

Attitude of Social Media Users towards Ephemeral Marketing

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Abstract

The Digital Age has seen tremendous development in the field of marketing. The prominence of the internet and social media has seen an increased transformation in marketing techniques from traditional bill boards and hoardings, door to door and print media to a gradual shift towards modern day digital and social media marketing. Ephemeral marketing is a technique where marketers display their products and services or any other relevant information for a very short period of time. Online ephemeral marketing is generally carried out through various social media platforms. Ephemeral marketing is a considerably new research field and a quick literature scan does not reveal many existing studies. However, there exist certain studies on offline ephemeral marketing techniques.

This paper focuses on attitude of social media users towards online ephemeral marketing. It also aims to understand the level of awareness about ephemeral marketing among the social media users.

The findings of the study allow us to deduce whether this new trend in marketing, although being used widely amongst marketers, is at all a necessity currently, keeping in mind the proven success of other, already existing techniques. The outcome examines whether the practice of this technique by the marketers has a positive or negative response from the consumers and also finds out if consumers pay attention to these trends.

Keywords: awareness, marketing techniques, social media, consumer purchase interest, ephemeral.

Introduction

The tremendous growth of social media over time has seen businesses adopt social media as a medium for marketing their products and services and also resort to digital marketing to enhance and modernize their traditional marketing techniques. Social media has been considered a game changer in the field of business due to several benefits it brings with it; some of them being increased exposure and traffic, reduction in marketing expenses, improved sales and growth is business partnerships.

Ephemeral marketing is one such concept being increasingly used by modern marketers in order to reach out to a larger target market and in order to increase the visibility of the products and services they offer.

The term ephemeral can literally be understood as lasting for a very short time. Therefore, ephemeral marketing is one such marketing technique where the marketer displays its products and related advertisements for a period of time which ranges from a minimum of 10 seconds to a maximum of 24 hours. This technique is used to capitalize on the effect of Fear of Missing out (FOMO). This form of ephemeral marketing has been further used not just on online platforms but also offline in the form of pop up stores or temporary retail set ups which exist for a very short period of time.

Background

Since the introduction of the internet, this world has seen immense advancement in the field of information technology. The Information Age has impacted various aspects of business, one of them being the broad spectrum of marketing. Marketing in this age has seen a transformation from traditional techniques such as hoardings and bill boards, print media and door to door to a gradual shift towards digital and social media marketing. One of the major reasons behind the prominence of social media marketing can be attributed to a gargantuan increase in the use of mobile phones with social media access. It is statistically deduced that the total count of users of social media is expected to rise to 2.77 billion worldwide by the end of 2019. This statement is also justified by another study which tells us that 71% of internet users are predominantly on social media. Considering that people of this world, be it from the developed, developing or the least developed countries have access to basic mobile phones with internet connectivity, it is safe to assume that social media marketing is the way forward and is subject to continuous innovation and improvement.

Innovation is what makes any business and marketer dynamic and it is this continuous improvement and evolution of social media marketing that has led to the introduction and increased use of this current trend of ephemeral marketing.

Scope of Research

Ephemeral marketing itself is a very broad concept which is required to be further categorized for the ease of understanding. Therefore, it can be further classified into offline and online forms of ephemeral marketing based on the applications of it in the outside world. Offline ephemeral marketing includes pop up stores whereby online ephemeral marketing comprises of advertisements on Instagram stories and Facebook statuses.

This research is however focused mainly on the aspect of online ephemeral marketing whereby analysis and interpretations will mainly cover advertisements which appear for a short duration on popular social media websites and applications.

This study will allow marketers to understand the penetration of ephemeral marketing and will allow them to ponder on the feasibility of its inclusion in their already existing marketing strategies. On the other hand, this research will allow the general public to be more aware of the current marketing strategies or the upcoming trends in business and will help them to further use this knowledge to make informed choices and apply it in other academic and non-academic domains.

Review of Literature

(Bashar, Ahmad, & Wasiq, 2012)

The researcher in this paper has laid emphasis on how traditional marketing has evolved, and has laid special emphasis on social media marketing as a tool. The author has stressed upon the need for current businesses to indulge in social media marketing. The objective of the study is to determine effectiveness of social media marketing and determine extent to which it influences their buying decisions. Regression analysis has been used by researcher as part of their study.

(Troisi O, C, V, A, & N, 2015)

The research was conducted with an aim to study the impact of social networks on the economy of the enterprise and how it affects the future of the enterprise. The researcher has tried to explain how social media influences the buying decision of the consumer by explaining various internal and external factors affecting the buying decision. It is a descriptive paper whose result is based on the 111 academic articles selected from a large pool.

(Leefflang, Verhoef, Dahlstrom, & Freundt, 2014)

This paper has tried to come up with challenges that the companies face while going digital in this era. The data has been collected through a convenience survey of 777 marketing executives around the globe. On the basis of data collected, the researchers have found out 4 major tensions/challenges that the companies face. They are: Developing of models to analyse large consumer data being generated every day, use of social media to maintain customer relationships as well as for branding purposes, understanding of metrics related to their usage, effectiveness etc, and fulfilling the talent gap created in analytical capabilities. These are the biggest improvement opportunities for companies across sectors.

(Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu, & Tichindelean, 2013)

This paper aims to study the online activities of 236 social media users using an online consumer survey. The paper identifies different types of users, segments them and shows how the predictors related to social networking sites can be examined using a linear model to identify whether they have a positive impact on how an individual perceives online advertising or not. The objective was to help the reader understand the engagement with different types of audiences in order to know how to maximize the effect of online marketing

strategy. The data collected was analysed through SPSS using factor analysis, regression analysis and Automatic Linear Modelling (ALM).

Research Gap

Ephemeral Marketing is one such concept under contemporary marketing techniques which has been increasingly used by marketers nowadays to grab the attention of a large target market. However, the major problem with this concept is a lack of information on how this type of marketing is perceived by various social media users among different demographics. It is therefore imperative to understand whether this new trend in marketing, although being used widely amongst marketers, is at all a necessity currently, keeping in mind the proven success of other already existing techniques. This study has mainly been conducted to provide the readers an extended understand of this concept of marketing and examine whether the practice of this technique by the marketers has a positive or negative response from the consumers on the basis of their purchases based on the data collected through a questionnaire.

Research Objectives

- To analyse the factors affecting the purchase intention of social media users exposed to ephemeral marketing.
- To understand the attitudes of social media users towards ephemeral marketing among different demographic characteristics.
- To understand the attitudes of social media users towards various ephemeral advertisements.
- To measure the awareness of the term ephemeral marketing among the social media users.

Research Methodology

The data was collected through a structured questionnaire which was based on a five-point Likert-scale. The online questionnaire technique was chosen because they allow us to collect data from vast individuals within short span of time. Convenience sampling was used by the researchers for the purpose of collection of data. Sample size comprised of 217 respondents. Various tools such as ANOVA, Cross Tabulation, Frequency and Percentage Analysis were used through the software SPSS for the purpose of analysis of collected data.

Analysis and Interpretation

- Out of the total of 217 respondents to the structured questionnaire which had been circulated for the purpose of research, 215 respondents use social media which comprise of 99.078% of the total respondents.
- Subsequently, it is also found out that 213 out of 217 respondents i.e. 98.17% of the total respondents are aware about the concept of stories and status updates in popular social media websites and applications.

Table 1:**Age * Have you ever come across advertisements while looking at stories? * Gender * Profession
Crosstabulation**

Profession	Gender	Age			Have you ever come across advertisements while looking at stories?		Total
					Yes	No	
Student	Male	Age	15-25	Count	78	2	80
				% within Age	97.5%	2.5%	100.0%
			26-35	Count	2	0	2
				% within Age	100.0%	0%	100.0%
		Total	Count	80	2	82	
			% within Age	97.6%	2.4%	100.0%	
	Female	Age	15-25	Count	84	5	89
				% within Age	94.4%	5.6%	100.0%
		Total	Count	84	5	89	
			% within Age	94.4%	5.6%	100.0%	
Homemaker	Female	Age	26-35	Count	3		3
				% within Age	100.0%		100.0%
			Above 35	Count	2		2
				% within Age	100.0%		100.0%
	Total	Count	5		5		
		% within Age	100.0%		100.0%		
Service	Male	Age	15-25	Count	5	0	5
				% within Age	100.0%	0%	100.0%
			26-35	Count	3	1	4
				% within Age	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
			Above 35	Count	6	0	6
				% within Age	100.0%	0%	100.0%
		Total	Count	14	1	15	
			% within Age	93.3%	6.7%	100.0%	
	Female	Age	15-25	Count	4	0	4
				% within Age	100.0%	0%	100.0%
			26-35	Count	5	1	6
				% within Age	83.3%	16.7%	100.0%
		Above 35	Count	5	0	5	
			% within Age	100.0%	0%	100.0%	
	Total	Count	14	1	15		
		% within Age	93.3%	6.7%	100.0%		
Self employed	Male	Age	15-25	Count	1		1
				% within Age	100.0%		100.0%
			26-35	Count	3		3
				% within Age	100.0%		100.0%
			Above 35	Count	3		3
				% within Age	100.0%		100.0%
		Total	Count	7		7	
			% within Age	100.0%		100.0%	
	Female	Age	26-35	Count		1	1
				% within Age		100.0%	100.0%
		Above 35	Count		1	1	
			% within Age		100.0%	100.0%	
	Total	Count		2	2		
		% within Age		100.0%	100.0%		

- Table 1 tells us that out of the total of 215 respondents who use social media, 204 of them have come across advertisements as stories and status updates on various social media websites or applications. It is also seen that students form the majority of these respondents and out of these 204 favourable respondents, 164 are students comprising of 80 males and 84 females.

Table 2:

Income (per month) * Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements? * Profession Crosstabulation				Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements?		Total
Profession				Yes	No	
Student	Income (per month)	Less than 15000	Count	55	98	153
			% within Income (per month)	35.9%	64.1%	100.0%
	16000-30000	Count	3	3	6	
		% within Income (per month)	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	
	31000-50000	Count	1	1	2	
% within Income (per month)		50.0%	50.0%	100.0%		
Above 50000	Count	1	2	3		
% within Income (per month)	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%			
Total			Count	60	104	164
			% within Income (per month)	36.6%	63.4%	100.0%
Homemaker	Income (per month)	Less than 15000	Count	1	1	2
			% within Income (per month)	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	31000-50000	Count	0	1	1	
		% within Income (per month)	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Above 50000	Count	0	2	2		
	% within Income (per month)	.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Total			Count	1	4	5
			% within Income (per month)	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
Service	Income (per month)	16000-30000	Count	1	12	13
			% within Income (per month)	7.7%	92.3%	100.0%
	31000-50000	Count	1	2	3	
		% within Income (per month)	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%	
Above 50000	Count	2	10	12		
	% within Income (per month)	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%		
Total			Count	4	24	28
			% within Income (per month)	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%
Self employed	Income (per month)	Less than 15000	Count	0	1	1
			% within Income (per month)	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	31000-50000	Count	1	0	1	
		% within Income (per month)	100.0%	.0%	100.0%	
Above 50000	Count	2	3	5		
	% within Income (per month)	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%		
Total			Count	3	4	7
			% within Income (per month)	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%

- It can be clearly interpreted from Table 2 that majority of the 204 out of the total respondents who have seen advertisements on social media websites and applications and who belong to various professional backgrounds have not purchased a product based on these advertisements.

Table 3:

Do you find these advertisements redundant? * Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements? Crosstabulation

Count		Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements?		Total
		Yes	No	
Do you find these advertisements redundant?	Yes	26	86	112
	No	42	50	92
Total		68	136	204

- The table above tells us that 50 respondents who do not find these advertisements redundant have also not purchased any product based on these advertisements.
- Majority of the total respondents who find these advertisements redundant have not purchased any product based on such advertisements.

ANOVA

VAR00014

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.490	2	.745	1.252	.288
Within Groups	115.990	195	.595		
Total	117.480	197			

- An analysis using One Way ANOVA was undertaken to determine the association between respondents' liking/disliking of ephemeral advertisements and their age. Consequently, the following hypotheses were formulated.

H₀: There is no statistically significant association between respondents' liking/disliking of ephemeral advertisements and their age.

H₁: There is a statistically significant association between respondents liking/disliking of ephemeral advertisements and their age.

Since the level of significance was ascertained to be 0.288 which more than 0.05 or 5%, **H₀** was accepted.

ANOVA

VAR00014

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.583	1	1.583	2.677	.103
Within Groups	115.897	196	.591		
Total	117.480	197			

- One Way ANOVA was used to determine the association between respondents' liking/disliking of ephemeral advertisements and their gender. The following hypotheses were formulated.

H₀: There is no statistically significant association between respondents' liking/disliking of ephemeral advertisements and their gender.

H₁: There is a statistically significant association between respondents liking/disliking of ephemeral advertisements and their gender.

Since the level of significance was ascertained to be 0.103 which more than 0.05 or 5%, **H₀** was accepted.

ANOVA

VAR00014

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.169	3	.390	.650	.584
Within Groups	116.311	194	.600		
Total	117.480	197			

- Similarly, One Way ANOVA was again used to determine the association between respondents' liking/disliking of ephemeral advertisements and their profession. The following hypotheses were formulated.

H₀: There is no statistically significant association between respondents' liking/disliking of ephemeral advertisements and their gender.

H₁: There is a statistically significant association between respondents liking/disliking of ephemeral advertisements and their gender.

Since the level of significance was ascertained to be 0.584 which more than 0.05 or 5%, **H₀** was accepted.

Table 4:

Why do you think you purchased the product or you would purchase the product sometime? * Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements? Crosstabulation

			Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements?		Total
			Yes	No	
Why do you think you purchased the product or you would purchase the product sometime?	Fear Of Missing Out	Count % within Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements?	4 5.6%	6 4.2%	10 4.7%
	Brand Loyalty/Image	Count % within Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements?	16 22.5%	33 22.9%	49 22.8%
	Never Seen Before	Count % within Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements?	7 9.9%	30 20.8%	37 17.2%
	Meets your current purchase requirements	Count % within Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements?	44 62.0%	75 52.1%	119 55.3%
Total	Count % within Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements?	71 100.0%	144 100.0%	215 100.0%	

- Table 4 illustrates prominently that a majority of the respondents who have bought products based on these ephemeral advertisements have done so because the advertisements meet their current purchase requirements.
- Consequently, 75 of the respondents who haven't bought any product feel that these advertisements meet their current purchase requirements.

Table 5:

What type of advertisements have you generally come across? * Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements? Crosstabulation

			Have you ever bought a product based on these advertisements?		Total
			Yes	No	
What type of advertisements have you generally come across ?	Promotional Videos	Count % within What type of advertisements have you generally come across ?	30 31.9%	64 68.1%	94 100.0%
	Offers and Discounts	Count % within What type of advertisements have you generally come across ?	33 35.9%	59 64.1%	92 100.0%
	New Product Launch	Count % within What type of advertisements have you generally come across ?	6 35.3%	11 64.7%	17 100.0%
	Services Offered	Count % within What type of advertisements have you generally come across ?	2 16.7%	10 83.3%	12 100.0%
Total	Count % within What type of advertisements have you generally come across ?	71 33.0%	144 67.0%	215 100.0%	

- Table 5 tells us that majority of the respondents who have bought products based on the advertisements have come across promotional videos and offers and discounts.

Recommendations and Conclusion

- According to the responses received through the questionnaire it can be clearly deduced that social media has penetrated into the daily life of the people irrespective of their age, gender and profession. This only opens the doors for marketers to use online ephemeral advertising through social media as a technique to enhance the visibility of their products and services thereby covering a large target market.
- Analysis has also shown that almost all of the social media users have come across ephemeral advertisements in various websites and advertisements as stories and status updates which only substantiates the fact that the marketers have indeed been successful in reaching out to their target customers through ephemeral marketing.
- It is therefore recommended that marketers continue using ephemeral marketing as a technique to market their products and services in order to penetrate into a large target market comprising of social media users of various demographics.
- However, it has also been analysed that most of the students who have come across these advertisements have not gone on to purchase the products or services marketed. Similar statistics are also seen among respondents belonging to other professional backgrounds. Hence, it can be understood that they prefer using social media as a platform to socialize and not as a platform to purchase products or services.
- Along the same lines, it has also been noticed that most of the respondents find these advertisements to be redundant and majority of such respondents do not end up making purchases. However, it has also been seen that even though there are quite a few respondents who do not find these advertisements to be redundant, yet they do not end up buying the marketed products. Some of the factors which cause reluctance to buy the products or services include –
 1. The fact that the advertisement may not be relevant to a particular social media platform.
 2. Excessive repetition of these advertisements.
 3. Unexpected pop ups or sudden display of these advertisements.
- It is therefore important that a marketer keeps these factors in mind when they resort to ephemeral marketing in order to ensure that the main aim of marketing that is increased sales is achieved instead of making the target market reluctant to make purchases due to these unappreciated characteristics of ephemeral advertisements.
- Since there is no statistically significant association between the respondents' liking or disliking of ephemeral advertisements and either of the demographics such as age, profession or gender, it can be concluded that the marketers do not need to focus on having advertisements specific to certain demographics of their target market because the attitude of the respondents have been similar irrespective of the kind of advertisement they have come across and the demographics they belong to.
- There are various factors due to which an individual may purchase a product or service marketed through ephemeral advertisements. They are –

1. Fear of Missing Out
 2. Brand Loyalty/Image of the marketer
 3. The fact that the advertisement or the products have never been seen before.
 4. The advertisements meet the current purchase requirements of the social media users.
- Although fear of missing out forms the basis of ephemeral marketing due to its short time span, analysis of the data collected for this research has shown differently. Only 6% of the total respondents who have seen advertisements have chosen fear of missing out as a factor whereas as many as 62% of them have said that they have purchased products or services based on these advertisements because it meets their current purchase requirements.

 - A cross tabulation analysis has also shown that promotional videos and offers and discounts have led to more purchases simply because a regular social media user or a consumer is generally attracted by the creativity of the promotional video or the attractiveness of the discounts offered. New product launch or services offered do not grab the attention mainly because these can be noticed elsewhere either on hoardings, billboards or any other platform.

 - In the end it has been understood that almost all of the social media users are exposed to ephemeral marketing in some website or application. However, a frequency analysis revealed that majority of the social media users do not know that the advertisements that they see on social media platforms for a limited time period are known as ephemeral advertisements forming a part of ephemeral marketing.
 - Unawareness of the jargon ephemeral marketing among everyday consumers and regular social media users does not in any way make this technique less feasible or ineffective,

Limitations

- This research mainly focuses on ephemeral marketing through online platforms such as social media. Any form of offline ephemeral marketing is completely excluded from this research.
- Considering the vast population of India, our sample size in comparison to the population is extremely minute and therefore any form of generalization through our analysis is not possible or feasible.

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