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**Abstract (150-250 Words)**

***Introduction****: Text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text. Text.* ***Aim****: text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text.* ***Method:*** *text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text.* ***Findings:*** *Text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text text.*

**Key Words:** *Social Media Use Intensity (SMUI)****,*** *Social Integration and Emotional Connection (SIEC)****,*** *Integration into Social Routines (ISR)****,*** *Brand Awareness (BA)*

# **INTRODUCTION**

The era of BBC and The Times has changed because we no longer depend solely on them for source of information. This is a world where people are directly engaged social media and have become media themselves. People now share their thoughts, ideas, insights, perspectives and opinions through various types of online services including images, text, audio or video. The upsurge of social media has fascinated many businesses towards itself.

Brennan and Schafer (2010) discussed in their study that now it has become everyday matter that traditional media like New York Times, USA Today or The Wall Street Journal headlines a story about social media. Social media had astonishing growth in the past 12 months. Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and other social media websites have continuous growth from the number of user perspective.

Firms can get insights of the users of Social Networking Sites (SNS) by investigating SNS users for marketing purpose. In order to observe integration level of social networking sites into the lives of users, researchers have attempted to cultivate measures to social media use intensity (Maree, 2017).

# **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Flagler (2011) argued that social media marketing should progressively be executed into the marketing plans of a firm instead of being considered as a replacement. He further stated that inclusion of social media marketing with other marketing tools will lead to improved results for the companies.

The importance of social media can be realized with the low cost interactive and immediate communication between the consumers and the companies. In this era, internet communities, blogs and social media networks have become an important part of people’s life. Their importance can be judged from the fact that these mediums act like an alternative tools of communications, which support the existing relationships and activities enriching the experience of users. In addition, augmented social media use has become a platform for brand nurturing which eventually affects the consumer’s purchase decision (Miller, Fabian and Lin (2009) in Kim and Ko (2010)).

The emergence of social media, also known as consumer generated media has significantly changed the communication strategies and tools used to contact with customers. This type of media can be described as “new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues’’ (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2004).

It is the advent of internet based social media due to which now possible that one person can communicate with thousands of people and provide them information regarding products, brands and companies. This is the reason that the communication among consumers is given importance in this era (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

## **Social Media Use**

Previously, frequency of use and duration have been used as measure for social media use. Maree (2017) discussed Orosz et al. (2015) findings in her study and stated that previous Facebook research encompasses scales concentrated on number of friends, time spent on social media, group memberships and some other activities on Facebook. However, such kind of activities are not adequate to indicate Facebook usage (Ellison et al., 2007 in Maree, 2017).

## **Brand Awareness**

Aaker (1996) defined brand awareness as the ability of a consumer to recall and identify or recognize a brand in various situations.

Furthermore, Hoeffler and Keller (2002) identified that brand awareness can be illustrated from two determinants; depth and width. Depth answers the question “how to make consumers recall or identify brand in an easy manner”, while width refers to “when consumers purchase a product, a specific brand name comes to their minds at once”.

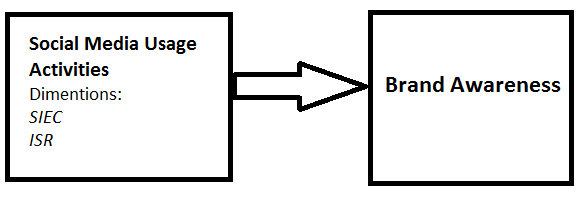
The previous studies have discussed mainly about the communication of companies with consumers, however, the gap in the study is the question that does the social media can actually change the knowledge of consumers about brands. Do consumers really give importance to social media advertisements or not. Does social media marketing actually influences the awareness of consumers or not (Edelman, 2010 in Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt and Füller, 2013).

# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Objective of this research is to study the impact of social media activities of social networking sites members; more specifically Facebook members, on the brand awareness. The study mainly focuses on finding the effectiveness of social media marketing. It aims to find how successful social media marketing is for making brand awareness in potential customers.

## **Research Model and Hypothesis**

The model shows the independent variable i.e. social media usage which has two dimensions; social integration and emotional connection (SIEC) and integration into social routines (ISR). This independent variable directly impacts the dependent variable i.e. brand awareness. Figure 1 shows the diagram of the research model.



*Figure 1. Research Model*

For the social media usage to completely influence brand awareness, both the dimensions of Social Media Usage should impact brand awareness positively. This is the reason that both hypothesis assume a positive impact on brand awareness. This assumption is taken by considering the previous researches discussed in the literature review including studies of Mangold and Faulds, (2009), Chu, (2011), Flaglar, (2011) and Bruhn, Schoenmueller and Schäfer, (2012).

The questionnaire was first tested for validity and reliability. After the factor analysis, regression was run between the dimensions of social media usage and brand awareness to find the impact of social media usage on brand awareness.

## **Explanation of Scales**

Since the study aim to explain the impact of social media activities of social networking sites members, two scales are used in the questionnaire. Using Facebook is part of my everyday routine

The second scale aims to measure consumer awareness about the brands. This study used the scale of Aaker (1996) to measure the brand awareness. It consists of 4 items encompassing recognition, recall, top-of-the-mind and brand knowledge. It is a seven point Likert scale. The items are as follows:

## **Data Analysis**

## **Demographics**

Out of total 100 respondents, 56 were male and 44 were female. Similarly, most of the students belonged to age group of 18-24 and were bachelors students. The Table 1 shows the number of participants from each age group with the current level of education.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Table 1: Age and Education Distribution* | | | | | |
|  | | **Education** | | | **Total** |
| **Bachelors** | **Masters** | **Doctorate/Ph.D. and above** |
| Age | 18-24 | 46 | 12 | 0 | 58 |
| 25-33 | 10 | 27 | 2 | 39 |
| 34-42 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | | 56 | 42 | 2 | 100 |

## **Normality and Validity of Scales**

The data was first put into normality tests to find out that if the collected data is normally distributed or not. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnovsignificance and Shapiro-Wilk significance (Table 2) illustrate that all the items have 0.000 significance which is below the level of 0.05. For a data to be normally distributed, this value should be more than 0.05. Hence it is concluded that the data is not normally distributed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test*  |  |  | | --- | --- | | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | .863 | | Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Sig | 0.000 | |

In the total variance explained table, it showed that this scale will be pursued under two factors. The total cumulative variance was 65.221, showing the percentage of explanation accounted by the two factors together. The table divided the variables into 2 components having percentage of square loadings of 34.545 and 30.068 percent respectively.

*Table 3: Total Variance Explained*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings** | | |
| **Components** | **% Variance** | **Cumulative %** |
| Component 1 | 34.545 | 34.545 |
| Component 2 | 30.068 | 65.221 |

Rotation component matrix shows relation of item questions with the previously defined three components in the Total Variance Explained table. This table classifies all the ten item questions into two components. The item questions for Social Integration and Emotional connection (SIEC) are classified into component 1, Integration into Social Routines (ISR) into component 2.

Similarly, Reliability for Brand awareness came out to be internally consistent as well. The Cronbach’s Aplha for Brand Awareness is 0.872 out of its 4 items. This shows strong level of reliability for the data

# **Regression Analysis Results**

Regression analysis was applied to gauge out the relationship between variables i.e. SIEC and ISR as independent variables and BA as dependent variable. It is also necessary to question the existence of certain conditions. In this context, normality and multi-collinearity analyzes of the variables to be used in the model have been made and it has been determined that there are no problems with the preconditions of the regression analysis. The results obtained are summarized in the table below.

In table the value of R square is 0.341 which illustrates that 34.1% variation of Brand Awareness is explain by independent variable i.e. Social media activities. R square also demonstrates the fitness of the model. The result in the table 6 exhibits the output of the ANOVA analysis to check the statistical significance in regression. The significance value is 0.000 (i.e., p=0.000), which is below 0.05 hence elucidating the statistical significance of the regression.

Coefficients illustrates the multiple regression analysis results. The social media activities have two dimensions; one is social integration and emotional connection (SIEC) and the coefficient value of SIEC is 0.412 indicating that there is a direct and positive relationship with brand awareness. It demonstrates that whenever there is one percent increase in the SIEC activity, it leads to 41.2% increase in the brand awareness. The results also show that this relationship is statistically significant i.e., 0.000 p-value is less than 0.05. Therefore, the H1 is accepted.

# **CONCLUSION**

The study inspected the relation between social media usage and brand awareness. Social media activities were measured through two dimensions; SIEC and ISR. The results of statistical tests suggest that social media usage has a positive influence on brand awareness of consumers. Both the dimensions were positively related to brand awareness. It can be concluded from the study that social media marketing can be handy in educating potential consumers about brands. Formerly, researches have been done to measure social media marketing effectiveness. Kim and Ko (2010) also conducted a similar research to find effectiveness of social media marketing. They came to the conclusion that social media marketing is an effective medium for marketing for luxury brands. DEI worldwide (2008) discussed in Kim and Ko’s study (2010) reports that purchase decision has strong relation with social media sites. Consumers refer to social media to get information about products and then share that information with others. Hutter et. Al. (2013) analyzed the impact of social media activities of brand and participants’ social media involvement on the purchase decision of consumers. Their findings illustrate that if consumers are engaged with the fan page of a brand on Facebook, it positively affects brand awareness of consumers. They also concluded that social media is a strong source of word of mouth promotion.

This study also implies similar findings and answers the research questions by showing positive relation between social media usage and brand awareness. It suggests that the more consumers engage in social media, the more they get informed about brands. Social media marketing can be handy in recalling brands when consumers make purchases.

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