

Social Media Marketing in Pakistan: Trends and Impact

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Abstract

Internet is the rapidly grown and emerging technology closing the gaps of distances between the people all across the globe and effectively replacing the traditional ways of advertising. Social Media are new emerging trends. Due to the high rush of audiences this media is being targeted by the various advertisers. Social media marketing is the emerging and rapidly grown new concept in which attention is gained by the use of social media. Purpose of this study is to explore out the awareness and usage trends of social networks in Pakistan. Also it tries to identify what age group spends how much time on internet, their awareness about social media, and primary reasons for using social networks. Finally this paper tries to explore out the understanding of the Pakistanis towards social media advertisement, what types of communications attract them and their influence on their behaviors. Primary data was collected through adapted research questionnaire. Questionnaires were floated online; Google Docs, emailed and were also filled by person. Analysis has been done using cross tabs and frequency tables. Findings suggest that facebook is the mostly used social network having well communicated and very effective ads. Results show that there is great opportunity to use facebook as a new medium to aware customers about the new products. Findings also suggest that there is an increasing trend of social networks usage in Pakistan. Not only among the age group of 18-25 but also in the adults of 50 and plus. This study can help to understand and design the effective communication strategy to reach the target market in Pakistan, using social media networks.

Keywords: social media marketing, facebook, marketing trends, facebook advertisement

1. Introduction

Internet is the rapidly grown and emerging technology closing the gaps of distances between the people all across the globe and effectively replacing the traditional ways of advertising (Jothi et al, 2011). Internet is something that can be used for as a source of communication and since its emerging use in business, one of its basic reasons is to do a marketing (Jothi et al, 2011). According to the David Aaker (1996) due to the development of new media it is becoming way more difficult for the companies to create awareness about their brands and the only thing important is to manage their message and marketing efforts effectively across all the media.

Social Media or networks are new emerging trends, due to the high rush of audience, are being targeted by the various advertisers (Jothi et al, 2011). Social Media defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2009, p. 61) is "group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow for the creation and exchange of user generated content." Web 2.0 is a web application on which social media networks are based (Rothschild, 2011; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009).

Growing importance of social media raised the concept of social media marketing. Social media marketing defined by searchengineland.com "refers to the process of gaining traffic or attention through social media sites." Pakistan is a country which has the fastest growing social media population in the world, with more than 4 million facebook users (Martin, 2011).

This paper tries to explore out the awareness and usage trends of social networks of Pakistani people. It tries to identify what age group spends, how much time on internet, their awareness about social media, and primary reasons for using social networks. At the same time this paper tries to explore out the understanding of the Pakistani people towards social media advertisement, what types of communications attract them and their influence on their behaviors.

Due to the emerging importance of social media a lot of work is being done on it. But a very few work has been done in the context of Pakistan. This paper, so far, tries to help in understanding the behavior of Pakistanis towards social media. This study can help to shape up the communication strategy to reach the target market in Pakistan over social media networks.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the age group aware about internet and social networks (SN)
- To identify the mostly used SN and the primary reason of use
- To identify the kinds of ads users are aware of and which one are communicated well
- To identify SN regarding best communicated ads
- To identify response towards those ads

- To identify the impact of ads appearing in SN on users

3. Literature Review

Social Media defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2009, p. 61) is “group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow for the creation and exchange of user generated content.” Social Media consists of many forms like social networks, blogs, internet forums and all the socially interacting stuff (Rothschild, 2011). Social Networks are the new emerging trends over the internet (Zhang et al, 2010). Social networks according to Boyd and Ellison (2007) “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.”

Statistics by Bennett (2011) facebook is among the widely used social network more than 800 million (845 million by wikipedia as of December 31, 2011) users whereas more than 50% users log on daily. In these statistics twitter has at least 200 million registered profiles. linkedin got 150 million users (Wikipedia) and stated by Bennett (2011) 82% of its users have confidence in the information they receive. According to Wikipedia Google+ has 90 million users which by Bennett (2011) were 10 million within the two weeks of its launch.

Now a day trusted form of advertising is recommendation from another person sharing same interests (Falkow, 2009). Social marketing has largely been ignored by the textbooks (Andreasen, 1995; Donovan and Henley, 2003; Kotler and Lee, 2008). Social marketing achieves social objectives by using the commercial marketing techniques in which social marketers combine 4 Ps of marketing, maximizing product being used by the specific population group (United States Agency for International Development, n.d). Today where social networks are being proven to build solid relationships with buyers and buyers want to be engaged differently it gives the notion that traditional tactics of marketing simply do not work anymore (Jothi et al, 2011; Borges, 2009).

Pakistan is among the fastest growing facebook and twitter using population; more than four million users (Martin, 2011). According to facebook ad target audience estimations there are more than 5 million Pakistani users between the ages of 18 to 50, in which more than 3 million are males and more than 1 million are females. Martin (2011) said 20 million Pakistanis are regularly online.

This paper tries to explore out the awareness and usage trends of social networks of Pakistanis. It tries to identify what age group spends how much time on internet, their awareness about social media and primary reasons for using social networks. Finally this paper tries to explore out the understanding of the Pakistanis towards social media advertisement; what types of communications attract them and their influence on their behaviors.

4. Research Methodology

Survey method was adopted to identify the awareness, usage pattern, mostly preferred social media regarding usage and better communicated ads, types of ad communication regarding mostly encountered and preferred, and the influence of communication on the behavior of Pakistanis.

4.1 Data and Analysis

Primary data was collected through adapted research questionnaire. Questionnaires were floated online; Google Docs, emailed and were also filled by person.

4.2 Sample size

Sample size was 150, Similar to Jothi et al (2011) and D’silva et al (2011)

5. Results and Discussions

5.1 Age group awareness about internet and social networks

5.1.1 Age group and internet

Most of the Pakistanis are involving internet in their lives. From Table 1.1 it can be seen that 56% of the respondents spend more than 3 hours on the internet. 37.3% uses for 1 or 2 hours a day, 4.7 % for 2 to 3 days a week use internet and only 2% use once a week. This is clear sign of the awareness about the internet. From table 1.2 it is clear that age group 18-25 spends more time on internet. 40.6% respondents which fall in age group of 18-25, spend more than 3 hours on internet. 31% of the same age group spends 1 or 2 hours a day on internet. This tells that more young adults are spending their time surfing on internet.

5.1.2 Awareness about social networks

Table 2 shows that 98% are aware about the social networks in which 74.8% fall in the age group of 18-25, whereas only 2% showed ignorance about the social networks. 10% of age group 26-30 showed awareness about social networks. Age group 26-30 showed 4.7%, 31-36 also 4.7% and 50+ show 5.4% awareness about social

networks.

5.1.3 Usage pattern of social networks

Table 3 shows that 42% use social networks daily in which high amount of users; 30%, fall in age group of 18-25. 26% log in to social networking site more than 3 times a day in which 18.6% are from the age group of 18-25. 16.6% use 2 to 3 times a day and 15.3% use social networks once a week.

5.2 Mostly used social network and the primary reason of use

5.2.1 Mostly used social networks

Facebook is the mostly used social network with over 800 million users. From table 4 it can be seen in Pakistan 55.5% uses facebook. Google+ on second with the 17.4% of usage, Twitter 12.1%, linkedin 13.2% and wordpress only 1.9%.

5.2.2 Primary reason of using social networks

51.4% use social networks to keep in touch with their family, 16.4% want to get in touch with the fan pages they have joined, 14.7% use to keep in touch with business contacts, 8.6% use to promote their ideas, there are 6.5 % who have other than these reasons to use social networks and only 2.4% promote their business through these networks. (Table 5)

5.3 Types of ads users are aware, type they find well communicated and best considered social network in this regard

5.3.1 Types of ads users encounter on social networks

41.1% web banners, 23.3% video ads, 19.6% flash ads, 13.8% pop-ups and 2.2% users encounter other than these in which some mentioned interactive wall posts. (Table 6)

5.3.2 Type of ads users find well communicated

Table 7 shows that 60% users consider interactive wall posts and updates by different fan pages well communicated. 22% banner ads, 16% flash ads and only 2% video ads.

5.3.3 Social network considered best in regard of well communicated ads

73.4% users consider facebook having well communicated ads, 13.3% consider google+, 6.9% linkedin, 4.6% twitter and wordpress only 1.7 % is considered having well communicated ads. (Table 8)

5.4 Response towards ads

5.4.1 Satisfaction with the appearance of ads

From research data 12% users are strongly agree and satisfied with the ads appearing in social networks, 17.3% are less agree and large number of users 34.7% are partially agree with the content and appearance of ads on social networks. 12% are strongly disagree, 8.7% disagree and 15.3% are partially disagree as they are, mostly, not satisfied with the content of ads. (Table 9)

5.4.2 Accessing ads

From the survey data 22.7% users show they have accessed ads many times. While 45.3% users say they accessed ads sometimes, 22% never accessed and 10% say it depend on the information ad contains. (Table 10)

5.5 Impact of ads

Finally from survey we tried to check the impact of ads e.g; in recalling of brands or information they encounter on ads appearing on social networks.

Analysis of survey data showed 9.4% are strongly agree that ads appearing on social networking sites help in recalling brands and information they contain. 24.2% agree and 32.2% are partially agreed. Whereas 9.4% are strongly disagreed, 10.1% disagree and 14.8 % are partially disagreed. (Table 11)

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Pakistan is among fastest growing social media usage population (Martin, 2011). This study shows that many of the youngsters from age group 18-25 spend their more than 3 hours a days on the internet. 98% of the same age group showed awareness about the social networks. From this survey we see that age group 50+ is also aware about the social network which shows the increasing usage trend of social networking sites in the Pakistan. Similarly a large number of users log in daily to the social networking websites in which mostly log in more than 3 times a day. This result proves the analysis of Martin (2011).

Among the social media networks facebook is mostly used social network in Pakistan. Thus this result confirms the Statistics provided by Bennett (2011). Mostly users use this to keep in touch with their family and friends. Analysis also showed that users also prefer social networks to keep in touch with the business contacts and some prefer to be up-to-date with fan pages they have joined.

Users encountered web banners and video ads the most on these sites. Whereas interactive wall posts which allow users to actively engage; quiz, question or game, are considered well communicated. Facebook is

considered having well communicated ads.

From the study a great number of users showed up in the range of satisfaction with the ads whereas very little amount of users showed up in the range of disagree. This shows they understand the reason of ads and trust the content it displays. Also the results showed that a large number of users after seeing the ads try to access them and very few ignore them.

Finally a great number of users agreed that ads appearing on social networking sites helped them in recalling brands and made impact on them. And very few disagreed with this.

The above discussion clearly shows the behavior of Pakistanis regarding social networks, internet consumption and their behavior towards advertisements in social networks. Results clearly show that there is a positive future for social media marketing in Pakistan. This study also identified which group is more into social networks thus can help in shaping the marketing strategies.

7. Limitations

Limited secondary data was quite a big limitation. Very few studies related to Pakistan were found.

8. Future Research

After having the good understanding about trends in social media one can design the effective strategies to exploit them. There is a great room to identify, explore and design the effective social media strategies. This paper clearly provides the base for the future research.

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Tables

Age * Time spent on internet Crosstabulation

Table 1.2		Time spent on internet				Total	Table 1.1		Frequency	Valid Percent
		once a week	2 to 3 days a week	1 or 2 hrs a day	More than 3 hours		Valid	Time spent on internet		
Age	18-25	1	4	47	61	113	once a week	3	2.0	
	26-30	0	1	4	10	15	2 to 3 days a week	7	4.7	
	31-36	0	0	2	5	7	1 or 2 hrs a day	56	37.3	
	36-50	0	1	1	5	7	More than 3 hours	84	56.0	
	50+	2	1	2	3	8	Total	150	100.0	
Total		3	7	56	84	150				

Age * Awareness about SNS Crosstabulation

Table 2		Awareness about SNS		Total
		yes	no	
Age	18-25	110	3	113
	26-30	15	0	15
	31-36	7	0	7
	36-50	7	0	7
	50+	8	0	8
Total		147	3	150

Age * Time spent on SNS Crosstabulation

Table 3		Usage Pattern of Social Networks				Total
		Once a week	daily	2 to 3 times a day	More than 3 times a day	
Age	18-25	19	45	21	28	113
	26-30	1	6	1	7	15
	31-36	0	3	1	3	7
	36-50	0	4	2	1	7
	50+	3	5	0	0	8
Total		23	63	25	39	150

Table 4		Responses	
		N	Percent
Accounts on SN ^a	SNS facebook	147	55.5%
	SNS twitter	32	12.1%
	SNS google+	46	17.4%
	SNS linkedin	35	13.2%
	SNS wordpress	5	1.9%
Total		265	100.0%

Table5		Responses	
		N	Percent
Reason using SN ^a	Keep in touch with family and friends	150	51.4%
	Keep in touch with business contacts	43	14.7%
	To get in touch with fan pages joined/liked	48	16.4%
	Promote business	7	2.4%
	Promote Idea	25	8.6%
	Other	19	6.5%
Total		292	100.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 6		Responses	
		N	Percent
Kinds Of Ads encountered ^a	Web banner	113	41.1%
	Pop up	38	13.8%
	Flash ads	54	19.6%
	Video ads	64	23.3%
	Other	6	2.2%
Total		275	100.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 7	Frequency	Valid Percent
Interactive wall posts/updates	90	60.0
Flash ads	24	16.0
Banner ads	33	22.0
Video ads	3	2.0
Total	150	100.0

Table 8		Responses	
		N	Percent
SN Reagrnding Better Ad ^a	Facebook	127	73.4%
	twitter	8	4.6%
	Google+	23	13.3%
	Linkedin	12	6.9%
	Wordpress	3	1.7%
Total		173	100.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 9	Frequency	Valid Percent
strongly agree	18	12.0
agree	26	17.3
partially agree	52	34.7
partially disagree	23	15.3
disagree	13	8.7
strongly disagree	18	12.0
Total	150	100.0

Table 10		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	many times	34	22.7
	sometimes	68	45.3
	never	33	22.0
	depends on ads	15	10.0
	Total	150	100.0

Table 11	Frequency	Valid Percent
strongly agree	14	9.4
agree	36	24.2
partially agree	48	32.2
partially disagree	22	14.8
disagree	15	10.1
strongly disagree	14	9.4
Total	149	100.0