

THE CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL OF COMMUNICATION WITH REFERENCE TO EVENT MARKETING IN VIJAYAWADA

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Abstract

Social media platforms enable event organizers to provide clients with timely, relevant, and simple information. Developing a marketing strategy without social media is extremely difficult. Contemporary marketing strategies rely heavily on social media, particularly for promotional activities. The advent of social media has spawned novel event promotion strategies. The purpose of this study is to investigate how consumers in Vijayawada perceive social media communication in the context of event marketing. The purpose of this study is to investigate consumers' social media usage and opinions. In conjunction with demographic considerations, the evaluation of quality, efficacy, credibility, risk, and usability is conducted. Using nonparametric methods, this study investigated the reliability of the questionnaire. In this investigation, the questionnaire was utilized because its reliability coefficient exceeded 0.70. On average, individuals devote three hours per day to social media platforms. This research reveals a significant correlation between age and usefulness.

Keywords: communication, social media, event marketing, consumer perception.

Introduction

Social media marketing is a systematic strategy for promoting a product or service via various social media platforms and websites. Academic discussions acknowledge the prevalence of e-marketing and digital marketing, but there is a growing trend among practitioners and academics to employ social media marketing strategies.

The use of social media platforms for communication with stakeholders and consumers is an efficient method. Nonetheless, the responsibility of supervising and directing an organization's communication strategies and responses may present obstacles. In addition, it is essential to actively monitor and evaluate one's social media efforts to ensure that their communication strategy and intended objectives are aligned. The utilisation of social networking platforms facilitates informal connections, hence expediting the method of marketing and selling products and services without the need for traditional sales approaches.

Event Management

Project management is employed to plan, coordinate, and execute large-scale events. Festivals, conferences, weddings, formal gatherings, concerts, and conventions are examples of social events. The method includes several phases, including brand analysis, audience identification, event concept creation, and pre-event logistics.

Management and organisation are essential elements within the sphere of event planning. Budget management, scheduling, venue evaluation and selection, acquisition of necessary permits, transportation and parking arrangements, coordination of speakers or entertainers, decor planning, event security, catering services, vendor coordination and disaster preparedness are included in the planning and execution of an event. Each event is unique, resulting in variations in both the preparation and execution processes.

Event management software facilitates the process of participant registration, accommodation and transportation booking, and allocation of exhibition floor space by event coordinators.

Sustainable event management, also known as event greening, prioritises environmental, economic, and social factors. Events must incorporate socially and environmentally responsible decision-making in their conception, planning, execution, and participation. In order to ensure responsible hosting, event organisers should integrate concepts of sustainable development across all phases of the event. This includes all coordinated event targeting interventions. It is recommended that event planners involve clients, organisers, venues, subcontractors, and suppliers from the earliest phases of event planning, while also adopting environmentally friendly practises.

Applications of social media in event marketing before events:

- Event marketing before events uses social media to engage the public and facilitate online visitor registration.
- A universal hash tag and event QR code are needed for event promotion.
- For maximum visibility, distribute event details to your audience well in advance.

Post-event social media marketing:

- Write a feature for the company newsletter and social media.
- Share event photos and information on social media.
- Hold a contest for participants.

The research aims to examine the perceptions of consumers in Vijayawada regarding social media as a communication medium in the context of event marketing. Approximately 150 individuals were provided with survey questionnaires. The analysis was limited to data from 126 respondents due to issues such as erroneous definition or missing responses. The present investigation employed nonparametric testing methods. The questionnaire was constructed using the five-point Likert Scale. This analysis utilized primary data pertaining to demographics.

Review of Literature:

Modern society views social media as a powerful communication tool. Social media was rated as a trustworthy information source by users. Social media platforms' perceived authenticity makes them useful for communicating event information, which piques people's interest and encourages active interaction. Demographics affect event selection and perception. Teachers see event selection as simple and user-friendly, whereas less educated people may see it as hazardous. Event managers must use social media to offer updated information, according to Daroch (2017). Social media use in India has increased, leading in a rise in event promotion, especially in rural areas. Consumer reliance on social media word-of-mouth affects information reliability. Low-literate people may view social media as a dangerous tool for information dissemination and actively oppose its use. However, Joy (2017) says social media is a good way to learn about events. Consumers say some social media networks have more information and are more timely. The study reveals that LinkedIn users' information beliefs vary based on source reliability. Thus, people have strong and weak beliefs. Arasu (2014) claims that social media, the most modern type of communication, may help people communicate. Building a marketing strategy without social media is difficult. Many industries and businesses have been affected by social media. Online event marketing relies on social media. Clients use two methods to receive information. Information is first evaluated for content and credibility. These judgements shape their social media views. Social media has grown rapidly, offering event promotion opportunities. Bashar (2012) says social media is good for spreading information. Social media has become essential for business growth, changing event management. Event marketers can quantify clients' perceptions of social media as a communication medium with this study. Age, wealth, gender, and occupation can affect consumer perceptions. However, customers value social media. Thus, adopting technology and its applications is crucial (Ali, 2016).

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify the factors that influence consumers towards social media.
2. To Study the relationship between demographic factors and the perception about social media with regard to usefulness and credibility.
3. To study the perception of consumers towards social media as a source of information in Event marketing.

Scope of the study:

The study's scope has been restricted to examining social media just as a communication instrument. This study has focused exclusively on the Vijayawada region, where social media is extensively utilized as a communication tool for various events.

Problem statement:

This study examines Vijayawada consumers' views of social media for event marketing. This study examines how event marketers use social media to engage customers. Due to the diversity of events, participants may choose several platforms, creating uncertainty about whether all participants will use one.

Hypothesis:

- H0: There is no relationship between age and perception towards usefulness of communication through social media.
- H1: There is relationship between age and perception towards usefulness of communication through social media.
- H10: There is no relationship between education and perception towards credibility of communication through social media.
- H11: There is relationship between education and perception towards credibility of communication through social media.
- H20: There is no relationship between education and perception towards risk of communication through social media.
- H21: There is relationship between education and perception towards risk of communication through social media.

Research Methodology:

Sample design:

- The sample size is 150 respondents. But originally the data obtained is 126 and the left 24 responses are not defined properly.
- Sample Population: Total Vijayawada
- Population scope: All social media users
- Sampling technique: convenient sampling.

Reliability Test:

The reliability statistics for the data is shown below.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.780	.783	5

The reliability is .783 which is $> .7$ hence there is reliability.

The reliability test shows that the questionnaire that was used for this test is reliable. And the factors that are used for this study are genuine factors to know the actual consumer perception towards social media as a communication tool.

Statistical analysis:

The Nonparametric test is performed to test the hypothesis and to study the relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variables.

Grouping variable: age

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	QT	UFT	CRT	RT	EUT
Chi-Square	3.791	11.817	2.123	.469	5.668
Df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.285	.008	.547	.926	.129

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Age

Chi square value is 11.817 between age and the usefulness defines close association between them and it is significant at $p = .008 (< 0.05)$.

Chi square value is 3.791 between age and the quality defines no association between them and its significant value $p = .285 (> 0.05)$. Hence there is no association because the significant value is > 0.05 .

Chi square value is 2.123 between age and the credibility defines no association between them and its significant value $p = .547 (> 0.05)$. Hence there is no association because the significant value is > 0.05 .

Chi square value is .469 between age and risk defines no association between them and its significant value $p = .926 (> 0.05)$. Hence there is no association because the significant value is > 0.05 .

Chi square value is 5.686 between age and ease of use defines no association between them and its significant value $p = .129 (> 0.05)$. Hence there is no association because the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Grouping variable: Education**Test Statistics^{a,b}**

	QT	UFT	CRT	RT	EUT
Chi-Square	5.081	2.977	9.096	13.878	2.769
Df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.166	.395	.028	.003	.429

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: EDUCATION

Chi square value 13.878 between education and risk defines close association between them and it is significant at $p = .003 (< 0.005)$.

Chi square value is 2.977 between education and usefulness defines no association between them and its significant value $p=.395(>0.05)$. Hence there is no association because the significant value is > 0.05 .

Chi square value is 5.081 between education and quality defines no association between them and its significant value $p=.166 (>0.05)$. Hence there is no association because the significant value is > 0.05 .

Chi square value is 2.769 between education and ease of use defines no association between them and its significant value $p=.429 (>0.05)$. Hence there is no association because the significant value is >0.05 .

Hence the Kruskal Wallis test defines there is a relationship between the dependent and the independent factors. Because of the relationship between the variables the null hypothesis is rejected, and the Alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Findings

- Many people spend more than three hours in a week on social media and female respondents also spend more time on social media.
- The majority of people belonging to all age groups engage on social media for entertainment purposes.
- The people in the age group between 20- 24, use social media for entertainment purposes.
- People in the income group between (50001-100000) mainly spending their time on conferences.
- People in the income group between 25001-50000 mostly spend their time on entertainment in social media.
- Less income group people are spending more time on social media when compared to the high-income people.
- There is no significant difference between age and usefulness.
- There is no significant difference between education and perception towards risk.
- There is no significant difference between education and credibility.

Recommendations:

- Effective event marketing relies on positive word of mouth to boost the legitimacy and consistency of event-related information given by participants.
- The respondents enjoy entertainment and understand the necessity to engage consumers with interesting communication.
- Consumer impression varies between activities, allowing event marketers to focus on improving insights.
- People in the income group between 25,001 to 50,000 spend 2-3 hours per day on social media. Since respondents of all income levels are likely to see ads on these platforms, their reach is much greater. Thus, fashion brands may market their items on social media.

Conclusion:

In event promotion, social media is an excellent communication tool. This research shows that people use social media to communicate, with entertainment events being the most widespread topic. Positive correlation exists between dependent and independent variables. Thus, the alternative theory is accepted. Female respondents outnumber male responders, and social media use tops three hours. Using primary data from surveys considerably improves this study. Thus, customer acceptance of social media as an event marketing communication tool suggests considerable communication. The Kruskal-Wallis's test determines if dependent and independent variables are significantly related. People consider social media an efficient communication tool.

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