

Examining the Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behavioural Responses of Indian Millennials Towards Social Media Advertisements: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationships of Indian social media users among their beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural responses towards social media advertisements. Hence, a conceptual framework based on Pollay and Mittal advertising model with two additional variables has been proposed. A quantitative approach of research has been followed, where data has been collected using a self-designed questionnaire from 472 Indian millennials who are active social media users. The results indicated that the proposed framework is a robust tool for measuring advertising effectiveness on social media sites, where the beliefs such as product information, hedonism, social role, and incentives have a significant positive relationship with attitude towards social media advertising, whereas the belief factors such as materialism, falsity, and irritation have a significant negative relationship with attitude towards social media advertising.

KEYWORDS

Attitude Towards Social Media Advertisements, Behavioural Responses Millennials, Beliefs, Social Media Advertisements,

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancements in Information, Communication and Internet technologies have boosted the spread of social media sites, which has led to an alteration in the communication pattern among people. These sites have been referred to as a set of internet-based applications which are built on the Web 2.0 premise, that focuses on the creation and circulation of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Today cyberspace is dominated by diverse social media platforms due to which the companies have now shifted from the traditional form of advertising channels to advertisements

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on social media sites (Lee and Hong, 2016) and are investing huge amounts of their advertisement budgets on these sites (Chi, 2011 and Duffett, 2015).

These sites benefit the companies as the effectiveness of the ads can be measured through various parameters namely: ad clicks, and the number of likes and comments (Bunker *et al.*, 2013). Many studies have been undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of social media advertisements by measuring different parameters such as advertising value generated (Hamouda, 2018; Kim and Han., 2014), electronic word of mouth (Chu and Kim, 2011), user-generated content (Kim and Kim, 2018), purchase intention and relationship management (Chi, 2011) and acceptance of social media as a technology (Pinho and Soares, 2011). However, very few studies have been conducted for the purpose of evaluating beliefs, attitudes and behavioural responses towards advertisements on social media sites with respect to Indian consumers.

1.1 Need of the Study

According to a report released by Digital India, (2021), the number of active social media users in 2019 in India is 448 million with a penetration of 32.3% of its total population, showing a growth of 21% from the previous year. Noticing the remarkable expansion in accessing the diverse social media sites by consumers across the globe, companies are choosing these sites as “one of the most cost-effective channels for reaching consumers in the form of blogs, email marketing, online and social media advertisements” (Arora and Agarwal, 2020, p. 48). The study on Indian consumers will offer significant implications to the researchers as well as practitioners. Firstly, the expenditure on social media by companies in the past 10 years has increased to almost 250%, the analysts have anticipated much more growth as companies and marketers try to capitalize on the unique features and opportunities presented by these platforms (CMO Survey, 2018), due to which many companies are switching to social media platforms for communicating with their consumers. Secondly, the focal point of a high amount of literature has always been dedicated to developed countries which possess high literacy rates, well-built infrastructure, and a great amount of disclosure for the consumers to various forms of digital advertisements. Thirdly it can be inferred from the literature that there exists variation in the belief system of consumers from Western and Eastern cultures towards advertisements (Sheldon *et al.*, 2017). In comparison to people from an individualistic culture, members of a collectivistic norms and be identified with the traits such as group norms and have the tendency of being involved in social media platforms for socialising activities at a much higher rate (Gupta and Shukla, 2019). Thereby a proper examination of the effectiveness of social media advertisements for Indian consumers will offer different and meaningful results.

Hence, this study has been designed, to develop a comprehensive model that explores the relationships between consumers’ beliefs, attitudes and behaviours by building up a framework using one of the well-recognised Beliefs Models (Pollay and Mittal, 1993) which will offer valuable insights to academicians and also to companies using social media platforms as their promotional channel, which can be imperative from a theoretical and practical perspective.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purpose of evaluating advertising effectiveness, beliefs and attitudes are rightly regarded as the appropriate measures (Mehta, 2000). Belief has been defined as a linkage or affiliation of an object with some particular characteristic or attribute (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1974), it is an illustrative contemplation that a person holds about something (Kotler and Keller, 2006). A robust study conducted by “Pollay and Mittal (1993) consisted of seven beliefs factors, which have been used as antecedents for determining consumer attitudes towards advertising.” The two broad categories included individual factors such as “product information, hedonism and social roles” and societal factors such as “good for the economy, materialism, falsity/no-sense, and value corruption”.

Beliefs have been defined as “an association of an object with some attribute” (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). In a milestone study conducted by Pollay and Mittal (1993), seven major belief factors were identified and

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