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International Marketing Conference IV (iMarC IV)
Bridging the gap between marketing theory and practice

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Prof. Prof. Bidyut Jyoti Gogoi, Prof. Pratap Chandra Mandal, and Prof. Sheetal

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Marketing has always been the bridge connecting businesses with their audiences, and its evolution reflects the ever-changing dynamics of our society and economy. As we host the 4th edition of iMarC, the International Marketing Conference, with the theme “**Bridging the Gap Between Marketing Theory & Practice: Infusion, Inclusion & Integration,**” we take a bold step forward in addressing one of the most critical challenges in the field—the disconnect between academic frameworks and real-world applications.

This theme is both timely and essential. In a world shaped by rapid technological advancements, globalized markets, and increasingly diverse consumer bases, it is imperative to align theoretical insights with practical execution. Infusion represents the incorporation of interdisciplinary ideas and innovations into marketing. Inclusion underscores the importance of diverse perspectives—whether cultural, demographic, or sectoral—in shaping more equitable and resonant strategies. Integration emphasizes the seamless merging of academic knowledge with business practices to create actionable, impactful solutions for today’s complex challenges.

I am proud to see iMarC grow as a platform where academicians, industry leaders, and young minds converge to exchange ideas, present cutting-edge research, and explore actionable strategies. This conference is a testament to our collective commitment to fostering an ecosystem where marketing knowledge not only thrives but also serves as a force for meaningful change.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the organizing committee and all those who have contributed to making this conference a reality. I also congratulate the authors of the research papers and the distinguished speakers who have brought their unique insights to the table. Your efforts are vital in ensuring that iMarC continues to inspire and impact the marketing community.

As we delve into discussions and deliberations over the next two days, I am confident that the outcomes of this conference will pave the way for new paradigms in marketing—paradigms that are inclusive, innovative, and deeply integrated with the realities of the marketplace.

My best wishes to all participants for a successful and enriching experience at iMarC IV. Let us together bridge the gap and redefine the future of marketing.

Prof. D.P. Goyal

Director, IIM Shillong

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The successful organization of the **4th International Marketing Conference (iMarC IV)**, themed **“Bridging the Gap Between Marketing Theory and Practice: Infusion, Inclusion & Integration”**, held on **January 23-24, 2025**, would not have been possible without the unwavering support and contributions of numerous individuals and organizations.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to **Prof. D.P. Goyal**, Director of IIM Shillong, for his visionary leadership, continuous support, and guidance as the Chief Patron of this event. His encouragement has been instrumental in elevating iMarC IV into a prestigious platform for marketing professionals and academicians worldwide.

Our sincere thanks go to the **distinguished speakers**, including **Prof. Sanjit Roy**, **Prof. Bipul Kumar**, and **Prof. Dipayan Biswas**, whose insightful deliberations have enriched the conference and added immense value to the discussions.

We deeply appreciate the efforts of the **Advisory Committee**, comprising **Prof. Lim Weng Marc**, **Prof. Nripendra P. Rana**, and **Prof. Bipul Kumar**, for their invaluable guidance in ensuring the success of this event.

This year, **iMarC IV** witnessed an impressive **136 paper presentations across 25 technical sessions**, covering **26 sub-themes** encompassing a wide range of marketing topics, including Digital Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Marketing in the Metaverse, and more. We extend our gratitude to all participants for their intellectual contributions, which have made iMarC IV stronger, more impactful, and a meaningful step toward bridging the gap between theory and practice.

We acknowledge the tireless efforts of the **Organizing Committee**, led by **Prof. Bidyut Jyoti Gogoi** as Chairman, along with **Prof. Lim Weng Marc**, **Prof. Vibhas Amawate**, **Prof. Sanjita Jaipuria**, **Prof. Pratap Chandra Mandal**, and **Prof. Sheetal**. Special thanks go to PhD scholars **Sudhanshu Shekhar** and **Nikeeta Jain**, whose dedication and coordination were pivotal in managing every aspect of the conference. We would like to thank our student organizing committee: **Divyansh Jindal**, **Salma Farhana Aman**, **Vaishnavi Komapalli**, **Surbhi Nimje**, **Anand Ranjan Prasad**, **Sampada Dubey**, **Shraddha Mahapatra**, **Shubham**, **Prasad Domewale**, **Kirti Hariyal** for their relentless efforts and commitment.

We also recognize the **dedicated team of research scholars**: **Shobhanam Krishna**, **Anita Choudhary**, **Divyansh Paliwal**, **Sagarika Paul**, **Manish Kumar Atree**, **Pawan Ashok Kamble**, **Kirti Pahuja**, **Anchit Rakesh**, **Varun D. Raj**, **Vishal Tyagi**, and **Muhammad Vasil M**, **Mohamed Nazar M**, **Anushri Kesarwani**, **Arnab Das**, **Shompy Das** for their tireless efforts in ensuring smooth logistics and operations.

The **Pre-Conference Workshops**, held on **January 21-22, 2025**, provided participants with hands-on learning opportunities in areas such as Multi-Criteria Decision-Making, Mediation and Moderation Analysis Using R, Systematic Literature Review, and Qualitative Analysis Using NVivo. We extend our gratitude to the workshop speakers for their expertise and impactful sessions.

We also appreciate the support of our **publication partners**, including **Global Business and Organizational Excellence**, **International Journal of Quality and Innovation**, and **IIMS Journal of Management Science**, for facilitating the dissemination of the valuable research presented at iMarC IV.

Behind every successful event lies meticulous planning and dedication. The eight months of rigorous preparation and collaboration among the faculty, research scholars, administrative staff, and the entire IIM Shillong family have been the driving force behind the success of iMarC IV.

Finally, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all participants, including students, academicians, corporate professionals, NGO representatives, and government officials, whose active engagement and enthusiastic participation have made the 4th International Marketing Conference a resounding success.

We hope that the insights and discussions from iMarC IV inspire further research and innovation, contributing to the advancement of marketing practices globally.

**Warm regards,
Organizing Team
4th International Marketing Conference
Indian Institute of Management Shillong**

Chairperson's Message

The outstanding response received for **iMarC IV** has been truly remarkable, and the resounding success of this event is a testament to the dedication and collaboration of all its stakeholders. As the Chairman and on behalf of the Co-chairmen, I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who played a part in making this conference a significant and memorable milestone

The **4th International Marketing Conference (iMarC IV)**, themed "**Bridging the Gap Between Marketing Theory and Practice: Infusion, Inclusion & Integration**", reflects IIM Shillong's commitment to fostering innovation, excellence, and sustainability. iMarC IV has provided a global platform for marketing professionals, academicians, researchers, and industry leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange ideas, and present research that bridges the evolving divide between theory and practice in marketing.

First and foremost, we express our deepest gratitude to **Prof. D.P. Goyal**, Director of IIM Shillong, for being a pillar of unwavering support throughout our journey. The teaching and non-teaching staff of the institution have also risen to every occasion, and their contributions have been pivotal in ensuring the grand success of this event.

We would also like to acknowledge the invaluable support of our **knowledge partner, Sunway Business School, Sunway University, Malaysia**, and our **publication partners**, including **Global Business and Organizational Excellence, International Journal of Quality and Innovation**, and **IIMS Journal of Management Science**. Their collaboration has enriched the quality and reach of this conference significantly.

The participants were the true backbone of iMarC IV. Their novel ideas, impressive research, and active engagement have made the conference a dynamic and impactful forum. We are immensely grateful to the **reviewers** and **session chairs**, whose diligence and expertise ensured the high standards of the conference.

Our heartfelt thanks also go to the distinguished **chief guests, keynote speakers**, and **resource persons**, whose valuable insights and expertise greatly enhanced the intellectual discourse of iMarC IV.

A special note of appreciation is due to the **Research Scholars** and the **Markathon (Marketing Club)** members of IIM Shillong. Their meticulous planning, flawless execution, and relentless enthusiasm were instrumental in the seamless conduct of the event.

This year, iMarC IV brought together an impressive pool of participants, with **136 paper presentations** across **25 technical sessions** covering **26 sub-themes**. The **Pre-Conference Workshops**, held on **January 21-22, 2025**, further enriched the experience by providing hands-on knowledge in areas such as Multi-Criteria Decision-Making, Mediation and Moderation Analysis Using R, Systematic Literature Review, and Qualitative Analysis Using NVivo. We extend our gratitude to the workshop speakers **Prof. Rohit Joshi, Professor, Dean- Academics IIM Shillong, Prof. Murugan Pattusamy Assistant Professor Hyderabad University, Prof. Lim Weng Marc, Professor Sunway University, Prof. Jaspreet Kaur Professor, Delhi School of Business** for their expertise and impactful sessions.

The **Book of Abstracts**, a compilation of **132 peer-reviewed scholarly articles** serves as a valuable resource, showcasing the depth and diversity of research in marketing. We hope these research contributions inspire new perspectives and foster further innovation in the field.

At iMarC IV, our collective objective was not only to address the challenges in marketing but also to craft creative solutions that propel the discipline forward. Through insightful presentations, collaborative discussions, and impactful research, we aspire to leave a legacy of ethically driven organizations, enlightened leaders, and transformative marketing practices that contribute to a

sustainable and inclusive future. On behalf of the organizing team, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all participants and stakeholders for making iMarC IV a resounding success. Let us continue to bridge the gap between marketing theory and practice, working together for a brighter and more innovative future.

Warm regards,

Prof. Bidyut Jyoti Gogoi

Chairman, iMarC IV

Indian Institute of Management Shillong

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Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Endeavours on Stakeholders' Brand Loyalty: Role of Stakeholders' Engagement

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Abstract:

In the present VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) market the core idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has received a paramount thrust, the companies, by portraying their various social welfare activities under CSR, are trying to attain/gain a competitive advantage over their rivals. To deal in a competitive market, firm have adopted CSR as an essential practice in trading activities and steering the fast-moving consumer goods(FMCG) in business enterprises because the scheduling of organisational tasks gets accelerated in accordance with moral and social norms. The principal aim is to ascertain the benefits of CSR integration for the company's performance and image. It also looks at how a company's CSR initiatives affect Stakeholders' loyalty toward the brand through the mediation of brand equity, brand credibility, and brand image. Through the use of a non-probability convenience sample technique, 364 respondents who are aware about the various CSR activities of Indian FMCG companies participated in this study. In order to use structural equation modelling to assess the proposed hypotheses, this study took 302 responses. This study discovered that CSR endeavours of Indian FMCG companies has strengthened brand image, which increased brand trust and inspired Stakeholders to spread PWOM about the businesses in order to promote brand loyalty. This study has concluded that CSR endeavours by these six FMCG companies have a crucial and favourable effect on consumers' perceptions, which in turn affects customer attachment and the corporation's overall performance. The results have important implications for the philosophy and practice of marketing and advertising.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility; Brand Credibility; Stakeholders' Engagement; Brand Equity; Brand Image.

Does Gender Make A Difference In Community Support For Ecotourism: Searching For Answers Through Multi-Group Analysis

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Abstract:

The study examines the factors affecting the support intention of the locals for ecotourism development in the state of Meghalaya, India. The relationship between community involvement, community attachment, perceived benefit and community support (both direct and indirect) has been analyzed using partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Quantitative data was collected using stratified random sampling from 212 local residents who are directly related to the ecotourism activities of the region. The study established that it is very crucial to involve the community members in the decision-making process when developing ecotourism. Then, building on the above findings, this study conducts a Multigroup Analysis to unravel the role that gender may play within the context of ecotourism. By shedding light on gender's impact, this research enriches the ecotourism discourse, expanding knowledge on the complex interplay between gender and residents' support formation.

Keywords: ecotourism, perceived benefit, Community Support, Community involvement, Community attachment.

A Study On Consumer Perception Towards Gamification In Online Shopping

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Introduction:

Gamification, which means using game-like features in non-game settings, has become a popular way to make online shopping more engaging and to build customer loyalty. This study looks at how consumers feel about gamification in online shopping, combining insights from marketing, psychology, and technology. Recently, online shopping has changed a lot due to new technology and shifting consumer habits. Online stores are always looking for new ways to stand out and offer more value to their customers. Gamification uses features like points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges to make shopping more interactive and fun and to create a sense of community among shoppers.

Previous studies have shown that gamification can be beneficial in areas like education, health, and work. In online shopping, research suggests that gamification can make shopping more enjoyable and engaging. These game-like elements can boost internal motivations, like enjoyment and satisfaction, and external motivations, like rewards and recognition, leading to greater customer engagement and loyalty. This study aims to address gaps in current research by looking at how different groups of people perceive gamification in online shopping. It will explore factors like age, gender, and past gaming experience, which might affect how consumers feel about gamified shopping experiences. Additionally, the study will look at how specific game-like features, such as reward systems, progress tracking, and social sharing, impact customer satisfaction and buying behavior.

Objectives of the Study:

- To identify key factors influencing consumers' perceptions towards gamification in online shopping.
- To validate a proposed conceptual model of consumer perception towards gamification in online shopping.

Methodology:

The research approach will be a quantitative research design that uses a survey method to collect data. The survey data is analyzed using the statistical software SPSS to identify patterns and relationships between variables. The data is analyzed using Exploratory factor analysis and Confirmatory Factor analysis.

Findings:

The study found that customer perception of gamification has a significant impact on purchase decisions. Also, the factors of perception towards gamification like perceived usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEU), Customer Loyalty (CL), and Repurchase Intention (RI) have a positive influence on purchase decisions. Therefore, enhancing these constructs could increase consumers' adoption of technology in marketplaces.

Analysing The Impact Of Deceptive Marketing On Consumer Purchase Decision

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Introduction:

Despite a notable increase in marketing activity in recent years and institutions accomplishing their objectives, some have resorted to using unethical marketing practices to increase their profits by misleading customers with false information about products, services, promotions, prices, or distributions. Customers' decisions to acquire goods or services are indicative of this. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize the various forms of deceptive marketing that exist in the services industry and endeavour to showcase marketing strategies that elevate consumer and company trust in a way that aligns with consumer desires by offering products or services that satisfy customers and give the company an edge over rivals. Providing after-sales services that support products and companies is one of the most crucial activities that contributes to building confidence. Businesses are not allowed to employ unethical techniques in these services in order to preserve the trust that has been built between them and their customers. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of deceptive marketing on consumer choice when it comes to the after-sales services—product delivery, installation, and maintenance—that customers receive from producers or distributors. The necessity of an after-sales services agreement between the producer/distributor and the customer stems from the validity, efficiency, and seriousness of accidents that may occur. These accidents can only manifest after using the product for a specific amount of time. This is known as a warranty contract, and it serves several functions for both the manufacturer and the customer, such as fulfilling the buyer's desire to acquire the goods, making it easier for the buyer to use, and guaranteeing the buyer's safety.

Objectives:

To identify the various deceptive marketing techniques in providing after-sales services.
To analyze the impact of deceptive marketing on consumer purchase decision

Data Analysis:

The data was analyzed and interpreted using statistical software SPSS software. To investigate sample data and assess model fit, this study employs the Multiple Regression Model. Multiple Regression model that estimates the relationship between a quantitative dependent and independent variable.

Findings:

Marketing deception in the areas of service, promotion, and distribution has an impact on consumer decisions, but it has little borne on the caliber of after-sale services. This suggests that the consumer is less interested in deception in the areas of service, promotion, or distribution and more focused on the after-sales service prices.

E-commerce and Q-Commerce Disruptions in India: Examining the Role of Supply Chain in Marketing Success

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Abstract:

This study examines the role of supply chain management (SCM) in the success of e-commerce and Q-commerce platforms in India, particularly in the context of disruptions and logistical challenges. The rapid expansion of e-commerce and Q-commerce demands efficient SCM to meet consumer expectations for fast delivery and service. Previous research highlights the critical role of agile supply chains, the importance of AI-driven tools, micro-warehousing, and real-time tracking and challenges such as infrastructure limitations, especially in rural areas, hinder supply chain optimization. There is a gap to address the role of supply chain in marketing success. To address this gap the study used qualitative approach, based on secondary data and interviews with industry experts, analysed supply chain metrics (delivery time, inventory turnover) to assess their impact on marketing success. The study found that e-commerce platforms benefit from investments in technology, reducing operational costs and improving customer satisfaction. In contrast, Q-commerce faces the challenge of balancing fast deliveries with high operational costs. Companies addressing these challenges through innovation and partnerships with third-party logistics providers will maintain competitive advantage as competition in India's digital economy grows, supply chain innovation will remain pivotal for marketing success.

Keywords: Marketing Success, E-commerce, Q-Commerce, Supply chain, Technology.

Improving User Engagement in Digital Health: A Comprehensive Framework for Sustained Interaction

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Abstract:

The study talks about digital health interventions, which have excellent potential to improve healthcare outcomes, but keeping users engaged over a long period is an extended challenge. In this regard, the exploratory study is done by doing a systematic review of 40 papers, and from that, the thematic analysis is done. By conducting this exploratory study, we took three theories Unified theory of acceptance and use of technology 2(UTAUT2), the Health Belief Model (HBM), and the Engagement theory, and based on that, a comprehensive Digital Health Engagement Framework is given by stating three propositions: (1) Individuals' perceptions of health benefits significantly influence their engagement with digital health solutions. (2) Strategic designed prompts for behavior modification will enhance engagement with digital health interventions, and (3) Contextual Factors are essential in sustaining engagement.

Keywords: Digital health interventions, UTAUT2, HBM, Digital health engagement, Engagement Theory, personalized engagement, digital health platforms, health literacy, sustained engagement, digital health tools, data privacy, security.

Customer Assessment of Indian E-Commerce Platforms

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Extended Abstract:

With the increase in internet penetration, reliable payment systems, and better road infrastructure, the Indian E-Commerce B2C market is booming. Price-sensitive Indian customers are attracted by the heavy discounts offered on various e-commerce platforms. Every e-commerce website is designed with various functional and non-functional requirements in mind. The functional requirements define how the e-commerce website will perform its core operations, such as customer registration, seller registration, order processing, cart management, payment processing, delivery, tracking, returns, refunds, security protocols, database management, customer care, catalog management, etc. The non-functional requirements define the performance-related attributes of the E-Commerce portal, such as design, scalability, reliability, uptime, mobile and tab-friendliness, etc. The design-related nonfunctional attributes of an e-commerce platform that customers assess while interacting with it are also very important. There are eight such attributes viz. functionality in terms of performance, informational, ease of use, redundant navigation, ease of purchase, multi-browser functionality, simple graphics, and legible text (Laudon, 2022). The definitions of these eight attributes are provided in Table 1 (Laudon, 2022).

During the middle of the MBA-level elective course on E-Commerce at the author's institute, an in-class empirical study with five e-commerce platforms and eight different attributes (as listed in Table 1) was conducted among 54 students during the month of July 2023. The five E-Commerce platforms were chosen after deliberations among the students and their familiarity and experience with such platforms. The chosen e-commerce platforms were Amazon India, Flipkart, Shopclues, TataCliq, and Snapdeal. The participants were divided into 13 teams and were given the task of evaluating these five platforms on eight attributes. All the members of each team were carrying a laptop to visit these e-commerce platforms and perform an individual assessment. Later, they were asked to discuss among their team members to arrive at a common evaluation of each platform on each of the eight attributes. At first, each team is required to provide weight importance to each of the attributes. All the teams used a scale of 0-100 to define the importance of each of the attributes, such that the total sum of weights of all the attributes is 100. Thereafter, each team member requested to assess each of the five platforms on each of the eight attributes and rate it on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means very poor while 10 is excellent. After this individual assessment, each team was requested to internally discuss and jointly arrive at a rating score for each platform on each of the attributes using the same scale of 1-10. The data were collected from 13 teams and were analysed at the team level. The study found that "Ease of use" is the most important attribute, followed by "Simple Graphics" and "Redundant Navigation". The study also found that no single platform is excelled in all the attributes. Most of the platforms received above-average ratings on "functionality" and "legible text" aspects but below-average ratings on "Ease of use" and "Redundant Navigation" aspects. The overall weighted rating was significantly higher for the first-ranked platform than for the last-ranked platform. The average standard deviation for "Legible Text" was highest across teams, while it was found to be lowest for "Functionality" and "Simple Graphics" aspects. It is also important to report that the standard deviation of the weighted ratings across thirteen teams was highest for the top-rated platform. The data analysis revealed scope for improvement in

various E-Commerce platforms. In the modern era of automation and artificial intelligence, there is a greater scope to offer customized interfaces to individual customers based on their preferences.

Sr	Attribute	Definition
1	Functionality	Pages that work, load quickly and point the customer toward your product offerings
2	Informational	Links that customers can easily find to discover more about you and your products
3	Ease of Use	Simple foolproof navigation
4	Redundant Navigation	Alternative navigation to the same content
5	Ease of Purchase	One or two clicks to purchase
6	Multi-Browser Functionality	Site works with the most popular browsers
7	Simple Graphics	Avoids distracting, obnoxious graphics and sounds that the user cannot control
8	Legible Text	Avoids backgrounds that distort text or make it illegible

Table 1: E-Commerce Platform Design-related Non-functional Attribute Definitions

Keywords: E-Commerce, Portal Attribute, Customer Engagement, Interface.

Customer Brand Experience – A Mediating Factor Impacting User Gratification And Customer Engagement Behaviour

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Abstract:

Instagram has over 2.5 billion monthly active users worldwide. Instagram's user base continues to grow at a steady rate of approximately 6-7% annually (The Indian Express, 2024). This study examines the relationship between the Uses and Gratification Theory and Customer Engagement Behaviour with a mediating factor, Customer Brand Experience in Instagram. Through extensive literature analysis, it can be concluded that research on the effect of UGT on CEB with CBE as the mediating factor for a social media platform like Instagram has not been evaluated from the Indian context. The UGT explores the gratification derived from the fulfilment of psychological needs. Whereas CEB is the customer's manifestation of their relationship with a brand that goes beyond a transaction, motivational drivers play a vital role in boosting sales for the brand. Finally, CBE refers to different kinds of experiences, such as sensory, intellectual, behavioural, and affective experiences. To determine the findings, primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 287 respondents using convenience sampling. One-way ANOVA and SEM were used for analysing the data. The study also exhibited that there is a in the average time spent on Instagram with the factors of the study, UGT, CEB and CBE. The proposed model showed a good fit and it also establishes the indirect effect between UGT with CBE and CBE with CEB. To conclude, the findings have validated the positive impact of UGT on CBE, thereby influencing CEB.

Keywords: Uses and Gratification theory, Customer Brand Engagement, Brand Experience, Social Media, Instagram.

A Study on the Customer Perception of Fine Dining Experience at Gourmet Restaurant

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Abstract:

This study explores the gourmet food experience in consumers, focusing on how it extends beyond eating to encompass sophistication, quality, and cultural significance. It aims to understand the interplay between tradition, innovation, and globalization, and how these elements influence consumer sensory delight, intellectual curiosity, and social interactions in gourmet settings. The research addresses a gap in understanding the emotions surrounding food consumption, particularly the hedonic experience in realistic dining contexts.

A mixed-method approach was employed, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Surveys and interviews were conducted with gourmet restaurant diners to assess the impact of fine dining experiences on hedonic, utilitarian, and social values. Statistical analyses were used to explore correlations between dining experiences and customer intentions to revisit or recommend restaurants. Additionally, experimental designs were applied to manipulate factors such as dining context and consumer perceptions.

The findings reveal that gourmet food experiences significantly affect consumers' hedonic, utilitarian, and social values. Tradition and globalization are key forces shaping these experiences, blending heritage with modern culinary trends. Consumers expressed high satisfaction with the sensory and cultural aspects of their dining experiences, which influenced their intentions to revisit gourmet restaurants and recommend them to others. Future research should include more diverse consumer groups and dining contexts to broaden the generalizability of these insights.

Keywords: Gourmet food, fine dining, consumer behaviour, hedonic value, globalization, sensory exp.

Mindful Marketing: A New Approach Towards Sustainability

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Abstract:

Mindful marketing is founded on human-centric and values-driven principles, interconnected with the market, and emphasises a quality-oriented approach. It is predicated on the premise that it provides the organisation with enduring advantages and is more orientated towards the consumers. This research seeks to identify the opportunities and challenges of mindful marketing and examine various methods of integrating it with sustainability, a sustainable approach businesses can employ to address global environmental degradation and resource depletion, which exaggerates climate change and economic challenges. It can also help to achieve SDG 12, Responsible Production and Consumption. Due to the scarcity of studies elucidating its application for sustainable practices, this study used a qualitative methodology to interview marketing experts and consumers to achieve the research aims. The findings have been divided into three broad themes, which can help marketers and policymakers to develop strategies addressing consumer and social and environmental well-being.

Keywords: mindful marketing; sustainability; SDGs; qualitative; consumer; interview.

An empirical study on understanding digital marketing efficacy and its strategic importance for small businesses in special reference with Hyderabad based firm.

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Abstract:

Digital marketing efficacy refers to the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies and tactics in achieving desired business outcomes. Measuring and enhancing digital marketing efficacy involves various metrics, tools, and best practices. Here are some key components and strategies for assessing and improving digital marketing efficacy:

- a) Clear Objectives: Define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals.
- b) Target Audience: Understand and segment the target audience to tailor marketing efforts.
- c) Channels and Platforms: Utilize appropriate digital channels (e.g., social media, email, SEO, PPC) that align with the audience and goals.
- d) Content Quality: Create high-quality, engaging, and relevant content.
- e) Analytics and Metrics: Use analytics tools to track performance metrics such as click-through rates (CTR), conversion rates, and return on investment (ROI).

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Target Audience, Digital Efficacy, Tactics, Objectives.

Shades of Green: Illuminating the path to green purchase behaviour

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Introduction:

There has been a consistent knowledge of depleting resources in present times, which calls for their conservative use to promote sustainability and improve livelihood. The further extension of this knowledge gave birth to the concept of green behavior and how this is implanted through organizations. The researcher strongly believes that organizations have the potential to impact a large mass of audience through their decisions. And recently a few companies have taken the decision to go green and benefit the environment holistically.

Research Objective:

The objective of the study is to investigate the factors that impact the decision making of the consumer to purchase green and sustainable products. The paper studies the impact of two behavioral variables on the green buying behavior of the consumer for the green product, namely Consumer Awareness and Brand Loyalty and Willingness to pay as the moderator variable.

Methodology:

The current study intends to apply the literature and theoretical understanding to perform structural equation modeling (SEM) and thereby, construct a model for green buying behavior which can explain the direct and indirect causal relationships among the variables in question, which can shed light on the relative importance of the individual constructs. The present study is exploratory in nature to provide a roadmap to empirical research that can be done by capturing and quantifying the constructs defined in the model. The study will follow a multi- method approach integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Conducting in-depth interviews, followed by empirical analysis after collecting a large number of data (n=200) through survey questionnaire and employing relevant statistical data analysis tools will validate the findings.

A conceptual model is proposed using the three factors demonstrating the relationship between the dependent and independent constructs, which can be used to test the hypothesis as a part of taking this research

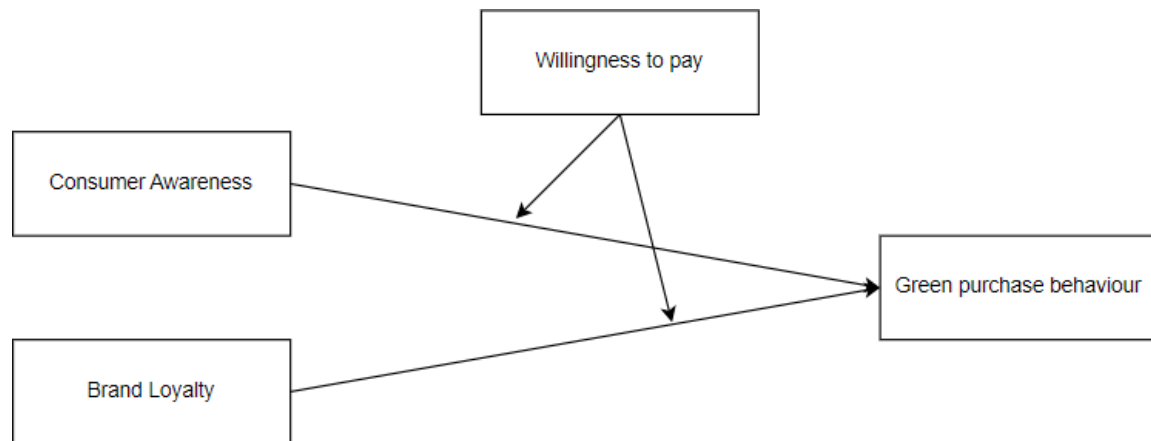


Figure 1- Conceptual Model

Implications and Future Research:

The results expected from this study would indicate that there is a causal relation between the behavioral aspects of the consumer and their intention to purchase green products. This hypothesized relation would empower and direct the businesses to build marketing strategies for a product.

Conclusion:

The paper concludes with the discussion about implications of this study, how it will be useful to the future development of the topic, a discussion about the direction for future research in this topic, where specifically organizations, government, and scholarly students can contribute and bring about a sustainable and environmentally healthy change. The underlying objective of this study is to promote green buying behavior amongst consumers and to build more population of green consumers, where a green consumer is anyone whose purchase behavior is influenced by environmental concerns.

Assessing the impact of chatbot integration on consumer purchase intention in e-commerce platform: a study of Guwahati city

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Abstract:

This research examines the chatbot integration on consumer purchase intention of apparel shopping from e-commerce platform and it also investigates the factors that impact consumers' intention to purchase products from e-commerce platforms in Guwahati. The perception factors of chatbot examined in this study are Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Security and Privacy and Trust while the mediating variables is attitude and dependent variables is purchase intention. This study used a quantitative method to collect data for statistical analysis, utilizing stratified random sampling to gather 280 completed questionnaires for analysis. The conceptual framework was evaluated using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The results indicate that perceived ease of use, perceived security & privacy, trust, attitude towards chatbot significantly predict purchase intention, while the perceived usefulness does not. These results underscore the importance of user-friendly chatbot interfaces and the need for robust security measures to generate trust and positive attitudes among consumers. The study highlights the potential of chatbots in enhancing e-commerce experiences but suggests that future research should encompass a broader range of chatbot commerce across various online shopping categories to provide more comprehensive insights.

Keywords: Chatbot, Purchase intention, E-commerce, SEM, digital marketing.

A study on “tribal entrepreneurial development” & e-marketing of minor forest produce (MFP) and development of value chain model in coastal Andhra Pradesh.

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Abstract:

This study explores the potential for tribal entrepreneurial development and the implementation of e-marketing strategies for Minor Forest Produce (MFP) in coastal Andhra Pradesh, India. Given the rich biodiversity and vast forest resources in this region, tribal communities possess unique opportunities to sustainably harness and commercialize MFP. However, they often face challenges, such as limited market access, lack of entrepreneurial training, and absence of a structured value chain. This research aims to address these gaps by developing a comprehensive value chain model tailored to the socio-economic context of coastal Andhra tribes. By utilizing e-marketing tools, the study seeks to empower tribal entrepreneurs to reach broader markets, enhance price realizations, and establish a sustainable income stream. Through field surveys, stakeholder interviews, and market analyses, the study provides insights into effective value chain linkages, pricing mechanisms, and digital platforms suitable for MFP. The proposed model highlights the importance of integrating government support, private partnerships, and community-led initiatives. Ultimately, the study envisions a sustainable, inclusive approach to tribal development, aiming to uplift livelihoods and promote economic resilience within tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh.

Keywords: Minor Forest Produce, Tribal Entrepreneurial Development, Value Chain Model.

The influence of personalised advertising on the purchasing behaviour of generation z

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Abstract:

The growing prevalence of personalized advertising has significantly reshaped consumer behaviour, particularly among Generation Z. This study investigates the impact of personalized advertisements on the purchasing decisions of Generation Z, a demographic known for its digital fluency and engagement with social media platforms. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data, this research explores how personalized ads tailored through data analytics, algorithms, and user behaviour tracking affect the buying preferences, brand loyalty, and overall purchasing behaviour of Generation Z consumers. The findings reveal that while personalized advertising enhances user engagement and increases the likelihood of impulse purchases, it also raises concerns related to privacy and data security. Furthermore, the study highlights key factors such as ad relevance, frequency, and the emotional resonance of ads as critical determinants of their effectiveness. However, the skepticism towards overly invasive techniques also emerged as a potential barrier. This paper provides insights into how marketers can optimize personalized advertising strategies to foster trust and long-term consumer relationships with generation Z customers. The implications of these findings are vital for businesses aiming to engage Generation Z effectively, balancing personalization with ethical advertising practices.

Keywords: Personalised Advertising, Generation Z, Purchase Intentions, Advertising Strategy.

A review of personal branding research from the past two decades: a bibliometric analysis

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Abstract:

Personal branding has become crucial in determining the paths of individuals and organizations in the constantly evolving professional landscape, marked by the widespread use of digital media. Personal branding has become essential for enhancing professional visibility and success, attracting significant interest from researchers and practitioners. However, studies on the breadth of this interest remain limited. With the above in mind, a bibliometric analysis using VOS viewer software has been performed, to deliver a detailed analysis of the status of the personal branding phenomenon. Our study selected the existing literature of the last two decades in the Web of Science Database for bibliographic analysis. The analysis results improve the quality of the review by directing researchers to the most significant documents, journals, constructs, and most influential authors, and mapping areas of publications.

Keywords: Personal Branding, Personal Brand, Bibliometric Analysis, Web of Science (WoS), VOS viewer.

The Role of Customer Data and Analytics in Omni-channel Marketing

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Abstract:

Omni-channel marketing has transformed the way businesses engage with customers by creating integrated and consistent experiences across multiple touchpoints such as websites, mobile apps, social media, in-store interactions, and customer service channels. In this context, customer data and analytics serve as crucial components for driving marketing strategies that are not only cohesive but also highly personalized. With an increasing number of data collection points, brands can track customer behavior, preferences, and purchasing patterns, thus enabling the delivery of more relevant and timely messaging.

This paper explores the role of customer data and analytics in supporting omni-channel marketing strategies. It examines the methodologies businesses use to collect and integrate data across various platforms, the analytic techniques applied to understand customer journeys, and the effectiveness of these approaches in enhancing customer satisfaction and business performance. Key challenges, such as data silos, privacy concerns, and technological limitations, are also discussed, alongside opportunities arising from the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) for predictive analytics.

The study incorporates both qualitative and quantitative research methods, including an analysis of interviews with industry professionals and statistical evaluations of omni-channel marketing outcomes. Findings reveal that businesses leveraging advanced analytics and real-time customer insights see significant improvements in engagement, conversion rates, and overall customer loyalty. Future trends point toward greater adoption of AI, deeper personalization, and evolving customer data regulations.

The research concludes that while customer data and analytics are paramount to the success of omni-channel marketing, businesses must continuously adapt to technological advancements and regulatory changes. Furthermore, addressing the challenges of data fragmentation and ensuring responsible use of customer data will be crucial for maintaining consumer trust.

Keywords: Customer Data, Omni-channel Marketing, Analytics, Personalization, Data Integration, Customer Engagement.

Exploring Generative AI Adoption Among University Students: Insights from The Technology Acceptance Model.

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Abstract:

In recent times the emergence of artificial intelligence has grown immensely and it has become popular among academicians and scholars. Generative AI (Artificial Intelligence), characterized by its ability to autonomously create content such as text, images, and code, has seen rapid adoption across various fields. Among student populations, generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc.) are becoming increasingly prevalent, influencing how students engage with learning materials, complete assignments, and conduct research. It has become crucial to investigate the factors that affect the adoption of generative AI. In this paper, the Authors study the acceptance of generative AI from the lens of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

Generative AI is an emerging technology. Several people question their commercial viability given its extreme energy usage behind the scenes in the form of data centers and servers. How to effectively capitalize and commercialize this technology is also not clear yet, with the

freemium model being used by all generative AI platforms right now. Where a limited feature trial is offered to the user with a limitation on the number of uses per day with an upgrade of unlimited usage with all features being offered at a price. At this crucial junction of this technology, it becomes imperative to try and find out whether and to what extent would this technology be adopted. Our inquiry into purchase intention using the TAM model will provide a benchmark for all AI platforms to estimate their market potential. There by bridging the gap between the buzz of AI generative tools and the actual acceptance of generative AI.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework helps us to predict why and how the use of new technology will happen. According to the TAM model. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, are the key factors influencing user attitude and behavioural intention towards technological innovation. We add the variable intrinsic motivation to the model of TAM in the context of generative AI. This field of inquiry has not been made concerning generative AI to the best of the author's knowledge. This research extends the TAM framework to explore the nuances of generative AI adoption in an educational context, considering potential moderating variables such as perceived risks, technological self-efficacy, and peer influence.

Data collection:

Primary data would be collected via a questionnaire using 5 point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree", from university students. After collection of data reliability and validity of scales would be checked. To check the reliability and validity following measures will be used Cronbach alpha,

composite reliability, and Fornell-Larcker criterion. After meeting the required assumption of data, the Structural equation modelling (SEM) technique would be applied for the analysis of this data. SEM is a robust technique used in social sciences, psychology, and business research including marketing, this technique enables researchers to study complex relationships among observed variables and latent constructs. For Sampling, a purposive sampling technique will be used.

The primary users of generative AI would be academicians, scholars, teachers, students, graphic designers, coders, and content writers. This is the target audience of this innovation. We would like to enquire as to what extent would this technological innovation be adopted in an academic setting. We investigate and administer questionnaires to students of Chandigarh to analyze the extent of generative AI adoption among them and also look into the factors that would determine, drive, make or break a generative AI tool in this modern world, especially in

the Indian context. Chandigarh is being used as a preferred destination of study as it is an emerging smart city and the sample from this region is likely to be familiar with or at least aware of this technology. Providing vital feedback as to how prevalent this technology of generative AI could become among students and scholars. The sample size for this study would be 200 university students in and around Chandigarh.

Objectives:

1. To study the factors affecting the behavioural intention of students towards generative AI tools.
2. Impact of Behavioural intention on Actual behaviour.
3. To study the behavioural intention towards generative AI across different demographic variables i.e., gender and education.
4. To bridge the gap between theory and actual practice in the context of inclusion, infusion, and integration concerning generative AI.

Next-Generation Trends in Marketing Evolution

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Abstract:

Crafting captivating stories that attract target audiences and encourage engagement is the art and science of marketing. It comprises using advanced data analytics to interpret customer preferences and behaviors in order to create customiZed strategies that appeal to their emotions. Marketing constructs routes to market prominence through a complex dance of digital innovation, strategic positioning, and brand storytelling. The field maximiZes outreach and personalizes connections by utilizing cutting-edge technology like machine learning , artificial intelligence and immersive experiences. It entails the dynamic interaction of rigorous analysis with artistic vision. Without marketing, a firm cannot even be imagined. So much so that, in today's world of globalization and simultaneous technological advancement, competitive circumstances have grown difficult. A product made anywhere in the globe can be easily acquired by a consumer anywhere else in the world through internet shopping or other means. This increases the level of intractable global competitiveness that already exists. We will see briefly about newer ways deployed for marketing.

Keywords: Marketing, innovation, consumer, digital.

Influencer Impact: The Double-Edged Sword of Gen Z Marketing

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Abstract:

This study examines the receptivity of Generation Z (Gen Z) individuals to influencer-led promotions. A sample of 266 respondents was studied to examine demographic factors, including gender, age, and education, to comprehend the target audience for influencer marketing. Key characteristics investigated include such as influencer credibility, authenticity, emotional involvement, parasocial interactions, customer attitude, and buy intention, utilizing reliability analysis, correlation analysis, ANOVA, and structural equation modeling. The findings indicate a demographic profile predominantly consisting of girls aged 21 to 26, with Instagram as the favoured social media channel. Positive relationships exist among consumer attitudes, purchasing intentions, and other influencing factors. Structural equation modeling validates the substantial influence of influencer credibility, emotional involvement, and parasocial ties on customer behaviour. This research highlights the importance of authenticity and credibility in influencer marketing targeting Generation Z, providing actionable insights for marketers looking to effectively engage this demographic.

Keywords: Customer Attitude; Emotional involvement; Influencer Marketing; Parasocial Relationship.

Exploring Colourism in Influencer Marketing: How Skin Tone, Voice Tone, and Content Delivery Style Affect Consumer Perception

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Abstract

Purpose:

This study explores how the skin tone, voice tone, and content delivery style of influencers affect ad trust and persuasion, specifically in the context of colourism or shadeism, a prevalent issue in India. While previous research has explored celebrity traits such as gender, race, and profession in advertising, the influence of an influencer's skin tone (light vs. dark), voice tone (loud vs. mild), and content delivery style (formal vs. informal) remains underexplored. This study aims to address this gap and investigate how these factors impact consumer perceptions, ad trust, and the ease of persuasion in advertising.

Design/Methodology/Approach:

The proposed study will use a 2x2x2 factorial design to manipulate three independent variables: skin tone (light vs. dark), voice tone (loud vs. mild), and content delivery style (formal vs. informal). Eight experimental conditions will be tested using print advertisements where influencers endorse either beauty or non-beauty products. Experiment will be involving participants from both northern and southern regions to explore potential cultural differences. The study will measure ad trust, ease of persuasion, and Parasocial Interaction (PSI), while also examining the moderating effects of product category (beauty vs. non-beauty) and thinking style (analytical vs. holistic).

Theoretical Framework:

This study adopts Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) (Spencer et. al, 1997) to explore how societal structures, such as colourism, influence consumers' identity and behavior. According to PVEST, internalized biases related to skin tone impact consumers' perceptions of influencers and their trustworthiness in advertisements. Parasocial Interaction (PSI), which measures the emotional bond between consumers and influencers, is a key mediator in the relationship between skin tone, voice tone, content delivery style, and ad effectiveness.

Constructs and Relationships:

Skin Tone and Consumer Perceptions: Skin tone is expected to significantly impact ad trust and persuasion, with lighter-skinned influencers perceived as more trustworthy, especially in beauty-related ads. PVEST suggests that social norms surrounding skin tone shape consumer identity and response to influencer endorsements, with lighter skin often associated with greater credibility and attractiveness (Allport, 1954).

Voice Tone and Content Delivery Style: Both voice tone and content delivery style are hypothesized to moderate the relationship between skin tone and ad trust. More formal and louder delivery styles are likely to amplify the effects of skin tone on ad effectiveness by increasing perceived authority and trust (Escalas & Bettman, 2017).

Parasocial Interaction (PSI): PSI is expected to mediate the relationship between influencer traits (skin tone, voice tone, and content delivery style) and consumer outcomes such as ad trust

and persuasion. Consumers with stronger PSI are more likely to trust and be influenced by the ads, regardless of the influencer's skin tone (Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985).

Product Category as a Moderator: The product category (beauty vs. non-beauty) will moderate the effects of skin tone on ad trust. It is expected that beauty products will exhibit a stronger bias towards light-skinned influencers, while non-beauty products may not show such a significant pattern (Soh, Reid, & King, 2009).

Thinking Style as a Moderator: Thinking style (analytical vs. holistic) will also moderate the influence of influencer traits on consumer perception. Analytical thinkers may be less susceptible to persuasion, while holistic thinkers may be more likely to be influenced by the emotional connection with the influencer (Chang, 2017).

Anticipated Findings

It is anticipated that lighter-skinned influencers will generate higher levels of ad trust and persuasion, particularly in beauty product ads. Voice tone and content delivery style are expected to moderate these effects, with formal and louder delivery styles enhancing ad trust. PSI is expected to mediate the relationship, with stronger emotional bonds leading to greater ad effectiveness. The product category will moderate the effects, with beauty products showing a greater bias towards light-skinned influencers. Additionally, analytical thinkers are expected to be less susceptible to persuasion than holistic thinkers.

Research Limitations/Implications

Potential limitations include the possibility of social desirability bias, especially in regions sensitive to colourism. The cross-sectional design also limits the ability to assess long-term effects, such as brand loyalty or changes in consumer behavior over time.

Practical Implications

This research will provide insights for brands and marketers about the impact of skin tone, voice tone, and content delivery style on influencer marketing. It can guide marketers in selecting influencers whose traits align with their target audience, helping them navigate colourism and improve the effectiveness of their ad campaigns.

Originality/Value

This study addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on colourism in influencer marketing. It contributes new insights into how skin tone, voice tone, and content delivery style interact to influence ad trust and persuasion, particularly in markets sensitive to colour-based discrimination.

Keywords: Colourism, Influencer Marketing, Voice Tone, Content Delivery Style, Parasocial Interaction, Ad Trust, Ease of Being Persuaded.

Circular products in a developing economy: a study of recycled soap category

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Abstract:

Circular economy has become the buzzword in the domain of sustainable development. The products that come from a circular economy are termed as circular products. In order to aid the marketers and policymakers, it is necessary to understand the difference between sustainable and circular products. Also, to accelerate a circular economy, it is essential to understand the consumer behaviour in this regard. Behavioural Reasoning Theory [BRT] has been utilized in the current study to investigate the 'reasons for' and the 'reasons against' towards purchase of recycled product. Further, through an extensive literature review, the current study has made an attempt to differentiate between circular and sustainable products. The majorly identified difference reveals that sustainable product may end up in a landfill, but a circular product remains in a loop of circular economy. Further, the 'reasons for' identified were 'value for money' and 'environment friendly'. 'Social risk', 'health risk' and 'perceived scarcity' were identified as resisters for purchase of recycled soap. The findings of current study contribute to a sound understanding of consumer behaviour towards emerging product category of circular economy in India. The study suggests a need for awareness and brand development around circular products among consumers.

Keywords: Circular Economy, Circular Products, Recycled Soap, Sustainable Development, Behavioural Reasoning Theory.

The Palindrome Price Effect

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Abstract

Palindrome numbers that read the same backward or forward can be used to price products and services. We propose a novel effect termed the palindrome price effect, which is the positive effect of palindrome prices on consumer response, contributing to the rich literature on round and odd prices. Through a between-subjects experiment conducted with MTurk participants, we conclude that palindrome prices generate a more favorable attitude and perception, more positive feelings, and more positive purchase intention than non-palindrome prices. The effect is hypothesized to occur due to symmetry in the numerical presentation of the palindrome price, thus causing a higher processing fluency. Restaurant managers can price their menus, and subscription apps can price their annual fees using palindrome prices to avoid potentially negative consumer reactions to prices.

Keywords: Palindrome, odd prices, round prices, symmetry, processing fluency

1. A restaurant manager faces a dilemma to price their glass of wine. Could a higher price of INR 494 be evaluated as better than the price of INR 485?

2. How much should Spotify price their annual subscription fee for: INR 865 or INR 878?

Pricing function bring in revenue for the organization. Hence, setting a price that generates a higher revenue while being evaluated as appropriate is a pricing or a marketing manager's prerogative. This could have a huge impact on a firm's income. For example, if Coca-Cola could increase its price by just 1 per cent without losing its customers, its income could go up by 6.4 per cent (Gourville, 1999).

In the pricing literature, much has been studied regarding how round prices (numbers ending in '0') and odd prices (numbers not ending in '0') influence price perceptions (Troll et al., 2024). Even numbers ending in '5' have been classified as round numbers (Dehaene & Mehler, 1992; Schindler & Kirby, 1997). Round numbers are more prevalent possibly because of their higher cognitive accessibility (Troll et al., 2024). Odd prices, specifically those ending in 9 are perceived as low which increases the product's preference (Snir & Levy, 2021). Thomas et al. (2010) claimed that even larger magnitude precise prices are perceived smaller than round prices.

We introduce a novel effect regarding numbers, we term palindrome effect. Palindromes are defined as a sequence that read the same backward or forward. These numbers could be defined as round (e.g., 585), odd (989), or precise (171). Palindromes are symmetrical in their presentation. Consequently, we conjecture that they will be easier to process cognitively. Another way to describe it is that palindrome prices will have higher processing fluency, which is the ease with which information is processed by the cognitive system. Wadhwa & Zhang (2015) argued that round numbers are processed more fluently than non-round numbers. Hence, they provide a sense of feeling right, and this feeling-based process leads to their positive evaluation. As ease of cognitive processing could cause better consumer response, we hypothesize for the palindrome prices that,

H1: Palindrome prices will elicit a more positive consumer response than non-palindrome prices (termed palindrome price effect).

H2: Symmetry mediates the palindrome price effect.

H3: Processing fluency mediates the effect of symmetry on the consumer response in the palindrome price effect.

Study 1 tested H1 through a between-subjects experiment. The independent variable was product price that was manipulated as either a palindrome price or a non-palindrome price. Multiple dependent variables were included in the analysis from the literature, such as, attitude, feeling, liking, perception, and purchase intention. Respondents (n = 332, Mage = 34.8, Females = 47%) were recruited from MTurk. After receiving their consent to participate in an exchange of payment, we presented prices across a product and a service: a glass of wine and the annual subscription of Spotify. Respondents received a price for each category and answered the scale items for all dependent variables. The mean scores are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean ratings of Glass of Wine and Spotify Subscription for Palindrome and Non-Palindrome prices

	Glass of Wine		Spotify Subscription				
	INR 485	INR 494	INR 852	INR 865	INR 878		
Attitude	4.9	5.2	Attitude	5.1	5.1	5.3	
Feelings	4.9	5.2	Feelings	5.1	5.1	5.2	
Liking	4.9	5.1	Liking	5.1	5.0	5.3	
Perceived Right	4.7	5.0	Perceived Right	5.0	5.0	5.3	
Perceived Good	4.8	4.9	Perceived Good	5.2	5.0	5.3	
Perceived Nice	4.9	5.1	Perceived Nice	5.2	5.1	5.3	
Perceived Appropriate	4.8	5.0	Perceived Appropriate	5.2	5.1	5.3	
Perceived Suitable	4.8	5.0	Perceived Suitable	5.1	5.0	5.3	
Purchase Intention	4.7	5.0	Purchase Intention	4.9	5.0	5.3	

For both the product and the service most mean scores were higher (measured on a 1-7 scale with 7 being most positive) for palindrome prices, as we had hypothesized. We can conclude that palindrome

prices generate a more favorable attitude and perception, more positive feelings, and more positive purchase intention than non-palindrome prices. This is a pilot study to understand the presence of the main effect. Further analyses and testing of other hypotheses is pending.

This study contributes to the growing literature on pricing and processing fluency. Pricing managers will now be able to price their products and services to elicit a better consumer response from their customers. Restaurant menus could maintain their prices such that even when the product is priced high, it does not necessarily generate a negative consumer reaction. Subscriptions are a grudge purchase. A price for the subscription that generates least negative affect could increase consumer retention rates.

From Words to Metrics: Measuring Digitalization from Corporate Reports

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Abstract

We propose a generalizable computer-aided text analysis using a supervised Latent Dirichlet Allocation (CATA-sLDA) approach for measuring strategic orientations (SOs) using text analysis of firms' annual 10-K reports. This approach automates the creation of an SO-based dictionary of words that are weighted based on their relevance to the SO and reflect the strategic intent of senior management. We assess the effectiveness and value of our proposed CATA-sLDA approach by measuring the construct of digitalization from 2007 to 2022 for 245 firms across three industries. To validate our digitalization score, we compute its correlation with: (1) scores developed independently by industry sources, (2) data from a survey we conducted with industry executives, and (3) scores developed from alternate CATA-based approaches such as expert-based dictionaries and the Doc2Vec model. The proposed CATA-sLDA approach has a positive and significant correlation with the alternative scores in all these assessments, suggesting it captures the essence of the construct digitalization. Further, the digitalization scores from our CATA-sLDA approach also outperform the competing scores in predicting firm performance measured as Tobin's Q. We conclude with observations about potential applications of our digitalization score in gaining a better understanding of the trajectory of digitalization in firms.

Keywords: Strategic Orientation; Digitalization; Digital Transformation; Natural Language Processing; Supervised Latent Dirichlet Allocation

Introduction:

Measuring a firm's strategic orientation, which refers to its long-term focus and direction and encompasses the principles that guide its activities and decisions (Hakala, 2011), is crucial for understanding how a firm's outlook towards the marketplace affects its performance. Both researchers and practitioners recognize strategic orientations (e.g., market orientation, customer orientation, and digitalization or digital orientation) as key drivers of firm performance (Kindermann et al., 2021; Narver & Slater, 1990; Uotila et al., 2009; Chung et al., 2019) and the effectiveness of firm strategies (Fernández-Pérez et al., 2013).

Furthermore, measuring these orientations is essential to understanding and enhancing the effectiveness of Information Systems (IS) through their alignment with business strategies (Chan et al., 1997; Segars & Grover, 1999; Gerow et al., 2014). Traditional approaches for measuring strategic orientations, such as intensive interviews and questionnaire surveys, have limitations, including low response rates and potential biases (Baruch, 1999; Hufnagel & Conca, 1994). To overcome these limitations, Computer-Aided Text Analysis (CATA) has emerged as a promising alternative for measuring strategic orientations by analyzing text from organizational documents, such as CEO shareholder letters and annual reports (Duriiau et al., 2007), without the need for access to senior management for interviews and surveys.

The traditional CATA approach measures a firm's strategic orientation by creating a construct dictionary consisting of keywords related to the strategic orientation and then applying a "bag of words" model to measure the degree to which the strategic orientation is present in the documents. However, despite its advantages, traditional CATA approaches also have limitations, including the need for domain experts to construct dictionaries and the imposition of equal weights for each keyword in the dictionary.

We propose an advanced CATA (CATA-sLDA) approach to address these limitations, allowing more efficient and accurate measurement of strategic orientations. Our approach removes the need for using domain experts in creating construct-based dictionaries and assigns construct-specific weights to the keywords in the dictionary. We achieve these benefits by utilizing text from publicly available academic and business articles focusing on the strategic orientation of interest to create construct-specific dictionaries; in other words, we rely on the collective knowledge of key domain experts. We then employ a supervised Latent Dirichlet allocation (sLDA) model to assign a construct-specific weight to each keyword in the dictionary.¹ Thus, a firm's strategic orientation score is computed based on the prevalence of the dictionary keywords in the firm's annual 10-K report, weighted by the construct-specific weights estimated from the sLDA model.

The proposed CATA-sLDA approach offers several advantages over traditional approaches. First, it allows the creation of construct-specific dictionaries without the need for direct involvement of domain experts. Second, it enables the assignment of construct-specific weights to keywords, allowing for a more nuanced and potentially more accurate measurement of strategic orientations. Third, by using annual reports from publicly traded firms to measure strategic orientations, our approach relies on a standardized and robust data source that varies over time and can be used for cross-industry comparisons and identifying potential causal relationships between strategic orientations and other firm-level variables, including performance measures. Finally, this approach eliminates the need for manual interventions, allowing for automation and replication when measuring other strategic orientation constructs of interest. Thus, it offers a versatile approach for developing scores for various strategic orientations applicable across firms, industries, and time.

In this paper, we demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of the CATA-sLDA approach for developing a score of digitalization, a critical strategic orientation of firms.

More importantly, we provide evidence for the reliability and validity of the CATA-sLDA measurement approach and highlight its potential for practical applications and theory testing in strategic management. Specifically, we illustrate the utility of the measurement approach by generating digitalization scores that vary across firms (i.e., cross-sectional) and over time (i.e., temporal). We show that our digitalization score has a significant positive correlation with digitalization scores obtained from existing approaches and well-known industry-developed digitalization indicators. Together, these correlations provide evidence for the validity, reliability, and value of the proposed CATA-sLDA approach. We also compare the predictive validity of the CATA-sLDA score with another CATA-based measurement approach using the Doc2Vec model (Le & Mikolov, 2014) and show that our model performs better at predicting firm profitability.

Methodology:

The CATA-sLDA approach builds on traditional CATA techniques, which rely on keyword dictionaries to measure constructs like digitalization. However, these dictionaries typically require extensive input from domain experts, creating a static and potentially biased view of strategic orientations. The CATA-sLDA approach advances this by automating dictionary creation, applying topic modeling, and assigning context-specific weights to words, resulting in a more flexible and accurate model.

The methodology follows four main stages:

1. **Defining the Strategic Orientation (SO):** Digitalization is defined as an enterprise-wide commitment to digital transformation, encompassing integration of digital technologies within organizational processes, business models, and strategic planning (Kindermann et al., 2021; Baiyere et al., 2023). This focus on digitalization includes factors such as process automation, digital literacy, data analytics, IT integration, and customer experience improvements.
2. **Defining the Measurement Model:** To create a relevant and representative dictionary of digitalization terms, the authors used a comprehensive set of articles covering digital and non-digital topics from well-regarded journals and industry sources. The digital articles covered various dimensions of digitalization, such as process digitization, data analytics, and customer engagement, while non-digital articles focused on unrelated themes like leadership and corporate social responsibility. The sLDA model then assigned weights to dictionary words based on their frequency and relevance to the digitalization construct, capturing each term's contextual importance (Blei & McAuliffe, 2007).
3. **Assessing SO Presence:** The digitalization score for each firm was calculated based on the weighted frequency of dictionary words within its 10-K report. By analyzing 10-K filings from 245 firms across the banking, retail, and manufacturing sectors from 2007 to 2022, the model produced annual digitalization scores that reflect a firm's strategic digital orientation.
4. **Reliability and Validity Testing:** To ensure robustness, the model underwent several tests for reliability and validity:

Reliability: Test-retest reliability assessed score stability over time, and parallel-forms reliability compared CATA-sLDA scores with expert-created digitalization scores. Inter-rater reliability tested score consistency across different article samples.

Validity: Construct validity was assessed by comparing CATA-sLDA digitalization scores with established benchmarks like Gartner's Digital IQ Index, expert-based dictionary scores, and survey-based scores. Predictive validity was verified through regression analysis, showing significant positive relationships between CATA-sLDA scores and firm performance measures such as Tobin's Q (Kindermann et al., 2021; Teubner & Stockinger, 2020).

Results

The CATA-sLDA model's digitalization scores showed strong alignment with other recognized digitalization measures, confirming both construct and predictive validity. The main findings are summarized as follows:

1. Reliability and Validity of Digitalization Scores:

- The digitalization scores produced by CATA-sLDA demonstrated high test-retest reliability, with a correlation coefficient of 0.83 across repeated assessments.
- Construct validity was verified by comparing CATA-sLDA scores with alternative digitalization metrics, including expert-based digital dictionaries, industry indices like Gartner's Digital IQ Index, and survey-based digitalization scores (Short et al., 2010; Kindermann et al., 2021).

- Predictive validity was established through a regression analysis with firm performance measures, specifically Tobin's Q. The CATA-sLDA digitalization scores positively predicted firm performance.

2. Trends in Digitalization Across Industries:

Analysis of industry-specific digitalization trends revealed a consistent increase in digitalization scores across the banking, retail, and manufacturing sectors from 2007 to 2022. The study observed an accelerated digitalization trajectory in response to major economic events, such as the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Performance Implications of Digitalization:

CATA-sLDA digitalization scores showed a strong predictive relationship with Tobin's Q. Firms with higher digitalization scores generally exhibited better performance, supporting the premise that digitalization contributes to competitive advantage.

Contributions and Implications

1. **Advancing Measurement of Strategic Orientations:** By automating dictionary creation and weighting, CATA-sLDA overcomes limitations of traditional CATA methods and offers a flexible, scalable alternative for measuring strategic orientations.
2. **Enhanced Tracking of Digitalization:** CATA-sLDA enables firms and researchers to track digitalization dynamically, revealing insights into digital transformation trends and responses to economic shocks.
3. **Linking Digitalization to Firm Performance:** The study establishes a clear link between digitalization and firm performance, indicating that firms prioritizing digital strategies are better positioned to succeed in the market.
4. **Automated and Scalable Framework for Future Research:** This model can be adapted to measure other strategic constructs, making it invaluable for researchers studying various strategic orientations across industries.

Conclusion

The CATA-sLDA approach offers significant advantages over traditional survey methods and existing CATA methods that rely on domain experts for dictionary creation. Unlike these methods, which rely heavily on the knowledge and presence of a few experts, CATA-sLDA harnesses a broader spectrum of expert knowledge from published articles both within and outside the domain of the focal SO. Using published articles allows for the inclusion of a wide range of expert opinions and insights. It facilitates a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the construct, reducing the potential for subjective bias from a narrow expert base. Additionally, CATA-sLDA further enhances objectivity by assigning weights to words based on their statistical prevalence in SO-focused articles, establishing a more rigorous and objective weighting scheme. This method also capitalizes on automated, data-driven processes to efficiently use existing resources, including readily available literature and firm-generated texts, substantially reducing the reliance on resource-intensive expert consultations and primary data collection. As a model-based method that utilizes secondary data, CATA-sLDA can be tailored to different conceptualizations of the SO across time periods and geographies and can automatically integrate new insights and emerging trends regarding the SO construct. These attributes make CATA-sLDA a cost-effective, scalable, and less biased approach, ideal for accurately capturing and analyzing evolving constructs positioning it as a superior methodology for measuring strategic constructs.

Bridging the Millennial Gap: Exploring Consumer Behavior in Phygital Marketing.

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of phygital marketing on Millennial consumer behavior, integrating physical and digital marketing to enhance engagement and satisfaction. By combining secondary research with a survey of 100 respondents in Maharashtra, the research explores how consumers perceive phygital strategies, focusing on flexibility, personalization, and security. Key findings highlight consumers' appreciation for seamless channel integration, secure payments, and culturally adapted content. The study introduces a Phygital Marketing Model with components such as Cross-Channel Integration, Personalization, and Cultural Adaptation. This model emphasizes the need for localized experiences to build strong consumer connections. Retailers can leverage these insights to create immersive, consumer-centric phygital experiences that foster loyalty and engagement.

Keywords: Phygital marketing, consumer behavior, , smart stores, personalization, data privacy, customer engagement, retail transformation, Millennial, cultural adaptation.

Purpose of the study

This research investigates the transformative role of phygital marketing in shaping consumer behavior by seamlessly integrating physical and digital marketing elements. As the retail landscape evolves, the study aims to understand the dual impact of emerging technologies in enhancing consumer engagement, satisfaction, and decision-making. By examining the ways phygital marketing bridges offline and online channels, this study seeks to identify how retailers can leverage these innovations to fulfill the expectations of modern consumers, with a particular focus on Millennials.

Design/methodology/approach

The study applies a dual-method approach, combining secondary data analysis from academic journals, industry publications, government reports, and company case studies with primary data gathered through a Google Forms survey targeting 100 respondents from Maharashtra . The survey explores consumer experiences, preferences, and perceptions of phygital marketing interactions. Quantitative methods such as descriptive and trend analysis identify patterns in consumer engagement, while qualitative thematic analysis reveals recurring consumer themes and perceptions in phygital retail environments. This mixed- methods approach offers a nuanced view of consumer behavior in phygital spaces, providing a foundation for developing a cohesive framework for phygital marketing.

Findings

Phygital platforms offer substantial benefits by blending online and offline shopping experiences, providing flexibility and convenience. With 62% of respondents using services like click-and-collect,

many consumers appreciate the seamless integration that allows them to switch easily between channels. Personalized offers and recommendations, valued by 40% of respondents, make shopping experiences more relevant and engaging. Cultural adaptation enhances this further, as 62% prefer local language content and promotions during festivals. Security is also crucial, with 54% prioritizing secure payment options, highlighting trust as essential. Overall, phygital platforms empower consumers by combining price transparency, hands-on product experience, and quality assessment, creating a well-rounded, satisfying shopping journey that fosters brand loyalty.

Originality

This research introduces a comprehensive Phygital Marketing Model designed to bridge physical and digital experiences effectively, with specific components addressing consumer needs and preferences. The model includes essential elements such as Consumer Entry Point, Cross-Channel Integration, Seamless Integration, Personalization, Ethical Handling, Empowerment and Feedback, Cultural Adaptation, and Feedback and Improvement. One of the unique contributions of this model is the inclusion of Cultural Adaptation, which emphasizes the importance of localizing phygital strategies to reflect the cultural values and practices of diverse consumer demographics. By adapting content and in-store experiences to regional and cultural preferences, the model offers retailers a way to build stronger connections and enhance customer engagement across different cultural contexts. This inclusion of Cultural Adaptation acknowledges the diversity within the consumer base and allows retailers to provide more personalized, culturally resonant experiences.

Research limitations/implications

The study's limitations include its reliance on a sample size of 100 respondents, which may not fully capture diverse consumer behaviours across different demographics and regions. Additionally, the short-term nature of the study may not reflect the long-term effects of phygital interactions on consumer loyalty and brand perception. Future research should consider longitudinal studies to assess sustained consumer responses to phygital marketing and expand on the economic impact of these strategies on various retail sectors.

Practical implications

This study provides retail practitioners with key insights for developing phygital strategies that meet consumer demands for interactivity, convenience, and security. By leveraging immersive technologies like AR and VR, retailers can enhance in-store experiences while prioritizing data privacy to build trust. Incorporating Cultural Adaptation into phygital models allows retailers to engage diverse audiences with localized content and culturally relevant promotions, broadening the appeal of phygital marketing in varied markets.

Social implications

Phygital marketing's influence extends beyond consumer engagement, impacting social and employment dynamics within retail spaces. As technology takes on a more prominent role, the need for traditional retail roles may shift, potentially reducing the demand for customer service staff but increasing roles in technology maintenance and customer engagement through digital means. Moreover, phygital marketing reshapes the in-store experience to be more dynamic and interactive, which may attract tech-savvy demographics, fostering inclusivity and engagement among younger consumer groups. The Cultural Adaptation component specifically highlights how phygital strategies can foster greater social inclusivity by catering to regional and cultural preferences, thus enhancing consumer comfort and satisfaction in diverse markets. This shift also underscores a societal transition toward more

experience-driven retail environments, reflecting broader changes in consumer expectations for convenience and interactivity.

Revolutionizing Offline Retail: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Merchandise Planning, Pricing, and Personalization

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Abstract:

In the modern age, where dependence on technology is growing rapidly. Artificial intelligence is seen as the epitome of innovation. Implementations are extensive for various industries; offline retail is no exception. Artificial intelligence can guide for better merchandise planning in the store as an outcome the practice of offering discounts may become obsolete. This transformation could be made possible through software that offers precise guidance to retailers on product selection, quantities to purchase and optimal timing of sales to maximize full-price sales. The use of computer vision and AI algorithms for optimizing store layouts, product placements, and window displays to attract and engage customers in Indian retail stores. The field of offline shopping can evolve into a more interactive experience where shoppers formulate their ideal outfit and within seconds an AI-driven search engine finds the closest match. In addition, AI could work with designers, marketers, and buyers to predict customers' fashion preferences even before the customers themselves are aware of them.

Design/methodology/approach: The paper is based on the insights from Literature review, Case studies and Content Analysis.

Findings: The findings of the article on the application of artificial intelligence in the offline retail sector will focus upon AI Revolutionising Merchandise Planning, Interactive Online Shopping Experience and AI's Role in Predicting Fashion Trends.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Offline retail, Merchandise Planning, AI driven search engine.

Analyzing Tourism Marketing Metrics in India: Insights into Trends, Performance, and Strategic Opportunities

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Abstract:

Purpose

The purpose of studying tourism marketing metrics is to understand how different strategies and tactics in tourism marketing impact the success of tourism destinations, businesses, and services. By analyzing and interpreting key performance indicators (KPIs) and other relevant data, tourism professionals can make informed decisions that enhance the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, improve customer engagement, and drive business growth. Campaigns for tourism marketing are frequently extensive and multidimensional. Whether these ads affect decisions, create interest, and reach the target audience can be ascertained using metrics. Certain campaigns and advertising initiatives can be evaluated for success using metrics like return on investment (ROI), conversion rates, or engagement rates (click-through, social media interactions). The behaviour of potential tourists can be understood by tourism marketers by examining indicators like website traffic, booking trends, social media sentiment, and search trends. Marketing techniques can be improved to better suit consumer preferences by knowing when and why consumers are searching for vacation locations or services, as well as the elements that affect their choices.

Design/methodology/approach

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the tourism marketing metrics in India. Convenience Sampling was used for collecting approximately 659 data which included travellers from all over India by using 58 questionnaires. Techniques such as paired t-tests and exploratory factor analysis are utilized to determine various elements of the tourism marketing metrics by using SPSS S/W.

Findings

From the statistical analysis, it is observed that there are seven elements of tourism marketing and having cumulative variances respectively as mentioned i.e.: Website traffic (17.08%), social media Engagement (33.03%), Conversion Rate (Booking Visitors) (43.94%), Return on Investments (ROI) (52.04%), Customer Satisfaction (Surveys, Reviews) (60.11%), Destination awareness (67.43%) and Visitor length of stay (72.27%) etc.

Originality

Metrics aid in the more effective distribution of resources. Businesses in the tourism industry can maximize their marketing expenditures by determining which marketing channels or strategies (social

media, SEO, influencer relationships, etc.) are yielding the best results. Metric tracking and analysis also help organizations make decisions about future marketing spending by directing money toward the most successful projects. To make sure that marketing expenditures are producing real company outcomes, like more reservations, more visitors spending money, or longer stays, ROI measurement is essential.

Research limitations/implications

Metrics for tourism marketing have limits even though they provide insightful information about how well marketing initiatives are working. Interpreting study findings requires careful consideration of these constraints, which range from issues with understanding complicated consumer behaviour to data quality and external influences. Tourism marketers can gain more precise and thorough insights by incorporating qualitative data into quantitative measures, taking into account outside factors, and regularly modifying their approaches to take into account shifting consumer trends, technical developments, and trends.

Practical implications

Tourism organizations can predict demand and prepare their marketing efforts ahead of time by examining trends in customer behaviour, travel patterns, and booking seasons. This allows companies to target particular client segments at the appropriate moment (for example, advertising last-minute specials during the low season or winter holidays during the autumn). Businesses may maintain their agility and adjust to shifting consumer tastes, market situations, or world events by regularly analyzing tourism marketing KPIs. Whether it's a move towards eco-tourism or an increase in remote work-related travel, this helps organizations remain competitive and adaptable to new trends.

Social implications

Studying tourism marketing metrics has important societal ramifications since it enables travel agencies and destinations to better understand and serve the varied needs of tourists, leading to more inclusive and culturally aware travel experiences. Businesses can develop targeted marketing efforts that appeal to different groups and encourage ethical travel and cross-cultural interaction by analyzing customer data. Furthermore, by encouraging the growth of sustainable tourism practices, this data-driven strategy can guarantee that travel destinations evolve in a way that minimizes their negative effects on the environment, supports local communities, and protects cultural heritage. Additionally, by making travel more accessible to people from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and those with disabilities, tourist marketing metrics can support greater social fairness in the sector.

Keywords: Tourism, Marketing, Traveller, Work, Organization, Business, social media.

Style revolution: bridging theory and trends in india's fast fashion landscape

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Abstract

Purpose

This study investigates the factors influencing the segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies of India's fast fashion industry, it explores the impact of Indian fast fashion apparel brands on college students across various demographic groups.

Design / Methodology / Approach

Through an online survey of 130 college students, this study reveals a four-fold segmentation of the market and the significant impact of fast fashion on consumer behaviour, including excessive spending and cultural homogenization.

Findings

It was concluded that the major impacts were overconsumption, overspending, cultural homogenization, and financial burden. The implications of the study are a source of information for fashion retailers and marketers.

Research Implications

By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this research aims to identify practical implications for marketers to enhance their strategies and better understand consumer behaviour in the fast fashion context. These findings provide valuable insights for marketers to develop targeted campaigns and address the negative consequences of fast fashion consumption.

Keywords: fast fashion, purchasing behaviour, market segmentation, consumer behaviour, theory-practice gap.

Demographics Systematic Study of Impact of Subsidies and Incentives on Food Processing Unit holders in Jammu Division.

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Abstract

Subsidies and Incentives play vital effective role in the development of food processing industry. Industries are benefitted in different ways in terms of investment promotion, Job creation, Value addition, strengthening the supply chain, product diversification and many more. In this paper, 215 food processing units were examined among the unit holders of Jammu division, with a sample size of 31 parameters/statements were designed in the form of questionnaire and same were submitted to various respondents. The information collected by questions based on 5-Point-Likert scale which was later tabulated using SPSS. Exploratory factor analysis was used on 31 statements which were later converged into nine prominent factors using statistical tool viz; Government schemes and related subsidies performance. Based on the data collected the variance explained on nine factors is 9.413, with KMO value of 0.771 and Bartlett's test of sphericity value of 3255.861 respectively. For further understanding of impact of factors influencing food processing unit's growth within Jammu Division, two-Way ANOVA test was applied on the collected data to understand impact of factors identified and their relative significance on FPI's in Jammu division. Tables, results and discussions and conclusions were drawn accordingly.

Keywords: Incentives, Subsidies, Food Processing, Factor Analysis.

Building blocks of an Immersive Ad Experience

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Abstract

Technology has disrupted how consumers immerse themselves in advertising today (Mokoena & Prinsloo, 2021). Advertising has historically used the role of immersion through storytelling and visual imagery to provide consumers with engaging experiences (Carù & Cova, 2006; Kim et al., 2017). However, in the digital age of technological advancements, new doors for advertisers have opened to create novel and immersive experiences through tools such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), mixed reality (MR) and extended reality (XR). Immersive experiences, as defined by (Han et al., 2023), involve a deep sense of consumer engagement in an ad facilitated by multi-sensory stimulation encompassing physical, emotional, and mental involvement. While advertisers use immersive VR experiences to transport consumers into multi-sensory new digital environments, AR and MR blend the consumer's immediate physical environments to create an extended reality experience (Rauschnabel et al., 2022). According to Statista, the VR advertising market is projected to reach a global revenue of US\$174.0 million by 2024, while the AR advertising market is estimated to generate US\$5.2 billion in the same year (Statista, 2024). In today's competitive environment, brands try to stand out and stay relevant using new technology-mediated tools (Ipek, 2020). While these technologies can grab attention and provide experience through novelty (Zeng et al., 2023), research suggests they may not be enough for long-term brand impact (Broeck, 2024). While many industry observers have called for brands to look beyond immersive technology's novel profile and find factors that could help harness long-term brand engagement (Hopp & Gangadharbatla, 2016), there is no clear understanding of how advertising can help create immersive experiences to enable a more profound emotional and long term connect with consumers. This study thus aims to conduct systematic research that conceptualises (a) what an immersive ad experience is and (b) the components needed to build an immersive ad experience. While the use of immersive tools in advertising is still in its infancy, understanding the intricacies and strategies that help formulate an immersive ad experience becomes crucial.

Methodology: In the present study, we utilised a qualitative method approach to analyse (a) the building blocks of an immersive ad experience, (b) capture the perspective of multiple industry specialists to understand how advertising in the immersive world works, (c) conceptualise what constitutes as an immersive experience in the context of advertising. Due to the limited literature on immersive ad experience, an inductive research design was utilised using the grounded theory approach to achieve the above research objectives. We conducted twelve in-depth interviews with industry professionals working in the field of advertising who had some experience in making immersive advertisements.

Findings: In a world where attention is being drawn to a deficit, brands are trying to connect with their consumers and remain in the consumers' minds in the long run. The battle of memory performance through ads for brands has been an age-old battle, with brands trying to connect with consumers through new and creative ways. Our research utilises the knowledge of industry professionals and provides brands with a comprehensive framework that would help marketers and brands strategise and amalgamate the use of traditional and immersive tools to elevate a consumer's ad experience. The

present study identified three main dimensions that conceptualise an immersive ad experience: Gamification, Interactivity and Novelty.

Keywords: Interactivity, Immersion, Immersive experience, brand engagement.

Inclusion, Infusion and Integration for a better tomorrow.-A case for bridging the gap between marketing theory and practice with special mention to feasible household waste management.

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“The biggest part of our digital transformation is changing the way we think.” — Simeon Preston, Bupa

In the Marketing perspective,infusion and inclusion could be viewed as being all about creating environments that value and respect varying value propositions while integration may be seen as bringing in technology and upgrading the value proposition by helping-upgrading the existing environment or value proposition .

To further reiterate,Inclusive marketing is all about acknowledging the many ways consumers are different, choosing which of those differences, or identities the business would chose to serve.Thus Inclusive marketing is marketing that celebrates diversity and capitalizes on it. Infusion and Integration could be various value adding processes that aid the process of Inclusion.

This case intends to present a case for garbage management as a construct to incorporate Inclusion, Infusion and Integration on a fundamental and grass root level of household level . The paper intends to present a case for sustainable garbage management for a society thus incorporating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals1.

One aspect of this work intends to focus on issues relating to better waste management at household and society level that could aid in reduced landfilling of waste together with increased sustainable recycling of waste for a society .The usage of technology is integral part of this construct and thus the discussion would involve methods of infusion ad integration

Waste can be both a resource and an environmental problem. Interestingly, there exists a great diversity in the manner in which different consumers respond to and behave with regard to waste management as a concept. Therefore ,Inclusion as a concept in this regard would relate to understanding the diversity among consumers with regard to how they respond to and involve in garbage management on a household level. Waste management that works poorly involves considerable wastage of valuable material and can lead to environmental and health problems. waste management when does not work, could lead to problems related to sanitation and health, as well as soil and water pollution. The paper intends to study and incorporate the varied customer behavior patterns with regard to waste management and identify -propose feasible and sustainable methods of waste management by integrating and infusing technological avenues for the same.

This paper thus would intend to discuss how Inclusion, Infusion and Integration as marketing functions could involve processes that could help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the area of Waste Management.

India² is confronted with a significant waste management dilemma due to its fast urbanization. Based on data from 2017, 62 million tons of municipal solid trash are produced annually in 7,935 towns and cities, home to approximately 377 million urban residents. Just 11.9 MT of the 43 MT of waste that is collected is treated, and 31 MT are disposed of in landfills. The necessity for proper waste management is urgent given the volume of unmanaged waste that India is seeing develop.

The garbage industry thus offers great opportunities with avenues available for usage of tech know-how to disrupt the waste ecosystem with a marketing strategy that works on employing inclusive consumer behavior. Numerous startups and innumerable governments have come to the fore with inclusive, tech infused and tech integrated solutions for the same. The goal of these businesses is basically to create a cyclical self-sustaining community. This paper is a testament of few such initiatives.

Some success stories :

Europe leads the way in waste management solutions. So it is no surprise that Germany, Austria and Belgium are three of the top performers in [recycling](#)

Germany³ has done a number of things right to get to this point. In 2005, Germany banned traditional garbage dumps replacing them with a much more sophisticated system. As a result of their advanced waste management policies, the 50,000 garbage dumps have been transformed into: 70 incinerators, 60 biological and mechanical waste processing factories; 800 units producing compost from organic waste. One of the most innovative recycling solutions that Germany has promoted is the green dot system. Manufacturers and retailers have to pay for a green dot on the packaging of their products. The more packaging, the higher the fee creating an incentive for businesses to reduce packaging and facilitate recycling. This system has led to less paper, thinner glass and less metal being used therefore reducing the amount of waste produced.

Similarly, Austria is a small country doing big things in waste management. They have been successful with a number of traditional initiatives to separate recyclable waste and reduce landfill using taxes and incentives. A more innovative approach is that of an Austrian biotech company which has developed a new high-tech method of waste management which uses fungal enzymes to recycle PET. By using bioengineered fungal enzymes, the recycling of PET plastic can be done “naturally”, without the production of any new by-products, with less new production materials having to be made using petroleum and 100 percent of the material recycled can be used.

Coming to the Indian landscape there are a bunch of initiatives in this direction which include Smart City Solutions like Smart Waste Management Monitoring Systems, Garbage monitoring systems using IoT, smart bins for waste collection, aggregators apps, mobile apps and many more. The paper will go into greater depth of each of these initiatives present them and attempt to identify their working models. These discussions intend to bring to the fore that each of these instances are cases where the gap between marketing theory and marketing practice has been bridged to offer greater and sustainable marketing solutions using Infusion, integration and inclusion.

The paper will attempt to present a model for success stories and present a debate on the efficacy of the successful ones while attempting to design one that could be efficient and feasible.

Study on Exploring the Antecedents of Online Store Usage

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Abstract:

India is one of the largest and fastest-growing Internet markets globally, with over 800 million users and more than 500 million active daily users. This surge in internet penetration has fueled the rapid growth of e-commerce, especially through mobile platforms. As e-commerce evolves, so do customer expectations for service quality, shaped by both local and global trends. In this competitive landscape, online retailers must cater to local preferences and focus on service quality to ensure customer satisfaction. This paper explores the antecedents while assessing overall service quality of online shopping websites. The antecedents were analysed, through primary data collection from users of two Indian and two global e-commerce websites. The analysis of data involved three phases- Phase one focused on identifying the internal consistent of construct. The antecedents of service quality of e-commerce websites were explored using exploratory factor analysis in phase two. In phase three, the outcomes were later confirmed and validated using confirmatory factor analysis. The questionnaire was administered to 300 respondents. AMOS was used to analyze the data. Results of the study indicate that information quality and reliability; assurance and responsiveness; ease of use; privacy; and personalization are the prime concerns of consumers while shopping online.

Keywords: Online shopping websites, Online service quality, Online service quality antecedents, Exploratory factor analysis.

Hashtag cracked: decoding the mechanics of viral marketing

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Extended Abstract:

In recent years, what was originally an innocuous, additional approach for categorizing and making social media information more easily accessed has evolved into a potent instrument for marketing, activism, and cultural phenomena.

The hashtag enables users to categorize their posts and thereby make those posts accessible to others. However, in the world of digital marketing, the usages of hashtags have developed from their initial place in strategies, causes, and viral phenomena. Despite the ubiquitous usage of hashtags in viral marketing, the fundamental mechanics driving their success are still unexplored. This study intends to explore how hashtags improve brand awareness, engage customers, and impact social behaviour.

This conceptual paper will focus on the process employed by a viral marketing campaign employing hashtags, decoding the components that develop, propagate and ultimately succeed or fail to build a viral marketing campaign. The objectives for this research paper are-

1. To explore the role of hashtags in viral marketing
2. To investigate the social, cultural, and ethical implications of hashtag-driven viral marketing.

The concept of "virality" is rather intangible. Despite efforts and years of attempts by marketers, influencers and researchers in attempting to get an exact formula, its recipe remains elusive. Though a mix of emotional appeal, timeliness, and social influence are commonly identified as critical components of virality, there is still a need for more depth in terms of the role that hashtags have played in catalysing, amplifying, and sustaining campaigns that reached viral status. It conceives the hashtag as an essential mechanism in viral marketing and focuses on the use of the hashtag beyond the use as a tool for the dissemination of messages, instead as an activator of engagement through user interaction.

Viral marketing is one of those means of achieving exposure and engagement through organic reach with the content, most often by using social networks. Unlike paid placements or endorsements using more conventional forms of advertising, the initiative for sharing and spreading communication in viral marketing comes from the users themselves through organic social interactions or campaign participation. The term "virality" most nearly relates to the concept of exponential growth, and the idea is often drawn as if it were similar to the spread of a viral infection, as one person's interaction with another brings the content to a critical mass through network effect. The success of viral marketing depends on the speed a message travels, the scale of engagement, whether it's likes, shares, comments, and the endurance of its presence in public discourse. Although these measures will help gauge the success of a marketing campaign, however, they fail to capture the complexity and nuance of what might make a marketing campaign "go viral."

Hashtag remains one of the most striking features in viral campaigns because it signifies symbolic material that is often short-term, but makes categorization and discoverability of content on social media networks very easy. From being a mere organizer, the hashtag has evolved to become an important aspect of digital storytelling and viral marketing. As social media continues to flourish through Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc. the utilization of hashtags in organizing the flow of opinion and altering the

direction of consumer behaviour has been magnified. Since these services depend heavily on hashtags as a means of gathering content, they have led to higher user visibility and engagement.

Theoretical framework: The theory of viral marketing is premised on the principles of the concepts of both traditional and digital marketing. Over the years, numerous scholars have tried to come up with various models that attempt to describe the process of diffusion of marketing communications over the Internet. One of the best-known frameworks is the "Two-Step Flow of Communication" theory by Katz and Lazarsfeld in 1955, which proposes that information flows from the media to the opinion leaders who subsequently influence the larger audience. This theory was later transferred into the virtual age, where "influencers" or "micro-influencers" are the opinion leaders that facilitate spreading branded content through hashtags (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011).

In addition, the "Diffusion of Innovations" theory (Rogers, 2003) explains how new ideas-or marketing programs in this case-are adopted by adopters. There are indications that hashtags operate as digital innovations that can diffuse rapidly between an effective network of users and involve different kinds of consumers according to their social network ties and relevant interests (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

Hashtags are used by viral marketing campaigns as they aggregate content, create community engagement, and enhance the discoverability of messages. Hashtag campaigns enable brands to access audiences beyond their immediate followers, who either connect with or share the hashtag. According to Tufekci (2014), the use of hashtags leads to "cascading effects" where one piece of content goes global within hours because it went viral. Virality depends on many different factors, such as emotional appeal, timing, and network effects. A good example of this is when strong emotions through humor, nostalgia, or anger are provoked by the hashtag and when hashtags tend to capture the moment of a current social issue or trend. For instance, #BlackLivesMatter was a hashtag that spearheaded the social justice campaign; it gained power in social media through rallying the whole world toward one cause, so, it demonstrates the capability of hashtags as something more than just marketing tools; they can also ignite real-world movements (Brock, 2018).

The internal structure of a hashtag, for example, its length, complexity, and memorability, even affects its actual success, according to Chen et al. (2014). Short, simple, and easy-to-remember hashtags have a higher likelihood of achieving a higher engagement rate because the participants are more likely to join or share the content associated with these hashtags. In addition, branded hashtags instead of generic ones also produce a stronger brand recall and consumer loyalty.

Twitter started using hashtags as early as 2007, where they had conceptualized it as a means of collecting messages that related to a particular theme or topic. Using the symbol #, people can tag their content in such a manner that it will be found and other people can comment and share the same interest. Initially, hashtags had the function of organizing content; however, with the growth and development of social media, they now play a very significant role in driving discourse and public attention. Hashtags can serve to separate significant content from the chaos of online conversation, allowing it to find its own identity and be noticed by a larger audience than the user's network.

The concept of using hashtags in viral marketing promotes a message, encourages participation, and fosters community around a brand, product, or idea. Similar to any campaign that hinges on hashtags, success through the hashtag is predicated upon the engagement and sharing levels because high engagement translates into higher awareness and power. Marketers opt for mnemonic memorable, relevant, and time-effective hashtags in order to ride the wave of any ongoing trend or a happening in culture to make the message more prominent.

While breaking down the mechanics of using hashtags for viral marketing, some points must be taken into consideration:

1. **Emotional Resonance and Content Appeal:** The ones that provoke significant emotional responses—be it laughter, anger, exhilaration, or even nostalgia—are those that receive more engagement. An emotional resonance plays a very important role in whether a marketing message has virality or not. Content that provokes an automatic gut reaction is shared more often, spreading the content even further. For example, the #BlackLivesMatter movement sparked an international force through the appeal to emotional feelings of injustice and solidarity. Humorous content, such as the #IceBucketChallenge, creates viral success through entertainment and participation.
2. **Timeliness and Relevance:** Timing is everything in the success of a viral marketing campaign. Hashtags tied to major cultural events, holidays, or news stories can take off quickly when users at large want to get in on the conversation. Marketing messages that leverage these moments can generate tremendous buzz. However, the downside of such campaigns is that it may not be very relevant in the long run.
3. **User Participation and Interaction:** The essence of viral marketing is user-generated content. For effective viral campaigns, consumers are motivated to write posts under the campaign hashtags, which makes them feel that they have a participation and ownership experience. This user involvement can take many forms - sharing personal stories, photos, or videos, like Calvin Klein's #MyCalvins campaign, or Coca-Cola's #ShareACoke. The secret lies in making the hashtag vast and effortless to participate in, fun, meaningful, or excitingly expressive to users.
4. **Network Effects and Social Influence:** Network effects often fuel the viral spread of hashtags. Individual users are likely to join a conversation when other people have been engaging with that hashtag. Virality is also influenced significantly by social proof, referring to the tendency of individuals to be influenced by other people's actions. Massive influencers and celebrities also massively fuel hashtag campaigns. A timely endorsement by a popular celebrity can send the campaign to viral stratosphere. Amplification effect is more pronounced here as this falls in the domain of a digital landscape that is dominated by influencer marketing in determining consumer behaviour.
5. **Cross-Platform Integration:** Hashtags don't live in one platform. Popular viral campaigns spread across the various social media platforms, like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and even YouTube. The flexible nature of hashtags across the platforms makes the campaign scalable. The #MeToo movement did not only gain momentum on Twitter but as well harvested to Instagram, where people posted their stories. The ability to carry the hashtag across the different platforms is a recipe for potential for virality since it can reach other areas of demographic distribution.
6. **Branding and Identity:** Hashtags are also how brands build a unique personality or tone for their campaign. A great hashtag can become synonymous with a brand, much like a slogan might. For example, the #JustDoIt Nike hashtag has gone from an idea to become a cultural beacon. Hashtags can be instrumental for brands in positioning themselves and how they relate to greater social or even political movements. For example, #LoveOurPlanet of Patagonia gives rise to brand awareness concerning environmental activism while developing brand loyalty and engagement amongst the environmentally sensitive consumers.

However, hashtags are very strong tools for engagement and visibility, but they are also fraught with several challenges. The primary challenge of course is losing control of the narrative when a hashtag actually becomes popular. In some cases, hashtags take on lives of their own—for example, the #DumpStarbucks hashtag, used by protest groups to rail against the company's political positions. Brands looking to use a hashtag as a marketing mechanism may be at the mercy of public opinion, which can shift on a dime if the hashtag is aligned with negative sentiment. Another is ensuring that engagement is organic. It may negatively impact the authenticity of the campaign through "hashtag hijacking," when some people or groups appropriate a branded or popular hashtag for their purposes.

Moreover, overuse of hashtag campaigns can become dilutive, leading to user fatigue or disinterest. Emotional appeal, relevance, user engagement, and social influence would be important determinants of the success of a hashtag-driven campaign. Interpreting these dynamics can enable marketers to construct more effective campaigns to tap into the viral propensity of a hashtag. However, with such power comes risk, and brands must be very careful in asserting control over the complexities of online discourse to survive the long game.

To summarize, the mechanics of viral marketing, powered by the strategic use of hashtags, provide valuable insights to consumer behaviour, brand engagement and social media dynamics. Understanding these trends allows marketers to fine-tune their tactics for leveraging viral potential, resulting in deeper connections and larger reach in this digital era.

Keywords: Viral marketing, Hashtag campaign, Marketing innovation, Digital marketing strategy, Emotional resonance, Algorithmic amplification, Hashtag virality, Brand engagement, Responsible marketing, User-generated content, Influencer marketing.

Driving Involvement: A Dual-Phase SEM-ANN Analysis of Interactivity in Live Shopping

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Abstract

In an era where digital interfaces increasingly mediate consumer engagement, Amazon Live exemplifies the transformative potential of live-stream commerce, achieving high interaction and sales rates. Grounded in involvement theory, this study investigates the interplay between both interpersonal (e.g., perceived expertise, similarity, familiarity) and platform-related factors (e.g., synchronicity, active control, and two-way communication) on two essential dimensions of consumer involvement-cognitive & affective. The study further explores the notion of 'flow' – an optimal experience – and their subsequent influence on consumers' purchase intention. A dual-stage SEM-ANN approach reveals that perceived expertise, perceived similarity, and perceived familiarity significantly and positively influenced consumer involvement. The platform characteristics of the flow and purchase intention had been more enhanced by synchronicity and two-way communication, which underlined the importance of immediate interaction and feedback. Interestingly, active control as the independent variable also showed no significant differences in the level of involvement and purchase behavior, this means that the role of consumer control in live-stream shopping is not as significant as it was initially hypothesized. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of both interpersonal and platform-related factors, along with its innovative methodological approach combining SEM and ANN to examine consumer behavior in live-stream commerce.

Keywords: live stream shopping (LSS), consumer involvement, affective involvement, cognitive involvement, interpersonal interaction factors, flow, purchase intention.

Bridging Consumer Expectations and E-commerce Strategies: Integrating Consumer Insights into Effective E-commerce Sales Promotions for Large Appliances in India

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Abstract

Over the past decade, Indian consumer behavior has undergone a notable transformation, primarily driven by the rapid growth of e-commerce fuelled by increased internet access and smartphone adoption. In this competitive landscape, companies employ diverse strategies to attract customers, with sales promotions playing a central role. E-commerce platforms engage digital natives through price offs, coupon discounts, contests, and free delivery and installation to stimulate purchases, especially for large appliances. However, the effectiveness of such promotional methods varies over a period of time. This study examines customer perceptions of online sales promotions for consumer durables in India, drawing on data from a survey of 467 participants. The findings indicate the presence of five primary attitudes toward promotions: cost savings, quality, convenience, status, and variety. To optimize engagement, Indian e-commerce platforms should focus on emphasizing monetary value, product quality, a seamless shopping experience, engaging interactions, and an extensive product range.

Keywords: e-commerce, online sales promotion, consumer durables, online consumers, consumer perception.

Impact of price deals on consumer perception of product quality

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Abstract:

Price deals represent time-specific promotion offers intended to drive consumer purchase. The present study aims to understand the impact of occasion-specific price deals on consumers' perception of product quality. We also study the impact of price deals on purchase intention. Findings from our study reveal that consumers' perception of product quality and purchase intention was higher when the price deal offered was associated with an occasion.

Keywords: Price deals, occasion-specific purchases, promotions, product quality.

Do Polluting and Non-Polluting Industries Respond to the ESG in the Same Way? A Glimpse into the Indian Corporate Sector

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to compare the aggregated and disaggregated ESG performance between polluting and non-polluting industries operating in India and investigate the impact of ESG on firm value (FV) of these industries.

Design/methodology/approach: The present study is a cross-sectional analysis based on secondary data with a sample of 788 companies, of which 457 are from the polluting industry and 331 are from the non-polluting industry for the period 2022. We have deployed the methodology adopted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for bifurcating the sample companies into polluting and non-polluting sectors. The ESG performance data were collected from Credit Rating Information Services of India Limited (CRISIL), while the data pertaining to firm value have been extracted from annual reports of the selected companies. For empirical exploration, the ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression method has been employed, and simultaneous quantile regression models have been used for the robustness of the result. Additionally, a t-test has been applied to check the significant differences between these industries.

Findings: The findings demonstrate that the polluting sector is less responsive towards ESG dimensions while non-polluting sectors put much emphasis on augmenting their ESG performance. Additionally, the result of the OLS regression reveals that ESG performance is positively and significantly influencing the firm value of both the polluting and non-polluting industries. Moreover, the result of quantile regression exhibits that the positive impact of ESG is more pronounced at upper quantiles and it varies at different locations of the conditional distribution of firm performance.

Originality/value: This research is the first to investigate the impact of ESG performance on FV with a large sample in India comprising the Polluting and Non-Polluting Industries using the ESG data from indigenously devised rating agency i.e. CRISIL. Therefore, this study is significant and has practical implications for investors, customers, researchers, policymakers, and regulators.

Keywords: ESG Performance, Sustainability, Firm value, Polluting and Non-Polluting Industry, CRISIL, Quantile Regression.

Feeling Small but Thinking Big: Awe-induced Positive Self-diminishment Motivates

Sustainable Consumption

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Extended abstract

Research on sustainable attitudes and behaviors has documented promoting aspects of self-relevance to drive sustainable behavior. For instance, research suggests that individuals are motivated to preserve or raise self-esteem when making sustainable purchases. This is because individuals' identity or self-image concerns are important triggers of positive consumer behaviors (e.g., White et al., 2014). However, enhancement of self-image poses an immediate concern of boosting consumers' self-interests rather than a more self-transcendent perception required to motivate consumption for the greater good. In other words, the relatively higher costs associated with sustainable products act as a barrier for consumer adoption of such goods. Although extensive research has examined the influence of psychological antecedents on sustainable actions and behaviors, marketers still struggle to overcome the attitude-behavior gap of consumers in the domain of sustainable products.

Thus, a gap remains in understanding potential motivating factors to consume sustainably and especially, boost inclinations to pay for relatively expensive sustainable products. In this research, we identify a novel aspect of self-relevance – positive self-diminishment – that will help marketers to bridge the gap by increasing willingness to pay (WTP) for sustainable products. We define positive self-diminishment as the perception of feeling psychologically small without adversely affecting associated self-concept perceptions such as self-esteem, status, and sense of power and control. Put differently, positive self-diminishment is devoid of negative self-perceptions even while making the consumer feel psychologically small. Thus, a sense of positive self-diminishment addresses double barreled necessities relevant to motivating sustainable consumption – first, viewing the self as psychologically smaller primes a sensitivity to others' and promotes self-sacrificing behaviors (e.g., Van Vugt, 2009) and second, a positive self-perception enables uptake of opportunities which can affirm self-worth (Baumeister, 1998; Beaugard & Dunning, 1998; Swann, 1997), such as purchase of socio-desirable sustainable products. Emotional engagement of consumers is a crucial and pervasive component of marketing. For instance, advertisements that use appropriate emotions increase consumer interest and translate to increased sales volumes (Nielsen, 2016). Similarly, in the domain of sustainable consumption, emotions like anticipated guilt encourage sustainable behavior (Peloza et al., 2013) while sadness can increase donations for sustainable causes (Schwartz & Loewenstein, 2017). However, there are significant drawbacks to experiencing negative perceptions since marketers strive to inculcate positive experiences for consumers.

Answering recent calls for research to examine positive emotions, we evaluate a range of positive emotions and test the hypothesis that awe-induced positive self-diminishment is a stronger and more efficient motivator of sustainable actions.

Awe is a positive emotion which is primed by elicitors of natural scenic beauty or magnificent artwork or even spiritual episodes (Shiota, Keltner, and Mossman, 2007). In other words, awe incorporates a sense of wonder (Piff et al., 2015) and alters consumers' existing mental structures (Keltner & Haidt 2003). Importantly, awe induces a perception of reduced self-size whereby individuals feel smaller in the presence of awe-inducing stimuli (Piff et al., 2015). We argue and demonstrate that the sense of awe-induced self-diminishment enhances motivation to manifest moral identity and spend more on sustainable products. This is an important advantage of positive self-diminishment since prior research outlines that signaling is an integral part of socio-moral behaviors such as sustainable consumption (e.g., Griskevicius et al., 2010).

Among positive emotions, literature has largely emphasized the role of pride in motivating sustainable behaviors (e.g., Antonetti & Maklan, 2014; Bissing-Olson et al., 2016; Onwezen et al., 2013; Onwezen et al., 2014). However, pride is a self-focused emotion (Tracy & Robins, 2004) and may enhance focus on money and status, thus reducing the tendency to pay for sustainable products which are relatively more expensive. Thus, we examined if awe-induced positive diminishment would emerge as a more efficient motivator than self-referential emotions (such as pride) and other-referential emotions (such as gratitude and compassion) in facilitating higher willingness to pay for sustainable products. Using data from an archival dataset of a nationally representative population in the United States (N = 1519), a field study (N = 108), and three experiments (N = 641), our results show that utilizing awe (versus other positive emotions) primes positive self-diminishment and promotes engagement in sustainable goals including greater willingness to pay for sustainable products. Importantly, while prior empirical research has examined only one to two emotions in comparison with each other, we are the first to examine the effects of a range of positive emotions on sustainable consumption.

FIGURE 1: Conceptual framework

Findings & Discussion

Study 1 examined a publicly available dataset to assess whether dispositional emotions influence sustainable inclinations. We compared a range of positive dispositional emotions such as awe, amusement, compassion, contentment, enthusiasm, love, and pride, and regressed onto important variables like active participation in the Environmental Rights movement and individuals' position on the environment as an issue of moral concern, we discovered that only dispositional awe was effective in predicting sustainable inclinations and

participation in the Environmental Rights movement ($B = .55$, $SE = .26$, $\chi^2(1) = 4.46$, $p = .035$, 95% CI [1.04, 2.87]). Controlling for demographic variables replicated the same pattern of results.

Awe Self-diminishment Symbolization Sustainable Attribute (e.g., packaging) WTP Study 2 manipulated emotions (awe, pride, gratitude) and packaging of soap (sustainable, regular plastic) to examine the effect of awe versus other self-referential (pride) and other-referential (gratitude) emotions on sustainable product. Results revealed that a significant interaction effect of emotion and packaging ($F(2, 269) = 5.54$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .04$).

Awe (vs. pride and gratitude) increased willingness to pay (WTP) for the soap in the sustainable packaging condition, while WTP was comparable to other emotions for the regular packaged version of the product.

Study 3 examined the underlying mediating mechanism of self-diminishment and moral identity symbolization in a managerially relevant scenario. Specifically, we embedded emotional appeals (awe, happiness, neutral) in advertisements and assessed WTP on different products (hedonic product:

chocolate bar, utilitarian product: water) in sustainable packaging to eliminate product effects as well as examine any potential differences on product type. We also tested the serial mediation pathway of self-diminishment and symbolization from the effect of awe (vs. happiness, neutral) on WTP. Results demonstrate that experiencing awe (versus happiness and neutral conditions) leads to higher WTP for a utilitarian product such as a sustainable water carton as well as a hedonic product such as a chocolate bar in sustainable packaging. Mediation analysis demonstrated the effect of awe contrast variable on WTP ($b = .1455$, $SE = .0619$, $95\%CI [.0373, .2775]$). Further, self-diminishment and symbolization sequentially mediated the effect ($b = .0652$, $SE = .0356$, $95\%CI [.0127, .1509]$).

Study 4 re-examined the interaction effect of emotion (awe, pride) and product type (utilitarian, hedonic) on WTP of product, and the underlying mediation mechanism. We tested for the sequential mediation pathway of emotion on WTP by self-diminishment, regardless of differences in product hedonicity. A moderated sequential mediation analysis revealed that awe (vs. pride) on WTP was sequentially mediated by self-diminishment and symbolization (water: $b = .21$, $95\%CI [.0352, .5594]$; chocolate: $b = .22$, $95\%CI [.0398, .5406]$).

Study 5 was conducted in a naturalistic setting with real shoppers in Sydney, Australia after a nationwide ban on lightweight, single-use plastic bags by major supermarket retailers.

We compared dispositional awe (versus dispositional pride, compassion, and gratitude) on WTP for reusable bags at the supermarket as well as willingness to be inconvenienced. Dispositional awe increased WTP for a reusable shopping bag ($B = .59$, $SE = .27$, $t = 2.21$, $p = .030$) while dispositional pride decreased WTP for the reusable shopping bag ($B = -.78$, $SE = .25$, $t = -3.13$, $p = .002$). Compassion ($p = .326$) and gratitude ($p = .622$) did not have an effect. A similar pattern of results emerged for the willingness to bear personal costs as well.

General Discussion: We employed five studies to examine the concept of positive self-diminishment via

awe and how it might be a useful strategy to bridge the attitude-behavior gap in sustainable consumption. Specifically, evoking awe helps individuals feel small without negatively impacting their self-concept and helps to overcome the dilemma of self-other trade-off, thereby increasing spending levels on sustainable products. This research makes several contributions, including exploration of a novel aspect of self-concept, examination of discrete positive emotions from a functional perspective, and contribution to the nascent work on specific aspects of moral identity. Overall, our research adds to our understanding of factors

driving sustainable behaviors, while providing a novel perspective to promote sustainable consumption.

Keywords: routine products, self-size, positive emotions, sustainable consumption, moral identity, awe.

Exploring Consumer Belief and Purchase Intention in Ayurvedic Personal Care Products: The Impact of Alternative Attractions in a Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between consumer belief and purchase intention for Ayurvedic personal care products, focusing on key factors such as cultural and symbolic capital, health consciousness, perceived product effectiveness, self-care motivation, and the moderating effect of alternative attractions. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative phase involved 20 expert interviews and 4 group sessions to identify challenges and opportunities influencing purchase intention, while the quantitative phase tested the conceptual model using a survey of 355 consumers, analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Results show that cultural and symbolic capital, health consciousness, and self-care motivation significantly influence consumer belief, which, in turn, positively affects purchase intention. However, perceived product effectiveness did not significantly impact consumer belief. Alternative attractions had a minimal moderating effect on the relationship between belief and purchase intention. The study provides valuable insights for marketers in the Ayurvedic industry, emphasizing the importance of health consciousness, cultural positioning, and self-care motivations in enhancing consumer engagement and purchase intentions. The findings also suggest that Ayurvedic brands should focus on building trust and differentiating themselves through education and storytelling to strengthen consumer beliefs and drive sales.

Keywords: Ayurvedic personal care, consumer belief, purchase intention, cultural capital, symbolic capital, health consciousness, perceived product effectiveness, self-care motivation, alternative attractions.

Attributes of virtual influencers: science mapping, hierarchical model and future agenda

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Abstract:

The purpose of this bibliometric and systematic literature review is to survey and evaluate the attributes of Virtual Influencers. This study aims to develop the hierarchical model on the attributes of virtual influencers based on the Total Interpretive Structural Modelling (TISM), and highlights research gaps and avenues for future research. The findings showed that recent years have been more productive, and many authors have demonstrated their interest in studying the virtual influencers. Some of the most important attributes of virtual influencers are trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, similarity, anthropomorphism, etc. The present research is one of the first systematic reviews based on a framework relating to virtual influencers.

Introduction

Virtual influencers, defined as digitally generated artificial humans with fame and a network on social media (Thomas & Fowler, 2021), are the computer-generated counterparts of social media influencers. Existing studies employ various terms to discuss virtual influencers, with the most prevalent ones being CGI influencers and AI influencers, highlighting distinct attributes of these virtual personas (Arsenyan & Mirowska, 2021). As such, virtual influencers can be categorized into two broad groups based on their level of human likeness: anime-like virtual influencers (e.g., Hatsune Miku/Noonouri) and human-like virtual influencers (e.g., Lil Miquela).

Despite the extensive research on human influencer marketing (Agnihotri et al., 2023; Lee and Eastin, 2021), the understanding of the effectiveness and potential of virtual influencers for brands remains limited except for a few studies highlighting the advantages of virtual influencers over human influencers. From a management perspective, virtual influencers are always available, controllable and present with fewer PR risks and scandals (Ham et al., 2024; Duffy and Hund, 2019). They provide brands with opportunities for greater adaptability and customization, enhancing brand communities and unlimited storytelling (Robinson, 2020; Liu and Lee, 2024; Moustakas et al., 2020). Despite these advantages, there remains a notable gap in understanding the attributes of virtual influencers and its impact among their audiences which could provide critical insights for marketers aiming to stay ahead of digital trends. Therefore, the current study aims to explore the attributes of virtual influencers and present a future trend in influencer marketing. To further advance the field based on this knowledge structure, the study aims to:

1. To identify the attributes of virtual influencers that influence their audiences;

2. To evaluate the current trends in virtual influencer through bibliographic coupling;
3. To assess future directions and trends in virtual influencers through co-word analysis; and
4. To develop a hierarchical model exhibiting the interplay between attributes of Virtual Influencers.

Literature review

The shift from human to virtual influencers on social media represents a notable change, with virtual influencers offering unique advantages (Wang and Weng, 2023). Virtual influencers, meticulously designed and controlled, ensure flawless and consistent representation (Mouritzen et al., 2023). They excel in customization and creativity, using digital design for engaging, visually stunning product presentations. virtual influencers can seamlessly integrate products through virtual try-ons, dynamic demonstrations, and contextual storytelling in tailor- made digital environments (Um, 2023). Their perfect brand alignment and predictability make them valuable in digital marketing, offering a compelling alternative to human influencers (Sands et al., 2022; Taillon et al., 2020).

More recently, virtual influencers, which are a fusion of digital avatars and virtual agents, have emerged in the social media landscape (Arsenyan and Mirowska, 2021). These virtual influencers present a carefully created reality that resembles the artificial authenticity of their human counterparts, but with the key difference that they are truly artificial (Wills, 2019). By engaging in activities such as modelling, singing, socializing and sharing opinions, virtual influencers project a human-like persona (Arsenyan and Mirowska, 2021). Similar to human influencers, virtual influencers also create distinct public personas and storylines that showcase different levels of human-like traits (Hanus and Fox, 2015). They empower brands with heightened authority over influencer content and conduct, thereby mitigating the potential hazards associated with “human error” stemming from the subjective viewpoints or offline conduct of human influencers (Moustakas et al., 2020; Thomas and Fowler, 2021).

Methodology

The bibliometric method analyses a huge volume of scientific data from various bibliographic databases such as Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, PubMed and Dimensions (Donthu et al., 2021). Bibliometric approach complements the quantitative review method of meta-analysis and the qualitative systematic literature review (SLR) method (Fauzi et al., 2024). To achieve the science mapping, two bibliometric analyses i.e., bibliographic coupling and co-word analysis are provided to reveal the current and emerging trends of virtual influencers. To develop the hierarchical model the TISM approach will be applied. TISM is employed to classify the inhibitors in order to devise a hierarchical structure based on their driving power and dependence (Jena et al., 2017).

We used the search string outlined in Table 1 to find keywords associated with virtual influencers in Scopus database. The search was restricted to publications in English and journals, excluding conference proceedings, books, and book chapters. VOSviewer was used to conduct the science mapping analysis.

Table 1: Search Strings in Scopus database

Keywords	Justification
“Virtual Influencer”	To identify literature related to virtual influencer.

Findings

The first search yielded 213 documents. After filtering for only English journal publications, the result reduced to 155 journal articles. Some of the most important attributes of virtual influencers are trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, similarity, anthropomorphism, etc which is identified through a systematic review.

Bibliographic Coupling

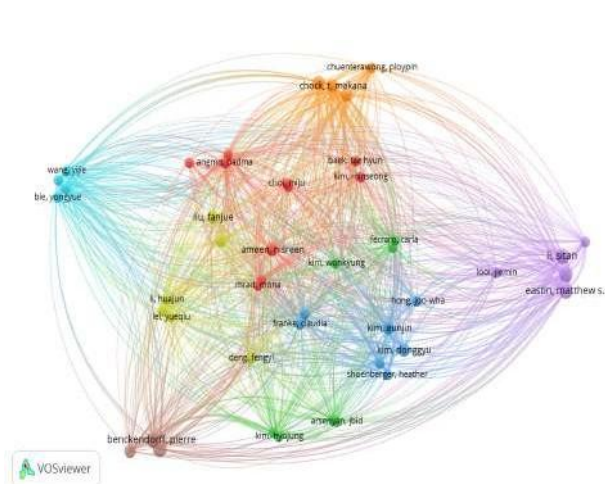


Figure 1: Bibliographic coupling on authors

Co-word Analysis

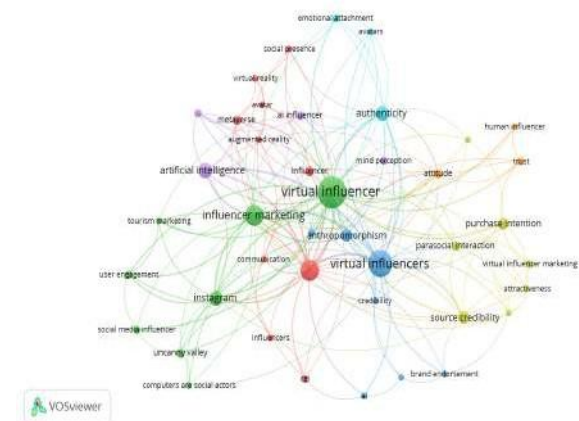


Figure 2: Co-word analysis on author's keyword

Future research trends

Future research should explore the effects of virtual influencers across diverse samples, such as varying ages, cultural backgrounds, and thematic interests, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their impact (Stein et al., 2022). Additionally, it is crucial to investigate how consumers react differently to virtual influencers on various platforms, such as Twitter and TikTok, which utilise text-based and video-based media, respectively (Hedhli et al., 2023). The difference between local and global virtual influencers and their influence on consumer behaviour in the framework of globalisation also demands further examination while studying the differential influences of male and female virtual influencers on male and female audiences can provide valuable understandings (Hedhli et al., 2023). Finally, investigating AI-based characters as virtual influencers holds substantial promise and could reveal new possibilities in this field (Stein et al., 2022).

Keywords: Anthropomorphism, attractiveness, expertise, similarity, TISM, trustworthiness.

Enhancing customer experience through artificial intelligence: a mixed method systematic review approach

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Abstract:

The way customers engage with brands is being disrupted by artificial intelligence (AI). With its rapid advancement, AI has fundamentally altered how companies engage with consumers resulting in huge prospects for both. However, the limited scope of current studies stems from the fragmented insights provided by the pre-existent literature. This paper attempts to fill this gap by undertaking a comprehensive review that would offer a cutting-edge summary of customer's experience resultant from how enterprises across industries are using AI. To achieve this, this study reviews 68 papers on customer experience by conducting a bibliometric method from the year 2000-Present. The study analyses influential papers from leading journals, authors, institutions, and countries that contribute to this field by adopting the framework provided by SPAR-4 SLR protocol in addition to conceptual models like TCCM, ADO, and the 4W framework. Basically, the authors seek to highlight the mutually beneficial link that exists between AI technology and the development of enhanced consumer experiences within the framework of contemporary business.

Keywords: Customer experience, Customer value, Artificial intelligence, Customer engagement, Customer satisfaction.

Large Language Models and Marketing Managers – A Reversal of Decision Calculus

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Abstract:

Objective - This study examines how the rise of Large Language Models (LLMs) like GPT and BERT has reversed traditional decision-making processes, shifting authority from marketing managers to AI-driven insights. It explores the resulting implications for brand strategy, marketing management, and ethical oversight.

Method - Using a Bayesian framework, this study models the shift in decision calculus. The study also provides real-world examples from Netflix, Amazon, and HDFC Bank, where LLMs now lead in areas traditionally governed by human intuition and expertise.

Findings - The analysis reveals that LLMs are transforming decision-making from a human-led to an AI-led process. Marketing managers increasingly serve as interpreters of AI outputs rather than primary decision-makers, focusing on strategy, brand values, and ethical alignment.

Originality - This study offers a unique perspective on AI's role in marketing by framing LLMs not as supportive tools but as active agents in decision-making.

Implications - For brand marketing, the findings highlight the importance of balancing AI-driven efficiencies with human oversight to maintain consumer trust and ethical standards, aligning with UN SDG Goal 8 for sustainable economic growth.

Keywords: LLMs, ADBUDG, Marketing, UN-SDG, Brand.

Tourism Marketing Efforts in Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam through Influencer Marketing and Online Customer Review: The Mediating Role of Tourism Destination Awareness

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Introduction:

Tourism is a manner of the fundamental activity of modern times and it has an effect on gross masses from every direction of the world. Tour and travel to new destinations create new experiences satisfying people's needs and desires to travel. The desire of people to travel has magnified, attributable to increased prosperity in economic, cultural, and social life, since the 20th century and people want their desires and expectations to be met at the highest level of satisfaction (Sert, 2017). Relevant to the growing demands of tourists, the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) of Assam, India serves as a quintessential tourism destination to comply with the tourism demands with cultural, social, and natural exposure.

The BTR is an autonomous region of India and is about 8970 sq. km in total geographical area and has about 3539.95 sq. km forest area. The region is in the northeast of India, located below the highlands of Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan and positioned at the northern riverside of the Brahmaputra River. Tourism in this region of India has not developed yet and the region up till now, has not been able to reap the economic and social benefits from tourism, in the face of immense prospects. Realizing the necessity for marketing efforts and popularizing Bodoland tourism, incorporating up-to-the-minute strategies is crucial to supporting Bodoland tourism marketing that is relevant and effective. A modern means of marketing includes Influencer marketing in social media, where Social Media Influencers with fairly large followers and fan bases advertise products to their audience (Khan, 2023) and online customer reviews in online applications and websites, where customers share their experiences with the products, proving to be informative for the potential customers in future (Damayanti & Damayanti, 2024). Therefore, the present study endeavors to analyze the development of Bodoland tourism destination marketing efforts from the tourists' perspectives by delving into voguish digital marketing encompassing influencer marketing and online customer reviews. The study also investigates if influencer marketing and online customer reviews potentially contribute to creating destination awareness.

Research Methodology:

The present study will depend both on primary and secondary sources of data. This research is intended to assess the perspectives about Influencer marketing, Online Customer Reviews, Destination Awareness, and Tourism Marketing Efforts in the Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam, in the opinion of foreign and domestic tourists. Keeping in view the objectives of the study the research work will follow a quantitative method of investigation.

The research framework shown in Figure 1 below was built by taking insights from the qualitative study which was conducted at the initial stage of the study and reviewing extant literature.

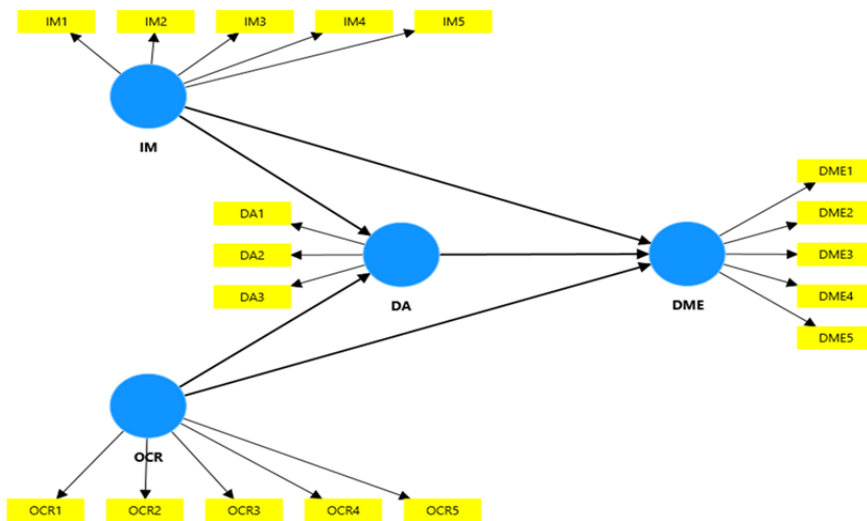


Figure 1: Research model framework

Findings:

The results of the study confirm that influencer marketing and online customer reviews of Bodoland tourism have a significant effect on destination marketing efforts and destination awareness of Bodoland tourism. However, the results of the study revealed that Bodoland tourism destination awareness does not mediate the relationship between influencer marketing and destination marketing efforts of the region's tourism, and the relationship between online customer reviews and destination marketing efforts of the region's tourism. The findings of the study provide the tourism managers of BTR with valuable insights to develop marketing strategies that are efficient and effective in attracting tourists to the modern world. The findings will aid the tourism destination of BTR to build strong destination awareness and successful destination marketing efforts.

Conclusion:

The study highlights the importance of influencer marketing and online customer reviews for creating destination awareness and successful destination marketing efforts. These variables are considered to be of concern in the present times, for tourism development. The world is being driven by upgraded and upgrading technology, modern people are associated with advanced online technologies. Influencers and perceived individual views of people on various online platforms are leading the light in convincing the major masses about various concerns. Thus, in the tourism sphere, marketing with the help of influencers and customer reviews appears to be the most effective marketing strategy. The findings of the study including the tourist perspectives have shown that the tourism destination of Bodoland Territorial Region is unpopular and the global masses are not aware of the tourism destinations of the region. In the matter of such unwelcome disadvantage, the tourism managers should employ influencers

and online customer reviews to create Bodoland tourism destination awareness and consequently, achieve successful destination marketing efforts.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing; Online customer review; Destination Awareness; Tourism marketing efforts; Bodoland Territorial Region.

Understanding Drivers of Meme Community Participation - A Uses and Gratification Approach

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Extended Abstract

Abstract

In recent times, marketers face unprecedented challenges in capturing and maintaining consumer attention due to increasing ad avoidance and declining engagement towards conventional advertising and communication strategies. Memes have emerged as a compelling solution to this problem, providing brands with a unique opportunity to connect with audiences through humour, cultural relevance, and shared experiences. Beyond their entertainment value, memes foster the formation of vibrant online meme communities, where individuals gather around shared interests and engage in collective identity-building. Inspired by the need to understand the drivers of user participation in an online meme community, this study draws on the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory to explore the motivations behind such participation. The research employs a PLS-SEM approach to test the proposed relationships within the conceptual model. The paper concludes by highlighting theoretical and practical implications.

Introduction

In recent years, customer attention span has condensed towards brand communications, plummeting customer engagement (Agrawal et al., 2024; Razzaq et al., 2024). This trend is further supported by a 2023 Statista survey, which revealed that 65.9 percent of app users reported always skipping in-app video ads across platforms when given the option after a certain period (Statista, 2023). Thus, creating a marketing void to effectively reach and engage the customers, especially through conventional communication strategies (Razzaq et al., 2023). This issue is pertinent and prolonged, creating an interest among practitioners and researchers to seek relevant and effective solutions. To support this, multiple research studies have identified customer interest in user-generated content instead of commercial and sponsored content. A recent study by Malodia et al. (2022) reinforces the growing customer preference for user-generated content and emphasizes the role of memes as a powerful means of online communication.

Mememes have been explored to a limit in the research and identified as one of the effective methods of communication, especially for their simplicity, cost-effectiveness, and enhanced customer engagement (Razzaq et al., 2023). Mememes engage customers with content that may employ humour, sarcasm, or wit

to convey a message or idea (Brubaker et al., 2018). Memes can be shared in diverse formats (including animations, GIFs, images, texts, or videos) making them plausible for customers as well as brands. Memes are considered as “artifacts of participatory digital culture” (Wiggins & Bowers, 2015), consisting of concise and easily shareable content that internet users frequently utilize to collectively navigate and define cultural elements within our digital social landscape.

The literature on memes highlights their ability to form social capital, enabling individuals to connect and interact on a global scale (Galip, 2024). Meme-centric interactions have nurtured communities where shared experiences and relatability with the content foster a sense of belonging and collective identity (Benaim, 2018). These online meme communities are characterized by increased participation, as they enable users to derive various forms of gratification - such as entertainment, social connection, and personal fulfillment. This study focuses on hedonic, social, utilitarian, and eudaimonic gratifications as key drivers influencing users' intentions to participate in online meme communities.

Meme communities do fall within the broader spectrum of online communities but differ in significant ways due to their unique features as visual content, virality, ephemerality, social sharing, etc. They distinguish themselves through their rapid creation and dissemination of humorous or satirical content, and their ability to transcend traditional geographical and cultural boundaries (Benaim, 2018). Thus, acknowledging these distinguishing features of meme communities, the current research aims to investigate the drivers of user participation in meme communities taking theoretical support of the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

RQ: What are the various gratifications that drive user participation in a meme community?

Literature Review

Participation in Online Meme Community

A meme community is essentially a group of individuals linked through online visual media and various digital platforms (Galip, 2024). By visual media, we refer to images, videos, and graphics that are commonly shared across social networks, while digital platforms include websites, and social media sites like Instagram, Twitter, Reddit, and other online forums where such content can be created, and shared.

Participation is a fundamental mechanism that fosters the creation and exchange of content, ideas, and knowledge within online communities (Masson & Parmentier, 2023). Participation is essential for online communities to function effectively, as the active participation of members not only ensures the generation of content but also promotes collaboration among community members (Iriberry & Leroy, 2009). Research on user participation in online communities has highlighted its centrality to community success. Moreover, it has been described as key to the overall performance and longevity of a community (Masson & Parmentier, 2023).

Values Derived Through Participation – A Uses & Gratifications Approach

Literature suggests that several gratifications drive the participation intentions of users in online communities (Kamboj, 2020). Drawing on the theoretical foundations of Uses and Gratification Theory, this study focuses on hedonic gratifications, social gratifications, utilitarian gratifications, and eudemonic gratification as the driving forces influencing the participation intentions of users in online meme communities.

Hedonic gratifications refer to the pleasures that users experience, often related to entertainment, enjoyment, or the pursuit of fun and excitement (Gan & Li, 2018). Social Gratifications involve the satisfaction derived from social interactions, including connecting with others, building relationships,

and being part of a community or social network (Li et al., 2015). Utilitarian Gratifications are practical benefits users gain, such as acquiring useful information, solving problems, or achieving specific goals or tasks (Gan & Li, 2018). Eudaimonic Gratifications focus on personal growth, self-improvement, and the pursuit of meaningful experiences that contribute to a sense of well-being and life satisfaction (Shin et al., 2022).

Although both hedonic and eudaimonic gratifications are motivated by the pursuit of personal happiness and well-being, they can be conceptually and empirically distinguished. For example, eudaimonia is achieved through self-expression, while hedonic enjoyment stems from fulfilling immediate needs (Shin et al., 2022).

Proposed Conceptual Model

This study proposes a conceptual model to understand the drivers of user participation in meme communities. This study focuses on four types of user gratifications - hedonic, social, utilitarian, and eudaimonic to understand how various gratifications motivate users to participate in meme communities (Refer to Figure 1)

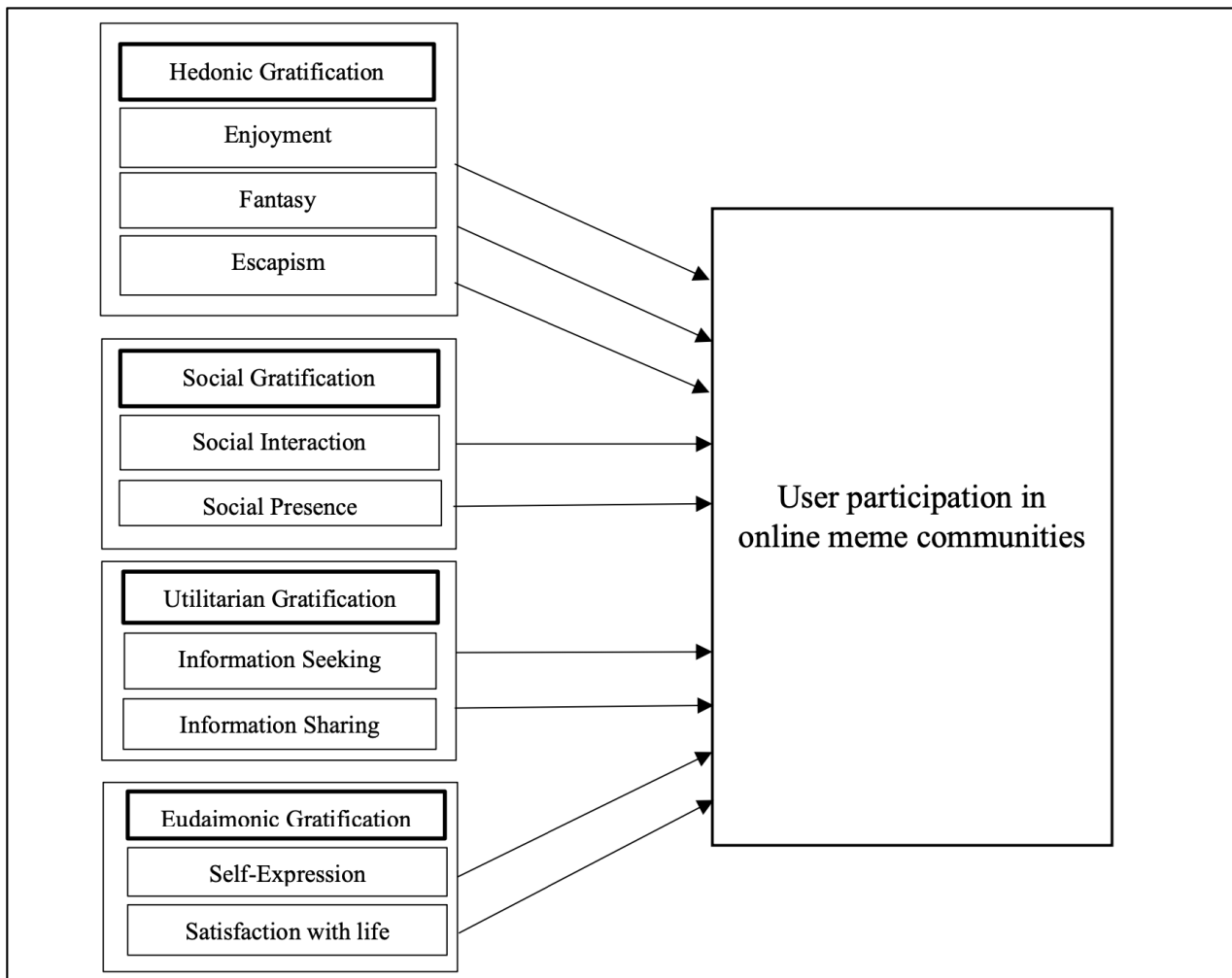


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Model

Hypothesis development

H1 a: Enjoyment influences user participation in an online meme community. H1 b: Escapism influences user participation in an online meme community.

H1 c: Fantasy positively influences user participation in an online meme community. H2 a: Social interaction influences user participation in an online meme community.

H2b: Social presence positively influences user participation in an online meme community. H3 a: Information seeking influences user participation in an online meme community.

H3 b: Information sharing influences user participation in an online meme community. H4 a: Self-expression influences user participation in an online meme community.

H4 b: Satisfaction with life influences user participation in an online meme community.

Proposed Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach. Data collection is conducted through a web-based survey using a structured questionnaire of validated items adapted from previous studies. The current research intends to collect data from users who are part of any online meme community. The scales for enjoyment, fantasy, escapism, social interaction, social presence, information seeking, information sharing, self-expression, satisfaction with life, and user participation in a meme community are adapted from Ghani and Deshpande (1994), Li et al. (2015), Colwell (2007), Li et al. (2015), Wu et al. (2010), Mills et al. (2014), Mills et al. (2014), Trub & Barbot (2019), Margolis et al. (2018) and Kamboj (2019) respectively. The empirical testing of the suggested conceptual model will be carried out using 'Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling' (PLS-SEM). Additionally, multicollinearity will be checked using the common method bias (CMB).

Proposed Implications for Theory and Practice

This research will provide significant theoretical and practical implications. This research extends the Uses and Gratifications Theory in the context of meme communities. This research contributes to online community literature by examining hedonic, social, utilitarian, and eudaimonic gratifications as distinct drivers of user participation in meme communities. The study also offers strategic direction for brands and content creators within meme communities. By understanding the specific gratifications that drive participation, brands can craft content tailored to these motivations, designing meme-based campaigns that resonate across hedonic, social, utilitarian, and eudaimonic dimensions. Such targeted strategies are likely to enhance user participation and deepen community ties.

Keywords: Meme Community, User Participation, Online Community, Uses and gratifications Theory.

Unveiling the Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Online Impulsive Buying Decisions

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The exponential growth of e-commerce and the pervasive influence of social media have made online shopping more prevalent and accessible than ever before. Consequently, understanding the dynamics of online consumer behavior has become crucial for businesses looking to thrive in the digital marketplace. To drive sales and increase their customer base companies are now investing heavily in social media marketing. This research paper aims to explore the key factors associated with social media marketing that contribute to shaping the online impulsive buying behavior of customers. By synthesizing the existing literature on this subject, this paper provides valuable insights into the factors that drive impulsive purchases online. This knowledge can help marketers develop effective strategies for leveraging social media platforms to drive impulsive purchases and tailor their marketing efforts to the specific needs and preferences of their target audience. Consumers can also benefit from this knowledge by making informed decisions in the online marketplace. By being aware of the various factors influencing impulsive buying behavior, consumers can avoid making hasty and regretful purchases. In summary, this research paper highlights the importance of social media marketing in shaping the online impulsive buying behavior of customers. It underscores the need for businesses to understand the key drivers behind this behavior and develop effective marketing strategies. It also emphasizes the importance of consumers being aware of these factors to make informed purchasing decisions.

Introduction

Social media has transformed marketing by integrating brand interactions into consumers' daily digital experiences, thus influencing consumer habits, including impulsive buying. Online impulsive buying is an unplanned, emotion-driven purchase made without premeditated intent, often encouraged by social media's immersive, engaging, and personalized content. The research explores how major platforms—Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat—have become instrumental in creating familiarity, desirability, and urgency around products, which often leads to impulsive purchases. From real-time customer reviews to targeted ads and influencer endorsements, social media facilitates a range of techniques that support impulsive buying by leveraging consumer emotions and preferences. As social media concern nowadays a “Buy” button is available for purchasing the products and social media is a fast and easy tool for marketing, connecting with customers, hiring new employees, and generating new business. As well as the concern of impulse buying, most people are on social media nowadays and they made online impulse or unplanned purchases with a click of the mouse easily comparatively physical market. Therefore, the trend of impulse buying is increasing day by day through social media marketing.

Research Objective

This paper's main objective is to investigate how social media marketing strategies influence consumers' online impulsive buying behavior. By analyzing various factors—from visual appeal to

gamification techniques—the study aims to clarify the impact of different marketing stimuli on impulsive online purchases.

Methodology:

This study employs a literature review method to analyze previous research findings and theoretical perspectives on social media marketing and impulsive buying behavior.

Conclusion:

In sum, the research underscores the pivotal role of social media marketing in fostering online impulsive buying behavior. SMM enables brands to leverage various psychological and behavioral strategies, from creating a sense of scarcity to personalizing recommendations. By doing so, SMM triggers unplanned purchases by appealing to consumers' emotions, desires, and social connections. For marketers, understanding these factors and strategically integrating them into campaigns can lead to enhanced engagement and increased sales. For consumers, recognizing the psychological underpinnings of impulsive buying can empower more mindful spending and reduce regretful purchases. As SMM continues to evolve, its impact on OIBB will likely remain a focal point of study and strategic consideration.

Future Implications:

As digital marketing techniques continue to evolve, it is crucial that future research should examine new engagement tools, evolving consumer psychology, and the potential ethical considerations of using such powerful marketing techniques. By doing so, both marketers and consumers stand to benefit, as brands can drive business growth while promoting a balanced approach to online shopping in the digital economy.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Online Impulsive Buying Behaviour, Consumers, Online Shopping, Digital Marketplace.

Metaverse aided virtual travels (MAVT): A multi-dimensional and multi-domain review of literature

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Abstract

A dual process of systematic literature and bibliometric analysis was undertaken to examine the impact of metaverse-aided virtual travels (MAVT) in the domains of tourism, travel, entertainment, hospitality, museums, sports, etc. The study concentrated majorly on hospitality and tourism, utilizing articles from Scopus and Web of Science (WOS) covering the period up to June 2024. This study aims to emphasize the current and emerging trends, important themes in the MAVT, major contributing authors, countries, and journals. Despite the increased significance of MAVT in hospitality and tourism, there seems to be a lack of integrated research highlighting the trends and potential areas for future exploration. This study extensively and systematically evaluated articles based on bibliometric metrics and identified the most important influencers to thematically categorize MAVT. By adopting a dual process for the exhaustive evaluation of articles, this study presents a foundational platform for future scholarly research in the domain of MAVT.

Keywords: Metaverse, Immersive Technology, Travel, Tourism.

Game On or Game Off? Consumer Experiences with Gamification in Online Shopping

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Abstract

Gamification, which involves integrating game elements into non-game settings, has become a popular strategy for enhancing customer engagement and enriching the online shopping experience. This research aims to explore how consumers engage with and react to gamification techniques employed by online retailers. Using a qualitative research methodology with a thematic analysis approach, the study involved semi-structured interviews with online shoppers. Findings reveal that while most participants view online shopping as a form of entertainment, they prioritize tangible rewards over the entertainment value of gamified features. Four key themes emerged: Online Shopping Experience, where convenience and entertainment factors drive online shopping; Significant Impact, where gamification boosts time engagement, purchase intention, platform retention, and overall experience; Weak Impact, highlighting the short-lived appeal of gamified features; and Consumer Response, detailing both positive reactions (excitement from winning rewards) and negative reactions (frustration with trivial elements). This insight underscores the need for gamification strategies that balance engagement with meaningful incentives. Insights gathered from consumer responses inform practical recommendations for retailers on optimizing gamification to improve consumer experience and engagement. Some suggestions include offering gamification as an optional feature, providing meaningful rewards, creating innovative gamified experiences, and introducing gamified elements around special occasions.

Keywords: Gamification, Online Shopping Behaviour, Consumer Experience, Online Retail Experience, Customer Engagement, Thematic Analysis

Charting the Evolution of Brand Experience: Current Trends and Future Directions

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Abstract

In today's fiercely competitive marketplace, managers increasingly rely on experiential marketing methods, such as brand experience, to strengthen customer engagement and build brand loyalty. Brand experience encompasses creating memorable and engaging interactions through brand-related stimuli that build long-lasting consumer relationships. Despite the extensive discourse in academia since the early 2000s, the practical implementation of brand experience remains limited. This review consolidates the literature on brand experience and aims to bridge the theoretical and practical aspects by outlining future research avenues through the TCCM (theories, contexts, characteristics, and methodology) framework. These directions blend theoretical insights with practical methods, amplifying the concept's relevance and impact in today's competitive marketplace.

Keywords: Brand experience, Experiential Marketing, Customer Engagement, TCCM Framework Literature Review.

The Role of AR Food Menu Attributes in Enhancing User Experience and Purchase Intention

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Abstract

With the increase in online dining, AR menus offers a novel solution to replicate the sensory and immersive qualities of in-person dining, thus bridging the gap between physical and digital food experiences. This study explores the role of augmented reality (AR) food menu attributes in enhancing user experience and influencing purchase intention within online food ordering applications. Utilizing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, this study examines how specific AR attributes—namely, augmentation quality, interactivity, informativeness, spatial presence, novelty, enjoyment, and vividness—serve as stimuli that shape users' experience and subsequently influence their behavioural responses. A survey was conducted among individuals who had interacted with AR food menus on the Zomato app. By using Likert scale assessments, the study measures user experience and purchase intention in response to various AR features. The results reveal that AR attributes play a significant role in enhancing user experience, which in turn positively affects purchase intention. Additionally, the study considers the moderating effects of individual differences, such as tech-savviness, risk aversion, and need for touch, on the relationship between user experience and purchase intention. This paper provides valuable insights for online food app developers and restaurateurs, emphasizing the potential of AR to transform online food ordering by offering immersive and interactive experiences. The findings highlights the importance of designing AR-enhanced menus that are not only visually appealing but also informative and user-friendly to maximize customer satisfaction and drive purchase behaviour.

Keywords: Augmented reality, AR food menu, User experience, purchase intention, Food sector.

Through New Lenses: Crafting Immersive Experiences with Augmented Reality in Retail

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Abstract

Augmented Reality (AR) is an evolving and intriguing field in marketing research and practice. Little is known about whether, how, or why AR-based shopping apps can influence consumer perceptions. Using an exploratory (qualitative) design, this research examined how various determinants affect attitude toward AR apps, which, in turn, affects user's behavioral intentions. The analysis indicates that user's attitude toward AR apps are significantly impacted by utilitarian and hedonic benefits, anticipated emotions, sense of presence, interactivity, and immersion, all of which profoundly influence behavioral intentions. The study offers marketers embedding AR features, such as virtual try-ons and product visualization, strengthens consumer engagement and fosters brand loyalty by facilitating immersive, interactive shopping experiences. Such AR-driven strategies allow businesses to align with rising consumer expectations, increase app adoption, stimulate more informed purchase decisions, and reinforce competitiveness in the digital marketplace.

Keywords: Augmented Reality Marketing, AR applications, Immersion, Attitude, Behavioral Intention.

Natural Heritage Destinations and Stakeholder's Concerns: Sketching the Ecological Threats – Destination Attachment Matrix, for Managing Tourism Activities

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Abstract

Natural heritage destinations attract global and domestic tourists, irrespective of ethnicity or geographic limitations; However, mass tourism spiked negative impacts on these ecosystems and threatened habitats of several organisms. This research paper aims to highlight few options to the tourism stakeholders, for handling tourism activities, at these vulnerable locations. It follows a qualitative research design, by shaping a conceptual matrix, based on two dimensions – Destination Attachment, Ecological Threats. The secondary data were collected from online websites and the matrix conception involved subjective interpretation, of these informative resources. The matrix quadrants present four activities, to ease anxious stakeholders: *Extensive Endorsement*, *Persevering Promotion*, *Custodial Conservation*, and *Instilled Insulation*; Each quadrant varies according to the stakeholder needs, marketing programs, threats on ecosystems, and resolving capabilities or outlooks, for controlling tourism activities. Due to aggregated sustainable development commitments and geo-political risks, the tourism stakeholders should design value-driven service environment, along with unique tour packages. This matrix aids them, to identify destination-specific bottlenecks in the travel systems or itineraries, and to co-create impressive travel activities.

Keywords: Destination Attachment, Ecological Threats, Environmental Resources, Natural Heritage, Tourism Activities.

A Study Of Consumer Perception Towards Private Label Brands In The Apparel Sector

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Abstract

Retail industry is one of the fastest changing and lively industries that contributed to the growth of the economy of many countries all over the world. Indian retail industry has emerged as one of the most dynamic and fast-paced industries due to the entry of several new players. It accounts for over 10% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and around 8% of the employment. During the last decades, private label products evolution has radically changed the retail industry in manifold ways. Nowadays, private label products are constantly gaining market shares. Numerous studies have identified several factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards private label products. This paper examines consumer's perception on private label products under the spectrum of five basic dimensions: (a) **Perceived Quality**, (b) **Pricing**, (c) **Brand Image**, (d) **Promotion** and (e) **Variety and Assortment**. The independent variables used in the study are Perceived quality, Pricing, Brand Image, Promotion, and Variety and Assortment. On the other hand, the dependent variables used in the study are Purchase Decision, Satisfaction and Re-Purchase Intention. The detailed model explaining the relationships between the independent and dependent is established and tested using the appropriate statistical tools. In addition, in order to establish reliability and validity of the adapted measures, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) has been performed. Due to the covariate nature of the proposed research model, structural equation modelling (SEM) will be performed to evaluate the research hypotheses. It attempts to identify consumer's attitudes towards private label products in apparel sector and thus investigate the impact of it on the growth of PLBs. Primary empirical research will be conducted, focusing on consumers shopping attitudes. The findings of the research will confirm the role of consumer's attitudes in the growth of Private label products under all dimensions.

Keywords: Retail industry; Private label brands; consumer's attitudes; Apparel sector; Indian retail.

Yoga Tourism: An untapped opportunity for India

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Abstract

Adhering to the definition of nation-branding given by Simon Anholt through his ‘hexagon of competitive identity’ (Anholt 2007: 26), I will examine the importance of tourism in a country’s nation-branding strategy. Often neglected in the academic world, tourism plays a vital role in the development of a country’s image. Tourism is one of the components of the ‘hexagon of competitive identity’; others being People, Culture, Investment, Policy and Brands. All these components are interrelated and they function together. For example, countries cannot attract tourists without talking about their warm ‘people’ and exquisite ‘culture’. On the cultural front, India has always had an exquisite identity. One such example is yoga. Yoga gained international recognition in 2014, when the United Nations declared 21 June as the International Day of Yoga. The Prime Minister of India said in the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly that ‘yoga is an invaluable gift from our ancient tradition’. In the same session, on 21 June 2014, the United Nations proclaimed 21 June the International Day of Yoga. Yoga was recognised at the international level as ‘a way to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature’ (United Nations 2014).

However, there are two issues that need to be talked about. The first one is the lack of adequate infrastructure, as compared to other ‘yoga destinations’ (Sutarya 2020). And the other one is the insufficient effort to promote yoga to the people of India. Just about a third of Indian adults (35%) say they ever practise yoga, including 22% who say they do so monthly or less, and even fewer who do so daily (7%) or weekly (6%), a 2021 survey by the Pew Research Center noted (Diamant 2021). As internal branding is as important as external branding, this issue needs to be talked about. This paper will talk about the opportunity that India has in yoga tourism and how these two issues can be resolved through a nation-branding/ place-branding strategy.

Nation-Branding:

Keller (1998) defines brand as ‘product but one that adds other dimensions, differentiating it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need’. ‘These differences may be rational and tangible - related to product performance of the brand - or more symbolic, emotional or intangible - related to what the brand represents’ according to Keller (1998). He further writes that ‘brands themselves are valuable intangible assets that need to be handled carefully’ (Keller 1998). It is ‘a useful summation of the intangible competitive assets of an organization or a country: its vision, its genius, its distinctive character, its people, its promise to the marketplace’ (Anholt 2005a).

The term ‘nation brand’ was first used in 1996 by Simon Anholt (Anholt 2007, Murphy 2022, Giannopoulos et al.) to indicate that the reputation of a country behaves the same way a corporate firm’s goodwill does. ‘Nation-branding’ pervades within several disciplines, say marketing, commerce, communications, political sciences, humanities and international relations. Kaneva (2011) categorises the literature of nation-branding into technical-economic approaches, political approaches and cultural approaches. Anholt and other undermentioned scholars have tried to cover all these approaches together, as it is difficult to separately analyse them as they are strongly interconnected.

According to Anholt (2005b, 2007, 2010), nation-branding is the need of the hour as the world has changed significantly. ‘It seems the time is rapidly approaching when territorial entities can no longer afford not to jump on the ‘brandwagon’—it’s branding or bust’ (van Ham 2002). This has been suggested especially for

developing countries (Anholt 2005b). Anholt (2005b) takes note of the world market as being one where all the countries, places and regions compete for the ‘internationalised capital’ (Hymer 1972, Simmons 1999) and seek to enhance their national images and reputation. The developing or poor countries, as Anholt (2005b) argues, must ‘use marketing and commerce for their economic growth and competitive advantage’. At a time when the United States is no more the ‘mysterious, idealised, far-off, magical land’, it is a great opportunity for the emerging markets to fill up the gap of country-brands projecting ‘quality’, rather than ‘power, wealth and sophistication’ (Anholt 2005b).

Anholt (2007) expressed his uneasiness with the term ‘branding’ and therefore suggested replacing it with ‘competitive identity’. He talks about the hexagon of nation-branding, or competitive identity which consists of Tourism, Brands, Policy, Investment, Culture and People; all working in tandem with each other as the “natural” channels through which a country’s reputation is built (Anholt 2007).

Yoga and Tourism:

The Indian government promotes yoga tourism through campaigns like "Incredible India," highlighting destinations known for yoga retreats and ashrams, such as Rishikesh, Mysore, and Kerala. This initiative aims to attract international tourists seeking authentic yoga experiences, benefiting local economies.

In 2022, as per the analysis 36.5% of foreign tourist arrivals was for the purpose “Leisure Holiday & Recreation (36.5%) followed by, Indian Diaspora (21.1%), Business and Professionals (10.2%) and other purpose (16.5%)” (Ministry of Tourism 2023). As there is no separate data on Yoga tourism, this would come under “Leisure, Holiday & Recreation”.

The Indian government established the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy) in 2014. The Ministry promotes traditional Indian systems of medicine and wellness, with yoga being a significant focus. It organizes events, funds research, and supports yoga institutions to standardize and promote yoga practices.

However, India still lags behind various other popular yoga destinations, like Bali because of its ‘lack of infrastructure and facility barriers’ (Sutarya 2020). ‘Therefore, yoga tourists choose Bali, which is a place of native Hindus with complete and luxurious tourism facilities’ (Sutarya 2020). Simon Anholt had warned about nation-branding being reduced to mere logos and symbols. India may promote itself as the original birthplace of yoga, but its yoga tourism is not booming as much as it should. Hence, there is a need for India to also ‘walk the talk’ and make better facilities for yoga tourists.

Secondly, branding a nation through the tools of its tourist destination is not possible if it has no existence of itself. Nation-branding can’t happen if the product didn’t exist in the first place. In order to cater to the international audience, the domestic audience needs to be ‘conquered’ (Anholt 2017, Jaeger and Bastos 2021). In a conference presentation (International Convention of Asia Scholars 2024) a few months back, several scholars suggested that yoga needs to be ‘marketed’ to Indians first before India can brand itself as the birthplace of Yoga. Another scholar said that ‘Yoga is undoubtedly India’s, everyone knows it, except India’.

Conclusion:

Place-branding/ destination branding is one of the solutions presented in this paper. Blain et al. (2005: p.337) defined destination branding as “the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word, mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk”, all with the intent purpose of creating an image that influences consumers’ decisions to visit the destination in question, as opposed to an alternative one. One example of a successful place branding is Barangaroo, an area of Central Sydney, Australia. In 2003, the Government of New South Wales determined that the precinct would be redeveloped from shipping and

stevedoring facilities to provide more commercial office space and recreational areas. This redevelopment has moved from design contest to concept plan from 2005 to 2012. Rishikesh can be such a place-branding project of the Government of India where large scale redevelopment can be done and can be branded as the 'Yoga Capital of the World'.

The second problem can be dealt by promoting yoga to the Indians as India's pride. The Ministry of AYUSH can play an important role here. Schools, offices and universities can be provided with regular yoga classes as a wellness routine. The Ministry can also organise yoga retreats implementing differential pricing for the people of India.

The sexual abuse taking place in the name of Yoga is also important to be considered (Horton 2019). Many such cases have also happened in India. These cases and the 2012 Nirbhaya incident have tarnished the image of India from the point of view of women tourists. The Ministry of Ayush issues guidelines for several renowned ashrams, which has hopefully revived the trust of tourists, especially women tourists. Such policies on law and order have to be strengthened further if India wants to be a safe and authentic yoga destination of the world.

Keywords: Nation-branding, Place-branding, Destination-branding, Culture, Yoga, Tourism, Yoga Tourism.

A Study of Key Barriers to the Handloom Industry by Using ISM Method

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Abstract

The handloom industry is a vital part of the Indian economy, which plays an important role in generating local employment in both rural and urban areas of the country. This study aims to explore the barriers faced by the handloom weavers in the distribution of handloom products and to analyse and establish interrelationships among the problems faced in the distribution by using ISM. Through an extensive literature review and expert feedback, a total of 15 key barriers were identified and analysed. The relationship among the factors was analysed and hierarchical model was developed using ISM method and MICMAC method. The results of the study suggest that proper market access, Government support and attention, and proper marketing mix strategies can flourish the old age heritage industry of India

Keywords: Handloom Industry, Interpretive structural modelling, MICMAC analysis, Distribution channel.

Marketing with a Conscience: A Case Study Analysis of Dove's "Real Beauty" Campaign and Lifebuoy's "F.I.G.H.T. COVID" Campaign

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Abstract

This paper aims to show how ethical marketing practices positively impact businesses. It examines case studies of two prominent soap brands, Dove and Lifebuoy, to demonstrate the multifaceted role that ethics play in shaping a brand's success. The campaigns highlighted are Dove's "Real Beauty" campaign and Lifebuoy's "F.I.G.H.T. Covid" campaign. The "Real Beauty" campaign by Dove was chosen because of the stand it took against conventional beauty norms and the "F.I.G.H.T. Covid" campaign was chosen because of its conscious attempts to increase public awareness about health and hygiene during the Covid pandemic. The primary objective is to illustrate the effectiveness of ethical marketing strategies. A qualitative research methodology has been used, primarily relying on secondary data from news articles, industry reports and academic literature. The analysis focused on marketing strategies, ethical implications and campaign impact. The findings reveal that ethical marketing can be an effective tool in differentiating businesses from competitors and building long-lasting relationships with consumers. Dove's campaign challenged stereotypical beauty norms and promoted body positivity, which resonated with its target audience. Lifebuoy's campaign prioritized public health and hygiene during the Covid-19 pandemic, demonstrating a strong responsibility to social responsibility. Due to the successful integration of ethical issues into their marketing strategies, both campaigns produced positive brand outcomes as well as societal benefits.

Keywords: Ethical Marketing, Real Beauty Campaign, Lifebuoy's F.I.G.H.T. Covid Campaign, Sustainable Marketing, Social Impact.

Omnichannel Shopping Intention of Indian Consumers: Moderating Roles of Product Type and Gender

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Abstract

This paper explores the impact of technological advances and evolving consumer preferences on the retail industry, focusing on omnichannel retailing and its implications for customers and retailers. The study aims to develop a conceptual model to identify factors influencing Indian consumers' omnichannel purchase intentions, considering product type and gender as moderating variable. Conceptual model was proposed on extensive literature survey by following systematic literature review. Using a survey questionnaire validated through a pilot study, this research emphasizes the need for seamless online-offline integration to remain competitive. The findings of the research will highlight best practices, consumer preferences, and the challenges and opportunities for retailers adopting omnichannel strategies. The study's outcomes will assist businesses in enhancing customer engagement, increasing sales, and building brand loyalty in a digitalized world.

Keywords: Omnichannel shopping intention, Theory of consumption values, UTAUT2, Indian Consumers.

Like Parent, Like Child? Intergenerational Transfer of Money Attitudes, Risk Avoidance and Investment Preferences

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Abstract

This paper attempts to investigate the intergenerational transfer of money attitudes and risk avoidance attitude among parent-child dyads. Further we examine how parental money attitudes, child's money attitudes and parent's risk investment preferences affect the child's risk investment preferences.

Convenience sampling is used to collect responses from 251 parent-child pairs through an online survey. Money attitudes are measured using Money Attitude Scale (Yamauchi and Templer, 1982) and risk avoidance is measured using subjective self-reported author developed scale. Structural equation models are built to identify how intergenerational transmission of money attitudes and parental risk preference affects the child's risk preference.

Structural equation models show that parental money attitudes have a significant effect on the corresponding attitudes of adult children. Parental power prestige negatively impacted their children's risk avoidance attitude while parental anxiety and retention time had a positive impact; all being mediated by the child's corresponding money attitudes. Further both the parental risk avoidance attitude and child's risk avoidance attitude have a positive impact to their stated preferences towards investment risk avoidance. The use of data from parent-child dyads allows us to establish a direct causal relationship between money attitudes and investment risk preferences.

Keywords: money attitudes, risk avoidance, parent-child dyads, young adults, intergenerational transfer.

Are Management Students Contextually Relevant

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Abstract

We examine contextual relevance of management students' academic survey titles by constructing a rubric based on psycho-communicative analysis (PCA) approach. The test model relies on Media Richness Theory (MRT), Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Relevance Theory (RT) for research design. PCA based variables acts as predictors and response variable (contextual relevance) is measured on principles of RT. Adopting a mix- method approach 10% of sample data has been analysed qualitatively and findings resonates with quantitative results. Analysing 97 titles collected over a two year period revealed a significant gap between student's expectation and ground realities. The findings indicates lack of vision, unsystematic work approach and compliance attitude. The results underscore the need for teaching pedagogy reform, focusing on skill development of management students beyond sandbox format to enhance professional success.

Keywords: Academic Survey, Communication, Contextual Relevance, Project Titles, Psycho-Communicative Analysis.

The Influence of Pricing on Product Classification: Exploring the Hedonic-Utilitarian Continuum

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Introduction

For several years, almost all online shopping platforms, like Amazon.com, have run their advertisements with comparable strike-off pricing wherein consumers can see the MRP, which has been priced at a discounted price. This practice is prevalent and is not limited to a particular product category. We can see this kind of advertisement from smartphones to regular-use items like a pen. In the dynamic landscape of consumer behavior and market dynamics, the categorization of products into either hedonic or utilitarian categories has been a subject of significant scholarly inquiry. The differentiation of product categories into hedonic and utilitarian has been established in the past literature. Hedonic products fulfill consumers' emotional and experiential needs, providing pleasure, enjoyment, or aesthetic satisfaction, while utilitarian products are primarily functional, meeting consumers' practical needs and solving specific problems. (Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000)

Despite the established differentiation between these two categories, recent research has increasingly highlighted the nuanced role of pricing in shaping consumers' perceptions of product hedonicity or utilitarianism.

However, the pricing strategy adopted for a product is not merely a financial decision but a strategic tool that influences consumer perceptions, behaviors, and, ultimately, purchase decisions. This paper aims to explore whether pricing has an effect in determining if a product is hedonic or utilitarian. Indeed, spending money on indulgent behaviors is often viewed as extravagant, irresponsible, and morally questionable. This perception stems from the understanding that allocating funds towards vices leaves less available income for essential needs and future security. (Kivetz and Zheng, 2006) Often, spending on hedonic products is difficult to justify, and there is higher guilt associated with the expenditure. Often, consumers prefer to spend more time on hedonic products than money (Okada 2005). Due to this sense of guilt, it becomes challenging to rationalize expenditures on hedonic products, while it is comparatively simpler to justify spending on utilitarian items. (Okada, 2005) Often, hedonistic purchases are difficult to quantify, so consumers find it challenging to justify spending on such products.

In this study, we are trying to understand if a price change can affect whether a product is hedonic or utilitarian. The premise is consumers feel guilty about spending money on hedonic products as it is difficult to quantify. Now, we are exploring whether consumers would perceive the product as utilitarian or hedonic if the price of product A is reduced from \$500 to \$200.

Ethical AI in Keyword Research: A Double-Edged Sword for Search Engine Marketing

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Abstract:

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into keyword research has transformed search engine marketing (SEM), enhancing efficiency and accuracy in keyword identification and content optimization. However, this rapid advancement raises significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding data privacy, algorithmic bias, and potential manipulation of search results. This paper explores these ethical implications and the challenges SEM professionals face in navigating responsible AI use.

A mixed-methods approach was employed to assess digital marketers' perceptions of AI-powered keyword research tools. Regression analysis and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were used to examine the relationships between ethical concerns, algorithmic bias, data privacy, and potential manipulation. The findings reveal significant concerns regarding data privacy, algorithmic bias, and search result manipulation. Algorithmic bias had the most significant impact on ethical concerns. Additionally, ethical concerns were found to positively influence user trust, with indirect effects of algorithmic bias and data privacy on user trust through ethical concerns. These results emphasize the need for addressing ethical issues to foster trust and ensure the responsible use of AI-powered keyword research tools in SEM, highlighting the importance of balancing technological advancement with ethical responsibility in the field.

Keywords: AI, Keyword research, Search engine marketing, Data privacy, Algorithmic bias.

The Impact of Personalization on Women's Online Shopping Behaviour: A Consumer Decision-Making Perspective

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Abstract:

The paper explores the significant impact of personalization on women's online shopping behaviour, emphasizing its role in enhancing consumer decision-making. As e-commerce continues to evolve, personalization emerges as a critical strategy for retailers, tailoring experiences to meet individual preferences. This study highlights how personalized recommendations, tailored advertisements, and customized interfaces foster emotional connections and trust among female consumers. By addressing factors such as convenience, emotional engagement, and perceived value, personalization not only improves customer satisfaction but also encourages loyalty. The findings underscore the need for retailers to adopt personalized approaches to effectively engage women shoppers, ultimately driving sales and enhancing the overall shopping experience. This research fills a gap in existing literature by focusing specifically on women's unique responses to personalized marketing strategies in the context of online shopping.

Keywords: Personalization, Online Shopping Behavior, Consumer Decision-Making, Women Consumers, E-commerce.

AI Failure Types and Corporate Response Strategies: An Analysis of Diverse Failure Instances

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Abstract:

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming industries, enhancing service delivery, and increasing operational efficiencies. However, the occurrence of AI failures can severely disrupt service quality and damage brand reputation, necessitating effective corporate communication strategies. This study aims to address the gap in understanding the types of AI failures and the corresponding organizational responses by analyzing 15 AI failure cases from 2020 to 2024. Using content analysis, this research employs thematic extraction through Atlas.ti to identify major patterns in AI failures, followed by manual concept coding. Subsequently, keyword extraction is performed using KeyBERT to capture relevant terms associated with each failure type facilitating the selection of excerpts. Choi's typology of AI failures provides a framework for categorizing these failures. Additionally, Benoit's Image Repair Theory serves as a lens through which to examine the corporate communication strategies implemented in response to these failures. The findings reveal that failures like common sense and established crisis management strategies like reducing offensiveness are effectively used in most of the cases. However, failure like catastrophic forgetting and mortification strategies are used the least. These insights contribute to the ongoing discourse on best practices in corporate communication in the era of AI.

Keywords: AI, Service failure, Crisis communication.

Femvertising and Women Empowerment: A Review and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract:

The study presents a comprehensive overview of research in femvertising— “*Advertising that employs pro-female talent, messages, and imagery to empower women and girls*” S Skey, (2015). Although the term was coined as early as 2014, no Systematic Literature Review (SLR) has been published in academic journals, creating a critical gap in the literature. The current study addresses this gap by thematically categorizing key findings, including general responses to femvertising, femvertising in diverse contexts, and challenges in femvertising. Suggestions for future research are also proposed based on gaps identified in femvertising literature. Additionally, the themes used in femvertising ads are compared against an integrated framework to determine whether all facets of empowerment are effectively represented in femvertising. Furthermore, a framework is developed incorporating antecedents, decisions, and outcomes of femvertising. This framework provides a structured approach to understanding femvertising, with variables affecting its effectiveness, influence on consumers, and impact on the advertising brand.

Keywords: Femvertising, Feminism in advertising, Women empowerment, Gender Equality, SDG-5.104

Monopoly on Wheels: A Gamified Approach to Market Research

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Introduction:

In the ever-evolving landscape of market research, researchers are continually seeking innovative strategies to enhance data collection and engagement. Traditional survey methods, often characterized by low response rates and limited participant interest, have prompted the exploration of alternative approaches. Gamification, the integration of game elements into non-game contexts, emerges as a promising solution. By harnessing the power of play, gamification can create more engaging and interactive experiences, leading to increased participation and higher-quality data.

This paper introduces Monopoly on Wheels, a gamified market research application that leverages the iconic Monopoly board game and Spin the wheel to collect survey responses. By disguising surveys as a fun and interactive game, Monopoly on Wheels aims to overcome the challenges associated with traditional survey methods and provide a more effective and engaging data collection experience.

Design Principles and Key Features

Monopoly on Wheels is designed to capture the essence of the classic Monopoly board game while seamlessly incorporating survey questions. Key features include:

1. **Familiar Theme:** The app leverages the well-known Monopoly theme, creating a sense of nostalgia and comfort for users. This familiarity can lower the perceived barrier to entry and encourage participation.
2. **Spin the Wheel:** The core mechanic of the game involves spinning a wheel to determine the user's next move. This element of chance adds excitement and unpredictability, keeping users engaged and motivated.
3. **Life Situations:** As users progress through the game, they encounter life situations similar to those in traditional Monopoly. These situations are designed to elicit survey responses related to specific topics, such as consumer preferences, opinions, or behaviors.

4. **Rewards and Incentives:** To encourage participation, Monopoly on Wheels offers rewards and incentives, such as virtual currency or prizes. These rewards can serve as extrinsic motivators, driving users to complete surveys and progress through the game.
5. **Progressive Difficulty:** The game gradually increases in difficulty as users advance, ensuring that the experience remains challenging and engaging. This progression can help to maintain user interest and prevent boredom.

Game Interface:

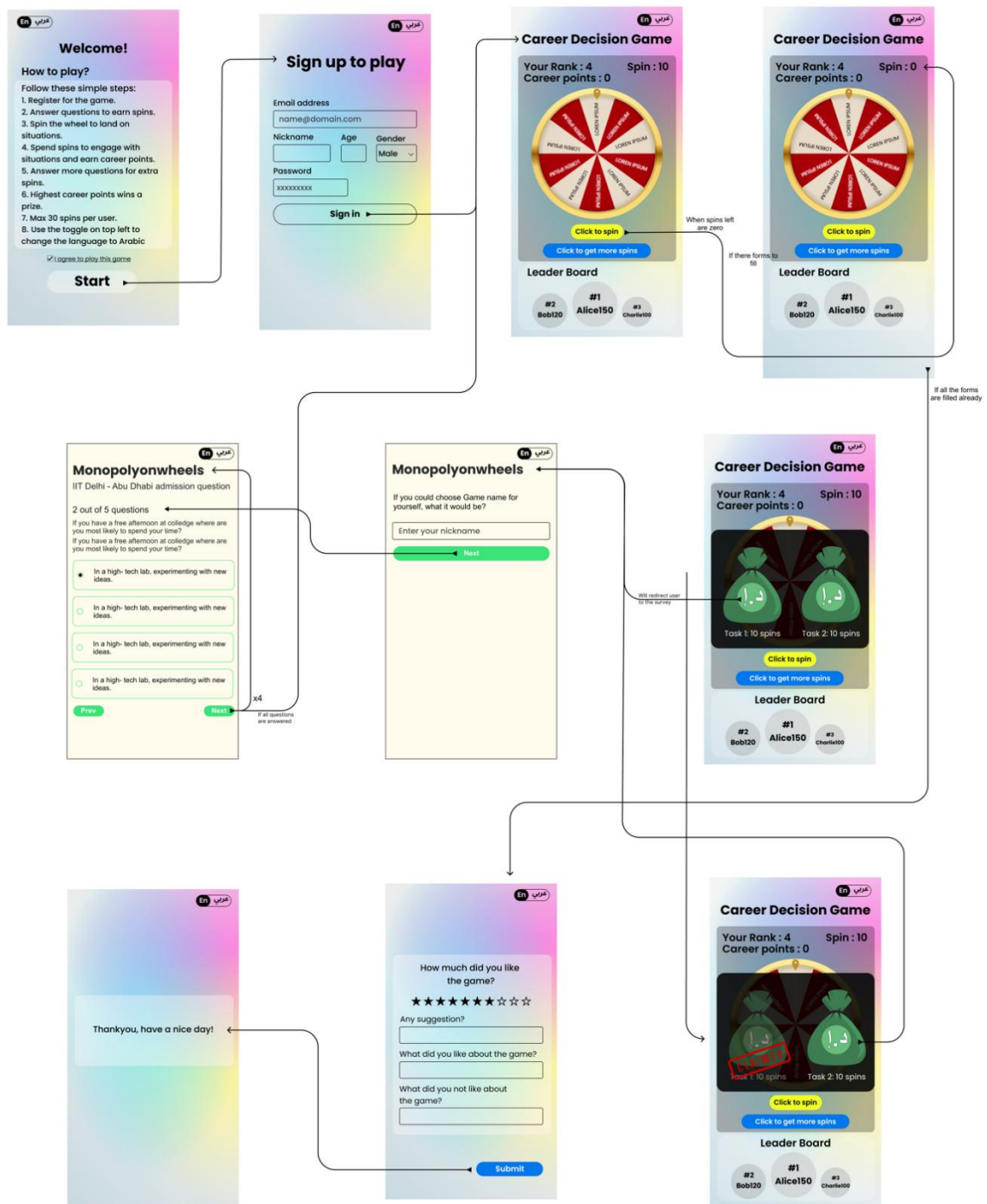


Figure 1: Game Interface of Monopoly on Wheels

Benefits of Gamification in Market Research

Monopoly on Wheels demonstrates the potential benefits of gamification in market research. By incorporating game elements, the app can:

1. **Increase Engagement:** The interactive nature of the game can enhance user engagement and reduce the perceived effort required to complete surveys.
2. **Improve Response Rates:** The fun and enjoyable experience provided by Monopoly on Wheels can lead to higher completion rates and lower attrition.
3. **Collect Richer Data:** The gamified format can encourage users to provide more detailed and thoughtful responses to survey questions.
4. **Foster Brand Loyalty:** By creating a positive and memorable experience, Monopoly on Wheels can strengthen the relationship between users and the brand.

Gameplay and Avoiding Survey Loopholes

To ensure the integrity and reliability of the survey data collected through Monopoly on Wheels, several measures have been implemented:

1. **Survey Design:** The surveys are carefully designed to avoid leading questions, bias, and ambiguity. Clear and concise language is used to minimize confusion and ensure accurate responses.
2. **Randomization:** The order of survey questions is randomized to prevent participants from anticipating or preparing answers.
3. **Data Validation:** The collected data is subjected to quality checks and validation procedures to identify and address any inconsistencies or errors.
4. **Incentive Structure:** The reward system is designed to encourage honest and accurate responses. Excessive rewards for completing surveys quickly or providing specific answers could incentivize participants to provide misleading information.
5. **Multiple Surveys:** By breaking down the larger survey into multiple smaller surveys, we aim to reduce participant fatigue and improve response quality. This also allows for more targeted data collection on specific topics.
6. **User Experience Monitoring:** The app tracks user behavior and engagement to identify any patterns or anomalies that may indicate fraudulent or incomplete responses.

Engagement, Awareness, or Market Survey: Why Not All!

The Monopoly on Wheels serves multiple purposes: market engagement, awareness creation, and market surveys. By adjusting the question mix, the app can be tailored to meet these different objectives.

For example, at the NAJAH Education Expo, we used Monopoly on Wheels to engage students at the IIT Delhi Abu Dhabi stall. The game included questions designed to explore students' aspirations for an ideal campus and their preferred academic fields. Additionally, we integrated FAQs from the institute's admissions page to inform visitors about the application process. Light-hearted, engaging questions were also added to maintain interest. Students who completed the game were rewarded with branded merchandise.

The app proved highly popular among students who visited the booth, effectively capturing attention and facilitating meaningful engagement.

Future Developments

There are plenty of ways Monopoly on Wheels could be expanded to make it even more versatile and engaging:

1. Customized User Experiences: The app could offer more tailored questions and experiences based on users' previous answers. This way, each person's journey feels unique, making it easier to gather deeper insights.

2. Detailed Data Analytics: Adding a user-friendly analytics dashboard would help organizers see responses in real time, track trends, and get an instant feel for the overall results. This would make it easy to spot interesting patterns right away.

3. Multi-Platform Support: Making Monopoly on Wheels available on more platforms, like mobile and tablet versions, would expand its reach. People could then access it easily, whether at events, at home, or even on the go.

4. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR): AR and VR elements could add a fresh, immersive layer to the game. For example, participants could experience a virtual campus tour or try out product demos, giving them a real-life feel for the brand.

5. Social Sharing and Leaderboards: Adding options to share progress on social media or compete on leaderboards could encourage friendly competition and keep users invested. It might also spread the word about the game to new audiences.

6. Language Options and Regional Content: Offering multiple languages and region-specific content could make the app more inclusive, allowing people from different backgrounds to enjoy it in a way that feels relatable.

7. More Game Features: Adding levels, unlockable achievements, and other game mechanics would keep the experience fun and engaging, encouraging users to stick around longer.

These upgrades could take Monopoly on Wheels to the next level, making it more adaptable for different types of events and campaigns and more engaging for users. Our team is working on developing the app further to meet the above scope.

Literature Review

Gamification has emerged as a promising approach to enhance engagement and motivation in various domains, including education, healthcare, and marketing (Deterding et al., 2011). Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of gamification in increasing user participation, improving learning outcomes, and fostering positive attitudes (Huynh and Nguyen, 2017; Pivec, 2018).

In the context of market research, gamification offers the potential to overcome the challenges associated with traditional survey methods. By incorporating game elements, researchers can create more engaging and interactive experiences that capture the attention of participants (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Discussion and Implications:

Monopoly on Wheels showcases the potential of gamification in market research. By leveraging the familiar theme of Monopoly and incorporating interactive elements, the app can provide a more engaging and effective data collection experience.

The findings of this study have several implications for future research and practice:

- **Gamification as a Tool for Data Collection:** This research suggests that gamification can be a valuable tool for collecting market research data. By creating engaging and interactive experiences, researchers can increase participation rates and obtain higher-quality data.
- **Customization and Tailoring:** The success of gamification in market research may depend on the specific context and target audience. Researchers should carefully consider the design and implementation of gamified applications to ensure they are tailored to the needs of their target population.
- **Ethical Considerations:** The use of gamification in market research raises ethical questions regarding user privacy, consent, and the potential for manipulation. Researchers must ensure that gamified applications are designed and implemented ethically, respecting the rights and well-being of participants.

Monopoly on Wheels represents a promising approach to market research that leverages the power of gamification. By combining the familiar theme of Monopoly with interactive game elements, the app can provide a more engaging and effective data collection experience. While challenges and considerations exist, the potential benefits of gamification in market research make it a worthwhile avenue for exploration. As technology continues to advance, we can expect to see further innovations in this field, leading to even more effective and engaging market research methods.

Artificial Intelligence in Frontline Service Encounters: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract

Recently, artificial intelligence (AI) proliferation has enabled businesses worldwide to employ AI-driven service agents to deliver frontline services to their customers. This paradigm shift has also increased scholarly attention to consumer behavior research in AI-driven frontline service encounters. Nevertheless, the body of knowledge in this domain lacks coherence as it is scattered across numerous disciplines. Consequently, to provide a current and thorough comprehension of the consumer research conducted thus far in this field and a comprehensive and systematic framework of the existing literature, we analyzed 75 articles using the Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology (TCCM) framework. Our research categorized the theories in the extant literature on the basis of Human- AI interaction, AI service efficiency and AI adoption. Different contexts studied in this domain include retailing, hospitality, financial sector and other services. Furthermore, our review revealed that various characteristics relating to consumer, AI and firm were investigated using different methodologies. This analysis identifies several research gaps and suggests potential opportunities for further investigation that pertain to major emerging topics and overlooked areas.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI-driven service encounters, TCCM, Systematic Literature Review, Human- AI interaction.

Content Strategies of Unhealthy Food Brands on Social Media: A Machine Learning Perspective

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Abstract:

The increase in global obesity, driven by unhealthy food marketing on social media, is a major challenge to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3. While there is more focus on promoting healthy food content, with many brands trying to encourage healthy lifestyles, recent studies show a concerning trend: users engage more with unhealthy, high-calorie foods, often liking, commenting, and sharing them. Despite large investments in marketing content by food brands, there has been little research on the specific content strategies used by unhealthy brands on different social media platforms, which are important for driving higher consumer engagement. This study analyzes 10,536 social media posts using an automated machine learning model (AutoML) on Google Cloud Vertex AI, comparing the content strategies of unhealthy brands on Instagram and Twitter. Through chi-square tests and MANOVA, it investigates the relationships between variables and the combined influence of platform type and content type on consumer interactions. The findings show notable differences in the content strategies used by unhealthy brands across different platforms, emphasizing effective methods that lead to greater engagement. By adopting these successful strategies, healthy food brands can enhance their connection with consumers and increase engagement with healthier options.

Keywords: Food marketing, Marketer-generated content, Unhealthy, Social media, Machine Learning.

Marketing Strategies and Bodoland Transport Services in Assam: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract:

State Road Transport Undertakings play a crucial role in India's public transportation system, accounting for 4.59 percent of the country's GDP in 2019-20. They represent the largest mode of transport in the country. Similarly, Bodoland Transport Services holds an important position in the Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam, providing efficient, economical, safe, and comfortable public transport services to the general public. This study is descriptive in nature and is based on both primary and secondary data. It examines the current status of Bodoland Transport Services and analyzes the marketing strategies used by public bus transportation in the Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam. The findings reveal that Bodoland Transport Services (BTS) operates on a no-profit, no-loss model. Currently, BTS has a fleet of 37 buses running on 23 routes, connecting district headquarters and major cities in Assam. The fare rates are approximately 2 percent lower than those of private services. However, BTS buses consume more fuel, and maintenance costs are rising due to aging coaches. Additionally, the service is facing intense competition, which has resulted in a 30 percent decrease in the number of passengers since 2022.

Keywords: Public bus transport, Bodoland Transport Services, Marketing Strategies, Bodoland Territorial Region.

Crafting Inclusive Brand Narratives in Fashion: Integrating Theory and Practice

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Abstract:

The fashion industry is undergoing a pivotal shift from exclusive to inclusive storytelling, reflecting a deeper understanding of diverse consumer needs. This research examines how fashion brands are reimagining their marketing narratives to forge authentic connections while maintaining brand integrity and cultural sensitivity. Current data reveals a significant implementation gap in inclusive marketing. Despite 93% of marketers recognizing its importance, representation remains imbalanced – notably, people with disabilities constitute 25% of the population but appear in only 1% of fashion advertisements. However, brands embracing diverse advertising strategies report a 64% increase in immediate sales, demonstrating the business value of inclusion. The study highlights both successes and challenges, from Fenty Beauty's remarkable \$100 million launch to the UK fashion industry's slow progress in representation since 2020. The findings emphasize that effective inclusive marketing transcends surface-level diversity, requiring authentic storytelling that resonates with real consumer experiences and drives sustainable business growth.

Keywords: Fashion Marketing, Inclusive Branding, Consumer Behaviour, Cultural Integration, Brand Strategy, Visual Representation.

The Moderating Effect Of AI Perception On The Relationship Between Personalized Recommendations And Customer Engagement

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Abstract:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed the way humans interact with technology in the 21st century. One key area, among many, where AI has created a huge imprint, is the field of marketing. Consumers' experience augmented by the power of AI has become a critical subject-matter of research in recent times. The way AI has strengthened personalized recommendations system to suit the needs of individual consumers, is the focal point of this paper. This study investigates into the effect of personalized recommendations on consumer engagement. It also delves into how consumers' perception about AI plays a role in the association between personalized recommendations and consumer engagement. To this purpose, data was collected from Indian consumers via Google forms. Using PLS-SEM method, it was revealed that personalized recommendations had a positive impact on consumer engagement, However, consumer perceptions about AI weakens this relationship, indicating that consumers are wary about AI and this puts a negative impact on consumer engagement.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Personalised Recommendations, Consumer Engagement, AI perception, Privacy concerns.

The Role of Financial Inclusion in Enhancing Efficiency in Indian Public Sector Banks (2020-2023)

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Abstract:

Financial inclusion is a critically important and widely discussed topic for policymakers and academics in India. The focus is on expanding access to financial services for underprivileged groups in order to empower them economically. This encompasses various aspects such as promoting savings, credit, insurance, and efficient risk management. True financial inclusion goes beyond simply providing bank accounts; it also requires increasing the usage of these accounts and expanding banking penetration throughout the entire country. To drive the progress towards a growth-focused economy, it is paramount to enhance financial literacy programs. By equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills, they can make informed financial decisions that will positively impact their lives. Furthermore, encouraging female social security savings plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality and empowering women to become financially independent. Moreover, to ensure that social benefits reach their intended beneficiaries efficiently, it is vital to reduce the cost of delivering these benefits through the banking system. By leveraging technological advancements and adopting innovative practices, the banking system can streamline the distribution process, minimizing overhead costs and maximizing the impact of social welfare programs.

In conclusion, achieving true financial inclusion requires a multi-faceted approach that goes beyond mere account provision. It necessitates comprehensive efforts to increase financial literacy, empower women economically, and optimize the delivery of social benefits. By pursuing these strategies, India can foster a financially inclusive society that provides equal opportunities for all its citizens.

Keywords: Financial Inclusion, Indian Banks, Economic growth, Efficiency.

Exploring Femvertising: A PRISMA-Based Systematic Review of Feminist Advertising

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Abstract

In the contemporary world of intense rivalry, advertising are essential for capturing consumers' attention and altering their brand-related behaviour. The importance and force of feminism and gender equality have been increasingly recognized in recent years, leading to a significant revolution in the ever-changing sectors of marketing and communication within the ever-evolving advertising landscape. The fascinating and thought-provoking discipline of "femvertising" has emerged as a result of this change. This study specifically attempts to Recognise and classify recurring themes in the literature on femvertising and to find geographical trends and areas of focused research, look at the frequency and geographic distribution of studies. This study carries out a review of femvertising in marketing context by analysing the existing literature between 2014 and 2024. Articles were drawn from scopus database and were analysed using thematic analysis. A review of selected papers depicts that despite its effectiveness, the academic exploration of femvertising remains limited, with relatively few studies addressing its complexities within the marketing field. This review identifies significant thematic gaps and unexplored areas, highlighting an opportunity for future research.

Keywords: Femvertising, PRISMA, Consumer Behaviour, Marketing

Background of the study

In the contemporary world of intense rivalry, advertising are essential for capturing consumers' attention and altering their brand-related behaviour. The importance and force of feminism and gender equality have been increasingly recognized in recent years, leading to a significant revolution in the ever-changing sectors of marketing and communication within the ever-evolving advertising landscape. The fascinating and thought-provoking discipline of "femvertising" has emerged as a result of this change. Femvertising, a portmanteau of "feminism" and "advertising," refers to advertisements that promote female empowerment and challenge traditional gender stereotypes. Coined in 2014 by SHE Media, femvertising emerged in response to growing social movements advocating for gender equality and the rejection of stereotypical representations of women in media. It seeks to redefine how women are portrayed by highlighting themes of independence, confidence, and empowerment. Campaigns such as Dove's "Real Beauty" and Always' "#LikeAGirl" are early examples of femvertising that have resonated with audiences, encouraging women to embrace their individuality and challenging cultural norms around beauty and gender roles. Femvertising was first implemented by brands that catered to women (e.g., Dove, Always, and Pantene), and it looked to be a good fit for the causes. But as the campaigns gained momentum, other businesses—some connected to items aimed at men (like RAM trucks) and some affiliated with products aimed at gender neutral products (like Google and Verizon)—jumped on the bandwagon and started using feminist advertising in their marketing campaigns. However, research indicates that there is a lack of direction for marketers aiming to explore non-stereotypical gender depictions in order to lessen gender stereotypes in advertising, as there is little empirical information and research on the subject. This study seeks to address these gaps through a

systematic literature review of femvertising research from 2014 to 2024, focusing on thematic trends across geographic contexts.

Purpose of the study

The main goal of the study is to use the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach to present an organised review of the body of current femvertising literature in a marketing setting.

This study specifically attempts to:

1. Recognise and classify recurring themes in the literature on femvertising.
2. To find geographical trends and areas of focused research, look at the frequency and geographic distribution of studies.

Methodology

A systematic literature review was conducted to ensure a comprehensive examination of femvertising studies within the specified timeframe (2014–2024). Articles were sourced from the Scopus database, chosen for its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed publications in the marketing field. Following the PRISMA guidelines, the study employed rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria to identify relevant studies. Only studies explicitly focused on femvertising within a marketing context were considered, with unrelated fields and non-English publications excluded to maintain thematic relevance and consistency. This method was particularly suited for identifying trends and key concepts, as it facilitated a structured breakdown of diverse perspectives on femvertising.

Result

The findings underscore the complex nature of femvertising as a marketing strategy. While it offers brands a powerful tool to connect with socially conscious consumers, it also requires careful alignment with authentic brand practices. By organizing and analyzing femvertising literature over the past decade, this study provides a comprehensive framework for researchers and practitioners interested in socially conscious advertising. As per the findings of the study, there are 13 themes of femvertising. The study Recognised and classified recurring themes in the literature on femvertising. Also study offered geographical trends and their areas of focused research on femvertising.

Implications

The findings of this systematic review carry several critical implications for the field of marketing and socially conscious advertising. Firstly, this review contributes to the understanding of femvertising's role in marketing and systematic review leads to **Enhanced Understanding of Femvertising Themes**. This study provides a systematic framework that future researchers can use to explore gaps in femvertising literature, particularly in regions or themes underrepresented in the current research landscape. By structuring and organizing femvertising literature over the past decade, this study contributes significantly to the academic discourse on socially conscious advertising. This synthesis of findings can be foundational for emerging research in feminist marketing, advertising ethics, and consumer psychology.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores femvertising as a valuable marketing strategy, with brands leveraging pro-female messages often receiving positive consumer responses. Despite its effectiveness, the academic exploration of femvertising remains limited, with relatively few studies addressing its complexities within the marketing field. This review identifies significant thematic gaps and unexplored areas, highlighting an opportunity for future research to deepen understanding of femvertising's impact across diverse cultural, demographic, and media contexts. Expanding research on femvertising can offer brands more refined insights into consumer expectations for gender-sensitive advertising, ultimately

aiding in the development of more authentic and impactful campaigns. The findings call for a broader academic focus on femvertising to further uncover its role and potential within modern marketing practices.

A Data-Driven Study of Customer Satisfaction in Indian Restaurants Through Online Reviews

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Introduction

The global food service market is undergoing significant expansion, with projections indicating an increase from \$2,646.99 billion in 2023 to \$5,423.59 billion by the year 2030, thereby reflecting an annual growth rate of 10.79%, as cited in Fortune Business Insights (2023). This upward trend is evident within the Indian food service sector, which is anticipated to experience a growth rate of 9-10% during the period from 2018 to 2023 (NRAI, 2019). The Indian food market is predicted to increase at an 11.19% compound annual growth rate from 2022 to 2028, increasing its value from \$41.1 billion to \$79.65 billion (Press Trust of India, 2022). The swift advancement of the Indian food market surpasses the global average, fuelled by an expanding consumer base, rapid urbanization, and escalating disposable incomes, thereby distinguishing itself from the more established markets of developed nations (Brar et al., 2014). Online reviews constitute a form of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) facilitated by Web 2.0 technologies that have emerged over the past two decades (Gan et al., 2017). Additionally, there was a significant shift in the service industry brought about by the internet, which revolutionized the restaurant business by enable ordering on fingertips instead of dining. WOM was initially impacted by this shift, and later e-WOM became popular. Online reviews have become key sources for hospitality, tourism, and business research since they provide insights into customers' spontaneous and insightful feedback (Guo et al., 2017), reflecting either happiness or dissatisfaction with their experiences (Banerjee and Chua, 2016). Yelp, TripAdvisor, Google Maps, and Dianping all offer free online reviews (Mathayomchan & Taecharunroj, 2020), these platforms allow users to engage and publish reviews, which help reviewers express their emotions, provide information, describe experiences, and make recommendations (Racherla et al., 2013; Ye et al., 2014).

Customer experience influences a wide range of cognitive and behavioral reactions (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory, introduced by Lewin (1938), is the most recognized theory for explaining customer satisfaction. It states that customers evaluate their satisfaction levels by comparing actual experiences or performance to their expectations. This customer satisfaction technique depends on the cognitive process of expectation confirmation (Oliver, 1980; Oliver, 1989). The theory recommends three scenarios for customer evaluations: (1) confirmation, which occurs when actual performance matches expectations; (2) positive disconfirmation, which occurs when actual performance exceeds expectations, resulting in satisfaction; and (3) negative disconfirmation, which occurs when actual performance is worse than expected, resulting in dissatisfaction (Ha and Jang, 2010). Positive experiences, for example, can result in satisfaction and loyalty (Hyun, 2010; Ryu and Han, 2011), a better attitude and brand preference (Hwang and Ok, 2013), intention to purchase (Ashton et al., 2010), and intention to return (Gupta et al., 2007). Alternatively, an inadequate encounter will result in customer dissatisfaction and negative emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses (Abdelhamied, 2011). However, improving the restaurant experience is a challenging task because it is complicated and multidimensional, incorporating elements other than food (Ponnam and Balaji, 2014; Walter et al., 2010). Despite the complex nature of restaurant features, researchers have broadly defined four major restaurant attributes: cuisine, service, atmosphere, and value (Yrjölä et al., 2019).

The studies mentioned above investigated multiple factors that influence customer experience by conducting mixed method research and traditional techniques, but as per our knowledge none of the study has explored the sentiments associated with all aspects in the restaurant context. This study will focus on online reviews of restaurants to better understand the underlying patterns. Further, these themes will be used to determine the most important factors that emphasize a positive or negative element of the business. These key factors will be used by restaurant managers to investigate the crucial reasons behind the surge or drop in customer traffic and to develop strategies based on consumer input.

Objectives

While extensive research exists on customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry, a notable gap exists in understanding the nuanced factors that influence customer perception and satisfaction across different dining establishments. Existing literature primarily focuses on general aspects of service quality, food quality, and ambiance (Yrjölä et al., 2019; Ryu et al., 2012; Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Andersson & Mossberg, 2004; Heung and Gu, 2012; Harrington et al., 2012), but lacks in-depth analysis of specific factors that contribute to customer satisfaction. Previous studies have examined the relationship between customer ratings and overall satisfaction (Lee et al., 2015; Schlosser, 2005; Wang et al., 2018; Adomavicius et al., 2013; Ma et al., 2013; Hu and Li, 2011; Moe and Trusov, 2011), but there is limited research on the content analysis of online review provided by customers. Understanding the qualitative aspects of customer reviews is crucial for gaining deeper insights into their preferences and perceptions.

Given the insights gained from the literature review and the identified gap in existing literature, we formulate two primary research objectives:

1. Identifying key factors influencing customer satisfaction at Indian restaurants.
2. Determining restaurant-related parameters impacting customer satisfaction during food delivery services provided by these restaurants.

Methodology

In order to understand the overall sentiment expressed in reviews, we can use or apply sentiment analysis techniques. These techniques can categorize each review as positive, negative, or neutral. To go beyond basic sentiment and dive into the emotional nuances, we can use sentiment dictionaries specifically designed to identify emotions like joy, love, trust, anger, sadness, and surprise (Li et al., 2022). Additionally, exploring machine learning approaches for sentiment analysis can offer even deeper insights and potentially improve the accuracy of our analysis. Topic modelling is a machine learning technique that has gained significant attention in recent years for its ability to automatically uncover latent structures within large text datasets (Park et al., 2018). It involves the use of algorithms like Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) to identify key themes or topics present in a corpus of text. These topics are extracted based on the occurrence of relevant keywords, enabling the recognition of knowledge structures and patterns within research articles (Lee et al., 2022).

In this study we will be collecting online reviews of the restaurants in India from different locations in the country (include all five zones) which includes metros as well as other Tier-I and Tier-II cities. The online food delivery aggregator platforms ensure a diverse range of reviews covering various restaurants and cuisines across the country. We have used python for scrapping the reviews in JSON format and then pre-processing will happen for applying text analytics.

Proposed Results

With the help of sentiment analysis, we can gain valuable insights into the restaurant industry in India. This process involves identifying key parameters that significantly influence overall customer evaluations based on the sentiment expressed in their reviews (Khan et al., 2022). By focusing on aspects that consistently generate positive sentiment, we can gain a deeper understanding of customer

preferences and satisfaction levels. This analysis can further reveal areas for improvement and inform targeted recommendations for restaurants seeking to enhance their customer experience. Ultimately, these findings can be compiled into a comprehensive report that details the key parameters impacting sentiment in restaurant reviews, providing valuable insights for businesses in the Indian market.

Practical Implications

This study will focus on online reviews of restaurants to better understand the underlying patterns. Further, these themes will be used to determine the most important factors that emphasize a positive or negative element of the business. These key factors will be used by restaurant managers to investigate the crucial reasons behind the surge or drop in customer traffic and to develop strategies based on consumer input. If we see the other side from customer point of view, it will be very helpful to take purchase decision for having dinner from particular restaurant or not. This study will be providing the key areas which are lacking in terms of service or other aspects mentioned by customer, which acts as feedback mechanism.

Keywords: Online reviews, User-Generated-Content (UGC), Customer Satisfaction, Sentiment Analysis, Text analytics.

Socially Responsible Marketing in India's Food industry: A consumer perspective

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Abstract

With lots of changes and uncertainties, when it can't be foreseen how pandemics like Covid- 19 may affect our lives, responsible behaviour, socially responsible marketing strategies, and consumer perception towards them become more prominent to face these difficulties, particularly in the food sector. Being socially responsible, companies can create a position in consumers' minds and positively affect the behaviour of all participants, from individuals to business entities, towards themselves and others to enhance their well-being and enrich our society. The research uses the Theory of planned behaviour as a base with other different factors to evaluate the effect of consumer perception towards socially responsible behaviour and purchase intention. This research is descriptive and survey-based, and a questionnaire will be used as a research instrument to collect data.

Keywords: socially responsible marketing, social responsibility, food products, consumer perception, environment.

Factors Enhancing Customer Engagement on social media: An analysis via Smart PLS approach

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Abstract

Businesses and consumers have adopted social media, transforming traditional business promotion and operations (Hasan & Sohail, 2020). With users spanning from Baby Boomers to Generation Z, social media's influence on business practices has surged, shifting marketing strategies toward virtual promotion (Farrell, 2022; Khaliq, 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2015). Social media engagement metrics significantly affect consumers' online purchase intentions, with factors like perceived connectedness, enjoyment, and attitudes toward social media use playing pivotal roles (Rahman et al., 2016; Rudyanto, 2018; Hussein & Hassan, 2017). Critical elements of social media marketing, such as entertainment, engagement, eWOM, and trendiness, are vital in shaping consumer engagement and purchase intentions, particularly in e-commerce (Bilal et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2016). This study aims to analyze the determinants influencing social media engagement intentions, developing a theoretical framework based on constructs like entertainment, interactivity, information, and hedonic value. Focusing on the diverse demographic of social media users in India, the study provides insights for executives to refine their social media strategies (Hussein & Hassan, 2017; Bilal et al., 2020).

This study aims to explore and empirically examine the factors contributing to engagement intentions on social media platforms. Through analysing crucial variables and their influence on user behaviour, this research strives to present a detailed comprehension of the determinants of social media engagement. The outcomes yield valuable perspectives for formulating efficient strategies to promote user participation and interaction.

Keywords – social media, customer engagement, entertainment, engagement intention, SMART PLS, SEM.

Exploring emerging technologies' impact on aida and Marketing mix in digital marketing for india

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of digital marketing on the audiences of the Indian OTT (over the top) media industry in the year 2024. The Over-the-Top (OTT) services have become like a streaming gadgets technology that gaining piquancy, soothed by growth, internet penetration and mobile usage across India. The questionnaire-based study proceeds to use the AIDA approach strategy (that stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) in assessing the impacts of marketing on different types of media and that of consumer behavior.

The survey looks at the levels of satisfaction with both the content and its advertising appeal as well as the level of customer care offered. This is applied on AIDA system to structure these answers encoding the role of persuasive advertising as well as the role of emerging trends — the level of interest development and preservation. Also, the study takes into consideration the rapidly changing digital landscape in India, which is encouraging marketers to be more data driven in their selling effort. The study also describes the role of artificial intelligence and machine learning (ML) in providing targeted services.

The research results provide confidence that the application of the AIDA structure to digital marketing communication measures attracts the audience's attention for OTT sector in India. This research offers important considerations for the attention of marketers looking to adapt to the Indian media system which is content-rich but fraught with challenges in personalization and moderation of privacy at the same time.

Keywords: Over-the-Top (OTT) Media; AIDA (Attention-Interest-Desire-Action) Model; Consumer Behavior; Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Marketing; Marketing Mix; Consumer Behavior

Aligning Love and Responsibility - ESG Investing Priorities in Couple Finance through Smart PLS Analysis

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Abstract

This study explores responsible financial decision-making in the context of couple finance, focusing on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing priorities. As dual-income households and joint financial planning gain prominence, the dynamics of shared decision-making in investment choices become critical. This research employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Smart PLS to analyze the interrelationship between financial behavior, ESG preferences, and investment outcomes within couples.

Drawing on survey data from a diverse demographic sample, the study identifies key factors influencing ESG-focused financial decisions, including risk tolerance, financial literacy, communication effectiveness, and value alignment. We have used random sampling at Delhi NCR with total 214 respondents, who have minimum five years of investing experience. Our findings reveal that couples with higher alignment in ESG values demonstrate greater financial satisfaction and long-term portfolio sustainability. The study also highlights the role of gender, cultural background, and income disparities in shaping ESG investment priorities.

This research contributes to the evolving discourse on responsible finance by providing actionable insights for financial advisors and policymakers aiming to promote ESG-aligned investment strategies. It underscores the importance of collaborative decision-making frameworks that integrate ethical and environmental considerations, thereby fostering financial well-being and societal impact.

Keywords: Responsible finance, couple finance, ESG investing, Smart PLS, financial decision-making, sustainable investing.

Friendship, Fulfilment, and Logistics: Key to Social Commerce Success

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Abstract

Friend-to-friend (Fr2Fr) social commerce (SC) has gained popularity among e-tailers and consumers due to its mix of online convenience and trust-based interactions. Logistics service quality (LSQ) plays a critical role in meeting customer expectations, incorporating both operational (timeliness, condition) and relational (empathy, responsiveness) aspects. This study, based on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model, analyzed survey data from 432 Fr2Fr SC users using SmartPLS software. The results revealed that both operational and relational LSQ positively impact customer experience, which, in turn, enhances customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer experience mediates the relationship between LSQ and customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Logistics service quality, friend-to-friend social commerce, customer experience, S-O-R model, customer satisfaction.

Antecedents of Customer Experience for Quick Commerce Apps: Mediating Role of Customer Engagement and Enjoyment

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Abstract

This study examines mediated framework to understand the impact of mobile app features like customization, ease of use and convivence on customer experience via customer enjoyment and customer engagement. This research used digital retail literature to explain the relationship between the app features and customers experience. The study used survey data collected from 303 q-commerce app service users. Findings of study highlighted that the app features enhance customer engagement and enjoyment which in turn improves customers overall shopping experience. Academically, this study enriches literature on quick commerce shopping service experience of customers and provide useful insights for practitioners. The findings of this research can provide valuable insights to managers and entrepreneurs in rapidly growing emerging market to effectively design strategies and enhance customer experience .

Exploring the Influence of Neuromarketing Factors on Consumer Perception: Insights into Cognitive and Emotional Drivers of Consumer Behavior

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Abstract

The study of Neuromarketing looks into how subconscious processes affect customer choices. Through data analysis, this study investigates how Neuromarketing affects consumer perception. It uncovers complex connections between emotion, attention, memory, motivation and perception of consumer. This study examines how it affects consumer perception, focusing on how emotions and cognition affect how decisions are made. The research examines links between emotion, attention, memory, motivation and consumer perception using rigorous data analysis techniques, such as data cleaning, descriptive statistics, Regression Analysis. Respondent demographic information adds even more value to the analysis by illuminating a variety of consumer groups. Data is collected from 552 respondents. In this study, Attention shows the highest influence on perception of consumer. In case of memory and motivation both are showing positive impact on perception of consumer.

Keywords: Neuromarketing, Perception, Emotion, Attention, Memory, Motivation.

Impact of green consumption values on green consumer behaviour of upcycled apparels among indian youth

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Abstract:

This study aims to recognize the green consumption values trailed by the Indian youth in the upcycled apparel sector and by what means do these values impact their green consumer behavior, with green attitude having a mediating role. This study focuses on the green purchase pattern among the youth by identifying past green behaviour. The influence of green purchase intentions and green attitude of the young consumers are also be identified in this study. The Theory of Planned Behaviour and Theory of Consumption Values forms the theoretical root of the current research. An online survey was conducted among 250 participants in and around the ambit of the study. The hypothesis of the study was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling. The results reflected straight or oblique relationship between green consumption values and green purchase intentions of upcycled apparels. There is a strong presence of the classic attitude-behaviour gap in the upcycled apparel sector. This study mainly contributes in identifying the mediating role of green attitude on green purchase intentions and how the green consumption values of the Indian youth is influencing green consumer behaviour. These findings will empower the upcycled apparel firms and future researchers to comprehend how upcycled apparel segment can attract consumers reflecting green attitude and green purchase intentions.

Keywords: Green Consumption Values, Green Purchase Intentions, Upcycled Apparels, Willingness attitude, Past green behaviour.

A Status-Driven Society: Bibliometric Insights into Conspicuous Consumption Research

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Abstract

Merely a century ago, Thorstein Veblen introduced the concept of Conspicuous Consumption; this notion remains relevant in contemporary society, playing a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior. This phenomenon has yet to receive considerable attention in academic literature despite its profound importance. Our study presents a comprehensive outlook on the literature's past, present, and future of Conspicuous Consumption. The bibliometric review reveals performance metrics as well as the conceptual framework that underpins the conspicuous consumption literature. Furthermore, the cluster analysis identifies the present study's focal points and suggests potential pathways for future studies.

Keywords: Conspicuous Consumption, Veblen Effect, Bibliometric analysis, Luxury.

Bridging the Gap: A Comprehensive Model for Building Psychological Ownership in Digital Goods

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Abstract

The digital revolution is giving rise to an ever-expanding landscape of digital goods which are becoming central to consumers' lives and interactions with brands. However, as these goods shift from tangible to intangible forms, the tactile cues that traditionally foster psychological ownership—such as physical control, personal investment, and interaction—are lost. This lack of "felt" ownership can reduce consumer attachment not only to digital goods themselves but also to the brands that offer them. While psychological ownership is a well-established concept in the context of physical products, its application to digital goods remains underexplored. Although previous research has touched upon psychological ownership in digital contexts, there is currently no comprehensive framework to guide brands in cultivating psychological ownership specifically for digital goods. Addressing this gap, this paper proposes a conceptual model for brands to foster psychological ownership in digital goods. This model outlines strategies that leverage personalization, immersive technology, community validation, and exclusivity to create a sense of ownership in consumers, despite the intangible nature of digital goods. By utilizing this framework, brands can build a loyal, engaged customer base, ultimately driving monetary value and enhancing brand equity in the increasingly competitive digital marketplace.

Keywords: Brand Loyalty, Consumer Engagement, Digital Goods, Digital Marketing, Psychological Ownership.

Faith and Sustainability: Exploring the Role of Consumer Psychology in Eco-friendly Religious Practices

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the antecedents and consequences of adopting eco-friendly religious practices. It hypothesizes cultural nostalgia, environmental stewardship, pro-environmental self-identity, and altruistic values as antecedents of adopting eco-friendly religious practices and moral satisfaction as a direct consequence. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire employing convenience sampling from 365 Indian citizens across various religious groups. The hypotheses were tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in SmartPLS 4. The findings reveal that cultural nostalgia, environmental stewardship, altruistic values, and pro-environmental self-identity significantly influence the adoption of eco-friendly religious practices, which, in turn, positively impacts moral satisfaction. This study offers actionable insights for religious leaders, policymakers, and environmental organizations to promote sustainable practices within faith-based communities. By leveraging cultural nostalgia and altruistic values, initiatives can draw on deeply rooted religious traditions to inspire eco-friendly behaviors. Fostering pro-environmental self-identity among practitioners may further enhance their commitment to sustainability. The originality of this research lies in its novel focus on the intersection of consumer psychology and religious practices within the Indian context, offering fresh perspectives on sustainability in diverse religious communities. This study advances academic discussions on sustainable behavior and provides a roadmap for integrating ecological consciousness into spiritual practices, fostering a harmonious relationship between faith and environmental stewardship.

Keywords: Cultural nostalgia, environmental stewardship, pro-environmental self-identity, eco-friendly religious practices, moral satisfaction.

Beyond the Screen: The Real-World Impact of Media's Glorified Masculinity and Violence on Workplace Culture

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Extended Abstract

As women increasingly demonstrate their capabilities and excel in corporate roles, they continue to face significant challenges and remain underrepresented in senior positions. This underrepresentation is further compounded by the media's glorification of violence and masculinity. Popular films such as *Kabir Singh*, *Pushpa*, and *Animal* exacerbate this issue by presenting protagonists who channel their frustrations into unchecked aggression. These portrayals serve as vicarious outlets for audiences while endorsing male dominance and violence, which can adversely impact workplace culture.

This study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining how media's glorification of masculinity influences corporate environments. We analyse the impact of "alpha male" characters featured in *Kabir Singh*, *Pushpa*, and *Animal*. *Kabir Singh* romanticizes aggression, possessiveness, and toxic dominance as signs of profound love, rewarding Kabir's violent and controlling actions with a favourable ending, thus glamorizing toxic masculinity and reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes. *Animal* depicts the protagonist's violent aggression and patriarchal control as symbols of strength and power, justifying his brutality as expressions of love and authority, and presenting hyper-masculine behaviour as admirable. Similarly, *Pushpa: The Rise* portrays the titular character as a dominant, fearless figure who uses aggression and violence to assert control over an illegal empire. His signature chin-stroking gesture and rugged masculinity are celebrated, framing his rise as a heroic journey and further glorifying toxic masculinity.

The connection between alpha male characters, male violent behaviour, and female managerial productivity can be understood through several theoretical lenses. Social Role Theory and Gender Schema Theory indicate that media portrayals of alpha males reinforce traditional gender roles and cognitive frameworks that associate leadership with masculine traits (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Bem, 1981). These portrayals create a narrow definition of successful leadership, marginalizing female managers who do not conform to these ideals, thereby affecting their perceived competence and productivity. Toxic Masculinity Theory further explain how these media representations normalize aggressive behaviours, influencing organisational

culture to reward such traits while undermining female managers. This environment devalues women's contributions and leads to decreased support and productivity (Kimmel, 2018). This research uniquely evaluates how media-driven perceptions of masculinity seep into the operational framework of modern organisations, fostering a pervasive bias against gender diversity. This study bridges a critical gap often overlooked by traditional organisational behaviour models by linking media narratives to workplace dynamics.

Empirically, we collected primary data through close-ended questionnaires and personal interviews with female managers from 100 corporations, using random and snowball sampling methods. The questionnaire assessed various aspects of their workplace experiences, including their influence in board meetings, recognition received, treatment by seniors and subordinates, decision-making scope, conflict resolution procedures, and participation in social and team-building activities. Our findings reveal that women face limited influence in board meetings, receive less recognition and fewer opportunities compared to their male counterparts, and are perceived as less competent. They are typically restricted to lower-level decisions, and the conflict resolution processes lack transparency and structure. The empirical insights also highlight an alarming trend: the normalisation of male-centric leadership ideologies, that often overshadow collaborative and inclusive strategies vital for organisational growth.

These results underscore ongoing gender conflicts, leading to inequality issues and reduced productivity. This study makes two significant contributions to the literature: 1) It extends the understanding of workplace determinants by exploring the impact of media's glorified masculinity and violence, a previously underexplored area. 2) It enriches the literature on employee behaviour and its impact on work culture by evaluating the influence of alpha-male behaviour, a dimension not previously addressed.

The findings provide valuable insights for managers and regulators. It helps managers to develop strategies dealing with gender inequality and male dominance. It provides insights to the regulators regarding the need for media policies to mitigate the adverse effects of such portrayals on workplace environments.

Keywords: alpha male, masculinity, violence, workplace culture.

From words to authenticity- An experimental investigation of how written relational communication affect brand authenticity perceptions

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Abstract

The quest for authentic brands has become more pronounced in the contemporary retailing environment characterized by online interactions and exchanges. Although brands engage their customers with different types of communications online, the significance of different types of written communication in affecting brand authenticity perceptions has been insufficiently studied. In this article, the authors empirically demonstrate that brand authenticity perceptions can be strengthened through the conscious use of different written communication formats, specifically in the online retailing context. A randomized field experiment shows that receiving handwritten notes from an online retailer strengthens brand authenticity perceptions of the consumers. Four controlled lab experiments look deeper into the inquiry by exploring the experiential and logical explanations underlying the focal effect and reveal some boundary conditions.

Keywords- Written relational communication, warmth, effort, online retailing, experimental design.

The Objective of the Study

With stiff competition online, brand authenticity has become more critical than ever. Consumers continually look for authentic products and authentic brands online. Since authenticity is a socially constructed phenomenon rather than some objective truth, consumers continually seek cues to arrive at authenticity judgments. Therefore, it becomes important that marketers actively look for ways to enhance the authenticity of their products and brands online.

In response, we propose that brand authenticity perceptions can be positively affected by initiating written relational communication with the consumers. Here, we propose that sending notes (Handwritten, Scripted or Printed) to the customers along with their orders can make them feel warm even in an online exchange and act as a cue of a brand's authenticity.

Research Methodology

We conducted one field experiment and four lab experiments to prove that written relational communication initiated by the brand positively affect perceived brand authenticity. We also uncover the underlying process and suggest a moderator to the focal effect. Study 1 (N=53) was conducted as a field experiment in collaboration with a small-scale online retailer dealing in handcrafted products. Study 2, 3, 4 and 5 were

conducted as lab experiments. Study 2 (N=106) utilized a single factor between-subject design (Handwritten note vs. Printed note) to test the effect of written relational communication on brand authenticity and reveal warmth and perceived effort as the process underlying the focal effect. Study 2 & 3 utilized a 2

(mediator level) \times 3 (Handwritten note vs. Scripted note vs. Printed note) between-subject factorial design to boost confidence in the underlying mechanism and bring forward the role of scripted notes as a midway solution to handwritten & printed notes. Study 3 (N=132) tested warmth as a mediator, while Study 4 (N=162) tested perceived effort as a mediator.

Lastly, Study 5 (N=159) utilized a single factor between-subject design (Handwritten note vs. Scripted note vs. Printed note) to replicate the findings of previous studies using a more heterogenous sample & brings forward consumer's regulatory focus (Prevention vs. Promotion) as a moderator to the observed effect of handwritten notes on perceived brand authenticity.

Findings of the Study

Study 1 (the field experiment) provided initial evidence to our focal prediction that written relational communication affects brand authenticity perceptions. One-way ANOVA results show that in Study 2, participants perceived the brand as more authentic when they received a handwritten note versus when they received a printed note. We further established that warmth and perceived effort parallelly mediated the relationship between receiving handwritten or printed notes and perceived brand authenticity. Study 3 boosted confidence in our process by testing warmth as a mediator. In low warmth condition, receiving a note from the brand affected perceived brand authenticity. However, in the high condition, this effect was attenuated. Study 4 showed similar results about perceived effort as a mediator. Study 5 showed that prevention-focused individuals perceived sending a note (handwritten, scripted, or printed) as more effortful than warm. In contrast, for promotion-focussed individuals, the gesture is more warm than effortful.

Key Contributions

The current set of experimental studies demonstrates how brands can favorably impact brand authenticity perceptions by sending handwritten notes to their customers primarily in an online retailing environment that is largely devoid of personal and human touch. Specifically, we test the role of handwritten, printed and scripted notes in affecting brand authenticity perceptions. The present article contributes to the literature in several ways. Firstly, the article contributes to the brand authenticity literature. Marketers continually emphasize that consumers seek authentic brands. In response, the current studies experimentally demonstrate that receiving a note from an

online seller can positively impact brand authenticity perceptions and benefit the online retailer. Further, it might not be possible for retailers working on a large scale to send handwritten notes to every customer; therefore, the article suggests scripted notes as a midpath between handwritten and printed notes.

Sites of sorrow and spectacle: A meta-analytic structural Equation Modelling Approach to visitor behaviour towards dark tourism destinations

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction – Dark tourism, a concept often intertwined with visits to locations associated with tragedy, death, and historical calamities, has been a burgeoning topic in tourism studies, capturing the academic and managerial imagination alike (Stone, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000). The interest in understanding visitor behavior at such destinations reflects an intersection of psychological intrigue, sociocultural dimensions, and ethical considerations (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). Central to this discourse is the notion that dark tourism serves as a medium for individuals to confront mortality, engage with collective memory, and navigate moral ambiguities (Light, 2017). Existing research highlights the complexity of visitor motivations, ranging from voyeuristic curiosity to reflective engagement with history and culture (Biran & Poria, 2012; Kang et al., 2012). Yet, a systematic synthesis of empirical findings remains underexplored, leading to fragmented knowledge about the interplay of emotional, cognitive, and ethical drivers shaping visitor experiences (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Addressing this gap, the present study employs a meta-analytic structural equation modeling (MASEM) approach to consolidate insights from 65 empirical studies, offering a robust theoretical and practical roadmap (Mandelartz & Johnston, 2016).

This work aims to elucidate the role of key constructs such as emotional engagement, perceived authenticity, and moral complexity in shaping visitor satisfaction and post-visit reflections (Seaton, 1996; Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005). Moreover, by considering cultural variations and site typologies, this study extends the understanding of dark tourism's global appeal and ethical challenges (Rittichainuwat, 2008). Such an endeavor not only advances academic frameworks but also provides actionable insights for destination management and ethical curation in the realm of dark tourism (Walter, 2009).

Literature Review – Dark tourism, the phenomenon of visiting sites associated with death and tragedy, has garnered considerable scholarly attention for its unique ability to intertwine macabre fascination with cultural, ethical, and historical inquiry (Stone, 2006; Sharpley & Stone, 2009). As a field, it intersects with tourism management, visitor psychology, and cultural studies, enabling a multi-disciplinary exploration of human behavior and societal values (Lennon & Foley, 2000). Visitor motivations for engaging with dark

tourism sites often stem from curiosity, an intrinsic driver shaping the desire to explore historical and cultural narratives of death and tragedy (Biran et al., 2011; Poria et al., 2006). Emotional engagement, an equally significant motivator, further illuminates the interplay between affective and cognitive responses during such visits (Light, 2017; Stone & Sharpley, 2008). These factors align with theories of visitor satisfaction, where emotional resonance and perceived authenticity converge to shape positive or reflective visitor experiences (Stone, 2012; Cohen, 2011). Moreover, collective memory plays a pivotal role in contextualizing visitor behavior at sites memorializing genocide or natural disasters, signifying the shared sociocultural underpinnings that frame such experiences (Uzzell, 1989; Ashworth, 2004). Ethical concerns, particularly regarding the commodification of tragedy, have been central to debates on the responsible curation of dark tourism sites (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005). Variations in visitor behavior across cultural contexts further underscore the nuanced dynamics of dark tourism. Scholars have noted that cultural sensitivity and historical narratives influence not only visitor expectations but also their subsequent reflections and satisfaction levels (Biran et al., 2014; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017). As a result, dark tourism research has increasingly emphasized the importance of context-specific approaches to destination management and ethical tourism practices (Light, 2017; Stone, 2006).

Keywords: Dark tourism, Meta-Analytic Structural Equation Modelling, visitor behaviour, emotional engagement, ethical concerns, collective memory, destination management.

Overtourism as a Growing Threat to Hill Communities: An Examination of Illustrative Cases from Nainital, India.

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Abstract

In Nainital, Uttarakhand, overtourism is an alarming issue that influences the perceptions of the host community towards tourists and the tourism industry. This research employs the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory and Doxey's Irritation Index theory to assess these perceptions. The study examines the impact of increasing tourism on the perceptions of the local community. The study analyzes six constructs: Congestion and Touristification as stimuli, aligning with Doxey's Apathy stage; Tourismphobia and Annoyance as organisms, corresponding to the Annoyance stage; and Antagonism as the ultimate response. Data was gathered from 400 households in Nainital using a structured questionnaire method. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to validate constructs and evaluate model robustness. The host community's perception seems to align with Doxey's hypothesis, which progresses from apathy to anger as overtourism escalates. The model's Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are 0.89, signifying a favorable fit. These figures are slightly below the target threshold yet remain acceptable. This study highlights the increasing discontent of Nainital's host community, underscoring the necessity for sustainable tourism initiatives that reconcile economic advantages with community welfare. This study enhances the scholarly discourse on overtourism and assists policymakers and stakeholders in mitigating its adverse impacts while fostering a sustainable strategy for the destination.

Keywords: Host Community, Sustainable tourism, Overtourism.

Sentiment Analysis Of E-Commerce Reviews On Flipkart

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Abstract

With the boom in e-commerce, understanding customer reviews has become essential. Before making any purchase, customers often assess product reviews by past users to understand a product precisely. However, interpreting the reviews given by other customers can sometimes be challenging. This paper analyses reviews of electronic items of different brands available on Flipkart, a leading internet retailer. The proposed model aims to provide an optimal solution to enhance user-to-user understanding. The reviews used to train the model are extracted from Flipkart's website using Python modules, including BeautifulSoup, Urllib, and Requests. The extracted data is pre-processed and split into training and testing data, which is used in supervised learning algorithms for classification. The model classifies reviews into three categories based on their sentiment polarity. After completing the feature selection process, different algorithms, including Naive Bayes, Decision Tree, Logistic Regression, Random Forest and Support Vector Machines are employed. The Decision Tree algorithm using CART and TF-IDF representation gave the best results with 93.9% accuracy post-resampling, outperforming other models. It makes reliable classifications that can benefit the customers in understanding opinions of users before making any purchase. Future research could extend this approach to other product categories and platforms for broader applicability.

"Reimagining Marketing Theories in the Era of Social Media: A Framework for Digital Success"

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Abstract

The rapid evolution of digital technologies has redefined marketing, positioning social media as a central tool for consumer engagement, brand visibility, and sales growth. Social media marketing (SMM) utilizes platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and LinkedIn to create content, interact with audiences, and measure campaign effectiveness. This study explores the integration of traditional marketing theories within the realm of SMM, highlighting their relevance, adaptability, and limitations in the dynamic digital landscape.

Traditional frameworks such as the 4Ps of Marketing—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—are reimagined in the social media context. Products extend to include digital assets such as videos and user-generated content, while pricing strategies incorporate data-driven discounts tailored to consumer behavior. "Place" reflects the accessibility of products via digital platforms, and "Promotion" prioritizes influencer partnerships, viral campaigns, and interactive advertisements. This research examines how these foundational concepts are reshaped to meet the demands of the social media ecosystem, identifying both their continued relevance and areas requiring innovation.

The AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) also finds application in social media marketing. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok leverage algorithm-driven content to capture attention, spark interest through targeted messaging, foster desire with storytelling, and encourage action via calls-to-action. For example, visually engaging reels and videos cater to users' shorter attention spans, demonstrating the adaptability of AIDA in the digital age.

Relationship Marketing, which focuses on long-term customer engagement, is strengthened through the interactive nature of social media. Two-way communication fosters authenticity, transparency, and brand loyalty, converting customers into advocates. Case studies highlight successful brand-consumer interactions, such as responding to queries on Twitter or engaging audiences through polls on Instagram.

Additionally, Consumer Behavior theories are applied to analyze vast behavioral data for segmentation and personalization. Campaigns addressing needs from Maslow's hierarchy or utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior demonstrate the power of tailored messaging to drive consumer action.

Emerging phenomena like virality, engagement metrics, and influencer marketing challenge traditional paradigms. Virality's unpredictability and influencer marketing's ethical dilemmas require modern adaptations. This study concludes that while classical theories provide a foundation, their evolution is essential for addressing the complexities of social media marketing.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Marketing Theory, Relationship Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Interactive Advertising.

Letting Go and Bringing in New! Understanding Minimalism Lifestyle from the Lived Experiences of Educators

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this paper is to identify triggers that lead to the adoption of a minimalistic lifestyle among educators. This research extends the marketing minimalism literature by identifying the tasks and activities foregone and adopted by minimalists.

Design/ methodology: An in-depth semi-structured interviewing technique was followed to conduct 23 interviews with the faculty of higher education institutions (HEIs) of India practicing minimalism.

Findings: Conscious consumption, drive to achieve personal life goals, avoidance of guilt, establishing visibility, lifestyle choice, and quest to simplify are six triggers that led to the adoption of minimalism in academia. Thirty elements of value proposed by Bain and Co. (2016) were used to identify the foregone value and adopted value in a minimalist lifestyle.

Originality: Faculty is seen as an influencer in academia. Using the qualitative research lenses, six triggers of facilitating minimalism for value realization by an individual were identified.

Keywords: in-depth interviews, minimalism, qualitative research, Educators

A Qualitative Study on Sustainable Procurement in Super Specialty Hospital in Karnataka

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Abstract

The healthcare sector is increasingly emphasizing sustainability as a critical factor in improving operational efficiency and patient care outcomes. This study examines the green buying process in private hospitals super-specialty hospitals, focusing on how environmentally responsible operations impact the quality of healthcare services. Super-specialty hospitals, known for their advanced technologies and treatment for complex medical conditions, face unique challenges in balancing high operational demands with environmental sustainability. Through mixed research methods including literature review and interviews of managers and decision-makers of super-specialty hospitals in Karnataka and subsequently data analysis, factors like organizational culture, product design, regulatory aspect, and pricing influence the organization's green buying significantly. The research also evaluated the influence of these factors on green buying and subsequently their influence on consumer satisfaction. This study uncovers a critical aspect of green buying in service sectors especially in hospital services. The result found that organizational culture and governmental policy play a crucial role in organizational green buying in super-specialty hospitals. The research has a significant impact on futuristic research and government policy-making.

Keywords-: Greener Healthcare, Sustainable Hospital Practices, Patient Behavior, Green Hospital Attributes, Environmental Concern in Hospitals.

The Impact of Celebrity Endorsements on Millennials and Gen Z's Online Shopping Perception

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Introduction

These days, with the rise of digital marketing and social media's global reach, celebrity endorsements play a significant role in determining how consumers perceive online buying, especially among Millennials and Gen Z. Celebrity endorsements have a significant impact on their choices for making purchases. Celebrity endorsements have historically been used in ads to increase credibility and brand exposure. But in the social media age, the nature of endorsements has changed, becoming more personal and collaborative, which has a big impact on how Gen Z and millennials view companies and their goods online. Because millennials and Gen Z were raised in the digital era, buying has changed dramatically over the past decade and consumers are becoming more and more interested in the accessibility and convenience that online shops offer. Born between 1981 and 1996, millennials Currently between the ages of 26 and 41, they have adjusted to digital platforms after growing up in a time of conventional media, so they are familiar with both modern influencer culture and classic celebrity marketing. For millennials, if a celebrity seems to sincerely support a product is a major factor in how credible the endorsement is. In contrast, Gen Z, who were born between 1997 and 2012 and are currently between the ages of 12 and 27, are real digital natives who have grown up in a world where social media rules. This generation is used to highly curated online environments, rapid trends, and instant information. In contrast to endorsements by influencers or micro-celebrities that exhibit a more approachable, daily persona, they may find that traditional celebrity endorsements are occasionally out of touch. Gen Z values authenticity and favours endorsements that demonstrate real utility and usefulness. value of a product over well-produced advertising. Customers' opinions of businesses and purchasing decisions may be influenced by these celebrities' endorsement power in ways that were previously mostly seen in conventional media. Celebrity endorsements have long been employed as a marketing strategy to raise brand awareness, credibility, and trust. However, things have altered since the advent of social media. The ability for celebrities and influencers to interact directly with their followers has increased the impact and personalization of their recommendations.

Objective

- To examine the impact of celebrity endorsements on Millennials and GenZ online shopping perception

- To examine the factors that make celebrity endorsements effective in their online shopping Perception in Tripura
- To analyse the role of social media platform in facilitating celebrity endorsement in Tripura
- To examine how celebrity collaboration with e-commerce platform are reshaping online shopping perception in Tripura

Research Methodology

a) **Research Design:** This study will employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data, with the collection of data serving as the major primary and secondary focus. The Study is in Preliminary stage.

b) **Sampling Technique and Methods:** Snowball sampling and stratified random sampling will be combined. While snowball sampling will assist in obtaining more responses through initial participants, stratified sampling guarantees diversity in the sample by focusing on particular subgroups (e.g., distinct age groups within millennials and Gen Z, active social media users, etc.). Only Tripura will be the primary location for the study. The inquiry will be based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data will be collected through structured questionnaires and interviewing procedures.

c) **Sample Size:** The survey will be pilot tested with a target sample of around 100 respondents, assuring a mix of participation from the two generations of Gen Z and Millennials.

d) **Statistical Tools Used:** The data and the sample will be analysed through SPSS software

The statistical tools that will be considered:

- **Percentage Analysis:** Percentage analysis can ensure that the findings are understandable to a broad audience and assist illustrate important insights in this study on celebrity endorsements and their influence on the perception of online shopping.
- **Factor Analysis:** Factor analysis can be used to identify underlying factors that contribute to the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, such as perceived authenticity, engagement level, and social media usage.
- **Reliability Test:** A reliability test is necessary to verify your measurement instruments and guarantee the accuracy and consistency of your results. For internal consistency, one of the most popular techniques is Cronbach's Alpha.
- **Chi-Square:** to test for associations between categorical variable such as the type of celebrity and product category.

Expected Outcome

The study is aimed to reveal the fundamental characteristics that make celebrity endorsements effective in altering online buying opinions among millennials and Gen Z. These elements could include the celebrity's relatability to the target audience, emotional connection, authenticity, and credibility. By showing how social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube increase the reach and engagement of celebrity

endorsements, the study should highlight the important role that these platforms play in enabling these endorsements. It is anticipated that results will demonstrate how interactive elements (such as reels, posts, and tales) increase the perceived genuineness of recommendations and promote confidence. The results ought to show that celebrity partnerships with e-commerce sites help to change people's attitudes of online buying. It is expected that the study will demonstrate that these collaborations simplify the buying experience, increase the legitimacy of the goods, and sway customer choices by capitalizing on the celebrity's brand trust. It is anticipated that the study would provide light on the differences in how Gen Z and millennials react to celebrity endorsements. For example, although endorsements may be valued by both groups, Gen Z is expected to prefer endorsements that are in line with societal ideals and ethics, while millennials may be more interested in the lifestyle component.

A Study of Organizational Green Buying In The Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to analyze the factors that influence green buying behavior in the hotel and hospitality industry. The study utilized a qualitative approach, conducting 20 informal interviews with hotel managers and supported by a comprehensive literature review. The findings of this study reveal the various factors that influence hotels' buying behavior, including individuals' characteristics, beliefs, values, attitudes, and environmental concerns. These factors contribute to the development of green perception and trust, as well as a strong preference for sustainable hospitality and lodging. By incorporating different theoretical models of sustainability, the research aims to identify the key drivers necessary for sustainability. Implementing these drivers can help companies attract more customers and gain a strategic competitive edge. This study offers valuable insights into organizational green buying within the context of green hospitality, providing guidance for lodge managers and marketers in meeting the needs of both customers and society.

Keywords:- Sustainable accommodation, green hotel attributes, willingness to pay, environmental concern, Theory of Planned Behavior.

Understanding Sustainability in Consumer orientation through analyzing Green Purchase Behavior

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Abstract

Green Purchase Behaviour (GPB) is a critical aspect of sustainable consumption. This intends to minimize environmental impact. This study examines the interplay between Environmental Attitude (EA), Green Knowledge (GK), and Willingness to Pay (WTP) as key variables that influence GPB. This approach uses the famous Attitude-Behaviour-Context (ABC) model as the theoretical foundation. The ABC model posits that behaviour is primarily determined by attitudes and contextual factors. This also impacts behavioural outcomes. Environmental Attitude (EA) reflects beliefs and values about environmental protection. This has shown different correlations with GPB in previous studies. Some research demonstrates a positive relationship, others find it tenuous. Green Knowledge (GK) refers to individual's awareness of environmental issues. This significantly influences pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours. WTP represents the financial threshold consumers are willing to cross for green products. This is influenced by factors like perceived quality and emotional benefits. This study emphasizes the mediating roles of Environmental Behaviour (EB) and Environmental Concern (EC) in shaping GPB. EB reflects actions taken to protect the environment. Whereas EC indicates the awareness of environmental degradation. The research also acknowledges the discrepancy between consumer's expressed intentions and actual behaviors. This is often termed "green purchasing inconsistency."

Methodology and Novel Contributions

The research leverages the ABC model to analyze the complex interrelationships between these variables in a competitive economic context. By incorporating new dimensions such as the mediating effects of EA and EC, this study extends the understanding of GPB beyond existing frameworks. It emphasizes the dynamic and context-dependent nature of consumer behaviour, recognizing that contextual factors often inhibit the translation of positive attitudes into actions.

Findings and Implications

The paper tries to highlight that environmental attitude (EA) and environmental concern (EC) are important independent variables for Green Purchase Behaviour (GPB), it also indicates that a good number of studies confirmed that these variables have positive influence with GPB. However, the consumer behaviour sometimes doesn't support the same. These variables shape consumer's willingness to make pro-environment centric buying decisions. This in a way also highlights the importance of sustainability in consumer behaviour. The existing literature highlights the significant role of environmental attitude and environmental concern to play in promoting the Green Purchase Behaviour (GPB). This in a way reinstates the need for businesses to design their strategies. In doing that they should focus more emphasis on the environmental values of consumers. So that they can promote eco-friendly green products. The number of

dependent variables described in this paper substantiate the corollary directly that green purchase behaviour is an outcome of a complex ecosystem, by both theoretical and practical considerations. The consumer behaviour pattern as cited by earlier researchers also highlighted the same connotations. These direct variables and its impacts on green purchase behaviour (GPB) is crucial. It goes through multiple measures, and self- directed controls. Whatever inference is drawn it is aligned with the holistic dynamics of the inter relationships. It is not uncommon for researchers to notice the difference of the impacts however to prove that statistically in a well-defined model is a profound task that need to be taken care of. However, each approach whether logical or numerical has its advantages and disadvantages associated with its propositions. The study underscores the importance of gaining a deeper understanding of the factors that influence Green Purchase Behaviour (GPB) in order to develop more effective strategies to promote environmentally friendly consumer behaviour. By identifying and analysing the key drivers behind consumers' eco-friendly purchasing decisions, businesses, policymakers, and marketers can tailor their approaches to encourage sustainable consumption. The constructs need to be defined more substantially including all other parameters that may add holistic dimensions to the existing contour. A lot of emphasis needs to be provided to understand perceived consumer effectiveness, effect of contextual variance on the overall framework. Future researchers may involve these constructs to better understand the attitude of consumers towards green products. The present work demonstrates that environmental attitude (EC), green knowledge (GK), and willingness to pay (WTP) have positive influence to pay for green products. These can act as a catalyst for enhancing the impact on green purchase behaviour (GPB). The researchers may explore more factors which influence environmental concern (EC), green knowledge (GK) and willingness to pay (WTP). This will help understand the consumers and ultimately result in greater impact in green purchase behavior (GPB).

Originality

This paper differentiates itself from earlier work by providing a holistic evaluation of Green Purchase Behavior (GPB). That includes addressing existing gaps in the literature through adding more comprehensive framework. This includes inclusion of new variables that were previously overlooked by earlier studies. The constructs are developed on the backbone of ABC theory. This work highlights the importance of SDG 17, through adoption of Green Purchase Behavior (GPB), sustainable development is possible in the global ecosystem. This enriched construct helps a detail exploration of the nuances around GPB. This innovative approach separates the paper's originality and its contribution to Green Purchase Behaviour. This study helps to direct future research so that more focused approach can be taken to address the gaps. To sum up, this work stands as a pivotal work in advancing the discourse on sustainable consumption. This study highlights its relevance in the growing field of Green Purchase Behaviour studies.

Conclusion

This study offers a nuanced understanding of GPB by integrating new variables and examining their interplay under the ABC model. The research contributes to the growing body of literature by addressing gaps in the exploration of contextual influences on GPB. The findings have significant implications for policymakers, marketers, and environmental advocates aiming to promote sustainable consumption patterns. Future research should explore additional mediating and moderating variables to further refine the understanding of GPB dynamics.

The Role of AI Promotions and FOMO: Online Planned Vs. Impulse Purchases

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Abstract

New technologies empower customers. Artificial intelligence (AI) is the most recent technological development that has fundamentally altered marketing strategies. The present study applies the SOR framework to outline how AI promotions (stimulus) impact FOMO (organism), resulting in both impulsive and planned online purchases. Data from a total of 860 Indian women who shopped online were analyzed through SEM. The role of AI-driven promotions is significant for both impulsive and planned buying behaviour. Results suggest a high positive correlation between AI-based promotions and FOMO ($\beta = 0.913$, $p < 0.001$), which means that both personalized and scarcity marketing approach would evoke FOMO in the consumers effectively. Secondly, there is a significant influence on impulse purchases due to FOMO ($\beta = 0.610$, $p < 0.001$), but an effect on planned purchases is only moderate ($\beta = 0.383$, $p = 0.000$). The present study indicate that AI marketing had a greater impact on the online impulsive purchase by female consumers than their online planned purchases. By balancing value-driven, honest messaging with emotional triggers such as FOMO, the study demonstrates how marketers should find a balance between building customer loyalty and trust.

Keywords: AI Promotions, FOMO, Online Planned Purchase, Online Impulse Purchase, SOR Model.

Estimating Potential Store Sales in Selected Catchment Areas Using the Huff Probability Model: An Empirical Approach

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Abstract

The paper aims to identify potential sites in a city where an ethnic wear brand which is a market leader, having 5 sub-brands of EBO potential, can expand by adding store footprints. These sub-brands are of varying product mixes, price ranges, and target audiences, and hence, need to have different locations proportional to brand value. The paper entails analyzing the macro-environment of a Tier I city for an ethnic wear brand, based on 3 key retail metrics, namely, (i) distance from said store to the primary, secondary, and tertiary catchments, (ii) average monthly sales of each store, and (iii) the square feet of each store. The viability of a new store establishment is assessed through sales forecasting with the help of a retail gravitational model, namely, the Huff Probability Model. The aim is to see the usability of this method when there is a dearth of adequate data and a lack of technical tools. Overall, there were three store locations suggested for two of the sub-brands, one being mid-premium and one premium.

Keywords: Huff Probability Model, Average Monthly Sales, R-squared, Catchment Area.

A Decadal Bibliometric Analysis of Customer Experience Research in Luxury Marketing

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Abstract

The present study provides a comprehensive insight into the scholarly work conducted in the field of Customer Experience (CX) from 2015 to 2024. For this study, a literature mapping of CX was performed using the Web of Science, a premium academic database, ensuring the inclusion of the most credible research. The bibliometric analysis highlights major contributors in the field of CX and elucidates how their contributions have advanced this area of study. Open-source software tools, namely Biblioshiny and VOSviewer, were utilized to analyze the literature on CX, focusing on the most cited articles, countries actively engaged in this research area, prominent journals publishing related studies, and significant author keywords. The country-wise contribution analysis revealed that the United States is the leading contributor to CX research, followed by India, which ranks as the second-largest contributor. This paper presents several interesting findings that may inform and inspire future research endeavours.

Keywords: Customer Experience, Masstige, Luxury Marketing, Bibliometrics, VoS viewer.

Marketing Practices of Micro and Small Food Processing Enterprises in Kamrup Metro District, Assam

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Abstract

In today's globalized world, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) encounter significant challenges across various aspects of marketing, including product planning, positioning, pricing, and distribution. Ineffective marketing strategies have been identified as a key contributor to these difficulties. Successful marketing is critical for achieving profitability, which is essential for business survival. This study focuses on analyzing the marketing practices adopted by micro and small food processing enterprises in the Kamrup Metro district of Assam, India. The reliability of the questionnaire utilized in the study was evaluated using the KR-20 method. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution and percentages, were employed to analyze the data. Micro enterprises primarily rely on geographical segmentation, utilize the shortest distribution channels, adopt intensive distribution strategies, strategically set prices for market survival, and emphasize branding and labeling. These businesses also focus on personalized marketing and fostering strong customer relationships. On the other hand, small enterprises place a greater emphasis on market research, geographical segmentation, and maintaining high-quality standards. They adhere to standard certifications, use longer distribution channels, implement intensive distribution methods, adopt survival pricing, and engage in collaborative strategies. Furthermore, they employ both consumer-focused promotional tools (e.g., discounts, free samples) and trade-oriented sales promotions (e.g., buying allowances). They also incorporate branding, labeling, relationship marketing, and digital marketing into their business strategies.

Keywords: Food processing industries, Marketing practices, MSME.

Study of the shift in Marketing of Life Insurance in India to Omni-channel marketing

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Introduction

'Insurance is sold and never bought', is an old saying in the Life Insurance Industry. It simply means that people are reluctant to face the reality of their mortality and plan for it. Thus, Life Insurance marketing in India was always driven by an intermediary, the life Insurance agent. The intermediary must convince the reluctant customer to buy Life Insurance so that of the dependents will be financially protected. The Life Insurance Agents are omnipresent all over India. They are more prominent in villages of India where they not only sell insurance but provide services and advice to their customers on different issues, financial or non-financial. This is because they have earned the trust of the customer. Things started to change post liberalization of the Life Insurance sector in the year 2000 as banks formed joint ventures to enter insurance and started leveraging their network to sell insurance. The regulatory changes and the rapid changes in technology also lead to the emergence of new channels. Today we have multiple channels of Life Insurance marketing and they have impacted the life insurance business in number of ways. This paper analyses this shift and its impact from a practitioner's perspective.

Objectives

Life Insurance is an important part of modern economy that helps in collecting and channelising savings in a productive manner that helps the nation at the same time providing protection to an individual from the financial risks associated with mortality/morbidity and longevity. The low penetration of Life Insurance is an area of concern in India. Life insurance marketing through multiple channels is necessary to reach out to customers from different section of society which will increase penetration. This paper tries to add a practitioner's insight.

The primary objective of doing this study is:

To analyse the Shift in Marketing of Life Insurance in India from tied channels to Omni-channel marketing and the emerging trends and highlight its impact on some key aspects of life insurance business.

Materials & Methods/ Methodology

Review of relevant literature

Very little literature is available which have covered the Shift in Marketing of Life Insurance in India from tied channels to Omni-channel marketing. A major publication in this area was the Report of the committee constituted by IRDAI on distribution channels in 2007 which has a detailed discussion on the different distribution channels available at that time. IRDAI annual reports give a detailed channel wise business breakup. The Distribution of life insurance products in India are discussed in some details (Gulati et al

2022). Channels wise performance also given (Rajendra Prasad Sharma et al 2009) & (Ankita et al 2023) . The comparison between LIC of India and private players is presented (Roshan Lal Rohilla 2023)

Research Design

The study is primarily based upon the data available in the public domain. Therefore, it was decided to restrict the scope of the study to the four key parameters:

- Channel-wise new business
- Insurance new business growth
- Insurance Penetration
- Changes in the Tied Agency channel

This data is primarily taken from IRDAI annual reports

Data Sources

- The main data sources are
- Secondary data from IRDAI website
- Public disclosures made by life insurers on their websites.

Results and Discussion

Channel wise growth in Life Insurance Business:

In the Pre-Liberalisation era, life insurance was a state monopoly where LIC of India was the main player along with postal life insurance and state life insurers as relatively minor players. Tied Agency was the channel for Individual Insurance marketing. For group Insurance LIC had a separate channel within the corporation which accounted for the bulk of group Insurance business.

Post liberalisation a major change was that many of the large private players like SBI life Insurance, HDFC Life Insurance and ICICI Life Insurance were promoted by large banks with formidable distribution muscle. Their desire to leverage their existing distribution strength has led to a strong emphasis on bancassurance. Corporate agents and direct marketing also emerged as another key channels, especially for the private players in first decade of liberalisation. Online channel emerged later in the second decade post-liberalisation.

If we see the current channel wise business, then tied agency is the most dominant channel. But LIC relies almost exclusively on this channel while for private insurers, the percentage of tied agency business has come down drastically to 22.9 % by 2021-22. But the share of tied agency channel is declining both for LIC as well as Private life insurers, but the decline is far more gradual for LIC. Bank and alternate channels have shown a consistent growth. Specially bank channel is now crucial for private players and also has shown some growth for LIC but its still far behind the tied agency channel.

A very important emerging trend is the rapid rise in the share of direct/direct online channel in total premium in just over a decade. This share is high for Private players at 14.9% and for LIC it has contributed small share of 0.35% to total New Business. Its probably indicative of the future of life insurance distribution.

The technology changes with rapid spread of internet, mobile telephony in India and its cost advantages have driven online marketing channel as the fastest growing channel.

This shift is also driven largely by the rapid growth in Indian economy and the Indian demographic changes. The rising levels of income, education, literacy, expectations and urbanisation has contributed to this shift. Customer is gradually shifting to these new channels. The regulator, IRDAI is encouraging separate channels for low cost microinsurance products. It has proposed Bima Vaahaks which is women-centric

marketing channel for villages. The IRDAI promoted Bima Sugam is an online marketplace that combines insurers and distributors on a single platform. Tied channel has retained its dominant position but future clearly points to the dominance of online marketing channels.

Growth in Insurance business along with shift in omni-channel marketing:

The shift in omni-channel marketing is accompanied by almost secular growth in business barring the stock market crash after 2010, when private life insurers and to some extent LIC were focussing more on the Unit Linked products (ULIP). The regulatory changes in ULIP accompanied this. But after this hiccup the industry resumed its growth driven by multiple channels. The sector has shown phenomenal growth in the business of over 15 times in twenty years. The new channels account for almost 45 % of the business in 2023. This shows the impact of omni-channel shift on the business.

Insurance Penetration:

The impact of the business growth of which the omni-channel shift is one reason is seen the level of Life Insurance penetration as a percentage of GDP. A very important point to keep in mind is that the level of GDP has also grown substantially over last two decades. And thus, life insurance penetration has grown faster than the GDP. It shows the impact of the shift in marketing channels.

Changes in the Tied Agency channel:

If we look at tied channel vis-vis other channels we see that its dominance is decreasing. And along with this decrease the number of tied agents are also decreasing. Another conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the 11,16,177 tied agents of private life insurers, did a new business of 265.49 billion rupees out of total new business of 1159.35 billion rupees. While LIC's 1326432 tied agents did a new business of 1915.71 billion rupees out of total new business of 1189.32 billion rupees. It implies that tied agent of LIC are more productive than that of private life insurers.

Practical Implications

The main impact of the shift to omni-channel marketing is on the new business which has in turn resulted in a rapid increase in life insurance penetration in India. Increased awareness created due to multiple channels may also be a reason for this growth. The importance of tied agency channel has decreased and the number of tied agents is going down. Gradual Changes in consumer preference from "Brick-n-mortar" model to "click-n-portal" model of doing business in India. The emergence of online channel shows that every life insurer must focus on this to ensure sustained growth and profitability. The emerging technologies like Big data, AI (Artificial Intelligence) and Block chain may lead to novel channels for life insurance marketing which could be a major disruptor. It's important for an Insurer to keep pace with these technological changes to prepare for these disruptive changes.

Increased level of literacy as well as financial literacy which is causing a gradual shift in making Insurance as a 'pull product' from a 'push product'. Insurer need to prepare for these changes. Due to the low Insurance cover in India, Regulator is focussed on Insurance penetration. The role of technology in creating novel ways of Insurance distribution is necessary for increasing Insurance penetration to fulfil regulatory objective to spread Insurance to every Indian by the year 2047. Insurers need to focus on the two novel channels Bima Vahak and Bima Sugam to fulfil these objectives of IRDAI.

Effect of Service Recovery Performance on B2B customer rebuy Intention: Mediating role of Personnel Likeability and Customer Contentment”

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Introduction

Every organization is prone to error in their services irrespective of their size and expertise but what makes them unique is how they handle their service failures to retain the existing customer. Service failure constitutes a stressful situation, and customers often undergo stages of reactions and evaluations (Su et al., 2023). Customers tend to encounter service failures when they use a service that fails to perform as expected (Kaur et al., 2022). Service failure may be inevitable but not rectifiable. It can be rectified by performing various service recovery strategies. Service recovery maybe defined as the actions taken by service providers to atone for their service failures (Choi et al., 2014). Performing a good recovery is believed to reduce negative word of mouth and frustration of the customer due to service failure towards the organization. This study also concentrates on the type of service recovery performance, the service personnel perform during or immediately after the event of service failure. This study focuses on how these strategies affect the customers' rebuy intention of the customer by also considering the mediating effect of personnel likeability and customer contentment. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: first, we discuss past literature relating to service recovery performance, customer contentment, personnel likeability, and rebuy intention. Second, we develop the conceptual framework of this study. Third, we present the results, interpretation, and conclusion of the study, and, finally, we discuss the managerial implications and further research recommendations.

Literature Review

Service Recovery Performance

Service recovery includes all the efforts made by a service provider to address service failure, such as an apology, compensation, and redress, which may influence the customers' satisfaction with the service experience. The literature demonstrates that appropriate recovery efforts can tremendously restore customer satisfaction and increase positive word-of-mouth intentions (K. Chen et al., 2023). Customer Contentment. Customer Contentment (a state of happy satisfaction) has always been a priority for all organizations around the world since it is essential to stop customers from switching from the usage of their product or services. Contentment can be defined as a metric of how well a firm's product or service fulfills customers' expectations. The measurement of customers' contentment is used as business performance's standard and excellence. (Grigoroudis & Siskos, 2010). Contentment with online environment factors makes customers significantly more likely to repurchase (Abdul-Muhmin, 2010).

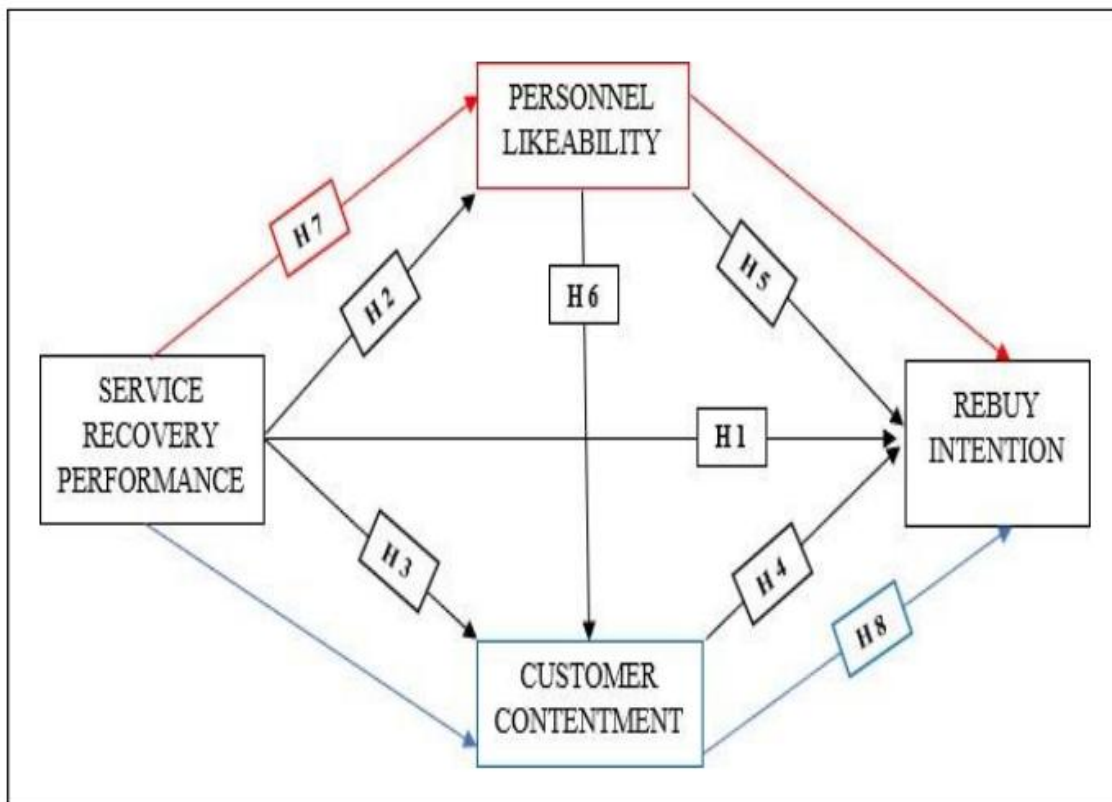
Personnel Likeability

Personnel likability refers to the degree to which service providers are perceived by customers as friendly, nice, polite, and pleasant (Pulles & Hartman, 2017a) Likability is a personal and emotional factor and is considered a strong human motivator for relationship development and maintenance (Vlachos et al., 2010).

Rebuy Intention

Repurchasing refers to the customer behavior of purchasing a product or service more than one time from the same site (Ibzan et al., 2016). When consumers are satisfied with the same service provider, they become loyal to them and do not consider switching to a different service provider (Antwi, 2021).

Research Framework



Methodology

The study adopted cross sectional research design and the data were collected from the participants (B2B customers) through Google Forms. Measurement items were adopted from the following studies: Service recovery performance, customer contentment, personnel likeability, and rebuy intention all have three measurement items each respectively. The measurement items were taken from past studies (Correa et al., 2021; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Harrison-Walker, 2019; Liao, 2007; Ollver, n.d.; Valarie A. Zeithaml et al., 1996; Smith & Karwan, 2010; Taylor & Baker, 1994; Varela-Neira et al., 2010) (Pulles & Hartman, 2017b; Ruiz et al., 2008)

Findings and Discussion

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 while the measurement and the structural model were analyzed using Smart PLS 4. To determine the significance of the hypothesized relationships, we assessed the path coefficients and the indirect effects of the constructs using the bootstrap re-sampling function embedded in the Smart PLS. Our findings confirm a significant positive effect of service recovery performance (SRP) on rebuy intention (RI), customer contentment (CC), and personnel likeability (PL). At the same time, personnel likeability (PL) and customer contentment (CC) had a significant positive effect on rebuy intention (RI). Also, personnel likeability (PL) had a significant positive effect on customer contentment (CC).

From these results, we came to know how essential it is to perform a good service recovery to sustain the B2B customers in the long run, because it affects almost every other which has an impact on rebuy intention significantly. Customer contentment affects rebuy intention is not so surprising since the level of satisfaction a customer attains from a service provider determines the decision in which he/she decides to purchase service again from the same service provider. Here personnel likeability of the service person also affects the rebuy intention and customer contentment because customers feel a level of attractiveness towards service personnel through his/her professionalism, trust, and friendship which helps to maintain the relationship between the service firm and the customers' trust in them.

Our research findings have practical implications for researchers and marketing managers interested in exploring the B2B service firm market. The findings suggest that service recovery performance will increase rebuy intentions among B2B customers, so it is essential to perform service recovery at the time or immediately after the service failure. It is important to maintain customer contentment among the customer since it also has a significant impact on rebuy intention.

Exploring Sustainable Practices in the Fashion Industry and Analysing Consumer Preferences in India

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Abstract

Sustainable practices in fashion refer to methods that minimize environmental harm and promote social responsibility. This study shows sustainable practices within the fashion industry and examines consumers' preferences in India. With growing awareness of environmental and social issues, there is an increasing demand for sustainable fashion options. Through an analysis of current practices and consumer behavior, this research aims to identify the trends in the Indian fashion market. By understanding consumer preferences, the study aims to identify opportunities for promoting sustainability in the industry while meeting the needs of Indian consumers.

This study highlights how more people in India, especially young ones, are becoming interested in making fashion more sustainable. It shows that both men and women like sustainable fashion. People buy clothes differently, but most care about how clothes look and feel. Some are starting to think about how clothes affect the environment. The study suggests we must teach people more about sustainable fashion and make it easier to find and buy. It also recommends using eco-friendly materials and promoting Indian brands that are working to make fashion more sustainable.

Keywords: Sustainable Fashion, Consumer Preferences, Eco-friendly Materials, Indian Fashion Market, Environmental Awareness.

Raising Responsible Consumers: Shaping Ethical and Sustainable Consumer Habits in Children

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Abstract

Children are pre-dominantly recognized as a focal audience for marketing, but they are also vulnerable to aggressive advertising tactics, majorly from fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies promoting unhealthy products. Up to 80% of food and beverage advertisements targeted at children highlight products high in sugar, salt, or fats, contributing to long-term health issues such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. Such occurrences raise condemning regulatory and ethical concerns. Countries like the UK have implemented advertisement restrictions to restrain the promotion of unhealthy products to children, setting a precedent for ethical advertising practices. This study systematically reviews 62 articles to examine strategies for marketing sustainable products to children, shifting the focus toward promoting healthier, eco-friendly consumption patterns. Using the Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology (TCCM) framework, and advanced bibliometric tools like VOSviewer and Biblioshiny, this review synthesizes interdisciplinary insights on consumer socialization, ethical advertising, and the role of families, media, and education in nurturing sustainable behaviors. The findings provide actionable guidance for FMCG companies, policymakers, and educators to transition from exploitative practices to empowering sustainable consumer habits in consumers of younger generations.

Keywords: sustainable marketing, children, TCCM framework, ethical advertising, public health.

Navigating Privacy in MOOCs: Challenges & Strategies for Safe Online Learning

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Abstract

The Covid-19 Pandemic has generated a new wave of novice users of online education across the globe and the statistics of these beginners appears to be only gaining momentum. Various sources from researchers and other industry experts confirm that online education is going to persist along with physical education. One of the concerns in this scenario is the data privacy which still restricts the customers from using online platforms. Newspaper columns till today keep up their headlines on the fines imposed by various regulatory bodies on the major players like Meta. On the other hand, it is not uncommon for users to register on online platforms without completely reading the privacy policies and terms and conditions. Moreover, the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) platforms adapt multiple privacy policies and collect large amount of personal data from the participants. The present research attempts to understand the factors that persuade the users to share their data on these MOOC platforms with the mediating role of privacy concerns. Hence the research explores the impact of trust on the MOOC platform, knowledge about company's privacy policies, previous experience with data breach and tech savviness as the antecedents of learner's willingness to share data on MOOC platforms. The findings would help in formulating policies by the concerned regulatory bodies and also suggest firms regarding designing their privacy policies.

Keywords: Massive Open Online Courses, Tech savviness, knowledge about companies, Policies, willingness to share personal data

Framework for B2B Digital Marketing Implementation Using ISM and FMICMAC

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Abstract

Digital marketing initiatives in the B2B context enable marketing and sales professionals to engage with potential prospects and target customers on digital platforms such as LinkedIn (Cortez, 2023). In addition to being cost-effective, these initiatives also enhance organizational productivity (Pandey, 2019). Until recently, digital marketing was primarily seen as a strategy suited for B2C organizations. However, the success stories of Fortune 500 companies like Cisco and IBM who have successfully adopted digital marketing have shifted this traditional perspective (Venkatesh, 2019). Despite the growing adoption, many business leaders still find it challenging to effectively utilize the right channels, and there is a lack of academic support to guide researchers and decision-makers in this area (Leek, Houghton, & Canning, 2019). The aim of this paper is to develop a comprehensive framework for identifying key Digital Marketing Enablers (DMEs) using the Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) and Fuzzy Matrice d'Impacts Croisés Multiplication Appliquée à un Classement (FMICMAC) methodology. This framework will help decision-makers and marketers prioritize the enablers that require immediate attention. The findings will provide valuable insights for business leaders and marketers to better understand the digital marketing landscape, anticipate potential challenges, and refine their marketing strategies.

Keywords: Digital marketing, Digital marketing enablers, B2B marketing, Interpretive structural modelling (ISM), MICMAC, FMICMAC.

The evolution of Green Branding: A bibliometric and thematic analysis approach

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Purpose - The rising demand for sustainable and organic products among consumers has surged due to the risks associated with climate change. This shift has compelled marketers to prioritize green branding by crafting unique propositions based on environmentally sound attributes. With the rapid adoption of green branding strategies, scholarly interest in the subject has grown significantly. This study aims to explore the evolution of green branding by examining its historical development, current trends, and future potential, as well as the social and conceptual frameworks that can inspire further research.

Design/Methodology/Approach - The study uses data from Scopus and Web of Science to comprehensively analyse the quantitative-bibliometric analysis and qualitative-thematic analysis to provide future insights on green branding.

Findings – The analysis reveals the rising trend in the publication of green branding. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the study, our findings reveal the publication of research papers in journals not directly associated with marketing. The publication trends also exhibit the author's contributions from developed countries such as the US and the UK and developing countries such as China. Most of the contributions to the literature come from universities in China, Australia, and Vietnam. Sustainability, Green Marketing, Green Brand Equity, and Green Brand Image emerged as the top author's keywords.

Research Implications/Limitations- The databases from Scopus and the Web of Sciences are updated regularly, which may result in alterations and modifications of articles.

Practical Implication- Brand Managers and Marketers may use this study's findings to better understand the present green branding trends and plan and make strategies according to consumer requirements and demands.

Originality/Value- This research provides novel insights into the literature on green branding. Due to the rising awareness of concerns related to the environment, corporations need to integrate green branding into their strategic plans, and our study examines the emergence of green branding over the years.

Keywords- Green Brand, Sustainable Brand, Organic Brand, Bibliometric analysis, Thematic analysis.

Consumer Buying Behavior towards Sustainable Packaged Food Products

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Introduction

The rising awareness regarding ecological issues by various organisations had prompted them to implement environment-friendly or sustainability practices in their day to day businesses (Karatepe et.al., 2022). Environmental knowledge is increasing among the people of India (Lavuri et.al., 2022), as a result the awareness related to environmental problems and knowledge regarding sustainability is also increasing in India (Kautish et.al., 2019). Packaging accounts for around 30–35% of the municipal waste in developed nations and about 15–20% in developing nations (Wiesmeth et.al., 2018), in turn this creates environmental pollutions (Wohner et.al., 2019). This brings a change in the consumer buying behaviour towards products/services and many environmental concerns and health conscious customer prefer to purchase sustainable packaged food products.

Most of the previous studies related to consumer behaviour and sustainable packaging done in the developed countries (Steenis et.al., 2017). However, in India, very few studies carried out with respect to consumer buying behaviour towards sustainable packaged foods, so this paper will be able to bridge this gap. The paper going to solve the following research problem

- (i) What factors influence consumer buying behaviour towards sustainable packaged food products?
- (ii) How many clusters they formed? What makes the clusters similar or dissimilar to each other?

The study will add to the consumer buying behaviour literature. This is a unique kind of study done to understand the consumer buying behaviour related to packaged foods and profiling various customer segments. By looking at limited number of literatures in Indian context, this study is the first of its kind to explore dimensions of sustainable packaged food products and create customer segments to understand the consumer buying behaviour towards packaged food products empirically.

Objectives

The purpose of this paper is to determine the factors influencing consumer buying behaviour towards sustainable packaged food products in India. Secondly, to segment the types of consumers who buys sustainable packaged food products and understand the profile of each of the segments.

Methodology

The study used both qualitative and quantitative analysis. By the help of literature review and focus group discussions, we have identified 17 variables. The structured questionnaire was developed by using these variables. Then, the survey-oriented questionnaire was meticulously crafted, and data collection was carried out using convenience sampling method. The data has been collected from 307 respondents with having prior experience/knowledge about sustainable packaged food products. To gather responses, a questionnaire

was administered with 17 variables using Google Forms. We have used likert scale (1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree) for data collection. Data was analysed by using exploratory factor analysis, cluster analysis, and descriptive statistics to meet the objectives of the study.

Results and Discussion

The study found that there are four determinants of consumer buying behaviour towards sustainable packaged food products such as environmental factor, convenience factor, personal factor, and durability factor (as shown in Table 1). The findings of this study partially aligned with study conducted by George, H.J. et.al.,(2023).

Table 1: Factors influencing consumer buying behaviour towards sustainable packaged food products

Name of the Variables/Factors	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1: Personal factor		0.801
V14: Personal value and emotion	.716	
V13: Personal image	.818	
V12: Current trends and fashion	.790	
V7: Protection provided by packaging	.721	
V11: Health consciousness	.645	
Factor 2: Environmental factor		0.704
V10: Positive attitude towards environment friendly packaging	.588	
V6: Environmental impact of packaging	.637	
V4: Recycle packaging	.756	
Factor 3: Convenience factor		0.715
V9: Ease of handling and convenience packaging	.544	
V3: Design of packaging	.890	
V1: Awareness and availability	.577	
Factor 4: Durability factor		0.761
V8: Durability	.731	
V5: Shelf life of the product increases	.553	
V2: Types of materials used in packaging	.589	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Method; **Rotation Method:** Varimax rotation method, **Source:** Primary data.

To find the segment we have applied cluster analysis and the analysis revealed that there were four clusters. The analysis revealed that in each cluster consist of 34.9, 27.4, 20.2 and 17.6 per cent of cases, respectively.

The study concluded that the four clusters were significantly different from each other with respect to all the variables except two variables such as ‘types of materials used’ and ‘positive attitude towards environmental packaging’ (as shown in Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of different clusters with their mean score and significance level

Variables	Cluster-1 (Mean score)	Cluster-2 (Mean score)	Cluster-3 (Mean score)	Cluster-4 (Mean score)	Sig.
V1	3.70	4.26	4.18	4.56	0.014
V2	4.11	3.89	4.39	3.81	0.261
V3	4.29	3.85	3.98	3.54	0.000
V4	3.93	4.31	3.69	3.98	0.000
V5	3.98	3.98	3.95	4.43	0.003
V6	4.13	4.01	4.29	3.67	0.035
V7	4.24	3.79	3.89	4.30	0.016
V8	4.08	3.82	4.06	3.41	0.000
V9	3.96	4.02	4.00	4.09	0.047
V10	4.09	4.19	3.81	3.80	0.896
V11	3.94	3.95	4.29	4.22	0.000
V12	4.11	4.20	3.34	3.63	0.000
V13	3.83	3.76	4.06	4.13	0.007
V14	3.79	3.96	3.92	4.24	0.000

Source: Primary data

The details about all the four clusters are given below:

Cluster 1 comprises of 34.9 per cent of the customers of the total respondents. It implies that, the highest numbers of respondents are there in this cluster. Most of the customers of this segments were young age lies between 20-30 years (65.4%). This cluster represented by the family with 5

members. On this basis of gender, this cluster is dominated by mostly male members. So, we can conclude that, this cluster consists of young male customers those who buys sustainable packaged food products because of its design and protection. Thus, cluster 1 can be labelled as 'safety oriented customers'.

Cluster 2 comprises of 27.4 per cent of the customers of the total respondents. Most of the customers of this segments were in the age group between 41-50 years (86.9%). This cluster represented by the family with 4 members. This can be called as a cluster with small family size. Most of the participants in this clusters were male members. So, we can conclude that, this cluster belongs to the mid-aged male customers, who buys sustainable packaged food products because of its awareness, availability, and recycling packaging. Thus, cluster 2 can be labelled as 'Eco-friendly customers'.

Cluster 3 comprises of 20.2 per cent of the customers of the total respondents. Most of the customers of this segments were in the age group between 31-40 years (72.69%). This cluster represented with small family size having 4 members. Most of the participants in this clusters were male members. So, we can conclude that, this cluster belongs to the young male customers, who buys sustainable packaged food products due to its environmental impact and health consciousness. Thus, cluster 3 can be labelled as 'Health oriented customers'. This findings of the study aligned with the past studies (Tleis, M. et.al., 2017).

Cluster 4 consists of 17.6 per cent of the customers of the total respondents. The majority of customers belong to this segment are in the age group between 20-30 years (96.3%). Hence, we can say that, this cluster is dominated by the young customers. The number of family members is 6. It implies comparison to other clusters, this cluster having highest number of members. This cluster primarily dominated by female customers. So, we can conclude that, this cluster belongs to the young female customers, who buys sustainable packaged food products because of awareness, availability and more shelf life of the products. Thus, cluster 4 can be labelled as 'Product oriented customers'.

Practical implications

Practically, the findings of the research provide insights to the marketers in further understanding their customers' expectations. Secondly, on the basis of the findings the marketers can design their packaging. Thirdly, after implementing the strategy on the basis of the outcomes of the study, the marketers will able to enhance the level of customer satisfaction and trust. To bridge the gap between consumer expectations and available market offerings, marketers can re- formulate their strategies with respect to sustainable packaging. The findings from cluster analysis provides insights related to market segmentation. This involves tailoring their messaging and packaging designs to cater to the specific requirements of each cluster. The research provides insights to marketers to target the right customer segments. The future researches can take the advantages of this research to expand their scope of research as it contributes a lot with respect to sustainable packaging.

Keywords: Sustainability, consumer behaviour, packaged foods, clustering, principal component analysis.

Advertising in Recession: Keep Walking in to Make Your Voice Heard

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Abstract

Advertising is an important part of marketing, it's a type of communication which includes name of the brand, its product/service and how well that product or service could benefit the consumer. Recession is a business cycle contraction, a general economic slowdown over a period of time. Due to this slowdown organization often tend to reduce their advertising budget. This paper attempts to throw a light on how innovative advertising can help the organizations generate recall of their brand and why sometimes it is necessary not to reduce the advertising budget during recession so that the brand comes out to be a stronger one when this economical slowdown is over. This is the real time when major companies can wipe out small competitors which won't be able to survive recession with help of innovative advertising strategy.

Keywords: Advertising, marketing, communication, recession etc.

Livestream Shopping and Platform Affordances: A study of Purchase Intention in Social Commerce

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Abstract:

The world of internet commerce is changing quickly, and new trends are influencing how we purchase and sell. One such innovative development is livestream commerce, which is having a significant impact on markets like India. The primary driver of the rise is the increased usage of social media by Gen Z and millennial consumers, particularly those from Tier II and III cities in India. Due to this, livestream shopping became extremely popular, which in turn caused a rise in live commerce. Advertisers are becoming more interested in livestream e-commerce, but customer viewpoints regarding the impact of platform affordances on purchase are scarce and isolated. Using a theoretical framework based on platform affordance, this study investigates how live streaming platforms affect Indian social commerce users' intents to make purchases. In order to examine platform affordances from the viewpoints of customers and identify the underlying mechanisms that allow these characteristics to facilitate online purchases, this research used a cross-sectional survey. Online purchases are facilitated by five affordances (visibility, trading/payment, guidance shopping, social connecting and metavoicing) of livestreaming e-commerce platforms. In order to gather empirical data for this study, livestream shoppers using Facebook and Instagram for shopping were connected online and offline to collect data. After analyzing 380 customer's data, it was discovered that the visibility, triggered attending, social connecting, and guidance shopping affordances of livestream commerce had a favorable impact on customers' intentions to make purchases.

Keywords: Livestream, Social Commerce, Platform Affordance, Purchase Intention

RoadBez: Strengthening Mobility Services through Innovation

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On 5th September 2024, Dilkhush Kumar, the founder and CEO of Roadbez, was discussing the idea of introducing a new service to their offering with his co-founder Sidharth Jha. The new service, “WeDrive,” aimed to connect the trained drivers to the car or vehicle owners looking for a driver on a full-time or part-time basis. Dilkhush was evaluating the risk associated with this offering as external partners were to be engaged. At the same time, Roadbez was supposed to be the platform partner to bridge the gap between vehicle owners and drivers. After the meeting, he left with many challenges to be answered before the launch of “WeDrive,” such as a revenue-sharing model, loyalty scheme, and other ethical considerations.

Company Background

Dilkhush Kumar, a native of Bangaon, a village in Saharsa district in Bihar, grew up amid difficult economic circumstances. With only a 12th-grade education, he supported himself by working as a rickshaw puller and vegetable vendor. Despite limited options, Kumar was motivated by a desire to enhance rural mobility. Kumar realized that public transportation was either scarce or unreliable, and renting private cabs for even one-way excursions has long been prohibitively expensive. People who need to travel for medical treatment, education, or work frequently struggle to find convenient and cheap transportation options. This major problem prompted him to develop RoadBez, a one-way taxi and carpool platform, in May 2022, an innovative startup that was aimed to connect communities to nearby urban centers via economical taxi services.¹

RoadBez concentrated on one-way charges, significantly cutting the cost of transportation for rural customers. Unlike traditional taxi services, which charge for round journeys even if the return leg is not used, RoadBez started charging consumers to pay just for the distance traveled in one direction.² They launched their service in Bihar, Jharkhand, and the Eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, but they wanted to expand their service to other states of India as well.³

Cab industry in india

Indian cab industry mainly catered to two types of customers: intercity travelers and intracity customers. In fiscal year 2020, the Indian intercity cab business was estimated to be worth approximately 2.3 billion US dollars. This is expected to expand to more than four billion US dollars by the fiscal year 2027 (See Exhibit 1).⁴ Roadbez was mainly catering to the intercity customers.

Key Market Drivers

The Key factors driving the growth of the intercity cab market were the rapidly growing urban population, the Rise of Ride-Hailing Platforms, Government Initiatives, Economic Factors, Technological Advancements, and Environmental Concerns.⁵

Urbanization and Population Growth

The growing urban population created a considerable increase in demand for convenient transportation. This trend was especially noticeable in metropolitan areas where public transportation was frequently inadequate.

Rise of Ride-Hailing Platforms

Platforms such as Uber and Ola have transformed intercity travel by making it more accessible and user-friendly. Their mobile apps enabled rapid bookings and real-time tracking, improving the overall travel experience.

Government initiatives

Supportive policies such as Faster Adoption and Manufacture of (Hybrid and) Electric Vehicles (FAME) aimed at upgrading transportation infrastructure benefited the market. These initiatives included improvements in road networks and laws that promoted ride-sharing businesses.

Economic Factors

As disposable incomes increased, more people chose more comfortable modes of transportation, such as interstate taxis. This transition reflected the changing lifestyles and aspirations of the middle class.

Technological advancements

Innovations in mobile applications and payment mechanisms have dramatically improved consumer convenience. GPS navigation and cashless transactions improved intercity travel efficiency.

Environmental Concerns

The rising emphasis on sustainability resulted in a trend towards environmentally friendly electric automobiles. This movement was fueled by both consumer demand and government subsidies supporting environmentally friendly transportation options.

Evolving Consumer Behaviour

Customers in Indian cabs experienced tremendous changes due to technological improvements and shifting societal standards. The development of ride-hailing platforms such as Uber and Ola has altered transportation choices, with users increasingly favoring convenience. Traditional cab services became less tempting as quick app bookings, real-time tracking, and cashless payments were introduced. Furthermore, rising environmental consciousness has resulted in a desire for eco-friendly options, with many customers preferring electric automobiles as sustainable alternatives. This increase was consistent with government programs targeted at encouraging electric vehicle use. The popularity of ride-sharing services influenced consumer choices even more, as budget-conscious travelers sought cost-effective alternatives while still engaging in social interactions on their excursions. The growing middle class in India, typified by rising disposable incomes, has migrated from public transportation to cabs for daily travel, creating a desire for dependable and pleasant solutions. Customers now expect robust safety measures like real-time tracking and driver authentication in the services they choose. Overall, these shifting choices changed the Indian cab sector, with convenience, sustainability, affordability, and safety remaining significant variables that influenced consumer behavior in the years that followed.⁶

Major players

The Indian taxi market was dominated by a mix of global and local players, with both large multinational corporations and local businesses competing for market share. This moderately consolidated market expanded significantly due to increased urbanization, a growing middle class, and increased smartphone penetration. While global behemoths like Uber established a strong presence, local companies like ANI Technologies Private Limited (Ola Cabs) emerged as dominant forces due to their extensive knowledge of local customer preferences and regulatory environments. Although the market was not fragmented, it did provide opportunities for smaller companies to capture niche segments.

Uber Technologies and ANI Technologies Private Limited (Ola Cabs) were the major players in India's taxi market, with both setting high standards for service quality, technology integration, and customer experience. Other notable companies included Meru Cabs and Carzonrent India Pvt Ltd., which specialized in providing dependable services via both app-based and traditional taxi services. These companies achieved strong brand recognition and customer loyalty by providing consistent service and innovation in their offerings.⁷

Key trends in India's taxi market included a shift toward electric vehicles (EVs), due to increase awareness of carbon literacy among the customers. Incorporating advanced technologies such as AI and IoT for improved fleet management and the expansion of ride sharing and carpooling services helped customers and companies bring more transparency to their offerings. Partnerships with various payment platforms and the introduction of subscription models became increasingly common. To succeed in this market, companies must prioritize customer safety, affordability, and the use of technology to improve operational efficiency. Understanding local regulations and adapting to changing market dynamics were also critical for keeping a competitive advantage

Innovation by roadbez

Key trends in India's taxi market included a shift toward electric vehicles (EVs), due to increase awareness of carbon literacy among the customers. Incorporating advanced technologies such as AI and IoT for improved fleet management and

In addition to One Way Taxi, RodBez launched Taxipool services, which allow passengers to find available taxis traveling on their routes without passengers, lowering fares by up to 60% compared to traditional market prices. Within months of its launch, the app had over 50,000 users and was effectively connecting rural villages to urban centers such as Patna. RodBez made transportation more affordable by optimizing routes and ensuring drivers rarely returned empty, while also creating job opportunities for local drivers. Kumar's vision of connecting every village in Bihar with reliable taxi services transformed local mobility and established a new standard for transportation in the region.¹⁰

RodBez effectively utilized technology, specifically the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), to improve its services. By combining these technologies, RodBez created a robust platform for matching passengers with taxi drivers. The IoT devices collected real-time data on drivers' routes and availability, allowing the system to identify potential passengers traveling in the same direction. This data-driven approach enabled RodBez to provide innovative services such as One Way Taxi and Taxipool, which significantly reduced users' travel costs. This improved operational efficiency and increased customer satisfaction by providing convenient and affordable transportation options.¹¹

RedBez had to decide to address potential challenges in collaboration with external partners to make WeDrive successful. This included creating a revenue-sharing model that benefited all stakeholders, implementing a loyalty program to foster long-term customer relationships, and setting ethical standards for engaging drivers and vehicle owners. Additionally, RoadBez used technological innovations such as AI and IoT to optimize driver-partner matching and improve user experience. Expanding into new states while remaining affordable and dependable was critical to sustaining growth and long-term success.

Discussion Questions

1. How did RoadBez balance affordability and profitability as it expanded into new markets?
2. What ethical concerns were addressed when connecting vehicle owners with drivers via the

"WeDrive" service?

3. How did RoadBez use technology to improve customer satisfaction and operational efficiency with its "WeDrive" service?
4. What were the potential risks of collaborating with external partners, and how did RoadBez address them?

Demographic determinants of menstrual product choices: a study through the lens of engel-kollat-blackwell model

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Objectives

This study aims to examine the health behaviour of women in India concerning their awareness, preference and usage of menstrual products, focusing on three critical demographic domains: age, education and income levels. The research seeks to identify patterns and disparities in menstrual product choices among diverse population segments by investigating these factors. By applying the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell model (Stankevich, 2017), the research aims to reveal patterns and disparities in menstrual product choices, contributing to a broader understanding of how economic growth and sustainability can be aligned with improving public health. This analysis supports the integration of ecological and socio-economic considerations into economic planning for a sustainable future.

Methodology

The research was conducted as a cross-sectional study from 11th May - 30th May through a self-made questionnaire. A total of 201 respondents whose ages ranged from below 18, 18-25, 25-30 and 30-35. The data captures people's awareness across the domain of female health literacy, with a special focus on menstrual hygiene. Individuals were asked questions such as "During your last menstrual cycle?", to know their usage pattern "What type of product did you primarily use for menstrual flow absorption or management?" was asked, to assess their awareness the following was asked "Out of all the above options which ones were you already aware of?", and for mapping their preferences question asked was "Out of all the above options which one do you prefer using?" the product options provided for all the questions included single-use menstrual pads, reusable menstrual pads, tampons, menstrual cups, period panties/underwear and cloth. Awareness and usage-related questions were open to multiple responses. A chi-square test was performed to investigate the relationship between the usage of menstrual products and age groups, education levels and income levels across various product categories. Similarly, a chi-square test was performed to investigate the relationship between the awareness of menstrual products and age groups, education levels and income levels across various product categories.

Results

Awareness, preference and usage of menstrual products vary by education, income and age. Undergraduates demonstrate the highest awareness (90%) and preference for tampons (35%) and menstrual cups (28%). Income impacts preferences: those earning 8-15 lakhs per annum prefer single-use pads (81.66%). At the same time, those earning under 3 lakhs show a growing inclination for menstrual cups (29.41%). Age also impacts usage. Individuals aged 25-30

demonstrated the highest preference (28.57%) and usage (14.28%) for reusable menstrual pads. However, practical usage often lags behind preference due to cost barriers, especially among lower-income groups, where affordability limits the adoption of reusable options.

Conclusions

The paper was an attempt to understand the awareness, preference and usage of menstrual products among women and also shows the use of these statistics by organisations and companies by using the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model (Stankevich, 2017) to enhance their marketing strategies and know the preferences of customers across various demographics to help them know their target market and hence enhance advertisements of the products and achieve greater customer satisfaction. It can be further concluded that demographics like age, income and education levels do affect women's awareness, preference and usage of menstrual products. Individuals having higher education levels displayed greater awareness of the latest products, higher income levels demonstrated higher access to a variety of products and education levels also influenced people's decision-making towards menstrual products. Hence, it can be suggested that these variables impact people's preferences and can be studied to improve female healthcare and provide better, more affordable and sustainable options to women.

Examining the Impact of Celebrity-Brand Fit, Likeability, and Familiarity on Consumer Willingness to Pay a Premium: The Mediating Role of Perceived Quality in Packaged Food Brands

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Introduction

In today's competitive marketplace, packaged food brands increasingly rely on celebrity endorsements to enhance their perceived value and drive consumer behavior. Celebrities influence not only brand visibility but also consumers' perception of product quality, especially when the fit between the celebrity and the brand is strong. Understanding the drivers behind consumer willingness to pay a premium (WTPP) for endorsed brands is critical in the packaged food industry, where product differentiation can be challenging. This research explores the relationship between three key attributes of celebrity endorsers—Celebrity-Brand Fit, Likeability, and Familiarity—and consumer willingness to pay a premium, mediated by perceived quality. Previous studies have suggested that these attributes significantly shape consumer preferences, but few have specifically addressed how they influence WTPP in the context of packaged food brands.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

To examine the impact of Celebrity-Brand Fit, Likeability, and Familiarity on consumer Willingness to Pay Premium (WTPP) for packaged food brands.

To explore the mediating role of Perceived Quality in the relationship between celebrity endorser attributes (Fit, Likeability, Familiarity) and WTPP.

To provide actionable insights for brand managers in the packaged food industry on how to leverage celebrity endorsements to increase perceived brand value and consumer WTPP.

Materials & Methods/Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative approach using a survey-based methodology to collect data from consumers of packaged food brands. A structured questionnaire was developed, incorporating validated scales for measuring Celebrity-Brand Fit, Likeability, Familiarity, Perceived Quality, and WTPP. The data will be gathered from a sample of 500 respondents through an online survey platform, targeting consumers who regularly purchase packaged food products. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be employed to analyse the relationships between the independent variables (Celebrity-Brand Fit, Likeability, Familiarity), the mediating variable (Perceived Quality), and the dependent variable (WTPP). Mediation analysis will follow Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach to test the significance of perceived quality as a mediator.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary results indicate that Celebrity-Brand Fit, Likeability, and Familiarity positively influence consumer WTPP, with Perceived Quality serving as a significant mediator. Celebrity-Brand Fit appears to have the strongest direct impact on perceived quality and WTPP, suggesting that when a celebrity is perceived as highly congruent with a brand, consumers are more likely to perceive the product as high-quality and be willing to pay a price premium. Likeability and Familiarity also contribute positively but are more impactful when perceived quality mediates their relationship with WTPP. These findings align with the existing literature on celebrity endorsement, which emphasizes the importance of congruency and likeability in shaping consumer behaviour.

The discussion will delve into the implications of these findings for the packaged food industry, particularly how brand managers can strategically choose endorsers based on their fit with the brand, while also focusing on enhancing the perceived quality of their products to justify premium pricing.

Practical Implications

The study offers valuable insights for marketing practitioners in the packaged food sector. First, selecting celebrities with a high degree of brand fit can elevate perceived quality and justify higher price points. Second, leveraging the likeability and familiarity of a celebrity can further enhance consumer perceptions, especially when combined with messaging that reinforces the quality of the product. By understanding the nuances of these relationships, brands can optimize their endorsement strategies, ensuring not only increased brand visibility but also greater profitability through premium pricing.

Keywords: Celebrity-Brand Fit, Likeability, Familiarity, Perceived Quality, Willingness to Pay Premium, Packaged Food Brands, Celebrity Endorsements

Breaking the Scale Barrier: AI-Driven Customer Engagement Insights from Organizations Processing 12.1 Trillion Interactions

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Abstract

This research examines the evolution of personalization in enterprise customer engagement through empirical analysis of 11,050 organizations (Twilio, 2024a). Our study bridges theoretical frameworks with implementation challenges, analyzing over 12.1 trillion customer interactions (Twilio, 2024b). Results demonstrate that organizations implementing comprehensive personalization strategies achieve 77% customer retention rates compared to 43% for traditional approaches (Twilio, 2024a). We contribute to both theoretical understanding of large-scale personalization and provide empirically validated frameworks for practitioners.

Keywords: AI-driven personalization, customer engagement at scale, personalization at scale, enterprise transformation, omnichannel engagement, privacy-preserving personalization

The Impact of Brand Familiarity and Social Media Connectedness on Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention: A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

In the digital age social media has emerged as a new interactive technology that transforms the traditional approach for consumer brand interaction. Due to the growing usage of social media in the field of marketing the study aims to develop a conceptual framework for examining the relationship between social media connectedness, brand familiarity, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. The framework of the study is grounded in the brand equity theory and CognitiveAffective- Conative hierarchy of effects theory which combinedly elaborates the cognitive and emotional processes influencing consumer behavior. Our study aims to amalgamate all the available literature and integrate key theoretical perspectives for proposing a comprehensive model of consumer-brand relationship in social media context. The study elaborates the branding theory through interconnectedness of social media platforms and brand familiarity for strategically leveraging brand loyalty and purchase intentions. For marketing experts, the study's findings suggest the importance of creating brand familiarity through interactive social media experiences for fostering emotional connection with consumers. This study provides a novel perspective and offers an integrated model by addressing the research gap that captures the evolving dynamics of consumer-brand relationship in this digital age.

Keywords- Brand Familiarity, Social Media Connectedness, Brand Loyalty, Purchase Intention, Brand-Consumer Relationship, Cognitive-Affective-Conative (CAC) Model, Brand Equity.

Sustainable Consumer Ethnocentrism and Sustainable Purchase Intention: An Empirical Study

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Abstract:

The globalization and economic liberalization offered extensive challenges to domestic marketers. As an outcome, domestic manufacturers of sustainable products face growing competitiveness from overseas merchandise on home grounds. In such a setting, it has become critical for domestic marketers to ascertain sustainable consumer ethnocentrism and its impact on sustainable purchase intention. The study empirically examined the degree of sustainable consumer ethnocentrism tendency (SCE) and its influence on sustainable purchase intention. The study has also explored the mediating effect of the home country image for sustainable products. Primary research using a structured questionnaire was directed and 900 valid responses were collected. The analysis using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was executed to test the model empirically. It is found that SCE is a bidimensional construct and both the components of the SCE i.e. sustainable protective ethnocentrism and sustainable patriotic ethnocentrism have a significant impact on home country image for sustainable products but only sustainable patriotic ethnocentrism has a significant impact on sustainable purchase intention. The home country image for sustainable products is significantly mediating between both the components of SCE and sustainable purchase intention.

Keywords: Sustainable consumer ethnocentrism, Home country image for sustainable products, Sustainable purchase intention, Sustainability

From Clicks to Commitment: Strategic Role of Digital Marketing Communication and Social Media Usage in Shaping Sustainable Purchase Intention

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Abstract

Digital Marketing Communication (DMC) has become essential for businesses to engage consumers in an increasingly competitive and dynamic online marketplace. Based on SOR theory, the present study reoriented DMC strategies to enhance Online Customer Experience (OCE) and promote Sustainable Purchase Intention (SPI), emphasizing the moderating influence of Social Media Usage (SMU). Using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), data from 300 young green apparel customers of North India were analyzed to validate the proposed hypotheses. Results indicated that Digital Marketing Communication significantly improved Online Customer Experience, which in turn positively impacted Sustainable Purchase Intention. Moreover, Social Media Usage notably moderated the DMC-OCE relationship. While previous studies have examined these relationships in a fragmented manner, the present study attempted integration among Digital Marketing Communication (DMC), Online Customer Experience (OCE), Sustainable Purchase Intention (SPI) and moderating influence of Social Media Usage into a cohesive framework. This integrated approach offered novel insights for marketers aiming to promote sustainability through optimized digital marketing strategies.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Communication, Sustainable Purchase Intention, Online Customer Experience, Social Media Usage, Green Apparel.

Instagram Influencers and Purchase Intention Towards Fashion Products Among Youths of Kathmandu

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Introduction:

Users can interact with businesses and customers by sharing material on social media networks. Due to the increasing attention that Social Media Influencers (SMIs) are receiving for their reliable, polished, and captivating material, they have developed into effective marketing tools (Boateng & Okoe, 2015). Compared to celebrity endorsers who mold the mindset of

customers with comparable interests, SMIs are a new kind of endorser (Zhu et al., 2021). On websites like blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, social media influencers (SMIs) provide interesting material that gains popularity as their following grows dramatically. They utilize Instagram for reach and, unlike actors or celebrities, offer relevant stories of their own (Ki et al., 2020).

The business of creating, manufacturing, and marketing fashion items to customers makes up the multibillion dollar global fashion industry. In the present period, the fashion business is a significant part of the community (Andel et al., 2014). Fashion expresses identity, with customers drawing inspiration from friends and SMIs. Social media sites like Facebook and Instagram facilitate customer outreach and boost revenue by disseminating information about their goods and services (Lou et al., 2022). Social networking is now essential for business, trends, and relationships. In the world of fashion, Instagram is the leader. Influencer marketing is growing and emphasizing sincere relationships. Young people use social media extensively and are drawn to real content and social commerce. They use social media and video material as well as other platforms. To reach this key group, brands need to change (Ye et al., 2021).

Research Gap and Research Problem:

The fashion industry in Nepal has grown rapidly, and there are now many successful local boutiques, retail establishments, and businesses. Many entrepreneurs have launched their own fashion brands, such as Mode23, T's Armoire, Brocade, Lakhey Nepal, and Logo Fashion Industry (Tamang, 2022). Instagram in particular is utilized on social media to draw in clients and educate them about goods and services (Adhikari, 2023; Selvarajah, 2018; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Chua & Chang, 2016). Sponsor funded by companies or marketers, sponsored

postings can include both images and videos. Working along with a well-known SMI, IG SMI marketing aims to raise brand recognition, engage audiences, and encourage purchase intention. Leading SMIs cultivate connections with their followers (Syed, et al., 2023)

Working with celebrities or other well-known individuals as brand ambassadors to promote products is known as influencer marketing (SMI) in Nepal. Since the target population views SMIs as sincere and personable, having a large following can have a stronger influence and possibly yield higher returns on investment (Nugroho et al., 2022; Feat International, 2022). According to earlier research, users unfollow brands and influencers on social media when they encounter bothersome behavior (Salma et

al., 2024). There is little scholarly study on influencer marketing on Instagram (Gross & Wangenheim, 2022).

Objectives of the study:

The specific objective of the study are:

1. To examine the impact of trustworthiness, information content, expertise, similarity, familiarity, likability of IG influencers on youth purchase intention toward fashion products.

Research methodology:

The research philosophy used is positivist with explanatory research design in a cross sectional time frame where structured questionnaire survey has been used to answer the research questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Nepali Instagram users who are above 16 years to 40 years of age are considered as population in our study (Nepali Youth in Figures, 2011). The sample size was determined using Cohen's (as referenced in Green, 1991) indicated 25 to 1 subject-to-predictor ratio. There are seven factors in this research. Therefore, in order to conduct this study, a minimum of 175 respondents were required. We used purposive judgmental sampling to collect

199 respondents out of 200 questionnaire distributed physically (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The response rate of 99.5% helps to minimize the social desirable bias. The self-administered questionnaire survey has done on physical setup. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: (a) demographics (gender, age, and education) and (b) independent variables assessed through multiple 5-point Likert scales measuring Trustworthiness (3 items), Similarity (5 items), Information Content (5 items), Expertise (5 items), Likability (4 items), Familiarity (5 items), and dependent variable, purchase intention (5 items) totaling to 31 items. The above items were adopted from the paper of Tamara et al. (2021) and Sigdel (2021). The value for the Cronbach's alpha for all constructs shows i.e. $\alpha > 0.7$ which indicates there is acceptable internal consistency. And thus the scales used for each construct are reliable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Additionally, the scale employed in this study was previously developed and validated in earlier research, and we adapted it by contextualizing the items based on expert recommendations to enhance its validity.

Data analysis and results:

With the use of descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression analysis, the current study seeks to address our research question and test for hypothesis. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The analysis will be used with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software version 25.

Descriptive statistics analysis identified the current status of various constructs. Table 2 presents the demographics of respondents, revealing a predominance of male participants (56.8%), with the majority aged 23-30 years (64.8%) and holding a Bachelor's degree (68.3%). This suggests that male Bachelor's degree holders aged 23-30 are the primary Instagram users in our sample, representing the population outlined in the sampling section. The skewness and

kurtosis values for all constructs fall between -1 and +1, indicating a normal distribution of the respondents' data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The Pearson correlation coefficient reveals a moderately positive and significant linear relationship of trustworthiness, information content, expertise, similarity, familiarity, likability, with purchase intention i.e. $0.4 < r < 0.7$, $p < 0.05$ (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The multiple regression model reveals that Information content, Familiarity, Similarity, Likability, Trustworthiness, and Expertise explain 59.10% variance in the Purchase Intention (PI). These predictors are more accurate due to error adjustment and explanatory than R^2 . Familiarity, Similarity, and Trustworthiness are the most significant predictors, with p-values less than 0.05. Information content has a greater impact on PI, with a unit increase in it increasing purchase intention by 0.514 units.

Expertise and Likability are not statistically significant in explaining PI. Moreover, the model's prediction variables explain the PI with less chance of dilution and error due to no multi-collinearity, as indicated by VIF <5 (Sun et al., 2023; Sekaran, Bougie, 2010).

Implications of the Study:

This study investigates how consumers' intentions to purchase apparel are influenced by the traits of Instagram influencers. It implies that in order to effectively sell items, marketers need take into account likeability, familiarity, competence, resemblance, and trustworthiness. The study also discloses the motivations behind consumer following of influencers. This study emphasizes how important social proof and social influence are in influencing Instagram users' judgments about what to buy when it comes to fashion. The impact of influencers varies according on material kind, competence, and likeability. Consumer views and decision-making are influenced by social proof, which is consistent with social identity theory knowledge.

Consumer behavior on social media platforms requires a knowledge of social influence and social proof, as Instagram influencers are a member of a social group that shapes fashion consumption behavior. The company thinking about social media marketing as a tools for targeting and positioning thee youth population via Instagram must focus on information content more powerfully to cash the large volume of youth in Nepali market of fashion products.

Integrating Social, Utilitarian, and Ease-of-Use Values: A Study on Omni-Channel Consumer Experience

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Abstract:

This study investigates the complex relationship between omni-channel shopping value and consumer experience, with a primary focus on how seamless integration across both online and offline channels affects customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall shopping enjoyment. In today's retail landscape, consumers increasingly expect a cohesive experience that allows for smooth transitions across digital and physical touchpoints, from online research and browsing to in-store purchases and returns. Addressing this shift, the study explores three fundamental dimensions of omni-channel shopping value—social and hedonic value, utilitarian value, and ease-of-use—and how these dimensions collectively enhance the consumer experience within an integrated retail ecosystem.

Social and hedonic value captures the enjoyment, social interaction, and personal satisfaction consumers derive from the shopping experience, often influenced by engaging, immersive elements across platforms. Utilitarian value focuses on the functional aspects of shopping, such as convenience, product availability, and the efficiency of purchasing and fulfillment processes. Ease-of-use value, meanwhile, reflects the consumer's perception of simplicity, accessibility, and intuitive navigation throughout the omni-channel journey, enabling smooth transitions between online and offline interactions. Together, these dimensions play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior, preferences, and attitudes toward brands that adopt omni-channel strategies.

To investigate these dimensions, the study utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as a rigorous method for analyzing relationships between the constructs of omni-channel shopping value and consumer experience. SEM is well-suited to this type of analysis, allowing for the examination of complex, multivariate relationships and providing insights into how various factors contribute to a unified model of consumer experience.

The model fit was assessed through key indices including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). These indices serve as indicators of the model's goodness of fit, with values indicating that the hypothesized model closely aligns with the observed data.

For CFI and TLI, values above 0.90 are generally indicative of an acceptable fit, with values over 0.95 considered excellent, suggesting that the model explains a significant portion of the variance in consumer experience. The RMSEA provides a measure of error in the model, with values below 0.05 reflecting close fit and values up to 0.08 indicating reasonable approximation to the data. Finally, the SRMR offers insight into the residual variance between observed and model-predicted correlations, with values below 0.08 considered acceptable. Together, these indices confirmed the robustness of the model, validating its capability to capture the nuances of omni-channel shopping value and consumer experience.

Modification indices were applied to identify potential areas for model improvement, offering insights into specific parameters that could be adjusted to better align the model with the data without

compromising theoretical coherence. Modification indices indicate points of misfit within the model by suggesting the addition of paths or correlations that could reduce the overall chi-square value, leading to a more precise representation of the underlying data. However, these adjustments were only made when supported by theoretical rationale, as the addition of paths or relationships solely based on statistical feedback can lead to overfitting and reduce the model's generalizability. This careful approach ensured that any modifications enhanced both the statistical rigor and theoretical integrity of the model.

Results from the analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between omni-channel shopping value and consumer experience. Specifically, each dimension of shopping value—social and hedonic, utilitarian, and ease-of-use—was found to contribute uniquely to the consumer's perception of an enjoyable, functional, and user-friendly shopping experience. Social and hedonic value significantly influenced consumer engagement by enhancing the enjoyable aspects of shopping and creating opportunities for social interaction and personal expression, factors that are increasingly valued by today's consumers in both online and offline settings. Utilitarian value, with its focus on practical and functional benefits, was crucial in meeting customer expectations for convenience, reliability, and efficiency, elements that play a substantial role in fostering satisfaction, especially in a highly competitive retail environment. Ease-of-use value further contributed to positive experiences by simplifying the process of transitioning between online and offline channels, thereby reducing friction in the shopping journey and enhancing overall accessibility.

These findings underscore the importance of omni-channel strategies that prioritize seamless integration, user-friendly design, and the inclusion of enjoyable, engaging elements across touchpoints. The study's insights offer practical implications for retailers seeking to cultivate strong customer relationships by delivering a consistent and cohesive experience. As omni-channel shopping becomes more prevalent, brands that excel in integrating these dimensions of shopping value are better positioned to foster loyalty and repeat purchases, ultimately driving long-term growth and customer retention. By aligning physical stores with digital channels and providing options such as online ordering with in-store pickup, retailers can enhance the customer experience by combining the convenience of online shopping with the tactile, immersive benefits of physical retail.

The study also highlights the strategic importance of leveraging omni-channel data to tailor customer interactions and personalize recommendations across channels. A high level of omni-channel coherence enables retailers to offer features like customized product suggestions, real-time inventory updates, and consistent messaging, all of which contribute to a positive shopping experience. For retailers, this means not only investing in technology that supports seamless transitions across platforms but also emphasizing staff training, brand messaging, and marketing strategies that reinforce the omni-channel approach.

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence that omni-channel shopping value significantly influences consumer experience by addressing diverse customer needs and expectations across various dimensions. By meeting these needs through a well-integrated retail strategy, brands can cultivate a shopping environment that encourages customer satisfaction, enhances engagement, and builds brand loyalty. The findings encourage retailers to adopt omni-channel strategies that focus on delivering cohesive and personalized experiences, ensuring that all channels work in concert to provide a unified brand presence. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on omni-channel retailing by demonstrating the critical role that well-aligned, customer-centric strategies play in shaping positive consumer outcomes in an increasingly digitalized marketplace.

Keywords: Omni-Channel Retailing, Consumer Experience, Shopping Value, Social and Hedonic Value, Utilitarian Value

Whispers to Wisdom: Leveraging AI to Turn Customer Chatter into Customer-Centric Products

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Abstract

Even in the modern, rapidly changing technological world, product design processes don't always adapt to the constantly changing customer demands, resulting in incomplete features, high churn and a nebulous market. In this paper, I present the CustomerEcho AI Model, a new customer-centric, AI-based framework that is designed to bridge this gap. Through the hypothetical case study of "EmailPro," we demonstrate how this six-stage model systematically integrates customer feedback throughout the product development lifecycle, leveraging AI techniques like natural language processing and sentiment analysis. Our findings suggest that the CustomerEcho AI Model can significantly improve customer satisfaction, reduce churn, and enhance market share. While acknowledging challenges such as data privacy and algorithmic bias, this research provides a practical roadmap for building customer-centric products and offers a valuable framework for future empirical validation and exploration of ethical considerations in AI-driven product development.

Keywords: Customer-centric, AI-driven product development, CustomerEcho AI Model, customer feedback, natural language processing, sentiment analysis, agile development, data privacy, algorithmic bias, ethical AI.

H2H Marketing as a trust-building tool

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Abstract

Purpose- This paper aims to examine the relationship between H2H and Heart to Heart marketing and consumer trust as well as to establish whether consumer trust can be built through H2H and loyalty through Heart to Heart marketing.

Research methodology – To do this paper, the brands that were selected that have been involved in a trust breach and screened on certain criteria and to build the questionnaire we used developed questions, for brand loyalty xu,y.(2014) and for trust Shimul,a.s.and phau,I,(2023)

Findings—This study established that H2H marketing is positively related to building consumer trust. The research results indicated a positive relationship between Heart-to-Heart marketing and consumer loyalty. The study showcased various case studies on brands like Nike, Amazon, KFC, and others that have used these strategies to positively influence consumers.

Practical implications: This study demonstrates how Companies may strategically use H2H and heart-to-heart marketing to enhance consumer trust and stabilize their market share in the long-term.

Originality/value A few efforts have been made to investigate H2H marketing policies worldwide. However, this is the first study that has examined the direct influence of H2H and heart-to-heart marketing strategies as a variable for building trust in consumers and establishing long-term consumer loyalty.

Keywords: Human to human, brand love, trust, advocacy, heart-to-heart, loyalty, social media marketing, trust breach.

A Study on the Role of Social Media in Promoting Ziro Festival of Music in the State of Arunachal Pradesh: A Case Study

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Abstract:

The festivals of music are a global phenomenon that is gaining considerable importance through the event tourism industry. There are different types of festivals of music worldwide and their number is rapidly growing. Under such circumstances, the key to success lies in the appropriate marketing strategy. Nowadays, the growing popularity of the Internet has changed the way people communicate, purchase, and make decisions. All this has triggered the reinvention of the traditional marketing strategies. As the world becomes more and more connected, keeping pace with the developments and trends is essential for marketers trying to reach new audiences, who are much more demanding, perceptive and fragmented. The most crucial information in the marketing sector is given to marketers by social media marketing, the potential to fully understand the needs of consumers. Being active on the most popular social media platforms allows marketers to easily get client feedback, including how satisfied or dissatisfied customers are, as well as the circumstances that led to those opinions. This allows them to assess customer demands. The purpose of this research is to highlight the importance of social media marketing in promoting the Ziro Festival of Music in Arunachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Arunachal Pradesh, Marketing, Music Festival, Social Media Marketing Tourism and Ziro.

Emotion-Driven Guest Journey Mapping and Predictive Satisfaction Modeling in Hospitality: Leveraging LLMs for Personalized Experience and Enhanced Service Quality

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Introduction

Guest Satisfaction as a Competitive Advantage: In the highly competitive hotel industry, guest satisfaction is critical to retaining customers, motivating positive word-of-mouth, and being a yardstick for continued brand reputation.

Importance of Guest Journey Mapping: The guest's journey typically consists of stages, each touching their experience in different ways. Most traditional methods of feedback, like surveys, cannot capture this kind of granular, stage-by-stage input that can indicate areas where their experience lacks.

Unpacking Review Data: Hotel review data across online platforms, from TripAdvisor to Google Reviews, is a complete and raw feedback base coming right from the horse's mouth. Using language models today provides even more detail on the nuances of the guest journey.

Objective: The present study attempts to utilize LLMs in mapping the guest journey across distinct stages-check-in, room experience, and amenities-predicting satisfaction at each of these stages. This will enable hotels to focus on specific improvements that are likely to ensure overall satisfaction. Secondly, an Enhanced Room Features Recommendation System will be developed through the study that uses emotion-driven analysis to recommend room features, further enhancing personalization in the guest experience.

Research Objectives

Journey mapping: identify key stages of the guest journey from review data and plot satisfaction along each of these stages.

Sentiment and satisfaction analysis: Leverage LLMs in the analysis of guest sentiment and the identification of satisfaction markers at each stage.

Satisfaction Prediction: Create a model to predict the overall satisfaction of guests based on journey-specific feedback.

Emotion-Driven Room Feature Recommendations: Design a system to provide personalized recommendations for room features, such as view, soundproofing, and amenities, focusing on insights gained from emotion-driven guest reviews.

Methodology

Guest Journey Mapping and Satisfaction Prediction

Data Preprocessing and Collection

Data Source: Scrape a comprehensive dataset of hotel reviews from various platforms to represent all kinds of guest experiences.

Labeling Stages: The segmentation of reviews into stages, like from check-in to room comfort and further into the dining experience, can be done using various NLP techniques: keyword matching, regular expressions. This type of categorization will help in identifying the journey-based insights.

Model Selection: Selecting the correct LLM, which can be any of the latest models such as XLM-RoBERTa or GPT-4, will help with multilingual and fine-grained sentiment analysis.

Sentiment and Satisfaction-stage-based analysis

Sentiment Analysis: The LLM to be used shall be trained on divided review data for sentiment detection at each journey stage-labeled as positive, neutral, or negative. Identify changes in sentiments across different stages.

Satisfaction Marker Extraction: Key satisfaction markers-like "friendly staff," "clean rooms," and "efficient check-in"-are identified at every stage by analyzing adjectives, phrases, and tone.

Custom ABSA: Perform aspect-based sentiment analysis focusing on specific aspects like cleanliness, service quality, amenities, etc., which will give insights much deeper at every journey stage.

Development of Predictive Model

Features Engineering: Satisfaction markers, sentiment score, and stage-specific insight should serve as features to the predictive model. Other features may include the following: polarity of sentiment, review length, and frequency of High/Low satisfaction markers.

Model Selection: The appropriate implemented supervised learning model can be Gradient Boosting or Recurrent Neural Network-RNN, trained on extracted features to predict Overall Satisfaction.

Training and Validation: Segmentation of data into training and testing sets; model validation in terms of accuracy of predicting overall guest satisfaction based on journey-stage feedback.

Feedback Loop and Dynamic Adaptation

Continuous Model Improvement: The model can incorporate new reviews over time to accommodate changing expectations from guests and trends in sentiment.

Time Trend Analysis: This analysis will track changes in satisfaction markers and sentiment trends over time, particularly around the time operational improvements are applied to assess the effectiveness of those improvements.

Emotion-Driven-Analysed-Based Advanced Room Features Recommendation System

Emotion-Driven Analysis for Enhanced Room Feature Recommendation System

Emotion Detection and Analysis

Emotion Classification: Classify, using fine-tuned LLMs like GPT-4 or RoBERTa, the reviews for their emotions, such as excitement, disappointment, comfort, frustration, and more. Emotion analysis here will be focused on reviews with mentions of room-specific features.

Map Emotions to Room Features: Consider the normal emotions one would have with regard to room features like privacy, view, noise levels, cleanliness, and decoration. For example, if reviews with high satisfaction mention "quiet rooms," the recommendation system will prioritize soundproofing for certain guests.

Extraction of Room Features and Preference Modeling

Feature Extraction: An LLM identifies the principal attributes of rooms mentioned in reviews with associated emotional states expressed, such as "room was spacious," "ocean view," "comfortable bed." This will help in mapping specific room features to the emotional needs of the guests.

Preference Modeling: The model, which can be built to associate some feelings with features of the room, provides substantial insight into which features would add most to guests' comfort and satisfaction. Personalized Room Recommendation System

Recommendation Algorithm: The recommendation algorithm can be emotive, which helps in matching room features with the guest preferences. Example: In case reviews show that guests who come to relax want a quiet room, then identical guests would be recommended to the soundproofed rooms by the system. Integrated User Profiles: Integrate guest profile data to make recommendations better, offering room features that align with their preferences and needs considering travel purpose and emotional expectations.

Key Contributions

Detailed, Stage-Specific Insights: The study provides a deep, stage-based insight into the journey of a guest to a hotel, identifying the satisfaction drivers for each one of these stages. It contrasts with the general satisfaction scores in that it is more focused on the details.

Emotion-driven room recommendation: This enhanced recommendation system uses emotion analysis to personalize room features according to the likings of the guests and thus leads them to a more pleasing stay.

Predictive Power: A sentiment-based predictive model stage will enable the hotels to forecast the satisfaction outcome of a priority area that has the most significant impact on the overall experience.

Proactive and Dynamic Feedback: The real strength of a feedback loop, or so it were, indeed lies in being dynamic: this ability allows hotels to adapt to the changing expectations of guests, thus making satisfaction prediction timely and relevant.

The use of LLMs to extract information from large datasets in multiple languages is scalable, hence applicable to various contexts: from single property to large chains with extreme diversity in their guest demographics.

Significance and Implications

Improved Guest Experience Management: The knowledge of how each of the stages along the journey affects overall satisfaction; for instance, if the aspect-based sentiment analysis shows dissatisfaction with check-in processes, it leads hotels to streamline the operations process of check-in or integrate digital means for better guest experiences.

Targeted Resource Allocation: The interpretations of the predictive model assist the hotel administration in effectively allocating resources, with more emphasis on high-impacting areas. This can even reduce costs for the operational areas while successfully increasing guest satisfaction.

Emotionally Sensitive Room Assignment: The recommendations of room features allow the hotels to grant emotionally comforting rooms to their customers and make them feel understood, thus amplifying satisfaction related to room experience.

Personalization of Experience through Segmentation of Guests: Since hotels can measure sentiment and satisfaction at the demographic level, for instance, business travelers compared to family vacationers, they can tailor strategies to particular types of guests and provide services that truly meet the needs of each segment.

Application to Online Reputation Management: Satisfaction forecasts let the hotel proactively predict any problems that may arise and have them resolved before they manifest to become bigger complaints. Anticipating reactions keeps your brand image positive, hence maintaining a good online reputation.

A Data-Driven Study of Customer Satisfaction in Indian Restaurants Through Online Reviews

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Introduction

The global food service market is undergoing significant expansion, with projections indicating an increase from \$2,646.99 billion in 2023 to \$5,423.59 billion by the year 2030, thereby reflecting an annual growth rate of 10.79%, as cited in Fortune Business Insights (2023). This upward trend is evident within the Indian food service sector, which is anticipated to experience a growth rate of 9-10% during the period from 2018 to 2023 (NRAI, 2019). The Indian food market is predicted to increase at an 11.19% compound annual growth rate from 2022 to 2028, increasing its value from \$41.1 billion to \$79.65 billion (Press Trust of India, 2022). The swift advancement of the Indian food market surpasses the global average, fuelled by an expanding consumer base, rapid urbanization, and escalating disposable incomes, thereby distinguishing itself from the more established markets of developed nations (Brar et al., 2014). Online reviews constitute a form of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) facilitated by Web 2.0 technologies that have emerged over the past two decades (Gan et al., 2017). Additionally, there was a significant shift in the service industry brought about by the internet, which revolutionized the restaurant business by enable ordering on fingertips instead of dining. WOM was initially impacted by this shift, and later e-WOM became popular. Online reviews have become key sources for hospitality, tourism, and business research since they provide insights into customers' spontaneous and insightful feedback (Guo et al., 2017), reflecting either happiness or dissatisfaction with their experiences (Banerjee and Chua, 2016). Yelp, TripAdvisor, Google Maps, and Dianping all offer free online reviews (Mathayomchan & Taecharunroj, 2020), these platforms allow users to engage and publish reviews, which help reviewers express their emotions, provide information, describe experiences, and make recommendations (Racherla et al., 2013; Ye et al., 2014).

Customer experience influences a wide range of cognitive and behavioral reactions (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory, introduced by Lewin (1938), is the most recognized theory for explaining customer satisfaction. It states that customers evaluate their satisfaction levels by comparing actual experiences or performance to their expectations. This customer satisfaction technique depends on the cognitive process of expectation confirmation (Oliver, 1980; Oliver, 1989). The theory recommends three scenarios for customer evaluations: (1) confirmation, which occurs when actual performance matches expectations; (2) positive disconfirmation, which occurs when actual performance exceeds expectations, resulting in satisfaction; and (3) negative disconfirmation, which occurs when actual performance is worse than expected, resulting in dissatisfaction (Ha and Jang, 2010). Positive experiences, for example, can result in satisfaction and loyalty (Hyun, 2010; Ryu and Han, 2011), a better attitude and brand preference (Hwang and Ok, 2013), intention to purchase (Ashton et al., 2010), and intention to return (Gupta et al., 2007). Alternatively, an inadequate encounter will result in customer dissatisfaction and negative emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses (Abdelhamied, 2011). However, improving the restaurant experience is a challenging task because it is complicated and multidimensional, incorporating elements other than food (Ponnam and Balaji, 2014; Walter et al., 2010). Despite the complex nature of restaurant features, researchers have broadly defined four major restaurant attributes: cuisine, service, atmosphere, and value (Yrjölä et al., 2019).

The studies mentioned above investigated multiple factors that influence customer experience by conducting mixed method research and traditional techniques, but as per our knowledge none of the study has explored the sentiments associated with all aspects in the restaurant context. This study will focus on online reviews of restaurants to better understand the underlying patterns. Further, these themes will be used to determine the most important factors that emphasize a positive or negative element of the business. These key factors will be used by restaurant managers to investigate the crucial reasons behind the surge or drop in customer traffic and to develop strategies based on consumer input.

Objectives

While extensive research exists on customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry, a notable gap exists in understanding the nuanced factors that influence customer perception and satisfaction across different dining establishments. Existing literature primarily focuses on general aspects of service quality, food quality, and ambiance (Yrjölä et al., 2019; Ryu et al., 2012; Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Andersson & Mossberg, 2004; Heung and Gu, 2012; Harrington et al., 2012), but lacks in-depth analysis of specific factors that contribute to customer satisfaction. Previous studies have examined the relationship between customer ratings and overall satisfaction (Lee et al., 2015; Schlosser, 2005; Wang et al., 2018; Adomavicius et al., 2013; Ma et al., 2013; Hu and Li, 2011; Moe and Trusov, 2011), but there is limited research on the content analysis of online review provided by customers. Understanding the qualitative aspects of customer reviews is crucial for gaining deeper insights into their preferences and perceptions.

Given the insights gained from the literature review and the identified gap in existing literature, we formulate two primary research objectives:

1. Identifying key factors influencing customer satisfaction at Indian restaurants.
2. Determining restaurant-related parameters impacting customer satisfaction during food delivery services provided by these restaurants.

Methodology

In order to understand the overall sentiment expressed in reviews, we can use or apply sentiment analysis techniques. These techniques can categorize each review as positive, negative, or neutral. To go beyond basic sentiment and dive into the emotional nuances, we can use sentiment dictionaries specifically designed to identify emotions like joy, love, trust, anger, sadness, and surprise (Li et al., 2022). Additionally, exploring machine learning approaches for sentiment analysis can offer even deeper insights and potentially improve the accuracy of our analysis. Topic modelling is a machine learning technique that has gained significant attention in recent years for its ability to automatically uncover latent structures within large text datasets (Park et al., 2018). It involves the use of algorithms like Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) to identify key themes or topics present in a corpus of text. These topics are extracted based on the occurrence of relevant keywords, enabling the recognition of knowledge structures and patterns within research articles (Lee et al., 2022).

In this study we will be collecting online reviews of the restaurants in India from different locations in the country (include all five zones) which includes metros as well as other Tier-I and Tier-II cities. The online food delivery aggregator platforms ensure a diverse range of reviews covering various restaurants and cuisines across the country. We have used python for scrapping the reviews in JSON format and then pre-processing will happen for applying text analytics.

Proposed Results

With the help of sentiment analysis, we can gain valuable insights into the restaurant industry in India. This process involves identifying key parameters that significantly influence overall customer evaluations based on the sentiment expressed in their reviews (Khan et al., 2022). By focusing on aspects that consistently generate positive sentiment, we can gain a deeper understanding of customer preferences and satisfaction levels. This analysis can further reveal areas for improvement and inform targeted recommendations for restaurants seeking to enhance their customer experience. Ultimately, these findings can be compiled into a comprehensive report that details the key parameters impacting sentiment in restaurant reviews, providing valuable insights for businesses in the Indian market.

Practical Implications

This study will focus on online reviews of restaurants to better understand the underlying patterns. Further, these themes will be used to determine the most important factors that emphasize a positive or negative element of the business. These key factors will be used by restaurant managers to investigate the crucial reasons behind the surge or drop in customer traffic and to develop strategies based on consumer input. If we see the other side from customer point of view, it will be very helpful to take purchase decision for having dinner from particular restaurant or not. This study will be providing the key areas which are lacking in terms of service or other aspects mentioned by customer, which acts as feedback mechanism.

Keywords: Online reviews, User-Generated-Content (UGC), Customer Satisfaction, Sentiment Analysis, Text analytics

The battle for attention: Exploring the influence of Brand, Influencer, or User-Generated Content on Instagram's customers' engagement and intent to subscribe

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Abstract

Recently, social media has played a crucial role in connecting with consumers. To navigate the complexity of consumer behaviour and build brand perception, firms employ a variety of strategies like brand-directed, influencer-directed and user-generated content. While each of the firms are experimenting with these, but their individual effectiveness in stimulating customer engagement and consumers' intentions to engage with the brand remains unclear. This study aims to fill a research gap by examining the impact of three tactics on key performance metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and intent to subscribe. The research employs a survey design to gather data on customers' intention to engage with the brand and subscribe to future communications when exposed to brand-directed and influencer-directed social media marketing. The study offers a strategic perspective for brands, helping them analyze their limited digital marketing budget and decide between these different social media marketing strategies based on their consumer behaviour goals, short term like engagement and long-term brand relationships with intent to subscribe.

Research Question

The aim of this research, therefore, is to ascertain the following: How do followers engage with three different marketing strategies on Instagram, and if there is any impact on their engagement and subscription intent. By analyzing the sentiment expressed in comments and reactions to these different styles, we aim to identify the most effective strategies for fostering follower interaction and emotional connection. This research will present a comparative study of various trends in engagement across diverse endorsement styles in the pursuit of establishing identification from the most effective ways to foster follower interaction and emotional connection through an influencer marketing context.

Methodology

Sample: For the study, 5 trending fashion brands on Instagram were identified, with active accounts and follower bases exceeding a particular threshold. Further, researchers randomly selected a representative sample of each brand's followers. Additionally, Social Media Scraping (with ethical considerations) was done to collect data like post type (image or video), captions and hashtags, engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares), author (brand, influencer, or user). This will lead to categorizing the scraped data into the three styles: influencer-generated, brand-generated, and UGC. The further steps will entail analyzing the content based on Visual elements (color schemes, clothing types, etc.), Tone (informative,

humorous, aspirational, etc.), Call to action (subscribe, visit website, etc.) By breaking down posts into these elements, the research will be able to identify patterns and trends that influence engagement. Furthermore, we will analyze the sentiment of comments for each style to understand emotional response. By combining content analysis and sentiment analysis, you can gain a deeper understanding of how different elements of social media content contribute to engagement behaviours. Further the survey instrument was used to assess, demographics, following habits (brands and influencers), engagement behaviour (liking, commenting), brand perception, Intent to subscribe (brand newsletter, follow additional channels).

Consequently, the main objective of this study will be to analyze the different marketing styles on follower engagement and subscription intention. Hence, this study will take a closer look at:

Engagement Metrics: How different endorsement styles provide different impacts on major engagement metrics of likes, comments, shares, and saves assessed as proxies for followers' interaction and interest. **Emotional Connection:** How various forms of endorsement styles will be able to influence the emotional connection of followers with regard to the influencer and the brand. **Content Effectiveness:** Which style(s) result in deeper follower-brand relationships, as reflected in sustained engagement and positive sentiment over time. The study, therefore, sets out to focus on these imperatives with a view to providing functional insights to marketers and influencers in pursuit of heightened levels of follower engagement and connection driven by meaningful endorsement.

Additionally, quantitative content analysis will be applied in the study to assess the differences in engagement across endorsement styles. Sampling of influencer profiles on Instagram should be selected in a way that varies across different count ranges and niche category like fashion to ensure there is diversity in the reach of influencers and demographics of their audiences. The integration of sentiment analysis involves evaluating brand sentiment, influencer sentiment, and product sentiment to assess brand perception, influencer endorsement, and product or service features.

Engagement metrics for each post will include tracking, among others: likes, comments, shares, and saves. These would probably create a quantitative basis through which the style-to-style comparison of engagement could be drawn. Alongside each post, sentiment analysis of comments will also be performed to pick out emotional responses that could be associated with a particular endorsement style. Significant differences in engagement and sentiment among these styles shall be sought using appropriate statistical techniques such as ANOVA and regression modelling. Furthermore, the research will control for the potential presence of confounding factors: influencer size, category of industry in which they operate, and frequency of posting.

Expected Contributions

The following research is well expected to make the following valuable additions to the knowledge pool in the field of influencer marketing:

The Most Effective Endorsement Styles: The study will gain insight from identifying the styles of endorsement that will bring in the highest level of follower engagement and emotional connection. In this respect, the study will provide evidence-based strategies to the influencers and marketers on how they can create more effective content.

Guidance on Content Personalization: The findings on differences in engagement across style of endorsement help brands and influencers create content to suit various audience preferences and thereby increase the relevance and appeal of endorsed products.

Better Understanding of Emotional Involvement: In turn, this research examines the emotional tone of responses from followers to explore how the style of endorsement influences the emotional resonance

of the content created by influencers in developing better understanding in relationship-building in digital marketing.

Conclusion

Therefore, this study tries to add to the rapid growth of knowledge about influencer marketing by comparing how various types of endorsement styles influence the engagement of followers in Instagram. Such an understanding is fundamental for both brands and influencers to further their social media strategies toward both short term and positive long-term relationships with their followers. This research can also aim to provide a knowledge gap in informing marketing techniques that will not only be attractive but also strategically fit the bill of consumer expectations in the digital era through highlighting effectiveness by including lifestyle posts, direct product promotions, and storytelling. The study finally underlines the importance of tailoring endorsement styles for maximum engagement and emotional impact and adds to the ever-evolving domain of social media marketing.

Although earlier research has examined how influencer marketing affects different facets of consumer behavior, this study intends to investigate the relative efficacy of various social media marketing tactics, such as user-generated, influencer-directed, and brand-directed content. The platform that is used in the study is Instagram due to its visual and interactive dimensions that facilitate an influencer's capability to engage with their followers on multiple levels. By focusing on Instagram, we can examine the platform-specific nuances and trends in influencer marketing. Since each of these styles reflects a different manner of communicating, a detailed analysis thus could affect follower engagement and their attachment to the influencer and a brand. By analyzing the sentiment of comments and reactions, we can gain a deeper understanding of consumer perceptions and attitudes towards different content types. The role of UGC in driving engagement and sales is often overlooked. This study will examine the impact of UGC on brand perception and consumer behaviour. As the reliance upon influencers for marketing in the digital space grows, understanding what endorsement style best resonates with followers will be key to optimizing brand strategies, ensuring value-for-money expenditure on influencer marketing.

Market Information and its Role in Enhancing Farm Revenue: Evidence from small and marginal farmers in Rongram Village, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya.

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Abstract

Access to accurate and up-to-date information on agricultural market has been a concern for farmers to optimize agricultural production and revenue. Market information helps the farmers to learn the best farming technique for agricultural production, learned weather and climate information necessary for their agricultural farming and also can help them to know about the market demand for their produce. Market information also plays a crucial role in empowering farmers to negotiate favourable term with traders and intermediaries. By analyzing market information, informed decisions can be taken, on the count of what to produce, how to produce, when to produce and at what prices should they negotiate with the traders. However, lack of information, or situations of asymmetric information is rather the norm in most developing country. Farmers often donot have information about market conditions prior to the sale. The results are that farmers donot get a good price while selling their produce and they continue depending on subsistence farming. This hampers improvements in agricultural livelihoods, sustains rural poverty and underdevelopment of both rural areas and agricultural sectors. Despite its importance, the relationship between market information and farm revenue in developing countries has been insufficiently explored. In this study, an attempt has been made to shed light on the role of market information on farm revenue generated by the farmers of West Garo Hills, Meghalaya. While determining the role of market information from farmers revenue an attempt will also be made to access the quality of information in terms of accuracy, timeliness and usefulness to the farmers of West Garo Hills, Meghalaya. The study revealed that access to accurate and timely market information, particularly related to production techniques and government schemes, has a significant positive impact on the revenue generated by farmers. The study also found that factors such as market information related to price and supply chain had negligible effects on revenue, suggesting that other factors might play a more prominent role in determining farmers' financial outcomes.

Keywords: Market Information, small and marginal farmers, Farmers revenue, agricultural production.

Fake News: The Vulnerable Consumers on Social Media

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Abstract

Fake news implies news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers. The goal of the research is to identify the consumers most vulnerable to believing fake news and misinformation on social media. The research considers individual factors like self-esteem and intelligence as well as relationship between individuals and the topics of fake news. The interplay between these factors needs to be understood to determine vulnerability of consumers to fake news. The proposed research methodology is random effects model wherein different groups of subjects respond to different subsets of profiles, each subset having fewer profiles than complete design.

Fake news implies news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017).

- 1) 62 percent of US adults get news on social media (Gottfried and Shearer 2016).
- 2) The most popular fake news stories were more widely shared on Facebook than the most popular mainstream news stories (Silverman 2016).
- 3) Many people who see fake news stories report that they believe them (Silverman and Singer-Vine 2016).

Research Question - How to identify individuals more susceptible to believing fake news?

Research Objective - To understand which consumers are most vulnerable to (i.e. accept/believe) fake news.

Two kinds of factors:

- 1) Individual factors – self-esteem & intelligence.
- 2) Relationship between individuals and the topics and opinions of fake news – topic relevance and opinion congruence.

The interplay between these factors needs to be understood to determine vulnerability of consumers to fake news.

Andreas Schleicher, OECD Education Director states “Schools should teach young people about how to identify ‘fake news’. Distinguishing what is true from what is not true is a critical judgment.” Around the world, many schools are considering to introduce courses such as ‘news literacy’ and ‘critical reasoning’ to prepare students to distinguish between real and fake news.

An understanding of these factors at play can help the schools form specific and different target groups and facilitate adequate training depending on these characteristics/factors.

Theory

(A) Reasons for people believing and sharing fake news (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Shermer 2017; Heflick 2017)

1. Cognitive Simplicity - when our brains process information, belief comes quickly and naturally, skepticism is slow and unnatural, and most people have a low tolerance for ambiguity. Research shows that when we process and comprehend a statement our brain automatically accepts it as true, whereas the subsequent skepticism of the statement requires an extra cognitive step, which is a heavier load to lift. It is easier to just believe it and move on (Bieri, J. 1955; Koenig, F. W., and King Jr, M. B. 1962).

2. Confirmation Bias - occurs from the direct influence of desire on beliefs. When people would like a certain idea/concept to be true, they end up believing it to be true. They are motivated by wishful thinking. This error leads the individual to stop gathering information when the evidence gathered so far confirms the views (prejudices) one would like to be true (e.g. Nickerson & Raymond S. 1998).

3. Naïve Realism - our tendency to believe that our perception of reality is the only accurate view, and that people who disagree with us are necessarily uninformed, irrational, or biased (Robinson, R. J., Keltner, D., Ward, A., and Ross, L. 1996).

4. Tribe Unity – Human beings are a social primate species and we want to signal to others that we can be trusted as a reliable group member. This means being consistent in agreeing with the other group members—whether that group is our political party or our religious faith—that we will not stray too far from our group’s core beliefs.

5. Social Media Echo Chambers - Existing social-media algorithms feed users news sources that they have previously shown interest in. Over time, this narrows the news sources of Facebook users and tends to expose them to information that reinforces their own perspectives.

(B)A meta-analysis study results show that recipients of moderate self-esteem are more influenceable than those of low or high esteem. According to the Yale-McGuire model, this curvilinear pattern stems from individual differences in reception of as well as yielding to the influence appeal. Recipients with low self-esteem have difficulty receiving the message; those high in self-esteem tend not to yield. Adequate data were not available to examine curvilinear effects of intelligence. Instead, low intelligence recipients were more influenceable than highly intelligent ones (Rhodes and Wood 1992).

Methodology

Random effects model - different groups of subjects respond to different subsets of profiles, each subset having fewer profiles than complete design. Step 1: Ask respondents:

- 1) Their political and social inclinations.
- 2) Degree of the inclinations
- 3) To rank social and political topics in decreasing order of relevance.

Step 2: Ask respondents to recognize fake news in every pair of options given to them. Every pair will vary with respect to fake and real news – both options may be fake news or real news or one each.

Every pair will have options varying in the following attributes:

- 1) Relevance of topic
- 2) Opinion Congruence

Step 3: Measure intelligence and self-esteem of participants

Measurement scale for intelligence (Wechsler, D. 2014): Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale—Fourth Edition (WAIS–IV) Used as a general test the intelligence, the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV) was developed to assess cognitive ability for adults.

Measurement scale for self-esteem: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, 1965 (Rosenberg, M. 1965)

Step 4: Analyze which combinations of factors make respondents commit maximum to minimum number of mistakes while recognizing fake news.

**Real vs. Desired: Self-Presentation of the Stigmatized on Social Media ,
“Freeing yourself was one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self was
another.”- Toni Morrison**

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Abstract

Social media allows its users to craft self-presentations. This research identifies that there are two competing forces/rationales behind self-presentation on social media: First, social media allows individuals to pick, choose and craft a desirable social media self-presentation, implying that it's not complete or real, may be false and inauthentic to varying extents. Second, social media empowers individuals to present their hidden self-aspect as it provides the required control because of its very nature of being distant (mediated by a screen/computer as opposed to face-to-face communication) and asynchronous. The goal of the research is to study how the stigmatized present themselves online. This study is in Indian context and caste has been chosen as the basis of stigmatization. The research seeks to examine how individuals belonging to stigmatized castes in India indulge in self-presentation online.

Keywords: Self-presentation, stigmatization, caste in India, social media

Tourist Temptations: Examining Factors Behind Impulse Buying Through a Dual-Study Approach

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Abstract

In the fast-paced tourism industry, impulsive buying behaviors offer valuable insights into consumer psychology, yet much remains unknown about the drivers of these spontaneous purchases. This study explores the factors influencing impulse buying in tourists using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Surprisingly, SEM results revealed unexpected patterns, notably that heightened urges do not consistently translate to increased purchases, challenging conventional assumptions. To deepen our understanding, a qualitative phase complements this analysis, uncovering nuanced influences like mood, seller demeanor, and situational spontaneity through in-depth interviews. This triangulated approach underscores the power of qualitative inquiry in validating and expanding quantitative findings, offering a richer perspective on tourist behaviors. By integrating structural modeling with qualitative insights, our research illuminates key factors shaping impulsive buying, offering actionable guidance for tourism marketers and paving the way for refined future studies.

Keywords: impulse buying; tourism consumer behavior; structural equation modeling; qualitative research; triangulation.

Marketing for festivals – A case study on promotion of Ambubachi Mela

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Abstract:

Religious events and festivals have been an integral part of Indian culture and heritage. These events and festivals provide platforms for the Indian community or people of the country to get together and keep practising their ancient traditions. Over time, these religious or cultural practices of observing events and festivals have expanded to include commercial prospects, especially in the context of tourism. In this regard, Ambubachi Mela, celebrated in Assam is worth mentioning. This festival provides a significant opportunity to the pilgrimage needs of the country and the tourism needs of the state. This festival is very important for the Hindu community and devotees of Goddess Kamakhya. Accordingly, over and above the religious practice, it has provided the state tourism a potential product for promoting tourism in Assam. This paper is a case study to understand how a culturally relevant event like Ambubashi Mela can enable tourism promotion and attract people or tourists from across the globe to witness the traditions as well as understand the significance of the rituals. Further, this paper is an attempt to understand the existing promotional measures associated with Ambubachi Mela for placing this event before the global audience.

Keywords: Festivals, Tourism, Religious Tourism, Ambubachi Mela

Navigating Ageing: Mental Schemas, Coping Strategies, and Anti-ageing Product Decisions of Women

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Abstract:

Beauty has often been associated with attractiveness and characteristics such as smooth skin, bright complexion, and facial features symmetry have always been desirable (De La Garza and Vashi, 2024). As people age, their skin loses firmness and elasticity, leading to wrinkles and other signs of ageing, which can alter perceptions of beauty (Choi and Lee, 2024). Gaviano et al. (2024) opined that the process of ageing is often accompanied by both excitement and anxiety, influenced by societal roles and individual self-perception. However, age identity lacks a unified meaning and instead depends on each person's unique experiences (Gillooley et al., 2023). Researchers have noted that in many societies that value youth, ageing is often associated with beauty, youth, and even self-worth (Masters, 2024; Shadrina, 2024). This cultural emphasis on youthhood fosters a fear of ageing (Chee, 2024), which in turn drives demand for products that promise to reverse the ageing process (Lee and Hyun, 2023; Ng and Indran, 2024). This concern has been well exploited by the global beauty industry, especially the anti-ageing segment, to offer products that can help delay the formation of wrinkles and other visible signs of ageing (de Mello et al., 2023).

The growing desire for youthfulness, an ageing population, and the emergence of market players offering advanced treatments have significantly boosted the anti-ageing market (Mehra, 2023). This surge drives demand for products like creams, lotions, gels, skincare procedures, and cosmetic enhancements that improve skin, reduce pigmentation, and repair UV damage (Forbes, 2022). The size of the global anti-ageing market is projected to grow from \$79.5 billion in 2024 to \$111.90 billion by 2029, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.08% (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). Mordor Intelligence also reported Asia Pacific to be the fastest growing market, accounting for 50% of the market share, while North America was noted to be the largest market for anti-ageing products and procedures (Mordor Intelligence, 2024).

While both sexes have anxiety about ageing and follow requisite skincare regimens, women consume beauty products which combat signs of ageing more liberally than men (Dutta, 2020). Even though the literature indicates the adoption of skin care routine and products that allegedly help women look younger, research on the complex feelings that women may have about getting older is scarce (Gillooley et al., 2023). Moreover, women's attitudes to ageing are not stereotyped (He et al., 2021) and, depending on the culture they belong to, may transform (Simone et al., 2024). The situation may be different even within the same culture, as the experience of ageing can be different between different women (Mady et al., 2023). As with any other psychological construct, perceptions around beauty and ageing are complex and are a result of an interplay between a variety of social, cultural, biological and psychological elements (Hausknecht et al., 2020). There is a gap in the literature regarding perceptions of ageing and the use of anti-ageing products and studies have largely focused on understanding the attitudes towards ageing (Kornadt et al., 2020; Rudnicka et al., 2020), the relation of these attitudes to the self (Yaghoobzadeh et al., 2020; Kang and Kim, 2022; London et al., 2023; Gillooley et al., 2023) and psychological well-being (Hofmeier et al., 2017; Nehr Korn-Bailey et al., 2023). In addition, although existing works have pointed out that women and anti-ageing products and cosmetic surgeries are in search of youthful attractiveness (Căiță et al., 2023; Faust et al., 2024), the works have not defined the consumers with the perception of ageing and the factors that motivate or discourage the consumption of the products.

It is, therefore, imperative for marketers of anti-ageing products to not only grasp but also consider the psychological and emotional dimensions of ageing. This means going beyond simplified concerns that might be trivial or have no impact on women's lives to understand how women think about aging in the light of environmental and self-image perspectives. In the present study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data about the women of different age groups. Behavioural Reasoning Theory (BRT) framework was used for reporting their attitudes about ageing and their receptiveness/views towards anti-ageing products. Our findings bridge the gap in the literature by linking perceptions of ageing with the intention to use these products. We further segment women into distinct categories based on their attitudes toward ageing and anti-ageing products and provide suggestions to marketers to for each segment.

Study Background and Objectives Beauty standards are strongly influenced by cultural narratives, media representations, and social interactions. Western beauty norms, which often prioritize youth, influence Indian beauty ideals through globalization. However, Indian cultural beliefs add layers to how women approach aging, often oscillating between societal pressure to maintain youthful appearances and a cultural respect for aging that associates it with wisdom and status. This study identifies how these factors impact women's perceptions, with a focus on the emotional and psychological aspects driving their engagement with anti-aging products.

Methodology The study employs a phenomenological research design within the qualitative framework, chosen for its strength in capturing personal experiences and subjective meanings. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with Indian women in their 30s, 40s, and 50s, with purposive sampling ensuring that participants had relevant perspectives on aging and anti-aging product use. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of themes such as social norms, media influence, self-perception, and professional expectations. Using a grounded theory approach, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis, with both open and axial coding applied to derive insights from participant responses, identifying the intricate links between social, cultural, and psychological aspects that shape women's attitudes.

Findings: The findings reveal a complex interplay between cultural, social, and psychological factors, encapsulated in a conceptual model that categorizes women's aging perceptions into three outcomes: anxiety, acceptance, and ambivalence. Social norms and media representations promote a youthful ideal, leading some women to experience anxiety as they strive to meet these standards. Others, however, adopt an accepting stance, viewing aging as a natural process linked to self-assurance and inner beauty. Additionally, a group of women experience ambivalence, fluctuating between acceptance and societal pressure. Self-identity, age and professional engagement are also identified to shape these attitudes. Women who equate self-identity with external appearance tend to rely on anti-aging products, whereas those with a more holistic self-identity view aging positively.

Implications:

Theoretical Implications: This study makes a novel contribution to the Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT) in two key ways. First, it uncovers the beliefs and values women hold related to the aging process. Second, it elucidates the underlying reasons that drive women's attitudes for or against using anti-aging products. By providing a comprehensive understanding of how women perceive aging along with the motivations behind their stances on anti-aging product usage, this research fills an important gap not previously addressed in the existing literature.

Practical Implications: The study's findings suggest distinct strategies for marketing anti-aging products to women based on their varied perceptions of ageing. For those with acceptance attitudes, products emphasizing gradual, natural effects align with their preference for aging gracefully. Anxiety-driven women are more receptive to products with immediate, visible results, favouring innovations in anti-aging technologies. For ambivalent women, marketing should focus on anti-aging products as a

balanced self-care choice rather than a necessity for beauty, emphasizing flexibility in usage to allow personal control over aging concerns.

Conclusion This research enriches the understanding of women's perceptions of aging by examining the intersecting influences of culture, society, and psychology. It highlights the nuanced responses women have toward aging, shaped by personal and external expectations, and the need for the beauty industry to consider these dimensions in its approach. By recognizing the complex motivations behind anti-aging product use, marketers can better cater to diverse consumer attitudes, fostering more relatable and inclusive beauty standards.

Does a customer's desire for aggregated or disaggregated discount have an impact on their purchase intention?

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Abstract

Consumers regularly face a multitude of financial decisions, whether it's paying for a broadband bill, maintaining a gym membership, repaying a loan, or considering options like "buy now, pay later." In such cases, consumers typically lean towards a disaggregated payment approach as their preference.

However, we present a counterintuitive concept: when consumers are presented with discounts in both the aggregated and disaggregated payment frames, their preference shifts towards the aggregate payment method. This shift occurs because discounts appear more substantial within the aggregate frame, creating a false perception of increased disposable income in their mental accounts. In contrast, the discounts within the disaggregated frame may seem smaller and less significant. The type of discount, shallow or deep, percent-off or amount-off, as well as framing of discount as gain or loss, all moderate the effects observed in our study. This study contributes to the fields of temporal reframing and mental accounting and offers valuable insights for marketers to enhance the attractiveness and appeal of promotional offers.

From Purpose to Purchase: A Meaningfulness-Based Branding Model for Enhancing Consumer Affinity and Purchase Intention

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Introduction

Purpose-driven branding is the talk of the town (Fernandes et al., 2024; Gray et al., 2024; Hajdas & Kłeczek, 2021). With an increasing focus on altruism and the values of an organization, brands are now expected to go beyond profit maximization and embody a clear sense of “purpose” (Fernandes et al., 2024). This rise of purpose-driven branding reflects a shift towards consumer expectations for brands to align with personal values, social responsibility, and meaningful experiences (Fernandes et al., 2024; Hajdas & Kłeczek, 2021).

Even though the current focus on “purpose” in branding is agreed upon, we believe branding lacks the depth offered by psychological constructs of meaning, which view purpose as part of a more complex framework. In branding, purpose has been largely defined by meaningfulness, social impact, or legitimacy (Lunkenheimer & Kracklauer, 2023). But in psychology, purpose is one of the key dimensions within the well-developed, overarching concept of meaningfulness, alongside coherence and significance (Costin & Vignoles, 2020; King & Hicks, 2021; Martela & Steger, 2016).

Purpose, as a dimension of meaningfulness, captures the clarity and impact through which the brand enables consumers and employees to transcend material gains. Coherence measures whether consumers can connect to the brand along with the alignment between the brand and the consumer, while significance captures the emotional importance of the brand to the consumer brand significant value.

By examining coherence, purpose, and significance as dimensions of meaningfulness, and establishing it in the context of branding, this study proposes a theory of Meaningfulness-Based Branding (MBB) and hypothesizes a model that explores how MBB fosters deeper brand affinity and stronger consumer purchase intention.

Literature Review

On meaningfulness

The construct of meaningfulness in psychology is defined through three interrelated dimensions: coherence, purpose, and significance. Coherence refers to the sense of comprehensibility and predictability in one's life, allowing individuals to make sense of their experiences (Steger, 2016). Purpose, on the other hand, involves having core goals and direction, which guide individuals in their actions and aspirations (Steger & Dik, 2010). Lastly, significance pertains to the inherent value that individuals ascribe to their lives, reflecting a sense of worth and fulfillment (Costin & Vignoles, 2020). Together, these dimensions create a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals derive meaning from their experiences, including their interactions with brands.

On meaningfulness and branding

In branding literature, while purpose often focuses on the goals and intentions behind a brand, meaningfulness encompasses a broader spectrum of emotional and psychological connections that consumers form with brands (for e.g., as in Schauman et al., 2023). This is particularly relevant in contemporary consumer culture, where the quest for meaning has intensified due to the overwhelming diversity of choices available (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). Meaningfulness in branding allows for deeper consumer engagement, as it resonates with individuals' desires for coherence and significance in their lives, thus fostering stronger brand loyalty and advocacy (Thomson et al., 2005). By fostering meaningful relationships through branding, companies can not only enhance consumer satisfaction but also contribute to a sense of community and shared values, ultimately leading to a more engaged and loyal customer base (Fernandes et al., 2024).

Design/Methodology/Approach

The core objective of this paper is to theoretically establish the need for meaningfulness in branding by developing a model of meaningfulness-based branding (MBB) that integrates coherence, purpose, and significance. To address this, we conceptualize meaningfulness in branding and propose a structured model. As a direction for future research, we suggest empirically testing this MBB model through a survey.

Findings and Discussion

Meaningfulness-Based Branding (MBB) is conceptualized as a brand strategy that integrates psychological dimensions of meaning to foster deeper consumer connections. Psychology literature defines three key dimensions of meaningfulness—coherence, purpose, and significance—which are incorporated into our branding framework. Brand coherence is conceptualized as the degree of brand comprehension and the strength of the brand-consumer connection, reflecting how well consumers understand and relate to the brand's messaging and values. Brand purpose represents the orientation the consumers have to the brand's larger goals enabling the consumers to transcend the mere functionalities of the brand by providing them a higher purpose. Brand significance captures the brand's significant value and emotional resonance, highlighting its meaningful impact and importance in the consumer's life or within a broader social context. Together, these dimensions create a framework for meaningfulness-based branding that seeks to deepen consumer affinity and drive purchase intention.

We propose that MBB positively impacts consumer perceptions of the brand such as brand affinity and consequently their purchase intention. Additionally, we suggest that each component—brand coherence, purpose, and significance—also independently influences brand affinity which in turn impacts purchase intention. Brand centrality and brand familiarity are posited as moderators of the relationship between MBB and brand affinity, and between each dimension of MBB and brand affinity. The propositions are given below and the proposed theoretical model is presented as Figure 1.

Propositions for building the theoretical model

MBB and Brand Affinity

P1: MBB positively influences Brand Affinity

- P1a: Brand Coherence positively influences Brand Affinity.
- P1b: Brand Purpose positively influences Brand Affinity.
- P1c: Brand Significance positively influences Brand Affinity.

Moderating Effects on the Relationship between MBB and Brand Affinity

P2: Brand Centrality moderates the relationship between MBB and Brand Affinity, such that the effect is stronger when Brand Centrality is high.

- P2a: Brand Centrality moderates the relationship between Brand Coherence and Brand Affinity, such that the effect is stronger when Brand Centrality is high.
- P2b: Brand Centrality moderates the relationship between Brand Purpose and Brand Affinity, such that the effect is stronger when Brand Centrality is high.
- P2c: Brand Centrality moderates the relationship between Brand Significance and Brand Affinity, such that the effect is stronger when Brand Centrality is high.

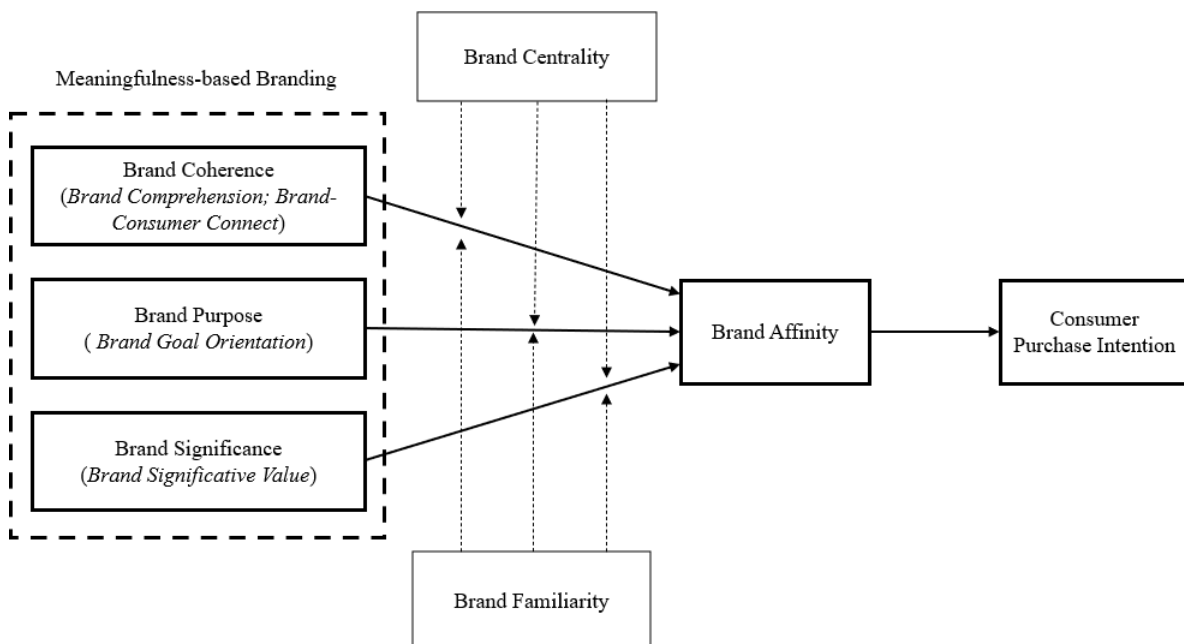
P3: Brand Familiarity moderates the relationship between MBB and Brand Affinity, such that the effect is stronger when Brand Familiarity is high.

- P3a: Brand Familiarity moderates the relationship between Brand Coherence and Brand Affinity, such that the effect is stronger when Brand Familiarity is high.
- P3b: Brand Familiarity moderates the relationship between Brand Purpose and Brand Affinity, such that the effect is stronger when Brand Familiarity is high.
- P3c: Brand Familiarity moderates the relationship between Brand Significance and Brand Affinity, such that the effect is stronger when Brand Familiarity is high.

Brand Affinity and Consumer Purchase Intention

P4: Brand Affinity positively influences Consumer Purchase Intention.

Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Model for MBB



This theoretical model will be tested empirically in the next stage of the research by conducting survey.

Implications

Managerial Implications: This study offers actionable insights for brand managers seeking to enhance consumer engagement and purchasing decisions. By focusing on coherence, purpose, and significance, brands can move beyond superficial purpose statements and instead deliver a more meaningful consumer experience that fosters brand loyalty and purchase intention.

Theoretical Implications: This research contributes to the branding literature by integrating psychological constructs of meaning into branding theory. The MBB model provides a more comprehensive understanding of how branding can leverage meaning to influence consumer behaviour, adding depth to the concept of purpose in marketing.

Originality/Value

The proposed model introduces a novel perspective by conceptualizing meaningfulness as a multidimensional construct rooted in psychological theory rather than a singular focus on purpose. This study is among the first to provide an empirical approach to measuring meaningfulness in the theories in branding, offering a foundation for future research on the psychological underpinnings of brand affinity and purchase intention.

Research Limitations

This study's conceptual model of meaningfulness-based branding—focused on coherence, purpose, and significance—may not capture all relevant dimensions of brand meaningfulness, particularly across varied cultural or demographic contexts. Moreover, the model does not account for external factors, such as market trends or competitive dynamics, which could influence brand affinity and purchase intentions. Finally, the nature of empirical work would be cross-sectional, leaving room for future research to examine how meaningfulness-based branding impacts consumer behaviour over time using longitudinal research designs.

Analyzing Social Media Marketing Activities and Their Effects on Brand Loyalty and Premium Price Willingness: A Review In The Context Of The Indian Cosmetics Industry

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Extended Abstract:

The Indian cosmetic sector has experienced significant growth over the past decade, driven by heightened consumer knowledge, increased disposable money, and the rise of various internet platforms. Social media has become essential for transforming customer behaviour in this sector, fostering brand loyalty and an inclination to pay a premium. This analysis analyses the influence of social media marketing on brand loyalty and the desire to pay premium prices in the Indian cosmetics sector, where visual attractiveness and customer engagement are essential factors in consumer choice. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube offer an interface for conveying value, authenticity, exclusivity, and other brand traits to consumers via personalized advertising, mainly through influencer collaborations and user-generated content. The objective is to rigorously evaluate the theoretical framework of brand loyalty and readiness to pay a premium by analysing specific social media marketing methods utilized in India and their efficacy.

In the context of the digital era, brand loyalty is comprised of behavioural, attitudinal, and cognitive factors that reinforce a consumer's attachment to a particular brand. Through personalized engagement and strategic content, digital platforms make it possible for marketers to construct these dimensions themselves. On the other side, the desire to pay a premium price is influenced by the perceived value of the brand, the consumer's view of the quality of the goods, and the exclusivity of the brand, as expressed across various social media platforms. Several more marketing ideas, such as the customer engagement theory and relationship marketing, complement these philosophies. These are instances of how social media marketing strengthens these qualities, cultivates an emotional connection with the company, and develops a good consumer perception that minimizes price sensitivity and maintains brand loyalty. It is inspired by social media marketing activities such as influencer marketing, content marketing, and community involvement; however, the activities that underpin these ideas are social media marketing activities that embed companies within consumers' digital lives daily.

According to this analysis, the most prominent social media marketing tactics that the Indian cosmetics sector has implemented can be broken down into four major categories: content marketing, influencer and celebrity endorsements, user-generated content, and personalized marketing. Tutorials, beauty suggestions, and visually appealing postings are all examples of content marketing strategies that may be used to build consumer trust and loyalty. A brand's credibility and appeal can be increased through celebrity and influencer endorsements, mainly when the influencers connect with their followers in a sense grounded in reality. Consumers are involved in a brand relationship and speak on behalf of brands through user-generated content (UGC) and community-building campaigns, ultimately

developing an impression of community. Personalization in marketing maintains this sensation of exclusivity and relevance using tailored adverts and recommendations. As a result, it shapes consumers' perceptions regarding the value of brands and premium pricing.

Brand loyalty in social media marketing can be explained by referring to customer engagement and retention, the perception of authenticity, and the emotional connection between the brand and the customer. High engagement rates include likes, comments, and shares, all of which are indicators of the affinity formed among customers, strengthening their loyalty. Authenticity is essential when it comes to companies' digital communication. The honesty and openness of the brand, particularly in the realm of influencer collaborations, ultimately results in the development of organic, long-term loyalty. On social media, brands can establish an emotional connection with their target audience by sharing content that is both relatable and value-driven. This is demonstrated by the case studies of Indian beauty businesses, which show how these methods contribute to developing passionate brand communities and encourage loyalty.

In the Indian cosmetics industry, social media is increasingly playing a role in determining whether or not consumers are willing to pay premium pricing. This is because consumers' perceptions of the worth and quality of brands are frequently shaped by the trends that they comment on. Consumers are more likely to be able to bear high pricing when they have a stronger sense of the value that they associate with a particular brand. This perception is created by the use of aesthetic representation on social media platforms and the telling of stories about the brand. It is also possible to establish social proof, which can be accomplished through consumer ratings and social endorsements, which enhances the desire to pay a premium price. The reason for this is that people have a tendency to associate trustworthy and high-quality businesses with those that have gotten great reviews. It is possible to gain unique insights into the tastes of consumers by analysing the contrasts and similarities between local and multinational cosmetics brands. There is a notion that multinational brands offer a better value, particularly in the premium market segments, despite the fact that Indian enterprises are earning client loyalty at an increasing rate.

Although social media marketing comes with a number of advantages, it is also loaded with challenges, and there are instances in which it is severely restricted. Social media marketing is a business that is fraught with obstacles. By way of illustration, the degree of competition in India has significantly increased as a consequence of the saturation of the market; thus, it might be difficult for brands to break through to the top of the pack. When it comes to marketing, the employment of influencers raises the prospect of problems relating to authenticity. This is because an excessive amount of exposure to customers will only drive them to question the legitimacy of the marketing approach. One further thing to take into consideration is that the digital world is plagued by a multitude of ethical and legal issues, the most significant of which being the security of data in personalised marketing and the transparency of influencer endorsement. Taking action to address these issues is absolutely necessary in order to maintain the confidence of customers and to make the most of the opportunities presented by social media marketing.

Additional study might be conducted to investigate the influence of social media marketing outside of metropolitan areas. This could be accomplished by analysing the purchasing behaviour of consumers in India's rural and semi-urban marketplaces, which are experiencing an increase in social media involvement. New potential for customer connection and the nurturing of brand loyalty have arisen as a result of the proliferation of short-form video platforms such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. It would be extremely beneficial to do longitudinal research that investigates brand loyalty and premium pricing in order to gain important insights into the long-term effects of social

media marketing within the cosmetics industry. Furthermore, psychoscientific investigations into the underlying motivations for customers' willingness to pay a premium would benefit from an appreciation of the intricacies of consumer behaviour within India's quickly changing digital environment. This would be the case since India is a digital environment constantly evolving.

This study concludes with a summary of the most important results about social media's impact on the Indian cosmetics business in terms of fostering brand loyalty and premium pricing. Regarding the practical consequences for marketers, it appears that authenticity and involvement, in conjunction with the development of communities, will be beneficial in fostering brand loyalty. Nevertheless, before implementing any premium pricing strategy, it is necessary to invest in brand imaging and provide a high perceived value through social proof and content that concentrates on quality. No company can afford to ignore social media marketing as a medium to remain competitive in the diverse and rapidly changing Indian market. The dynamics associated with social media marketing continue to evolve, and their significance in moulding consumer views and purchasing patterns within the cosmetics sector distinguishes it as a medium that no brand can afford to ignore.

Keywords: Brand loyalty, Social media marketing, Content marketing, User-Generated Content (UGC), Indian cosmetics sector.



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