ISSN Number (Print) – 2693-4108
ISSN Number (Online) – 2691-5103

Examining the role of meme marketing on purchase intention - A social media marketing perspective.

*[1]Deepanjan Mukhopadhyay, [2]Srishtika Mazumder, [3]Srinjan Das, [4]Subham Goon, [*5]Dibyendu Chattaraj*

Abstract

Purpose: Meme Marketing is relatively a newer concept in the market which needs significant exploration and practical implications before it can be used thoroughly in the market. Meme has generally been accepted by the younger generation and the ever-changing markets throughout the world. This study shows the effects of Meme Marketing and its deeper understandings by researching the consumer's behaviour towards the product purchase intentions after interacting with the meme and its community.

Methods: A self-developed structured questionnaire had been used as the research instrument to collect data from 125 respondents in Kolkata. This study was analytical and correlational in nature and utilised convivence sampling. It was meant to determine the relationship among antecedent and outcome variables, and followed Descriptive statistics analysis as the analysis tool to examine the stated relationship. Prior to Descriptive statistics analysis the reliability and validity of the data was measured using reliability test and exploratory factor analysis.

Findings: Meme Impact is significantly influenced by Meme Value. When a brand has a high Value of Meme, consumers can anticipate to receive information about that brand that is of high quality, whether it is information on the brand's products, services, or after-service quality. It can also be claimed that trends have a significant influence on how a customer responds to memes. People's purposeful decision to follow the most recent trends at the time creates satisfaction and makes the company appear more approachable and real.

Implications: Younger generation is gradually taking up most of the purchasing power of the markets. Hence, to attract these younger consumers marketers needs to understand the consumer psychology. Meme on varied forms can be a good option for marketers to reach and understand consumer. This study can be an input in this regard to strategize the move for various companies.

Keywords: Meme Marketing, Purchase Intention, Value of Meme (VM), Advertising Insights (AI), Customer Retention (CR) and Trends (TR).

ISSN Number (Print) – 2693-4108
ISSN Number (Online) – 2691-5103

[1]BBA Final Year Student, Institute of Engineering & Management, Kolkata, India Contact Number: 7044777964, E-mail: deepanjan.miembba2020@gmail.com

[2]BBA Final Year Student, Institute of Engineering & Management, Kolkata, India Contact Number: 8777748634 E-mail: srishtika.mazumderiembba2023@gmail.com

[3]BBA Final Year Student, Institute of Engineering & Management, Kolkata, India Contact Number: 79806 18638 E-mail: srinjan.dasiembba2020@gmail.com

[4]BBA Final Year Student, Institute of Engineering & Management, Kolkata, India Contact Number: 6290324503 E-mail: subham.gooniembba2020@gmail.com

*[*5]Assistant Professor – Marketing, Institute of Engineering & Management, Kolkata, India Contact Number: 7595971975 E-mail: dibyendu.chattaraj@iemcal.com*

Introduction

Every company, organization, or firm wants to increase its revenues. Brands want to increase their sales, for increasing sales they use different tools like marketing, sales promotions, or advertising. Advertising plays a vital role in every company's success or brand's success. Marketers search for ways to get consumer intention to use different advertising techniques. Advertisers use humor in every one of the five television ads, advertisers believe that humor advertisements get more intention rather than non-humor ads, and humorous commercials tend to increase the intention of consumers. Humorous advertisements also help to increase brand image, and customer loyalty and funny ads attract consumers and enhance positive feelings about the product.

According to a study by the University of California, Irvine, memes have the ability to spread rapidly through online communities and generate high levels of engagement (Ferrara, et al., 2016).

Businesses can use memes in a variety of ways, such as creating their own memes to promote their products or using existing memes in advertising campaigns. For example, the fast-food chain Wendy's has been known to use memes in its social media marketing strategy, often using humor and sarcasm to engage with customers and promote its products (Bickmore, 2019). Another example is the campaign of the brand Old spice which uses humor and absurdity in its video ads and social media posts, this campaign was a success as it boosted the brand and increased sales (Fowles, 2018). Another study, conducted by Wang et at. (2020), found that memes can also increase purchase intention by creating a sense of humor and relatability for the brand. The study suggests that this is because memes often use relatable or humorous content, which can make the brand feel more approachable and likable to the consumer.

In conclusion, the role of meme marketing on purchase intention is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that requires further research. However, it is clear that memes can be an effective tool for increasing brand awareness, positive sentiment, and purchase intention among consumers.

Objectives

1. To study the role of meme marketing on purchase intention - A social media marketing perspective.
2. To examine the role of meme marketing on purchase intention - A social media marketing perspective.

Literature Review

Meme Impact

The memetic approach shifts focus from the individual to social interactions (Gabora, 1996), which in online communities involve participation in discussions resulting in information exchange. To describe these informational units, Dawkins coined the term "meme" and defined it as "a unit of cultural transmissions, or a unit of imitation" (Dawkins, 1976, p. 192). Others have defined memes as an instruction for behavior passed on through imitation (Blackmore, 1999), a "unit of cultural evolution and selection" (Wilkins, 1998, p. 56), and an informational pattern that can be copied from one brain to another (Heylighen, 1998). Although Internet memes have received more scholarly and public attention, a meme in its broader definition is any piece of information or practice that can be transmitted from one person to another (Gabora, 1996).

Value of meme

Memes are contagious patterns of cultural information that are transferred from mind to mind, which directly shape and transmit the key actions and mentalities of a social group (Knobel and Lankshear, 2007). With the advent of social networks, memes have become a practice to propagate and circulate communications, which has a significant dimension in cultural production and transfer (Knobel, 2006a). Knobel and Lankshear (2007) have explained that memes include things like popular melodies, key phrases, clothing fashions, ways of doing things, icons, jingles, among other elements. When the use of memes throughout social media is observed, a tendency to satirize social events using laughter as a measure of collective coping with the news of public interest becomes evident (Guilmette, 2008). Collective coping consists of the learned and uniform responses that culture manifests with the purpose of eliminating a stressor to change the interpretation of a situation. The study of collective coping is triggered by different forms of the media, which builds and communicates something (Kaplan and Liu, 2000; Lindgren, 2012; Wagner, 1998; Wagner et al., 2002)

H1: Value of Meme (VM) influences the Meme Impact (MI) of a product of that particular brand, for a consumer to use a particular brand.

ISSN Number (Print) – 2693-4108
ISSN Number (Online) – 2691-5103

Advertising Insights

Meme culture in today's social media age has become a norm which is widely appreciated by a majority of people, mainly the youth (Bury, 2016). But while it is enjoyed by the majority of the population, memes rarely promote brands directly and instead stress on a particular emotion, the acceptance towards this form of marketing has been snowballing. Several advertisements have the potential of negatively affecting certain aspects of both cognitive and emotional components of brand equity and may also later affect the attitude towards the brand (Ramish, 2020). Memes are funny and entertaining to consume (Milosavljevic, 2020; Wu & Ardley, 2007). Marketers hijack humorous and famous memes to market their products and it has become increasingly popular as it is a good way to share and revive content that has the capability to go viral. These days, memes have become a new language of social media to communicate trends, ideas and attitudes (Bury, 2016). So, it is safe to say that meme marketing can generate a new life in the strategy of social media. Memes are easy to make with the correct image editor and animation tools to customise it according to the brand and target audience (Bury, 2016; Yang, 2022).

H2: Advertising Insights (AI) influences the Meme Impact (MI) for a particular brand.

Customer Retention

Increased performance in customer retention practices, on the other hand, has been found to create five times more impact than a similar amount of discount or cost of the capital, leading into the more profitable customer relationship. (Ang & Buttle, 2006.) Ang and Buttle (2006) have stated that the planning of a customer retention process is essential in order to achieve the desired level of outcome which is determined in the modern management literature. Although, the development of the customer retention process still is a rather unknown concept due to the lack of research in this specific field. The limited research around the metrics and segments of the customer retention processes has turned out to be the root cause for the problematic implementation of customer retention on companies' business strategies. (Ang & Buttle, 2006.) Overall, customer retention has been recognized to be an effective way to lower the maintenance costs per se and yield economic benefits (Ang & Buttle, 2006).

H3: Customer Retention (CR) of a particular brand) influences the Meme Impact (MI) for a particular brand.

Trends

A trend is a pattern of behaviour or interest that becomes popular and spreads rapidly among a particular group of people. Memes, on the other hand, are ideas, images, or videos that are widely shared and often take on a life of their own online. The research says that trends often give rise to new memes or inspire existing ones and memes are in currently in trend, hence it can be said that trending memes influences one's purchase of brand or product.

H4: Trends (TR) influences the Meme Impact (MI) for a particular brand.

Research Methodology

Model Development

To study relationship between the five constructs namely Meme Impact (MI) Value of meme (VM), Advertising insights (AI), Customer Retention (CR) and Trends (TR). a model is proposed for this study. This model enables to know the influence of independent variable on the dependent variable i.e., Meme Impact.

Sample & sampling:

The research is of quantitative approach. In this research primary data are collected from 125 (n=125) respondents to examine the relationships between the constructs using self- developed structured questionnaire using survey method. The survey was done by non- probability judgmental sampling. The questionnaire had 2 sections. The first part was to cover the demographics. The second part was to understand the relationship between the constructs. In the questionnaire 5-point Likert scale was used to collect the data, where strongly agree (SA)=5 and strongly disagree (SD)=1.

Analysis tool used

To examine the reliability and validity Exploratory Factor Analysis using SPSS, 18 is used. To test the Hypotheses simple linear regression is used.

Analysis & Findings

The demographic profile illustrates the Gender, the range of age, the level of education, their occupations and the range of personal income in Kolkata and adjoining areas. The majority of respondents were students or (48%). Most of the respondents were male (59%). The age group of majority of respondents was 18-25 years old (56%). The educational qualification of majority of respondents is Under Graduate (52%).

ISSN Number (Print) – 2693-4108
ISSN Number (Online) – 2691-5103

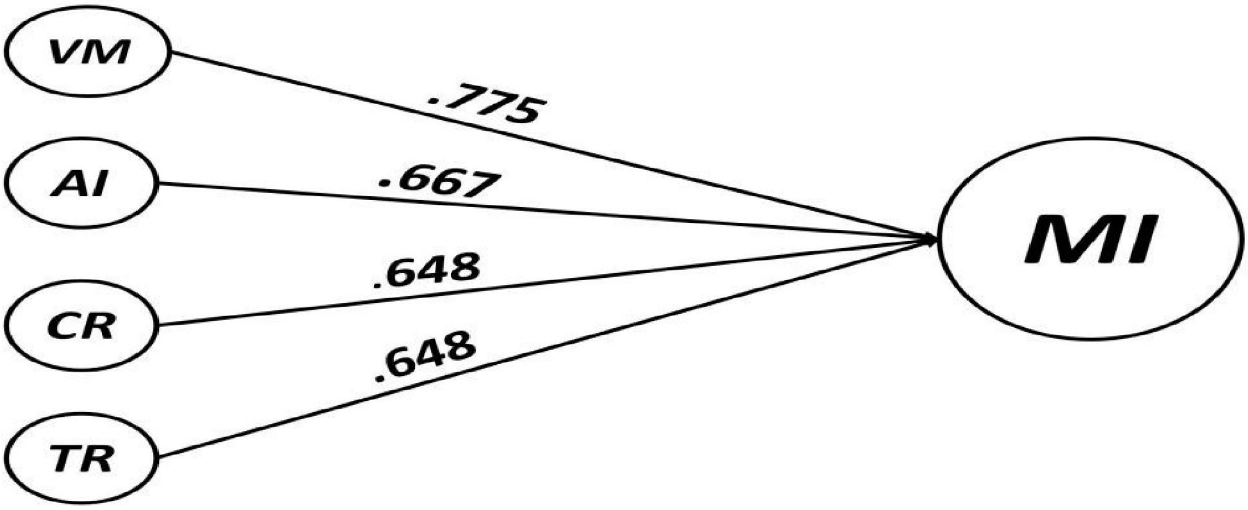
The foremost step in the analysis of the behavioral model is the Reliability and Validity analysis. Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used index for testing internal consistency reliability for a set of test items. Meanwhile Factor loading help to analyse the validity of the data. Factor loading are a way to understand the role of each item in defining a factor. For Factor loading and Cronbach's alpha, a value above 0.7 is acceptable.

Table 1: Respondents Validity and Reliability Statistics

Factor	Item	FL	Alpha	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity
F1 - VM	VM B1	0.560	0.938	0.931	Approx. Chi-Square: 1498.627 df: 105 Sig.: 0.000
	VM B2	0.572			
	VM B3	0.828			
F2 - AI	AI B6	0.793			
	AI B7	0.737			
	AI B8	0.769			
	AI B9	0.821			
F3 - CR	CR B10	0.726			
	CR B11	0.786			
	CR B12	0.625			
F4 - T	T B13	0.844			
	T B14	0.734			
	T B15	0.605			
F5 - MI	MI B16	0.725			
	MI B17	0.784			

The above table shows the KMO and Barlett's shows the value 0.931 excluding demographic profile. As the value is more than 0.7, it can be interpreted that the items have relatively high internal consistency, which justifies the acceptability of the study.

Based on the figure below, which shows the beta values for the path correlation as analyzed. The key determinant factor is found to be Meme Impact.



The table below shows that 4 hypotheses have been proven to have positive and significant correlation.

Table 2: SPSS Analysis – Result of Hypothesis

HYPOTHESIS	STRUCTURAL PATH	R2	t VALUE	p VALUE	Beta	DECISION
H1	VM --->MI	0.600	1.378	0.000	0.775	SUPPORTED
H2	AI--->MI	0.445	4.520	0.000	0.667	SUPPORTED
H3	CR --->MI	0.420	3.712	0.000	0.648	SUPPORTED
H4	TR--->MI	0.420	3.712	0.000	0.648	SUPPORTED

$p<0.05$, significant at 95% confidence level

In our study model in all the paths are significant and positive, supporting the corresponding hypotheses that have been framed for this study. The hypotheses test results which provide the beta coefficients and t-values for the hypotheses tested through the linear regression, are presented in Table 4. The t values for the beta coefficients in all the paths have been found to be significant at 95% confidence levels.

Hypothesis H1, H2, exhibits the strongest relationship between VM-MI and AI-MI, with the largest β value of 0.775 and 0.667 respectively. The SPSS regression analysis finds all the relationships significant and all the hypothesised relationships are supported.

Discussion

The results show that the model validates all the proposed positive correlation and they have a positive significant value.

The first correlation between VM and MI (Beta VM --- > MI = 0.775), describes the Value of Meme and Meme Impact on a customer for a product of a particular brand. The result shows that Value of Meme has a relatively stronger effect on Meme Impact. If a brand has a good Value of Meme, it is expected that the consumers of that particular brand will receive a good quality in terms of information of that particular brand, be it product quality information, service quality information and after service quality information.

The second correlation between AI and MI (Beta AI --- > MI = 0.667), indicates the degree of Advertising insights on Meme Impact for a particular brand. The output shows that Advertising insights has a stronger effect on Meme Impact. It actually indicates that if brands want to increase Meme Impact on their customers, they should focus on the quality of Advertising insights they are offering. If the Advertising insights are of good quality, the Meme Impact will be automatically will satisfy more consumers and it will increase sales of a particular brand.

The third correlation between CR and MI (Beta CR --- > MI = 0.648), describes the degree of Customer Retention on Meme Impact. The result highlights Customer Retention is affected by Meme Impact towards a large extent. It has a strong effect on customer loyalty. If the Meme quality of a brand has a good reputation in the market, it do guarantees that the consumers will be just satisfied with the reputation and they will be the regular followers of the brand.

The fourth correlation between TR and MI (Beta TR --- > MI = 0.648), describes the degree of Trends on Meme Impact. The result indicates that Trends has a strong impact on Meme Impact on a consumer. It is the conscious habit of people to follow the latest Trends at that moment which leads to generation of satisfaction and makes the brand look closer and more humane. People are very much bothered about maintaining social status and hence following latest Trends is very much related to customer satisfaction. Hence brands need to stay updated with the latest Trends in order to maintain satisfaction and inclination of consumers for that particular brand.

Conclusion

The present research followed the proposed model to investigate the citizens of Kolkata's behavior regarding the impact meme marketing on purchase intention. The proposed model consists of five components – Value of meme (VM), Advertising insights (AI), Customer Retention (CR) and Trends (TR). The result indicates that Value of Meme is the strongest factor for Meme Impact and Trends and Customer Retention are the weakest factor for Meme Impact. The study suggests that if good Valuable Meme can be maintained, then it will help to retain advertising insights and meme impact. Most respondents were students of (48%). Most of the respondents were male (59%). The age group of majority of respondents was 18-25 years old (56%). The educational qualification of majority of respondents is Under Graduate (52%).

As a result, we can draw the conclusion that Meme Impact is significantly influenced by Meme Value. When a brand has a high Value of Meme, consumers can anticipate to receive information about that brand that is of high quality, whether it is information on the brand's products, services, or after-service quality. It can also be claimed that trends have a significant influence on how a customer responds to memes. People's purposeful decision to follow the most recent trends at the time creates satisfaction and makes the company appear more approachable and real.

References

1. Meer, Dr & Sherwani, Dr & Kanwal, Syeda. (2022). Meme Marketing and Purchasing Behavior: A Study of Active Social Media Users. 59. 216-223. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364118632_Meme_Marketing_and_Purchasing_Behavior_A_Study_of_Active_Social_Media_Users
2. Vasile, Sorina&Mototo, Lebogang &Chuchu, Tinashe. (2021). Using "Memes" as a Marketing Communication Tool in Connecting with Consumers within the Age of Digital Connectivity. International Review of Management and Marketing. 11. 30-35. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351444390_Using_Memes_as_a_Marketing_Communication_Tool_in_Connecting_with_Consumers_within_the_Age_of_Digital_Connectivit y
3. Lee, H.-H.; Liang, C.-H.; Liao, S.-Y.; Chen, H.-S. Analyzing the Intention of Consumer

Purchasing Behaviors in Relation to Internet Memes Using VAB Model. Sustainability 2019, 11,5549. https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/20/5549

4. Vasile, S., Mototo, L., &Chuchu, T. USING "MEMES" AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOL IN CONNECTING WITH CONSUMERS WITHIN THE AGE OF DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY. International Review of Management and Marketing, 11(3), 30–35. https://www.academia.edu/48889568/Using_Memes_as_a_Marketing_Communication_Tool_in_Connecting_with_Consumers_within_the_Age_of_Digital_Connectivity
5. Malodia, S., Dhir, A., Bilgihan, A., Sinha, P., & Tikoo, T. (2022). Meme marketing: How marketers can drive better engagement using viral memes? Psychology & Marketing, 39, 1775– 1801.https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/mar.21702.
6. LUBIS, A. Y., SANTOSO, P. Y., & FITRIANTO, B. Y. (2021). UTILIZING MEME AS DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY. ICCD, 3(1), 432–437. https://www.academia.edu/67025896/Utilizing_Meme_as_Digital_Marketing_Strategy
7. Sriram K V, Namitha KP & Giridhar B Kamath | Teresa Villace (Reviewing editor) (2021) Social media advertisements and their influence on consumer purchase intention, Cogent Business & Management, 8:1, DOI: 10.1080/23311975.2021.2000697 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311975.2021.2000697
8. Azar, S. L., Machado, J. C., Vacas-de-Carvalho, L., & Mendes, A. (2016). Motivations to interact with brands on Facebook–Towards a typology of consumer–brand interactions. Journal of Brand Management, 23(2), 153– 178.
9. Bauckhage, C. (2011), July. Insights into internet memes. In Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media, 5(1).
10. Beattie, A. (2020) Trends in the digital advertising industry. Investopedia.
11. Benaim, M. (2018). From symbolic values to symbolic innovation: Internet-memes and innovation. Research Policy, 47(5), 901– 910.
12. Bury, B. (2016). Creative use of Internet memes in advertising. World Scientific News, 57, 33– 41