Application of Social Media as a Marketing Promotion Tool-A Review

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Abstract—Social media is the buzz word of the market. Marketing and promotion is solely relying upon social media which was a sideline media during its effective inception a decade back. Print media and television media lost its relevance to social media, because of many factors including cost effectiveness and wider reach. Almost all fields have adopted Social media for its effective and efficient working. Social media effectiveness is mostly used in all demographic segments as the new age millennial cannot be isolated from social media. Social media is being adopted by various fields. This paper attempts to review the literature of the application of social media for marketing promotion. This study not only provides the evidence that the promotion through social media is better than the traditional promotion approach, but also helps firms to understand the essential driver for adaptation of social media for their marketing promotion strategies. The paper concludes with the future path of social media marketing.

Keywords—social media; social media adaptability; consumerism; literature review

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media is reigning the world of marketing promotion nowadays. The main reason being cost effectiveness, wider reach, reach prediction and check, easy adaptability, alignment with modern advancements etc. This makes it the perfect platform for any marketing promotion in any field. One of the most important aspects of social media marketing is the two way possibility of communication. The age of traditional media has not been wiped out as it is very much relevant and influential in the market. The traditional media has been stagnated in growth whereas social media always heads towards steady increase in usage or growth on a whole. The number of subscribers/listeners for traditional media was way back overtaken by the social media. Facebook, one of the popular social media platforms became the 3rd most populous country behind China and India in 2014.

The key triggering factors viz. search engine optimization, consumerism, virility, social media hygiene, social media adaptability influence the social media application as a marketing promotion tool. An in-depth classification based on the area applied has been attempted in this paper.

II. CLASSIFICATION BASED ON INDUSTRY/FIELD/AREA

The papers taken for review was classified based on the industry/field/area. 5 major fields have been taken based on the number of papers in the literature review. These papers are classified as follows.

a) Social Media Analytics
b) Social Media Marketing
c) Promotion and Sales through Social Media
d) Social media marketing in Tourism
e) Consumerism through Social media
f) Business promotion through Social media

A. Social Media Analytics

Bisgin et al. [1] studied three social media sites, in order to find out whether homophily exists in social media. They analyzed the community structures using effective methods like dyadic, community based, random rewired and content based analysis. Cvijikj et al.[2] proposed an evaluation framework that will allow companies to perform the social media analytics through continuous monitoring of the content and activities on their social media channels to evaluate the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool. Batrinca and Treleaven [3] studied the usability, efficiency and expertise as a technique, tool and platform of social media analytics. A very comprehensive review of software tools for various verticals, along with introduction to various facts of social media has been discussed. Also, a methodology and critique of social media tools has been imparted. They captured the overview of scientists who seek to utilize social media scraping and analytics.

Bharati et al.[4] studied the social media assimilation in firms using a model, that combines two streams of IT adoption; organizational innovation and institutional theory. Social media is employed by firms to a large extent to manage relationships with partner organizations, but the role of institutional
pressures in social media assimilation emerges as the research gap in the paper. Institutional pressures have no influence on social media assimilation, but have a role to impact absorptive capacity which in turn influences assimilation. Bhaskar et al. [5] conducted sentiment analysis in social media for digital cameras product review from Amazon and ebay.

B. Social Media Marketing

Thackeray et al.[6] studied how to integrate social media and social marketing in the field of health sector. Social media can create much bigger impact rather than other traditional media as social media can put the consumer at the centre of the whole marketing process by a four step process. Describing the audience, purpose of engaging the audience, strategizing and selection of the technology are the processes that effectively gives a strategic template for the integration. Atwong [7] studies the evolving social media and its applicability as an effective marketing tool. An action learning approach, social media practicum involves both social media marketing and analytics. Highly structural marketing process is dealt and elaborated in a step by step manner. Challenges and responses of this social media practicum as a marketing course and its impact on other courses are also mentioned. Killian and McManus [8] studies how social media decisions are incorporated in marketing communication strategy by conducting case studies, in-depth interviews and other effective methods. Different ways of social media platforms are classified and are used by the brand managers to cater the individual customer needs.

Ashley and Tuten [9] conducted content analysis using sampling, code sheet development, coder training and reliability of the creative strategies presently employed by the top brands. They showed that how top brands used their social media channels effectively, their creative strategies and social media engagement. Jayaram et al. [10] studied the changes happening in the field of marketing in three counties at Eastern Europe. They found that the core principles of marketing are timeless and only the medium and applications keep changing. Bianchi and Andrews [11] studied the lesser known engagement of firms with Web 2.0 technologies in emerging markets of Latin America, amidst the fact that social media assimilation, but have a role to impact absorptive capacity which in turn influences assimilation. Bhaskar et al. [5] conducted sentiment analysis in social media for digital cameras product review from Amazon and ebay.

C. Promotion and Sales through Social Media

Siamakga et al. [16] studied the B2B firms in UK and adoption of social media by them for their marketing promotions. They frame a conceptual model which is based on acceptance of technology and resource based theory. They found the adoption of social media is directly influenced by innovativeness of the organization. Saboo et al. [17] studied on the limited understanding on how consumer engagement happens and influences the purchasing process, even great amount of resources are being spent on social media by the brands. They took music industry as specimen and gave 3 factors to enhance the attractiveness factor as part of their study; sampling music, following music artists and commenting on artists’ social media posts. The paper is concluded by stating the scope and limitations of the study, especially, the solo industry taken for the whole study makes it less fit to be applicable in other sectors or fields.

Guesalaga [18] proposed an application of interactional psychological theory to test a model on adoption of social media in sales, for analyzing an individual, customer related factors. The future ever growing prospectus of the social media and its applicability is evident in almost every field, especially in sales. Organizational competence and commitment are key determinants of sales through social media. Michaelidou et al. [19] studied the social media practices, usage, barriers and effectiveness of B2B small and medium enterprises.

D. Social media marketing in Tourism

Minazzi [20] studied the role of social media marketing in tourism and hospitality sector. Author has taken rich set of both theoretical background and practical examples on the use and impact of the social media on both tourism demand and supply. Gulbahar and Yildirim [21] studied the role of social media and its application, effect and merit on the field of Tourism in Istanbul. The study intends to explore the very less excavated areas of social media marketing of tourism companies in Turkey. Even as an emerging economy Turkey has developed
itself in fronts of social media and mobile technology. They suggested that, social media, web based marketing and mobile based applications have to be blended effectively to yield better results.

Hays et al. [22] studied on how social media is used effectively as a destination marketing tool. Social media ensures the reach and effectiveness within specific time limit. They applied content and semi structured analysis to find effectiveness of social media adopted by national tourism organizations. Shao et al. [23] applied netgraphical study to check on the effectiveness of social media and micro film marketing can be implemented in Tourism. They concluded by citing the importance of Social media adoption and its success. Hudson and Thal [24] recommended the importance of social media community in consumer decision making process. The social media exactly knows how a customer engages with brands. Their study focuses on how an travelers benefits out of social media.

E. Consumerism through Social media

Ephraim [25] proposed a culture centered approach to the use of social media in a bid to minimize these cyber crimes and encourage the matured use of social media amongst African youths. Li et al. [26] studied the social media usage on country image and purchase intention from peer-to-peer network perspective. Ho and Wang [27] analyzed the repurchase intention and relationship with virtual customers, considering social media community of a particular brand into account. They studied on how to manage the digital customer relationship in the social media brand community.

Trainor et al.[28] studied how social media usage and customer relationship performance are linked. They analyzed social CRM capability and its influence by CRM systems and social media. Mirzaei et al. [29] studied on developing relationship between social media and user reward programs. Basically social media helps to increase the site visit, a reward program is planned which is more like a game which ranks the visitor on the basics of activeness in the web arena. They concluded on the adaption of strategies employed, how it in turn change into a revenue sharing model to induce the success in social media application on user reward programs.

F. Business promotion through Social media

He et al. [30] discussed about the adoption of social media by small business enterprises which have budget constraints, whereas bigger companies do not have and also on the ways in which these small businesses adopt social media for their betterment. They have listed the limitations of this study and its future prospects of the research topic, one of the main reasons being, social media changes every day and the strategies to be used also changes rapidly.

Sandlin and Pena [31] studied the effectiveness of social media tools to enhance authenticity in college students’ recruitment process.

Papadopoulos et al. [32] proposed five strategies for scaling community detection in the context of social media. They studied the performance characteristics of community detection methods and its exploitation in real world web mining and information retrieval process. Lapointe et al. [33] studied the scope of creating cancer awareness through social media. Criswell and Canty [34] studied the social media advancements of two genre fiction titles published in UK, giving more emphasis on Face book and Twitter. They discussed on how effective social media is, as a marketing platform, when already a dedicated community exists, allowing communication between publishers and readers. They found that channel of marketing is much more effective when the author or the book has already established online community base and less effective when it comes to new book.

Liu et al. [35] studied on mobile crowd sourcing platform and its various effects when applied over a social media. Dixon et al. [36] proposed the scope of usage and perceived effectiveness of social media within intercollegiate athletic departments. They studied the role of social media in framing a marketing strategy in an era where new media influence is at its maximum in every organization’s strategic mix. Robillard et al. [37] discusses about social media as a platform on advancements in the field of bio medics, like stem cell research. They studied on how the information regarding the stem cells is disseminated in a platform like Twitter. A content analysis of the tweets with key words, stem cells, spinal cord injury and Parkinson disease were carried out. Cross sectional survey, statistical analysis, coding and inter-coder reproducibility were some of the methods used. Some of their findings include entirely new knowledge about Twitter as a connecting platform for many voices and also as a key tool for the dissemination of information about stem cells and other disorders. Stefanidis et al. [38] developed a framework to harvest for ambient geospatial information and its resulting hybrid capabilities to analyze it to support awareness as it relates to human activities. They studied on how effectively geospatial information could be collected through social media feeds, analyzing various factors that support greater mapping and understanding of the evolving human landscape. Momentary social hotspot from where they are updating the social media is taken, after which quantitative and qualitative analysis were carried out in human geography. They took special events with international appeal and studied the responses from users, taking their location as the main criteria.

Lazzaretta et al. [39] studied a case of museum of Natural History of Florence, which is a nonprofit, medium sized cultural institution which has engaged with social media. Less
emphasis and attention was given to cultural sector where social media is actually empowering visitors whereas, all attention focuses on social media’s role in non-profit organization to build and strengthen relation with its stakeholders. Role of different social media platforms in museum’s communication activities are analyzed through direct interactions and its intensity is measured. They applied a qualitative content analysis of museum’s profile in Facebook and Twitter, for the identification of nature of interactions with stakeholders. Lee et al. [40] proposed, companies can increase their likelihood of a positive reaction if they carefully consider the relation between initiatives and core businesses. They also analyzed the role of social media in businesses, with respect to a comparison analysis between the CSR initiatives and the company. Various modes of study were conducted to finally arrive at the conclusion, sampling, comparative analysis, qualitative analysis. Since it is exploratory in nature, various limitations were reported and study cannot be given a completed status as so many issues mentioned in the paper required prolonged study.

Munnukka and Jarvi [41] explored the important risks associated with business organizations using social media in their marketing communication. Usage of electronic media for marketing communications is gaining wide popularity with all type of organizations. Proactive focus and procedural control were expected to provide high level security against the risks. Agarwal et al. [42] studied on cyber-collective social movement analysis in multicultural settings. They observed the transcending nature of cyber-collective social movements for modeling transnational outreach. Issue propagation and sentiment diffusion is taken into account and a methodological framework is created taking three level of effectiveness. Gan and Wang [43] studied the mapping of the intellectual structure of social media research in China from 2006 to 2013. They studied on how to map the characteristics and status on social media using bibliometric and co-word analysis.

Lansigan et al. [44] conducted a study to determine the similarities or differences in the data collected with the help of a validated questionnaire, which in turn was intended to find out the influence of social media in school choice considerations. Williams and Ricciardelli [45] studied about the body image concerns of young women and impact of social media over it. Evaluating youth’s experiences of online appearance culture and how it garners reviews, influences of social media with other media are some facts they addressed.

Singh [46] analyzed the relationship between social media and corporate agility. Conventional tools and methodologies are relevant, but finding out newer tools like social media offers and how this is going to revitalize the agility strategic arsenal were some of the areas of their discussion. They found that social media helps towards corporate agility. Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan [47] studied the increasing acceptance of social media as a political tool. Micro blogging and social networking sites are changing the whole idea of political communication. They proposed a methodological framework for social media in a political context. Murphy [48] discussed on various social media tools used by fire service and the ways of working efficiently with these tools.

Ranschaert et al. [49] studied on how the social media was used by radiologists effectively for their career prospectus/public good. Some of their areas of discussion included the usefulness of social media for radiologists for many factors like communicating with peers, clinicians, patients etc., the merits other than using social media as a learning aid and information seeking tool. Lee et al.[50] considered the effect of CSR activities on the efficiency of social media as a stakeholder-relationship organization stand. The twitter handles of Fortune 500 companies were considered, which served as a CSR tool to increase their ratings. They conceptualized social media as a proponent of CSR.

Wu et al. [51] studied the social media as a research tool and reviewed its current status. The latest advancements in the field of social media have attracted the attention of researchers worldwide and this has been elevated as a powerful research tool. Paper has discussed different genres of social media research. Using descriptive research methods like empirical, experimental and analytical methods; and predictive analysis, concludes by giving a fundamental concise review on social media research. Challenges faced by researchers over this topic, using quantitative methods are discussed, opening the scope of further research. Ramanadhian et al. [52] studied the adoption of social media by community based organizations (CBO), which are very crucial in delivering health promotion programs. Their study assesses the extent to which CBOs uses social media channels to engage in health promotion. They concluded that, social media application to community based organizations is an interactive one rather than being a one sided channel.

Baert and Booth [53] proposed two new claims about intellectuals and their public engagement based on positioning theory. They focused on recent technological advancements enabling the novel intellectual interactions and interventions in the social media. They concluded by stating the future scope of study, after identifying the logical line between intellectuals, social media and their interaction.

Meng et al. [54] studied the strategies adopted by the Government in social media platform during public emergencies. Official micro-blogging site of Shifang Government was analyzed using big data tools. They classified
the Government strategies into 5 different categories. Liu and Lopez [55] studied the influence of social media on consumer brand preferences for carbonated soft drinks. They studied on how the social media conversations impacted the consumer valuation of brand characteristics and demand for carbonated soft drinks. They formulated a random coefficient, discrete choice model of consumer demand that includes social media conversations and matched it with Nielson sales data on CSD, to social media conversations. Study is concluded by suggesting that social media can be called as a strategic tool for effective brand promotion and product design and also for public health policies.

Calefato et al. [56] investigated the role of traditional websites and social media in trust building along with cognitive and affective dimensions presenting two different experiments. They studied on how and why companies are investing in social media for building their social digital brand and how it strengthens the relationship with the customers. Lyon and Montgomery [57] have identified the main differences between social media and traditional media and how it influences the corporate culture and its effect. They proposed a framework for understanding greenwash in which the corporate environmental communication backfires, if citizens and activists have a feeling that company is engaging in more than optimum self-promotion. Rapp et al. [58] studied on contagious effect of social media among groups of business suppliers, retailers and consumers. They developed a conceptual framework and analyzed the responses to the contagion effect of social media. Hausmann and Poellmann [59] studied on influence of social media for marketing of arts in the geographical context of Germany. They exhibited the use of social media by performing arts organizations which are growing rapidly and social media effectively supporting the marketing of performing arts organization. How cost effective it can be using the latest features of social media can a firm reap profits is another key learning.

III. LEANINGS AND FINDINGS

The vast, wide and deep reach of social media is the basic learning out of this review. Also, the further scope lies on how this can be even effective in the fields that are yet to adapt social media for its marketing promotion. From conventional to unconventional fields, areas and industries have adopted and are moving forward with social media is to be scrutinized upon. Diminishing scope of old media and growth retaliation is another finding. Scope of study is very high in this topic as social media is evolving day by day. Research papers are abundant in the field. We have chosen few factors and have classified accordingly but more factors can be found out and review can be done.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study of social media as a marketing promotion tool taking into consideration lot of various factors like Search Engine Optimization, Consumerism, Virality, Social Media Hygiene and adaptability has given a comprehensive insight about the scope of social media. Keeping these factors in mind, we have analyzed the literature to find out various classifications of the literatures which were social media, marketing, sales, tourism and consumerism. Earlier observations in this field suggests evolution and how its presence increased to various manifold these years. Social media is a ever continuing success as a marketing promotion tool since its inception. The scope of social media is prone to increase only because of the digitalization happening in almost all fields, especially marketing promotion.

REFERENCES


