Social Media as an Effective Tool to Promote Business- An Empirical Study

By Dr. Moloy Ghoshal

Abstract- In a rapidly changing era, entrepreneurs, as well as marketers, need to be up to date with the change in the business environment or they may have to face the risk of being obsolete. Days are long past when a conventional business model used to grow fast and get success. In the era of Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram, social marketing has evolved as an integral part of marketing strategy. It is all most impossible to think of a marketing strategy without taking into account the importance of social media. Adopting some form of online promotion through social media has become essential for all business houses. In an industry where trends are changing in faster than light, adoption of social network marketing is very vital for companies to survive in that race.

In this paper, the researcher has tried to find out the importance and effectiveness of social media as a marketing and promotional tool. An attempt has been made to analyze the extent of influence of social media as a buying decision maker. The paper also tries to find out the role of gender biases. The gap between the customer's expectation and social media performance is also attempted to find out.

Keywords: brand loyalty; promotional tool; marketing strategy; social media marketing (SMM); social networking site; social media; online branding.

GJMBR-E Classification: JEL Code: M37

SOCIALMEDIAASANEFFECTIVETOOLTOPROMOTEBUSINESSANEMPIRICALSTUDY

Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

Social Media as an Effective Tool to Promote Business- An Empirical Study

Dr. Moloy Ghoshal

Abstract- In a rapidly changing era, entrepreneurs, as well as marketers, need to be up to date with the change in the business environment or they may have to face the risk of being obsolete. Days are long past when a conventional business model used to grow fast and get success. In the era of Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram, social marketing has evolved as an integral part of marketing strategy. It is all most impossible to think of a marketing strategy without taking into account the importance of social media. Adopting some form of online promotion through social media has become essential for all business houses. In an industry where trends are changing in faster than light, adoption of social network marketing is very vital for companies to survive in that race.

In this paper, the researcher has tried to find out the importance and effectiveness of social media as a marketing and promotional tool. An attempt has been made to analyze the extent of influence of social media as a buying decision maker. The paper also tries to find out the role of gender biases. The gap between the customer's expectation and social media performance is also attempted to find out. At the end, strategies have been recommended by the researcher for maximizing the effectiveness of social media as a promotional tool.

Keywords: brand loyalty; promotional tool; marketing strategy; social media marketing (SMM); social networking site; social media; online branding.

I. Introduction

After the liberalization in Indian Economy Policy, in 1991, we, as customers experienced a radical change in our daily life, as well as in market place. The introduction of MNCs, along with their world-class products, with a very competitive price; the living standard of common Indian has raised a lot. The introduction of modern computers, laptop, tablet, internet, e-commerce, and m-commerce has had a tremendous impact on how business operates and promotes.

As more and more new technologies are available, businesses houses willing to adopt them will gain big leverage over its competitor. Companies like, Microsoft, eBay, Amazon, Facebook, Google are ruling the world because they have adopted the changes in technology keeping in view of customer's expectations and conveniences.

Author: Associate Professor, Delhi School of Professional Studies and Research (DSPSR), New Delhi, India.
e-mails: moloybreeze@rediffmail.com, moloyghoshal@dspsr.in

Along with the evolution of IT-based companies, social media has become one of the most booming sectors where youth are the major users and followers of such media. Social Media Marketing (SMM) has become the hottest medium of promotion for most of the companies irrespective of the private sector or public sector. Most of the entrepreneurs micro or small, medium or big, are using social media for promotion as well as for lead generation. Entrepreneurs have realized the power of social media and its role in building brand image and customer relationship.

Human, by birth, is social in nature and collection & sharing of information is a part of his life style. Technology has removed the physical distance barrier and made it very quick and easy to connect with people living different part of the nation or even in the world. With the help of social network sites, it is easy to stay in touch with old friends and relatives, living in a distanced place. Social media marketers have understood this fact and are focusing on this business strategy to reap profit by exploiting this new platform.

With time, the lives of people are becoming more and more dependent on technologies even for their basic communication. Now a day social networking sites are affecting our daily life considerably, and are commanding major portion of time in our daily life. Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, are influencing our thinking process, socialization, and leisure time. What is more shocking and astonishing is that the youth of today are spending even more than ten hours on social networking sites. They prefer to watch advertising and product promotion on different social network sites on their Smartphone rather than on conventional television.

Customers, these days are more information-savvy about a product or service, before they make a purchase decision. Features like users review, expert opinion, peer review, critic's opinion in network sites are becoming more influencing factors in decision making rather than conventional advertising and sales promotion. Now a day, the customer has the power to talk about a brand and post his opinion about the product and service on the company's web page and social media also. Therefore companies have no choice but to accept the influence of social marketing and handle them with special care and respect.

Due to such a tremendous influence on customers' purchase decision making, every business

now days needs to leverage proper social media channel in the best possible ways. By giving your business brand a social media touch, you not only generate more profit but also connect with new customers better and serve them on a higher level. It makes digital marketing easier.

The tremendous growth rate of social media and galloping increase in users on social media on a mobile device is encouraging companies to use Facebook, twitter, instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Google+ for advertising and promoting their products and services.

II. Literature Review

Kalpana and Haenlein, (2010), defined social media, as a group of internet based applications that build on ideological and technological foundation of web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generation content.

O. Reilly, (2005) defined social media as; "social media is a broad term which describes software tools to create user-generated content that can be shared."

How well consumers perceived the effectiveness of social media can be measured by a feature known as Customers' Sentiment towards Marketing (CSM). CMS is a concept that refers to the general feeling of customers towards marketing and market place (Lawson et al. 2001 as cited by Mady, 2011).

Basher et al. (2012) in their empirical research, based on Delhi and NCR, concluded that social marketing as a promotional tool, will be effective only if it will provide concrete and timely information wanted by the customers with an aim to bridge the gap between expectation and reality.

Mady (2011) discussed the importance of customer's perception on overall marketing activities regardless of their active participation in consumption. He also explained the process of adoption towards innovation; according to him; it is a tool that provides information about customer's readiness towards acceptance of new technology.

Perceive fit is another factor that marketers can consider for social media shopping. It is the degree of similarity between an existing product with it's extended new version, affiliated to a recognized brand, (Del Vecchio & Smith as cited by Cha, 2009).

Now a day's social media is not a mere platform to stay connected with friends, peers, and family but it has become a strong medium of promotion for companies. In this platform consumers learn more about their preferred companies; their products and services.

Marketers and retailers should utilize these sites more effectively, and professionally as a media to reach their customers and provide a new experience of shopping.

The technology related development like the introduction of powerful search engine, Smartphone, different user-friendly apps, availability of high-speed internet with reasonable or very low price, social network medium has extended marketers ability to reach shoppers through new touch points, (Shankar et al. 2011).

Word of Mouth (WOM) marketing is another term used by the marketer to promote a product. It is an un-paid form of publicity where users of the product are the campaigner of the company. Castronovo and Huang (2012) in their study on alternative marketing communication discussed the importance of social media and word of mouth communication as an integral part of integrated marketing communication.

Perceive fit is another factor that marketers can consider for social media shopping. It is the amount of similarity between an existing product and an extended product category affiliated with a brand (Del Vecchio &Smith as cited by Cha, 2009).

Aaker & Keller (1990), stated that perceived fit is, the extend of consumers perception towards a new version of an existing product and its consistency with the old one.

a) Virtual Brand Community (VBC)

A brand community is a specialized non-geographical community based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand, (Royo-Vella, Casamassima, 2011).

Muniz and O, Guinn, cited by Georgi and Mink, 2012, described VBC as an aggregation of consumers that occurs on the internet as because of their interest in some brand or product.

According to Gasol, Favian, and Guinaliu, 2008; a brand community is a group of people who share the same interest in a particular brand or product.

Muniz & Jensen, (2007) described VBC as a site of complex brand meaning, creation and consumption efforts.

Gasol, Favian, and Guinaliu (2008) founded that members of VBC who are very active in this group and have a positive experience are more loyal toward a brand as compared to others.

Cha, (2009), concluded that security is a major reasons concerned by customers to express their opinion towards social network sites, therefore, impacting trust in such media.

b) Consumers Attitude/ Motives

These days, it is most vital for entrepreneurs and distributors to focus on the factors that build customers attitude; as on social media, customers are

actively creating contents about a brand, something previously controlled solely by the company, (Heinonen, 2011).

Chu, (2011), examined the link between Facebook brand related group participation, responses towards advertising, psychological factors of self-disclosure and attitude amongst members and nonmembers of different social media groups. He concluded that those who are active members to a particulars group have a more favorable attitude towards social media and advertisements on this media.

Cox, (2010) has found the correlation between attitude and age. Based on his finding he concluded that people fall in the age bracket of 18-24, are more attracted and active in blogs, videos on social media like YouTube, Facebook, Snap deal, Instagram; as they find it most eye- catching.

With ever increasing development of social media and the subsequent advantages that come with it such as vast reach, low cost, and high communication efficiency, companies of all size have been hiring marketers who are very eager to learn about, create, and facilitate virtual brand communities. LaRoche, Habibi, Richard, and Sankarnarayanan, (2012) listed several other reasons behind such interest in virtual brand communities: the rapid dissemination of information, influencing customers evaluation, learning customers perception of new products and most importantly gaining a holy grail of loyal customer.

c) User-generated Content

Consumers now a day play an increasingly active and important role in the marketing cycle. Photo editing apps such as camera +, and VSCO, enable everyday people to produce and post high-quality images to the internet. User-generated content, also known as UGC, is a rich resource waiting to be tapped into by the business.

According to Gonzalez, (2010) social media provides never- ending avenue for communication; it is the individual who serves as the influencer, not the technology. According to Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, UGC describes the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media, and usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publically available and created by end users.

d) Viral Advertising

Viral advertising or viral marketing is a more popular business strategy that uses the social network to promote their products. According to Poter and Allen, cited by Chu, 2011, viral advertising is an unpaid peer to peer communication about a product using the internet to influence the targeted customers.

Just like a virus spreads from one person to another, viral marketing is circulated by companies through social networking sites as a medium, and in most of the cases, sponsored by the companies.

Bampo et al, (2008), in their finding confirmed that social network marketing plays a critical role in spreading a viral message.

Bajpai and Pandey (2012) examined how viral marketing put its mark as a new concept of product promotion and concluded that it is in the stage of infancy and marketers still have to learn a lot to make it more effective.

e) Objectives of the Study

1. To examine whether there exists any role of gender in attitude building, perception creation, and purchase decision making based on social media advertising.
2. To study the gap between consumer's perception about social media and its performance to meet the expectation.
3. To suggest strategies to fill the gap between customers expectation, and the performance of social media.

f) Formulation of Hypothesis

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H_01: There is a significant difference in attitude between male and female towards social media advertisement.

H_A1: There is no significant difference in attitude between male and female towards social media advertisement.

H_02: There is a significant difference in perception of advertisement utility in social media between male and female.

H_A2: There is no significant difference in perception of advertisement utility in social media between male and female.

H_03: There is a significant difference between social media performance and the expectation of consumers, in promotion of brand of consumer's durable and luxury products.

H_A3: There is no significant difference between social media performance and the expectation of consumers in promotion of brand of consumer's durable and luxury products.

$Ho4$: There is a significant difference between male and female in decision making related to their purchase either FMCG, Consumers' durable, apparel, and luxury products through social media.

H_A4: There is no significant difference between male and female in decision making related to their purchase either FMCG, Consumers' durable, apparel, and luxury products through social media.

III. Research Methodology

A descriptive research methodology technique was applied to collect the data. A questionnaire was designed to collect the view of the respondents about the influence of social media in consumer's buying decision. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, Part-I, and Part-II. Part-I contains questions related to respondents demographic information and its usages pattern, whereas Part-II have a series of close-ended questions based on the impact of social media in the purchase decision and their expectation from such media.

A pilot survey was conducted taking five respondents from each age group, and the shortfalls of the questionnaire were met. Then the questionnaire was put over Google docs and a link was shared with the users of social media through mail for the purpose of data collection. The link was also posted on various social network sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn etc. The respondents and the users of social network sites were also requested to share the link from their own profile. The researcher has used a non-probability convenience sampling. For visual representation of findings and results; bar charts, pie chart, and table has been used as a descriptive analysis tool. To prove the hypothesis, SPSS 20 software was used and the independent T-test has been performed.

a) Descriptive Statistics

Table 1.1: Profile of respondents

Variable	Classification	Total number	Percentage
Gender	Male	85	56.7
	Female	65	43.3
Age	18-30	70	46.7
	31-50	50	33.3
	51-70	30	20

From table-1.1, we can observe that out of 150 respondents, 85 respondents are male, and 65 respondents are female.

As per Govt. of India age categorization, the researcher has considered the respondents having age in between 18-30 years will be in the youth category. Seventy respondents out of one hundred and fifty, i.e., 46.7 percent respondents as per the tabular data, fall in this category of youth. Fifty respondents are in between the age of 31-50 years and are of the middle age group peopled. Rest thirty respondents are within the age bracket of old peopled.

Table 1.2: Preference of social media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Facebook	63	41.7	42.0	42.0
	linkedin	26	17.2	17.3	59.3
	instagram	20	13.2	13.3	72.7
	snapchat	34	22.5	22.7	95.3
	twitter	7	4.6	4.7	100.0
	Total	150	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.7		
Total		151	100.0		

From the above table-1.2, we can interpret that Facebook is the leading social media network site, as supported by the finding of Jati and Mohanty (2012) and Bhagwant and Goutam, (2013). Snapchat and LinkedIn are also at the top of the list with 22.5 percent and 17.2 percent preference share.

Table 1.3: Motivational factors behind following a brand or joining a brand page

	Variable	Total N
Motivation to follow a brand or join a brand page	Brand name invitation/ advertising	50
		30
	Friends invitation	25
	Personal research	25
	Loyalty towards the brand	20

Motivational factor for social media users joining or following a brand in social network platforms varies from user to user. From table-1.3, we can see that the main reason for fans to join a brand page or brand is based on the brand name of the product. Advertising and friends invitation do also play an important role in selection of a brand or a product. Personal search is another important factor of public preference towards a brand page.

Thus we can interpret that easy availability of the brand name in a search engine is crucial consideration for companies to be kept in mind. Brand loyal consumers purchase a product again and again; market the brand directly or indirectly by talking positive words amongst their friends and peers. It is known as Word of Mouth (WoM) communication about a brand or a product, and is considered to be the most effective tool for a purchase decision making, especially for a technical and costly product.

Social networking sites are the new customer relationship management (CRM) medium where consumers have a feeling of exclusiveness. The attachment towards a particular company or brand is the key motivators to advocate about it.

b) *Time Dedicated for Socializations*

Table 1.4: Time spend in social media.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
valid	less than 1 hr	50	33.1	33.3	33.3
	1-2 hrs	39	25.8	26.0	59.3
	2-3 hrs	45	29.8	30.0	89.3
	3 hrs and above	16	10.6	10.7	100.0
	Total	150	99.3	100.0	
missing	System	1	.7		
	total	151	100.0		

In these days, social networking has become an important aspect of lifestyle. People are spending more than five to six hours browsing on the net or social networks. From table-1.4, we can see the importance of social network marketing as an effective tool for promotional strategy, as more than 2/3 of the respondents are spending more and more hours in a day on different social network sites.
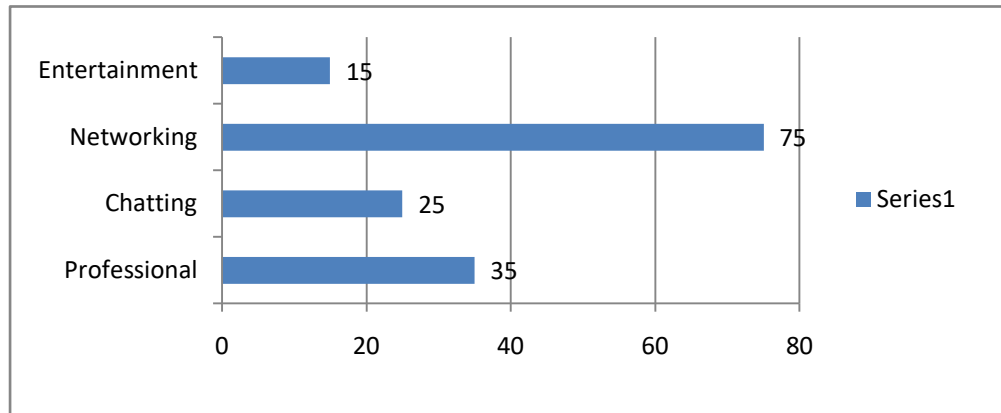
c) The Purpose of Use of a Social Media Platform

Fig. 1.1: Purpose of use

Social media has become the most effective communication tool through which people can connect with their long lost friends of childhood or college life. This is evident, as most of the respondents, near about 100 out of 150, are using such platform to connect with their friends through network building and chatting. While 'professional use' has rated second as a purpose of using the social network, and others apart from just playing games, watching videos, listening to music, are the next important purposes of using this medium.

Marketers have plenty of opportunities to communicate with their target customers and offer them the products and services, and persuade them to transact and become a loyal customer for the company. Undoubtedly the social media is a rapidly growing platform for a brand building and is used by almost all the sectors. It is not only an effective tool for product promotion and brand building but very cost effective compare to any other form of promotion.
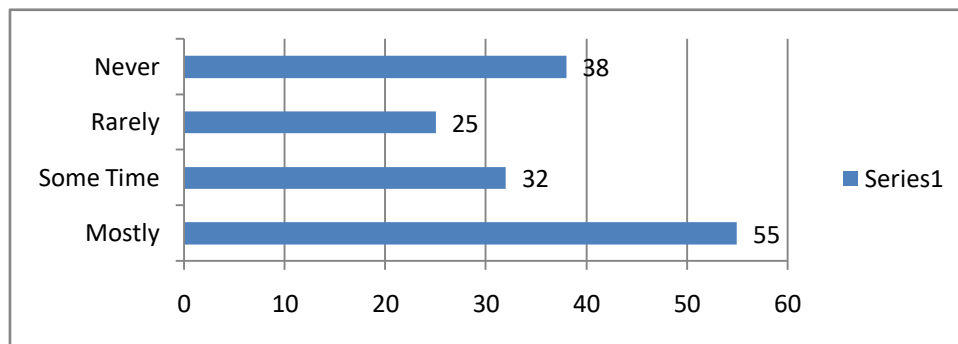
d) Considering Social Media in Buying Decision

Fig. 1. 2: Social media as a buying decision factor

It is clear from the above fig.1.2, that majority of the respondents, 112 (55+32 +25) out of 150, consider social media networks in their buying decision- making process either most of the time or some times.

Most of the users consider social media networks as a decision-making tool during their process of purchasing. Especially in electronics and fashion related products, travel destinations, and hotels booking etc., review and suggestions of social network friends play the decisive role.

Thus it is an immense importance for marketers to put more and more information on social media so as to become visible with target customers and if succeeded to pursue them, positive word of mouth

communication will automatically get started and eventually gives rise to multiple impacts.
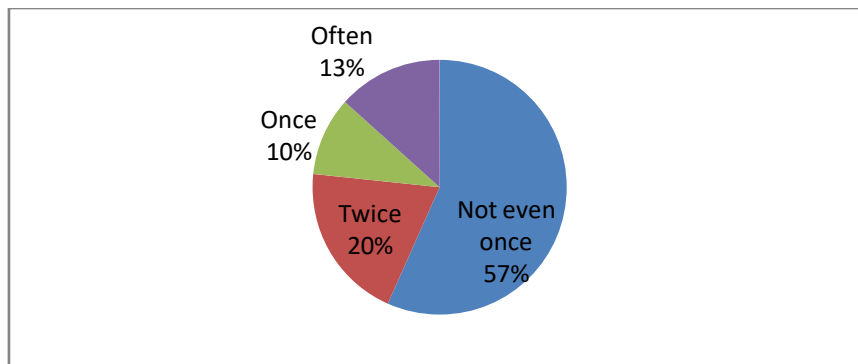
Fig.1. 3: Grievance redressal effectiveness

From fig.1.3, it is pretty evident that the social media is not an effective grievance handling platform. It seems that consumers are not getting the proper services, especially the after sales services as perceived by them. During the survey, it has been pointed out by the respondents that they are not getting any response of their queries and questions they used to post on the companies social media pages. To make SNM more effective, it is expected from the marketers that they will put more importance on this aspect of customer's satisfaction. Providing effective after sales service and redressal of grievances through customer's complaint page, social marketing will be more effective in years to come, as it is well said by a Chinese proverb, *"a stitch in time, save nine."*

e) *Hypotheses Testing*

H_01: There is a significant difference in attitude between male and female towards social media advertising.

Group statistics

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error
Attitude	Male	85	1.2941	.45835	.04971
	Female	65	1.4769	.50335	.06243

Independence sample test

		Levene's test for Equality of variences		t-test for equality of mean							
										95% confidence interval of the difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference		Lower	Upper
Attitude	Equal variances assumed	12.621	.001	-2.319	148	.022	-.18281	.07881		-.33855	-.02706
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.291	130.820	.024	-.18281	.07981		-.34069	-.02492

From the above test table, we can see that the significant value, i.e., p- value for T-test is .022, less than our chosen significant value i.e., p< α = 0.05. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis and interpret that there is no significant difference in attitude between male and female towards social media advertisement. The finding indicates that gender difference is not a considerable factor for social media advertising, contrary to the findings of Vollman, Abraham & Morn, 2010 and Junco, Merson, Salter, 2010; where women found more active in social media.

$H_0$2: There is a significance difference in perception towards advertisement utility in social media between male and female respondents.

Group statistics					
	Sex	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Perception on ad. utility in social media	male	85	1.3294	.47279	.05128
	female	65	1.6462	.48188	.05977

Independence samples test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	95% confidence Interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
Perception on ad utility in social media	Equal variances assumed	.378	.540	-4.032	148	.000	-.31674	.07855	-.47197	-.16151
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.022	136.534	.000	-.31674	.07875	-.47248	-.16101

From the above table we can see that the significant value i.e., p- value for T-test is .000, which is less than our chosen significant value, i.e. p< α = 0.05. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference in perception towards advertisement utility in social media between male and female.

$H_0$3: There is a significant difference between social media performance and expectation of consumers in promotion of brand of consumer's durable and luxury products.

One sample statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. difference	Std. error mean
Performance of social media ad.	150	1.5333	.50056	.04087

One sample test						
	Test value = 1.5					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
					Lower	Upper
Performance of social media ad.	.816	149	.416	.03333	-.0474	.1141

From the above table we can see that the significant value i.e., p-value for one sample t-test is 0.416, which is much higher than our chosen significant value i.e., p > α = 0.05. Therefore we accept the null hypothesis and interpret that there is a significant difference between social media performance and expectation of consumers in promotion of brand of consumer's durable and luxury products.

Ho4: There is a significant difference between male and female in decision making related to their purchase either FMCG, Consumers' durable, apparel, and luxury products through social media.

		Levene's test equality of variances		t- test for equality of means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
Role in purchase decision making	Equal variances assumed	1.632	.203	-.657	148	.512	-.05158	.07846	-.20664	.10347
	Equal variances not assumed			-.654	135.162	.514	-.05158	.07886	-.20755	.10438

Group statistics					
	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. error. mean
Role in purchase decision making	male	85	1.3176	.46832	.05080
	female	65	1.3692	.48635	.06032

From the above table we can see that the significant value i.e., p- value for T-test is .512, which is much higher than our chosen significant value, $p > \alpha$ =0.05. Therefore we accept the null hypothesis and can interpret that there is a significant difference between male and female in decision making related to their purchase either in FMCG or consumers' durable; apparel, and luxury products through social media.

IV. Findings

There is no variability in attitude towards social media usage between male and female i.e. gender biases has no impact on the usage pattern of social media. It is young people who have been adopting social media as a platform of up gradation about what is happening in the world of marketing and to enrich their knowledge domain in other areas.

Both male and female have the same outlook related to the effectiveness of social media for market promotion. The effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool is only possible when organizations will provide effective and timely information about their products and services in social media and also on their media pages, which is supported by the finding of Bashar et al. 2012. Daily updating of company's social media page is a must to create a positive impression on consumers mind.

During the course of data analysis it has been realized by the researcher that somehow a gap exists between customer's expectation and company's promises over social media advertising. Customers also, do not agree with the fact that social media in general, and companies' page in particular, is a good platform for their grievances to be solved. At the same time, they feel lack of personal touch that is a major shortcoming of social media and is not as effective as single stand retail store. One of the interesting findings of this research is, that women usually prefer to purchase product that they can touch, feel, and bargain with.

V. Discussion

There is a paradigm shift of business from transactional to long-lasting relationship marketing. A new area of relationship building and management i.e. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has evolved as a marketing strategic tool. It is now more critical than ever that successful companies are using engagement marketing principle to engage their prospects and consumers before, during and after their purchase cycle. Information which is demanded by target market should be provided in such a manner that you are viewed in a positive light, create a positive brand and product reputation, and are selected with a priority as their brand of choice. With the growth of social media, a new term of marketing i.e. permission marketing has been coined in 1999 and the features like - friend request, page like, page follow, page share etc. are helping companies to reach their customer with more confident. Though the concept of SNM is growing at a very fast rate, still it is in a nascent stage in India. Therefore the companies have to think seriously about the use of this recent development in the field communication, make effective strategies, and execute them in a professional manner so as to win a large share of market and evolve as an innovative firm in years to come.

For a business to get success in a world of reached social media influence; companies now have to transform their business strategies from product-

oriented to customer-oriented where the customer will play a decisive role. According to Nielson & Roper reports, more than 90 percent of consumers take their purchase decision especially in consumer's durable products, based on word of mouth recommendations.

In the era of Mark Zuckerberg generation, it is not difficult to understand why people, especially the youth generation, are so obsessed about social media. Not only the common people but big political parties of different countries are highly depending on social media marketing.

Every company, big or small, young or established, need to have an active presence on such social media. It is now inexcusable for any business that wants to thrive too, not be tweeting!

Here some suggestions for companies to improve their promotional activities and brand visibility in social network sites:

1. Develop a proper content of your message.
2. Create an attractive presentation of it.
3. Make your target consumers engage with your message.
4. Add audio; sometime people prefer listening rather than reading.
5. Encourage consumer feedback. More and more feedback you received, more will be the chance to improve your product/service.
6. Feel the customer's experience. There is a very nice saying, "you can't really understand another person's experience, until you have walked a mile in his shoes."
7. Deal with customer service. If they are satisfied, they will pull business for you.
8. Improve word of mouth communication.
9. Keep learning always.

Now a day, social media is one of the most powerful, profitable, and effective platforms for companies to increase its visibility amongst its target customers. By spending few hours on social media and on companies' page, firms are reported a huge increase in queries and business turnover as well. At the same time companies should keep in mind that social media is a double- edged sword, if not used with care it may have the power to create havoc of market reputation within no time.

References Références Referencias

1. Aaker, D. A., & Keller, K. L. (1990). Consumer evaluations of brand extension. Journal of Marketing. 54(1), 24-41.
2. Bampo, Mauro, Michael T. Ewing, Dineli R. Mather, David Stewart, and Mark Wallace, (2008). The Effects of the Social Structure of Digital Networks on Viral Marketing Performance. Information Systems Research 19(1), 273-290.
3. Bajpai, V. and Pandey, S. (2012).Viral Marketing Through Social Networking Sites With Special Reference of Facebook, International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research, 1(7),194-207.
4. Bashar, Abu; Ahmad, Irshad and Wasiq, Mohammad (2012). Effectiveness of social media as   marketing tool: an empirical study, International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services and Management Research, ISSN: 2277 3622, 1(11), 88 -99.
5. Bhagwat, Shree and Goutam, Ankur (2013). Development of Social Networking Sites and TheirRole in Business with Special Reference to Facebook, IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) ISSN: 2278-487X. . 6(5), 15-28.
6. Casaló, Luis V., Flavián Carlos, and Miguel Guinalíu, (2008). Promoting Consumer's Participation in Virtual Brand Communities: A New Paradigm in Branding Strategy. Journal of Marketing Communications. 14(1), 19-36.
7. Castronovo, Cristina and Huang, Lei (2012). Social Media in an Alternative Marketing Communication Model, Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness. 6(1), 117-131.
8. Cha, Jiyoung, (2009). Shopping on Social Networking Websites: Attitudes towards real versus virtual items. Journal of Interactive Advertising. 10(1), 77-93.
9. Chu, Shu-Chuan,(2011). Viral advertising in social media: Participation in Facebook groups and responses among college-aged users. *Journal of Interactive Advertising* 12(1), 30-43.
10. Cox, Shirley A., (2010). Online Social Network Member Attitude toward Online Advertising Formats. MA thesis, The Rochester Institute of Technology.
11. Georgi, Dominik and Moritz Mink, (2012). e-CCIq: The quality of electronic customer-to customer interaction, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.
12. Gonzalez, Cuitlahuac, (2010). Social Media Best Practices for Communication Professionals through the Lens of the Fashion Industry. MA thesis, The University of Southern California.
13. Heinonen, Kristina, (2011). Consumer activity in social media: Managerial approaches to consumers' social media behavior. Journal of Consumer Behavior. 10(1), 356-364.
14. Jati, Nityananda and Mohanty, Ajit Narayan (2012). International Social Media Marketing: A Global Business Environment Perspective. VSRD-International Journal of Business and Management Research. 2(5), 199-212.

15. Junco, R., Merson, D., & Salter, D. (2010). The effect of gender, ethnicity, and income on college students' use of communication technologies. Cyber psychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 13(6), 619–627.

16. Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M., (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. Business Horizons. 53(1), 59–68.

17. LaRoche, M., Habibi, M., Richard, M., & Sankaranarayanan R. The effects of social media based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, and brand trust and brand loyalty. Computers In Human Behavior, 28(5), 1755-1767.

18. Mady, Tarek T., (2011). Sentiment toward marketing: Should we care about consumer alienation and readiness to use technology?. Journal of Consumer Behavior 10(1), 192-204.

19. Muñiz, Albert M. and Hope Jensen Schau, (2007). Vigilante Marketing and Consumer Created Communications. Journal of Advertising 36(1), 35-50.

20. O'Reilly. T., (2005). What is web 2.0? Retrieved June 12, 2011, from www.oreilly.com: http://oreilly.com/lpt/a/6228.

21. Parasuraman, A. (2000). Technology readiness index (TRI), a multiple-item scale to measure readiness to embrace new technology. Journal of Service Research, 2(4), 307-320.

22. Porter, L. and Golan, G. J. (2006). From subservient chickens to brawny men: A comparison of viral advertising to television advertising. Journal of Interactive Advertising, 6 (2).

23. Royo-Vela, M., & Casamassima, P. (2011). The influence of belonging to virtual brand communities on consumers' affective commitment, satisfaction and word-of-mouth advertising The ZARA case. Online Information Review, 35(4), 517-542.

24. Shankar, Venkatesh, Jeffery Inman, Murali Mantrala, Eileen Kelley, and Ross Rizley, (2011). Innovations in Shopper Marketing: Current Insights and Future Research Issues. *Journal of Retailing* 1: s29-s42, doi:10.1016/j.jretai.2011.04.007.

25. Vollman, A., Abraham, L., & Mörn, M. P. (2014). Women on the web: How women are shaping the internet. http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Presentations_Whitepapers/2010/Women_on_the_Web_How_Women_are_Shap-ing_the_Internet.

26. Zinnbauer, Markus, and Tobias Honer, (2011). How Brands can Create Social Currency- a Framework for Managing Brands in a New Era. Marketing Review St. Gallen. 28(1), 50-55.