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**An Empirical study on the consumers' attitude towards Online Word of Mouth Marketing**

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Online word of mouth marketing is the word these days that is thoroughgoing by which any information increasing rapidly across a million people within a short period of time mainly through Social media. Online spoken communication has been one amongst the exciting analysis areas of enquiry. There is a rising attention on the effectiveness of online spoken communication. The present research is conducted to investigate consumers' attitude towards online word of mouth through social networks. People's attitude towards a product is effecting by Social media. But it is difficult to ensure that the consumers prefer the same brand influenced by online word of mouth technique of social networks. This research is to conduct an empirical study to identify the attitude of peoples towards online word of mouth. Various statistical tests such as T test, ANOVA, Friedman rank test have been applied to support the research hypothesis. This analysis not solely provides us with a summary of current standing data within in the domain of online word of mouth, however additionally is a salient guideline for future analysis direction.

**Keywords:** Social networks, onlineword of mouth marketing, consumer attitude and purchase decision

**INTRODUCTION**

Social Media sites are the collection of individuals who share information regarding a common interest in an online media over the internet (Kumar, Raghavan, Rajagopalan and Tomkins, 1999). The entire method concerned in shopping for a product has been modified and ancient advertising is setting out to lose its impact and importance. Today, with the web teams that forming on social networking sites; online spoken marketing has become even more important. Social media sites, blogs, and online testimonials are platforms in which people will speak their mind and reach thousands of individuals directly.. Word of mouth marketing refers to the use of informal communications among networks of consumers to promote products, brands, or services (Brooks Jr, R.C 1957). Base on the social theory suggests that people tend to connect with other who shares common interests (Hills, S 2000). Companies should perceive the facility that consumers possess on social networks and also the influence they will have over one another regarding the purchases of products and services. Shopper's area units are far more probably to believe the recommendation and opinions of their peers over advertisements coming back directly from the corporate. People say products they like as a result of they believe that they're of top quality, and that they feel the requirement to share their satisfaction with others. For an acquisition, particularly if it's a replacement product or one thing pricey, customers wish to do a bunch of analysis beforehand. This typically consists of



seeking the opinions of others and searching for what folks need to say on-line. Each of those varieties of market research square measure samples of spoken promoting (Yang, W.S., Dia, J.B., Cheng, H.C., & Lin, H.T. 2006). Based on relative studies and consumer's tendency to brand and product, this paper has established a model that the message impressions of online word-of-mouth and opinion leaders have influence on people of south Kerala's buying decision. This is because Kerala's literacy level and peoples usage of social network sites and technical knowledge is high. But the factors critical to viral online word of mouth effectiveness remains largely unknown to both marketing academics and practitioners. (Godes D, Mayzlin D, Chen y, Das S, Verlegh P, (2005). This study provides suggestions for Brand websites on how to make effective marketing measures taking the benefit of online word-of-mouth.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Social theory suggests that people interested in connect with others who share common interests (Hill, Provost and Volinsky, 2006). Therefore a customer's call to shop for a product or service may be powerfully full of his or her community or general social network (Yang W.S, Dia Cheng, and Lin, 2006). WOM messages will reach and probably influence several beneficiaries and are sometimes perceived by shoppers to be additional reliable and credible than firm initiated ones, since the senders of WOM are principally freelance of the market (Brown, J., Broderick, A. J., and Lee, N. 2007). Furthermore, WOM is commonly conjointly hiding selling, encouraging customers to feel they solely happened to listen to regarding the merchandise or services instead of to feel directly marketed to (Xu, Y., Zhang, C., L., & Yeo, L. L. 2008). Now a days members of on-line social Medias square measure ideal targets for participation in word of mouth selling efforts. Their participation in on-line social networks permits members to be additional receptive word of mouth selling messages from their on-line community, and that they naturally wish to share info with alternative members (Dwyer, P 2007). More than 1/2 social media users share with others of their social network regarding merchandise they need used. Purchase choices are powerfully influenced by people that the customer is aware of and trusts by his or her social network and their community (Brown, J, Broderick, A.J, and Lee, N2007). Online social network members also are a lot of fascinated by seeing the profile pages of corporations. The scope of on-line social networks is that the reach of groups of customers who share common interests is not any longer restricted geographically which word of mouth messages will be unfold quickly by customers who actually share common interests and preferences. At the individual-level analysis, researchers postulated on-line WOM as a method of non-public influence, within which the communications between a someone and a receiver will change the receivers angle and purchasing decision (Kicker and Cowles, 2001). Despite the increasing shift of advertising spending to social media (Christy.M.K., Cheug & Dimple, R.Thadni). WOM marketing and online social networks have been extensively studied (Brown et al., 2007), But there's restricted analysis that studies the development of effectiveness of

WOM promoting through on-line social networks. Among the restricted variety of studies on this space of analysis, we tend to find 2 general classes of things. The primary class focuses on what proportion this on-line word of mouth through the social network influence shoppers; whereas the opposite class explains however individual factors poignant the communication among consumers and also the final purchase of product (Kiecker and Cowles, 2001). As per Spyros Angelopolus and AntonisKodajamanis (2013) consumer perception and attitudes towards advertising on social media, regarding the effectiveness of advertising mechanisms on social networking sites, and how consumers that are currently in the higher education react towards the phenomenon of “advertising mechanism”. The term advertising mechanism encapsulates all the forms of promoting tools and eWOM (electronic word of mouth) platforms, such as paid ads, groups/pages, page suggestion and friends recommendations. The study attempts to explore to what extent social networking sites can be used as a standalone marketing platform and as an individual marketing strategy. In this study also notes that social networking sites are the link between the brand and the consumer. Based on that, the majority of the firms are following this route to attract consumers, and generate eWOM for their products and services. The succeeding parameter is not entirely based on the brand and the development of the campaign, but also the social advocates that will occur from that process.

#### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

This study has focused on the influence of online word-of-mouth marketing through social networks in the attitudes of consumers towards brands with their final purchase.

#### **OBJECTIVES & HYPOTHESIS OF RESEARCH**

Our research is based on certain objectives:

- To understand the influence of OWOM among consumers
- To examine the consumers attitude towards OWOM
- To analyze the effectiveness of OWOM with final purchase

#### **TEST HYPOTHESIS INCLUDES:**

- There is no significance difference between male and female with respect to the attitude towards online word of mouth marketing
- There is no significance difference among the Age group of consumers with respect to the attitude towards online word of mouth marketing
- There is no association between online word of mouth marketing and the final purchase of consumers

#### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study indicates how great of a potential impact online word of mouth can have on consumer decision process and understanding whether they preferring the same brands in their final consumption.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

**DATA COLLECTION**

The paper used both primary and secondary sources of information. Samples of 75 respondents were taken from the southern region of Kerala using multistage random sampling. An empirical study has been conducted with the questionnaire.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Analysis and interpretation are the backbone of a research process. The aim is to classify and summarize the data so that can be used to give answers to the questions that arise in the research. In this chapter a detailed analysis of collected data has been attempted as per the objectives of the study.

**1. Descriptive Analysis on Sample**

Percentage Analysis is used to describe the characteristics of collected sample or population in totality. Percentage analysis involves computing measures of variables selected of the study and its finding will give interpretation for the reader.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Different Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 30	47	62.7
30 - 40	23	30.7
Above 40	56	7.7
Total	75	100

From the above table it is inferred that 62.7 % people are below 30 years. Only 6.7 % of people are of above40. Maximum number of opinions is given by people below 30 years and minimum number of opinions is given by people above 40.

Table 1.2 Frequency distribution of Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	43	57.3
Single	32	42.7
Total	75	100

From the above table 57.3% of opinion givers are married and 42.7% are single. The maximum number of people responded to online word of mouth marketing is married.

Table 1.3 Frequency distribution of Locality

Locality	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	44	58.7
Rural	31	41.3
o t a l	75	100



From the above diagram it is understandable that the maximum number of respondents are from urban area that is 58.7% and minimum number from rural area which is 41.3%

Table 1.6 Frequency distribution of Account in Social networking Sites

S o c i a l N e t w o r k s	F r e q u e n c y	P e r c e n t a g e
Y o u T u b e	1 2	1 6
F a c e b o o k	4 4	5 8 . 7
T w i t t e r	9	1 2
L i n k e d i n	3	4 0
W h a t ' s a p p	7	9 . 3
T o t a l	7 5	1 0 0

From the above table 4.2.6 inferred that maximum of 58.7% peoples using Facebook and minimum of 9.3% people using what’s app.

Table 1.8 Mean and SD of consumer attitude

Consumer attitude towards online word of mouth marketing	Mean	S D
Discussing with your friends on social networking websites about the product you buy	3 . 8 1	. 6 9
Likes and comments of your friends regarding a product is trustworthy	3 . 6 7	. 7 6
Likes and Reviews of products by your friends are influencing you	3 . 6 1	. 7 5
High brand ratings of products are considered before going for final purchase	3 . 3 2	. 8 1
OWOM marketing increases your annual shopping	3 . 1 1	. 9 4
Believing that the likes and comments are not controlled by companies	3 . 0 8	. 8 5
OWOM is using largely for selecting products	3 . 0 4	1.18
OWOM marketing influence you to purchase that you don’t need	3 . 0 3	. 9 4
Believing that all the likes and comments of products are true	2 . 7 5	. 9 0
Choosing the same brand advertised through OWOM in the final purchase	2 . 6 9	1.03

Based on the mean score, people discussing with friends about the product having high mean value of (3.81), followed by likes and comments of friend is trustworthy (3.67) are the most important factors showing their perception This shows that high influence of online spoken communication among people. The least factor choosing the same brand advertised through media in final purchase (2.69) in respective with the above shows that there is a low level of effectiveness by online marketing in the final purchase of people.

## 2. Inferential Analysis on Sample

Variations between two teams with in the mean scores of variables are studied using T test are discussed in this section. Also ANOVA, Friedman test are used to verify the hypothesis stated in the paper.



Table 2.1 T tests for significant difference between male and female with respect to online word of mouth marketing.

Online word of mouth	M a l e		F e m a l e		T V a l u e	P V a l u e
	M e a n	S D	M e a n	S D		
	5 0 . 5 6	6 . 3 7 4	4 5 . 5 9	6 . 9 4 2		

Note: \*\* denotes significant at 1%level 2. \* denotes significant at 5% level

Since P value is less than 0.01, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level with regard to dimension of online word of mouth marketing. Here the null hypothesis is rejected; there is a significance difference between male and female with respect to online word of mouth marketing. Based on the mean score among male are high (50.56) than female (45.59) this makes a remark that the male are more influenced than female.

Table 2.2. ANOVA test for significance difference between age, with respect to consumer attitude towards online word of mouth marketing.

Online word of mouth	A g e g r o u p			F v a l u e	P v a l u e
	B e l o w 3 0	3 0 - 4 0	A b o v e 4 0		
	4 6 . 4 0 (3.85)	4 4 . 9 1 (6.63)	5 0 . 3 8 (6.83)		

Note: 1.The value within bracket refers to SD 2. \*\* denotes significant at 1%level 3. \*denotes significant at 5%level

Since P Value is less than 0.01, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level with regard to the dimension of consumer attitude towards online word of mouth. Hence here there is a significant difference among age group with online word of mouth. Here the p value for age group is 0.006.



Table.2.3. Friedman test for mean rank of consumers attitude towards online word of mouth

Consumer attitude towards online word of mouth	Mean Rank	Chi square value	P value
Discussing with your friends on social networking websites about the product you are going to buy	10.67	170.245	<0.001**
Likes and comments of your friends regarding a product is trustworthy	10.17		
Spending time on social media for seeing reviews and likes of products you are going to buy	9.93		
Likes and Reviews of products by your friends are influencing you	9.81		
Believing that social media advertisement is not affecting your privacy	8.59		
High brand ratings of products are considered before going for final purchase	8.39		
Social media is the best place to get product awareness	8.05		
Believing that the personal data shared with companies are keeping confidential	7.63		
OWOM marketing increases your annual shopping.	7.43		
Believing that the likes and comments are not controlled by companies	7.27		
OWOM is using largely for selecting products	7.26		
OWOM influence you to purchase that you don't need	7.09		
Social media sites and brand pages giving you proper response for doubts and grievances about the product	6.25		
Believing that all likes and comments of products are true	5.84		
Choosing the same brand marketed through OWOM in the final purchase	5.62		

\*\* denotes significant at 1% level

Here the P value is <0.001; hence there is significant difference among mean ranks of consumer perspective towards online word of mouth. Based on mean rank discussing with your friends on social media having high mean rank(10.67) shows high usage of online spoken communication through social networks . Least mean rank (5.62) on choosing the same brand advertised through social media in final purchase, shows that there is a less effectiveness of online word of mouth in people's final purchase.

**FINDINGS**

There is variability among consumer attitude towards online word of mouth. It shows that there is an influence of online word of mouth among different age groups. The effectiveness of OWOM is related with brand followers and brand purchase either through offline or online. The online word of mouth would be influencing the attitude of the customers but they are not going for the final purchase of same brand. More over the consumers are not getting the information timely and adequately. The queries are not answering through the brand pages in time. People do not perceive social media networks as a grievance redressed platform.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Social media channels have a placing ability to draw in customers with online word of mouth selling and may lead people to valuable content settled on company's website. So as to accomplish this goal additional with efficiency following steps could also be followed:

- a) Modify the way of online word of mouth about the brand i.e. concentrate more on opinion leaders those have trust among the people.
- b) Maintain a consistent communication style with people.
- c) Online word of mouth affecting differently to different age groups so marketers should pay greater attention to the credibility of the messages and controlled word of mouth according to various age groups.
- d) Conduct more marketing campaigns to make a final push.
- e) Implement more control over online word of mouth about the product in order to avoid product bullying.
- f) Concentrate on families which having more purchase power.
- g) Develop trust among people by safeguard their privacy and secrecy.
- h) Ideally, software can design based on the results of this study, which help marketers identify whether the people attracted most with online word of mouth is end up with purchase of the same brand advertised. There by understand the effectiveness of their brands online word of mouth and can control expenses of online advertising.

## **CONCLUSION**

The medium of social networking sites is growing in no time and holds the massive potential However it remain aborning stage in India. Online word of mouth is the most effectively used advertising mechanism in social media sites. From the above research it shows that the effectiveness of online word of mouth should develop more, not only to attract people towards brand but also to keep a consistent relation with them till their final purchase. Firms should focus on social groups and interactive approach in the marketing campaign that will be used as the primal force in the generation of online word of mouth. More concentration should give at different age groups using social networking sites in order to create more trust towards online word of mouth marketing.

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