



THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING ON CONSUMERS BUYING BEHAVIOUR: A CASE OF AIRTEL IN IRINGA MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of social media advertising on consumers buying behavior in Iringa Municipality. Specifically, the study intended to determine the influence of social media credibility, informative messages and entertainment on consumers buying behavior in Iringa Municipality. The research employed explanatory design whereby a quantitative research approach was used. The targeted population was 174,000 customers of Airtel Iringa where a sample size of 250 was drawn out of it. Data were collected using a questionnaire and was analyzed using descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency and measures of variations) processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) V.20. The findings revealed that customers are satisfied with the credibility of Airtel social media which influences them on consumers buying behavior. Advertisements provided by Airtel on social media are trusted and are easily accessible by customers on social media. Furthermore, majority of the customers are influenced with social media entertainment on their buying behavior because Airtel social media advertisements are more enjoyable, desired, excitement and surprises, The study concludes that social media advertisements which are trusted and are easily accessible by customers on social media raises customer loyalty. On the other hand, clear and updated information, accurate information, complete and reasonable information on social media also influences consumer behavior. The study recommends that Airtel should make use of these research findings to tailor their marketing elements with potential customers' needs. In addition Airtel should ensure that provided information is clear and updated in order to capture customer

attention hence increasing customer loyalty. Furthermore, Airtel should offer creative and innovative advertisements to its customers in order to compete in the dynamic fast paced telecommunication markets.

Key words; social media advertising, consumer buying behavior, credibility, informative messages and entertainment.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior, as stated by Hoyer et al. (2012), “reflects the totality of consumers decisions with respect to the acquisition, consumption, and disposition of goods, services, activities, experience, people and ideas by (human) decision-making units (over time)” (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2012, p. 4).

Court et al., (2018) and Powell et al. (2019) explain that the consumers buying behaviour journey starts with initial awareness of a product, to familiarizing themselves with the product (information search), to considering purchasing a product (evaluation of product), to actually buying the product (decision) and finally developing and maintaining loyalty to the product. It is the cognitive processes that consumers go through when making purchase decisions (Sheehan, 2019).

The modern consumer no longer relies on the information which is provided to them via traditional marketing (Court et al., 2018). The modern consumer engages in market research and is able to gather information to help educate themselves about the brands (Sheenan, 2019). This presents marketers with the opportunity to influence the consumer’s buying behaviour decision journey by means of aggressive market communications via touch points (Court et al., 2018). Touch points are media platforms which allow consumers to connect to brands (Vollmer and Precourt, 2018).

Chu and Kim (2011) suggest that the consumers easily engage with social network sites in their buying decision process to seek their contacts’ opinions about products, because they acquire more credible information from their friends’ or family rather than unknown people

Social medias are ones of the means of (Communication) conveying information quickly, accurately and efficiently over the internet (Mitel, 2018) with the growing of communication technology, social medias have become a great opportunity to many firms in offerings information and promoting their products as many people are in demand of it too. In recent years, customers in social Medias have extended regarding their age, income, profession, gender,

education and religion and it has become an important component of the present life time (Rahman, 2014).

According to Marketer (2013), nearly one in four people worldwide use social network sites - a number of about 1.73 billion people. By 2017, the global social network audience was estimated to be around 2.55 billion people (Schivinski and Dabrowsk, 2019).

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was guided by persuasion theory which was developed by Carl I. Hovland during the 1940s and '50s. Mr. Hovland's "Message Learning Theory" posits that the more people learn and remember from an advertisement, the more persuasive the advertisement will be. His research was designed around the step-by-step process through which people are persuaded: attention, comprehension, yielding and retention of the message. Practical guidelines suggested by message learning theory include, for example, that repetition of a message increases learning; commercials "wear out" faster among serious social media users; and commercials that employ brand users as the message source wear out more slowly than do those that use only straightforward claims and basic support. "Source characteristics" themselves were another major research track within message learning theory, and Mr. Hovland and his colleagues argued that the source of the message had a huge persuasive impact on audiences. They believed that audiences evaluate a source using two independent characteristics -- the degree to which the speaker is perceived to be an expert on the topic and the degree to which the speaker is perceived to be trustworthy.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 The Influence of Social Media Credibility on Consumers buying behaviour

Schivinski and Dabrowsk (2016) conducted a study on "The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase behaviour in Mumbai Markets". The study employed cross-sectional research design whereby primary data were collected from 70 respondents. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study found purchase behaviour is positively influenced by brand equity and brand image of the company. The results also showed that credibility of the company have a positive influence on purchase decision of customers as

the customer trust the brand and influenced to purchase the product due to social media credibility.

Khatibi (2016) did a study on “The Influence of Social Media on Consumer buying behaviour Process in Saudi Arabia”. The study used descriptive research design. Primary data were collected and 50 respondents were involved. Descriptive statistics were used in data analysis. The study found that the influence of social media has different levels when customer going through various stages of the consumers' purchasing behaviour process. The results of the research approved that consumer in Saudi Arabia are actively using social media platforms as a tool when they engage in the purchase decision because of its credibility. However, consumers are considered to be willing to sharing their opinions and word-of-mouth to other customers through social media platforms. It further approved that Saudi consumer were affected by social media in their purchasing behavior.

3. CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed quantitative approach where explanatory design the target population of this study included all 174,000 customers of Airtel in Iringa Municipality where by the a sample size of sample size of 250 was used with Simple random sampling which gave each Airtel customer equal chance of being selected. The study used primary data direct from the social media users in order to be more reliable and was collected through questionnaire and secondary data from airtel. Since this study incorporates quantitative data, descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. Empirical review of Scarth (2017) who conducted a study on “The influence of social media entertainment on purchase behavior of motor vehicle brands in South Africa”. The study employed descriptive research design whereby primary data were collected from 75 respondents. The study used descriptive statistics in data analysis. The study revealed that the brands examined has very positive image in respondents' minds, respondents were also perceiving tested brands as brands with good reputation on entertainment which draw positive features in consumers' minds.

In case of validity of the study, it was rooted in three aspects namely content, face and construct. The content of this study was extracted from empirical and theoretical review. From empirical and theoretical review of the theory of persuasion the study rooted both its independent and dependent variables. Data collection method which explains the face aspect of the validity of this study was considered by modifying questions of formal studies in respects to this study. In order to ensure validity of qualitative findings, a researcher correctly extracted constructs from the persuasion Theory so that to attain both theoretical and generalizability validity. Moreover the use of modified data collection methods from studies of other researchers who did studies in relation to the topic in question also ensured factual and accuracy of the data thus descriptive validity.

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent result. Kothari, (2014), reliability is quality of consistency of a study or measurement he study ensured reliability of data by obtaining information from authorized source and asking the same question to the respondents in order to avoid variation moreover the researcher looked for University research clearance form.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Analysis Results and Discussion

According Prasad, (2018) research reliability varies in quantitative and qualitative. Reliability in qualitative research is essentially a synonym for credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. Through the use of modified data collection methods of the previous other studies of Şahin, (2020).

Moreover the study also considered ethical issues by paying respects and giving freedom to all respondents in fill the questionnaires as well as keeping their information confidentiality for academic purpose only.

In addition, both respondent's ethics as well as morals was considered. The respondents were bound to observe the research ethics which include honest and trust to the researcher by providing correct answers. Respondent's rights to privacy, right to safety, right to the research consequence and right to know the factual reason of research results was considered and the information was not used for other purpose than this study. Moreover, the researcher asked airtel-iringa data collection permit letter for clearance procedures.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Analysis Results and Discussion

The researcher wanted to investigate the influence of social media advertising on consumer buying behavior. To answer this objective of the study, five statements were given to the respondents to rate using Likert scale of agreement. The response to these statements is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Social Media Credibility and Consumers Buying Behaviour

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
Airtel provides me with trusted advertisements on social media	18	47	58	61	66
	7.2	18.8	23.2	24.4	26.4
Airtel social media raises my loyalty towards the advertised product.			12	192	16
			16.8	76.8	6.4
Airtel advertisements are easily accessible on social media	18	24	45	55	108
	7.2	9.6	18.0	22.0	43.2
Airtel social media are credible sources of information of a particular product.	21	16	63	105	45
	8.4	6.4	25.2	42.0	18.0

Source: Research findings, (2022)

Table 1 shows that of 250 respondents, statement 1, 50.8% of the respondents agreed that Airtel provides trusted advertisements on social media, 26% were neutral to the statement while the remaining 23.2% disagreed. This implies that majority of customers trust Airtel advertisements on social media.

On the second statement, 83.2% of the respondents agreed that Airtel social media raises their loyalty towards the advertised product while the remaining 16.8% were neutral. This implies that majority of customers are loyal to Airtel products advertised on social media.

On third statement, 65.2% of the respondents agreed that Airtel advertisements are easily accessible on social media, 18% were neutral while the remaining 16.8% disagreed with the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied with accessibility of Airtel advertisements on social media.

Regarding the fourth statement, 60% of the respondents agreed that Airtel social media are credible sources of information of a particular product, 25.2% were neutral while the remaining 14.8% disagreed with the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied with Airtel social media as a credible sources of information.

4.2.2 The Influence of Social Media Informative Messages on Consumers Buying Behavior

Under this objective, the researcher was interested in finding out the influence of social media informative messages on consumers buying behavior. That is why the researcher listed some of the basic questions and the respondents were supposed to pinpoint their views by rounding their right choices against the right answers if they agree or disagree. The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 2: Social Media Informative Messages and Consumers Buying Behaviour

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
Airtel provides me with clear and updated information on social media which influences my intention to buy	24	42	48	55	81
	9.6	16.8	19.2	22.0	32.4
Airtel provides accurate information on social media which influences my buying behavior		45	37	39	129
		18.0	14.8	15.6	51.6
There is availability of complete information on Airtel social media accounts which influences my buying behavior		37	40	63	110
		14.8	16.0	25.2	44.0
There is reasonable information on Airtel social media accounts which influences my buying behaviour	18	47	58	61	66
	7.2	18.8	23.2	24.4	26.4

Source: Research findings, (2022)

Table 2 shows that of 250 respondents,

statement 1, 54.4% of the respondents agreed that Airtel provides clear and updated information on social media which influences customers' intention to buy, 26.4% disagreed while the remaining 19.2% were neutral with the statement. This implies that majority of customers are influenced to buy due to clear and updated information Airtel on social media.

Statement 2, 67.2% of the respondents agreed that Airtel provides accurate information on social media which influences consumers buying behavior, 18% disagreed while the remaining 14.8% were neutral to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied with accuracy of information on social media which influences their buying behavior.

Statement 3, 69.2% of the respondents agreed that there is availability of complete information on Airtel social media accounts which influences consumers buying behaviour, 16% were neutral while the remaining 14.8% disagreed to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied with availability of complete information on Airtel social media accounts which influences their buying behavior.

Statement 4, 50.8% of the respondents agreed that there is reasonable information on Airtel social media accounts which influences consumers buying behavior, 26%disagreed while the remaining 23.2% were neutral to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied with information provided with Airtel on social media accounts which influences their buying behavior.

Under this objective, the researcher was interested in finding out the influence of social media informative messages on consumers buying behavior. The study revealed that Airtel provides informative messages on social media which influences consumers buying behavior. It provides clear and updated information, accurate information, complete and reasonable information on social media which influences consumer intention to buy. Therefore, clear informative messages on social media influence consumers buying behavior.

4.2.3 The Influence of Social Media Entertainment on Consumers Buying Behaviour

Under this objective, the researcher was interested in examining influence of social media entertainment on consumers buying behaviour. That is why the researcher listed some of the basic questions and the respondents were supposed to pinpoint their views by rounding their right choices against the right answers if they agree or disagree. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Social Media Entertainment and Consumers Buying Behaviour

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
Airtel social media advertisements are even more enjoyable than other media content.		37	68	69	76
		14.8	27.2	27.6	30.4
I feel pleasure in thinking about what I saw or heard in Airtel social media advertisements		60	61	61	68
		24.0	24.4	24.4	27.2
Airtel social media advertising contains a lot of excitement and surprises	7	19	22	91	111
	2.8	7.6	8.8	36.4	44.4
Most of the time Airtel social media advertising contains funny character and its enjoyable	7	13	18	103	109
	2.8	5.2	7.2	41.2	43.6

Source: Research findings, (2022)

Table 3 shows that of 250 respondents, statement 1, 58% of the respondents agreed that Airtel social media advertisements are even more enjoyable than other media content, 27.2% were neutral while the remaining 14.8% disagreed to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are enjoying Airtel social media advertisements more than other media content.

Statement 2, 51.6% of the respondents agreed that customers feel pleasure in thinking about what they saw or heard in Airtel social media advertisements, 24.4% were neutral while the remaining 24% disagreed to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied with what they saw or heard in Airtel social media advertisements.

Statement 3, 80.8% of the respondents agreed that Airtel social media advertising contains a lot of excitement and surprises, 10.4% disagreed while the remaining 8.8% were neutral to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied with Airtel excitement and surprises through social media advertisements.

Statement 4, 84.8% of the respondents agreed that most of the time Airtel social media advertising contains funny character and its enjoyable, 8% disagreed while the remaining 7.2% were neutral to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied with funny character of Airtel social media advertisements and are enjoyable.

Under this objective, the researcher was interested in examining influence of social media entertainment on consumers buying behavior. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents are influenced with social media entertainment on their buying behavior because Airtel social media advertisements are more enjoyable, desired, excitement and surprises than other media content, also they contain funny character.

Table 4: Social Media and Consumers Buying Behaviour

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %
Airtel advertises through social media to increase number of products purchased online		39	57	66	88
		15.6	22.8	26.4	35.2
Airtel advertises through social media to increase number of feedback information online	9	12	23	100	106
	3.6	4.8	9.2	40.0	42.4
Airtel advertises through social media to increase number of product viewers online	3	14	28	92	113
	1.2	5.6	11.2	36.8	45.2
Airtel uses social media advertising to influence consumers buying behavior	3	7	25	105	110
	1.2	2.8	10.0	42.0	44.0

Source: Research findings, (2022)

Table 4 shows that of 250 respondents, statement 1, 61.6% of the respondents agreed that Airtel advertises through social media to increase number of products purchased online, 22.8% were neutral while the remaining 15.6% disagreed to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied that Airtel increase number of products purchased online through social media advertisements.

Statement 2, 82.4% of the respondents agreed that Airtel advertises through social media to increase number of feedback information online, 9.2% were neutral while the remaining 8.4% disagreed to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied that Airtel increase number of feedback information online through social media advertisements.

Statement 3, 82% of the respondents agreed that Airtel advertises through social media to increase number of product viewers online, 11.2% were neutral while the remaining 6.8% disagreed to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are satisfied that Airtel increase number of product viewers online through social media advertisements.

Statement 4, 86% of the respondents agreed that Airtel uses social media advertising to influence consumers buying behavior, 10% disagreed while the remaining 4% disagreed to the statement. This implies that majority of customers are influenced on their buying behavior due to Airtel social media advertisements.

The researcher was interested in assessing the influence of social media on consumers buying behavior. The findings revealed that Airtel advertises through social media with the aim of increasing number of products purchased online, number of feedback information online and number of product viewers online. Thus the use of social media advertisements triggers more consumer buying behavior. Therefore, consumer buying behavior has been influenced with many factors and it is important for the company to take into consideration factors with influence consumer buying behavior.

The finding was in line with study done by Zhang et al., (2018) revealed that exposure to electronic word of mouth (EWOM) messages can generate more interest in a product category than can exposure to information produced by marketers. Today, consumers are more knowledgeable of the products they consume due to the internet empowering them to gain access to information thus, creating active co-producers of value Consumers as co-producers of value can provide companies with a large amount of return on investment because it is increasing brand awareness, which signifies the importance of EWOM in today's marketing world. "Social media such as Facebook allow target consumers to become message senders by passing on ads to friends, connecting them to the advertisers explicitly, or commenting on the ad and having those comments passed along viral channels".

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

It could be concluded that most of consumers' buying behavior are influenced by the act of social media advertisement where by social media advertisement which are trusted and are easily accessible by customers on social media raises customer loyalty. On the other hand, clear and updated information, accurate information, complete and reasonable information on social media also influences consumer intention to buy. Additionally, social media advertisements which are more enjoyable, desired, excitement and surprises and also contains funny character influences more consumers buying behaviour.

5.3 Recommendations

From the findings, the study recommends that:

Airtel should make use of these research findings to tailor their marketing elements with potential customers' needs. For instance, this study has revealed that the trusted information, accurate information, complete and reasonable information influences consumers buying behavior.

Airtel should ensure that provided information is clear and updated in order to capture customer attention hence increasing customer loyalty.

Airtel should offer creative and innovative and entertaining advertisements to its customers in order to compete in the dynamic fast paced telecommunication markets.

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