

Impact Of Social Media Presence On A Brand

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Abstract

Social networking sites are the most popular web-based services in today's world which have shaped the way of communication between brands and consumers quite well. They have opened the door for more interactive, personalized and engaging marketing strategies to increase not only brand awareness but also to build stronger customer-brand relationships to attain brand loyalty. They have changed the way brands operate and have left them with no other choice but to diversify and establish their official brand pages on various social media sites.

Social media platforms experience so much of popularity amongst the consumers that they cause a direct as well as indirect impact on the minds of the people thereby leading them to make an opinion about the brand in question. Brands utilize this easy accessibility and possibility to reach and interact with a large crowd in order to understand the needs of the consumers, get feedback and shape their upcoming marketing strategy accordingly. This helps them in building as well as maintaining their brand and consumer loyalty towards it. These platforms enable direct consumer-brand interactions which mutually benefits both of them.

Thus, in this research is aimed to validate the Impact of Social Media Presence on a Brand. This study was conducted to shed light on the relationship between social media and a brand, especially brand awareness and brand loyalty amongst its consumers. An online survey was conducted as a data of study along with some published material. The information disclosed by the online survey, helped in comparing the findings of secondary data with the primary data. This research is content to reveal the effectiveness of social media in the building and functioning of a brand.

1. INTRODUCTION

Internet today has become the need of the hour and with the widespread and open access to it has crept into the daily life functions and decisions of an individual. We live in an era of globalisation and with that has come in a wave of availability and presence of almost everything through the evolving social media. Social media and networking has now crossed its budding phase and has entered the phase where it is now an influencer.

It is no longer just a platform for connectivity with friends and loved ones but has now become a way for consumers to stay connected with brands and services. Companies today have established social media presence to such an extent that consumers are now widely and actively following them and are engaging with them. Social media presence of brands has helped them connect with their existing customers and also to expand their customer base. On the other hand, it has also enabled the customers to stay updated and connected with the brand /service they are availing.

Nivedita Sharma, in her paper on Social Media and Brand Communication, states “People get attached to brands in social networking sites more than usual banner and pop up ads. These sites become interactive platform for audience and for advertisers.”

Through social media, companies also make efforts to make the consumer feel as a part of the family by not just updating them about the ongoing and upcoming trends and products but also the successes and failures they face.

The aim of this paper is to study over a variety of consumer base so as to reveal the impact of social media presence of a brand on the consumer.

Review Of Literature

Shahriyar Humbatov, 2015, in the paper Brand Management with Social Media In Service Industry states “It was found out that in fact the social media platforms / tools have an impact on generating the brand awareness and loyalty as well as they can be immensely effective tools to design social media strategy. Moreover, it has been depicted that the social media supports businesses to create relevant content and attract people to engage with brand product / service and with this way to expand the visibility of the brand to make customers aware about brand presence in the market.”

Through the study it was analysed that social media platforms have a great impact on a brand, its awareness and loyalty. It was also discovered that social media creates a strong bond between the customer and the brand. Also, it was found that it helps in targeting potential customers. It is also stated that brand engagement widens the visibility and engagement on the online market and engage in a conversation with the representatives of the brand.

Iesha and Rachna, 2017, in their study “IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA BRAND COMMUNICATIONS ON CONSUMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY” state that “Social networks can be seen flooded with various advertisements, which make people explore different purchase options in the virtual spaces. Companies are enthusiastically making use of such spaces to reach out to their customers and boost their brand communications. Though social media has been continually providing very effective ways to engage customers with brands, studies regarding how these affect people perception about the brands are scanty.” The findings of the study conclude that a consumer might be aware about the existence of a brand online with active online presence and also follow it but the feeling of association is formed only when the brand is followed constantly and a continuous communication channel is maintained. Interestingly the study also found that the social media fails to generate an understanding of a brand and the customer’s loyalty towards it.

Nivedita, 2019, in her study “Social Media and Brand Communication :An analysis of Social Networking sites to find communication strategy in developing brand communication” has stated “Many companies attract users by posting frequent updates and providing special offers through their social media profile pages. Social network advertising is a term that is used to describe a form of ONLINE ADVERTISING that focuses on social networking sites. Social networks can take advantage of demographic data on your profile and hence target the advertisement directly to you. Direct advertising based on the network of friends is the most effective format but also causes the most controversy. Indirect advertising is an innovative marketing technique in which a company will create a 'page' or 'group' those users can choose to join.”

It has been found in this study that no brand big or small can sustain itself in today’s era of digitalisation without an effective and attractive presence on various social media platforms and give it a personal edge to engage the customers more effectively and for a longer period of time.

Joana, Helena and Kip, 2014, in their paper “The impact of Facebook presence on brand image” say that “Consumers’ visits to a firm’s Facebook page pages are directly related to

consumers' visits to their own Facebook page and also that Consumers who have a positive perception of the company brand pages on Facebook tend to increase their purchasing volume." They also stated "Company/brand sites that interact more with consumers are those that update Facebook page more often and that the increase of positive consumer perceptions on firms' Facebook pages led to an increase of selling volume."

The study however drew that there is no relationship between the companies that update frequently on social media and also establish and maintain continuous contact with their consumers online. Further, it indicates that with the rising trend of social media presence has made both the consumer and the brand find it necessary to update their page of other platforms on a daily basis.

Melinda, 2015, in the paper "The Impact of Social Media Communication Forms on Brand Equity Dimensions and Consumer Purchase Intention" stated "Web 2.0 has become a real deal and its usage to share information and interact with other users does really help some companies in enhancing their business' performance. One of the platforms that use this technology is social media, where it allows users to connect through text, video, audio, or any other media online." With the intention to study the relationship between social media communication and brand equity" the researcher conducted the survey and found "Both firm created and user-generated communication have positive relationship toward brand awareness or brand association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality. Furthermore, all of the three brand equity dimensions also have positive relationship toward consumer purchase intention."

The study also indicates that even though review and comments are read by the consumers they are not followed blindly by them. A conscious decision about the purchase of the product is made by the consumer based on their own experience and interaction.

Mesut and Irem, 2019, in their paper on "The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Loyalty", stated that "providing relevant and updated content is one of the most crucial strategies to manage a brand on social media successfully. Popularity of the social media platform and the content among friends is another important reason for the customers to be engaged with brands on social media. Since there are plenty of social media platforms and it is impossible to be involved in all of them, marketers should analyze their target audience and decide to participate in the most effective platforms to communicate with them."

The researchers attempted at getting an insight into impact social media presence and interaction with consumers online is affecting the loyalty of a customer and also if the brand has advantages on having an effective online presence.

The findings of the study were that "The results of this study shows that advantageous campaigns on social media are the most significant drivers of brand loyalty followed by relevancy of the content, popularity of the content among friends, and appearing on different social media platforms and providing applications. First of all, companies which want to run effective social media campaigns should take into consideration the benefits, values, advantages they offer to the consumers in their campaigns and what makes the consumers more likely to become loyal to their brands. C platforms and applications that are offered by the brand on social media, what might imply that consumers are asking for creative reasons, variety, and differences for engaging with the brands on social media."

Objectives

The aim of the study is:-

- To study the importance of presence of brands on social media.
- To understand the impact of social media presence of brands on the consumers.
- To analyse whether or not the impact of social media presence of a brand leaves a positive impact on the consumer.

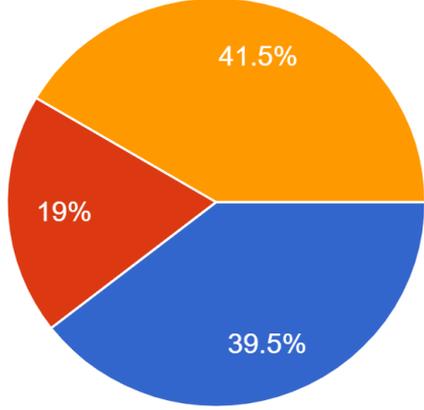
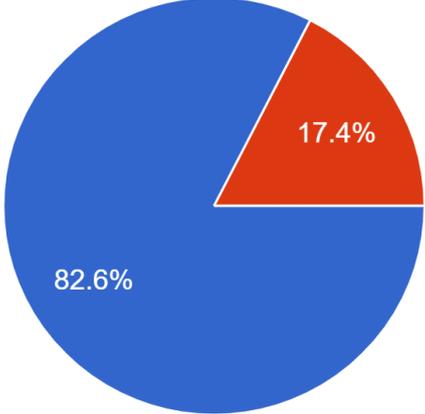
2. RESEACH METHODOLOGY

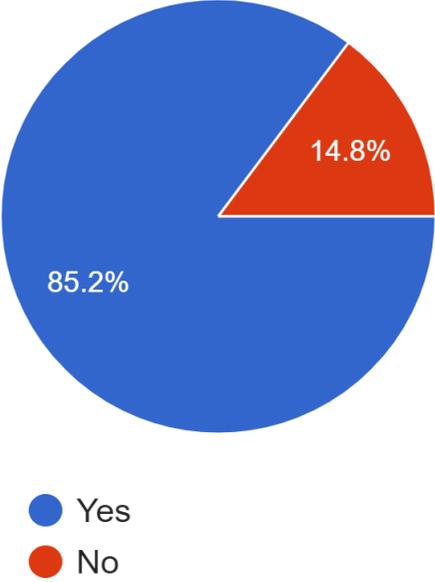
- **Objective 1-** Literature review was done to study the evolution and prevalence of social media. It was also studied that what is the importance of social media for a brand and the relation of the same with the consumer.
- **Objective 2:-** Tool- Questionnaire
- A survey was conducted with the help of a questionnaire amongst 150 people from various age groups, professions and geographical locations with the aim of understanding their perception of social media presence of brands and the impact it has on them.
- **Objective 3:-** With the help of graphs and tables, the same has been tabulated and then further analysed to fulfil the aim of the study.

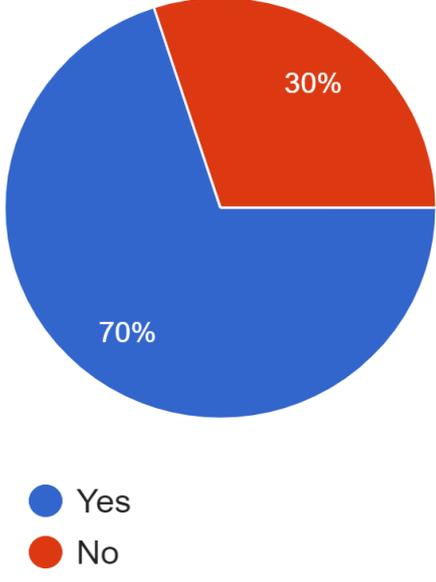
ANALYSIS

Table 1

Total no. of questions: 12		Total no. of Responses: 150	
Sr No.	Question	Responses	Max Response
1.	User addiction of social media	<p> ● Every hour ● Once in a few hours ● Once in a day ● Once in a week </p>	47%

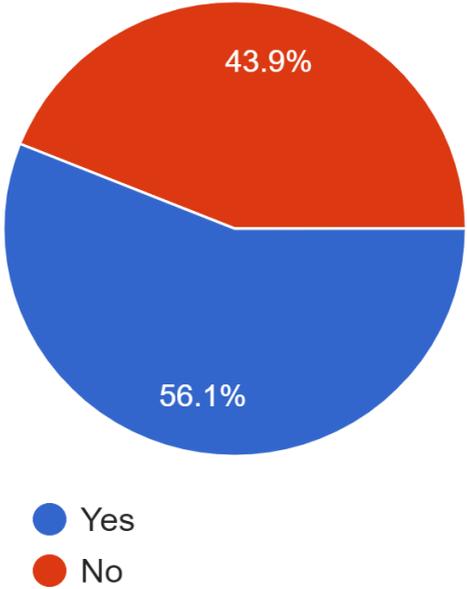
2.	Brand following on Social Media	 <p> ● 1-2 ● 3-4 ● More than 4 </p>	41.5%
Sr No.	Question	Responses	Max Response
3.	Preference of social media availability of a brand.	 <p> ● Yes ● No </p>	82.6%

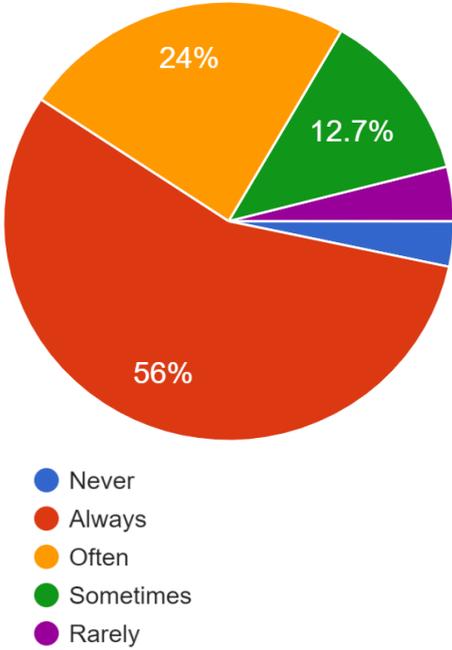
4.	Accessibility and connection felt with the brand/service due its online presence.	 <p>85.2%</p> <p>14.8%</p> <p>● Yes ● No</p>	85.2%
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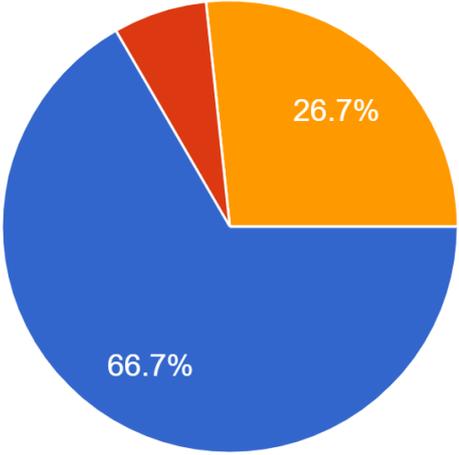
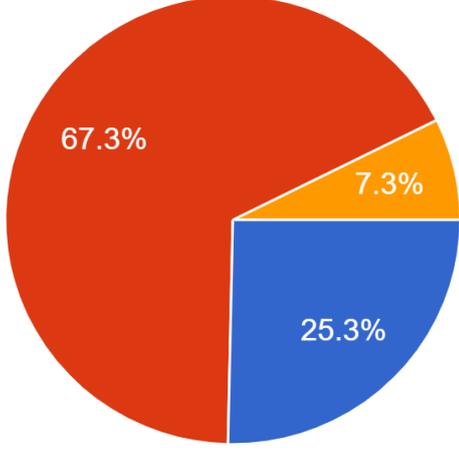
Sr No.	Question	Responses	Max Response
5.	Increase in trust towards a brand based on online communication	 <p>70%</p> <p>30%</p> <p>● Yes ● No</p>	70%

6.	Usage of social media platforms to communicate with brands	<p>A horizontal bar chart with two bars. The top bar is labeled 'Yes' and has a value of 77 (52%). The bottom bar is labeled 'No' and has a value of 74 (50%). The x-axis is labeled from 0 to 80 in increments of 20.</p>	52%
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Sr No.	Question	Responses	Max Response
7.	Response to consumer service related queries and issues answered faster and in a better way on social media	<p>A pie chart with four segments. The largest segment is blue, labeled '73.3%'. The other segments are red (11.3%), orange (12.7%), and green (2.7%). A legend below the chart identifies the colors: blue for 'Agree', red for 'Strongly agree', orange for 'Disagree', and green for 'Strongly Disagree'.</p>	73.3%

8.	Trust towards the projection of a brand on social media	 <p>56.1%</p> <p>43.9%</p> <p>● Yes ● No</p>	56.1%
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Sr No.	Question	Responses	Max Response
9.	Scrutiny of online reviews before purchasing a product/service	 <p>56%</p> <p>24%</p> <p>12.7%</p> <p>● Never ● Always ● Often ● Sometimes ● Rarely</p>	56%

10.	Affect of the online review/response of a brand on the purchasing decision	 <p>66.7%</p> <p>26.7%</p> <p>66.7%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Yes ● No ● May be 	66.7%
Sr No.	Question	Responses	Max Response
11.	Share frequency of the posts of the brands with family and friends	 <p>67.3%</p> <p>7.3%</p> <p>25.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Never ● Sometimes ● Always 	67.3%

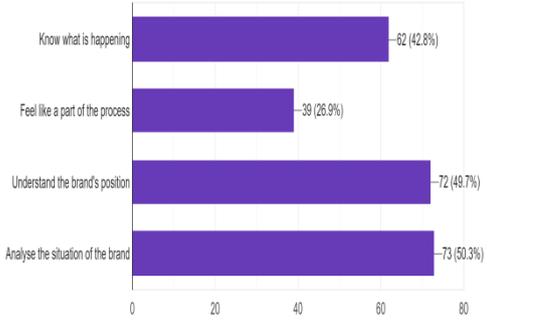
12.	Emotions felt when communication through social media during crisis of a brand is maintained	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Emotion</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Know what is happening</td> <td>62</td> <td>42.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Feel like a part of the process</td> <td>39</td> <td>26.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Understand the brand's position</td> <td>72</td> <td>49.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Analyse the situation of the brand</td> <td>73</td> <td>50.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Emotion	Count	Percentage	Know what is happening	62	42.8%	Feel like a part of the process	39	26.9%	Understand the brand's position	72	49.7%	Analyse the situation of the brand	73	50.3%	50.3% & 49.7%
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Table 2

Q. No.	Max Response	Response	Analysis
1.	47%	Once in a few hours	The world is actively connected at the tips of their fingers through social media. The survey reflects that it has become such an important part of everyone's life these days that they can't resist but scroll through it every other hour.
2.	41.5%	More than 4	The findings of the survey show that people are actively following the brands they like or use on social media platforms to stay up to date with their launches, products, campaigns, offers and latest trends.
3.	82.6%	Yes	The survey shows that customers prefer the online presence of the brands/services they use. The online presence of a brand is a great move in today's fast paced world where time is money. People are so caught up in their hectic schedules that they are growing a bit distant from the traditional means of a brand's presence. But social media has brought the brands to their homes making it more convenient for them.

Q. No.	Max Response	Response	Analysis
4.	85.2%	Yes	<p>According to the survey, consumers feel more connected and feel that the brand is more accessible to them due to their presence on social media. The marketing technique of making an official page of the brand on various social and digital media platforms has turned out to be fruitful as this makes consumers feel closer and more accessible to the brand and its services.</p>
5.	70%	Yes	<p>The study shows that brands are gaining the trust of their consumers because of social media presence. The online brand communities have turned out to be a great asset for the brands and they help the consumers feel relatable and understood. This develops and increases their trust and loyalty towards the brand.</p>
6.	52%	Yes	<p>According to the responses, people use social media to communicate with the brands they follow online. Consumers are using social media platforms moderately to communicate with the brands regarding their expectations, issues, suggestions and feedback. They believe that it's a fairly good means to be heard by the brands.</p>

Q. No.	Max Response	Response	Analysis
7.	73.3%	Agree	The survey supports the fact that queries are resolved and communication is maintained more effectively online. The quick customer services offered online by the brands are proven to be helpful for attaining and maintaining high number of satisfied customers. The consumers believe that their issues are being answered faster via this medium as compared to the other channels.
8.	56.1%	Yes	The results propose the fact that consumers trust social media as a platform to judge their brand. The projection of brands on social media platforms are fairly succeeding in being seen as trustworthy and legitimate in the eyes of the consumers. The content being posted by the brands are being trusted upon to quite a good extent.
9.	56%	Always	According to the survey, online reviews are paid attention to before purchasing a particular product. The online reviews about a brand and its products play a crucial role in the making and breaking of brand loyal consumers because most of the consumers check for the reviews online before purchasing a product.
Q. No.	Max Response	Response	Analysis
10.	66.7%	Yes	It is evident from the responses that online reviews affect the purchasing decisions of a customer. The consumers not only check the online reviews about a brand and its products before purchasing but also consider these reviews with great seriousness. These reviews work as a deciding factor and have the ability to change a

			consumer's mind as well as perception towards the brand as well as its products.
11.	67.3%	Sometimes	According to the responses, the posts about brands are not often shared by the followers. The posts shared by the brand online should feel relatable to the consumers as they usually share those posts with their friends and family. So, the more relatable the post, the more it'll be shared and the more will the brand loyalty ratio increase.
Q. No.	Max Response	Response	Analysis
12.	50.3% & 49.7%	Analyze the situation of the brand & Understand the Brand's situation	The response to the study show that effective communication on social media enables a consumer to Analyze the situation of the brand & Understand the Brand's situation during crisis for a brand. Maintaining communication through social media during the time of crisis by a brand is a great crisis management technique. It helps consumers analyze the situation of the brand. It also depicts the sincerity of the brand and shows how much it cares about its customers, thereby preventing consumer-brand relationship from getting spoiled.

3. CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to study the importance of social media presence for brands and analyse the impact of the presence on consumers. The literature reviews of previous studies have shown a positive relation between social media presence of a brand and its impact on the consumers and on the brand in return. The survey done in this study however supports the literature review and validates it.

The survey has been conclusive that the consumers are using social media very actively in their daily lives and are also following the brands they use online to stay updated and also to communicate whenever necessary. They also feel that they are more connected to the brand through social media and that their queries and concerns are handled more effectively and quickly through social media which increases their trust in the brand and strengthens their bond .

It has also been supported that the reviews given to the brand and its products are scrutinized by the consumers and it further affects their buying decision. This shows how any negative comment, review or any negative activity on social media for or by a brand can hamper the image of a brand and how social media is a very sensitive zone which must be handled very carefully by any brand.

The customers establish trust on the brands, on what they say and also on what is happening with the brand as a company. During a crisis , the study shows that due to the presence and transparency on social media customers are able to understand and analyse the situation better which is beneficial both for the customers and the brand.

It can be safely concluded that just as social media presence is crucial for a brand, it is also an asset to stay more connected to their consumers.

4. REFERENCES

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