their business going. Everyone has had to lean into Digital and social media more during COVID and they have learned how to use it differently and better than ever before. My prediction is that social media content from businesses will become more creative and the digital strategy will be better than ever. The businesses that pushed up their sleeves and got to work on social media marketing efforts during a major crisis will reap the rewards when the crisis starts to fade. Some businesses may have even found a new niche of online business and will continue to grow that area post-Social Media and E-Marketing is becoming more and more popular. More people are beginning to be involved in online activities. Consumers and Marketers have embraced the social media world to publicize their products and perform transactions. In this review, the researcher has been able to find out that trust is one factor most consumers must consider. Marketers/managers must be able to build repeated confidence and trust on their products with their consumers as this will enhance more sales. Hajli (2014, p.392). E-marketing has a lots of benefits such as generating exposure to businesses, increasing traffic/subscribers, building new business partnerships, rise in search engine rankings, generating qualified leads due to better lead generation efforts, selling more products and services, reduction in overall marketing expenses (Neti, 2011, p.6). In the descriptive research by Neti (2011), a breakdown of SMM was analyzed and how it has tremendously improved sales and marketing over the years. This article showed that SMM has been able to create an avenue for both established companies and start-ups. When compared with traditional marketing, markets might spend millions to locate their target market but with SMM, companies can search for fan pages, groups to find out who is interested in their products without paying large sums on market research Furthermore, in Vinerean's et al (2013, p.72) research, four different types of social media consumers were identified namely: Engagers, Expressers and Informers, Networkers and Watchers and Listeners. Hypothesis was established to determine the students' underlying characteristics in terms of social media engagement. Also, the different behaviours of these

consumers online were monitored in relation to social media marketing and even influential variables were analyzed. The findings showed that although different consumers come online for various reasons, however, their activities has been able to enhance positive reactions to social media marketing and online advertisement. Social media interaction ties have been proved to positively affect knowledge exchange and sharing. In a social network group, people with more links are easier to get more knowledge, causing informational social influence (Kwahk et al. 2012, p.1817). Also, social media commitment will positively affect informational social influence. As an example, if most of your friends have visited a website to look for or buy a product, then you will also intend to visit that website to see the same product. This also shows how influential SMM can be. In Swamynathan et al.'s (2008) research in assessing if social networks improve ecommerce. A study of Overstock Auctions which is a novel auction site similar to eBay but unique in its integration of a social network into the market community.4IK524 Information Systems Methodology, 7,5hp Literature review 9 The evaluation of social connections on business transactions showed that transactions between partners connected on social network leads to higher user satisfaction. In response to the research question on how SM platforms have influenced the emarketing world, we have been able to see from these articles that SM has influenced the e-marketing world positively. This can be seen from how consumers have social interactions via different online communities such as Facebook, twitter, etc. This interaction enforces and creates values for both business and consumers. The diversity of SMM can also be said to be a positive influence on e-marketing. So many organizations, companies and individuals have started to embrace this means of marketing and the topic is now being discussed in homes, small businesses, corporate boardrooms, and extending its reach into the nonprofit, education and health sectors (Neti, 2011, p.14). Not only that, SMM has been seen (Vinerean's et al 2013) to improve online consumer behavior. People are getting to be more interested in visiting marketing sites either via recommendations, reviews or influence of their friends. As mentioned before, social media affects getting information and knowledge transfer, which in turn enhances the influence of the information or knowledge (i.e., informational social influence), and finally influences online shopping behavior. That is to say, informational social influence is transferred from a social media context to an e-commerce context. Hence, social media has a high informational social influence, which affects the users' online behavior such as visit intention and purchase intention in e-commerce (Kwahk et al. 2012, p 1820). Finally SM platforms have been able to influence the e-marketing world by providing the opportunity to perform transactions on social network. Apart from the convenience this offers, it has also been able to provide higher user satisfaction as seen from the research done by Swamynathan et al. (2008) where the novel online marketplace (Overstock Auction) ratings has a strong correlation with user satisfaction after their transactions.

III. Methodology

Impact of Covid-19 On Digital Marketing

The widespread of Covid-19 had a drastic negative impact on on-field marketing activities, mainly due to lockdown. However, this opened the doors for digital marketing as people shifted to digital mediums faster than anticipated. The following points explains the impact of covid-19 on digital marketing and advertising.

i. Increased Social Media engagement paved way for increased Social Media Marketing:

Due to Covid-19 outbreak resulting in lockdown and work from home being in place, people had lot of free time, which they mostly spent on social media. As a result, this provides an opportunity for marketers to capitalize on and better connect with their customers through various Social Media sites, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.,

ii. Shift from K.P.I expectations to lifetime value:

Digital Marketing is traditionally based on analytics and Key Performance Indicators (K.P.I) for measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of digital marketing campaigns. However, the outbreak of Corona Virus has devalued the importance of, and emphasis on K.P. I's and increased the importance of Customer Lifetime Value.

iii. Increased demand for Video and MicroVideo Content:

While the internet revolution lead by Reliance Jio made the internet cheaper, the advent of Covid-19, made people so much so free that they had a lot time to spend now. As a result, the demand for video contents in Video streaming platforms like YouTube has increased tremendously. Similarly, in case of micro video content platforms there has been a huge increase in demand. These things provided the marketers with an opportunity to bank on Video and Micro Video contents to advertise and promote their products and services.

iv. Increased importance of A.I based Chatbots:

While the online activities of the people have increased during quarantine, and the majority of the workforce was on work from home status, the companies adopted to A.I based Chat-bots, that would provide necessary assistance to the customers through a preprogrammed chat room. The use of these kinds of chat-bot the customers liking towards these bots has also increased unexpectedly, and as a result, these chat-bots have become a virtual assistant to the customers.

v. Emphasis of Experiential Marketing:

As people are spending more time online during this lockdown period, the marketers has to emphasis on making the customers online experience engaging or else the chances are that the customer can get bored soon, if the webpage, landing page or virtual environment does not provide a good experience. Thus, the marketers are heavily emphasizing on making the customers online experience a delightful one when they visit the website, attend webinar, visit curated content hub, visit landing pages etc.,

vi. Surge in demand for O.T.T. Content Hubs:

Covid-19 lockdown period also saw a surge in demand for and viewership of Over-The-Top Content Hubs such a Netflix and Amazon Prime. The surge in demand for these O.T.T platforms provides the Digital Marketer with an opportunity to promote and market their products and service through these platforms.

vii. Increased Product Research among customers:

Over the last few months the people are spending more time in researching about Vidyabharati International Interdisciplinary Research Journal (Special Issue June 2020) ISSN 2319-4979 Int. e-Conf. on Impact of COVID-19 on Various Areas of Global Economy, Sci. & Humanities 228 products and services online. Thus, its forcing brands and marketers to manage their online reputation effectively and be responsive towards the customer reviews and requests and avoid any possible backlash.

Future of Digital Marketing Post Covid-19:

There is no doubt that Covid-19's impact on Digital marketing is positive for most of the part, but going forward in the future, post Covid era the marketers have to maintain or rather improve on the current digital opportunities in order to retain the customer base so acquired during the Covid period.

i. Being socially responsible in social media:

Although the companies have gained a great quantity of customer engagement on various social media platforms, going forward in the future the firms have to maintain this engagement while ensuring that they act with responsibility.

ii. Maintaining Online Reputation:

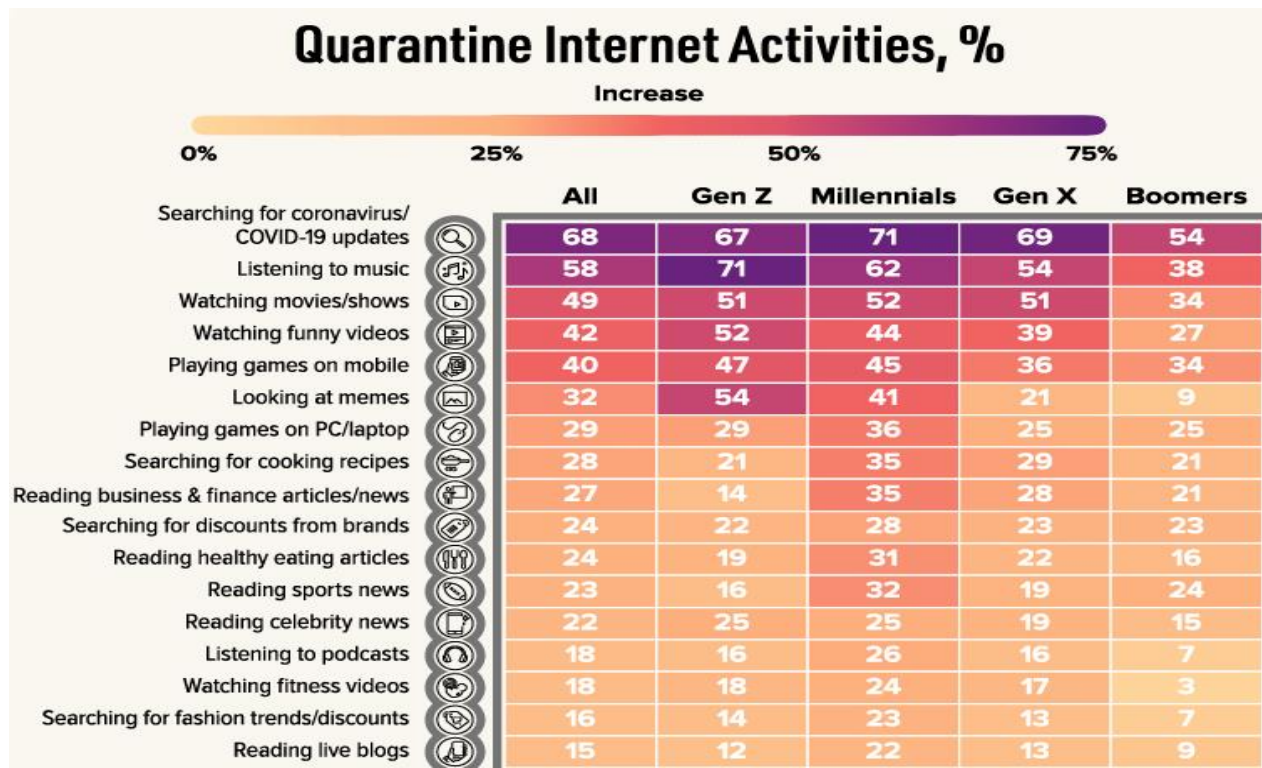
With an increase in the customers' online time spend, and increase in social media activities, any mistakes from the brands or company's part can lead to faster widespread of negative information and may lead to drastic backlash. Thus, maintaining the online reputation will be very much difficult and essential as well.

iii. Managing web traffic:

Post Covid, as the people get back to their normal lifestyles and routines, the challenge in front of the marketers would be to get the same quantity and quality web traffic on their websites and landing pages. The marketers have to continue making engaging digital content and virtual environment even post Covid to manage and maintain the web traffic.

iv. Investment on A.I based Chat-bots:

As the usage of chat-bots are increasing during the lockdown period and the customers finding it as useful service, going ahead in the future the onus on marketers will be invest more on such A.I Based technology while ensuring the U.I and UX is good and make sure that there aren't much of technical issues.



IV. Conclusion

In the present scenario, digital is at the heart of all companies and Digital marketing is an essential tool in the hands of brands and marketers for implementing marketing strategies during the pandemic period. While the field of marketing in general was drastically impacted, the branch of digital marketing has seen a tremendous boost. Covid19 has put Digital marketing on Fast-track and paved the way for further development and enhancement of digital marketing activities.

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