

Significance of social media brand communication in creating brand awareness

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Cite this paper: Amin, S., Iqbal, J., Sandhu, M. A., Bakht, K., & Saleem, H. M. (2019). Significance of social media brand communication in creating brand awareness. *Paradigms*, 13(1), 141-146.

The tendency of using social media is rapidly increasing fast among consumers and different brands also take help from social media to build relationships with their clients. This study is conducted to inspect the impact of brand communication through social media on brand awareness. Brand communication on social media such as Facebook, Twitter can be of two kinds: company-generated and user-generated communication. So the drive of this study is to examine the variation among influence of company-generated and user-generated social media communication on brand awareness among fashion business (clothing brands) of Pakistan. Target population of the study comprises of energetic users of social media in Pakistan, who take information of clothing brands from social media. Pragmatic research is done by using quantitative method. To reach to the respondents, convenience sampling method is used and data is gathered through online questionnaire from 350 respondents. For analyzing the data, statistical analysis was done by using SPSS application. Outcomes of the study show that company-generated and user-generated communication through social media plays a noteworthy part in creating brand awareness amongst customers. Moreover, user-generated communication is found more significant. Brand administrators and marketers should guarantee that they can improve consciousness about the brands by utilizing social media communication as a marketing tactic.

Keywords: Company-generated social media communication, User-generated social media communication, brand awareness.

INTRODUCTION

The use of internet and social media is growing globally due to progression in information technologies (Khadim et al., 2014). On the other hand, due to hectic urban life, individuals have little time to see each other, so they devote more time to internet to communicate with each other (Ashfaq Ahmad et al., 2014). That is the reason; in addition to old-style marketing communication methods, marketers are also utilizing social media as a source of brand communication to endorse their brands to their customers (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015). Now a day clients not only use social media for communication but also for buying. For this purpose advertisers are aiming their customers online through various social media platforms (Nyekwere, Endwell Onyinye, 2013). According to the Express Tribune (June 24, 2013), there are 30 million internet users in Pakistan. Different social networking websites like Facebook and Twitter are getting popular in Pakistan (Rehmani et al., 2011). Furthermore, Facebook is the most frequently visited social network in Pakistan. According to yearly social marketing report (2014) by Pakistan advertiser's society, Facebook active users by the end of 2013 were 11.6 million, and it gained about 6 million more active users by the end of 2014. Different businesses such as Fashion and beauty, electronics, telecommunication and FMCG are using social media to provide their brand associated information. Now-a-days brand communication is not only shaped by corporations

but the consumers also take part in it by using social networking platforms (Bruhn et al., 2012).

Extraordinary usage of internet and social media by consumers is pursuing marketers to produce and boost brand awareness through social media platforms (Isabel Buil et al., 2013). Brand awareness is a sign that how sound the existing and potential customers are conscious of your products and services. It is vital for the organizations to fascinate new customers, create brand awareness and launch a good impression in consumer's notice (Ehsan Malik et al., 2013). That is why it is required to study that how new resources of communication help in producing brand awareness. Hence, the purpose of the study is to discover association among social media communication about brands and brand awareness.

Sector of study

Fashion industry of Pakistan is selected for this study, because fashion marketing is at the top in fetching spectators on social media (Rebecca Lee White, 2016). Pakistan has a huge scale textile industry. It has a lot of fashion designers and professionals working in apparels, such as *Gul Ahmed*, *Khaadi*, *Nishat linen*, *Maria B*, *Sana Safinaz*, and *J.* etc. Other than offering outstanding customer services, most of the fashion brands in Pakistan are also providing online shopping platforms (Saadia Nasir et al., 2012). Platforms of social media like Facebook and twitter have become a central runway for fashion industry. Because consistent changes keep on taking place in

fashion industry with respect to the demands of customers, social media is supportive for the managers to learn the latest trends and predict fashion behaviors (Nawaz Ahmed et al., 2015).

Objectives of the study

Core objective of this study is to evaluate the effects of brand communication through social media (Facebook) on brand awareness, in fashion industry (clothing brands) of Pakistan.

- To identify the impact of company-generated social media communication on brand awareness.
- To analyze the effect of user-generated social media communication on brand awareness.
- To identify how well fashion industry of Pakistan is performing brand communication over social media.

Research questions

The current study articulated following research questions:

- What is the influence of company-generated social media communication on brand awareness?
- What is the influence of user-generated social media communication on brand awareness?
- What is the outcome of brand communication through social media in Pakistan's fashion industry?

Significance of study

This study will generate a valuable input in the research work of social media communication about brands and brand awareness among consumers, mainly in Pakistan's perspective. It will deliver assistance to marketers of fashion industry in comprehending what consumers think about their brands and whether their use of social media is effective in producing brand awareness or not. This will also help future research workers in their research related to social media communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media

The economics of marketing is changing due to internet and social media. The old resources of running business are now unjustifiable for the marketers (David C. Edelman, 2010). According to Sisira Neti (2011; p: 2), social media can be defined as "any website that allows users to share their content, opinions, views, and encourages interaction and community building". Social media can also be elaborated as "a form of electronic communication (as websites) through which users creates online communities to share information, ideas and other content" (Merriam-Webster dictionary). "Social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; p: 61). Principally, social media is a broader term and it can be categorized into different types such as blogs and micro blogs (e.g. twitter) as well as content communities (e.g. Youtube), and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook) (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012).

Facebook is mainly a platform where users join and interact with each other. Users have to develop a profile and have to provide information about them. Facebook offers chance to indigenous and national businesses, restaurants, cafes, artists

and health and fitness hubs to craft their Facebook page, so users can intermingle with them. Brands create their Facebook page with various tabs and present an overview of the company and mention contact information. Consumers having attentiveness towards a specific brand can like a post on brand's page wall, comment on the post and also contribute in a contest through brand's Facebook page (Thomas Jensen, 2014). Mark Zuckerberg has presented a concept of "social ad" that helps promoters to generate best ad campaigns through which users can show the items they rent or buy, and also can endorse to their friends (Gangadharbatla, 2008).

Company-generated and User-generated social media communication

Various firms are consuming social media such as blogs, MySpace, Facebook etc to link to their clients (W.G. Mangold and D.J. Faulds, 2009). Businesses are using different information technology facilities and social media platforms for endorsing their brand communication (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012). Organizations are now using social media settings to update their customers about the product related information, new advancements and proceedings, and to escalate brand loyalty (Khadim et al., 2014). Almost each business, from Starbucks and IBM to a local market, is considering for social media marketing ideas (Sisira Neti, 2011). This exercise is called company-generated social media communication.

Social media also contribute greatly in client to client communication; that is user generated communication. Different social media websites deliver opportunity to users for blogging, for sharing information, videos and pictures (Gangadharbatla, 2008). Wikipedia defines user generated communication as "Blogs, wikis, discussion forums, posts, chats, tweets, digital images, videos that are created by users of an online system, often made available via social media websites". This research work considers only brand-related content or brand-related communication by customers. The information that is shared by the customers of a specific brand to share their opinions or Feedback about the brand can be recognized as user-generated brand communication (Khadim et al., 2014). This user-generated social media communication is also recognized as electronic word of mouth. Certainly, word of mouth can be defined as communication among customers concerning their individual experience and viewpoint of a company or its products (Zhang et al., 2010). According to Duan et al., (2008), eWOM is a channel used by various users to communicate their beliefs and experiences with other millions of users, hence encourages other's choices.

From the above conversation, social media brand communication can be classified as company-generated and user-generated communication. "Company-generated is under the control of a business while the user-generated social media is free from company's control" (Bruno Schivinski, Dariusz Dabrowski, 2015; p: 31).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is defined as "the likelihood that a brand name will come to mind and the ease with which it does so" (Keller, 1993; p: 3). Brand awareness comprises of two

components that are brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition is the expertise of a customer to endorse his previous acquaintance with the brand, while brand recall means the capability of a consumer to select the brand from his remembrance when he encounters the product type as a hint (Keller, 1993). So brand awareness is a capability to identify and recall a brand (Aaker, 1991).

Brand awareness is taken as an essential objective of brand communication events by marketing managers. Without this, no other communication influence such as brand association, loyalty and brand image could be recognized (Macdonald et al., 2003). According to Ehsan Malik et al. (2013), customers' judgment regarding procurement of a brand greatly depends on the magnitude of brand awareness. That is reason brand awareness is considerably vital for administrations in attaining high market share and good appearance in the mind of consumers.

Social media communication and Brand awareness

Social media sites enable brands to involve with right people at right time. For structuring brands, social media platforms present outstanding chance. Social media publicity supports in promoting the brand to the target market, updates target spectators about the brand and provides a platform for the spectators to interact about the brand (Jothi et al., 2011).

According to Barreda et al., (2015), the capability to distinguish and remember a brand is known as brand awareness. Presently, for generating brand awareness, creating an effective collaborating atmosphere is very essential. Online social networks enable marketers to produce such a background and permit users to share consistent and updated information. An optimistic association is found between online social networks and brand awareness.

Social media is used by individuals to debate, inform and effect customers about brand linked information. Electronic word of mouth has also a pronounced effect on consumers for choice of a brand. Online criticisms are considered as a more trustworthy foundation of information and support in creating brand awareness (Callarisa et al., 2012).

Social media in addition to orthodox marketing communication has a noteworthy contribution on brand's success. Information reaches to the community in a huge volume through social media as compared to conventional media. Marketers assume that brand communication is only produced by the company, but they have to consider that it is also progressively generated through consumers themselves, that can be called as user-generated communication. Firm-created communication has an affirmative influence on brand awareness. But user-generated communication upsurges brand awareness either positively or negatively (Manfred Bruhn et al., 2012).

According to Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015), 1.2 billion active users approach the social media (Facebook) on monthly basis. That is the reason brands have to use social media networks to create associations with customers and advance brands communication. It delivers companies an aptitude to spread product related information to a large population.

Similarly it delivers chance to users to generate and share product related stuff. Firm-created social media communication and user-generated social media communication both have a noteworthy role in augmenting brand awareness.

STUDY FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

Company-generated social media communication and brand awareness

Consumer decisions are considerably influenced by brand awareness. Brand awareness is a capability to identify or recall a brand. Social media offers a network to enterprises to enhance their brand awareness. When companies efficiently showcase their brand, it contributes straight to brand awareness (Barreda et al., 2015). A good publicity of brands by the firms increase brand awareness as well as generates robust brand associations in the consumer's mind (Yoo et al., 2000). So we suggest that brand awareness is influenced by company-generated social media brand communication.

H1: Company-generated social media brand communication significantly influences brand awareness.

User-generated social media communication and brand awareness

When consumers profoundly take part in social media brand communication, higher will be the brand page obligation. That high commitment will result into brand awareness. Hence, we can say that brand awareness is also shaped by consumers (Hutter et al., 2013). Viral marketing is also a foundation of consumer based brand impartiality. In viral marketing the information about the brand is disseminated among consumers and potential purchasers through emails and other social media. Viral marketing or e-WOM is very powerful on consumer's conduct and plays a positive contribution in increasing brand awareness/associations (Zahari et al., 2011). Hence we assume that brand awareness is affected by user-generated brand communication.

H2: User-generated social media brand communication significantly influence brand awareness.

Independent variables: Company-generated social media communication and User-generated social media communication.

Dependent variable: Brand awareness

The structure for the study is shown below.

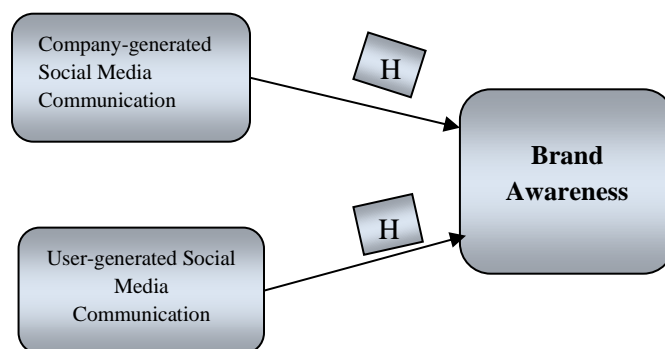


Figure 1: Proposed Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is a cross-sectional type of study and data is collected in a single point of time using quantitative method. Data collection is conducted with web based survey technique. Questionnaire is used as a research apparatus. Online questionnaire on Google forms was established for gathering appropriate data from the respondents. All the items of questionnaire are adopted from relevant literature; scale of company-generated social media communication is adopted from Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015), user-generated social media communication from Bruhn et al., (2012), and the scale of brand awareness from Yoo et al., (2000). Five point Likert scale is used for measuring all items, from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree.

Population of the study

Diverse clothing brands from fashion industry of Pakistan are selected for this study. The population of this study is represented by the active users of social media platforms (Facebook, twitter) in Pakistan who have activities on the designated industry's social media channels and have liked the company's Facebook pages and twitter accounts.

Sampling technique

Convenience sampling technique is utilized for this research. It is a kind of non-probability technique. Due to unavailability of all consumers' data bases, it is not possible to carry out a probability sampling.

Sample size

According to Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010), a minimum of 5 to 10 responses per each parameter is essential to get a suitable sample size. According to this rule, a sample of at least 165 is needed, because the total number of items in this study is 33. If we take 10 responses per each parameter, then maximum 330 responses are required. So the sample size of this study is 350.

Data collection method

Online link of the questionnaire is shared with people on face book as well as posted on brand's social media pages to request respondents for participation in the study. Total 372 questionnaires were collected from different cities. After excluding incomplete questionnaires, 350 responses are accepted.

Statistical Analysis

SPSS software is used to estimate and analyze the primary data collected from the survey. For testing the reliability of constructs, reliability analysis is conducted by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In order to test the hypothesis, multiple linear regression is used.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographics of respondents

The respondents included 193 females and 157 males. As a percentage 55.14% were females and 44.86% were males. The age demographics of respondents showed that 29.14% respondents were between 15-25 years, 40.86% were between 26-35 years, 26% were between 36-45 years and 4% of respondents were between 46-55 years. Education level of respondents showed that 4.57% respondents have done matriculation, 14.29% were intermediate, 53.43% were

graduates and 25.71% were post graduates, while only 2% of respondents choose "other" option. Respondents were also asked about their occupation: 18% of respondents were government employees, 38.86% were private employees, 31.14% were students and 12% of respondents had their own business. When the respondents were asked about their family income level, 2.57% of respondents had mentioned income (rupees/month) of 10,000 , 19.43% respondents had income between 11,000-30,000, 36% had income between 31,000-50,000, 26.29% had income between 51,000-70,000 and 15.71% respondents had income of 71,000 and above. Respondents are also inquired about the time period since they are using social media. 39.43% of the sample respondents have social media experience of between 1-5 years, 54% of respondents were using social media from between 6-10 years and 6% of respondents have experience of between 11-15 years. Respondents were asked about a clothing brand that they use or prefer. About 13.71% of respondents use "Nishat", 20.86% of respondents use "Khaadi", 12% of respondents use "Gul Ahmed", 8% of respondents use "Bareeze", 19.14% use "Diner's", 16.57% use "Outfitters" and 9.71% of respondents selected "other" option.

Reliability

Reliability analysis is used to test that how reliable the items are for measuring a construct. To check the reliability of scale, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is used. Ideally, the value of this coefficient should be above 0.7 (Julie Pallant, 2005). The values are shown in the following table:

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha
Company-generated communication	0.812
User-generated communication	0.783
Brand awareness	0.812

Interpretation: Findings in table 1 indicated that all variables are conforming to the threshold value i.e. >0.7, thus authorizing the reliability of all items.

Hypothesis testing

Regression analysis is used in this study for hypothesis testing. Multiple linear regression is used for the estimation how well one or two independent variables can forecast the dependent variable (Julie Pallant, 2005). The relationship of social media communication and brand awareness consists of two hypotheses, such as H1 is hypothesized as company-generated social media brand communication significantly affects Brand awareness and H2 is hypothesized as user-generated social media brand communication significantly affects Brand awareness.

The table 2 summarizes the results of regression analysis of company-generated and user-generated communication using social media on brand awareness. Coefficient of determination (R square) describes the percentage of variance in brand awareness due to the model (company-generated and user-generated social media communication). The value of R square is 0.584 (R square=0.584), which means that 58.4% variance in brand awareness is explained by company-generated and user-generated communication. The significance level (Sig. = 0.000)

showed the statistical significance of the results, where is $p < 0.05$. Furthermore, standardized regression coefficient (Beta) explained the influence of each independent variable individually while keeping other variables in the model constant. The values of beta for company-generated and user-generated communication are 0.376 and 0.428 respectively, which explains that 37.6% of variance in brand awareness is because of company-generated social media communication and 42.8% of variance is due to user-generated social media communication. Therefore, on the basis of Beta values, H1 and H2 are accepted. However, user-generated social media communication is playing more significant role in increasing awareness.

Table 2. Predictive values of company-generated and user-generated communication on brand awareness.

	Values	Beta	Sig.
R square	0.584		
Adjusted R square	0.582		
Sig.	0.000		
Company-generated social media		0.376	0.000
User-generated social media		0.428	0.000

CONCLUSION

The study inspected the contribution by brand communication via social media in producing brand awareness. Study outcomes demonstrate that both company-generated and user-generated social media communication significantly affect brand awareness among customers. By investigating the values of impact of both types of communication it can be established that the contribution of user-generated social media communication is more than company-generated social media communication in creating brand awareness.

From this study it is observed that Pakistan's fashion industry, particularly apparel brands are using social media as their communication tool. Different clothing brands have their Facebook pages that are liked by huge audience. Consumers get information about the brands from those pages, and it adds in generating brand awareness among consumers.

There are implications for the marketers and practitioners that they can be benefited by making use of social media communication in their marketing strategies. Brand managers have to emphasis on social media communication of brands as their advertising drive to generate brand awareness. Furthermore, marketers need to encourage those social media communication that can generate communication by users, which is more effective.

Limitations and Recommendations

Only one product category (clothing brands) is used in this study, so the outcomes are restricted to one product category. Future research should be carried out by using other product categories or some different business. Additionally, convenience sampling technique is used by the researcher. Future researchers can use probability sampling for further research. Furthermore, different dimensions of brand awareness can also be the part of future studies.

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