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Social Media Advertising Response and its Effectiveness: Case of South Asian Teenage Customers

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Abstract- Social media, a new dimension of marketing promotion mix, has made it possible for users to express their views about the companies, as well as their advertising. The purpose of this study was to test four hypotheses regarding the effects of young social media users' attitude, behavioral response, and purchasing intention toward social media advertising in South Asian perspective. The study selected four popular social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google Plus which indicated the highest Asian visitor and surveyed with a structured questionnaire, asking respondents to mention their attitudinal views and responses about social media and social media advertising. The result identifies variation in predictors of users' buying decision and provides some indications for using and developing social media platform for advertisement in the developing country and describes how to reach more user response in a regular time frame with the ultimate success of purchasing goal.

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I. Introduction

In the past few years, social media have become perhaps the popular communication channels for college-aged Internet users (Pelling and White, 2009). The aspect of communication most recently under the spotlight is that driven by the social media phenomenon. User-centric multimedia applications such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, and YouTube are flourishing (Bond Camilla et al. 2010). At the technological age, most of the valuable company doing business in developing countries in South Asia such as Bangladesh depends more on social media advertising for persuading consumer and branding their companies. The value of social media advertising in Bangladesh is increasing due to a rapid increase of teenage internet users which is approximately 16 million (BTRC, 2014). The study was designed to know whether the social media advertising is useful or not and how consumer showed their attitude and behavior on social media advertising.

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Marketers spend millions of dollars each year on online advertising. It is important to understand that global online advertisement expenditure grew from 6 to 10 percent between 2006 and 2009 all over the world (Keller, 2009), and social media marketing expenditure in USA was $716 million in 2009 which extended $3.1 billion by 2014 (Humphries, 2010). Forrester Research (Martinez, 2010) claim that around 70 percent of companies now have Facebook accounts, and more than half use Twitter to promote their brand. Considering that, social media enables college-aged population to learn about products; it represents a positive trend for advertisers that hope to persuade or influence a consumer (Ferguson, 2008).

The rise of social media has captured the attention both of companies and customers, and together with this changing communications environment companies now confront new challenges regarding our understanding of consumer behavior and consumption patterns in the new millennium (Bond Camilla et al., 2010). A recent study notes that the rapid growth of social media globally and its revolutionary impact on young generation's attitude, the research in this area from marketing communications perspective is still exploratory stage particularly in developing countries of South Asia. The majority of studies that have examined consumer attitudes toward social media marketing have conducted in developed countries (Imran, 2012). Imran (2012) also investigated that favorable attitudes toward social media advertising significantly influence consumers' advertisement clicking behavior, which in turn positively affects their buying behavior and multinational companies intend more to advertise their products and services through social media channels in South Asia.

Current research is unique because it examines four questions of college-aged students' attitudes, behavior and purchase decision on a broad basis. Firstly, the study investigates that if any differences exist in the psychological variables. Secondly, this study explores predictors influence on social media users to make a purchase decision. The findings provide valuable implications for the advertiser, researcher and academician on social media as a part of advertising platform in developing countries.

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II. Literature Review

a) Social Media

To explore social media, one must first establish an accepted definition (James "Mick" and zulis et al. 2012). Social media describes online resources, include blogs, vlogs, social networks, message boards, podcasts, public bookmarking, that people use to share 'content': video, photos, images, text, ideas, insight, opinion, gossip, news (Glen Drury, 2008). Social media has been acclaimed for having dramatic influences on every stage of the consumer decision-making process as well as influencing general opinions and attitude formation (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Christian Maurer and Rona Wiegmann (2011) stated social media as marketing tools give marketers the unique advantage to be at the same place as their customers, to interact with them and to gain access to their attitudes, needs, interests, preferences, wants and buying patterns.

Facebook is one of the largest and fastest growing social network sites, which has developed into a global network. Their goal is to become the operating system of the Internet and to make the world more open and transparent by giving everyone the right to share and connect (Facebook, 2010d; Laudon & Traver, 2008). Networks (e.g., Facebook) are services on which users can find and add friends and contacts, send messages to friends, and update personal profiles. Micro-blogs (e.g., Twitter) are social networking services that enable users to receive and read short message, which are usually restricted by the number of characters, while video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube) permit users to upload and share videos (Pierre R. Berthon et. al, 2012).

b) Social Media Advertising

In the digital age, more and more people in western cultures are finding new ways to connect with like-minded individuals and more interested in satisfying their needs for pleasure and self-actualization (Keller & Kotler, 2009). Many people have their own personal website where they fill out information about themselves, post pictures, create their own blogs, and upload their own videos which are important for advertisers to understand the self-esteem and self-actualization (Elizabeth Wright et al., 2010). Taylor, Lewin, and Strutton (2011) defined social media advertising as "a general term capturing all forms of advertising-whether explicit (e.g., banner advertising and commercial videos) or implicit (e.g., fan pages or firm-related "tweets")-that are delivered through social networking sites." Also, marketers use social media advertising (e.g., display ads on social networking sites) to persuade users to buy their products (Neti, 2011). Despite the rapid growth of social media and its revolutionary impact on young generation's attitude, the research in this area is still in exploratory stage particularly in developing countries (Imran, 2012). Consumers deem advertising as a valuable source of information because product information shown in advertisements help them in making the informed and right purchase decisions (Polly and Mittal, 1993). Imran (2012) also find her study that social media advertising was useful for the multinational companies which intended to advertise their products and services through social media channels in South Asia.

Consumer product companies that market nationally branded products or services might invest millions if not billions of dollars to build brands over the lifetime of their products' or services' life cycles (Keller 2008). The change prompted by the emergence of social media also applies to the consumer decision-making process and marketing communications (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004; Shankar and Malthouse, 2007). For example, social media websites provide a public forum that gives individual consumers voices, as well as access to product information that facilitates their purchase decisions (Kozinets et al., 2010).

III. Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

a) Attitudes toward Social Media Advertising

Advertising and marketing professionals have tapped into social media differently, recognizing the potential of these venues for conveying their campaign strategies (Hyoungkoo Khang et al., 2012). Attitude toward the advertising defined as, "a predisposition to respond in favorable or unfavorable to a particular advertising stimulus during an exposure occasion (Lutz, 1985). The attitudes that are formed toward the advertising can influence consumers' attitudes toward the brand as well as their purchase intent (Hormer, 1990; Lord et al., 1995; Mackenzie et al., 1986). A variety of studies show that the positive emotional response of linking an ad is positively related to subsequent brand-related cognitions, brand attitudes, and purchase intention (Brown & Stayman, 1992; Stone et al., 2000). Daugherty, Eastin, & Bright (2008) also find that a positive attitude toward user-generated online content increases a person's creation and consumption of such content. Also, with a wide variety of commercial information available through social media, users with a higher level of brand consciousness may maintain a more favorable attitude toward social media advertising (Shu Chuan et al. 2013). In general, research suggests that those consumers who have a positive attitude toward advertising are more able to recall it than those with a negative attitude (Donthu et al., 1993; Mehta, 2000). So, the difference in participants' overall attitudes towards social media and social advertising could assist the marketer to determine target audiences. Hence,

H1: Are there significant differences in the attitudes toward social media and advertising in social media?

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b) Behavioral Responses and Purchase Intention

The awareness in advertising literature denotes that when consumers perceive that advertising contains useful information, they become more likely to respond to it (Ducoffe, 1995; Muehling and McCann, 1993). The more relevant the advertising message to the media context, the more likely it can affect consumers' attitudes positively and influence their behavioral responses to the advertising (Zeng Fue et al., 2009). Advertising scholars tend to agree on the importance of advertising message relevancy for advertising effectiveness (Lee and Mason 1999). Conceptualization, behavioral responses to social media advertising refer to users' behavioral interests (e.g., click the link and seek more information), responses (e.g., ignore or pay attention), and offense level toward social media advertising (Wolin et al., 2002). According to Mehta (2000) provides evidence that attitudes toward advertising are positively associated with brand recall and buying intention.

Camilla Bond, Carla Ferraro, Sandra Luxton, & Sean Sands (2010) examined the effects of social media consumption, experiences, and engagement with brands (including via advertising) on behavioral outcomes such as brand awareness, word-of-mouth, and purchase intention. Understanding consumers' behavioral response is essential because a behavioral response/purchase intention assists in predicting the consumers' purchase behavior (Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat, 1978; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Warshaw, 1980). Similarly, the product/service strategy is a beneficiary of the social media push because customers get one more mechanism, or channel for direct interaction with the firm when it comes to about purchasing related issues. (James "Mick" A. et al., 2012). Consumers are turning more frequently to various types of social media to conduct their information searches and to make their purchasing decisions (Lempert, 2006; Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). Social media is perceived by consumers as a more trustworthy source of information regarding products and services than corporate-sponsored communications (Foux, 2006). The next research questions aim to determine how behavioral responses to social media advertising are related to participants' purchase intention. According to Xia Wang, Chunling Yu and Yujie Wei (2012) Members of a social networking group face conformity pressures when they make purchase decisions. Informational influences instead drive people to learn about some product/ service by seeking information from peers. They might search for information from knowledgeable peers or learn by observing others' behavior. Informational influences thus affect consumer decision processes and product evaluations. Social media provide a new channel to acquire product information through peer communication, from many peers or third parties (Kozinets, 1999) at a very low or no cost. Thus, the following two questions are:

H2: Are there users' attitudes toward social media advertising positively related to their behavioral responses?

H3: Are there users' behavioral responses to social media advertising are positively related to their purchase intention toward products?

Also, attitudinal and behavioral factors may closely associate with social media users' tendency to make a purchase decision. With more information obtained from agents, newcomers become more interested in a product, as well as more eager to learn about it (Franke, Keinz, and Steger, 2009). High involvement newcomers thus are more likely to show positive attitudes toward the product (Kim, Haley, and Koo 2009) and purchase it than are those with low involvement (Martin and Stewart, 2001; Zaichkowsky, 1985). To understand the impact of purchase decision and variation of users' decision, the last research question is:

H4: What factors influence social media users to make a purchase decision?

IV. Methodology

a) Sampling and Data Collection Procedure

Most research on social networking has used data from one university (Ellison, Stein field, and Lamp, 2007). The study's setting was Bangladesh, which contained large internet users approximately 43.64 million (BTRC 2014). Out of this 33.52 million people use Facebook as their daily social networking site. The most frequently mentioned were Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus and YouTube, all social networking sites for young people in Bangladesh. Most of the corporate and multinational company set their target customer based on the top four social media sites and promote their advertising campaign. The idea of this study developed from a variety of previous western social media advertising research. The data collected for this study using convenience sampling method from postgraduate and undergraduate students at a science & technology university in Bangladesh. A total of 10 students of BBA completed the questionnaire and obtained the answer to the question from undergraduate and postgraduate students of the same gender as themselves. The data gathering effort yielded 306 usable questionnaires. There were 183 men (70%) and 123 women (30%). Ages of the students range from 20 to 30. Most of the sample (90%) was between the ages of 18 and 25, with mean of 21.1 years (SD = 2.2). There were 101 freshmen, 219 seniors, and nine others. There was no statistically significant ($p<0.05$) difference in mean age between men and women. The time needed to complete the whole questionnaire was about 15 minutes. The data collection period spanned approximately three weeks, from February 2 to February 27, 2015.

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b) Questionnaire and Measurement

At the beginning of the survey, a definition of social media and social advertising provided to participants. The questionnaire divided into four parts. The first part of the questionnaire dealt with a pre-set list of weather members was using social media sites or not, which social media sites participants visited most and how many time per week participants logged in to social media sites. The second part described the attitude measurement toward social media and advertising in social media. The attitude measurement toward social media and toward advertising in social media measures instead used five-point semantic differential scales. Five-point semantic differential items indicated social media users' attitudinal responses to social media advertising therein: "like/dislike," "negative/positive," and "unfavorable/unfavorable." The third part of the questionnaire designed to measure the participants' behavioral responses toward social media advertising and purchase intention. For this purpose, participants rated statement such as "Advertising in social media is useful to me and pay close attention," "I click advertisement shown in social media sites for more and related information," "I pay attention to best-selling brands" and "I prefer valuable and essential brands for buying." All items used 5-point Liker t Scale (1= 'strongly disagree' and 5= 'strongly agree'). Finally, the questionnaire included demographic information such as name, gender, age, states, school classification as well as their university. The statistical programme SPSS was used for the data analysis.

V. Analysis and Result

RQ-1 stated that there were significant differences in the attitudes toward social media and advertising in social media. To find a conclusive answer, a t-test was examined to compare the mean number of participants' attitudes toward social media and advertising in social media. The participants were asked: "In general, for attitude measurement of social media and advertising in social media: 1= dislike/negative/unfavorable, 3= undecided and 5= like/positive/favorable." Thus, the overwhelming opinion of these consumers was either attitude toward social media and advertising in social media had a great difference or not. Men and women did not differ in perception of the social media sites, almost evenly divided between the positive and neutral opinions. The result showed that a significant difference emerged regarding attitude toward social media (M = 14.01, SD = 2.52) and advertising in social media (M= 11.77, SD= 4.48, t = 8.77, df = 304, p< 0.00001, two-tailed). Thus, tested result was not supported, suggesting that consumers had same attitude responses in media and social media advertising.

RQ-2 stated that social media users' attitude on social media advertising was positively related to their behavioral responses. The questionnaire was specified for participants to report their behavioral response in two questions "Advertising in social media is useful to me, and I pay close attention," and "I click advertisement shown in social media sites for more and related information." Five options presented which indicated "1 = strongly disagree" and "5 = strongly agree". For the first question, 23 participants (7.55%) strongly disagreed, 22 participants (7.23%) disagreed, 30 participants (9.84%) undecided, 179 participants (58.69%) agreed, and 51 participants (16.71%) strongly agreed. On the other hand, the second question indicated 29 participants (9.51%) strongly disagreed, 58 participants (19.02%) disagreed, 40 participants (13.12%) undecided, 150 participants (49.18%) agreed, and 28 participants (9.18%) strongly agreed with the statement.

In this study, a t-test was used to compare the mean number of attitude on social media advertising and behavioral responses. Social media users' attitude on social advertising (M=11.77, SD=4.48) were positively related to behavioral responses (M= 7.01, SD= 1.98), df= 304, p< 0.00001, two-tailed). This result suggested that there was a significant difference in the users' attitude of social advertising and their behavioral response and the calculated value has not supported the result. That was participants' who showed the same attitude toward social media and social media advertising tended to have distinct behavioral responses which indicated the advertising attitude and behavioral response are not positively related to each other.

Table 1: Regression Analysis: Predictors of participants' purchase intention

Independent variable	t	Standardized Coefficient	Adjusted R^2	F
The Attitude on Social media	0.012	0.001	0.264	37.39
Attitude on Social media Advertising	2.831	0.146		
Behavioral response of Social media Advertising	9.808	0.485		

To examine RQ-3 whether social media behavioral responses to social media advertising were positively related to their purchase intention toward products, another t-test conducted. For this purpose, using questionnaire, again asked participants to report their purchase decision in two questions format: "I pay attention to best quality products" and "I prefer valuable and essential products for buying." However, 29 participants (9.51%) strongly disagreed, 46 participants (15.08%) disagreed, 46 participants (15.08%) undecided, 148 (48.53%) participants agreed, and 36 participants (11.81%) strongly agreed with the first

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question. But, for the second question, 25 participants (8.19%) strongly disagreed, 29 participants (9.51%) disagreed, 48 participants (15.74%) undecided, 141 participants (46.23%) agreed, and 62 participants (20.33%) strongly agreed with the statement. Social media users' behavioral responses (M= 7.01, SD= 1.98) to social media advertising were positively related to their purchase intention (M= 6.98, SD= 1.99) and this difference was statistically significant (t= 0.175, df=304, p= 0.8612, two-tailed). The result, however, showed that participants' behavior influenced their purchase decision and the tested result supported.

For RQ4, a regression analysis was examined the predictors influenced social media users to make a purchase decision. The multiple regression models were significant (R adj =.264; F (3, 301) = 37.394, p< 0000). Attitude toward social media (B= .001, t= .012, p<.05), attitude toward advertising in social media (B= .146, t= 2.831, p<.05) emerged as a significant predictors of social media users to make purchase decision. However, behavioral responses (B= .485, t= 9.808, p<000) did not produce a significant influence on users' purchase decision.

VI. Discussion and Conclusion

Social media has influenced various aspects of both individuals' lives and society as a whole. The impact of these new technologies on our society is evident in news articles with headlines such as "Universities Use Social Media to Connect" (Alice Pfeiffer, 2010). Social media has acclaimed for having dramatic influences on every stage of the consumer decision-making process as well as influencing general opinions and attitude formation (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). The Current study aimed to identify belief about social media advertising and their influence on consumers' attitude toward social media advertising. Also, past studies from various researcher provided consumers' insights from Western and European university perspective whereas current study represented consumer views from a South Asian university-based teenage consumers' context. However, no prior research has addressed to identify the behavioral response on South Asian University based teenage consumers'. The effectiveness of social media advertising depends on consumers' participation in social media and the understanding of their psychological characteristics which were an important indicator of their overall attitude toward social media advertising (Shu Chuan et al. 2013).

This research examined the linkage between the attitude toward social media and social media advertising and their relation to behavioral and purchase intention. Based on the scholarly literature, the study formulated four hypotheses and tested those using data from a survey (Ronald E. et al. 2002) of 306 students' at large Science and Technology University in Bangladesh. By exploring the difference among social media advertising, behavioral responses and purchase intention, the study also had detailed which factors influence teenage consumers to make a purchase decision. The first set of findings illuminates the similarities and differences in attitude related psychological characteristics of participants. Relation to behavioral and purchase intention. Based on the scholarly literatures, the study formulated four hypotheses and tested those using data from a survey (Ronald E. et al 2002) of 306 students' at large Science and Technology University in Bangladesh. By exploring the difference among Social media users maintain a favorable attitude toward social media and advertising in social media. The result indicated that user does not differ in their attitudes toward social media and advertising in social media which seemed reasonable to postulate that students who like social media tend to be more receptive to various types of application.

Also, this study contributed a better understanding of the relationship among social media advertising, behavioral responses, and purchase intention of participants'. However, product and valuable brand consciousness shared a positive relationship with both behavioral responses to social media advertising, such as clicking through ads and interacting with brand page content, and intention to purchase branded products (Shu Chuan et al. 2013). That is, a high level of involvement and knowledge about products or brands may be related to appreciation for media world containing brands. Therefore, attitude toward social media advertising and behavioral responses included seeking information about products or brands which encouraged users to make a purchase decision. The regression analysis results represented variation in predictors of users' purchase decision of products. It should note that attitude toward social media and social media advertising were a significant predictor of users' purchase decision. On the other hand, favorable behavioral responses influenced participants' which affects their purchase intention.

This study provides implications for companies who use social media as part of their overall advertising campaign. Companies' advertiser should emphasize more on encouraging social media users who have a positive/favorable attitude toward social media advertising because these consumers are more likely to engage actively in companies' social media pages by liking or subscribing of these pages. The Advertiser should announce an upcoming promotion, prices, offers, and incentives into their pages or videos to grow more attention and retention consumers. Consumer privacy is a crucial part of social media sites, the advertiser should focus privacy option and avoid complexity.

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