

A study to determine the role of social media marketing for the awareness of herbal products in rural India

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ABSTRACT

We are living in 21st century where everything has been digitized and Social Media is playing an important role in digital era. From last decade to till date it is connecting people with each other virtually. On Business part the role of Social Media gets too critical as it becomes the way of generating revenue also. It is found that though Social Media is effective way for awareness but on selling part it is too behind than expectations. In this paper we try to find the effectiveness of Social Media to aware rural population for herbal products and how rural people value for herbal products in their daily life.

1. Introduction - Social Media

“Social media is not just a spoke on the wheel of marketing. It’s becoming the way entire bicycles are built.”
Ryan Lilly

We know the importance of social media in our lives, yet, if we try to put into words, none of us can probably express how much it means. We are living in world where all the things got digitized. Everything is available online from a needle to Big Machines. People are aware about the availability of products online. In earlier years when Internet was introduced nobody knew that it will become the very important part of billions of people’s daily lives. With the growth of internet lots of new things came in existence and Social Media is one of them. Today Social Media is playing a big role in Human’s life. Though economies throughout the world are growing but people are isolating due to work they have and Social Media is playing big role in human lives to keep them connected. An initiative taken by Google in 21st century by name of Orkut, it was somewhere start of Social Media era and it was ultimately taken over by Facebook and other social media apps. We can find numbers of Social Media Platforms today. Nowadays information is easily available online through Social Media websites. In past, companies were spending their marketing budget on commercials TV Ads, newspapers and radio etc but there was not guarantee that it will reach to their target customers. With introduction of Social Media, Companies increased their budgets for marketing on Social Media sites as they found it economical and reachable to their target customers.

2. Social media as a source of decision making for rural consumers

Buying decisions of customers are being influenced by a number of different variables, Social media that is at the prime position. Social media is playing an important role in decision making as it has evolved over the past few years in a human life as a connector with other human as well as with businesses. It has changed our decision making thought process. A company promotes their product or service through TV, newspaper Ads or on digital platform. As updated gadgets along with internet facilities are available with us, we search on

YouTube, Facebook and other digital platform(s) also to check the reviews and decide whether we should go further to buy it or leave that particular product or service. These days’ companies also are too smart that they promote their product in that way on Social Platforms with other communication modes; it somewhere creates more authenticity about product in human mind. If we talk about rural consumers they also somewhere impacted by Social Media in their decision making. As big brands cannot spend money in villages for promotion due to less population but they are reaching them through social media as present generation has updated gadgets and they are connected with people through social media and they are updated about products and services available in the market. Though rural consumers go physically to buy particular products or service but they check once on social platform whether to buy the same or not, social media and networks are offering massive potential to both the users and the organizations to get close to each other and provide mutual benefits of less cost, increased revenue and greater efficiency.

3. Herbal products on social media

“Health is a state of complete mental, social and physical well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”, a perfect definition for healthy mind and body from WHO. Human do many efforts to look young and energetic. As world is growing on fast pace, the disposable income of people have been increased and large part of that disposable income is being spent on health and nutritional products specially made from herbs. We normally call these, Herbal products. Today if we go to market we found lots of health drinks, nutritional food etc. These days’ big brands and other small players are introducing these products on Social Media as huge growth has been noticed for these products in the market. According to an interview which is done by a *Social Samosa* with *Archan Banerjee, Head of Digital Marketing, Dabur India Ltd* he quoted, “For me Social Media is the best tool to connect with consumers & Industry Leaders. The brand doesn’t really exist online if you’re not represented across all social channels – and regularly interacting with your followers, journalists who cover your industry, thought leaders and tastemakers, etc. It not only improves brand loyalty but also increases brand

recognition and conversion rates.” As Dabur is pioneer in manufacturing of herbal products, the statement means a lot and it represents the importance of Social Media for Herbal products. We can see herbal products stores online also which are connected with Social Platform.

Social media marketing is the activity and process for creating, communicating and delivering offerings that have value to customers. Now look at social media marketing, Social Media today argue that the purpose of social media marketing is to build a brand and increase a brand's visibility, through building relationships and communicating with potential customers. According to *Brandwatch*, There is 81% of Small or Medium Business entities are using Social media platform for promotion of the business. 91% retail brands using 2 or more Social Media modes for businesses. With these figures it is self explanatory that Social Media marketing has penetrated in our personal as well as business lives.

4. Literature Review

Social media is a combined aspect of the promotional mix because it enables companies to talk to their customers and a customer to talk to other customer with same likings. Companies and organizations are using online social marketing programmes and campaigns to increase their reach to online consumers. It includes providing consumers with various social platforms and using blogs, social media tools and promotional tools to engage customers (*Mangold and Faulds, 2009*), (*Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden, 2011*). Through Social media customer or prospectus communicates directly to brand spokesman or about the brand with other customers having same likeness. It described that how various forecasts related to social networking sites have a conclusive impact regarding perception of online advertisements on the target market. It was discovered the way to engage with various type of audience in order to maximize the effect of the online marketing strategy (*Vinerean, Cetina, Dumitrescu and Tichindelean, 2013*). There is a relationship between brands, users and Social Media. Majority of users follow brand pages through social media with other perspective also. Users have trust on Social media for brand interaction (*Nisar and Whitehead, 2016*). Every social network site has satisfaction level of user according to site characteristics. Two related changes that are emerging social media and Web 2.0 technologies. These technologies can positively and negatively impact the rationality and effectiveness of decision-making (*Power, Phillips & Wren, 2011*). Classical model of decision-making is valid in describing the decision process of consumers in this social media age. They also had greater confidence and satisfaction during the process. Those who perceived the information on social media to be of higher quality and greater quantity than expectations were more satisfied overall. This suggests that information overload did not reduce consumer satisfaction with social media (*Voramontri & Klieb, 2018*). As Indian Market is flooded with herbal products and these are unadulterated in nature. Only 23% of consumers use particular brand and they search other brands also for better result in form of its positive effects. Consumers always check with reliable sources before buying herbal products as their desirability for information is always on high side (*Ali & Yadav, 2015*). In Bangladesh youth is shifting from using conventional skin products to herbal skin products. Companies also started labeling their product with “herbal” to

capture the segment. There are some other factors which somewhere influences consumers to buy herbal products. Marketing mix elements relating to herbal skin care products also have an impact on buying motive of youth in country and they have more value for herbal skin care products in comparison to conventional skin care products (*Huda and Sultan, 2013*)

There is no single social media platform where user is satisfied with all characteristics of platform. In case of Social Comparison Social Networking Sites trust also significantly moderated the relationship between frequent use of each SNS to follow brands, and brand community-related outcomes (*Phua, Jin and Kim, 2016*). Information technology continued to provide opportunities to change the decision making behavior of individuals, groups and organizations. Stage characteristics positively associated with higher consumer satisfaction are easiness, enjoyment, trust and confidence. Social media users found decision-making to be easier and enjoyed the process more, when compared to those who used other information source.

5. Scope of the study

The study focuses on role of Social Media in Rural Market as all awareness modes are not able to expedite due to size of population and companies spend for promotion in that Market according to population density and the opportunities of business over there. Through this research paper we will how social media can be utilized in better way than present scenario.

6. Objective

To analyse the effect of social media for the brand awareness of Herbal products in Rural India.

7. Research methodology

This research paper titled, “Role of Social Media Marketing for The Awareness of herbal Products in Rural India” will focus on obtaining knowledge about how social media is useful for creating herbal products awareness in Rural India. This study will be largely descriptive in nature

Research Design

Research Design is a purposeful scheme of action proposed to be carried out in a sequence during the process of research focusing on the problem under consideration. Exploratory personal investigations involving, original field interviews with the people living in Rural areas have helped to have a greater insight into all possible practical aspects of the research problem. The adoption of the descriptive and diagnostic research design has been very effective in the later stage in the present study.

Size of Sample

In this research paper the sample size has been restricted to 100 respondents keeping in mind the research objectives and constraints.

Data Collection

The data is mostly be primary and it is collected with the help of Questionnaire.

Sampling

Respondents will be consumers of various Product Categories and stratified Random sampling technique will be used for selecting respondents in a given area.

Analysis

For the purpose of analysis latest statistical tools available like SPSS and other such needed software(s) and mathematical tools will be used as per requirement.

Research Methodology

The research methodology has been given below:

Research Type : Exploratory

Data Design : Qualitative

The research design adopted can provide more comprehensive arguments about this paper. This study attempts to examine the approach of the consumer towards the herbal products in the rural India. In the first phase a pilot study was conducted to ensure that the scenario was strong and the measures reliable. For the data collection participants identified were those who are living in rural India.

The authors of this article conducting a survey on 100 respondents residing the rural areas of Punjab and Haryana. The respondents participation was completely voluntary without revealing their identity in the questionnaire. All the participants were asked to fill a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 30 questions which include both open ended and close ended (multiple choice) questions.

From both the states 19 businessmen were found in which 14 from Punjab and 5 from Haryana and 53 salaried persons found in which 22 are from Punjab and 31 are from Haryana and at last 28 are from Other category means who are doing odd jobs in which 14 respondents are from each state were selected as respondents.

In this Survey 45% of respondents were lie in group of 26 to 35 years and 31% lies in the age group between 36 to 45 years, 13% lies in the age group between 15 to 25 years and only 11% were from above 45 Years age group. Total 86% of them were and 14% were unmarried from all age group mentioned

When respondents were analyzed on the basis of occupation, 53% persons found salaried, 28% persons were doing odd jobs and 19% were belongs to business class. On earning part 32% of respondents have their earnings between 10K to 20K, 31% have monthly earning less than 10K and 25% respondents have their earning between 20K to 30K while 9% have their earning between 30k to 40K and only 3% have their earning above 40K per month.

As we know that potential of social media, however , still seems to be overlooked by companies selling herbal products. Many companies neglect important aspects of the use of social media tools. As burdensome is perceived the need to

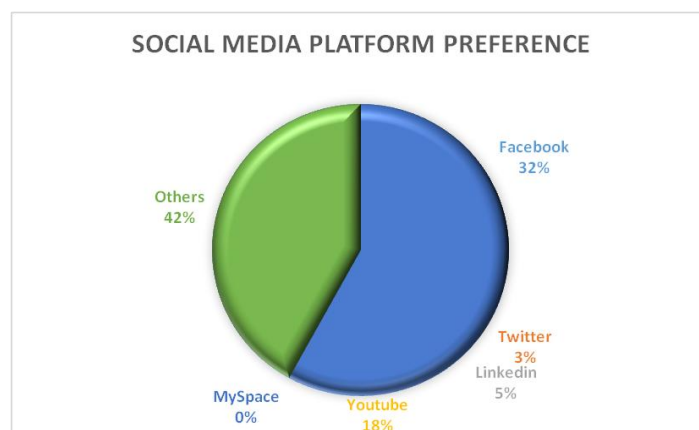
constantly monitor the content or possibility of losing the positive company image, as well as lack of control over the content behind. As a result , companies operating in the field of herbal products industry tend to remain at least one step behind the technological progress in the field of communication tools, losing the ability to generate available benefits.

A total of 100 respondents completed the questionnaire which include 45% (female) and 55% (male) respondents. Average age of the participating respondents were in the range of 26- 35 years (43.5%, n = 88)

About (41.5%, n =81) of the respondents were aware about the herbal products and (82;n=41%) respondents often use herbal products. Majority(49%; n=98) of the respondents were use at least one herbal product daily in their life while (42.5%, n =85) respondents were uses at least 2 herbal products daily in their life. Out of 200 respondents (38%, n =76) use Dabur, (29%, n=58) uses Patanjali ,(23%; n=46) uses Himalaya products and (6%, n= 11) respondents uses Baidyanath and (10%, n= 20) uses Zandu herbal products.

Social Media (50.5%, n = 110) was the most common source of information about herbal products for the respondents. (39%; n = 78)respondents were in agreement that for brand recognition they uses social media. Most of the respondents (65%, n= 130) were using the social media for more than 36 months for searching the information about the herbal products. As per the use of social media platform most of the respondents use WhatsApp (42%, n = 84) followed Facebook (33%, n = 65) then YouTube (18%, n= 36) and very few uses Twitter and LinkedIn.

The obtained results showed that the 41.5 % respondents has an account on social networking sites. The most popular social networking sites were : WhatsApp (400 million users) and Facebook (241 million users) as first choice of respondents followed by YouTube and LinkedIn while MySpace and LinkedIn were the least used sites for social networking in the rural areas.



41%(n=82) respondents disagreed that social media marketing never helped them for prior information about the product. 70.5 % (n = 141) respondents disagreed that social media campaigns have more influence on them rather than traditional methods, while 12% were in agreement that social media campaigns have more influence on them rather than traditional methods. 37.5%(n= 75) respondents felt that social media is very convenient tool for them to lodge their complaints and suggestions.38% (n = 76)of the respondents agreed that , it is more convenient to reach product through social media

campaigns. To make up their mind for the herbal product 46.5%(n= 93) respondents uses social media sites. Respondents(49.5%, n = 99) agreed that social media campaigns helped them buy herbal products to shop without limitation of time and space. 38.5%(n=77) respondents agreed that social media has revolutionized the herbal products and 29.5%(n= 59) agreed that social media is an effective tool for branding herbal products. 44% agreed that social media is an effective tool for the engagement of the customers.

Factor subset

Construct	Factors
Awareness	Factor One: "Awareness of Herbal Products"
Campaign	Factor Two: "Social Media Campaign about Herbal Products"
Positioning	Factor Three "Herbal Products Positioning by Social Media"
Branding	Factor Four " Branding of Herbal Products on Social Media"

The respondents determinants that substantially influence their awareness and use of herbal products has been measured with aid of four factors as mentioned above in the

table. The data collected from Likert based questionnaire was subjected to respective factor-ability analysis tests across SPSS version release 24.0

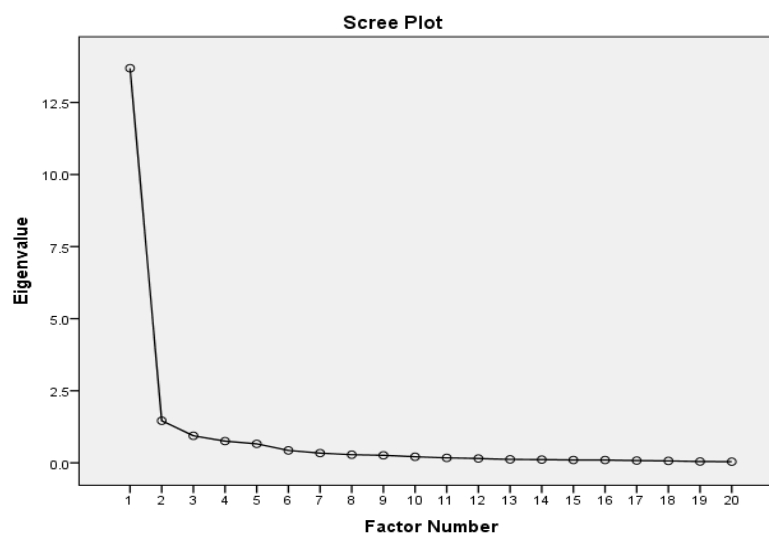
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.954
Approx. Chi-Square		5370.300
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	190
	Sig.	.000

KMO test vale 0.954 showed that the data collected for this research paper by using Likert scale with regard to construct is adequate and factor-able is heterogeneous in nature.

overall weightage across scale. The variance examination revealed the incidence of factor " Social Media Awareness" as exhibiting maximum reported variance of 67.37%. This was followed by factor "Awareness of Herbal Products on Social Media" reporting as variance of 6.49%.

The scale based elements or factors were accessed for



8. Conclusion

The respondents had higher level of knowledge and awareness about social media but the companies producing herbal products are not using social media appropriately for selling their products. There is a need to educate the

respondents about the herbal products as they have less knowledge about it. Respondents should also be sensitized to enquire about the use of herbal products so they can utilize the product effectively according to their need.

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