

GREAT LAKES INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
09th NASMEI CONFERENCE 2015
An International Marketing Conference

MESSAGE FROM DEAN

Dear friends,

The mission of Great Lakes is to serve as a catalyst – aiding the creation and propagation of abundant knowledge and information. Our commitment to cutting-edge research therefore is at the core of everything we do. Known for its prowess in the discipline of Marketing, Great Lakes has been bringing to the academic community the prestigious NASMEI conference every year for the last 8 years.

It gives me immense pride and pleasure to present to you the 9th edition of the Great Lakes – NASMEI conference slated for the 26th and 27th of December at our campus near Mahabalipuram. As is the norm, during this season of giving and sharing, we are delighted to present to you a grand expedition into the world of marketing with paper presentations in areas like CRM/services/strategy/modeling/culture/CB and so on. Furthermore, we are delighted to present to you the keynote address by Dr.Vithala Rao (Deane W. Malott Professor of Management Professor of Marketing and Quantitative Methods Johnson Graduate School of Management Cornell University).

I am delighted to welcome you to the 9th Great Lakes – NASMEI Conference.

Best wishes,

Bala V Balachandran

J L Kellogg Distinguished Professor of Accounting & Information Management (Emeritus in service),
Northwestern University, USA
Founder, Dean & Chairman, Great Lakes Institute of Management, India

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT – VITTAL RAO

Marketing is a relatively new academic field and is brimming with new ideas, new methodologies and exploring new frontiers. This 9th GLIM – NASMEI* Conference over a two-day period explores marketing topics ranging from the role of digital marketing to emerging markets to traditional marketing questions and methods.

To those of you attending your first conference here: welcome! If you have been here before then you already know you are in for a terrific conference. Now, a mainstay event on the marketing conference circuit, academics from all over the world look forward to exchanging ideas in this great campus.

As a representative of NASMEI, I wish you a terrific conference and a wonderful experience.

*NASMEI (North American Society for Marketing Education in India) - a Not-for-Profit Organization founded in the U.S. over 25 years ago with the specific purpose of contributing to marketing education in India

9th NASMEI CONFERENCE 2015

Abstract of selected Papers

Assessing Consumers' Reactions to Brand Placement in Motion Pictures

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Introduction

Tag Heuer in *Don*, Coke in *Dhoom2*, Singapore Tourism Board in *Krrish* or Pepsi in *Pearl Harbour*, product placements have a starring role in Bollywood and Hollywood movies. Screening thousands of films every year, film industry is fast emerging as the medium with maximum potential to capture and convert audiences to potential consumers. As the line between entertainment and marketing communication becomes increasingly blended or even erased during recent years (de Gregorio et. al., 2010; Eagle 2007; Steel 2007; Winkler and Buckner 2006), the notion of brand placement in an entertainment context has received considerable attention from scholars and practitioners alike. Branded entertainment is the embedding of a brand in a cultural or entertainment context. One way of doing this is placing the product/brand in a movie scene where it can be seen and/or its name heard. Movies have become a multi-million dollar industry exposing mass audience to a very important and effective tool of communication by the advertisers. A great deal of research has already been devoted to product placement in movies, however this paper strives to present insights into the effect of brand image-entertainment context fit on consumer's attitude.

Given the exposure of Indian audiences to both national and international entertainment industry, it is only reasonable to expect country of origin of the entertainment event to have an impact on consumer's evaluation. Because the link between country of origin of the entertainment event (Bollywood/ Hollywood) and brand placement is a relevant area of speculation, the present research paper aims to study this relationship in the national/international context.

Research Methodology

Prior research suggests that how the brands are presented in the movie, namely- in the background, used by main character, or as an integral part of the unfolding story, might lead to different responses from the audience (Russell, 2002). Therefore the present study focuses on only one of the types of brand placement, that is, the effect of visual brand placements used by the main character in the movie. Visual product placement means that the product is shown prominently in the movie without the mention of the brand name. Secondly, the current study explored the influence of brand placement using both Hollywood and Bollywood movies so as to study the effect of the link between country of origin of the entertainment event (Bollywood/ Hollywood) and brand placement in the movie. We hope to examine consumers' responses in terms of their attitude toward the placed brand and their intention to purchase the brand within the context of country of origin of the event (and not the brand).

A total of 120 students participated in the study (78 females and 42 males) who were drawn from the subject pool of a large Indian University. The study used a 2X2 between-subjects experimental design with two levels of events (Hollywood/ Bollywood movies) and two levels of brand-event fit (high fit/low fit). Each subject was assigned to only one of the four conditions in the experiment.

Results and Findings

A 2 (brand-event fit: high/low) X 2 (event type: Hollywood/Bollywood) MANOVA between-subjects was used to determine if there was a significant effect of brand-event fit and type of event on the dependent variables- attitude toward the brand and intention to purchase.

As one of the first attempts to analyze brand placements in the context of Hollywood and Bollywood vis-a-vis brand fit; this study found that the idea of fit, match or congruence between the brand and the event can be used as a key criterion when explaining brand evaluations. Findings of the study suggest that a brand may have more to loose in case of a misfit with the national entertainment event than with an international entertainment event. Possible causes may be deeper cultural understanding of the home country and the context. However, more research is required to explore the affective/behavioral processes that are leading to the effects found in the study.

Processing and Judgmental Consequences of Types of Indirect Comparisons: The Role of Product Differentiation and Categorization

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Most comparative advertising research has attempted to understand differences between comparative and non comparative ads (see Grewal et al. 1997 for a meta-analysis), with more recent investigations focusing on delineating comparison characteristics to examine differences between comparison *types*. For instance, extent of perceived derogation (Jain and Posavac 2004), preference consistency (Jain 2003), and comparison intensity (Donthu 1992) have all been shown to influence different criterion measures.

Given the theoretical as well as managerial importance of the topic, the current paper focuses on a specific type of comparison that has received little attention in the literature – the indirect comparison, a claim that features an advertiser making references to the competition without naming a specific brand (see Jackson, Brown and Harmon 1979; Pechmann and Stewart 1990). Examples of such comparisons are “Benadryl Allergy Relief is 54% more effective than the leading prescription antihistamine”, “Chevy is the biggest truck in its class”, and “You are more certain of safe delivery of your urgent documents with FedEx than with other carriers.”

Two content analyses provided the motivation for our investigation. The first of these, conducted by Pechmann and Stewart (1990), revealed that 60% of all television ads contained indirect comparative claims, 20% contained direct comparative claims, and 20% were non-comparative. To understand more recent practice, we conducted a second analysis by examining comparative TV advertisements over the course of a month (June 21, 2004 to July 20, 2004). 17 different channels (of major TV networks such as NBC, ABC, etc.) were viewed at 8 different times during the day resulting in a sample of 105 comparative ads. The ads were categorized into one of three categories: a) a direct comparative ad in which one or more competitors were targeted by name (e.g., “Visa is better than American Express”; “Pepsi is better than Coke”), b) an indirect comparative ad in which one or more competitors were targeted but their names were not mentioned, and c) a generic comparative ad in which the advertised brand claimed superiority over a generic category (e.g., “iMac is better than PCs”). Results showed that 18% (19 out of 105) were direct comparative, 22% (23) were generically comparative, and 60% (63) were indirect.

Thus, it appears that the use of an indirect comparison is not only a routine managerial practice, it is significantly more prevalent than that of the direct comparison. Interestingly, with the exception of a handful of papers, scholarly research appears to have focused exclusively on direct comparisons. Therefore, one of the goals of the current investigation is to fill this gap by examining indirect comparative ads in particular. The second goal of our investigation is to examine types of indirect comparisons and their processing and attitudinal consequences. Virtually all past studies featuring indirect comparisons have attempted to document differences between direct and indirect comparative advertising (see Snyder 1992 for an exception). While this goal has utility, it is perhaps equally, if not more, important that we understand indirect comparative advertising at a deeper level, more so because different types of indirect comparisons have been observed in practice as well as in scholarly work.

Further, there is no research that examines moderation of effectiveness of different types of indirect comparisons. Consequently, the third objective of our paper is to posit a framework based on consumers’ category perceptions that affords a theoretical basis for predicting differences

in processing and judgments associated with different types of indirect comparisons, depending on the market context within which they are viewed, processed, and used as the basis for judgment. Finally, relying on the same framework, we predict and directly demonstrate the categorization-based process mechanism that may underlie the hypothesized attitudinal effects. Ours is the first attempt to document direct evidence of some of the processes that may be associated with indirect comparative advertising in particular.

We begin by summarizing some key observations from the literature on indirect comparative advertising. Then we cite practical instances of indirect comparisons to underscore the importance of the need to examine various types of indirect comparative ads rather than assume that all indirect comparative ads are inherently similar in their attitudinal impact. In particular, we examine a typology of indirect comparisons based on a content analysis of real ads and investigate the two types that are most frequently observed (“better than the leading brand” and “best in class”). A framework is provided which posits that the attitudinal effects of exposure to specific types of indirect comparisons are moderated by consumers’ perceptions of two product-differentiation related market-level variables -- perceived quality differences and perceived product variety. It is further argued that these judgmental effects are mediated by consumers’ a priori mental representations (prototype or exemplar), the type of processing evoked by the indirect comparison (prototypical or exemplar), and the extent of counter arguing that results. Two experiments provide support for the proposed theory. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

Reframing the Frame: The Make in India Campaign and the Indian Institutional Context

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India — the Text and its Institutional ‘Con-text’ includes both formal and informal constraints. When we speak of the formal we include perceived policy and bureaucratic constraints, regulations, outmoded laws, infrastructural bottlenecks, labor problems, unemployment and the physical environment. Informal constraints emerge against this backdrop of the formal. These include informal practices, structures, rules, social norms, cultural behaviors and other non-quantifiable elements. These are then a part of the collective consciousness of a nation and contribute to its national identity and internationally to its presence as a soft power. These are also parameters that possess the potential to alter the manner in which one looks at the physical and social disposition of a nation. One such potential growth story has been scripted by the Government of India’s “Make in India” campaign (henceforth MII).

This study examines how marketing communication interfaces with perception of changes in the institutional context and the re-assertion of national identity through specific frames in the MII campaign. To do this, the study situates the campaign in the wider macro-economic context to understand its functions at three levels: macro (institutional context), meso (intermediate group processes and mechanisms, campaign structure, planning and communication) and micro (text level). We will examine the MII campaign against the context in which it is occurring and the embedded constraints that the campaign works around to craft what it sees as a potential growth

story. The texts that we shall examine here for their embedded strategies are the PM's speech on MII, newspaper articles, blogs and the campaign itself for its text and visuals. Through our analysis of the discourse we show how meaning generation out of the MII campaign is constitutive of the context that has shaped it, as also the context that challenges it. The primary conceptual device/construct that we shall use here to assess the phenomenon under study is 'framing' and related aspects of rhetoric.

Frame Analysis

Management and institutional research uses frame analysis in three broad approaches: at the micro/managerial/individual-cognitive level; the meso/structural/organizational/ communicative level and the macro/institutional level. It also recognizes how these are recursive approaches and draw from one another. Therefore, although our study here addresses the meso/structural/communicative level of the MII campaign, it does so with the realization that macro/institutional practices and contexts form an inevitable backdrop to meso level forms and outputs. So also, textual analysis at the micro-level reflects meso and macro level phenomena.

According to Goffman's (1974, p.11) early definition, frames are "principles of organization which govern the subjective meanings we assign to social events." These are seen as "schemata of interpretation" (21). Corniessen (2014) cautions against the incorrect usage of the constructs 'frame' and 'acts of framing': "frames are distinguished from acts of framing, which involve the ways in which individuals use language or other symbolic gestures in context either to reinforce existing interpretive frames or to call new frames into being"(p.197). Thus frames as templates could be already available and then are "primed" or activated or arise out of social constructions in context. This reflects current concerns which attempt to move away from viewing and using frames as relatively stable entities and to understand framing as "an ongoing process of meaning construction"(p.206). To our end, we examine the frames of reference used by the MII campaign and the acts of framing performed by actors, texts and artefacts in the campaign to elicit a desired response from audiences which is seen as "a basis for mobilizing support and gaining legitimacy." (Creed, Langstraat and Scully, 2002 in Corniessen, 2014, p.182). This also addresses the concept of "strategic frames" at the meso level where "strategic actors attempt to frame courses of actions and social identities in order to mobilize others to follow suit" (Corniessen, 2014, p.183). This is supported by work on strategic change in firms which use similar framing techniques (Fiss and Zajac, 2006). We shall also look at 'frame contesting' (Benford and Snow, 2000) which in this scenario is suggested by the counter-views and apprehensions expressed in representative blogs and opinion pieces. This study is thus a discursive frame analysis through a critical-subjectivist approach.

Questions are raised on the following lines:

What sort of framing techniques are used in the MII campaign?

Does the campaign create certain frames to lead the audience and enable it to read India as a 'text' differently?

How does it promote a specific interpretation or re-interpretation of India as a text?

Does the campaign simplify or oversimplify to get around national complexities?

How does the campaign contextualize information to help the audience connect through what they already know (through default frames)?

What are the stereotypes/constraints that are a part of the master frame/ institutional frame; how embedded are these?

Methods and Analysis

We examine the MII campaign for the following concepts: types of framing such as positive and negative framing (drawn from advertising, media and marketing communications research) ; diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing and various frame-alignment processes such as bridging, amplification, extension, transformation as also reframing (drawn from research on collective action, change and social movements). This is then extended to other significant micro-level discursive-textual features in the field of rhetoric such as metaphors and analogies (Cornelissen, J. P., Holt, R., & Zundel, M., 2012) as also major rhetorical principles; namely, logos, ethos and pathos.

Five representative texts are the textual data that informs our study. Of these, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's inaugural speech and the Introduction to MII from its website especially identify frames and acts of framing/re-framing whereas the three other textual pieces; namely, a blog from The Economist, an article from the Financial Express and a blog by Suresh Lulla, MD, Quimpro Consultants reflect counter views and interrogatory concepts. This counter-discourse addresses how 'Made for India' and 'Made in India' as against 'Make in India' are concepts that interrogate the MII campaign. We also examine the visuals that accompany the textual data in the MII campaign, both static and video.

Findings and Conclusion

Our study of key discursive markers in surrounding texts and those in the MII campaign itself suggests strategic discursive anticipatory measures which work around possibilities of apprehension, skepticism, resistance and the macro-economic context within which the campaign appears. It also shows how the MII campaign subverts existing perceptions (default frames) about the Indian institutional context by creating a new field frame for national and international consumption. We show how the campaign introduces 'ways of seeing' by maneuvering embedded institutional constraints and stereotypes. The study contributes to frame analysis in management and organizational research by bridging mainstream practice and critical perspectives in the fields of marketing and communication studies.

Purchase Decisions and Spending Patterns of Indian Female Consumers

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Shifting perceptions of women's roles in contemporary society have attracted marketing interest in terms of tracking the changes and understanding the impact of these changes on family consumption. Changes such as better education, more double-income families, and the increase of career women have resulted in challenges to prior beliefs about the role and purchase influence of each family member (Lee and Beatty, 2002; Xia et. al., 2006; Dong and Li, 2007).

As more women contribute to the resources of their families and become more motivated to succeed in their careers, consumption expenditures and decision behaviour patterns also change (Lee and Beatty, 2002). But, despite the remarkable strides in market power and social position that they have made in the past century, they still appear to be undervalued in the marketplace and underestimated in the workplace. Few companies have responded to their need for time-saving solutions or for products and services designed specifically for them (Silverstein and Sayre, 2009).

Changing spending patterns of women

Silverstein and Sayre (2009) explored how women felt about their work and their lives, and how they were being served by businesses. They found that most women believed companies failed in creating products meeting their needs, despite the fact that women represent a very large marketing opportunity.

Background of the study

According to the Census of India - 2011 (provisional), India's population is 1210.19 million of which 586.46 million (48.46%) are females. Female literacy rate increased from 15.4% in 1961 to 65.46% in 2011 (Census of India website). As more and more women enter the workforce and become more independent, a considerable shift is seen in the purchasing behaviour and spending patterns of Indian female consumers. This is a segment no business can ignore because of the tremendous opportunities it offers. As a result, it will be interesting to investigate how Indian women sees the market offerings available to her.

In this study, we attempt to figure out the influence on purchase decisions and spending patterns of female consumers in India. The proposed study would help us understand how women feel about their work and lives, how they are being served by businesses and the extent of women's influence over purchasing decisions of the family. We seek to gain knowledge about the underlying drivers of women's happiness and to zero in on their unmet needs as consumers. This will shed light on where companies have been lagging in the female consumer market place.

Implications

Female economy in India presents both challenges and opportunities at the same time for marketers. The study aims to figure out the shifts in the outlook of Indian female consumers in terms of their goals and aspirations, sources of happiness and dissatisfaction, purchase behaviour and spending patterns. This helps to identify the sectors that currently meet the needs of the

burgeoning female consumer market and also point out the areas where further progress can be attained.

Transactions to Ties: Role of Involvement and Emotional Attachment as dimensions of Customer Engagement

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Customer Engagement (CE) is a popular concept in the practitioner world for more than a decade, but is yet to gain traction amongst researchers. Research in this area has increased since the special issue of Journal of Service Research on the topic in 2010 and Marketing Sciences Institute announcing it as a priority area of research. However, literature in this area is predominantly conceptual in nature. CE is defined as a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive experiences of customers with focal brand / object. Two factors establishing CE as a relevant area of research include: (a) customer and market factors, and (b) conflicting opinions in the marketing area regarding its conceptualization.

Today's markets are very competitive and there is abundant choice available for consumers. Additionally, advancement in information technology has led to well informed and networked customers, hastening product / price comparison; gather / share product experiences; and review, comment and post their opinions. Marketers are expected to provide value propositions exceeding expectations and interactive experiences to 'engage' customers. Currently, there is limited research in marketing area on proposing a theoretical framework for explaining CE, examining the central role of CE within a nomological framework, identifying dimensions of CE and empirically testing the same. The contribution of this research is expected to be in terms of identifying a theoretical framework to conceptualize CE, defining the manifestation of CE and empirically testing a conceptual model of CE within a nomological framework.

CE is defined as a 'motivated psychological state' (Brodie et al., 2011) that customers experience due to interactions with a product, service or brands (herein after defined as product). In order to for this state to emerge, customers of a firm should experience goal fulfilment through interactions with firms. Attribution Theory provides an explanation for the motivated state arising out of goal fulfilment. Causal ascriptions of goal fulfilment create goal expectancies. Meeting the goal expectancies lead to affect and development of a motivated state. Additionally, Regulatory Engagement Theory posits that hedonic experiences associated with regulatory fit leads to motivational intensity. These theories explain the emergence of psychological state arising out of customer-firm exchanges.

Extant review of literature reveals that CE is a multi-dimensional construct and various constructs emerge as possible dimensions of CE. Specifically, the role of value, customer participation, involvement, emotional attachment and commitment were reviewed. Value and participation, by their nature and conceptualization emerge as antecedents to CE, whereas, commitment emerges as a consequence of CE. Involvement and emotional attachment emerge as dimensions of CE. Involvement emerges in early customer-firm interactions as a predominantly

cognitive evaluation dimension, which over a period of time transcends into emotional attachment. Emotional attachment is predominantly an affective state and is experienced without customer's volition. Loyalty comprising of repurchase intentions and favorable attitude emerge as consequences of CE. Involvement and emotional attachment are the 'motivated mental states', which concurs with the definition of CE and is conceptually grounded in Attribution and Regulatory Engagement Theory.

Five propositions emerge from literature review. In order to further explore the phenomenon, two exploratory studies were conducted. Firstly, a semi-structured open ended questionnaire was administered to 22 respondents, seeking responses with respect to their favorite product. A second study was conducted using netnography, where in, the facebook page of a popular coffee chain was analyzed for 50 days. Based on apriori definitions of key words, which signals manifestation of involvement and emotional attachments, evidence was found that these two constructs are conceptually different and are expressed by customers.

Based on the above, a set of hypotheses was formulated for further testing. The conceptual model proposes that value and customer participation lead to involvement, which over time transcends to emotional attachment. Repurchase intention and favorable attitude towards the brand are proposed as consequences of involvement and emotional attachment. It is also proposed that loyalty effects arising out of emotional attachment will emerge stronger than loyalty effects arising from involvement. Specifically, the research intends to study the emergence of CE, as customer-firm interaction progresses (i.e., early stages of customer-firm relationship).

A vignette based study was designed for a fictitious e-retailer of apparels. Apparels were chosen as it is a high importance emotion laden purchase for many and tested in the fast growing e-retail context. Vignettes have been used in literature for theory testing and have the advantage of standardizing stimuli and approximate real life decision making. Established scales were used to measure value, participation, involvement, attachment and loyalty. Pilot study was conducted to check the reliability of scales, before actual data collection. More than 600 responses were collected from students and other respondents. Analysis was done using Structural Equation Modeling method using SPSS AMOS 21.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted before testing the structural model. Fit indices of CFA were good; convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs were established. Results of the structural model show good fit indices and confirmed all the hypotheses except the effect of attachment on loyalty. Involvement's effect on loyalty emerged stronger than attachment's. Mediation analysis was conducted which revealed involvement fully mediating the effect of value and participation on loyalty. Involvement – Attachment – Loyalty mediation path was partially mediated. Involvement's effect on Attachment was high, but, attachment's effect on loyalty was significant but low.

A small scale follow-up study was conducted to test the role of emotions in enabling involvement and attachment. A second set of vignettes were designed and administered to a section of the initial respondents. Consumption Emotions Set (Richins, 1997) was used to evaluate the emotions of respondents immediately after being exposed to the vignettes manipulating

involvement and attachment. Results reveal that negative emotions reduced and positive emotions increased after the second set of vignettes (manipulating attachment) when compared to the initial set (involvement). Results reveal increase in positive emotions, as relationship with the focal firm expands, enhancing the role of attachment.

The results prove that marketers should deliver compelling value propositions and provide opportunity for customers to actively participate in the consumption process to increase the involvement of customers. This may transcend into an emotional connect, which would strengthen loyalty. Ensuring involvement and enhancing attachment are crucial to engage customers as they mediate firm actions and increase stickiness in the relationship. On the whole, involvement and engagement are crucial psychological states that are responsible to engage customers and hold them in a relationship.

The study is not without its limitations. Respondents were exposed to a fictitious firm and their intent to purchase was tested. Testing product experiences using a real brand could have provided more insights. The study was limited to apparels, a high involvement product category. Testing the model with other product categories would reveal the relevance of involvement and attachment in different contexts. Finally, detailed field studies and qualitative research may bring out the richness of emotional attachment in customer-firm relationships.

On the whole, the study was able to establish the role of involvement and attachment as important dimensions of CE in early stages of customer-firm relationship.

“Maggi” Brand Crisis: Does it Impact Consumer Perceptions and Purchasing Intentions

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Maggi, a three decade old Nestle brand controls close to 60 percent of the Indian instant noodles Market recently, since March 2014, the brand was in the center of the controversy due to its alleged noncompliance to the prescriptions of Indian food law, the Food and Safety Act 2006 (FSA). The situation intensified after March 2005 when the food testing laboratories held up the findings that the product indeed has excess toxic elements. The Indian watchdog for food safety, Food standards and safety authority of India (FSSAI) accused Maggi of violating the quality concerns under three counts. One, the presence of excess lead contents than the prescribed limit of 2.5 ppm by Indian standards. Two, the agency accused that the brand has mislead consumers by carrying a claim “No added Mono Sodium Glutamate (MSG)”. Whereas, the fact was contradictory, and, three, Nestle was accused of introducing Oats masala noodles in the market without proper approvals from the government. As a consequence, FSSAI ordered the immediate recall of the shelf inventory of Maggi noodles from all retail outlets across the country. It forced the Nestle to close its Nanjangud unit that has close to 800 employees. Promptly, as an effort to control the damage, the company tried to defend its case saying that the Maggi noodles are safe to eat and the all the concerns raised by FSSAI is not true. It said that, the taste maker has a MSG slightly more but, in its prepared form has the MSG well within the prescribed limits. In contrary, the government body asserted that the brand should pass the test for noodles and taste makers separately as they are sold in physically

different packets. The issue went on to become the major headlines in the Indian media attracting huge reaction from the all corners of the society. Moreover, the company maintained that it does not add MSG but it will creep into the product the MSG present in the ingredients like groundnut protein, onion powder and wheat flour. But, still the company has now decided to remove their claim from their packaging that MSG is not added. The whole episode exposed many shortcomings in the Indian food safety system, and also had many lessons to learn for other stake holders including other ready to eat food manufacturers. As a consequence, many other leading food brands of the country took a self-test and rectified the violations if any before the government could act.

The sudden removal of all nine variants of Maggi from retailers created a huge turmoil in the market. Adding to the trouble, other leading brands like Yippie from ITC, Top Ramen from Indo Nissin Foods, and Wai Wai also recalled their noodles from the market subject to pending clearance of their samples by the food testing authorities. The absence of Maggi, the most popularly accepted breakfast by the school going children, along with other leading brands left the home makers baffled. As the schools had started after the summer vacations, the housewives were forced to explore an immediate substitute.

The matter is now pending with the Mumbai high court. The interesting issue now is to see if the consumers are going to accept the Maggi noodles with the same confidence that they did in the past. But, the company is confident of this. Their global CEO Mr. Paul Bulcke says that Maggi noodles are safe for consumption. The company vowed to win back the trust of consumers and bring the product back on the shelves as soon as possible. With this as the background, the current research aims to test few issues that can make a good learning for marketing practitioners. The research objectives were as given below

- a. Studying the consumer inclination towards understanding the packaging disclosures made by the company before they make their buying decisions.
- b. Studying the changes in consumer product perceptions and conative attitudes towards Maggi noodles.

The respondents for the research were housewives who are the decision makers with respect to purchase of instant noodles. The study covered a sample size of 214 respondents based on stratified random sampling. The six strata's were different geographic locations of Bangalore. The respondents were then selected on random basis from each of the strata. A seven point Likert scale was adopted to record the consumer responses.

For objective one, a single sample T test was carried out to test the hypothesis. The null hypothesis was formulated as "the consumers are not inclined towards understanding the package disclosure" and alternate hypothesis was taken as "consumers are inclined to understand the packaging disclosures". Besides, a one way ANOVA was carried out to see if the inclination is same between different economic groups. For second objective, to measure changes in perception and purchasing attitudes, a paired sample T test was carried to see if the changes in perceptions and purchasing attitudes, before and after the episode are significant.

Results

A single sample t-test was run to determine whether Indian consumers have an inclination to notice the contents on the packaging. The inclination scores were normally distributed, as calculated by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$) and the box plot revealed that there were no outliers in the data. Mean inclination score ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.44$) was lower than the normal inclination score (assumed) of 4.0. There was no statistically significant difference between means ($p > .05$) and, therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that the Indian consumers are not inclined to notice the contents declared by the company on the packaging.

To determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between consumer's perception before and after the Maggi episode, a paired-samples t-test was used. There were two outliers detected that were beyond 1.5 box-lengths from the box in a boxplot. But they were included in analysis as their values were not found to be extreme. As revealed by the Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .675$), the assumption of normality was not violated. Participant's perception post the episode (3.43 ± 0.426) as opposed to the perception before the episode (3.702 ± 0.317), a statistically significant decrease in quality perception of 0.28 (95% CI). The p value (.033) is less than 0.05; the mean difference was statistically significantly different and, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there was significant change in the quality perception of Maggi after the incident.

To determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between consumers' purchasing intentions before and after the Maggi episode, a paired-samples t-test was used. There were three outliers detected that were beyond 1.5 box-lengths from the box in a boxplot. One of the outliers was removed for the further tests. As revealed by the Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = 0.55$), the assumption of normality was not violated. Participant's purchasing intentions post the episode (3.688 ± 0.344) as opposed to the perception before the episode (3.702 ± 0.317), a statistically significant difference between the means was not found. The p value (0.63) is more than 0.05; the mean difference was not statistically significantly different and, therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that there was no significant change in the purchasing intentions of Maggi after the incident.

Conclusions

Indian consumers are found to be not inclined in noticing the packaging contents claimed / declared by the company. There was a significant change in the perceived quality of Maggi after the controversy. Consumers have taken the fact seriously that the product contain Lead and MSG in excess than the prescribed levels. But, there was no significant changes noticed in their purchasing intentions. The probable reasons for this attitude could be the strength of the brand. The brand has been so strong and trusted for close to 3 decades and gives the customer a confidence that Maggi shall rectify the errors, even if any, and return to market with a fresh formulation.

Exploring reasons for purchase of luxury products among Indian customers: A Leximancer Analysis

Varuna Newatiya & Richa Agrawal
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Growing at an annual rate of 30%, luxury market in India is expected to touch 14 billion USD by 2016 (Indian Luxury Summit report, 2014). Once dominated by customers belonging to the royal and wealthy business families, luxury market in India is booming with the entry of young and aspiring middle class customers (Atwal and Jain, 2012). Lucrative jobs in IT, consulting, finance and BPO sectors coupled with high disposable income is giving these customers an unprecedented appetite for luxury (Sinha, 2012). Having grown up in the post-economic-liberalization era, new luxury customers are open to the idea of spending and aspire for a high quality life. This makes them a good target segment for luxury brands (Shukla, 2011; Sinha, 2012). It would be beneficial to understand the different reasons why these customers buy luxury products. Such knowledge would help international luxury brands facing strategic challenges in the Indian market (Shukla, Singh and Banerjee, 2015) due to lack of understanding of the needs of local customers (Seidel, 2010).

Review of literature revealed that, luxury is mostly bought for conspicuous reasons i.e., to display wealth, gain social status and improve social standing (Mason, 1992; O'Cass and Frost, 2004; Veblen, 1899). It may be bought to gain exclusivity and to be seen as belonging to a higher social class (Leibenstein, 1950); luxury may also be bought for premium quality, great aesthetics (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004) and craftsmanship. Self-gifting and congruity with the internal self are some of the others reasons why people buy luxury (Tsai, 2005). It was found that, researchers' in the past have focused on studying the luxury consumption behavior of the elite; however things have changed in the last decade. More and more middle class customers are found '*trading up*' to quality products (Silverstein, Fiske and Butman, 2008). In the context of luxury goods, this phenomenon is referred to as 'democratization of luxury' (Silverstein and Fiske, 2003; Atwal and Williams 2009; Tsai, 2005; Yeoman et al., 2005) with more customers having access to luxury beyond the elite (Silverstein and Fiske, 2003; Danziger, 2005; Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2006). The changing socio-demographic trends influence the consumption behavior and therefore traditional understanding of why people want luxury may no longer apply to the current luxury market and customers. Lack of empirical investigations, into the reasons why Indian customers buy luxury led to the undertaking of the current study. Consequently, the objective of this study is to understand the key reasons that drive consumption of luxury especially amongst the new luxury customers in India.

Working towards this objective, data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews which help in gaining understanding of new and unexplored topics (Gwinner et al., 1998) by providing access to rich and detailed information (Boyce and Neale, 2006). Twenty five respondents (aged 25-40 years) all of whom had purchased at least 1-2 luxury products in the last one year were identified through purposive and snowballing techniques. Respondents including corporate executives, fashion designers, and entrepreneurs were interviewed at a time and place of their convenience. Each interview lasted about 30-50 minutes and was audio recorded. All the interviews were transcribed within 24 hours (Daymon and Holloway, 2002) and later analyzed

using Leximancer 4.0 (Smith and Humphreys, 2006). Key *word-like concepts* appearing frequently together within the text were clustered and presented as distinct themes in a concept map.

Through the iterative discovery and editing/cleaning process of leximancer, similar *word-like concepts* were merged (e.g. 'achieve' and 'achieved') and other null concepts not relevant to the research question (e.g., 'possible', 'sense', 'watch', 'sunglasses' and 'handbag') were deleted. A thematic summary (Table 1) was also generated, giving the connectivity scores that indicated the relative importance of each identified theme within the text (the most important theme gets a score of 100%). Accordingly, the first 6 themes having high connectivity scores are the focus of this study as the score drops drastically (almost by 1/8th) at the seventh theme indicating its lower significance within the text. The top 6 themes are discussed below.

Celebration of success (connectivity score 100%): Key words comprising this theme include - 'earned', 'achieved', 'goals' and 'accomplishment' which suggests that customers buy luxury products to reward themselves for achieving and accomplishing their goals. Accompanied with the feeling of having earned it and being worth it, luxury products seem to be bought to treat one-self and celebrate one's success.

Exclusive (connectivity score 76%): Words like 'Different', 'personality', 'style' and 'statement' make up this theme which indicates that young customers are interested in creating a distinct personality. Purchase and use of luxury products that are exclusive, seem to help customers create a unique style different from others.

Gaining confidence (connectivity score 62%): 'Presentation', 'conscious' and 'others' are the words in this theme, which indicates that new luxury customers are conscious of how they present themselves or appear to others. Use of luxury products perhaps help them feel confident among people belonging to a higher economic class.

Aspirational (connectivity score 49%): Words like 'dream', 'proud', 'esteem' and 'booster' make up this theme. A close look at these words makes it appear that acquisition of luxury goods is perhaps a dream fulfilled for many new customers. The purchase of luxury products seems to be a matter of pride. The fact that they are finally able to buy luxury products also seems to enhance their self-esteem.

Satisfy curiosity (connectivity score 33%): Comprising of words like 'experience', 'explore' and 'curiosity' the theme seems to suggest that new customers are curious to experience luxury. Purchase of luxury products therefore seems to be driven by this desire to explore and experience how it feels to own luxury.

Status symbol (connectivity score 32%): 'Flaunt', 'flashy', 'society', and 'impression' are the key words making up this theme. It seems that young customers buy luxury products to flaunt their newly gained wealth, and impress others. Such customers seem to be using luxury products to gain status. Conspicuous consumption continues to be the motivation to buy luxury, albeit a weak one. Connectivity score is the least at 32% when compared to other themes.

Through a qualitative inquiry key reasons that drive consumption of luxury amongst the new luxury customers in India were identified in the present study. Going by the connectivity scores, the highest quoted reason for luxury consumption seems to be celebration, self-gratification and personal enjoyment. The findings supports the observations made by Tsai (2005) and Truong and McColl (2011) who argued that, not every customer bought luxury for conspicuous benefits instead some may seek personal benefits too. Further, it was noticed that acquisition of luxury products is like a dream come true for many customers who are new to the world of luxury. Purchase of luxury products gives them a great sense of fulfilment and also boosts their self-esteem. Interestingly, our study reveals that the young consumers of luxury use their growing disposable income to fulfil higher order needs of esteem, confidence and respect through the acquisition of luxury products. The study also reveals that the new generation of luxury customers are driven by a deep desire to explore and experience a good life. It may be noticed that these customers are comfortable spending money on luxury products, unlike the older generation who were too conservative to spend. Finally, our findings show that some luxury customers in India continue to be driven by the motivation to use luxury products as status symbols, although unlike in the past it is not the highly quoted reason for purchase.

Overall, the findings of the study reveal that reasons for purchase span the whole spectrum of external and internal motivations, ranging from the need to gain recognition among peers, to internal gratification and sense of fulfilment. However, based on the connectivity scores of the themes, it seems that the motivation to fulfil personal needs and desires is more prominent among the new customers of luxury in India than a desire to impress others. A shift in the consumption of luxury is evident from a conspicuous consumption in the past to a more personal and experiential consumption in the present. Findings offer empirical support to the observations made by Eckhardt, Belk and Jonathan (2015) about the rise of inconspicuous consumption among luxury consumers. Findings from the study contribute to the existing knowledge of drivers for luxury consumption. From the Practitioners' perspective, emerging insights from the study will help luxury brand managers re-align their marketing strategies to what luxury means to the new customers so as to successfully appeal to their hearts and minds. Such a customized approach will enhance luxury brands' competitiveness and profit opportunities in the high-growth Asian markets like India.

Identifying the most and least promising customers through similarity kernels

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One of the perplexing realities in marketing is that only a small percentage of potential consumers are actually promising. For example, in social media data the actual opinion leaders form a very small percentage, click rates on online ads is extremely small, conventional coupons are redeemed by at best 2% and at worst .2% of the target customers. Thus, a pertinent question from both a methodological and managerial point of view is what is the best way to identify this small number of promising customers? The payoffs from correct identification are substantial since they lead to the conservation of resources that routinely get wasted targeting the not-so promising customers. Identifying the small number of promising customers is akin to finding a needle in a haystack. This task acquires further complexity given the nature of the data that hides these potential customers.

In the age of Big Data, Marketing datasets routinely contain multitudes of categorical and numerical variables that can't be assumed to follow any statistical distribution, are at times sparse and are generated via a dynamic process where it is hard to fit a stable predictive model a priori.

One useful way to identify the small number of promising customers is to recognize that promising customers appear like anomalies. That is, in large datasets of predominantly no-so promising customers, they appear very different from most other consumers. Identifying promising consumers is a form of anomaly detection. Statistics literature defines that anomaly is not noise; they are observations that deviates so much from other observations as to arouse suspicion that they were generated by a different mechanism (Hawkins 1980).

However, the most important problem that we try to solve in this research deals with the nature of most marketing datasets: they contain both categorical and numeric variables, may be large in size, and may not follow a Gaussian distribution. Traditional statistical methods of anomaly detection cannot handle such mixed variable large datasets. Why? First, there are several assumptions one needs to make about the distribution of the data (e.g., normality assumptions inherent in Mahalanobis distance based methods like fast-MCD (Rousseeuw and Driessen, 1999)). Many times such assumptions are difficult to know a-priori in datasets generated in a marketing context. Second, conventional statistical methods are unstable when a large number of variables are present (i.e., curse of dimensionality). Finally, no method, to the best of our knowledge, exists in marketing literature that can combine information from categorical with numerical variables to identify anomalous observations.

Goals of this research

In his research we present a method that detects most and least profitable/promising consumers by 1) making no a-priori distributional assumptions and hence, can be used across different types of data sets. 2) The method has the ability to handle both numerical and categorical variables. 3) Our method requires no prior knowledge of the percentage of anomalous observations. It can decide based on the data, since different datasets are likely to have different percentages of anomalous observations. 4) It provides an unambiguous criterion (probability of being anomalous) to identify anomalous observations. 5) It uses unsupervised learning methods that require no expert knowledge and circumvents the need to build a predictive model.

Proposed method

In order to detect anomalous observation we need to find out how similar or dissimilar they are to other observations. Therefore, we need a distance estimate between the data points. Importantly, this distance measure should utilize both categorical and continuous variables. For instance, if there is an observation $X_i = (c_{1i}, c_{2i}, \dots, c_{ki}, n_{1i}, n_{2i}, \dots, n_{pi})$ where for the i th observation c_1, c_2, \dots, c_k denote values of the k categorical variables (e.g. gender, city, marital status) and n_1, n_2, \dots, n_p denote values of the p numeric variables (e.g. age, price of product, number of purchases in the previous week etc.). We have to find a similarity function $d(.)$ that can measure the similarity between two observations X_i and X_j . We used a kernel function to estimate distances.

Kernel functions can be seen as comparison functions that calculate the level of similarity between data points in higher dimensional Hilbert space (Hofmann, Scholkop and Smola, 2008). A Hilbert space (besides other technical conditions) is a (possibly) infinite dimensional linear space endowed with a dot product. A kernel function can be defined as a similarity function with the property that for any x , and as the distance between x and y increases decreases. For a kernel to be able to yield a distance metric it needs to be symmetric and positive definite. A positive definitive kernel indicates that there exists a Hilbert space H and a lifting map $\phi: X \rightarrow H$ in such a way that it yields the following familiar kernel transformation functions: One property of kernel functions that make them particularly useful for mixed attribute data is that different kernels can be combined to get new kernels. Therefore, using this property we utilized different kernels for numerical and categorical variables. We use the RBF (Radial Basis Function or Gaussia kernel) for numeric variable. If $N_i = (n_{1i}, n_{2i}, \dots, n_{pi})$ represents continuous/numeric variables then the similarity between the i th and j th observation in the data can be calculated by !

$$K_{n_ij} = e^{-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \|N_i - N_j\|^2}$$

, here σ is a real value parameter. We used the Diffusion kernel for categorical variables (Kandor and Lafferty, 2002). If $C_i = (c_{1i}, c_{2i}, \dots, c_{ki})$ represents categorical variables in the dataset and considering C_i and C_j are the vertex on a graph then the similarity score can be calculated by using !

$$K_{c_ij} = \frac{1 - e^{-\beta |D_c|}}{1 + (|D_c| - 1)e^{-\beta |D_c|}} \frac{1}{c + 1} k$$

, D_c is the value that the c th categorical variable can take, returns 0 when $C_i = C_j$ otherwise 1. β is a real value parameter. We combine the similarity score from both kernels via a convex combination to calculate a single similarity measure.

$$K_{ij} = \alpha K_{n_ij} + (1 - \alpha) K_{c_ij}, \forall \alpha \in [0, 1], \alpha \geq 0, (1 - \alpha) \geq 0.$$

Utilizing the single similarity measure and k-nearest neighbor algorithm, we calculated a probability score of anomalousness (Kriegel, Kroger, Schubert, and Zimek, 2009) for these observations such that the anomalous points could be categorized as 80% versus 85% anomalous.

$$\begin{aligned} & \phi: X \rightarrow H \\ & K(x, x) = 1 \\ & K(x, y) \\ & K: X \times X \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \\ & K(x, y) = \langle \phi(x), \phi(y) \rangle \end{aligned}$$

Validation of method

We validated the method using simulated and real data. 2000 observations were randomly generated across 80 variables (i.e., 2000 x 80 matrix). 40 variables were numerical and 40 were categorical. The values of the numerical variable were randomly sampled from non normal (tri-modal) distributions. The categorical values were sampled from nine possible levels. Across several simulations, we achieved an average accuracy level of 95% to identify anomalous observations. In the real world data of insurance customers we were able to double the accuracy compared to chance levels, of detecting the most and least profitable customers.

Conclusions

Our method makes no distribution assumption, can handle large data sets, is unsupervised and is able to handle both categorical and continuous data. It brings in knowledge from statistical learning theory and uses kernel-based approaches of machine learning to marketing domains such as surveys, word-of-mouth, sales promotion, online ad-delivery, retail purchases, etc. In word-of-mouth (WOM) research it would help in detecting consumers who are most likely to diffuse a message versus those who are least likely to. In customer churn, it would help companies if they can correctly identify customers who are more likely to churn so that they can invest resources on them and avoid wasteful spending on those who are less likely to churn. Heavy users can be identified from sales data and can be targeted with customized offers versus non-users. The method is useful for lab, survey and field studies where anomalous observations, also called outliers, can make an insignificant effect appear significant or vice versa. Correctly identifying the most valuable, from the least valuable, customers can result in targeted sales promotion offers, accurate online advertisement delivery and better direct marketing.

A Conjoint Study of Sequential vs. Simultaneous Bundle Choices

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This study proposes a general framework to describe consumers' sequential bundling of items in related product categories and to compare their choices with those under simultaneous bundling situations. To achieve this, we develop a dynamic model in which strategic consumers can choose a bundle either sequentially or simultaneously. To empirically test these two models, we conduct conjoint experiments in which respondents select a simultaneous bundle product of a Tablet PC and a Smart TV constructed explicitly by a seller and implicitly select a bundle in a sequential manner. Our results show that consumers apply different decision processes for these two types of bundle choices. In addition, we propose a new method to find optimal bundle prices under these bundling strategies when consumers are forward looking. We offer valuable implications on design and pricing strategies for a bundle of related products.

The effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on Customer Performance and Behavioral Intention - Testing the mediating role of reputation of a private university.

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An attempt is made in this study to: **(a)** examine the relationship hypothesis between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate reputation (CR) and how they influence customer satisfaction which leads to behavioral intention like word of mouth. **(b)** Does reputation of an institution acts as a mediator in explaining the relationship between social responsibility and customer satisfaction which ultimately results in customer's word of mouth. Scales measuring CSR, reputation, customer satisfaction and word of mouth in this study were adopted from measurement developed in previous literatures. Based on non-probability convenience sampling, 70 star students responded from a private university based in Vellore district (Tyre-2 city of state Tamil Nadu in India). Visual PLS was used to find the causal relationship between CSR and CR and their effect on customer performance and behavioral intention. The mediating effect was calculated as per the *Sobel test*. The result helps the decision makers of a service sector like education university and researchers to understand that by involving in frequent social responsible activities would enhance the reputation of the service firm and further the result helps in finding whether both CSR activities and reputation of the firm would leads to customer performance like satisfaction towards the service offered by the university that ultimately result in behavioral intention of the customer like positive word of mouth about the university to their friends and relatives.

Investigating the antecedents and consequences of attitudinal and continuance commitment on brand relationships

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Purpose – Does the type of brand relationship that consumers form with brands matter? Prior research has thrown up some mixed results and the current research seeks to identify whether studying the outcomes of the two forms of commitments-affective and continuance might help answer when affective commitment outcomes and continuance commitment outcomes differ from each other. In addition, this research also seeks to tie in the unique antecedents of affective and continuance commitments so that a better understanding of the drivers of these forms of commitment is available.

Design/methodology/approach – A random in-field survey of actual grocery shoppers was conducted. A questionnaire was handed to shoppers using a mall-intercept method. Questionnaires were filled at home and mailed back. One thousand surveys were distributed and 314 usable surveys were returned (31.4% response rate). A SEM analysis was conducted on the data to test the hypotheses.

Findings –This research finds that affective and continuance commitment consumers differ substantially from each other on four outcomes studied. Affective commitment is associated with more favorable intent to continue the relationship, to make sacrifices for the relationship, consider

the brand relationship as special, and less favorable opinion of the competition. Continuance commitment is seen to have the opposite effects on all these variables. Therefore, even though both are a form of commitment, affective commitment is more beneficial to brands than continuance commitment.

Originality/value – The comparative examination of the outcomes of affective and continuance commitment is of value to managers, especially given that the effects of affective commitment differ from that of continuance commitment on the outcome variables. Managers may want to examine the nature of the relationship that their customers have and understand the consequences of those relationships. Further, this paper also ties in the antecedents of commitment to its outcomes. Finally, the paper examines brand commitment in the context of a grocery store brand, a relatively less studied context.

The perils of category management: The effect of product assortment on multicategory purchase incidence

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Retailers determine the assortment for a mix of product categories in a particular space. For example, grocers fill their checkout aisle with items from tempting product categories to entice shoppers waiting in the queue to make impulse purchases. In some instances, the nature of the products requires that the assortment decisions be made for a group of categories in a common space; e.g., freezer space in a supermarket. Within such “target” space, shoppers are exposed to the entire selection of product categories that are not necessarily correlated in consumption (i.e., neither substitutes such as butter and margarine nor complements like pasta and pasta sauce). In this paper, we examine whether the assortment of one category affects a consumer’s purchase incidence decision in another independent category that shares a common display space (e.g., frozen meals and ice cream). We use a multivariate probity model of purchase incidence and incorporate assortment variety captured via an entropy measure. Results from analyzing IRI data and an online experiment provide strong evidence that consumers are less likely to purchase from a category of a given assortment when it is presented with another category assortment of greater variety, and that the effects are driven by the display proximity as opposed to the consumers’ budget constraints. Further, results from an eye-tracking study point to the consumers’ allocation of limited attention to multi-category assortments as a potential mechanism. This work serves as one of the first studies documenting the impact of product assortment beyond a focal category, and the results highlight the limitation of individual category management when making product assortment decisions in grocery retailing.

User Acceptance of Electronic Health Records: Cross Validation of UTAUT model with Gender as a Moderator

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With an increase trend in digitalization, e-health services playing a very significant role in today’s economy. As Health service is considered to be the basic obligation or need to mankind, the demand for e-health services is augmenting in the past recent years. In most of the Western countries, health service is

given prominence and everyone is insured. The birth rate of westernized countries was 12-13 births per 1000 population; infant mortality rate of India and United States reaches out to 44 and 6 people respectively and average life time is also considered to be very high when compared to India. When it draw closer to India the doctor patient ratio is said to be 1:1000 which means one doctor for every 1000 patients, yet it accounts for four lakh more of doctors by 2020. Most of multi-specialty hospitals and health services are restricted to urban areas and there is a lot of scarcity in rural and interior areas. So use of technology would fetch more to the doctors in order to serve up the patients. Hence the study aims to identify the perception of doctors in adopting the usage of Electronic Health Records. According to Orhun M. Kök et al. (2011) applied qualitative study to identify the major factors that impinges on usage of Electronic Health Records by interviewing the doctors. In our quantitative study, we would like to empirically validate UTAUT model by administering the questionnaire to doctors in private hospitals to identify the factors that effects on usage of EHR and gender is used as a moderating variable to identify the purpose.

Analyzing Brand Experience and Its Impact on Customer Experiential Value: A Case of Smart phones

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In today's competitive world, the companies are positioning their brands within the emotional and experiential domain of the consumers. These non-functional features or experiences that are wrapped around the traditional offerings of the firm during different customer encounters are included in brand experiences. The brand experiences or brand related stimuli that evoke various behavioural responses help the firm to enhance memorability and differentiation for the brand against competitors. The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of brand experience on customer experiential value in smart phone users of Jammu and Dehradun. In this paper, various dimensions of brand experience i.e. sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual, were analyzed to study their impact on customer experiential value. The results of the study suggest that brand experience dimensions do have significant impact on customer experiential values. However, different brand experience dimensions have varied impacts on experiential value.

Research methodology: This study comprised of both quantitative and qualitative research. In the first stage a qualitative study using word association technique was conducted to identify the smart phone brands. The brands were selected on the basis of experience they provide to the customer. In the second stage the primary data was collected from consumers using smartphones of the selected brands with the help of a structured questionnaire.

Findings: The qualitative study identified Apple and Samsung as the brand choices for the study. The study found a significant positive impact of various dimensions of brand experience on customer experiential values.

Research Limitations /Implications: This research includes consumers in Dehradun and Jammu city only. Further research can be done in broader areas and different sectors. The paper has several practical implications for the smart phone companies who want to retain customers by creating effective brand experience for customers.

Significance of National Identity on Global Brand Attitudes: Evidence from China

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Nowhere among the emerging markets is the impact of globalization more palpable than in China, where market oriented reforms, initiated by the government since the 1980s, have significantly raised consumer disposable income, altered consumption habits, and made global brands household names. Many multinationals, hobbled by slow growing domestic markets in their home countries in the West, have increasingly turned their attention to China for revenue growth. Yet, research in both the popular press and academia point out that *national identity* – a concept which measures the extent to which people identify with and have a positive feeling or pride of affiliation with their own nation along with its symbols, language, and culture (Biling, 1995; Tajfel, 1978) – is on the rise in China, with a potential to impact global brand acceptance. Steenkamp and Geyskens (2006) suggested that national identity provides a prescription for morally motivated behavior. This behavior may manifest itself in the form of rejection of global brands in favor of domestic brands, when the national economy is perceived to be under threat from foreign products. At the same time, the positive feelings associated with one's own country, as reflected by national identity, may prompt consumers to favor domestic brands (Zeugner-Roth et al. 2015). Previous research has also suggested that Chinese nationalism, which is connected to national identity, has emerged as a bulwark against the spread of globalization. For example, GAO (2012) proposed that rising Chinese nationalism could present a threat to the acceptance of global brands. Also, a Boston Consulting Group (2008) report disclosed that in the assessment of some brand analysts, Chinese consumers are increasingly favoring domestic brands for nationalistic reasons. In turn, consumer nationalism is playing a significant role in the evolving Chinese identity (Knight, 2006). Given the importance of national identity, but a dearth of research in this area, our study aims to examine the significance of national identity on Chinese consumers' global brand attitudes. We also address whether consumers' global identity and other psychological variables modify the above relationship.

China provides an appropriate setting for our study, as it is the second largest trading partner for both the U.S. and European Union (EU). Several multinationals based in the U.S. and EU have a significant presence in the Chinese market. From luxury products to consumer staples, the various global brands frequently compete with domestic brands. On the one hand, global brands have high familiarity and are preferred, even in smaller Chinese cities (cf. Ding and Xu, 2015). But, of late, domestic brands have begun to raise their quality and offer stiffer competition to global brands (Croll, 2006; Ding and Xu, 2015). Some of the Chinese brands (e.g., Hawei, Lenovo) have even been recognized as top global brands (Interbrand 2014). In such a dynamic market, it would be instructive to find what role national identity plays in shaping consumer brand attitudes. Our study addresses this issue on the basis of a survey of young adults, conducted in a major Chinese city. Our study's findings have implications for both academics and practitioners.

Evaluation Criteria of Mobile Apps among Smart-Phone Users: An Exploratory Study in Indian Context

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The widespread use of smart-phones in India has added new dimensions to interactive m-commerce in India. The penetration of smart-phones has brought millions of mobile applications (Apps) to the users which are significantly influencing every step of the buying behavior of these young consumers group especially in the age bracket of 18-35 years. The present paper attempts to focus on the underlying motives or values that drives consumer to adopt, use and consume mobile app technology. The paper also attempts to understand the experiential value of these apps among target consumers

Loss is a loss why categorize it? Mental Accounting across Cultures

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We regularly track our expenses and assign those to different categories like food, entertainment, clothing etc. This cognitive bookkeeping is popularly known as mental accounting in the literature (Thaler 1985, 1999). To give an example, let us consider the following situation: Imagine that you have decided to see a play where admission is \$15 per ticket. As you enter the theater, you realize that you have lost the ticket/\$15 bill. Will you still pay \$15 for a ticket for the play?

Henderson and Peterson (1992) show that a significantly higher proportion of individuals say yes in the lost cash condition compared to the lost ticket condition. Arguably this difference in responses seems to emanate from a categorical mindset of consumers, where he/she is prone to label and assign a particular expense to a well-defined category—cash (no debit to the ticket account, as losing cash has no relation to buying a ticket) versus play (a debit of \$30 to the ticket account, making it too expensive). The authors also highlight the importance of category formation in mental accounting and conclude, “In this regard, mental account is nothing more than a type of category, one that contains the advantages and disadvantages of the element being categorized” (p. 114).

Interestingly, this proclivity of consumers to categorize expenses violates one of the fundamental assumptions of economics, fungibility of money—money is not supposed to have any labels (Thaler 1990), whether one has lost a ticket worth \$15 or a dollar bill of the same amount. So, a pertinent question to ask is, loss is a loss why categorize it? Will the results be different if classification of expenses into specific categories is overlooked and instead the overall value of the transaction is given a greater consideration (it is the same \$30 that is spent)?

Though mental accounting is a robust phenomenon that has been replicated across several domains (Henderson and Peterson 1992) but participants came mostly from Western background, who are characterized by analytical thinking style. An analytical thinking style involves a “... detachment of the object from its context, a tendency to focus on attributes of the object to assign it to different categories to explain and predict the objects behavior” (Nisbett et al 2001, p. 293). On the other

hand, Easterners are characterized by holistic thinking style, “involving an orientation to the context or field as a whole, including attention to relationships between a focal object and the field, and a preference for explaining and predicting events on the basis of such relationships” (Nisbett et al. 2001, p. 300).

In view of the above discussions we posit that Easterners, due to their holistic style of thinking and a focus on interrelationships, will be able to link expenses together to arrive at a comprehensive whole—a total expenditure of \$30 for going to a play. Thereby, eliminating mental accounting biases. Westerners on the other hand, due to their analytical thinking style, will use rule based category formation, which will preclude them from taking an inclusive viewpoint of a financial transaction, thereby, making them susceptible to mental accounting biases.

We conducted two studies to test this proposition. In study 1, we show that Easterners are not susceptible to mental accounting biases and in study 2 we manipulate the cultural background of the participants, to explicate the underlying mechanism.

In study one, sixty-seven students from a large private university in India (used in prior research to represent people with Eastern cultural background, Monga and John 2007) were asked to imagine a scenario of going to a movie (opening example, but \$15 replaced by Rs.100 and play replaced by movie) and were randomly assigned to either lost ticket or cash condition. Following which they were asked whether they would be willing to buy a ticket and to list the thoughts that went through their mind as they made the choice. Finally, they answered some demographic questions before being debriefed and dismissed. The results of the study show that there is no significant difference in the number of participants who are willing to buy a ticket across the two different conditions—cash (0.80) versus ticket (0.81), $z = .1$, $p > .05$.

The listed thoughts were coded as follows: (1) analytical thoughts: any thought that expresses buying a ticket by spending double the amount as being too expensive and the loss of cash as being unrelated to going to movie, (2) holistic thoughts: any thought that compare the overall advantages and disadvantages of going to movie by spending an amount that equals the cost of two tickets or the cost of one ticket and an equivalent amount of cash, with any activity that may potentially act as a substitute, for example, spending time with friends in a café; and (3) all other thoughts that were irrelevant to our hypothesis were not coded. Results of the analysis show that in both the lost cash and ticket conditions, participants listed a significantly large number of holistic compared to analytical thoughts ($M_{\text{Holistic}} = .80(.89)$ versus $M_{\text{Analytical}} = .11(.32)$, $t(66) = 5.73$, $p < .05$). Thus the results of Study 1 show that unlike Westerners, Easterners are not prone to mental accounting biases due to the differences in styles of thinking. In Study 2, we manipulate the cultural background to control for factors that may be idiosyncratic to the Indian population and also to explicate the underlying process

In Study 2 one hundred and seventeen students from a large Midwestern university completed a paper-and-pencil study for partial fulfillment of a course credit. In the first part of the study, we manipulated the cultural background of the participants, using a pronoun circling task (Gardner, Gabriel, and Lee 1999; Monga and John 2007). Participants either circled individual pronouns such as “I” and “my” in the Western prime condition or collective pronouns such as “we” and “our,” in the Eastern prime condition. Following the manipulation, participants were either shown a scenario where the ticket was lost few days before going to a movie or at the movie theater. Then they were asked whether they would be willing to buy the ticket to the movie. Following which they were asked to list the thoughts that went through their mind as they made their choice. Finally,

they answered some demographic questions before being debriefed and dismissed. A chi-square test indicated a significant difference between Easterners and Westerners in buying a ticket ($\chi^2(3, 103) = 6.9, p = .07$). Consistent with our predictions, individuals primed with Western cultural background had a greater proportion of participants who were willing to buy the ticket when it was lost few days prior to the movie compared to at the theater (few days before (.60) versus at the theater (.20); $z = 2.9, p < .00$); while there was no significant difference between these conditions for individuals primed with Eastern cultural background (few days before (.26) versus at the theater (.25); $z = .1, p > .10$). The thoughts were categorized as in Study 1 but with a minor change. In study two the *loss of cash* was replaced by *loss of ticket few days before the movie* and consequently, thoughts like “sunk cost, irrelevant to the purchase of ticket” were coded as analytical thoughts. Supporting our conjecture, participants primed with Eastern cultural background listed more holistic versus analytical thoughts ($M_{\text{Holistic}} = .90(.99)$ versus $M_{\text{Analytical}} = .12(.33)$, $t(53) = 5.38, p < .05$), while participants primed with Western cultural background, listed more analytic compared to the holistic thoughts ($M_{\text{Holistic}} = .32(.51)$ versus $M_{\text{Analytical}} = .61(.70)$, $t(48) = 2.41, p < .05$). Such differences in result originate from the fact that Westerners due to their analytical style of thinking assign expenditures to two different accounts—one, few days before the movie and the other, at the theater. Consequently, this enables a greater number of participants in the Western prime condition to buy the ticket in the “lost few days before condition” presumably because it is unrelated to buying a ticket at the theater. On the other hand, for participants in the Eastern prime condition, due to holistic style of thinking, consider both the losses as financially equivalent, resulting in no difference in responses across situations. Thus the results of both the studies highlight the importance of categorization in the mental accounting process.

In the main, our findings resonate with the assertion of Henderson and Peterson (1992) that mental accounting, “...is simply an instance of categorization, albeit with a different nomenclature and focus” (p. 114). Moreover, it adds to the literature and shows what happens to mental accounting if categorization fails.

To Delist or Not to Delist National Brands from Grocery Shelves?

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Strategically, a grocery supermarket retailer is a real estate manager. Their real estate is the grocery shelves on which they place the brands and obtain revenues and profits from sale of those brands to end consumers. These brands can be private labels or store brands, national and regional brands, or a combination of both types of brands. Recently, there has been a growing trend among retailers to “delist” (i.e., stop carrying) some or all national brands and give more shelf space to their own store brands or private labels (Olbrich and Grewe 2013). For example, Wal Mart cut big brand names like Hefty and Glad for some time in favour of its own Great Value store brand. Dutch food retail chain Edah deleted 2000 manufacturer brands to make room for 1000 store brands items (Sloot and Verhoef 2008). In 2008, large Spanish retailer Mercadona delisted 800 items from several manufacturers including brands such as Nestle and Sara Lee.

There are a number of reasons for this delisting trend: (i) retailers believe they get higher margins on their store brands; (ii) retailers have better control over marketing of store brands and

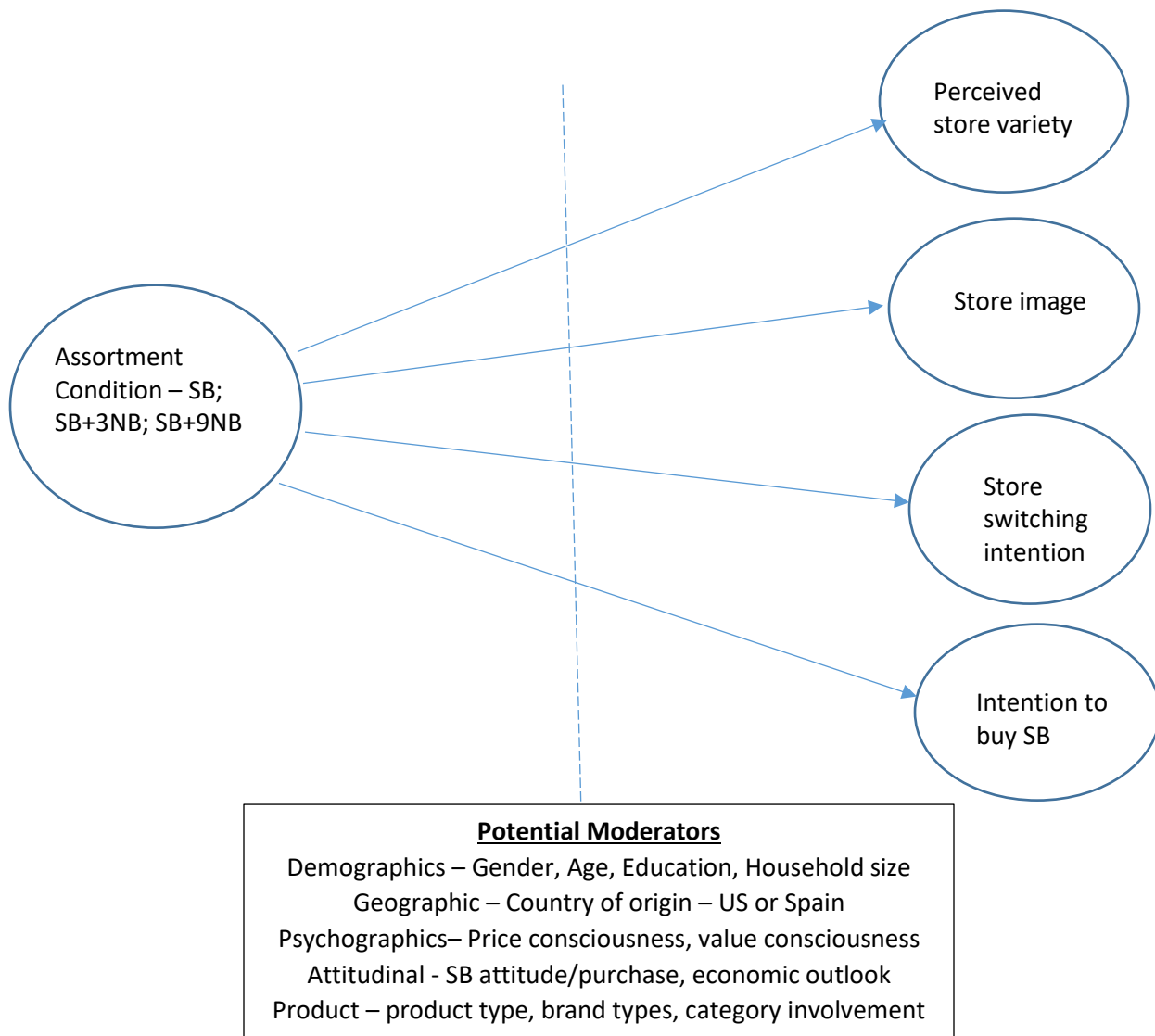
differentiating their retail store; (iii) by delisting or threat of delisting national brands, retailers can negotiate better terms with the manufacturers and even have them produce the store brands; (iv) retailers can become more efficient and cut costs if they stock brands from fewer suppliers (Ailawadi et al. 2008; Sethuraman and Gielens 2014).

Ideally, all things equal, a retailer might want to just carry its own store brand to avoid double marginalization and pocket most of the profits. All manufacturers would obviously want the retailer to carry their brands, perhaps at the exclusion of other brands. Thus the retailer can exercise any option ranging from carrying just its own store brand (delisting all manufacturer brands) to carrying all relevant brands (do not delist any relevant manufacturer brand – also called complete assortment).

Consumer is a prime “arbiter” of the retailer’s decision to delist manufacturer brand and set their assortment. A limited assortment can trigger negative consequences among consumers – such as poor store image, not purchasing in the category and even store switching. In fact, in response to consumer pressure, many retailers including the Dutch chain Edah and Spanish chain Mercadona had to relist or reintroduce some of the delisted national brands.

This research attempts to shed light on retailers’ decision to delist national brands through a large scale online experiment of 1400 consumer panelists in USA and 1400 panelists in Europe across four grocery products. These panelists were randomly assigned to broadly three assortment conditions: (i) Store brand only (ii) Store brand + 3 national brands (iii) Store brand + 9 national brands, across four product categories – Yogurt, Bread & Rolls, Toilet tissue and Laundry detergent. They were then asked to provide their perception of the assortment variety in the store, their image of the store, their intention to switch stores, and their intention to buy a private label or store brand in that category based on their observed assortment. Data are also collected on consumer demographics, psychographics and attitude. Our goal is to assess the relationship between retailer’s assortment (as reflected in the three experimental conditions) and consumers’ response to the observed assortment in terms of their perceived store variety, store image, store switching intention, intention to buy private label. We also investigate whether consumer demographics/attitudes and product characteristics moderate the relationships. The relationships investigated by us in our research are provided in Figure 1.

Figure1: Relationships and Potential Moderators Investigated (SB = Store brand or Private label)



Data and Method of Analysis

Two groups of 1400 primary grocery shoppers aged 24 to 70 belonging to a large existing consumer panel in the U.S. and Spain, owned by IRI participated in the online assortment experiment. The experiment was identical in both countries except for slight change in assortment composition (brands) to reflect the different markets. In the experiment, we manipulated two aspects of assortment variety – assortment size and assortment composition across four products as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Experimental Conditions

Product	Low equity (le) SB					High equity (he) SB				
	+ 0 NB	+ 3 NB		+ 9 NB		+ 0 NB	+ 3 NB		+ 9 NB	
		1/3 he NB	2/3 he NB	1/3 he NB	2/3 he NB		1/3 he NB	2/3 he NB	1/3 he NB	2/3 he NB
Yogurt	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Bread	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Toilet tissue	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Laundry deterg	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Total	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140

Dependent variables and consumer attitudinal and psychographic variables were measured with multi-item measures obtained from past literature. Other variables were directly measured.

We plan to use a combination of data analysis techniques – confirmatory factory analysis, descriptive (model-free) statistics, regression model, ANOVA with main and interaction effects, ANCOVA with moderators as covariates, MANOVA and MANCOVA to jointly assess the effect of assortment conditions on dependent variables. If necessary, we may resort to Structural Equation Modeling to identify mediators of effects and estimate path coefficients.

We believe results from this analysis will yield insights and initial guidance into whether retailers should delist national brands and to what extent. For example, if we find that the effect of assortment size on store switching is relatively strong for low equity SB but weak for high equity SB, the result would suggest that retailers with high equity (quality) SB can be more proactive in delisting national brands but those with low quality SB should be more cautious.

Mall mania - footfalls to sales - A study of buyer behavior in Coimbatore malls

Swamynathan & Mansurali

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Shopping centers and malls are viewed as a significant change in the shopping culture. Particularly, malls made a substantial impact on consumers and across the communities. Malls as such are not just a place for shopping, but it also viewed as a status symbol, hangout place and has become a one – stop solution. Tier 1 cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore have received greater social and economic contributions from the malls, now it's turn for Tier 2 cities like Coimbatore, Trichy, Salem etc., Coimbatore is the highest revenue yielding district in the state ahead of Chennai. The revenue growth of the city is nearly twice as much as India's growth. A mall is a place which has a collection of independent retail stores, services, and a vast parking area, they also contain restaurants, banks, theatres, professional offices, service stations etc..., The conversion of footfalls into sales in the malls is dependent on the convergence of mall hygiene, consumer expectations and mall offerings. This paper focuses on the mall assets and perceptions of customers over the mall assets. Mall assets consist of experiences, sensory or upliftment factors and the factors related to shopping success and customer delight. Experiences include entertainment centers, food court and the facilities like escalators, lift, cleanliness and rest rooms etc. Sensory factors include aroma, sound, lighting, music and display. Shopping success factors includes price, quality, value

delivered in the malls. The study has also tried to find out the shopping pattern of the consumers like frequency, time spent, money spent and the type of purchases they do. The research recorded the data in the range of low, medium, high while trying to capture the perceptions of consumers on Mall assets. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of customers on each aspect mentioned above which broadly classified under mall hygiene, customer expectations and mall offerings. This is the second study from the researcher in continuation with the previous study which concentrated on the factors influenced the consumer preference towards the Mall in Tier- 2 South Indian city Coimbatore.

Literature Review:

Indian consumers prefer shopping malls because malls provide easy access to all the products under one roof (Bailay, 2003). Shopping malls play a major role in consumers' lifestyle (Terblanche, 1999) and they have become not only a centre for shopping but also community centre for social and recreational activities (Howard, 1993; Terblanche, 1999; Chan et al., 2001; Ng, 2003; Martin and Mason, 1987; Jansen-Verbeke, 1987; Dholakia, 1999; Miller, 1998; Mintel, 2000; Myers and Lumbers, 2008). Large malls have brought about huge growth potential and changes in the consumer buying behavior (Mehta, 2009). Tripathi (2008) attempted to explain that retailers has to address family sensibilities more rigorously to woo Indian customers in malls. The popularity of malls is attributed to retailers offering range of facilities that targeted different consumer segments. Branded showrooms, apparel stores, book stores, household products, movie theaters, food courts, and play areas for kids are crowd pullers (Abratt et al., 1985; McGoldrick and Thomson, 1992; Prendergast et al., 1998; Yavas, 2003). Many researches had indicated the importance of experiences in the malls (Berman and Evans, 2004; Parsons, 2003; Yavas, 2003; Chattopadhyay and Sengupta, 2006; Lindsey-Mullikin and Munger, 2011; Singh and Sahay, 2012). Swamynathan et al.(2013) in their research highlighted the retail atmospherics, lifestyle, customer retreat and infotainment were the reasons for consumer's preference towards the mall. Michon et al. (2005) explored the role of mall atmospherics and its interaction effects of the mall environment on shopping behavior. Studies also highlighted that the consumers are attracted to the malls which has good architectural design and and appealing sensory factors (Barson, 2005). Hedonic values for the customer is been decided and associated with Mall's ambience, music, displays (Ballentine et al., 2010). Factors like price, offers, customer care, and shopping mall facilities are important for Indian shoppers (SeminarProjects.com, 2012).

Methodology:

The study attempts to study the buyer behavior of customers in malls is descriptive in nature and it uses both primary and secondary data. Convenience sampling method was used for the data collection. Questionnaire, an instrument used for the survey consists of demographics, perceptions on expectations, offerings and experiences. The Paper applies Correlation, Regression, and Descriptive statistics using SPSS on a sample of 375 respondents drawn from the two malls in the city of Coimbatore.

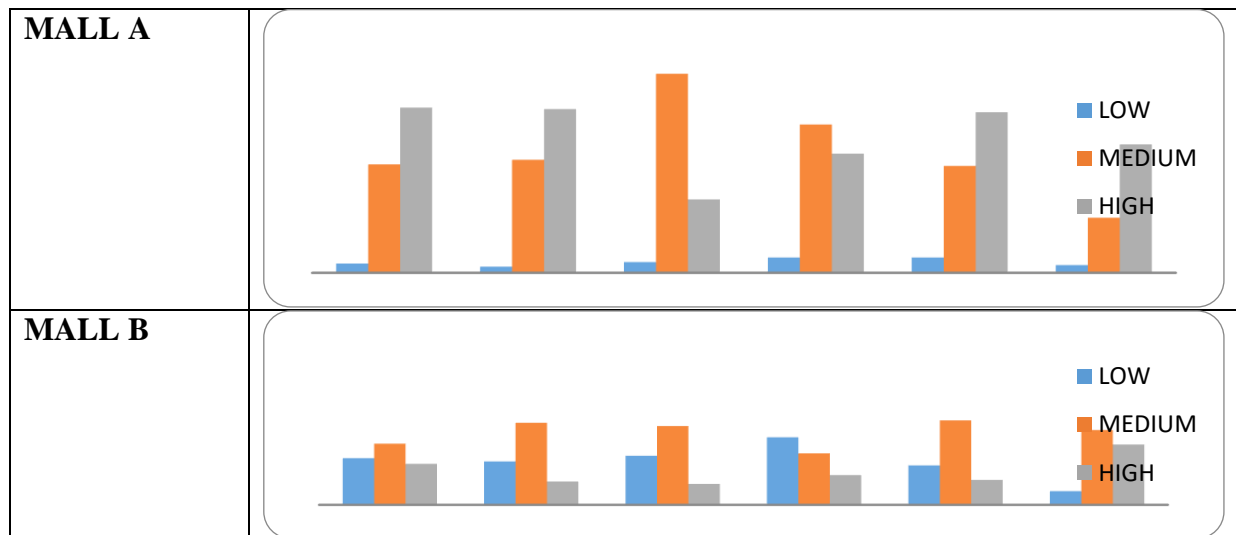
Objective:

- To study the customer perceptions on mall assets.

- To study the buying behavior of customers pertaining to mall hygiene, customer expectations and mall offerings
- To study the shopping pattern of consumers in the city of Coimbatore.
- To identify the most valued parameter among the consumers.

Major Findings:

Customer Perception:



Mall A & Mall B – Names have not been disclosed.

Buying behavior:

- Among the parameters included for the study, Customers are happy about the offerings by the retail (Stores & Entertainment) which tops the list.
- Customer expectations in the services and facilities are yet to move up on the ladder.
- Mall hygiene related matters (like Sensory, Cleanliness etc..), are a bigger concern among the customers, which the mall management needs to address.

Shopping Pattern on Consumers:

- Nearly 60 percent of the shoppers visit malls only once in a month
- Though the boomtown Coimbatore had a good surplus income, the shoppers who spend more than ten thousand rupees in malls is 10 percent
- On an average every visitor who step into the mall spends 2-3 hours

Valued parameters:

1 – Entertainment Centers 2 – Stores 3 – Life style 4 – Value added comforts 5 – Retail atmospherics.

- Entertainment centers are still crowd pullers for the malls in the Tier -2 cities like Coimbatore

Conclusion: To conclude, this research has given a significant insight on the customer perceptions about the mall assets. The research also highlights the parameter valued by the customers and insisting the convergence importance of mall hygiene, customer expectations and offerings. The findings can be useful to the mall management and mall retailers for designing the right mix on delivery values and assets to increase the footfalls and sales.

Marketing Channel Structure and Shareholder Value

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Changes in marketing channel structure are major strategic decisions and can have a significant impact on firm value. Yet, the financial performance impact of such decisions has not been as extensively investigated as has the effect of changes in other elements of a firm's marketing mix. In this study, we examine the effects of changes in the governance structure of a firm's marketing channels on its financial market value. We conduct the study in a franchising context and use the event study methodology to specifically examine (a) the effects of changes in the governance structure of marketing channels on shareholder value and (b) the factors that drive the magnitude of these effects. Our empirical analyses reveal that shifts in the governance structure of marketing channels have a significant positive impact on shareholder value. We identify and empirically assess theoretically-driven factors that influence the magnitude of these effects of channel governance changes on shareholder value.

The Impact of Media on Consumer Brand Trust

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Introduction

"A brand's value to a firm is largely created by the customer loyalty it commands" (David Aaker, 1996). At the root of loyalty is the fragile bond of trust that exists between the brand and the consumer. Brand trust is defined as "the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function" (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Consumer brand trust has become a thriving topic of discussion for businesses, academicians and consumers as well. Past researchers have studied the relationship of brand trust and variables such as brand choice, purchase intention, brand loyalty, brand performance and brand equity. Further, studies of different kinds have been made on the relationship between trust and a product-harm crisis.

The consumers' trust in the brand is the base for their commitment towards it and their willingness to even forgo some aspects in the course of the association with the brand. This is majorly due to the dependency of brand attachment on the level of brand trust (Ahmed & Thyagaraj, 2015). The trust that a consumer has for a brand is capable of affecting the loyalty of the consumers attitudinally as well as in the case of purchasing intention (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

A consumer's past experience with the brand could lead to brand trust (Kabadayi & Kocak Alan, 2012). This provides an opportunity for the companies to create good experiences for the consumers to build trust (Khan et al., 2009). This can also be done using advertising by building a feeling of trust through the message of the advertisement (Fuan & Miniard, 2006).

Also, the trust for a brand depends on the risk that a consumer faces from the brand and how important the outcome of the risk is to him/her. And consideration and purchase decisions for many categories could also be based on trust (Erdem & Swait, 2004). The fact remains that brands cannot afford to lose consumer trust, yet the consumer would be willing to base his/her decision on trust only in the case of few brands. This is for those categories that the consumer feels he/she has a lot to lose if the choice goes wrong - in other words when there is a high risk from the consumer's viewpoint.

Brand trust is a dynamic concept that is affected by a number of factors. At the same time, it is relative to different situations and also on the various sources of information for the consumer. Along with those factors that build brand trust as mentioned by researchers, the role of external information in shaping trust for a brand cannot be ignored. Media and word-of-mouth are two important sources of information about a brand and both the sources hold different levels of credibility with the consumer. Especially with the current trends of social media communication, word of mouth has grown into a new phenomenon with outcomes of great concern for brands.

Where studies have highlighted brand trust in different dimensions, there is not much research that analyses the role of media in affecting brand trust especially during a product-harm crisis.

Purpose

The objective of this study is to identify the impact that the media has on brand trust which in turn affects the consumer decision making during a product-harm crisis. The value of a brand is vulnerable to a number of uncontrollable factors, complete or partial, a notable instance being a product-harm crisis. A product-harm crisis may be said to have occurred when there is public knowledge of the questionable quality of a product (Dawar and Pillutla, 2000).

The media is an important entity when a brand is facing a crisis period because it has the ability to change or create consumer perceptions not just about the brand but about the details of the crisis as well (Yannopoulou et al., 2011). This paper is an attempt to understand how the media and word of mouth differ in affecting the consumer brand trust and decision making during a crisis in the Indian context. For this purpose the case of Maggi noodles product-harm crisis 2014-2015 is considered for the research.

Design / Methodology

A survey based research is to be conducted to understand the responses of the consumers. For this, a sample of students from M.O.P. Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai is to be chosen to administer the study. The sample under consideration would be between the ages of 19 and 25 years. The research design would facilitate the analysis of consumers' responses to the Maggi brand after the brand crisis of 2014-2015. The responses would be studied to determine the level of impact of external information and also the differences in the impact of media and word-of-mouth communication on brand trust and consumer decision making.

Implications for researchers and practitioners

The results of the paper would give a better understanding of the role of information from media and word-of-mouth in building brand trust especially for the packaged food category. A product-harm crisis creates doubt and suspicion among consumers. It is of course necessary to find the level of problem for a brand from a crisis. But more important is to work towards the responses to mitigate the damage (Heerde et al., 2007). The management must be responsive and actively work towards communicating with the public to reduce and eliminate the effects of the crisis (Baolong et al., 2014).

This study would give an insight both to the researchers and practitioners of management. In order for the management to face a crisis, the consumers' responses and the factors affecting the views must be determined. A level of understanding of these aspects can be acquired from this paper. Actions that can also shape the brand trust of the consumers can be decided on and suitable media could be used to disseminate information as an attempt to reduce the impact of distrust creating information. This in turn helps brands to manipulate the consumers' decisions through trust.

This research is pertaining to the packaged food category as the Maggi noodles crisis case is considered. Further, such studies for different categories would provide an idea of the differences between categories. Other parameters such as the other influences on brand trust during a product-harm crisis and the effect of the company responses during a crisis would also be an insight into practical crisis management.

Choice Architecture to the Rescue: Differential Use of Product Categorization Formats to Resolve Decision Paralysis

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Consumers choosing from large sets of products often face decision paralysis due to accuracy-effort trade-off dilemmas during the process. Retailers and e-Commerce portals employ product categorization techniques to help consumers circumvent this decision fatigue. While the positive effects of the 'mere categorization' technique have been empirically validated, the impact of categorization formats at different stages of decision making and on heterogeneous consumer groups are largely unexplored. We draw upon the Effort- Accuracy framework and fMRI results from extant research to reason that different categorization formats trigger contrasting processing styles. Two experiments explore the interaction effect of categorization formats (thematic versus taxonomic) and search tasks (browsing vs. searching) when initial assortment size varies (small versus large) on online consumer decision-making.

Research on consumer decision-making has traditionally promoted the advantages of extensive options as it facilitates greater preference matching among individuals (Haynes, 2009). However, empirical evidence indicates that choice proliferation can make decision-making tedious, especially in online contexts (Byung-Kwan & Wei-Na, 2004). Results indicate that online information search mode (browse and search mode) of the decision maker can further complicate this choice process (Hodkinson, Kiel & McColl-Kennedy, 2000). While product categorization has been identified as a possible tool to combat these decision fatigue issues (Mogilner, Rudnick

& Iyengar, 2008) the effect of product categorization formats on decision-making is under-explored. This study hypothesises that effective use of information architecture using appropriate product categorization formats can increase navigability on e-commerce websites by reducing the decision fatigue.

The exponential increase in product diversity has resulted in an interesting paradox where decision-makers opt for larger assortments if given a choice. However, more choice often leads to reduced decision accuracy and increased regret about choices made (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). The sheer number of options available can lead to 'decision fatigue', described as the deteriorating quality of decisions made by an individual, when the number of decisions to be made increases (Mogilner, Rudnick & Iyengar, 2008). The increased number of options result in resource depletion (Baumeister, 2003) leading to poor trade-offs, reduced decision accuracy, reduced satisfaction and increased regret about choices made.

Decision fatigue in consumers can be further accentuated by the information mode adopted by the consumer, a critical part of the early stage decision making process (Haubl & Trifts, 2000). Consumers looking for pre-purchase information engage in two modes of seeking activity: browsing and directed search (Rowley, 2000). Browsing is defined as "an activity in which one gathers information while scanning an information space without an explicit objective" (Toms, 2000) and browsing mode consumers are characterised by the uncertainty about goals. Exploratory action and loosely defined goals distinguish the individual mind set when in browsing mode. In contrast, directed search consumers are goal-oriented or utilitarian and search actively for product information to make a decision. Directed search mode consumers know what they are looking for and possess information about the product being sought, using it as the basis for the specific search (Berthon et. al., 1999). Information search mode of the customer affects the decision fatigue as the number of options considered varies according to the decision mode.

Research indicates that consumers rarely remain in one mode during the process of information search and modify their strategies to suit the situation (Hodkinson et. al., 2000; Rowley, 2000). An initial exploratory seeking mode and gradual progression towards goal-directed search with a narrower focus is often the norm in online choice contexts to lower transaction and cognitive costs for online shoppers (Liang & Huang, 1998). There exists evidence to show that information seeking customers in the pre-purchase stages shift between the two search modes (Rowley, 2000) resulting in varying cognitive efforts during the choice process (Detlor, Sproule & Gupta, 2003).

Product categorization is one of the decision aides employed by consumers to tide over decision fatigue effects. While extant research validates the positive effect of 'mere categorizations' on decision-making (Mogilner, Rudnik & Iyengar, 2008), research on the impact of different categorization formats have been limited. Research, however, indicates that assortment organization structures impact the perceived similarity about the products and hence variety perceptions about the assortment (Hoch, Bradlow, & Wansink, 1999). We propose to look at the two contrasting category classifications, thematic (Eg: car-garage) and taxonomic (Eg: couch-bed). Thematic relations refer to the link between concepts that occur together in time and space. Thematically related products have complementary features and are evaluated differently during the choice process; e.g., Shoes—Socks; Coffee—Juice (Lin & Murphy, 2001). In contrast,

taxonomic category is described as “a hierarchical system in which concepts are differentiated into levels of varying specificity (e.g., animal, dog, bull dog). Taxonomic categorization utilizes the internal characteristics within entities to create common categories based on those internal shared characteristics, such as a cat having whiskers, a tail, and two pointed ears (Estes, Golonka & Jones, 2011).

The study builds on the results of the research on thematic versus taxonomic categorizations by Poynor and Diehl (2007) and results from fMRI studies (Kircher, Sass, Sachs, & Krach, 2009) that indicate categorization formats lead to different processing styles. We predict that two categories have differential impacts on the choice process when the assortment size and consumer search mode varies. Processes influenced by taxonomic categorization require increased attention and effort whereas thematic categorization increases perceived similarity. The effects are attributed to the higher relational processing in thematic classifications and subsequent impact on similarity perceptions.

This study explores the role of the three variables: Categorization type (thematic vs. taxonomic), search tasks (browsing vs. searching) and initial assortment size (Small versus large) on the decision-making process. Research indicating decision paralysis in e-commerce websites due to large range of products has motivated the selection of the context. Theoretical implications of the study would be in finding the combined effect of the three elements mentioned in the decision-making process. Managerial implications would include adoption of appropriate categorization formats to simplify decision making in e-commerce websites.

WhatsApp's here to stay: A study on the elements making it a popular social app

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Introduction:

Whatsapp Messenger is a cross-platform mobile messaging app which enables users to send and receive text messages, Images, Audio Files, Video, Share contacts and location information in real-time to individuals and groups of friends at no cost. As of 2015 more than half a billion people around the world were regular, active Whatsapp users showing significant growth in countries like Brazil, India, Mexico, and Russia. Its users are sharing more than 700 million photos and 100 million videos every single day (Whatsapp, 2014). In a short span of six years, Whatsapp has captured a significant market share and has become popular across all age groups making it an interesting study to research upon. This study tries to investigate the elements that make it a popular choice including the various attachment options such as gallery, photo, video, audio, location, contact and the specific Whatsapp features such as ease of communication, double tick, voice note, group broadcast.

Literature Review:

Socialization is a basic need of life and professional life depends upon how they relate to the society. Being social is the soul of being human. It definitely increases knowledge by multiplying new ideas regarding research, social activities, and cultural activities (Shilpa Shah, 2013). The development and use of mobile technologies make the subjects more productive and allows them to make better decisions (Mantovani and Moura, 2012). WhatsApp instant messaging is a cross-platform Smartphone messenger that employs users' existing Internet data plan to help them network socially in real time (WhatsApp Inc, 2010). The nature and intent of WhatsApp messages tend to be more social, informal and conversational in nature, while SMS is seen as more privacy preserving, more formal and generally more reliable (Church 2013).

As of April 2014, users of the mobile messaging app were generating 64 billion messages each day, 20 billion of them inbound (sent) and 44 billion outbound (received), (WhatsApp Inc, 2010). As of 2015 Whatsapp was 50% bigger than the global SMS Market. On average, each of WhatsApp's users sends about 43 messages a day with 70% of users visiting every day. A study by Mobidia inferred that WhatsApp users spent an average of 195 minutes with the app weekly (Businessinsider, 2014). A study on the first four years growth after launch, Whatsapp had 419 million users compared to 145 million by Facebook, 123 million by Gmail, 54 million by Twitter and 52 million by Skype (Comscore media metrix 2015). WhatsApp's user base in India was measured at 70 million active-users, which is over a 10th of its global users.

(Verkasalo 2010) in his study highlighted that, voice was the predominant means of communication, with SMS apps, browsing and Instant Messaging second, and SMS third with the balance from multimedia, music and games. As an alternative to short messaging service (SMS), Whatsapp offers real-time texting or communication, including the ease of sharing information (e.g. contact list) or media content (e.g. audio, video files, images, location data) (Ahad, 2014). Various studies have been done by Church & Oliveria, 2013; Soliman & Salem, 2014; O'Hara, Massimi, Harper, Rubens & Morris, 2014; Devi & Tevera, 2014 on Whatsapp on various dimensions such as comparing Whatsapp with traditional SMS, Perception about whatsapp etc. Previous studies have indicated that a large section of the population is well prepared and primed for WhatsApp adoption (Shambare et al., 2012).

Methodology:

The study investigates "Whatsapp" popularity among its users, is exploratory in nature and uses both primary and secondary data. A survey using simple random sampling method on Whatsapp users was administered. A survey instrument (Questionnaire) was developed measuring elements, features, usage level and popularity. The Questionnaire was administered to a sample of 756 Whatsapp users in Coimbatore representing many social groups such as students, businessmen, working professionals, Government officials etc. Results were presented using Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, Correlation & Regression using SPSS.

Objectives:

1. To find out the factors influencing whatsapp popularity

2. To find out the major elements used within Whatsapp messenger excluding chat.
3. To understand the level of usage and popularity of whatsapp.

Major Findings:

Objective 1:-

- The value of R^2 (0.84) indicates that 84 % of the usage is being determined by the features including mass outreach, read notification, communication made easy etc.
- The top three loaded features were Social connection, sharing among the group and the media sharing with loading scores of .705, .694, .693 respectively and the least considered feature among the users was map sharing.

Objective 2:-

Elements:

Gallery ranks as the top most used element among the various attachment options and location is the least preferred options in consistency with the importance loaded in the process of dimension reduction.

Objective 3:-

Usage quantification:

Average Usage quantification among Whatsapp Users	
No of Hours Used (per day)	5.5
No of groups per person (Social fabrication)	13 groups
No of messages sent and received (per day)	359 Messages

With 41.78 %, WhatsApp clearly was the leader among other social apps such as Facebook, Viber, Hike, and other apps. Facebook followed WhatsApp with a score of 24.04%.

Future scope of the study:

- 1) WhatsApp utility among institutional levels (Hospitals, Police, Media, and Service) is another facet of study to look into.
- 2) Psychological and physical problems, social isolation as a result of addictive nature of WhatsApp can be extended further.

Conclusion:

WhatsApp entered the apps world at a perfect time matching the rising expectations of people to communicate faster at lower cost and thereby penetrating the market. As an early mover there were few features like gallery, photo, MMS etc. which assisted WhatsApp in sidelining the competitors

in this segment. The increased popularity over the other apps including Facebook led to the acquisition of WhatsApp by Facebook for an astounding high price of 19 billion USD. The average number of new WhatsApp users that register daily at almost 1 million indicates the high popularity of the mobile application. To conclude, the research has attempted to identify the critical success factors of an application and proved WhatsApp's success among the social app users.

The antecedents of e-loyalty: An empirical study in the Indian context

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INTRODUCTION:

Brand loyalty has been a major topic of discussion in marketing theory and also the source of gaining competitive advantage. In past, lot of studies analysed the brand loyalty in traditional consumer marketing and its benefits. It is also found that the underlying foundational of the traditional brand loyalty and e-loyalty are very similar. Schultz (2000) describes customer/brand loyalty in cyberspace as an evolution from the traditional product driven, marketer controlled concept towards a distribution driven, consumer controlled, and technology-facilitated concept. Generally it is seen customers are loyal to certain brands in the brick and mortar setup. In this setup factors like variety, service, and personal experience all contribute to this loyalty. However, now it's the Era of digitalization where brands not only have physical presence have an online presence as well. There is a sudden boom in the Ecommerce industry. Today ecommerce sites also established brand image and e-commerce companies are spending a lot on advertising which was not seen till few years back. As many companies are extending towards the E-commerce space it is important to identify the factors that are important to build e-loyalty. E-commerce companies are also focusing on having more loyal customers therefore it become important for e-commerce players to understand the factors that lead to loyalty in the online space.

According to Abdulla (2008) there are six factors i.e. Ease of Use, Service quality, Web design, responsiveness, personalization and assurance that lead to customer satisfaction, trust and henceforth led to loyalty in the e-commerce setup. The study conducted by Assion Lawson-Body (2010), shows that Internet web tools and CRM plays the important role in influenicing E-loyalty. George Christodoulides (2011) suggests that convenience; variety seeking and social interaction help in depicting e-satisfaction and henceforth e-loyalty. Social interaction factor are directly related to E-loyalty. The study also shows a strong relationship between e-satisfaction and e-loyalty. This study attempts to capture the areas that lead to E-satisfaction and thereof will focus upon the factors that are important to have E-loyalty. This study captures the factors that are reponsible for loyalty in case of e-commerce website.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive Research design is adopted in this study and samples are selected based on convenience sampling. 300 customers of e-commerce sites are interviewed for this study. The major objectives of this study are to analyze the consumer attitude towards E-commerce sites, identifying the factors that lead to E-Loyalty and to find out customers' preferred E-commerce site

in India. The study is based on major five online retailers i.e. Flipkart, Myntra, Jabong, Amazon and Snapdeal. The study involved both primary and secondary research. Questionnaire is prepared that aimed at capturing the consumer attitude towards online retailers and factors that lead to loyalty in e-commerce space. Exploratory Factor Analysis is carried out to find out the factors that are antecedents of loyalty in case of e-commerce website. Chi-square analysis is carried out to explore the relationship between the brand preferences of e-commerce websites and demographic characteristics of customer.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

This study identifies five factors which act as antecedents of loyalty in cyber space. Those are Trust, Site layout and Navigation, Company Experience, Perceived Security and privacy, Preference. Flipkart is the most preferred online retailer among Indian consumers. There is a significant relationship observed between age and the favorite retailer. Flipkart is the most favourite preference among all the age groups whereas Myntra was found to be popular among the age group of 18-29 more than the middle aged and aged people. A relationship is witnessed between the favorite retailer and gender. Flipkart is preferred more by women than men. Jabong and Myntra is preferred by men more than women.

Flipkart seems to have scored well most of the aspects except the ones which are related to giving private information and credit card details. It is not a problem to pay in advance for purchased products from this online company and trust what Flipkart says about its products is another aspect that Flipkart scores low on. Jabong scored less on the Security factor when compared to other factors. Myntra has scored less in security factor when a comparison was done with the other factors. Amazon has scored low scores in security factor. Snapdeal has scored scores less in factors like security, and buying preference when prices are low on other sites.

After the comparative analysis of different retailers following inferences can be made: Flipkart scored the best in trust factor scored as a favourite online retailer in over all aspects. Myntra scored the best in customer experience, Jabong scored the best in Site navigation and Amazon scored the highest in the preference factor.

When top five retailers were studied on various factors it is observed that most of them scored low on the perceived security and privacy factor. Most of the customers are not willing to share their personal information and credit card details. This shows being an e-commerce retailer all these need to be worked out on this factor. Another Interesting finding of this study is most of the customers are very price sensitive in cyberspace so they tend to easily switch to different retailer who offer better price. This makes building loyalty in cyber space much more challenging task for e-retailers.

The impact of cosmopolitanism on purchase behavior of fashion product among city's youth

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The paper investigates consumer cosmopolitanism and its antecedents in the Indian context. This study examines the effectiveness of different fashion marketing strategies and analyzes the consumer behavior in reference to fashion apparel retailing. The authors propose a model, which will offer strategic direction to the international marketers in gaining acceptance of their products among consumer segments and provides directions for future researches.

With the dismantling of trade barriers as part of liberalization and globalization processes initiated during the last two decades by WTO, India has allowed 100 percent FDI in single-brand retail and 51 percent in multi-brand retail with riders in September 2012.

It is no longer a daunting task for the foreign firms to make an entry into Indian retail market which as per the latest sectoral report stands at \$490 billion and is expected to reach an impressive \$ 865 billion by the end of 2023. However, what still continues to remain a major challenge is gaining consumer acceptance of foreign products. The marketing literature has previously offered various segmentation strategies for effective targeting and positioning, and cosmopolitanism is one of the key factors positively influencing consumer evaluation and purchase of foreign products.

Riefler, Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2012) quoted that “origins of cosmopolitanism, as a construct, date back to the early classical periods of Greek thought, where cosmopolitanism was understood as (1) a disdain of patriotism, (2) a desire for harmonious international relations, and (3) an emphasis on the primacy of the individual.” In the 18th century, the term “cosmopolitan” described individuals who saw themselves as citizens of the world, and who wished to distinguish themselves by a willingness to borrow from other cultures. Sociology literature renewed the debate on cosmopolitanism, another definition looks at cosmopolitans as people who oriented themselves outside their community rather than being influenced solely by local traditions and values.

With increasing globalization, an important challenge for internationally active companies is to identify appropriate customer segments and subsequently target these segments in different countries. Cosmopolitanism endorses a reflective distance from one's own cultural affiliation and openness towards other cultures and customs (Anderson, 1998; Bean, 1995). Riefler and Diamantopoulos (2009) define consumer cosmopolitanism as a three-dimensional, second-order construct capturing the extent to which a consumer (1) exhibits an open-mindedness towards foreign countries and cultures, (2) appreciates the diversity brought about by the availability of products from different national and cultural origins, and (3) is positively disposed towards consuming products from foreign countries.

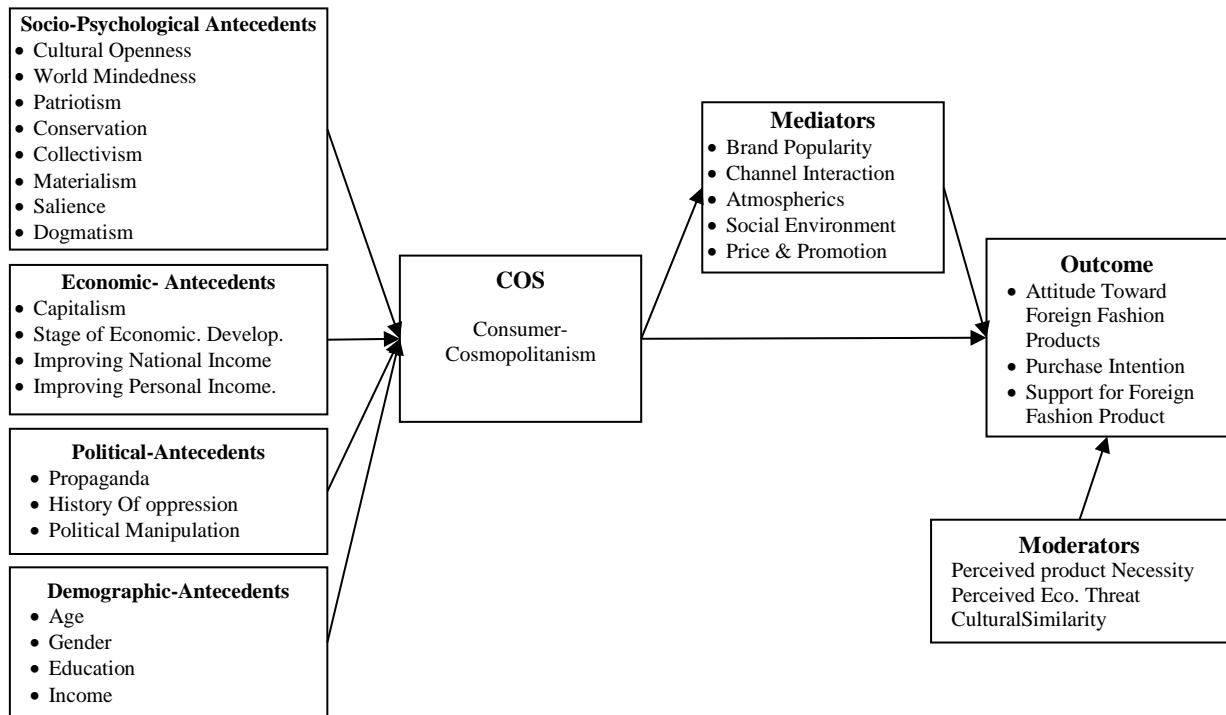
Fashion continuously redefines the social identity of individuals by gradually adding new meanings to products (Crane, 2000). Traditional understandings of the use of fashion in social settings have focused heavily on class perspectives. Consumer researchers have shown considerable interest in values because they are argued to be an important influence on behaviour. In general, marketers are keen to explore the values that characterize consumption. A value that is becoming more prevalent in many countries, particularly in India, is materialism, and it appears to

be a potentially important dimension of consumer behaviour.

Figure 1 depicts the proposed theoretical model, which comprises Four categories of antecedents emerges; namely, socio-psychological, political, economic and demographic are gathered from the literature. Direct consequences and indirect consequences through relevant mediators and moderators are identified. As outcome variable three key variables of consumer behavior are modeled, i.e. attitude towards foreign products, Support for foreign products, and purchase intention.

The model is examined using a data set of 417 youth in the age group of 17- 25 selected randomly from a pool of consumers who had shopped in a fashion retail chain based out of Bengaluru City; the measurement model is analyzed first, followed by the evaluation of a structural model in order to assess the hypothesized relationships between latent constructs. Initially, an exploratory factor analysis is conducted to ensure uni-dimensionality of the latent variable measurements; specifically principal factor analysis (varimax rotation) is applied. Reliability of the scales is established using composite reliability (ρ), and the validity of each of the scales is tested with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The study confirms that the youth of Bengaluru exhibit traits of consumer cosmopolitanism, forming a positive attitude towards international apparel brands. The study also throws light on the perception of the youth towards Indian domestic apparel brands but rejects the direct relationship between cosmopolitanism and product purchase intent.

Figure 1 Conceptual model of Cosmopolitanism and its antecedents



Source: Adapted from Shankarmahesh (2006), Jain and Jain (2010)

A Multilateral Framework for Assuring Environmental Sustainability

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There are a number of explanations as to why environmental sustainability practices are not embraced by a majority of consumers and firms in various industries and markets. First, not enough consumers may care about environmentally-sustainable products due to a variety of factors. Surveys report very few consumers actually buy green products and many of the barriers to green behaviors revolve around perceptions that green products may be actually lower in quality or higher in prices for the quality obtained (Bonini and Oppenheim 2008; Polonsky, Broks and Henry 1998). Apart from quality and price issues, Bonini and Oppenheim (2008) find that consumers may not be aware of what really constitutes “green,” or may distrust the greenness of “green products,” or may simply not find them when shopping. Moreover, many consumers appear to be on the fringes of green consumption, judging by the fact that recessionary pressures, such as in recent times, have prompted many to return to traditional low-priced products (Clifford and Martin 2011). Second, while businesses may be convinced by the scholarly wisdom of environmental sustainability, profits and competitive advantages, there may be too many barriers in the pursuit of environmentally-sustainable strategies. Firms may lack the expertise, commitment, stakeholder support, or organizational and operational support to develop green products and pursue a green marketing strategy (Peattie and Ratnayaka 1992). Third, environmentally sustainable strategies may call for radical changes in organizational objectives and business models (Nidumolu et al.

2009), and therefore, involve taking on tremendous risks. Given past failures by several firms, others in the same industry may be unwilling to take such risks (Ginsberg and Bloom 2004). Fourth, green marketing strategy, including development of green products, may involve cooperation, collaboration and integration from the supply chain in providing the comparable-cost green raw materials and components (Geffen and Rothenberg 2000; Vachon and Klassen 2007). Only large firms, such as Wal-Mart and Proctor & Gamble, may have the sufficient market power to obtain upstream supply chain collaboration in their green marketing ambitions. Finally, green marketing may simply not be economically sustainable in an industry where consumers lack appropriate commitment to green products, or where environmental impacts may not be readily observable by the consumer. In such industries, “green washing,” or mere claims of being green may be utilized by some firms, thereby reducing the incentives for truly green marketing strategies. In other words, a form of Gresham’s law may operate, wherein the green washers drive out the genuinely committed green firms.

In this paper, we develop a framework that ties-in industry constraints, regulatory compliance, economic objectives, competitive considerations and stakeholder concerns into a multi-lateral framework for environmental responsibility and green marketing. For example, environmental sustainability through the supply chain is feasible more for specific industries, where demand forecasting and planning can reduce excess demand and surplus production (Sharma et al. 2011). Moreover, specific products and industries are more amenable for retailing sustainable products. Further, environmentally-friendly laws and regulations that promote sustainable products as well as enable recycling and waste reductions are now quite common in various countries. Such laws and regulations not only increase the costs of environmentally-unfriendly products but also provide incentives for recycling through the supply chain.

A New Method for Big Data Analytics

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Proclamations abound that we have entered “the petabyte age”, “the exa byte revolution”, and “the zettabyte era” because the current technologies permit the collection and storage of a large amount of information in structured (e.g., sales, prices, advertising spends) and unstructured (e.g., texts, images, and videos) formats; see Spangler and Kreulen (2007), Barton and Court (2012), or McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2012). The resulting Big Data sets are characterized by the large Volume of data, the great Velocity at which data arrive, and the wide Variety of sources that generate it. The volume, velocity and variety — known as the “3Vs” — bring to fore the need for computational advancements to enable data analysis. The emphasis on the 3V’s, however, overshadows the need for statistical advancements necessary to tackle the variable space expansion, which we call the fourth “V,” that accompanies the increasing data size. The statistics literature refers to this variable space expansion as the high-dimensionality problem.

Variable space, which refers to the number of predictors, represents another consideration in extracting insights from big data sets. To understand the knowledge gaps in big data analytics,

consider the two dimensions in Table 1: sample size (denoted by n) and variable space (denoted by p).

TABLE 1. Typology of Big Data Literature

	$p < n$	$p > n$
Small n	Existing studies	This paper
Large n	Chau and Xu (2012); Ghose, Ipeirotis, and Li (2012); Jordan (2013); Lee, Hosanagar, and Nair (2014).	Theoretical studies as p and n tend to infinity; e.g., Zhang and Huang (2008); Meinshausen and Yu (2009); Negahban et al. (2012).

Note: p represents the number of predictors (variable space); n represents sample size.

The upper left cell represents existing studies, which consists of small to moderate sample size and a moderate number of predictors fewer than the sample size ($p < n$). As the computational power increases, the sample size can increase to exceed hundreds of thousands of observations, but the number of predictors are still fewer than the available sample size ($p < n$), as displayed in the bottom left cell. The challenge due to large n is computational and requires decisions about how to efficiently use a computer's memory and processor, whether to deploy single or multiple computers, and whether to utilize: local or remote computation, sequential or simultaneous analysis, batch-mode or real-time output, or parallel algorithms. However, this bottom left cell due to large n raises no new statistical challenges per se because the number of predictors remains fixed as sample size increases; the standard asymptotic theory holds, and the existing statistical methods continue to apply as n increases for fixed $p < n$.

In contrast, the top right cell creates a new situation as p increases. The degrees of freedom, defined as $n - p$, decreases as the number of predictors increases for a fixed n . A valid statistical approach requires the degrees of freedom to be positive. But as the variable space expands such that the number of predictors exceed the sample size ($p > n$), new statistical challenges arise to resolve the negative degrees of freedom; the standard statistical methods do not hold after p exceeds n and non-standard asymptotic theory needs to be applied (e.g., van de Geer 2008).

Finally, the bottom right cell in Table 1 represents theoretical studies rather than empirical ones to analyze the performance of estimators as both the sample size and the number of predictors increase asymptotically. The theoretical studies in this fourth cell illuminate the properties of high-dimensional estimators (e.g., Zhang and Huang 2008, Meinshausen and Yu 2009, Negahban et al. 2012).

To tackle the challenges that emerge in the top right cell, we develop a new statistical method, which we call Sparse Constrained Inverse Regression (SCIR), for high-dimensional analytics applicable for $p > n$ situations. Specifically, managers can reduce the dimensionality of

variable space by applying principal components analysis or sliced inverse regression (Li 1991) to extract statistical factors, but the resulting factors need not be meaningful to domain scientists. To overcome this problem and extract only the meaningful factors, Naik and Tsai (2005) developed constrained inverse regression (CIR) that incorporates managers' prior information using a set of factor constraints based on domain knowledge. However, their CIR approach is not applicable when the number of variables exceeds the sample size. In big data analysis, where $p > n$, a sparsity constraint needs to be imposed to exclude irrelevant predictors (e.g., Tibshirani 1996). To this end, we first transform the generalized eigenvalue problem in Naik and Tsai (2005) to a least squares problem and establish a mathematical equivalence between the two optimization problems (which we prove in Proposition 1). Having established this equivalence, we then solve the sparse CIR optimization problem (see Proposition 2), which forms the basis for the SCIR Algorithm of our proposed method to estimate factor loadings even if the number of predictors exceeds the sample size. Propositions 1 and 2 and the SCIR Algorithm comprise the main results, providing both the necessary statistical foundation and an implementable tool for analyzing high-dimensional data. We conduct Monte Carlo simulations to understand the efficacy of SCIR and illustrate its application to real data to predict box office sales of 116 movies using 421 predictors (i.e., $p > n$) based on structured and unstructured data.

Advancing the Service Field: Current Priority Topics and Research Imperatives

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The proposed presentation will draw from a recent article (Ostrom, Parasuraman, Bowen, Particio and Voss 2015) that discusses 12 research-priority topics – and 80 related subtopics – that emerged from a global, interdisciplinary, two-phase data collection (qualitative and quantitative) effort. In addition to identifying service topics worthy of scholarly inquiry, this research project assessed the topics' importance and current state of knowledge as perceived by service researchers. With assistance from 19 service centers/networks from around the world to conduct 23 roundtable discussions with academics and practitioners, the authors generated rich qualitative data about important service issues. Based on an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data they identified the research-priority topics and subtopics and included them in a global online survey. The survey was completed by 334 service researchers from multiple disciplines and 37 countries.

The presentation will first (a) briefly describe the research-priority-setting process; (b) highlight how/why it differs from previous such efforts in the service domain; and (c) provide an overview of current service-related issues that call for systematic scholarly inquiry. Next, using the “Parasuraman-Zeithaml-Berry (PZB)” research stream on service quality as an illustration, the presentation will emphasize the importance and potential impact of doing *programmatic research* on the priority topics. Finally, invoking insights from the global online survey that was part of Ostrom et al.'s (2015) priority-setting efforts, the presentation will discuss the *types* of research efforts and collaborations that would be necessary to *significantly* advance our knowledge-base in the service field.

Role of CSR in the Consumer Decision Making Process

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The recent surge of consumers' interest in the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001) can be attributed to firms' increased involvement in CSR activities and widespread communication of such efforts (Snider et al. 2003). Consequently, this increased attention on CSR affected consumers' purchase intentions as empirically proven in extant literature (Mohr and Webb, 2005). Customers believe that by purchasing from a socially active firm, they indirectly contribute to the society. However recent studies failed to find any significant role of CSR in the decision making process (Mohr et al. 2001). Companies in emerging economies face a lot of pressure to behave in a more socially responsible way (Mitra, 2012). Given the mandatory CSR expenditure in India due to the implementation of the Companies Bill, 2013, firms are now expected to contribute to social causes. A positive impact of CSR on performance would encourage firms to analyze their expenditures wisely and choose their cause strategically. The empirical studies on CSR firm performance link have been until now carried out mostly in developed economies. It has also been opined that the business environment of emerging economies is quite different from that of developed economies (Khanna and Palepu, 2000). Firms generally communicate their CSR activities through their sustainability reports or through advertising. This study attempts to clarify the process by which consumers use their perceptions of CSR to formulate their purchase decision. In order to do so, we employ qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews.

Theoretical background

CSR and CSR Communication: CSR is believed to be “more than philanthropy” (Rowe, 2006) and businesses contribute to the society when they are efficient, profitable and philanthropic. In the current scenario, CSR is an absolute necessity that defines the role of the organization in society to perform its social and responsible duties (Lichtenstein et al. 2004). Given the mandatory CSR expenditure in India, firms are now expected to contribute to social causes (Baron et al., 2011). CSR is expected to provide the company with intangible benefits like improved brand image, innovation, business efficiency, corporate reputation and image (Schwaiger, 2004), improved employee motivation, and customer and employee satisfaction.

Consumers' Awareness & Perceptions of CSR: One of the most common problems with CSR studies that link it to consumer behavior is an artificial awareness of CSR (O' berseder et al. 2011). Authors generally assume that consumers have a low level of CSR awareness (Pomeroy and Dolnicar 2009) and when they are informed of CSR it positively affects their attitudes and purchase intentions (Sen et al. 2006). So, communicating CSR activities of a firm plays a significant role to augment CSR awareness (Pirsch et al. 2007). CSR related communications also help to improve or rectify any negative information regarding the firm. Organizations make an effort to influence stakeholders' understanding regarding the need for environmentally responsible products and sustainable methods of production. Customers tend to expect that a profitable company should invest in social welfare. Consumers tend to associate quality products with

corporate citizenship behavior of firms (Maignan and Ferrell, 2001) and identify themselves with it (Sen et al, 2006). Consumers tend to have mixed feelings towards socially active firms and consider them to be value-driven and strategic (Vlachos et al. 2009).

CSR and Purchase Intention: While evaluating companies and products and making their purchase decisions, consumers tend to consider their commitment to CSR initiatives. Negative CSR information regarding firms has more effect on consumers as compared to positive news. Also, the extent to which a consumer identifies itself with the company plays a role while evaluating a company. In a nutshell, a company's CSR activities leads consumer to identify with the company, which helps in evaluating the company in a better way (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). Moreover, the nature of CSR activities and consumers' notions towards such activities molds their reactions positively, both during purchase and disposal (Mohr and Webb 2005). However, CSR affects consumers' purchase decision if the consumers' are prone to socially responsible activities and if they support it.

Research Approach

This study intends to assess what is conveyed by the actions of individuals, and not predict their behavior therefore a qualitative inquiry was found to be justifiable (McCracken 1988). Qualitative analysis also helps in analyzing situations where there are visible differences between attitudes and actual behavior. Therefore, in-depth interviews with consumers is advisable to gain "*accurate and clear picture of a respondent's position or behavior*" (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002). Therefore this study uses an exploratory approach, to have an understanding of consumers' evaluation of their perceptions of a company's CSR during the purchasing process (O'berseder et al. 2011). A small, diverse sample is recommended (O'berseder et al. 2011). Eight long interviews are enough for qualitative analysis (McCracken, 1988). The objective of the study was also to collect a mixed sample as per consumption and purchase habits. So, consumers with varied habits, background, demographic criteria were selected. The proposed methodology is content analysis.

Expected Contribution

This study was carried on in the Indian context during the time CSR was made mandatory for firms. The study intends to contribute to the field of marketing by exploring consumers' beliefs of CSR, their perceptions, and the role of such perceptions in the decision making process

Impact of E books on key stakeholders in Indian textbook publishing industry

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Introduction:

The advancement of technology in computers, laptops, tablets and readers such as better display, longer battery life, weightlessness, and advanced microprocessor technologies has led to the digitalization of books possible to a great extent. E book in simple is a book in a digital form which can be read either using a computer or laptop or E book readers, tablets, PDA's, Smart phones etc. Various studies across different countries have indicated that the availability of new technologies

is expected to impact on student use of E resources (JISC, 2008). The digitalization of books has become profitable and revenues from E books now account for a significant share of the total revenues of the largest global trade publishing houses (BookStats report, 2013). The significant adoption of E books across all segments could have a significant impact on the various stake holders. The digitalization of books has a great impact on its stake holders which include Author's, Publishing companies, Book Sellers, Library, and users. E books could have either positive or negative impact on different stakeholders spread across the chain. The impact will also play a crucial role in the supply chain on the textbook publishing industry in a direct or indirect manner.

Need for the study:

This study gains more importance with the changing reading habits of generation X where they prefer more of digital products than any other means. Many studies across have indicated that there has been a gaining acceptance of E books across many segments specifically the textbook segment. With increased awareness and acceptance levels, a higher transition from print books to E book would reflect in creating an impact on the stakeholders of the textbook publishing industry and hence the researcher has attempted this study.

Literature:

'Electronic books can be defined as: a) hardware device such as Softbook or Rocket eBook that enables readers to view content; b) Software applications such as Acrobat Reader which are used to view content online or; c) the content that is viewed by a hardware device or software applications' (Harold Henke 2001). In a study on the acceptance of E books conducted with a sample of 341 respondents many favored e books over printed book. These variables include: easy to obtain, low cost of possession of the reading materials, attractive prices for possessing contents, easiness to carry around. Weights, easy to share with others, need of special reading instruments, i.e, kindle, eReader, iPad, Galaxy, Nooks, etc, free delivery or delivery incentives, concern with copyright (Chao, 2012). Microsoft presented a timeline which predicted that by 2005, sales of ebooks, emagazines and newspapers would amount to \$1 billion and by 2020, 90% of titles would sell in ebook format (Microsoft, 2000). The entire publishing chain has various stakeholders with the key stakeholders being author, publisher, wholesaler, bookseller, library and customer (Meijer, A. J. 2007). On a study conducted in the Netherlands publishing industry revealed that the digitalization of the book sector will have large influences on the industry as a whole. It has also indicated that while some stakeholders profit by the growing popularity of eBooks and others will not (Bogaard, 2012).

Objectives:

Primary Objective:

- 1) To study the possible impact of E Books on the key stakeholders in Indian textbook Publishing Industry

Secondary Objectives:

- 1) To study the impact of E books on the supply chain of the stakeholders in the academic segment.

Methodology:

The study is descriptive in nature and employed qualitative research. Primary data has been collected by conducting interviews with various stakeholders including representatives from the publishing companies, authors, students, distributors, wholesalers, retailers and users etc. Simple random sampling was used for data collection.

A semi-structured interview was done with key stake holders of the publishing industry. The interviews were based on a list of questions that were prepared in advance. These questions were acting as guiding questions and the discussions were led according to the discussion with the respondents and content analysis was applied to present the results.

Major findings:

Objective 1: The impact of E books on different stakeholder

Stakeholders	Impact
Author	Positive
Publishing companies	Positive
Book Sellers	Negative
Library	Negative
Users	Positive

Author: The authors could update their books on a regular basis without the constraint of selling off the existing print run and connect with their audience often; as a result digitalization would be positive.

Publishing companies: The publishing companies would stand to gain as a result of reduction of cost as the printing cost and distribution cost would go down considerably.

Book Sellers: The booksellers will have a lesser role to play as the users and the publishers would contact directly.

Library: The library would also stand to play a lesser role as the issue and collection of books would reduce as users would get the books online.

Users: The users will stand to gain a lot because of the portability, lower price, convenience, ease of access etc.

Objective 2: The supply chain of the textbook segment will undergo a great change on the acceptance of E books as the inventory levels would reduce to a great extent, the transportation would also be eliminated as the supply of books would be in a digital way, the price of the E books is also expected to reduce as the publishing companies would stand to gain from the less inventory and distribution costs.

Conclusion:

The literature review and the interviews with various stakeholders revealed that with the gaining acceptance of E books could have a great impact on the various stakeholders. The entire chain is evolving with the gaining popularity of E books and is to change much more with more number of users opting for E Books. The impact of penetration of E Books could bring positive or negative impact depending on the stakeholder like while transformation from print to E books could be favorable to the authors, publishing companies, and end users it poses a question to the book sellers and the library community. Going the digital way will by and large be a greater benefit for the publishing industry by reducing costs, improving reading experience etc.

Choice of communication channel during product recall: public vs personal communication

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Introduction

In 1982, after five people died due to cyanide laced Tylenol capsules, the product was recalled nationwide. This cost was approximately \$2.31 billion to Johnson & Johnson (Dowdell et al. 1992). In November, 2007, Topps Meat Company went bankrupt after a hamburger meat recall (NY Times 2007). The impact of product recall goes beyond loss in revenue. In 1990, after Perrier mineral water bottles were recalled, brand loyalty was hit badly and even a year after the recall, firm's sales could achieve only a little more than half of the level of pre-recall sales (Hartley 1995). Firms invest significant resources to create brand image, increase and sustain market shares, revenue and profits.. Firm's financial performance, market share and brand equity suffer whenever firm has to recall its product(s). Previous research has looked into recall related issues ranging from the impact of product recalls on firms' valuation and brand equity, to the impact on marketing instruments such as advertising effectiveness. Recently, researchers have focused their attention on understanding the strategic aspects of the product recall (Chen, Ganesan and Liu, 2009).

Although prior research documents the impact of recall on various performance outcomes, it is mostly silent on communication strategies that firms' adopt during a recall situation. Recall communication is an important tool which allows firms to communicate the reason, status and remedial strategy for recall. In an early recall effectiveness study by US Consumer Product Safety Commission, two out of seven variables which strongly affect recall effectiveness were associated with communication (Lange, 1978, 2). Kauffmann, Kesner and Hazen (1994) state that an effectively handled communication could reduce damage to the firm's image. Despite its importance, only limited research in marketing has focused attention on recall communication strategy. An effective recall communication can help mitigate the negative effects of the recall. At the same time, a poor recall communication response strategy could worsen its effects (Liu et al., 2011). Therefore, it is critically important for the firm to carefully communicate their recall strategy.

Data and Methodology

We use eight years recall data (2004 to 2011) from publicly traded companies to understand the effects of communication medium on firm's financial performance. Our dataset comes from

the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). FDA's enforcement report that documents all recall related information such as product name, batch number, product type, hazard level, communication channel, etc. To understand the effects of recall communication medium we segregate recalls in two categories. Firms which used public recall announcements such as press release and website to inform stakeholders were categorized as "Public". Firms which used personal recall communication such as Telephone, Letter and Email were categorized as "Personal".

We conducted an event study to analyze the impact of recall communication on the firm's value. We employ the standard approach as described in previous literature (MacKinlay 1997, Chen et al. 2009). The first recall notification to stakeholders is our event of interest. We employ a four day window around event day (-2 to +1 day). We test whether abnormal returns for recall announcement differ across communication medium (Public vs Personal). Firm's stock performance data was collected from the Center for Research on Security Prices database. Following previous literature (Chen et al. 2009), we excluded observations for which firm experienced other economically significant events during the recall time window. We next conducted tests to examine if communication medium choice moderated the relationship of hazard level and abnormal returns. This allowed us to test the role of recall communication strategy in mitigating the likely negative impact of severe product recalls.

For robustness, we also correct for the potential endogeneity issue by employing Latent Instrumental Variable (LIV) approach. This method circumvents the difficult issue of finding valid instruments for the endogenous variable. To ensure further robustness, we repeat the entire process for a different time window (-2 to 0 day).

Results

We first analyze whether the recall communication medium significantly impacts abnormal returns. We compare between public and personal recall communication media using a two sample t-test. These tests provide evidence that significantly higher negative abnormal returns are associated with public communication medium compared to the personal communication medium. Thus a simple test suggests that firms would be better using a personal recall communication medium.

1. Impact of communication medium on firm's value (Abnormal Returns AR)		
Communication medium	Sample size (N)	Av. Abnormal return
Public	77	-0.3831%*
Personal	296	0.1738%*
2. Comparison between communication mediums		
	Difference in AR	Two sample t-test
Public vs Personal	-0.5568%	-2.5825*

***p < 0.05 for one sided t test*

Role of communication medium on the firm's value in case of recalls

The multivariate analysis consistent with the earlier analysis highlights that public communication medium is associated with lower abnormal return. Class1 level or severe hazards also impact firm's value negatively. However, when firms use a public communication medium for severe recalls, the interaction effect is positive, indicating that the a public recall communication strategy mitigates the negative impact of severe recalls.

Independent Variable	Model 1 Coeff.	Model 2 Coeff.	Model 3 Coeff.
Public recall	-0.005568*	-0.012107***	-0.013278***
Severe (Class1) recall		-0.009621**	-0.010405**
Public Recall*Severe recall		0.018489***	0.019661***
Minor (Class3) recall			-0.001807
Public Recall*Minor recall			0.012270
F	6.293	6.038	3.834

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Our results suggest that a public communication strategy reduces the uncertainty among stakeholders (Brummett 1980) and stakeholders (including investors) begin associating a firm's public notification as a sign of firm's confidence and responsible behavior to take necessary steps. Therefore, such public communication appears to restore stakeholder confidence in the firm. Dawar and Pillulta (2000) also argue that when firms accept their responsibility for the recall, the negative impact on its brand equity can be reduced. Similarly Brummett (1980) argues that the posture of silence in such serious matters only induces uncertainty and distorts the firm's image. An effective crisis response would take place when the recalling firm accepts its responsibility and openly communicates effective actions for remedial process (Hearit 1994). Public notification is a direct implementation of such a recall strategy. This showcases firm as a responsible entity which places consumer's interest above everything.

Addressing Endogeneity using Latent Instrumental Variable (LIV)

In case of recalls, managers may anticipate the market reaction and may take that into account in devising their recall communication strategies. Managers might choose a certain type of recall communication medium to minimize the adverse effects of recall. Such an approach creates a potential endogeneity issue. Finding an appropriate Instrumental Variable (IV) that is correlated with the endogenous variable of interest, but at the same time uncorrelated with the outcome variable is always a tricky issue.. We adopt a Frugal instrument variable approach, namely the "Latent Instrumental Variables (LIV)" method to address this challenge. LIV approach circumvents the problem related to finding an appropriate IV and provides a consistent estimate (Ebbes et al. 2005).

For brevity, we do not present the estimates from the robustness checks. Our results are consistent, even after solving for the potential endogeneity. We repeat the entire process (including LIV) for a different time window (-2 to 0 day) and obtain similar results. This ascertains the robustness of our results.

Conclusion and Contribution

Our research makes an important contribution to the literature. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to provide insight into a relationship between communication strategy and product recall impact. We find that the recall communication medium serves as a moderator when a press release is used for class 1 recalls, thus the negative impact of the recall is lowered. This study empirically establishes that recall communication medium can help restore market's confidence for class 1 recalls and alleviate the negative impact. The results are robust to the concerns of endogeneity and alternative study windows, thus adding a greater degree of confidence in the results.

Positioning Multi country brands: The Impact of variation in cultural values and competitive set

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"Some brands have established a strong, consistent connection across cultures by tapping into fundamental human truths: the commonalities that unite rather than divide people across the globe, such as the desire for love... and happiness. Such a platform opens up real opportunities to make your marketing budget work more efficiently, but finding the right idea can be a tough challenge." Nigel Hollis, *The Global Brand*, 2008, p.165.

As pointed out above by Hollis, a key challenge facing multinational marketers today is devising the best positioning strategy for their global brands across multiple national markets, which often vary in their cultural values as well as in their competitive contexts (Torelli et al. 2012). These multi-country brands are typically marketed in a very similar and coordinated way across multiple markets, utilizing consistent associations and image positioning (Steenkamp, Batra and Alden 2003, p.53). Such cross-national marketing standardization can lower total global costs (via economies of scale), speed-up market roll-out (Neff 1999), and improve consumer preference by creating a positive perception of globalness (Steenkamp et al. 2003). However, such consistency can also decrease local-market relevance (Jain 1989; Ryans, Griffith and White 2003). The literature on the standardization versus adaptation of international marketing strategy, over 40 years old, has thus long argued that only a high level of similarity in consumer needs and competitive contexts should justify the kind of standardization that can lower costs, without hurting consumer attitudes and preference (e.g., Zou and Cavusgil 2002). However, the prior literature has not attempted to identify specific consumer needs that are similar enough across countries to justify standardizing on them; nor has it empirically tested the impact of competitive context similarity on the payoff from standardization. We do both of these here, using a unique and large multi-country database.

Leveraging prior research, we first identify four life values (using Schwartz' typology) that are relatively more equal in their cross-national importance (universalism, benevolence, self-direction, achievement) versus two that are not (hedonism and power), and link specific brand

image attributes (e.g., friendly, social, unique, sensuous, elite style, rugged) to these life values. Using an extensive proprietary field-data (BAV) set on consumer perceptions and preferences, we then show, in an attribute-level analysis, that greater global consistency of a brand's image decreases overall brand attitudes if the specific image attribute is one of those that is not equally desired worldwide. Our analysis sample consists of field data from 64,790 consumers on 1,723 brands competing cross-nationally in over 27 broadly-defined product and service categories, from 22 representative countries across the world. These data are supplemented by additional cross-national studies conducted at the consumer-level that allow us to match the BAV brand-level data to the types of consumer values they best represent.

Importantly, the attitudinal impact of a multi-country brand's positioning consistency is also affected by the similarity of the set of competitors the brand faces across its markets. From a competitive positioning perspective, a multi-country brand that faces a varying set of competitors across its multiple markets is also more likely to face more varying competitive brand positioning platforms. Consequently, a multi-country brand facing a varying set of competitors across markets might be better served by responsively varying its own brand positioning across these markets, rather than sticking with the same standardized positioning worldwide. In addition to discussing the impact of the consistency in consumer needs, the literature on the standardization versus adaptation of international marketing strategy thus also conceptually suggests the important role of the cross-market similarity of the competitive environment on brand performance (Cavusgil, Zou and Naidu 1993; Jain 1989). These researchers propose that only a low level of variation in the brand's cross-market competitive environment justifies greater standardization. However, empirical tests of this proposition, using actual data from multiple markets, have not yet been reported in the literature. Thus, we also examine, using our multi-country field data, whether the success of a brand's consistent cross-country positioning is affected by the level of variation in the set of competitors it faces across these markets.

In our paper, we first develop the theoretical foundations of our research. We discuss how cross-cultural brand positioning uses image attributes designed to symbolize cultural values. Next, we present both theoretical arguments and empirical results from the cross-cultural values literature showing which specific values do and do not change as societies evolve, identifying those values which should and should not vary in their cross-cultural importance. We then describe in detail our proprietary BAV dataset and the way in which we link specific brand image attributes to particular cultural values, through prior research and our own multi-country consumer studies. After our analyses and results, we conclude by discussing our contributions.

Many Faces of Consumption: Understanding Consumers' Motivations and Product Preferences for Deconsumption

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Environmental destruction, social degradation, hedonistic motivations are just some of the criticisms directed at the levels of consumerism in society today. Many consumers have explored

alternative lifestyles and have been labeled as “green consumers” “voluntary simplifiers”, “anti-consumption consumers” and others. The purpose of this research is to investigate the attitudes and product preferences of consumers who are interested in modifying their consumption patterns to reduce the impact of their purchasing. Though deconsumers often reduce their consumption, they still need to consume, and this project investigates the types of products they believe satisfies their deconsumptive attitudes. The study demonstrates that marketers can appeal to a number of deconsumptive attitudes using products not normally thought of as “green” or “sustainable”. This can be accomplished by developing products and/or modifying communication strategies to appeal to different sub-groups of consumers that deconsume for varied reasons.

This research investigates the attitudes and product preferences of consumers who have altered their consumption towards products that are less damaging and use fewer resources. Though deconsumers often reduce their consumption, they still need to consume, and this project investigates the types of products that satisfy their deconsumptive attitudes. We survey 622 people using 50 attitude scales and 22 product options. Results reveal ten attitude factors explaining why people choose to deconsume. Regression analysis finds that product choice varies across these deconsumptive factors. Overall, consumers felt that spending less money is a better indicator of deconsumption than buying less quantity of products. Products that consumers could hold onto longer or were durable and lasted longer were the most preferred types of products. The study demonstrates that marketers can modify communication strategies for both “green” and “non-green” products and appeal to different sub-groups of consumers that deconsume for varied reasons.

Mediating role of customer attitude in adoption of solar products in rural India

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Energy is the key mover of economic growth of any country. India’s energy consumption has been rising due to its population growth and economic advancement. But, meeting the present energy demand is a challenging task since its conventional energy reserves are limited and we must increase all available and economic alternatives. Future economic growth significantly depends on the long term availability of energy from sources that are affordable, accessible and secure. Renewable energy is a promising source and has brought significant changes in Indian energy scenario. There is a large potential for renewable energy in India. Blessed with 300 sunny days in a year and receiving an average hourly radiation of 200 MW/sq km, India is well placed to overcome its key challenges by harnessing the enormous solar potential to generate solar energy. India, the first country in the world to have an exclusive ministry for renewable energy development, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy Sources, initiated its renewable energy program in 1981 with the establishment of the Commission for Additional Sources of Energy, which was later converted into the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources (MNES) in 1992 and renamed the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in 2006. There is a growing energy imbalance between Indian rural and urban areas. And, there were limited studies conducted from rural customer’s perspective in solar energy sector. Therefore, the present study facilitates to comprehend the rural customer. The focus of this paper is to study consumer mediating role of

attitude towards solar energy adoption in rural areas. The factors studied for study were customer awareness, ease of use, relative advantage, and perceived behavioral control towards solar energy. Primary data were collected by employing questionnaire to 150 solar energy users in villages of Adilabad district of Telangana state. Respondents were chosen based on judgment sampling technique. Data were analyzed using Factor analysis and multiple regression analysis with SPSS 21.0. The results revealed that awareness, ease of use, behavioral control towards solar energy have a positive influence on consumers' preference to solar energy. The present study contributes to the literature on barriers to solar energy adoption in the hinterland which is a key concern to be addressed.

An Exploration into Experiences of Organizational Citizenship Behavior among Sales Employees in Telecommunication

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Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the antecedents of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among sales employees in Telecommunication. This study is also investigates the relationship between person-organizational fit, fairness reward system and OCB. The leadership support, fairness reward in allocation, person –organizational fit, job satisfaction as direct predictors of Organization Citizenship Behavior. The selling aspect could affect the performance of OCBs differently from non-sales organizations which lead to competition to sales volume-related rewards.

Research Methodology: This study was conducted at mobile stores at Vellore. Descriptive Research design was used to study the organizational citizenship behavior of employees. The study based on survey of 180 sales person in telecommunications in Vellore. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data from the respondents, since the sales persons were busy in selling.

Finding: The person-organizational fit has positive influence on salespersons' perception which has influenced his/her job satisfaction. The manager must be certain in new hires understand what constitution good performance related to reward allocation. Sales manager can affects performance of their overall sales organization. The organization must adapt, requiring employees to engage in behavior beyond their formal job description. The social obstacles were more apt to influences customer satisfaction negatively.

Research Implications: The organizational should recognize the in-role and extra-role behavior. The direct predictors towards Organizational Citizenship Behaviour is fairness reward allocation and person-organizational fit. The specific aspects of job and explaining precisely each component of the sales tasks influences reward outcomes. The sales manager make salespeople aware of OCBs are important in the control and evaluation of salespeople.

Originality: The study helps to increases the level person-organizational fit and leadership support among sales executives. The job satisfaction might mediate the effects of others variables on OCBs only certain selling situation. The study can also further tested with job performance, job

involvement and with other predictors. As a predictors of OCBs, job satisfaction could be even more important in modern sales organizations than is currently recognized.

Conversations in Online Communities: Where does the marketer fit in?

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Introduction

Online communities offer rich user generated content for marketers. Customer expectations, passion for the product, community feeling towards users of similar products and conversations around the same product context, offer marketers with insightful naturally occurring data. With increasing familiarity with technology, online consumers have become more sophisticated in their use of internet (Rowley, 2000). Consumers are co-creating content on social media as never before. Most marketers are still using the traditional method of research for understanding consumer insights. The more ‘social’ a network becomes, it gets bigger in number, in terms of friends, followers and contacts (Kietzman et al, 2011). Groups online can be compared to clubs in the offline world, where members join with a purpose. The conversations happening in the online communities thus become very important source for consumer insights for a marketer.

Quinotn & Harridge – March (2010) who conducted a study on the relationship between social network members recommended that marketers should consider the content of a discussion fora as a valuable resource for learning about contemporary consumer communication and appreciate the power of peer to peer online relationships. They found that the social network members trust each other, over a period of time based on their shared interest and experiences and relationships with brands they discuss. We would like to take this study forward by identifying where and how do marketers can benefit from these conversations and understand whether marketers can be part of this community as natural enthusiasts and to what extent they can co-exist with members in community.

Purpose

In the current study, we intend to investigate how do marketers benefit from an online community discussion and where do marketers fit in the online community’s conversation. The study also propose to investigate the social network members’ behavior pattern and relationships which will help in validating the social network member classifications such as lurkers (Nonnecke and Preece, 2001), lead members (Pitta & Fowler, 2005), evangelists (Lee et al, 2006) and their relationship with each other.

Methodology

This study intends to investigate the trends in an online community by using a non-probability purposive sampling technique through a netnographic approach. A definition of netnography

states that it is a “qualitative, interpretive research methodology and adapts the traditional research techniques of anthropology to the study of online cultures and communities formed through social networks” (Jupp, 2006, p.193). India has more than 243 million internet users, making it third in the list of countries ranked by internet usage (internet live stats, 2014) and more than 8% of visitors of Facebook are from India (Alexa, 2014). Hence India was chosen for this research on account of the heavy internet usage. Indian Food Bloggers Community was selected as the online community under our study as this group exhibited passion and enthusiasm for food and great expertise in cooking and knowledge in food related areas. Constant comparative method as suggested by Glaser & Strauss (1967) will be used for data analysis. Under this method, postings will be read several times each in an iterative process without determining any themes in advance and grouped into categories.

Expected Findings:

The study may reveal the conversation patterns in an online community. By constant comparative method, we can find the conversation patterns and themes. The study may also validate the classification of social media users in the Indian context and the role they play in taking the conversations forward.

Benefits & Future Research Directions

By understanding the conversation patterns, we may be able to identify what strategies marketers can use to be a part of this conversation. The story and narrative which is important in social media marketing ((Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012) can be determined by the target audiences’ interests and associations. Marketers will also benefit from the social media classifications of community members as lurkers, insiders, lead members, evangelists, hackers etc. as they can devise how they will respond to favorable and unfavorable conversations towards their brands. Understanding of this classification and the behavior of each classification group may also assist companies in understanding how consumers view their brands or their category which may provide a rich source of consumer insights. The study can use a mixed method approach in future and use sentiment analysis to understand the user generated content and identify different attitudes of customers. Communities controlled by marketers can also be studied to identify whether the content and responses vary in nature when the members are part of a company/brand controlled social network community.

Influence of source characteristics of a celebrity on attitude formation towards social cause

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The study undertaken attempts to investigate the influence of celebrity source factors on the formation of attitude towards social messages. Past research has explored the celebrity source factors and its influence on various outcomes related to consumption of products and services. This study would consider these source factors of credibility, attractiveness and power and

examine if they influence attitude formation across the three dimensions of cognition, affection and conation towards the offered value, i.e. the social cause.

A study of this kind has not been undertaken before and hence this may form a link between the concept of celebrity endorsement and social marketing. It is based on the theory that like any another product, social cause can be marketed too and the theories of marketing communication, mainly source credibility model and the tri-component model. The study also uses the theory of celebrity worship and the scales used to measure celebrity worship which has been considered in studies related to fan behavior in the field of psychology.

This study would largely benefit the sponsors of the message who invest time and money to choose the appropriate celebrities for promoting a social cause. Identifying the source factors that influence an outcome thus might help in choosing the right kind of celebrity. Though the outcome is attitude towards the social cause, the study would attempt to categorize into three components of cognition, affection and conation. Hence this study helps to identify specific source factors that can influence any of the above mentioned outcomes. Other beneficiaries would be advertising agencies who can recommend the celebrity that has the desired source factors for the intended outcome. It could also help celebrities concerned about the type of causes that they would want to endorse to know their role while endorsing social cause campaigns.

Conceptual Framework

Celebrity Endorsement

To begin with Friedman (1979) defined a celebrity as “*an individual who is known to the public (actor, sports figure, entertainer, etc.) for his or her achievement in areas other than that of the product class endorsed*”. He concluded that celebrity endorsements vary in influence. Further research has led to conceptualization of models like the source credibility model and the source attractiveness model which were originally devised to explain the communication process. Later they were applied to the endorsement process. One such study (McCracken, 1989) proposed the Meaning Transfer Model and tried to give a comprehensive description of the celebrity endorsement process. This model suggests that a celebrity embodies a meaning and this can be transferred to the endorsed product and to the consumers. Several other studies have validated this model (Boustani, 1993; Mary Walker, 1992). McCracken further emphasizes that though anonymous models represent the demographic information of the intended audience, celebrities represent a range of personality and lifestyle meanings. These powerful meanings are derived from the roles they play in movies, television, sports, music and other fields. For this model to be practically successful, endorsement decisions such as choice of celebrity against the product, familiarity and the effective use of celebrity is crucial. Besides the transfer process is complete only if the audience claims the meanings.

Another theory that strongly suggests the use of a celebrity is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty, 1983). The model proposes that there are two routes to persuasion or attitude change – the central route and the peripheral route. Under the central route of persuasion, the receiver of information is seen as involved and active and engages cognitive processing of information. Therefore the receiver considers content of the message as important for being persuaded. While under the peripheral route, the receiver lacks the motivation or ability to process information and

hence looks for peripheral cues to persuade such as music, color, and celebrity among others. Several studies have validated this model too (Maackenzie, 1986; Heath, 1994; Stephenson, 2001; Lord, 1995).

It is also noteworthy to look at Celebrity Endorsement Selection Theories. The earliest study (Kelman, 1961) considered celebrity as a source in the communication process and explored three basic categories of source attributes: credibility, attractiveness and power. Each of these categories further influenced the social process of internalization, identification and compliance. Source credibility is further explained through expertise and trustworthiness, while attractiveness encompasses similarity and likeability.

Till (1998) attempted to associate the theories of fundamental learning with the celebrity endorsement process. Typically high revenue outcome is expected from celebrity endorsements. The study proposes how basic associative learning principles can be used to improve the value of using celebrity endorsers. He suggested how conditional learning theory tries to explain how celebrity is associated with product or how celebrities can change associations.

Social Marketing

The study of social marketing has its roots more than five decades ago when it was (Wiebe, 1951) questioned why brotherhood cannot be sold like soap. A study of various social campaigns found that more the social campaign resembled a campaign for marketing a product, the more successful it was. The study also identified the characteristics of a successful social campaign and its limitations. Marketing was extensively used to further sales and profit for firms selling products and services. However, Kotler (1969) found that marketing is being sought by organizations other than business firms. And hence it was proposed to consider expanding the meaning of marketing.

It was also felt that (Kotler, 1971) social marketing is a promising framework for planning and implementing social change. To understand how marketing concepts can be applied to social causes, it is required for one to comprehend marketing and some conceptual developments. Further, Kotler and Zaltman (1971) examined how several not-for-profit organizations are using marketing logic to further their goals.

Studies have also focused on issues (Rothschild, 1979) that need to be considered before developing a social marketing campaign. Marketing problems were found (Bloom, 1981) to manifest themselves to be challenges for social marketers. Problems related to market analysis, market segmentation, product strategy, pricing, channels, communication, evaluation and organizational design and planning, could question the success of a social marketing campaign which requires greater ingenuity and imagination for social marketers.

Tri-component Attitude Model

According to the tri-component attitude model (Schiffman, 2010), attitude comprises of cognitive, conative and affective components. The cognitive component comprises of knowledge and perceptions about the attitude object. These are gained from past direct experiences and also indirectly through information obtained from other sources. The knowledge and perceptions

together shape beliefs about the attitude object resulting in individual that object has certain attributes and will result in specific outcomes through specific behavior.

The affective component comprises of feelings or emotions about the attitude object. Researchers treat this component as evaluative in nature. This is captured as an individual's assessment of an attitude object. Experiences can also appear as emotionally charged states. And hence this can result into a feeling and translate into action

The conative component explains the possibility or likelihood of an outcome towards the attitude object. In marketing terms, the conative component is treated as an intention to purchase. The cognitive component is useful to develop positive brand beliefs for functional or tangible or even new products.

Research Questions

An examination of relevant literature reveals that several studies have been carried out to investigate the celebrity source effects. Source variables have explained outcomes related to consumption of products and services. However studies investigated have not revealed any influence of source variables on marketing of social messages.

Q1: What are the most important source characteristics of celebrities?

Q2: Do celebrity source factors influence the formation of attitude?

Q3: Are there any other variables that have a significant influence on the formation of attitude?

Q4: How does the presence of moderators influence attitude formation towards social cause?

Review of Literature Survey

A survey of existing literature in the fields of Social Marketing, Celebrity Advertising and Celebrity Fans has been carried out. Following is the brief review of the past studies conducted in the mentioned fields.

There have been several studies to identify the factors in celebrities for different products. Evans (2010) in his study on dead celebrities used constructs that were different from those used for living celebrities. Another study (Koo, 2012) examined the influence of on-field experience with source credibility. The study focused on investigating the impact on the causal relationships among consumers' brand attitude, attitude towards the ad and the purchase intentions. It considered sports celebrities as a part of the research. Study findings concluded that there was a positive relationship between perceived on-field performance and source credibility.

One of the earliest studies in celebrities (Assael, 1984), found that characteristics like physical attractiveness and likeability were major factors considered while choosing celebrity endorsers.

Further Till (1998) determined that physical attractiveness and expertise of celebrity endorsers are important for different products. This study also concluded that expertise is more important than attractiveness for matching a brand with an appropriate endorser. While Ohanian (1991) concluded that physical attractiveness was an important dimension in source credibility in understanding respondents' intention to purchase. The study considers the impact of a celebrity's attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness on intention to purchase. The study captures the variation of impact depending on the intended use of product – for self-consumption or gift-giving. Study also looked at whether male or female respondents evaluate celebrity spokespersons differently.

The study revealed that physical attractiveness and trustworthiness of a celebrity is not significantly related to the intention to purchase a product for either personal use or gift giving. Celebrities' perceived expertise with the product was significantly related to respondents' intention to purchase the product for both personal use and gift-giving. It is interesting to mention that British advertising managers rated celebrity trustworthiness and celebrity expertise as more important for a technical or attractiveness-unrelated product (like a PC) while familiarity, likeability and physical attractiveness were rated high for a non-technical or attractiveness-unrelated product (like blue jeans) (Erdogan, 2001).

It is also very crucial to study the scales that are used for effectiveness of advertising. One such study by Baker and Churchill (1977) quotes several historical researches that have concluded that physical attractiveness leads to more favorable evaluations.

As suggested earlier, researchers have tried to define social marketing as the marketing of a social message or a cause and thus needs to be included in the marketing thought. To continue further, all the marketing strategies are required to be applied to market a social cause. To support this explanation, a study (Liaquat Ali Khwaja, 2010) in Pakistan applied a social marketing strategy for anti-smoking. The study focused on reducing smoking among youth. The study describes the mix elements for the anti-smoking campaign. Thus the study concludes that a social marketing campaign resembles the marketing of a product and thus need effective strategies to be designed for implementation.

Several social marketing campaigns in recent years earmark a major portion of their budgets to advertising. In a study (Crimmins, 2003) on how to reduce road rage, the use of target insight was used to guide the advertising strategy for social change.

Further search to consider research related to fans lead to several studies being conducted in the field of psychology. Several studies have indicated that fans worship their celebrities by forging para social relationships at varying levels which is determined using a scale. McCutcheon (2003) likens celebrity worship to a psychological disorder, erotomania, which is a delusional belief that another person is passionately in love with the individual. The authors conclude that celebrity worshippers slightly differ as they may have no romantic feelings with the celebrity.

The study also discusses the Absorption-Addiction Model to explain cases of celebrity worship. Several studies conducted later are consistent with this model. The model suggests three sets of behavior. Initial form of celebrity worship where celebrity and his lifestyle is discussed in social groups, is called as entertainment-social value. Those scoring on intense-personal feelings reflect

an individual's intensive and compulsive feelings towards the celebrity, very much like obsession as referred in other studies. Those displaying extreme expression of celebrity worship may display irrational and illegal behaviors and this is termed as borderline-pathological. The study uses the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) which measures the favorableness of attitudes towards one's favorite celebrity. The CAS is a 23-item scale that measures three aspects of celebrity worship - Entertainment Social (10), Intense Personal (9) and Borderline Pathological (4). The study showed that high CAS scores were negatively correlated with measures of cognitive ability.

There are several similar studies that consider the relationship between CAS scores and different aspects of cognition. Findings suggest that those rated high on the CAS scale show poorer psychological well-being. Celebrity worshipper's score low on IQ scores and thus it is concluded that celebrity worshippers have poor cognitive ability. Another study (Vega, 2013) using the CAS found that women scored higher in entertainment-social subscale than males indicating women are more inclined to admire celebrities for their social and entertainment opportunities.

Another study (Reysen, 2010) looked at the differences and similarities between sports' fans and other fans. The study further makes a distinction between a fans' personal connection with a sport team and with other fans as a group. The study concluded that sports' fans were similar to non-sport fans and concluded that fan ship and fandom were found to be distinct constructs. In another study (McCutcheon, 2002) the celebrity worship scale showed no bias across celebrities from across fields. In yet another study (Criseld Tengco-Pacquing, 2014) the influence of celebrity power on tendency to worship was found to be negligible. A small minority of the sample seemed to be extremely influenced by the manipulation of the experienced power. This was in the context of previous studies that identified celebrity worshippers as foolish and submissive.

Proposed conceptual Model

The proposed conceptual model is shown in Figure 1. **Hypothesized Model**



Hypotheses:

H1: A celebrity's perceived trustworthiness influences attitude formation towards social cause

H2: A celebrity's perceived expertise influences attitude formation towards social cause

H3: A celebrity's perceived familiarity influences attitude formation towards social cause

H4: A celebrity's perceived likability influences attitude formation towards social cause
H5: A celebrity's perceived similarity influences attitude formation towards social cause
H6: A celebrity's perceived power influences attitude formation towards social cause
(Erdogan, 2001)

The Growth of E-Commerce/Internet and its Impact on Collaborative Consumption

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The internet technology has been a disruptive innovation. This paper is an attempt to study its impact on various aspects of the marketing strategy. We begin by reviewing various topics related to marketing strategy, reported in the internet marketing literature, over the last 25 years.

We attempt to summarize and analyze variety of applications of internet technology to the practice of marketing. Sharing is a phenomenon as old as humankind, while collaborative consumption and the "sharing economy" are phenomena born of the Internet age. This paper examines the growth of collaborative consumption/sharing economy in the context of increasing use of internet.

Examples are given and an assessment is made of the reasons for the current growth in these practices and their implications for businesses. The paper concludes with managerial implications and directions for future research in this important and growing field of study.

The internet technology has been a disruptive innovation.

History has witnessed quite a few discoveries, both natural and man-made, that disrupted the way we live and prosper as human beings. The business models that follow those "discoveries" can add substantially to the actual disruption on the marketplace as we knew it. Even some creative combinations or rearrangements of existing technologies can be disruptive. Often these disruptors add societal value through a significant reduction of "waste, energy, materials, labor, or legacy costs."

Exhibit 1 includes examples of disruptive discoveries all of which changed societal behaviors in more ways than one. We listed the discovery of internet at the top due to its speed of diffusion (see Exhibit 2).

In the long run, high (disruptive) technology bypasses, upgrades, or replaces the outdated support network. Gas stations need to rethink if electric cars were the norm in the future.

We are experiencing "market changes" at an unprecedented speed. The digital age has arrived on us and get on with it we should. Disruption is soon becoming the new "normal". Being relevant and timely with your offerings is more critical than ever.

The internet has changed every facet of business. For instance it has had a massive impact on the way consumers shop and forcing marketers to redesign strategies taking advantage of the latest technology to create the best possible set of customer experiences. The internet has affected the way businesses function in more than one way: 1. Technology has made business faster 2.

Technology has allowed for far-reaching collaboration 3. Technology has flattened the marketplace 4. Technology in business encourages innovation 5. Technology has changed how we connect and sell to clients 6. It's a Global Market Now 7. A New Way of Communicating 8. The World of Telecommuting Came to Life 9. Marketing Online 10. Advertising Online 11. A More Convenient and Effective Collaboration 12. Research Made Easy 13. Websites – Increasing Customer Awareness 14. Ecommerce – Buying without leaving the house 15. Advertising – Reaching your target audience 16. Social Media – Engage with your audience 17. Email Marketing – Keeping in touch with your customers 18. Analytics – So what issues?

Internet technology offers many opportunities for businesses to grow in sales and reduce costs. Small businesses that use the Internet can grow faster. Customers can quickly find product and price information and obtain advice from a wide variety of sellers. Online visitors can check product availability, place an order, check the status of an order, and pay electronically. Consumers benefit from the Internet because it reduces search costs. For instance, e-tailing increases competition for customers by positioning locals against national firms such as Amazon.com.

Impact of Internet on Marketing Strategy

Internet-based technologies have significantly reduced the marginal cost of producing and distributing digital goods such as software. Amazon.com recommends a book buyer other related books they may like. Branding is becoming important in Internet-based businesses because online consumers prefer to buy from well-known and reputable e-companies. One major effect of the Internet is the explosion of information that has resulted in more competition among firms and lower prices. Elimination of many traditional intermediaries has led to lower prices. Factors such as product quality, shipping and handling fees, ease of ordering, customer support, and timely delivery may be equally or even more important than price to online customers. Customers become loyal to an online site (such as Amazon.com) and prefer to buy from known online stores. Hence, firms must invest on building trust and increasing company reputation. Customers who prefer shopping online value the convenience of shopping anytime of the day and that it takes less time to complete the purchase.

Increased Efficiencies in Internet Marketing (IM) vs Traditional Marketing (TM)

In comparing the marketing efficiency of IM versus TM (Exhibits 3,4,5), we will particularly examine their promotional process-efficiencies in relation to information-dissemination, comparison-shopping, distribution, and their cost-effectiveness. We argue that IM as practiced today surpasses retail-based TM on all these essential process factors of obtaining and servicing demand. We briefly discuss each of these promotional-communication features in the sections that follow.

Information-Dissemination Performance

Among other things, we propose the following features that render information-dissemination by Internet marketing superior to traditional retail-outlet based marketing. Internet Marketing (IM) is Highly Interactive: The Internet is an extremely efficient medium for accessing, organizing, and communicating persuasive information either by written or spoken word or by visual images. The

Internet allows for multi-person, multi-way communications between several buyers and sellers at the same time.

Further, through their corporate web sites and servers firms can provide content to the medium, such as provide detailed information on a firm's offerings (e.g., the web sites of Federal Express, Sun Microsystems, and Volvo), or create an image and attempt to build an ongoing relationship with the consumer (e.g., the web sites of Zima, Reebok, David Letterman). Something radically new is that even consumers can provide product-related content in the medium and companies can directly interact with the customers in a continuous dialogue to get them involved in their designing and manufacturing.

Internet Marketing Speeds Comparison Shopping: This feature relates to value-added information. Homegrocer, an online grocer and competitor to Peapod, attracts customers to its website and service by providing them with value-added information. Buyers can order groceries by selecting individual items as they would in a regular grocery store. Similarly, Amazon.com not only provides competitive and content information on the books it sells, but also provides book reviews from peer-readers for content assessment, and suggests complementary book selections to prospective buyers. This provides an "intellectual leverage" for intelligent purchasing.

The Web can "tangibilize" the Intangible. When Internet customers cannot see what they are buying, they look for cues. For instance, the very popular travel-service related Website in Europe www.strolling.com allows its visitors to become virtual tourists. Customers buying fashion online could drag pictures of clothes onto the mannequin and see roughly how they would look on her. This is closer to the actual shopping experience.

Internet Marketing's Superior Distribution-Efficiency

The Internet is an Open and Comprehensive Market System: The web represents a phenomenal open system marketing distribution opportunity. Anybody with a computer, modem, and access to Internet can actively participate in the Internet world. Open access web results in lower entry barriers so that virtually anyone can access and provide content to the Internet. In essence, the web levels the playing field between producers and consumers. Buyers receive order confirmations, transaction histories, and audit trails. Both buyers and sellers can check order status online at every stage.

Internet Marketing is User-Friendly and Convenient: Internet buying or selling can be a lot of fun, easy to use, and user-friendly. Travel planning websites such as Orbitz.com, Priceline.com, and Expedia.com can round-the-clock search, reserve, book and confirm the lowest prices on air tickets on any airline, lowest car rentals and hotel accommodations in any city of destination, and even provide visible images of your airline seat, car rental, hotel, and the room, with just a couple of mouse clicks. Investors can easily trade stocks, bonds, and mutual funds on a host of e-brokerages E-Trade or Ameri Trade.

In the world of industrial sales, dozens of business-to-business companies are moving the most routine aspects of the sales process to the Internet, selling commodity and repeat-purchase products via e-commerce programs, putting catalogs and product information online, tracking orders and even negotiating prices for some deals. As a consequence, business-to-business sales teams spend significantly less time setting up their own sales-presentations, or handling and maintaining customer or prospect accounts, and instead spend more time delivering high-level strategic

services to customers. Amazon.Com rings up millions of dollars in sales each hour (open 24 hours, 365 days) and manages to provide high levels of customer convenience.

Internet Marketing is also Cost-Effective

Internet marketing's superiority in both information-dissemination and distribution system is real and meaningful only if it is cost-effective. The combined features of interactivity and openness, ease and speed of comparison, comprehensiveness, user-friendliness and convenience make IM more cost-effective. For businesses, online commerce is enticing mainly because of its intense efficiency. The Internet is an extremely efficient medium for accessing, organizing, and communicating information.

The web also provides an efficient channel for advertising, promoting, and even direct distribution of certain goods and services that may reduce costs up to 25% to producers and customers. On-line catalogs can save firms up to 25%. Internet may offer better marketing atmosphere: one vendor estimates that his web-based marketing efforts resulted in 10 times more sales in units with 1/10th advertising budget.

However, the Internet may not substitute certain retailer functions so easily or so soon. Not everything can be sold via e-commerce, and delivered over wires or satellite. In general, big-ticket items are tougher for the web to move. First, there is the trust issue. If one uses the credit card online there is always the fear that some teen hacker may empty one's credit line. Further, the Internet may not be that effective in completing complex transactions that demand complicated input. Another area is health care, especially surgical and hospitalized health care, where safety, security and privacy concerns about the Internet are most intense. Also, the Internet may not be practical for everyday fresh supplies such as oven-hot bread and fresh milk, fresh meats and vegetables. It may never replace a quick trip to the neighborhood convenience store.

Collaborative Consumption and the Sharing Economy

Growth in sharing systems has particularly been fueled by the Internet, with its rise of social media systems, which facilitate connections between peers eager to share their possessions. The central conceit of collaborative consumption is simple: Obtain value from untapped potential residing in goods that are not entirely exploited by their owners. The speed of growth with which sharing systems have spread suggests that the sharing economy might represent a serious threat to established industries, due to fewer purchases and consequent distress in conventional markets. The Internet has made sharing enormously simpler. And for consumers, it seems to hold the potential to unite cost reduction, benefit augmentation, convenience and environmental consciousness in one mode of consumption. Companies therefore should understand and manage this emergent system in order to adapt current and future business models to provide new sources of revenues within this growing area of the economy

Customers are already sharing product and service related information with the "community" and in the future the internet should enable "smooth" sharing of products and services. Thus the disruptive technological innovation called "the internet" will stimulate faster diffusion of the disruptive social innovation called "the collaborative consumption". The collaborative revolution is on its way. Consumers are increasingly willing to pay for temporarily access or share products

and services rather than owning them. By the year 2025, the sharing economy would represent \$335 billion in revenue.

AirBnb has opened up an income source for home owners. Uber, Lyft and Zipcar offer alternatives to owning a car. Lending club for banking, 99 Dresses or Rent there away as substitute for owning designer apparel etc. All of the above online businesses have achieved great success in a short time period. Innovative Companies are beginning to step into the collaborative consumption model. Toyota Rent-a-car is a car rental sponsored by Toyota motors to rent cars on a daily basis.

Collaborative consumption, often associated with the sharing economy, takes place in organized systems or networks, in which participants conduct sharing activities in the form of renting, lending, trading, bartering, and swapping of goods, services, transportation solutions, space, or money.

Collaborative consumption is growing because it is more efficient. It boosts productivity, lowers barriers to entrepreneurship, and helps markets work even when cash is scarce. Third, it's growing because Web-based technology helps to enable it. The Internet helps to match up buyers and sellers, promote trust, and complete transactions. Examples of businesses that fall within one or more of these rubrics are Airbnb, Zipcar, Wikipedia, YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, Freecycle, and Twitter. In a broad sense, the Internet itself is a giant pool of shared content that can be accessed by anyone with an Internet connection, a browser, and a government that allows access to most or all web content.

Various parts of the “sharing economy” truly involve sharing, and explain why these developments have stirred so much attention at this particular time. I further consider the degree to which they challenge traditional business models and the dangers and opportunities they may provide for business. The ground that collaborative consumption occupies is a middle ground between sharing and marketplace exchange, with elements of both. Zipcar.com and many other.com “sharing” organizations offer collaborative consumption opportunities.

The Case of Zipcar.com

Zipcar is a car sharing company operating in North America and Europe. Customers can reserve cars online and unlock and operate them with a valid “member” card issued by the firm. Customers use it for few hours (buying groceries) and the car is returned to the original spot. Users need not worry about fuel or insurance. This short-term car sharing is popular especially near college campuses. Many Auto companies offer car sharing programs, including Daimler’s Car2Go or BMW's Drive now. Smart phones have Apps that make it convenient to use shared car programs such as Zipcar.

The Case of Airbnb.com

Well-known cases of successful startups built on the concept of collaborative consumption include Airbnb Inc., a San Francisco-based online company. These companies offer a variety of Internet-based platforms and applications that create new ways for people to share goods and services. By acting an efficient “matchmaker” Airbnb has lowered transaction costs and helps facilitate transactions that is too cumbersome for the average customer. Making the such seemingly complex transactions a simple affair has promoted sharing of homes to strangers.

“Sharing-economy companies offer a wide variety of services but are united by three common traits. First, they rely on recent technological advances to satisfy age-old consumer demands in ways not previously possible. Second, they exist in and parallel to a wide variety of well-established industries that are fundamentally disrupted by the sharing economy’s emergent ability to provide innovative alternatives. Third, they operate in interstitial areas of the law because they present new and fundamentally different issues that were not foreseen when the governing statutes and regulations were enacted.”

“Airbnb is a marketplace where people share private spaces all over the world to be rented short-term. These spaces could be apartments, villas, houses, or even castles for a unique travel experience of various prices. Founded in 2008, the company now has over 550,000 listings in 33,000 cities and 192 countries and continues to grow. However, they were not always doing so well. “

Airbnb’s rating system of customers and property owners is among the most sophisticated and helped the company to grow exponentially over the last few years.

Strategic Implications of Evolving Collaborative Consumption Patterns

It is becoming increasingly difficult for organizations to survive the Internet era unless they change ways in which business is done. Internet technology has introduced new competitors and hence new rules for businesses to follow. This disruptive technology affects all aspects of the marketing strategy. One of the rules of the new economy is that customer related information is never misused and organizations value highly the concept of “customer privacy”. The security of customer personal information is vital for businesses to survive and prosper in the new era.

Influence of Social Media on Political Participation of Students

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Social media is becoming an integral part of life as it helps people to communicate, share information, images, audios and videos through web content and stay connected with people all over the world. It is an internet based form of communication and includes sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs etc. These technologies facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberation by stakeholders across boundaries, time and space and includes blogs, wikis, media (audio, photo, video, text) sharing tools, networking platforms (including Facebook, YouTube) and virtual worlds (Bryer and Zavatarro, 2011). Anthony J. Bradley (2009) defines Social media as a medium that is inevitable for the vast majority of people worldwide whose predictability is not assurance of success. The rise of social media sites as another platform on the internet has gained popularity over the last decade. The sites have attracted millions of users worldwide (Boyd, & Ellison, 2007) and due to this phenomenon many people are changing the medium where they search for news, information, business and entertainment. These social media sites let those who use them create personal profiles, while connecting with other users of the sites. Users can upload photographs and post what they are doing at any given

time (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2008). Social media have the capability to both inform and inflame their audience.

Politics is both a study and skill as to how power is exercised and by whom (for whose benefit), through the administration of public power to manage people's affair. Politics is an integral part of the operation of public education. Political activity is about negotiations over the allocation of scarce resources and about deciding who gets what. But all political activities are not same. Politics in Kerala is dominated by two coalition fronts: the Communist Party of India(Marxist)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Indian National Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF), besides these, now Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is gearing up to gain some ground in Kerala. Political activism among students has always been on a high in Kerala and it has its own influence on the socio economic structure of the state. History says that all the major political leaders in the state irrespective of the party were active in politics during their college days. The major student parties in Kerala are Students Federation of India (SFI), Kerala Students Union (KSU), Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), Muslim Students Federation (MSF) and they have a good presence in the colleges (mostly government run) across the state.

The augmented use of social media has facilitated to investigate the dimensions on political participation. Political participation refers to a citizen's involvement in the acts, events and activities that influence the selection of the political representatives and it refers to various mechanisms through which the public express their political views and exercise their influence on political process. Political participation is defined as "activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take" (Leighley and Verba 2012). Political participation can be defined as "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making of implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people those policies" (Francisco Osorio 2013). Zavattaro (2009) identify the following three factors as predictors of political participation: (i) Resources enabling individuals to participate (time, knowledge), (ii) psychological engagement (interest, efficacy) and (iii) "recruitment networks" which help to bring individuals into politics (like social movements, church groups or parties). Political participation refers to a citizen's involvement in the acts, events and activities that influence the selection of the political representatives and it refers to various mechanisms through which the public express their political views and exercise their influence on political process. There are mainly three types of participation: (a) Conventional participation- activities for good of citizens. (b) Unconventional participation- activities that are legal but often consider inappropriate. (c) Illegal participation- activities that break the law.

The use of social media is becoming a formidable force for political participation as the technology makes it participatory, interactive and cost effective by just one click. Political actors are increasingly using social media for their campaign, and young adults are relying less on traditional news media and more on new online media for political information (Kohut, 2008). Social interaction creates opportunities for students to gather information about politics that allows them to live beyond personal resource constraints, thereby supporting the political activity of many people. Social media allows bonding and decrease the distance between government and students and allows more collaboration. This exposure to political participation helps the students to maintain political efficacy, knowledge and build up some kind of responsibility in the minds of students. It also make them aware about the duties and responsibility, they must perform towards

the country and be a source to bring change in the society. Social networking offers a straightforward way to converse with them and get back their feedback as well as help them to maintain good social relations. Social media has made the politics more transparent as everyone can aware it and make questions on it. Students in Kerala use social networking sites as profile based websites that allow them to maintain social relationships by viewing, visiting, and sharing their lists of social connections with other members. These sites are being used to build community-based personal websites, online discussions forums, chat rooms and other social spaces accessible to users for exchange of personal content and communication .(Haneefa & Sumitha, 2011)

The objective of the study was to understand the involvement of college students in campus politics and to examine the influence of social media on the political participation of college students in Kerala. A descriptive study was undertaken by the researchers to study this. The scope of the study was limited to under graduate students studying in colleges of Kerala which include both boys and girls in the age group of 18 to 25. Students from engineering, commerce, arts and science background were included in this study. 250 students were selected through purposive sampling from different colleges across Kerala. A validated self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. Questions were asked to assess their interest and involvement in politics, their disinterest, the reasons for political participation and how they use social media for these purposes. Their political viewpoint was also assessed as part of the study. Students were asked to indicate their responses on a five - point likert scale.

The study focused mainly on the adoption of social media to ease the communication related to politics, policies and social protest and describe how this platform has changed the individual engagement in politics related issues and their social connectivity. India being a diversified country, it has many political parties with different viewpoints. Students are often described as the leaders of future generation and it is necessary for them to inculcate the features of good leaders and understand with the practices of different parties. So social media is a platform that enable them to participate in the political spheres of the society and articulate their views in their native languages. Social media act as an important medium among students as it allows not only to seek information but also to interact with others through online expression such as posting comments, sharing multimedia commentaries and even by blogging. Thus it molds students to be a responsible citizen and be a catalyst to bring changes in the society. For this they form groups to safeguard their interest over a particular thing and protest against the unethical practices of their representatives. They join groups to express openly their claims on the process of democratic consolidation, to differentiate and compare cognitive and behavioral aspects of traditional politics. This study would help the political parties to leverage social media in a better way and it would give necessary insights for the government in drawing out the social media policies.

Impact of bloggers sponsored recommendations on customer purchase decisions

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Introduction:

In today's business framework, digital marketing plays a significant role in facilitating business practices. It is highly preferred by the customers and they are very effective in influencing their behavior. Digital marketing makes use of electronic devices to stay connected with people. Digital marketing comprises two forms, pull where customer seeks content and pull where contents are displayed. Digital marketers faces big query now a days that whether acquiring new customer is imperative or retaining the existing customer? But while putting into reality it is not the question of either or. Yes, acquisition of customers is the topmost requirement at the early stage but customer retention has even more significance since concentrating only on acquisition will lead to traffic. The thing is that both of this will have a positive implication if there is a proper awareness.

This paper would provide some inference for the business concerns to increase the benefits received through digital marketing especially through blogger's recommendation posts. There exist some digital marketing strategies which are effective in seeking customer attention, enabling them to visit websites often, etc. This paper would reveal the essence that customers have any distinct preference over blogging.

Objective:

- To study how the blogger's sponsored recommendations influence customer purchase decisions.
- To sort out whether there is any significance over the attitude of the customer based on sponsorship type and product type.

Problem statement: To measure the effect of bloggers' recommended sponsorship type and product type on customer attitude and decision making.

Implications: Sponsored recommendation posts will become a vital online marketing tool for marketers. It will likely generate more remuneration for the marketers since it would reveal the customer anticipations. Also when recommended in Blog posts are search goods, customer will respond quickly and it will stand as a key for generating more customers. Customer retention is also possible in case of good processing as online consumers trust will hike up.

Conclusion: Thus, this paper would specify the effectiveness of online marketing. To put it in a nutshell, this paper hardly focuses on Online marketing practices that help the marketers as well the bloggers in gaining more benefits which in turn ensures customer trust, sales promotion, brand awareness, etc. This paper is more of customer perspective nature and it provides some inference for the business concerns to increase the benefits received through blogger's posts. As of now some of the possible keywords that could possibly be generated are digital marketing, online advertising, digital marketing strategy, blogs and customer retention.

A study on cult branding with respect to Royal Enfield

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We live in an environment where we are surrounded with choices. Be it the university we choose to study, the clothes we choose to wear or the engine oil we want to use. If magnified carefully all of them have brands attached to them and some have been stuck with a few consumers for generations. They have passed as a tradition from one generation to another and so on and so forth. These are identified to be as cult/ iconic brands where people have a religious veneration. They are fashionable among a specific sect of the society due to a variety of reasons. This paper highlights the concept of cult branding keeping the brand Royal Enfield in mind.

Cult brand is a term inspired and drawn perhaps on the similarities between the activities of cults (religious sects) and well-known brands. The comparison begins with the anthropology of cults – an investigation of marketing tactics of cult organizations reveals a high degree of consistency between cults in their overall pattern of activities. The different tactics used by cults and the sub-conscious techniques used by cult brands, status of a cult and cult brand are all interesting areas that helps comprehend what makes a cult brand a “cult” brand. The phenomenon of “consumer devotion” draws a parallel to that of cult following. Certain brands have managed to instil die-hard loyalty in their consumers by giving them an experience, a feeling, and an aura of a group identity which the consumers imbibe and stay committed to. Such brands have come to be called Cult brands. Cult brands don’t just sell products or services: they sell lifestyles. A brand becomes a cult when it is no more a product but a way of life. The study tells us how brands we use in daily life can turn into cult brands. The study tries to understand why only certain brands become cult brands. It analyzes the reason for huge popularity of Royal Enfield brand. The study attempts to understand the consumer perception towards cult brands like Royal Enfield.

According to **Douglas Holt** the very concept of cult branding is as old as civilization i.e. pre modern times. Cult branding diffused through storytelling to begin with and then via films in the 1930’s and used televisions in the 1950’s. (mbaskool.com) Royal Enfield also began its journey in the 1900’s and has moved a long way since then. It all began in British era, but has a more staunch foundation in Chennai city of India. So what makes this brand a cult even after 100 years of its origin? Intangible factors like brand identity, sense of ownership of the bike have made Enfield hit its mark. It’s not only among the citizens of the country, but the Indian army also uses this bike. Even though the bike is assembled in the outskirts of Tamil Nadu, its presence can hugely be felt in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh & Rajasthan. So what did Royal Enfield do to make its presence felt? It all started with Israeli’s travelling into our country in the 1980’s in their Enfield’s. Cost of living was cheap then and so was the bike. Also in the 1980’s the Enfield came in models of a full aluminum body and a diesel engine was also available. This gave the rider a more rustic feel. Coming down the years the value of an Enfield has appreciated because riders don’t mind spending more to relive that very experience. One more thing that Enfield incorporated was ‘Bullet Clubs’ where riders met often and embarked on road trips. Some famous trips include the, ‘Himalayan Odyssey’, ‘Rann of Kuch’ etc. This has not only increased affinity toward the brand but has also brought togetherness among like-minded individuals and taken the concept of branding and the brand to a whole new level.

Jeromy Corey & Phil Millage believe that few factors that give a brand a cult status largely depend on the country of conception, how emotionally have they hit the customer and the features of the product? The brand origin over a sustained period of time shapes into a community who share a commitment to a particular consumption activity. A few examples to support this would be Apple Inc., Harley Davidson

Motorcycles etc. Cult branding has given birth to the concept of, 'Corporate Evangelizing' wherein companies use fervor, zeal and anything else to convince to make consumers try their product in today's modern time.

Schouter & McAlexander (1995) believe that a cult brand leads to a subculture of consumption. This basically means of a distinctive group of people in a society that are brought together on the basis of a shared commitment because of a product class, brand or consumption activity. **Boortsin (1973)** also highlighted the concept of consumption community and virtual communities of consumption. **Cova & Cova (2002)** believe that a brand community is like a tribe.

Objective

1. To analyze consumer perception towards Royal Enfield.
2. To study the performance of Royal Enfield in the Indian market.
3. To compare the cult status of Harley Davidson to Royal Enfield and through this comparative study draw conclusions on Enfield's ability to achieve the status of a cult brand

Methodology

Our approach towards the study will be as follows. The sample population size will be 300 Royal Enfield riders. This is so that we could capture authentic information. We would be approaching our sample population with questionnaires. As far as data analysis is concerned the tools such as correlation and regression will be used to strike comparisons and formulate relations between different attributes.

Practical Implication

The results of this study would have implications on the way some organizations function. In the course of the research certain information might be useful to firms, which internally help them improve and might also result in product/service change.

Research Limitation

A few limitations to this study are as follows

1. This research is only restricted to the city of Bangalore.
2. The sample size of the population is only 300 which restricts the scope for more analysis
3. Personal biasness is another hardship for this study.

Future scope of study:

In the future we can use random sampling method to find out more appropriate results in terms of application, as random method will give better result as compared to convenience sampling.

Scarcity vs. Abundance: Mindsets That Influence Performance and Decision Making

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The increase in desk-based 24/7 jobs and consequent life-styles adopted vastly by the urban educated population today, has made the need for fitness and diet conscious life an imperative. According to a Time magazine report citing a study from the Division of Preventive Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital, *"about 5.3 million of the 57 million deaths worldwide in 2008 could be attributed to inactivity, the new report estimates, largely due to four major diseases: heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, breast cancer and colon cancer...if physical inactivity could be reduced by just 10%, it could avert some 533,000 deaths a year; if reduced by 25%, 1.3 million deaths could be prevented"*ⁱ.

Despite abundant health and lifestyle information from mainstream online and offline media that reiterate the need for inculcating good exercise and diet regimes for health as well as looks, the incessant demands on an individuals' attention and time make it difficult for them to plan and execute a healthy lifestyle. An often cited reason for inactive lifestyle is the 'lack of time'. With the permeation of media and the blending of personal and professional aspects of one's life, there appears to be large scale pandemic of time scarcity. Having too little time can be considered as a scarcity situation (Shah, Muralidharan & Shafiz, 2012).

Background Literature: Resource scarcity creates its own mindset, influencing individual's approach to problems and decision making. Shah et.al (2012) point out that this sort of scarcity is not bound to specific circumstances of material poverty, nor does it make assumptions about the disposition of the poor. According to the researchers, this mindset stems from the most fundamental feature of poverty – having less. While fundamental concepts of economics focus on "allocation of scarce resources" and scarcity of the economic type has garnered the attention of several streams of researchers (Booth, 1984; Brock, 1968), general perception of scarcity and situationally activated scarcity have garnered interest only recently. Individual differences in perception of scarcity arising from their own past histories of deprivation or abundance (Griskevicius, Ackerman, Cantu, Delton, Robertson, Simpson et al., 2013) as well as cues from the current context of environment resources might signal a context of scarcity or abundance (Laran and Salerno, 2012).

Besides the influence of scarcity and abundance mindsets, regulatory motivations of individuals might make an impact on how they perform and make choices. Those who use a preventive focus to avoid pain (avoid cognitive dissonance) and those who use promotional focus to gain pleasure (eg. well-being) may cope with scarce situations and abundance situations quite differently (Higgins 1997). This hedonic approach to pain avoidance or the pleasure principle can be applied directly to the motivations that influence exertions in physical activity such as painful endurance training as well as to the high degree of will power required to avoid succumbing to the temptations of rich food.

Thus, extant literature in the areas of scarcity mindset and regulatory focus indicate that performance and decision making maybe influenced by either or both conditions. While several studies have examined human behavior under scarce conditions (Zhu and Ratner, 2015; Shah, Muralidharan and Shafiz, 2012 ; Gierl and Huettl, 2010), several studies have looked into the

influence of regulatory focus on human behavior (Crowe and Higgins, 1997; Idsen, Liberman and Higgins, 2000; Aaker and Lee, 2001), the role of regulatory focus under conditions of scarcity has not been assessed to the best knowledge of the researchers (of the presented study). The role of motivational aspects under scarce and abundance conditions might be useful to organizations, given that they operate under one or the other market condition. An understanding of the best motivational approaches under such conditions can help in increasing efficiency and effectiveness of individuals in all walks of life.

We posit that people may be more focused on completing a given task under conditions of scarcity since “having less elicits more focus” (Shah, Muralidharan and Shafiz, 2012) and hence may perform better when compared with an ‘abundant’ situation. However, under contexts of scarcity, (regulatory) preventive focus may elicit better performance than under conditions of abundance and regulatory promotional focus may elicit better performance under conditions of abundance than in conditions of scarcity. Based on such premise, we carry out a series of three studies that examine performance and choice under conditions of scarcity and abundance as well as the role of regulatory focus in moderating the influence of scarcity vs. abundance mindset on performance and choice.

Methodology: In study 1, one week prior to the experiment, we collected estimates of students on their own ability to do push-ups - boys/squats- girls (henceforth referred to as exertions). In a short questionnaire, student participants self-reported the number of exertions they might be able to complete if they pushed themselves to their maximum ability. They also reported on the maximum time they could carry on the task and the number of exertions they could complete in 2 minutes. Based on this information, the time and number of exertions were calculated to create contexts of scarcity and abundance mindsets such that half the students selected randomly were assigned to levels of physical performance task higher than they had indicated, the other half were assigned a performance task lower than they had indicated. Thus, they were split into conditions where they had enough resources (time & ability) to reach the target number of exertions or were given much lesser resources to carry out the exertions. Further, half the students in each condition were told that if they failed to do the task as expected, they would lose grade points and the other half was told that they would be given free hours during the training sessions in the following week if they performed as expected.

In study 2, we assess how students were motivated by their regulatory focus when asked to run a long distance marathon. While one group was briefed that they had to run 8 kms when they had to in fact run 5kms and the other group was told that they had to run 3 kms when they had to in fact run 5kms. Students in each group were incentivized with either a loss of grade points or gain of additional grade.

In study 3, participants were asked to choose among chocolate cakes or salads either under time pressure or in leisure. Later their attitude towards diet with respect to either avoiding ill health or maintain good looks was elicited. The self-reports were used to assess how their regulatory motivations guided their decisions in contexts of resource constraint.

Conclusion: The studies were designed as 2*2 between subject designs among students of first year PGDM who were freshly recruited into the b-school. The measurements were carried out as part of their Personality Enhancement Program (PEP) requirements, which is 3 credit mandatory course in their curriculum. Analysis was carried out using between subjects ANOVA. This is an

ongoing study with preliminary data collection being carried out and the initial results indicate that general direction of the hypotheses could be supported.

Sequential Introduction of Products with Increasing Quality as a Planned Obsolescence Strategy

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In 2007, after launching its first iPhone, Apple has released four newer generations of the iPhone culminating with the release of the iPhone 5 in 2012. These newer generations of iPhones, it has been suggested, derive significant demand from existing iPhone users trading up to the newest versions (Meigs 2012). 67% of current iPhone owners surveyed in the U. K. ahead of the launch of iPhone 5 expected to purchase the new phone at some point (M2 Presswire 2012). One explanation for the almost annual stream of new and improved phones from Apple is technological progress over time. However, Apple's new product introductions also brought forth suggestions in the media that Apple is using a planned obsolescence strategy through strategic choice of features to include or exclude from successive generations of iPhones (Smart Company 2012). One article suggested that an example of such a strategic choice was to include the feature Siri only in the newer iPhone 4S although there was no technical reason preventing its inclusion in earlier iPhones (Meigs 2012). Similarly, automobile manufacturers are also believed to practice planned obsolescence through annual design changes of car models (Waldman 1993).

Pedram and Balachander (2014) offer one rationale for firms to offer sequentially increasing quality. They study the optimal introduction timing of a seller facing two segment of consumers differing in their willingness to pay for quality. In their model, the segment with the higher valuation for quality also possesses an outside option such as a substitute product. The effect of this substitute product is a lower total valuation for a new product, what they call a "possession effect," thus representing replacement buyers. They show that if the possession effect is high, a firm would offer the lower-quality product first followed by a higher-quality product.

A feature of the analysis in Pedram and Balachander (2014) is that the possession effect is exogenous in their model. A broader analysis might recognize that this possession effect of replacement buyers would depend on previous generations of the product sold by the seller to this segment. How might a seller manage the introduction of successive generations of a product recognizing that his earlier products would endow buyers with a possession effect? Would such considerations result in sequentially increasing quality with the seller strategically withholding the best quality until later? To study the impact of endogenizing the possession effect, we develop a model in which a seller faces a single segment of buyers over two periods. As the seller's product is new to the world, there are no replacement buyers initially. We also assume that there is potentially a secondary market for used products where buyers have a lower valuation for the product than the seller's target customers. Our main finding is that the seller optimally follows a planned obsolescence strategy. Specifically, the seller initially offers a product with a quality lower

than the profit-maximizing or “efficient” quality (cf. Mussa and Rosen 1977; Moorthy 1988; Moorthy and Png 1992) and subsequently offers a higher-quality product as a replacement product to its previous buyers. Thus, we show that a seller may strategically withhold profitable features from earlier generations of a product in order to increase profit, thereby giving rise to a planned obsolescence strategy.

The planned obsolescence strategy creates multiple purchases of the seller’s product instead of the single purchase that would result if he were to offer the highest quality product right away. More importantly, the lower quality of the first-generation product limits the possession effect that the seller needs to overcome when inducing a replacement purchase in the second period.¹ When replacing their earlier purchase in the second period, buyers dispose of their used product in the secondary market. However, we show that even without a secondary market, the seller would follow a planned obsolescence strategy as long as there is depreciation in the product between the periods. Nevertheless, a secondary market increases the seller’s profit further as the seller now gains additionally from indirect product discrimination between his target buyers and secondary market buyers. We then show that a planned obsolescence strategy of indirect product discrimination yields higher profit to the seller than a direct product discrimination strategy as in Moorthy and Png (1992). These findings may be consistent with the possible planned obsolescence strategy being followed for Apple’s iPhone.

Our research question and contribution spans two streams of the literature, namely, the broader literature on sequential product introduction and the more specialized literature on planned obsolescence. In the broader literature on sequential product introduction, Pedram and Balachander (2014), as noted above, suggest that a firm may delay the introduction of a higher-end product to achieve better discrimination between first-time buyers and replacement buyers, who possess an outside option. In other work in the literature, the strategic rationale for sequentially increasing quality principally depends on the presence of some form of uncertainty. In contrast to this literature, we offer a strategic rationale for an introductory strategy of increasing quality that is independent of any form of uncertainty or network externality. In particular, we show that a seller may offer sequentially increasing quality as a planned obsolescence strategy to benefit from replacement sales of upgraded products to previous buyers.

There is also an extensive literature on planned obsolescence that is motivated by the so-called time-inconsistency problem faced by a monopolist seller of a durable product (Coase 1972). Specifically, after selling initially to consumers who value his durable product the most, the seller has an incentive to reduce the product’s price to sell to lower-valuation consumers, thereby devaluing the product purchased by early consumers. However, the seller does not internalize this devaluation resulting in a time-inconsistency problem that reduces seller profit because early consumers become reluctant to pay a high price. Bulow (1986) shows that the seller can mitigate this problem by reducing the product’s durability thus effecting a kind of planned obsolescence. The lower product durability keeps high-valuation consumers in the market at later dates thus lowering the seller’s incentive to reduce price. In contrast to Bulow’s conception of planned

¹ An important assumption is that product quality or feature improvements cannot be separately sold and added to an existing product.

obsolescence through lower durability, we focus on planned obsolescence through successive product introductions of increasing quality.

Waldman (1993) studies sequential product introductions and shows that the time inconsistency problem induces a seller to plan obsolescence by introducing newer generations of his product that render the old units less valued or obsolete. The reduced utility of the old units, in turn, increases consumers' willingness to pay for the seller's newer product.² Waldman (1996a) extends this idea to show that a seller may have a greater incentive to invest in quality improvements after introducing the first-generation product, thus increasing obsolescence of the old product.³ However, the seller makes lower profits as a result of this planned obsolescence, which arises from the time-inconsistency problem. Unlike these papers by Waldman, our results on sequentially increasing quality under planned obsolescence do not rely on the time-consistency problem faced by the seller. Consequently, we find that a planned obsolescence strategy can be profitable to the seller unlike Waldman (1996a). Moreover, unlike these papers, we show that a seller may strategically withhold profitable features from earlier generations of product under a planned obsolescence strategy. In other words, in the papers by Waldman and the related literature, obsolescence is planned after introduction of the first-generation product. In contrast, we show that obsolescence may be planned even prior to introduction of the first-generation product. Further, while the emphasis in the previous literature is to kill the second-hand market, we find that a robust second-hand market would increase the seller's profit under a planned obsolescence strategy.

The Impact of Social Interactions and Shopping Categories on Online Shopping: A Theory of Tie Strength

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With the advent of digital marketing, most businesses use a combination of offline and online media to maximize their advertising effects. While traditional advertising through television, newspaper/magazines and radio are still the leading channels for firms' advertising, digital communication such as brand/manufacturer webpages, marketing emails and even mobile ads are being increasingly used to target customers (Nielsen 2013). In order to get the maximum reach and effectiveness through different types of media, firms need to develop a coordinated and integrated communication strategy using both traditional and digital media (Social Media Today 2012).

While offering customers multiple media touch points creates an opportunity for firms, it also poses several challenges regarding a balanced and coordinated execution of marketing communication strategies. Firms now need to balance advertising and promotion across traditional media (e.g., TV, Newspaper and Radio) with digital campaigns such as website ads and marketing emails to maximize their impact. In this study, we address the above issues by examining how firms should integrate traditional and digital marketing communication strategies to increase their

² The motive for such a strategy has also been expressed as one of killing off the used product market.

³ See also Fishman and Rob (2000) for related work and Waldman (2003) for a review of this literature.

performance metrics. Our objective is to understand how the various forms of marketing communications impact firm performance both individually and synergistically. For this purpose, we use vector auto regression (VAR) model to study the dynamic response and interactions among (1) firm's performance metrics such as sales and profits, (2) advertising activities including traditional and digital, and (3) other firm's marketing promotional activities such as price cuts and discounts.

Our data comes from one of the largest regional retailers of liquor products in the state of New York and spans a 5 year period from 2008 to 2013. The firm also retains individual customer level transactional information as well as various marketing communication and promotional activities that it engages in. Our research will provide implications for firms regarding the allocation of marketing and promotional resources to maximize firm's top and bottom line performance metrics.

Understanding the Effect of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on Buying Centre in Business-to-Business Context

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Organizational buying processes are complex in nature and involve interactions in step wise processes involving several people across multiple departments with varied objectives (Johnston & Lewin, 1996). The traditional view of organizational buying comprises of 'task' and 'non task' elements in a buying center, where the 'task' element goes with issues like objective of getting minimum price, meeting the set specifications, meeting the policy objectives regarding supplier preference and anticipation of price fluctuation based on environmental factors (Webster & Wind, 1972). The 'non task' elements include factors like personal values and needs for reducing perceived risk. The buying behavior model proposed by Webster and Wind (1972) describes organizational buying behavior as an interplay of individual, social, organizational and environmental factors. Johnston and Lewin (1996) further integrated the available studies on buying behavior model and presented the integrated framework with nine constructs - 2 environmental characteristics, organizational characteristics, purchase characteristics, seller characteristics, group characteristics, informational characteristics, participant's characteristics, conflict/negotiation characteristics and process characteristics.

As the businesses are becoming more networked, there is a shift from the inter-organizational to intra-organizational perspective due to interdependencies (Wind & Thomas, 2010). Wind and Thomas (2010) also indicated that with an increased communication and interdependency among buying and selling firms, the buying process may become more complex. The adoption of internet in organizational buying process is one such enhanced mode of communication which has significant impact due to its potential in affecting the strategic sourcing and information flow leading to reduction in overall procurement cost (Luckling & Spulber, 2001). Usage of internet advocates three value adding strategies, namely relational exchange strategy, joint learning strategy and rich information strategy (Walters, 2008). Web based procurement affect search, processing, monitoring and coordinating task of the buying process (chandrashekhara & Shaw, 2002), which are synonymous to the 'task' elements described by Webster and Wind (1972). The 'non task' elements, in many ways, are also influenced by the advent of internet. Social networking sites (SNS) have been found to be useful for brand-

building, interacting and nurturing relationships with customers in a business to business (B2B) setting (Michaelidou et al., 2011). However the adoption of Internet in the form of SNS by B2B firms also depends on firms' innovativeness and drive from top management (Gauvin & Sinha, 1993; Thong & Yap, 1995; Agarwal & Prasad, 1998; Lu, Yao, & Yu, 2005). All such factors are also expected to impact the buying center in its decision making.

Extant literature mentions the role of social media on various facets of the firm (e.g., Aral et al., 2013), but there is a dearth of scholarly work in understanding how social media influences 'task' and 'non-task' elements in B2B firms. Based on this elaboration, this study intends to understand the role social networking sites play in creating 'task' and 'non-task' elements in a buying center in a B2B context.

Theoretical Underpinning

We have used Social Capital Theory in extending the discussion on the subject as social capital helps in creating values within the members of a social structure (Coleman & Coleman, 1990). This theory is useful in understanding the role of SNS in the context of buying center at B2B firms since members of the center share similar values with regard to objective of the firm. It also pivots around the relations in a social structure which ultimately paves the way for appropriate action.

Research Methodology

The research methodology includes undertaking qualitative research technique in the form of in-depth interviews with the executives in the B2B firms who are part of the buying center. 3

Concluding Remarks

In this era of proliferation of social networking sites, B2B firms have also been affected by the growing influence of them which is evident from the emergence of new strategic choices. This study also makes an attempt to add to the stock of knowledge on emerging 'task' and 'non-task' elements in a buying center under changing scenario.

A Qualitative Exploration of Movie Sequel Consumption Behavior

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Introduction

The market for sequels across the world for Hollywood movies have boomed in the last decade with sequels in every possible genre of movies such as action (e.g. The Expendables), animation (e.g. Kung Fu Panda), horror (e.g. Insidious) and comedy (e.g. The Hangover). Interestingly, enough there are instances where a sequel has earned more box office revenues than the original movie (e.g. Harry Potter) and vice versa (e.g. Amazing Spiderman 2). Given the background, oddly enough, there has been very little academic interest in investigating why consumers watch sequels. The limited research in this area has either investigated the prediction of revenues for a sequel from a mathematical modelling perspective (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al. 2009) or has explored characteristics of sequels (such as name) (e.g. Sood and Dreze, 2006) and how they lead to consumer choice. To the authors'

knowledge, there has not been any study that has explored the consumer's perspective and what leads them to select and watch sequels. Even though sequels could be considered as brand extensions (Sood and Dreze, 2006), they have various features that differentiate them from product brand extensions.

Based on this premise, we undertake a qualitative exploration of the consumer side factors that lead to sequels choice and viewing.

Empirical Research on Movie Sequels

Empirical work on movie sequels is much lesser than that of brand extensions. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2009) proposed a method for measuring the monetary value of a brand extension by examining market data on movie sequels. They studied forward and reciprocal spillover effects. They reported that introducing a brand extension in motion pictures provides generates higher average revenues and reduces project-specific risk for movie sequels than for non-movie sequels. Similarly, Dhar et al. (2012) used empirical data from secondary sources and found sequels do better than non-sequels in generating more attendance and revenue. However, they also found parent movies to do better than sequels in total attendance and inflation adjusted revenue generation.

Sood and Dreze (2006) found dissimilar extensions to be rated higher than similar extensions. They also found that numbered sequels (e.g. Daredevil 2) and named sequels (e.g. Daredevil: Taking It to the Streets) to have a differential effects on consumers' information processing of the movie. The last study worth mentioning is by Yeh (2013) who examined the criteria governing the preference for original movie versus sequel. The study revealed that greater product knowledge dominates the preference for original movies in contrast to movie sequels. Yeh (2013) reaffirmed the spillover effect of parent movies to sequels and preference for numbered sequels as compared to named sequels.

Research Gap and Research Questions

Summarizing the literature on brand extensions and movie sequels, we find relatively less amount of scholarly work on movie sequels compared to brand extensions, and none investigating the consumer choice mechanism of sequel selection and choice. Thereby, in the present study we plan to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the factors that influence consumers to select and watch a movie sequel?

RQ2: What is the role of marketing and social factors in the same process?

RQ3: What is/are the outcomes of sequel consumption?

Methodology

We adopted a qualitative approach using grounded theory methodology (Strauss and Corbin, 1994) with Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Depth Interviews (DI) as data collection techniques. The protocol had a loose set of questions starting with the movie going habits of the participants and their opinions about sequels. Thereby, we asked probing questions on why a participant would select to

watch a sequel and the moderators of the choice. The last part of the discussion/interview was related to the aftereffects of watching the sequel. The Indian film industry is big and growing and of the different sub-industries the Hindi film industry (popularly known as Bollywood) churns more movies than Hollywood (McCarthy, 2014). Thus, India serves as an appropriate market for such a study. We conducted three FGDs, with two in the heart of Bollywood (Mumbai) and one in the national capital (Delhi). Total of 12 DIs each were conducted in the same two cities. Each focus group had 8-10 participants and totaled 27 participants with a fair balance of gender and age group ranging from 20-45. The FGD/DIs was conducted in the meeting room of a business school in each city respectively. All the discussions were video recorded and verbatim transcripts were developed from the video including body language, facial expression and tone of the participants.

Key Results

The transcripts were subject to an initial open coding procedure followed by axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Both the authors did the coding independently followed by inter-coder comparison that led to more than 80% agreement. Subsequently the coded tables were shown to an industry expert for external validity. The axial coding resulted in themes and categories and the relationships that are discussed in the following subsections.

Antecedents of sequel choice

Based on the findings we arrived at five antecedents that influence the choice of the sequel. These are story continuation; risk aversion; habitual consumption; product characteristics and nostalgia. Story continuation: many participants opined that they went to watch a sequel because they felt that the story was incomplete in the parent movie. Risk aversion: a good majority of the participants were of the opinion that a sequel of a hit movie is a risk free option or 'a safe bet'. Habitual consumption: at least twelve participants could not give any crystal clear answer to why they watch sequels. From detail probing it was implicit that many of them watch the sequel of the movie more because of the habit they have developed after watching the parent movie. Product characteristics: more than 50% of the respondents said that the movie characteristics influence them to select and watch a sequel. These characteristics ranged from the same set of actors, the same director, the same music director and even the same production house. Nostalgia: interestingly enough, some respondents opined that watching a sequel brought back a lot of memories and was like relieving the past.

Moderators

During the discussions we found marketing buzz and social factors to moderate the influence of the antecedents on the choice of sequel. Marketing buzz was found to increase consumer knowledge about the plot, the actors and the other characteristics of the movie. This to some extent led to risk reduction and increased propensity to watch. Quite a few respondents however said they ended up watch a sequel because of their social circle.

Actual consumption

A majority of respondents were found to indulge in instantaneous comparisons of the sequel with the original movie. This is where they were found to be dissatisfied with the sequel compared to the original one. Interestingly, a lot of respondents were found to engage in immediate word-of-mouth after watching the movie. This was mainly through smartphones and social networking sites such as Facebook and twitter.

Post consumption

Satisfaction and recommendation were the two obvious outcomes of the sequel watching. However, we found a third outcome that we named as anticipation. This was found to be the eagerness to watch one more sequel of the same franchise. Integrating the findings, we derive answers for the three RQs.

Discussion

The most important and novel contribution of the present study is the development of a model of sequel consumption from the consumers perspective that. Thus the present study complements the mathematical studies in the same area (Henig-Thurau et al. 2009; Dhar et al. 2012) by bringing in the behavioural perspective. Some of the findings support existing thoughts on brand extension such as the role of product characteristics and risk aversion leading to choice of the sequel (Volckner and Sattler, 2006). The role of nostalgia has been sparsely studied in case of extensions even though it has received attention in marketing (Loveland et al. 2010; Merchant et al. 2013). The role of social factors in moderating consumer choice is novel in the context of movie sequels. The moderating influence of buzz marketing supports the role of promotions and communications for movie sequels (Bay, 2010). The instant comparison of the sequel with the parent movie is another contribution that may not always be present in case of brand extensions. Interestingly, we found the role of social media in spreading the results of this comparison over online social networks. This supports the important role of technology in marketing and word-of-mouth (Berthon et al. 2012; Okazaki and Taylor, 2013). The role of a satisfactory movie sequel on recommendation is not very novel but in agreement with existing consumer theories. Among the post consumption behaviour, the role of satisfaction leading to anticipation is another interesting finding that emphasizes the role of a successful sequel in motivating the consumers to ask for more.

Franchising a gate way for fast food industry in India

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Introduction

India is one of the growing markets for franchising business because of the globalization and industrial policy of 1991 and increasing rich middle class and expanding population .India becomes a sort after destination for international and domestic franchisors. Franchising industry was worth 13.4 billion in 2012, It contributes 1.4% of GDP with an impressive growth rate of 30%

per year. Previously Indians prefer to have home food because they consider it as healthy and nutritious. Now a days' youngsters are open to the food habits of the western world. Another reason is the huge increase in the disposable income and change in the working habits of the youngsters has led to the growth of fast food restaurants in India.

In India foreign franchisors are making a remarkable progress in the fast food industry as compared to domestic franchisors Indians know their taste preference attitude still they are not considering franchising as system for expansion of their business. Foreign franchisors are adopting business format system of franchising. Mc Donald's have globalized their items for in order to suit the taste buds of Indians. The growth rate of fast food restaurants in India on an average is 40% and the foreign investment is up to 3600 million (1/4 of total investment).

According to KPMG India estimates the franchising industry is expected to quadruple between 2012 and 2017. There is a scope for franchising industry to contribute 4% of GDP IN 2017. This is also expected to create job opportunities for an additional of 11 million people by 2017. Franchising is an already proven concept with less risk when compared to other business ventures. A continuing relationship in which franchiser provides a licensed privilege to the franchisee to do business and offers assistance in organising, training, merchandising, marketing and managing in return for a monetary consideration. It is a form of business by which the owner (franchiser) of a product, service or a method obtains distribution through affiliated dealers (franchisees).

Need for the Study

Indian franchising system is still in the nascent stage because it is not considered as a separate sector. So far no study has been conducted in the specified area. This study proposes a model that will help the franchising sector to grow by overcoming the threats and the challenges faced by the franchisers, franchisees and customers in the fast food industry.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the reasons for growth of franchise format of business among fast food outlets in India.
- To explore the various challenges faced by the franchisers with reference to fast food outlets in India.

Research methodology

The Study: This research paper aims to identify the opportunities and threats faced by the fast food industry with reference to franchising business. Research methodology used is exploratory in nature using primary data and secondary published data.

Tool for Data Collection and Analysis: The data was collected using interview method. A structured interview schedule was prepared and the data thus collected was consolidated for analysis. The interview was recorded and transcript for analysis. The interview revolved around the following major parameters:

- The reason for choice of franchise mode of business

- The various advantages of food business franchising in terms of brand building cost; location; financial support promotional support; risk sharing, any other advantage.
- The major challenges faced by the franchise owners in terms of brand awareness; quality; staff; operational issues; pricing; raw material procurement; consumer acceptance, any other issues.

Sample: A study has been conducted with sample size of 15 respondents representing 6 brands of fast food chains (Papa Jones; KFC; McDonald's; Dominos; Subway; Pizza Hut) in India. The interviewees were individuals involved in the strategic decision making of the organization. The sample included 55% owners; 25% partners and 20% Store Managers.

The expansion plans of fast food outlets show that there is untapped potential in Indian market. These MNCs are moving towards tier-II and tier III cities

The major players in the fast food industry and their outlets are as follows:

- Dominos 411 outlets
- KFC 361 outlets
- Subway 260 outlets
- McDonalds 250 outlets
- Pizza Hut 121 outlets
- Papa Johns 46 outlets

Reasons for the growth of these MNCs are:

- Improved hygiene levels.
- No compromise on taste and quality.
- Affordable price.
- Suitable to Indian palate.
- Less waiting time.
- Better service by the staff personnel

Analysis and Interpretation

Franchisors are agreeing to the fact that it is the method of expanding the business with less capital investment. Indian economy is shifting from agriculture sector to service sector. The negative part of the franchising business is that franchisees are under the strict control of the franchisors. The franchisors have strict guidelines for promotional activity, pricing strategies procurement of raw materials recruitment and training of the staff personnel. They are not able to respond immediately to take the advantage of market fluctuations some times because of the inefficient promotional activities stores are witnessing less foot falls. This led to the dissolution of the franchising agreement. The franchisees are not able to retain highly motivated staff because of the stringent rules of the franchisors.

Review of Literature

Franchising is witnessing a significant growth in the fast food industry. Among the fast food industry franchisors are opting for the business format franchising. Norton (1988) suggests the business format franchising is ideal for those organizations which are highly dispersed. Success of the outlet depends on the how effectively local managers are managing it. Nilmeijev (2014)

suggests that success of any form of business depends on how efficiently it can adapt to the local conditions. Banerjee and Shivani (2015) had the opinion that government had a big role to play to enhance the benefits of consumers like convenience shopping, fulfilment of hygiene levels and food safety. As per the research paper of Goyal and Singh (2007) Mc Donalds scores are high in all attributes except quality and display of nutritional value of the food sold in the outlets.

THREATS & CHALLENGES

Franchiser	Franchisee	Customer
No unified law. Bribe and corruption. High real estate rentals.	Strict control by franchisers. Lack of creativity High employee turnover Difficult to get financial assistance Lack of training and promotional activity	Nutritional values are not displayed. Enormous health issues. Lack of quality check for the outlets.

SOLUTIONS

Separate law for franchising.
Single window clearance.
Consultancy firms.
Food and safety regulation.

Conclusion

This paper represents threats challenges and opportunities faced by the fast food industry in India. If the trends and challenges are able to overcome there is tremendous growth potential for the franchising sector in India. This sector is able to produce immense job opportunities to millions of people. The concrete law for franchising helps to consider as a separate business system. This will attract a large number of entrepreneur's to this particular system.

Consumer Perception of Retail Environment

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Abstract

A conceptual framework is developed to understand the consumer perception towards retail environment. The three main issues which aroused theoretical attention are; first, the issue of handling retail environment; second, perceptual dimensions related to retail environment; and third, factors which moderate retail environment and develop new research propositions. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis carried out on separate perceptual dimensions which results

into different retail environments. At last, theoretical, managerial and future research is discussed and suggestions are given.

Introduction

The present research paper focus of understanding retail environment is narrow (Foxall and Greenly, 1998). The past researches are mainly focused on cognitive and functional areas of stores, but in the present research the focus is shifted to emotional and social areas. In the past the focus of studies has been limited to consumer-retail environment interaction and the relationship of places to individuals has been found ignored (Fishwick and Vining, 1992). So, there is a need of research in conceptualization of retail environment from consumer perspective (Zimmer and Golden, 1988). Finally, there is a shortage of understanding of retail environment and the experiences consumers have in dealing with them. There is a need of research to capture the essence of theoretical relations in developing conceptual framework for retail environments. The phenomenological approach is used to understand consumer's perceptions and experiences related to different formats of retail environments.

Three objectives are set in the present paper; (a) factors which reveal the consumer perception toward retail environment; (b) development of research propositions for future research; and (c) reveal differences in consumer perception toward different formats of retail environment.

Literature review

Perceptions of retail environment

Consumers have variations in the way they respond to living places of other people (Ritterfeld and Cupchik, 1996). The perception toward these places is influenced by semantic, structural and connotative qualities of objects. The retail environment should be considered as a combination of merchandise, furniture, decoration and sales person. In various past researches, there is negation of social aspects related to retail environment (Babin et al., 1994). The semantic dimensions highlight the relevance of social content which further highlight values in retail environment. The retail spaces are worked as symbols and express one's identity (Ritterfeld and Cupchik, 1996). The connotative dimension represents consumer feelings toward retail environment. Hanyu (2000) describes that visual appearance of residential area has an effect on affective appraisals and level of excitement at the mall (Wakefield and Baker, 1998).

Building a conceptual framework

There is a meaning capture in retail environment. The essence of meanings varies as per the format of retail environment and nature of individual. The differences in consumer mind towards environmental perception are complex in nature to understand (Fishwick and Vining, 1992). Sometimes, the consumers feel like getting emotional towards their psychological states (Kerr and Tacon, 1999). There is even a difference in emotional states related to different places. To develop understanding for retail environment various constructs from the areas of psychology and consumer research were taken.

Character of Retail Environment

It is hard denying that the perception of retail environment depends on its pervasive influence. Many studies neglect the pleasant behaviour of salespersons (Baker et al., 1992). Molar characteristics are more important to evaluate instead of noticing individual physical characteristics (Barnes and Ward, 1995). Foxall and Greenley (1998) work does not focus much on retail environment and ranges consumer perception toward retail environment. In the present study, we offer topology for retail environment. Where, the first dimension focuses on the openness of retail environment and the second dimension focuses on quality of environment design laid down by managers. Some studies focus on understanding the second dimension in terms of emotional states by comparing the retail environment of traditional vs. modern bank designs (Greenland and McGoldrick, 1994), furniture stores (Spies et al., 1997) and CD stores (Tai and Fung, 1997) between emotional states and different aspects of shopping behaviour. The environmental design and openness shows four matrix cells which include discount store, specialty store, flea market and malls.

Malls and flea markets provide more open space for consumers in comparison to specialty and discount stores which are influenced by external factors like store personnel and tight spaces. The management of specialty stores and malls are more concerned about atmosphere and aesthetic features in comparison to flea market and discount stores. In turn, the management of flea market and discount stores are concerned about location and price. The fascinating question which arises here is to determine the relation of three perceptual dimensions (semantic, structural and connotative) with different retail environment.

Methodology:

The quantitative analysis is done to understand the retail environment perceptual dimensions. Along with that qualitative analysis is done through phenomenological approach to get consumer's experiences while shopping in discount stores, flea market and shopping centers.

Method, sample and data:

The personal experiences of consumers are taken to gain considerable theoretical insights (Thompson, 1997). The consumer stories give better understanding of consumer perception (Stern et al., 1998). The sample size taken of consumers were $n=190$ which makes easy to perform quantitative content analysis. The textual material for the study collected from shoppers shopping at malls, flea market and specialty stores. The shoppers were asked to provide their subjective experiences related to different retail environment. The researcher writes the narrative of shoppers.

Results:

Empirically it is very interesting to know the relation of three perceptual dimensions with retail environment. The frequency was checked for different perceptual dimensions for different retail environment. The semantic dimension has significant relationship with discount stores and malls, the structural dimension has strong relation with discount stores, and the connotative dimension has strong relation with specialty stores.

Discount store perceptual profile:

Semantic dimensions play a significant role for discount store. Three observations are made for discount stores. First, it was observed that underprivileged prefer discount stores. Second, functional motives drive individual intentions toward discount stores. Third, consumers at discount stores are insensitive to society; they do not care about other people opinion about them.

Specialty store perceptual profile:

Semantic dimensions describe three aspects for specialty store. First, people believe that only wealthy consumers prefer to go to specialty stores. Second, people believe that specialty store products maintain ethics and trust. Third, people believe that consumers of specialty stores are status-oriented. The narratives related to above stated three aspects are illustrated below.

Flea market perceptual profile:

Flea market generates two aspects related to semantic dimensions, that underprivileged and idealistic persons like to go to flea market. To illustrate these points two narratives are used. The flea market does not seem good to me and the people shopping there are not from good backgrounds, and the stuff they sell is usually of poor quality. But, sometimes one can get second hand good quality products which have some value.

Mall perceptual profile:

The semantic dimensions are described by three features in malls. First, malls are only for big middle class consumers. Second, social interaction in malls is very common. Third, hedonic behavior of consumers motivate them to do shopping at malls. The narratives are illustrated below to explain all the three features of semantic dimensions.

The main structural dimension which is commonly seen in all the write-ups is the 'availability of all the products under one roof'.

For connotative dimensions various positive aspects come out from mall experiences like excitement, freedom, free from responsibilities and a lot of fun, and the negative experience is nervousness. To clarify this point few narratives are illustrated below.

Conclusion and implications:

Measuring three perceptions (semantic, structural and connotative) in retail environment is a challenging task and needs more support from the field of environmental psychology. It is necessary to capture the essence of these perceptions for different retail environment. There are alternative ways to capture the meaning of retail environments. Fournier (1991) described meaning-based framework which is used to understand individual meanings attached to different consumption environments. The meanings arise from subjective, symbolic, objective, cultural, and emotional dimensions. To understand the meanings Holt (1995) topology of consumption practices in baseball is a best way.

The managerial implication for the present study is described as below. Managers have to understand that the commercial effectiveness is not the only thing which consumers are worried

about while shopping. The semantic dimension is a better tool to understand the cognitive structure of shoppers and considered them as social entities. This dimension brings attention of consumers toward affordability of the place. There is a difference in the perception of meanings an individual accumulate, because perception depends on the group from where the individual belong (Uzzell, 1995). For the management point of view it is very important for managers to consider all the perceptual dimensions (semantic, structural and connotative).

Perception and Switch Intention of Rural Customers towards organized retails

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Introduction

The retailing in rural areas has largely been in the traditional formats. Taking advantage of the seasonality of agricultural income, the retail shops in the rural markets have been asserted heavy pressure on the consumers by charging heavy margins. The major strength of the traditional rural retail formats is their consumer proximity, both in terms of physical and psychographic understanding of their needs. Besides economic limitations, other constraints of the rural markets are their lack of education and market literacy. The skewed distribution of marketing dynamics put the consumers at the receiving end. However, fostered by liberalization, agriculture revolution, advancement in technology, education etc., and the rural income has also increased tremendously and the manner in which they spend their disposable income has under gone a significant change. The rural markets are densely populated and have a lot of potential for retailing. The fast growing potential for organized retail in rural markets is quite evident from the changing retail formats in rural markets which are no more confined to only village shops, periodic centers and periodic markets, but departmental stores, specialty stores, super markets, super centers, convenience stores, glossy malls, retail chains etc. are also emerging and becoming popular in rural areas. Customers prefer to go to the organized retail outlets to purchase the products that confer their distinctiveness or higher value. The branded products, including clothes, attract the rural customers to visit the organized retail outlets more than other reference products because a customer gets the quality assurance of a brand, distinctiveness, and convenience of purchase.

Objectives of research

Despite the realization of a higher value emerging from the organized retail formats and an increasing footfall of rural customers in these retail formats, their diffusion into these segments is confronted with a multitude of economic compulsions and emotional barriers. The study aims at understanding the underlying perceptions of the rural customers and prospects for their shifting towards the organized retail formats. Specifically, the objectives of the study are stated as:

- To understand the retail perceptions of the rural customers.
- To find out the relationship between the perception of the rural customers towards the organized retail formats and their intention to purchase from these formats.

Research Methodology

The data was collected from a sample of 537 rural respondents from all over Haryana with the help of a questionnaire. The perceptions of the rural customers were ascertained with the help of factor analysis and the relationship of perception with switch intention was studied with the help of regression analysis.

Findings

An eight factor solution was obtained by applying factor analysis on various statements eliciting response to various aspects of customer perceptions towards the rural retail formats. The emerging factors were – value enhancement, pre-purchase inducements, core value delivery, transaction triggers, price value, spatial convenience, price skepticism, and price incentive. The rural customers are highly driven by value and price conscious and would not purchase unless there is a tangible gain in value. They understand that the organized retail formats try to give them higher value and the pre-purchase inducements work on well with the rural customers. Their propensity for impulsiveness and group behavior drives them towards the sales promotional incentives conferred upon them, although a sense of skepticism in the offerings was also evident.

Regression models linking switch intention and customer perceptions were developed for different product categories- branded goods, agricultural implements, durables, clothing etc. were made and the results of regression modelling found ‘core value delivery’ emerging as the most significant predictor of purchase intention, indicating that the customers are vigilant and always look quality, variety and after sales services, which constitute the core value delivery components. Customers are not carried away by marketing communication or other such allurements, and would evaluate each offering in terms of its capacity to deliver core value. The pre purchase inducement and value enhancement also emerge as most significant predictors of purchase intention in all the models, barring a few models. When bundled together, it emerges that all the factors that deliver and enhance the value to the customers would emerge as the most important inducement to the rural customers to visit the organized retail outlet. The customers prefer to visit the retail outlets for purchasing the products that confer them distinctiveness, visibility and convenience.

Implications

In order to reach out to the rural customers, the organized retail formats need to understand the rural customers and then deliver tangible value propositions to them. The short-term strategy of sales promotion or such inducements may not work in long run and the trust of rural customers can be gained only by adopting value building strategies. A successful organized retail format has a lot of scope for adding value to the local produce, which is being wasted. Hence, the government must support the growth of organized retail formats in the rural markets.

Passion to compassion: Impact of recession on consumer behavior

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The motivation of the study is to determine long term changes in consumer behavior triggered by recession. It is determined by using change in change in consumer psychology due to recession.

Changed consumer psychology its impact on companies and proactive measures that companies can apply for a win-win situation for themselves as well as customers is suggested.

Volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity of day to day world is a norm now. Consumers as well as marketers are affected by the prevailing situation and devising strategies to cope up with it. Variety of promotions, advertising and other marketing initiatives are used by companies to adjust to the new normal of the volatile and uncertain world around us created by the biggest financial crisis after the great depression. As consumer confidence is lacking and they are skeptical about their future prospect of income, growth and wellbeing, they left behind the norm of affluence and are trying to live within the means and hence, spending less for consumption. "Is it worth the money?" condition is used for every purchase. If we use Maslow's theory which determines the needs of an individual and use it in determining the impact of recession on consumer behavior it can give us interesting linkages. Maslow's theory of needs segregate needs into five categories which are physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization. An individual can strive for higher level of needs only when his lower level needs are satisfied. Customer benefits are function of If benefits from the consumption are segregated in two levels in Maslow's need hierarchy (lower, higher), first two benefits (product, service) cater to lower level needs and other two benefits (personnel and image) cater to higher level needs. In the times of recession it is seen that higher level needs are depressed or compressed to lower level needs. Value of an offering is determined by total customer benefits and total customer cost. Total customer benefit is a function of product, service, personnel and image benefit provided by the consumption of product whereas amount of money, time, energy and psychological resource determined the total customer cost. The worth of a value system is determined on the basis of core business processes and the delivery system used by the enterprise to reach to consumers. Change in any of the two has an impact on distinctive consumer value when consumers are ready to pay for differentiation which provides them personnel and image benefits.

Willingness to pay is determined by value received and consumers are spending less on higher level needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization of Maslow's need hierarchy. Buying intentions are prominently based on functional features and core benefits and for fulfilling the most basic needs of physiological and safety needs of the Maslow's need hierarchy. As a result, Competition is determined mainly by price and not by product differentiation of product, channel or image.

In a reactive measure companies are offering discounts, launching lower priced products and lower priced brands. Behavioral changes are seen in consumer spending as distrust of big business has increased and consumers are using and following social media recommendations from friends before any purchase decision. It is hypothesized that they are willing to pay for additional benefits, experience with product only after the confirmation from the near and dear ones. Tradeoff between price and benefits to the consumers and volume and margin of sales is determining profit margin. Falling sales and reducing margin on sales is reducing the profit for the marketing companies.

Customer perceived value and financial data of sales and profit for period of jan2006-jan 2015 is used in the study and structured equation modelling is used to see the impact of recession on consumer behavior. The extent of Retail sales and percentage change in retail sales and profitability of banking companies and industry as a whole in the period of jan2006-jan 2015 will be used in the study. At the same time customer perceived value for companies in retail industry

and banking industry is calculated with the help of survey data to see the difference between them as distrust for the business should impact banking more than retail industry.

It is found in the study that companies that are not transparent in dealing with customers are affected negatively in changed world. It is found that companies which are transparent, and empathize with consumers by doing price adjustments and service cuts without affecting the brand experience and are proactive in their market communication fare better than their counterparts in same product category.

How and how much do firms' Strategic choice of Product Portfolio and Expected Risk Exposure Inform Firm Performance?

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Introduction

The determinants of firm performance have elicited a lot of research attention, particularly in the economics and management literatures. A widely accepted perspective is that firm performance (henceforth, FP) is some function of factors internal to the firm (e.g., firm demographics, organizational structure, capital structure etc.), of factors external to the firm such as environmental and control variables (e.g., industry structure and characteristics, regulatory environment, macroeconomic conditions etc.), and of firm strategy, which connects and reconciles the firm's internal and external factors (e.g., Grant 2008). Firm strategy has been defined and interpreted in different ways depending on context. Hence, any attempt to study the FP effects of firm strategy requires defining and sharpening the focal aspects of strategy to enable better measurement, modeling, control and analysis.

Since a firm's strategic choices can be distilled to essentially two basic and intertwined questions (see, e.g., Grant 2008, p.18-19), namely 'where to compete' and 'how to compete', any description of firm strategy as a factor input in the determination of FP would ideally draw upon and address both questions. The first question corresponds to the domain of corporate strategy, which defines a firm's scope in terms of industries, markets, diversification, vertical integration, acquisitions etc whereas the second corresponds to business or competitive strategy and is concerned with staking out the sources of competitive advantage within an industry. Based on both theoretical and practical considerations, we focus on two particular elements of firm strategy, namely the firm's strategic choice of product portfolio (and thereby of industry and product-markets), and the firm's exposure to expected sources of risk. We do so for three reasons. First, the firm's choice of which products to sell addresses the question 'where to compete' and falls within the domain of corporate strategy in that it defines the firm's product-market, geographical and vertical scope. We posit that a firm's product portfolio choice comprises an important element of firm strategy, and that estimating the net effect of this strategic choice on firm performance would help explain firm performance differentials. This is a falsifiable assumption and can be empirically tested. Second, since strategy is forward looking, we posit that the firm's assessment of its vulnerabilities to future shocks as well as options available to mitigate such risks forms an

important element of strategy. Whereas firms may not always get to directly choose their exposure to sources of risk, a firm's risk factors can be viewed as an outcome of the interaction between a firm's realized strategy (Mintzberg 1994) and its external environment. For instance, firms adopting the competitive strategy of cost-leadership face the risk of volatility in input prices whereas those competing on differentiation or niche strategies face the risk of volatility customer preferences and tastes. Particular strategic choices by firms of product-markets to compete in (e.g., entry into Russia or China) may in turn impose particular types of risk such as geopolitical risk, currency risks, regulatory and litigation risks in foreign jurisdictions etc. Likewise, exposure to the risk of business disruption owing to innovation or technological change could yield insights into a firm's dynamic capabilities (e.g., Teece et al. 1997) such as agility. Hence, there is reason to believe that firms' expected exposure to various sources of risk contains information about their emergent strategies (Mintzberg 1978), and could help explain an important part of cross-firm performance differential. This again is a testable assumption and we test it empirically. Third, detailed information on these two elements of firm strategy are readily available as part of firms' statutory and legally binding filings with the US Securities and Exchange commission. We refer in particular to Items 1 and 1A in form 10-K that businesses file annually with the SEC that contain information, self-described by firms, on the scope of the firm's operations and the likely sources of competitive advantage. Thus, as a practical matter, the availability of data on the focal elements of strategy contributed to our choice of covariates.

Measuring firm strategy

The definition and role of strategy in firms has evolved over the past few decades - from detailed, long-range planning (e.g., Chandler 1962; Andrews 1971), choices and decision-making (e.g., Porter 198x), the balance between design and emergence in strategic planning (Mintzberg 1978; Grant 2008, p.22) to roles such as decision support, coordinating mechanism and target-setting, among others (e.g., Grant 2008, p.26). Consequently, the approaches adopted for measuring or accounting for strategy in formal analysis have also varied. Past approaches have included using variables reported by the firm in financial statements and annual reports as proxies for focal elements of strategy. For instance, to measure firms' strategic innovation emphasis or orientation, studies have used various proxy variables such as internal R&D spend (e.g., Cassiman and Veugelers 2006), the number of patents filed (e.g., Schilling and Phelps 2007; Griliches 1990), new product introductions (e.g., Basberg 1987), etc. Another approach has been to conceptualize particular aspects of strategy followed by theory-building and testing using either primary data from managers or secondary data about firms. For instance, to measure the impact of mission and vision statements on firm performance, various studies have used theoretical conceptualization (e.g., Baum et al. 1998), coding the statements and classifying into pre-categorized bins (e.g., Collins and Porras 1991), interviews with entrepreneurs (e.g., Fillion 1991) or with CXOs (e.g., Larwood et al. 1995), content analysis (developed by McClelland and Winter 1978) and scoring (e.g., Kirkpatrick et al. 2002) etc. Regarding the two elements of strategy focal to our study, we find that the firm's choice of product-portfolio is essentially the firm's product list, which is textual in form. Similarly, a firm's risk factors which can be numerous and varied, are also most readily available in the form of descriptive text. In such a scenario, at least three main challenges arise in measuring firm strategy and estimating its FP effect.

First, we need to extract objective (and preferably metric) measures of firm strategy from text descriptions alone. To address this issue, we propose to draw upon text analysis procedures popular in the social sciences literature to (i) atomize or tokenize the text into word- or phrase-

tokens that constitute our basic unit of measurement, (ii) filter out non-informative tokens, stopwords etc. and (iii) treat each firm's strategy description as a vector of phrase-tokens (weighted by their frequency) in a bag-of-words sense. The second challenge arises because strategy bridges a firm's internal and external environments, and the latter is affected by the presence and actions of other firms. Hence, we need to model and account for *externalities* in the firm's strategic elements. In other words, for every firm i in the analysis, the challenge is to explicitly account for the effect of other firms $j \neq i$ on i 's FP. To address this problem, we propose to estimate the FP effect of product-choices and risk exposure using latent space models adapted from the Statistics literature (e.g., Handcock et al. 2007; Hoff et al. 2002). Recall that the product-list and risk factor descriptions yield vectors of frequency-weighted tokens for every firm. To illustrate, consider the firm's strategic choice of product portfolio. If we use each individual phrase-token (which together semantically describe the firms' product portfolio) as a dimensions in a metric space of product portfolio choice, then we can position each firm in this (latent) space using its phrase-token frequency as its location ordinate for that phrase-token dimension. Once all the firms have been located in this large-dimensional space of product portfolio choice, inter-firm 'distances' are easily computed. Next, we assume that firm locations in product portfolio space are informative about inter-firm *externality* effects due to product portfolio decisions. More precisely, we assume that the externality effect of product portfolio choice on one firm i of another firm j is a simple function of the metric distance between i and j . Closer any set of firms are in product portfolio space, higher their product portfolio externality effects on one another. Thus, the use of latent strategy space enables us to summarize and measure the externality effects of firm strategy one firm at a time on every firm in the analysis. Likewise, we propose to build a latent space of firms' risk factor exposure and summarize and measure cross-firm commonalities and differences in this element of firm strategy based on their semantic descriptions of the risks they foresee.

Third, we need to estimate the marginal effects of firm strategy on FP while controlling for the FP effects of other factors and thereafter perform analysis, interpretation and inference on the results. This requires the development and deployment of a formal modeling framework that connects firm strategy to FP within the constraints outlined in the first two challenges. To address this third challenge, we propose a general framework to incorporate textual attributes of a set of units of analysis into a generalized linear model. We do so by using relative firm locations in latent strategy space as an input to a class of spatial autoregressive models from the spatial econometrics literature (Anselin 2002) and thereby enabling estimation, inference and interpretation of strategy externality effects on FP.

We develop and implement our proposed approach empirically on 2013 data from the Fortune 1000 firms. We find evidence that there exist externalities in firm strategy in both product portfolio choice and risk factor exposure. In particular, we find that risk factor exposure explains $x\%$ of the variance explained in FP whereas product portfolio choice explains only $y\%$. Hence, the results suggest that competitive strategy dominates industry choice in explaining firm performance. We also find that much of the strategy externality effect acts through neighbors' outcomes rather than their factor inputs, and (expectedly) that in firms which are neighbors in both product and risk space, strategy's externality effects are strongest. In terms of contribution, first, we show the existence and the extent of firm strategy externalities on FP. We do so using a large and diverse sample of firms. Second, we throw light on how the externality effects of firm strategy impact FP by investigating different externality conditions (externality in product space alone, in risk space alone and in the intersection of both), and different paths of action (whether through

factor inputs, firm outcomes or both). Third, we demonstrate a simple, powerful and objective method to analyze firm performance that is based on and leverages the advantages of the generic regression framework.

Rules of Engagement: An Empirical Investigation of Customer Engagement and Sales Outcomes

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Introduction

Customer engagement is becoming the new paradigm in marketing, with firms re-defining their understanding of the relationship and interactions with customers. While van Doorn et al (2010) define customer engagement as the behavioral manifestations from a customer towards a brand over and above purchases, Kumar et al (2010) include purchases also within the purview of customer engagement. The industry sees customer engagement as going beyond the involvement and interaction suggested by customer relationship management (CRM) and encompassing the dimensions of influence and intimacy (Experian Marketing Services, 2011).

As customer engagement becomes more prevalent and widely used, estimating customer engagement behaviors' impact on sales assumes importance. Customer engagement in the form of brand communities have been widely studied, both in context of online and offline communities. However, studies on the impact of other forms of engagement are scarce.

We address this gap by leveraging a unique dataset from the taxi services context to estimate the impact of two other forms of customer engagement, viz. customization and feedback, on sales outcomes. Our findings contribute to the customer engagement literature, and the literatures on feedback and customizations. It also has significant managerial relevance since feedback and customizations are part and parcel of most firms' regular business processes and the insights from our research can be directly applied by most firms.

Literature Review and Research Questions

Customer engagement behaviors have been defined to encompass, at one end of the spectrum, purchases (Kumar et al, 2010), to recommendation, blogging, and helping other customer (van Doorn, 2010), to ideating new products (Hoyer et al, 2010), at the other end. Studies have also looked at the effects of brand communities on customer behavior (Algesheimer et al, 2005), and on adoption of new products (Thompson & Sinha, 2008).

While Van Doorn et al (2010) suggest that feedback is a customer engagement manifestation, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) note that firms are increasingly 'engaging the customer in the personalization of his experience', feedback and customization have not been actively studied in the context of customer engagement and its impact, to the best of our knowledge.

We pose the following questions and proceed to answer them.

1. Does customer engagement affect frequency of purchases? Specifically -
 - a. How does customization affect inter-purchase time?
 - b. How does mere act of giving feedback affect inter-purchase time?
 - c. How does feedback sentiment affect inter-purchase time?
2. Does customer engagement result in upgrading in the product mix? Specifically –
 - a. Is customization associated with propensity to upgrade?
 - b. Is the mere act of giving feedback associated with propensity to upgrade?
 - c. Is feedback sentiment associated with propensity to upgrade?

Data and Model

We leverage a unique dataset of a taxi service provider that tracks customers over a 2 year window. The dataset captures, among others, customization instructions, feedback and contains 4,49,224 observations for 2,23,184 customers. The dataset is also unique from the point of view that it captures the first two years of operations of the taxi service provider and hence we observe the behavior of the customers from their first purchase. The data is clean since it is captured electronically and comes from a leading taxi service provider in India.

A typical customer uses the phone, web or mobile application to book a cab and has the option of providing customization requests at the time of booking. Typical customizations include asking for drivers who can speak a particular language, requesting for placard to be displayed with a particular name, request for a specific model of a car (within sedan or other categories), etc. After utilizing the services, the customer has the option of providing textual feedback. We posit that the customization request for a particular purchase event and the feedback of the previous purchase event have an impact on that particular purchase event.

We create a dummy for whether customization request has been made or not to capture customer engagement in the form of customization. For feedback, we create two variables, one a dummy capturing whether textual feedback was given by the customer or not, and the other a continuous variable that captures the valence of the feedback through converting the textual data to sentiment scores using the qdap package (Rinker, 2013) in R (R Core team, 2015). We control for customer satisfaction using rating, and have other controls including city and booking type.

We then run panel regression with customer fixed effects to estimate the impact of the customization and feedback engagement variables on inter-purchase time. We also estimate the impact of these customer engagement variables on propensity to upgrade using logit.

Results

We find the, both, customization and feedback impact inter-purchase time. Customization results in a decrease in inter-purchase time. The effect of feedback on inter-purchase time is more nuanced. While the effect of merely giving a feedback leads to an increase in inter-purchase time,

positive feedback results in a significant drop in inter-purchase time. When it comes to upgrades, both customization and the act of merely giving a feedback leads to higher propensity for upgrade (about twice as likely).

Conclusion

We contribute to customer engagement literature by estimating the effects of on inter-purchase time and propensity to upgrade. We also make managerial contributions by suggesting that firms should consider customization and feedback as means of customer engagement. Firm can strategically offer customizations to engage the customer and can also adopt a more nuanced approach to feedback and view it as an engagement tool. Our study has certain limitations. We consider the effects of two forms of customer engagement on inter-purchase time and propensity to upgrade. Future research can look at other forms of customer engagement such as confirmations of order. Future research can also look at sales outcomes like pricing/ willingness to pay.

Branding practices of Hotel in Digital space

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Introduction: - (research motivation) India ranks 13 among 184 countries in terms of travel and tourism's total contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013. Domestic travelers itself contributed over 80.7 per cent to total tourism revenues in 2013. Now, India has about 300 million Internet users, according to the data compiled by the Internet and Mobile Association of India. “Consumer confidence to do online hotel bookings is on the rise in India, with an estimated 8.4 million Indians likely to book hotels online by 2016. The online hotel booking industry will be worth \$1.8 billion from the current \$0.8 billion,” the Google Inc. report said on 15th April 2015. (india brand equity foundation /ibef.org, 2015)

Such extensive usage of internet can be leveraged by the hotel industry as well through digital marketing as a key brand strategy. The model Brand Knowledge Pyramid (chandon, 2013) showcasing the brand awareness at a ground level for achieving brand equity can be used to relate with the digital marketing strategies applied for hotel industry.

Purpose/Objective: - The main purpose of this paper is to examine the branding practices of hotel industry in the digital space through brand recall and recognition test. The various digital marketing strategies that are emerging through channels like Mobile and digital media for the hotel industry will be analyzed to gain an insight about the influence they make on consumers to help in brand awareness and brand recall.

Methodology:

The paper uses a survey of 10 premium hotels per state in western region of India i.e. Mumbai, Gujarat and Rajasthan to investigate branding practices in digital space done by premium hotels which will lead to brand recall of customers. The research approach will be Quantitative as well as Qualitative which will address study objectives. The Research design adapted here is exploratory which would use in dept interviews for data collection whereas for descriptive research

design questionnaire format will be used. The respondents for qualitative study would be targeted to premium hotel administrative executives whereas for quantitative it would be the present customers using the services of premium hotels. To identify the respondents the target population needs to be defined which would be different for quantitative and qualitative approach. The quantitative approach majorly includes the customer using premium hotel services so any age group and demographics would qualify. For qualitative approach the executives worked in premium hotels for more than 5 years to understand the dynamics of their company would be appropriate.

Scope: - For this study the hotel industry is defined as the premium hotels located in the western region of India. The qualitative as well as quantitative study will be conducted for testing the brand awareness through digital marketing in channels such as mobile and web to examine the level of influence on the minds of the customer when exposed to digital advertisements and visuals of premium hotels over digital space.

Finding: - Through the study we would be able to note the dynamics of consumer behavior when it comes to hotel industry. Also the influence of digital media may help in brand awareness through digital marketing strategies of hoteliers. The impact of visuals in hotel websites, advertisements and various promotional activities using enhanced visuals, which may be a part of visual storytelling.

Limitations: - The limitation for the study would be the geographical constraints. Only the western region of India is to be considered. So we may get a narrower perspective of the study.

Conclusion: - The study would be able to contribute the hoteliers to understand the dynamic nature of customers due to influence of digital media and take decisions for investing on digital marketing of their brand.

Online Purchase Process using decision aids: an exploratory study

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Introduction and Literature Review

E-commerce is witnessing unprecedented growth in India (Ernst and Young, 2013). Online shopping has been accepted widely by consumers due to its convenience over offline shopping channel, ease of product and price evaluation, customization of offers and efficient shopping (Burke, 2002; Chiang and Dholakia, 2003; Suki et.al, 2013). Despite the increase in digital economy there lies a challenge to decipher the purchasing patterns of consumers. The complexity and dynamicity of the online platform makes deciphering consumer's decision making process all the more difficult and a marketing decision more elusive.

Purchase decision making is a complex activity that captivates consumers' attention and effort (cognitive and physical). The excess of choice due to expansive marketplace creates a conflict for the consumers during which they either tend to seek more alternatives or defer the purchase (Resnick and Varian, 1997). The infinite shelf space increases the product offerings and simultaneously adds to the choice and search complexity (Häubl and Murray, 2000).

Online decision making process is similar to decision making process offline and consists of movement along various steps in the process (Xiao and Benbasat, 2007). The steps include: *The complete solution space > search set > in-depth search set > consideration set > Chosen alternative*. At every step of the decision process consumers will seek and process information to reach a purchase choice. In the real world scenario it is assumed that the decision process is not linear and a consumer goes back and forth at various steps in the process.

In an attempt to make optimal decision, consumers simplify the decision process by relying on heuristics (Payne, 1982) or seeking suggestions from their social connections, experts, salespersons and information systems (Senecal and Nantel, 2002). E-commerce websites are assisted with expert systems, which allow ease of choice formation in the online format. Decision aids are adopted as a comprehensive term in literature for the expert systems. Decision aids are capable of informing consumer of the product recommendations and merchant recommendations (Haübl and Trifts, 2000) and act as a useful tool for the e-commerce firms as well as the consumers (Steckel, Winer, Bucklin, Dellaert, Drèze, Haübl, Jap, Little, Meyvis, Montgomery and Rangaswamy, 2005). They act as a facilitator in consumer's decision process and ease the effort the consumer puts in the purchase process by offering consumers the best alternative. Decision aids hence, can be assumed to influence online consumer behavior.

Our study used the typology of decision aids extending on a continuum from low to high interactivity. To identify a typology, we drew upon extant literature (Breugelmans et. al., 2012, Wang and Benbasat, 2009, Pfeiffer, 2011) and in-depth interviews (n=3) with two organizations (a major e-commerce company in India having global presence and a third party software tool provider). The decision aids were classified as passive and interactive decision aids based on the interaction of the system with the consumer. A continuum was drawn to understand the broad usage of decision aids in online purchases. Passive decision aids include (on increasing level of interactivity) passive recommendation systems (Collaborative filtering, Content based filtering and Hybrid decision aids), Notifications and Electronic Word of Mouth. The interactive decision aids include (on increasing level of interactivity) Shopbots, Search tools, Sampling of Digital Products, Virtual Product Experience, Interactive Recommendation Systems (Comparative Matrix, Recommendation Agents, Questionnaire based Decision Aids, Demographic Decision Aids and Knowledge based Decision Aids) and Social presence.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- Trace the consumer purchase process in online shopping, in order to validate the linear process a consumer undertakes to make purchase decision online.
- Observe how a consumer uses various decision aids offered by the online retailer on their websites, the kind of decision aid (interactive or passive) sought by the consumers.

Research Methodology

This exploratory research uses a combination of screen recording and verbal insights from the subjects; to track the actual purchase process followed by the participants and get insights into their cognitive process. Senecal et al. (2005) in their research use clickstream analysis to identify the shopping process. But, the navigation between pages could not highlight the internal thoughts of participants behind following the process. The current research intends to

fill this methodological gap. Seven subjects were selected and asked to undertake a purchase process of a portable hard disc. Four participants (plus or minus one) are sufficient for the methodology (Nielsen, 1994),

Video based observation method has been used frequently in research (Spanjaard et.al, 2014; Webster et.al, 2010). Though the method has lot of benefits (Belk and Kozinets, 2005); it is obtrusive and can create anxiety in subjects or lead to a fabricated behavior by them. Software based computer screen recording is a non obtrusive method to capture a participant's activity on a computer system (Tang et. al., 2006). For the screen recording, computer screen was set at a search engine (Google) and subjects were asked to purchase the specified products. The entire process was recorded using Camtasia. As simultaneous process verbal inputs were solicited, the participants were instructed to think aloud while searching and choosing the product. Verbal protocol analysis as a research methodology has been frequently used in cognitive psychology and education (Cabello et.al. 2005; Kühberger et. al, 2012). It aims to understand the cognitive processes faced by a subject while solving a problem. To maintain objectivity, participants asked to only verbalize their thoughts not interpret them. Participants' verbal inputs were recorded using Sony Audio recorder. The verbal inputs were later transcribed. Whenever a participant stopped verbalizing their thoughts at any stage, it was time stamped and participant was asked "and what are you doing now?" to get continuous verbalizations. When the task involves a high cognitive load, concurrent verbal protocols causes problems (Branch, 2013). To account for this limitation of the method an interview was conducted at the end of the process to confirm and validate statements. The screen recording and verbal protocol were analyzed together to understand the purchase process and the thoughts and rationale behind the process.

Results

The online decision making process mentioned by Xiao and Benbasat (2007) was used to depict the purchase process of the participants. It was observed that the linear process was repeated several times, in different levels each time hopping steps. The process involved initially to decide about the online retailer. Participants loyal to certain e-retailers skipped this level and started product search. In the second level of search participants identified few products which matched their needs. Here too, prior brand knowledge acts as a heuristic for the product choice. Brands of hard discs purchased earlier or referred by friends and experts have prominence in memory and are chosen using 'filters'. Ratings and reviews are sought by all participants at the step of evaluating the products in the decision process. Participants with high online purchase experience add another level to the process by searching a seller from a particular e-retail store owing to the ratings provided to the seller.

Hard disc is a moderate value product of high involvement owing to the importance of data for the consumers. Participants during the consideration set compared products of same and different brands manually. But two participants were searched for 'add to compare' option which had been pulled down by the website and they seemed much upset about it. One participant mentioned "*The compare button is very important especially for electronics. For electronics it is must.*" The participants also used recommendations from collaborative filtering after the chosen alternative. The product identified from the recommended list was again compared with the chosen alternative

to have a final choice. Though few participants who had referred collaborative filtering during the process, disagreed on having used them, when asked in the interview.

It was observed that consumer prefer interactive decision aids while purchasing hard discs. This could be due to the involvement of the product and its relevance to the participant.

Further work with a greater sample set and for different products will shed light on the acceptance of decision aids and the types of decision aids used by consumers.

Discussion and Contribution

The research would enable understanding the search and purchase process of consumers. Tracking the purchase process provides insight to the e-retailer regarding the factors considered by the consumers to make a purchase especially in Indian context where consumers are more deal prone. It would also help online retailers identify the kind of decision aids (passive or interactive) to be included in their websites such that the decision process is most effective for the consumers and reduces their cognitive load. Ease of access of the decision aids to the consumers may lead to greater satisfaction with the website and enhanced loyalty with the retailer.

The relative importance of justice dimensions in case of services failure

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With the increase in competition, firms are facing incredible challenges to maintain their market-share. Researchers have argued that in a highly competitive environment, acquiring new customers is become increasingly difficult (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987). Thus firm has relied on defensive marketing strategies which focuses on reducing customers exit and brand switching to fight the competition (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987). One key challenge for successful implementation of defensive marketing strategy is addressing customer complaints. Customer complaint may arise due to service failures which are pervasive in any service encounters (Maxham III and Netemeyer, 2002). The way companies handle service failures is therefore critical for customer retention. Understanding the importance of service failure most firms rely on service recovery to address grievances of customers. Service recovery is defined as the actions taken by service provider after service failure (Gronroos, 1988). Some researchers have suggested that after product quality, service recovery is the most important dimension that influence consumer preference (Conon & Murray, 1996). A successful service recovery can lead to higher post-recovery satisfaction (Matos, Henrique and Rossi, 2007). This phenomenon is termed as service recovery paradox in the literature. Researchers have used justice theory to explain post-recovery satisfaction with the firm and argued that the relationship between organizations service recovery effort and customer satisfaction is completely mediated by three justice dimensions (distributional, procedural and interactional justice) (Gelbrich and Roschk, 2011). Significant amount of research has looked into the relationship between these justice dimensions and customer satisfaction. However, most researchers have only focused on single failure and try to explain what role each justice dimension play in shaping post-recovery satisfaction. However, in many services, multiple failures are a reality. Specially, in case of services where there is a membership relationship and nature of service

delivery is continuous (e.g. telecom service providers) there is a high chance of multiple failures (Lovelock, 1983). Prior research has not looked into how the relative importance of justice dimension changes in case of multiple failures. This paper thus try to explore the relative importance of justice dimension in case of initial (first) failure and how the role played by each justice dimension changes in case there are multiple failures.

This issue is critical from the perspective of both researchers and managers. First, from the perspective of researchers there are many questions which have been answered by this research. One of the critical question is related to service recovery paradox. There are many contradictory findings which have been reported by existing scholars. Magnini, Ford, Markowski and Honeycutt Jr (2007) has argued that only in case of failures which customers consider as not severe, customers without any prior failure experience, customers perceive that cause of failure is unstable and is caused by external factors outside firm's control, the post recovery satisfaction is higher than pre-failure satisfaction. According to authors however, the reason for such findings is ignoring the hierarchy of justice dimensions which has led the firms focus on those aspects which may not be related to satisfaction at all. Again there are many theoretical paradoxes that arises depending on the context in which firm is operating upon. For example if we look at the issue such as repeat failures (or multiple failures) what role interactional justice (such as apology) plays in shaping consumer satisfaction is not straight forward. In case of multiple failures an apology may be seen as an excuse which may actually decrease customer satisfaction (Liao, 2007). On the other hand, one might argue from the expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1981) that prior perception of interactional justice will establish expectation about future justice dimensions. In case the expectation of interactional justice has not been met consumers would feel dissatisfied. Thus understanding the hierarchical nature will help us in resolving such paradoxes.

Second, from the perspective of managers there are many important issues that the research shades light upon. As argued by earlier researchers the relationship between service recovery and satisfaction may not straight forward as thought by many researchers and managers. The effectiveness of service recovery not only varies from industry to industry but from situation to situation as well (Mattila, 2001). Not only is the detailed understanding of service recovery essential for retaining customers but also protect the organization from negative word of mouth (Mattila, 2001). This research can thus serve as a guideline for organizations to train frontline employees to address consumer needs based on different situations. As argued by researchers understanding the hierarchy of justice can be a critical aspect that can help managers and frontline employees to stress upon those components which matters most for creating customer satisfaction. The paper is divided into three section. In the first section we will review the literature on justice theory, customer satisfaction and will develop our hypothesis. In the next section a conceptual framework is presented and finally, we will conclude by discussing the important theoretical contributions that the paper is going to make in the literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The literature in justice theory is diverse and it incorporates research from organizational behaviour as well as marketing. There are three justice dimensions which have been frequently discussed by researchers. Distributive justice is associated with the outcome, procedural justice with decision making procedures and interactional justice with interpersonal behaviour (Tax, Brown and Chandrashekaran, 1998). Distributive justice theories focus their attention customer evaluation of outcome fairness. Procedural justice on the other hand is related to process fairness.

Customer feels processes to be procedurally just if individual think the processes what they have experienced when compared to several general procedural rules are upheld (Leventhal, 1980). Interactional justice refers to interpersonal treatment of people during any process (Bies and Shapiro, 1987). In this research the researchers have primarily relied upon exit-voice framework proposed by Hirschman (1970). According to Hirschman there are two factors determine customers' readiness to voice rather than selecting exit. First, customers who is willing to give up certainty of exit against uncertainties of an improvement in the product (in this case service). Second, customers who think that they have the ability to influence the organization are likely to use voice rather than exit strategy. Procedural justice will thus play a critical role in case of initial failure. From relational model perspective one may argue that procedural justice will reassure the customers that they are valued by the firm which will delay the exit process. Another source of reassurance comes in the form of interactional justice. Elements such as apology, politeness etc. of interactional justice will make customers understand that they are important and thus will be highly essential in shaping post recovery satisfaction. Finally, distributive justice will ensure that customers derive a sense of satisfaction from the transaction. As one of the critical reasons why customers voice their opinion is related to customers' perception that they have the ability to influence the organization, procedural and interactional justice are the most critical elements and should be weighed higher in consumers mind as compared to distributive justice in case of initial failure.

H1: In case of initial failure, distributive, interactional and procedural justice will positively influence customers' post-recovery satisfaction (and therefore exit).

H2: Procedural and interactive justice will have higher impact on post-purchase satisfaction (and therefore exit) as compared to distributive justice.

In case of multiple failures however the process is much more complicated. Because research produces contradictory evidence, and there is virtually no research which address the issue of role of justice dimension in case of multiple failures, the question is highly relevant. From expectancy disconfirmation theory one would argue that if the prior recovery was successful customers expectation rises. In absence of any information about the competitor's action, one can argue that customers "will expectations" will rise. The effect will be highly prominent in case of distributive justice. Consumers evaluate whether to exit or continue with a firm based on the trade-off between benefits provided by service organization and cost of discontinuing (Bolton, 1998). As with the second failure the benefits associated with continuing with the organization has come down drastically, by providing higher tangible compensation organization increases the benefits and thereby try to retain customers and postpone exit. However, in case of multiple failures consumers attribute the causes of the failure to be stable causes and blame the company for the failure. From Hirschman's exit-voice framework one may argue that initial recovery sends a signal to the consumer that they are important to the firm and have the ability to influence the organization and improve services. In case of multiple failures the uncertainty associated with service increase. However, customers may still feel that they have the ability to influence the firm because of the earlier experience of recovery. Thus, the procedural and interactional justice may act as factors which will effect "will expectations" of the customers. Both procedural and interactional justice may not increase their satisfaction as that is a part of their "will expectation", but if these elements are absent it will make them highly dissatisfied. The reason for the same is that in absence of procedural and interactional justice, the customers may feel that company doesn't care about them any longer and they may decide to exit. Thus procedural and distributive justice act as hygiene

factors, presence of which may not increase customer satisfaction but absence of them will make the customers highly dissatisfied. Distributive justice therefore will have the highest impact on customer satisfaction in case of multiple failure whereas procedural and interactional justice will act as a hygiene factor.

H3: In case of multiple failures distributive justice will have higher impact on satisfaction as compared to procedural and interactional justice which act as hygiene factors.

Finally, the paper explores the role of potential moderators. The authors argue that relationship duration will moderate the relationship between justice perception and service recovery.

Multi-Dimensional Approach to Viral Advertising: Past Research & Future Opportunities

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With the rise of social media, marketers are considering viral advertising as an effective and efficient brand communication strategy having greater persuasive powers when compared to traditional advertising. However, most extant research has focused on investigating the drivers of virality but studying one driver at a time leaving out the possibility of accounting the combined role these drivers could play in making the advertisement go viral. This study attempts to provide a multi-dimensional understanding of viral advertising by reviewing the relevant state-of-the-art literature and listing the possible research gaps that can be addressed in the future, the findings of which could help brand managers and digital marketing agencies plan and execute successful viral branding campaigns.

Introduction: Today, about 92% of consumers trust “earned” media (Nielson, 2012), where customers act as a channel of delivery to pass-on or share the brand message with members of their social network. Hence, marketers are shifting their focus from ‘paid’ and ‘owned’ media to ‘earned’ media which is reflected in the swift rise in the social media advertising as a marketing strategy (Tucker, 2014). This is evident in the fact that advertisers around the world are expected to spend US \$200 Billion on digital advertising (eMarketer’s forecast on Worldwide Ad Spending, 2015). Following this, many advertisers and marketers are interested in using online video ads as a new tool for promoting their brand by generating ‘viral’ effects via leveraging the Internet’s interactive power of sharing (Lee, Ham and Kim, 2013). Viral advertising, one of the forms of digital advertising, is defined as “persuasive messages by an identified sponsor distributed through unpaid communications among peers on interactive digital platforms” (Eckler and Rodgers, 2010). Viral ads are designed to be transmitted by consumers themselves, making it a costless means to maximize the reach of advertising messages (Tucker, 2014). However, research is still in its nascent stage in exploring the determinants of such viral phenomena. Extant literature investigating the drivers behind sharing can be classified in three groups on the basis of drivers of sharing intentions. This conceptual study attempts to provide a landscape of the literature review in this area outlining potential research gaps, which can provide a multi-dimensional understanding of viral advertising.

Literature Review: For better understanding, extant literature inspecting the motives behind sharing can be classified in three groups on the basis of investigated drivers of virality. These are (1) content as a driver of virality (2) Individual characteristics as drivers of virality and (3) social network structures as drivers of virality. We discuss each of these areas, separately.

Content characteristics as drivers of virality: An effective viral message should break through the clutter and encourage consumers to further pass-along the message. Focusing on the commercial use of viral concepts from an advertising perspective, Porter and Golan (2006) compared viral ads with television commercials and found that there is significant difference in the use of ad appeals between these two types of videos, wherein viral ads use more of ‘provocative or crude content’

(such as sex, nudity and violence). Later, these finding were supported by Southgate et al. (2010), wherein they found that majority of viral content contains creative characteristics, which deal with the execution of the ad. However, another school of researchers concluded that ‘*emotions*’ and not the ‘creative elements’ are important for virality (Dobelet al., 2007; Berger and Milkman, 2012). A study by Nelson-Field et al. (2013) found that two constructs of emotional response (arousal and valence), both separately and collectively are related to how videos are shared; whereas Eckler and Bolls (2011) conducted an experiment and their results indicate that pleasant emotional tone elicits the strongest attitude towards the ad, attitude toward the Brand, and the intention to forward. Bruni et al. (2012) analyzed almost 2 million tweets and found that multimedia content or content with links to multimedia, contribute to the virality of tweets. Figure 1 depicts the major content-focused studies investigating drivers of virality.

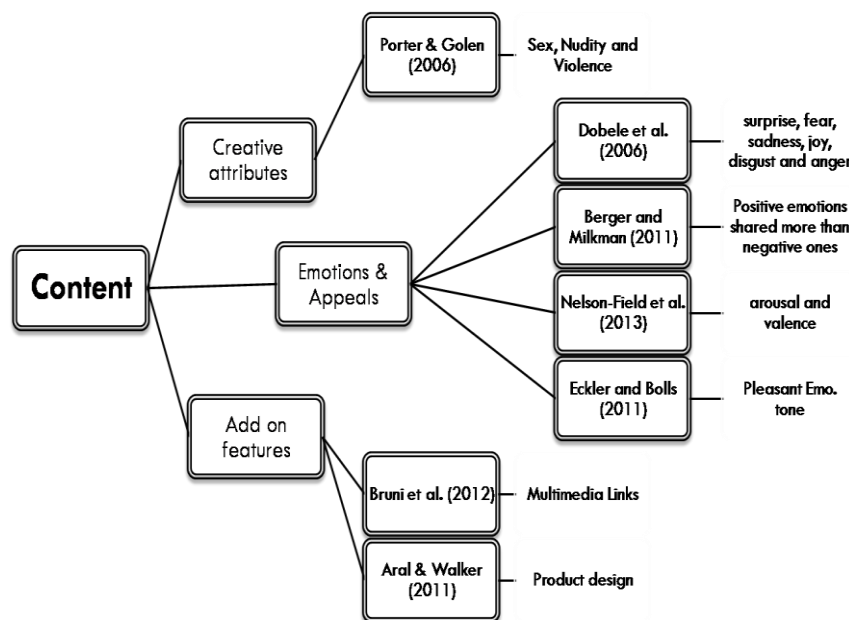


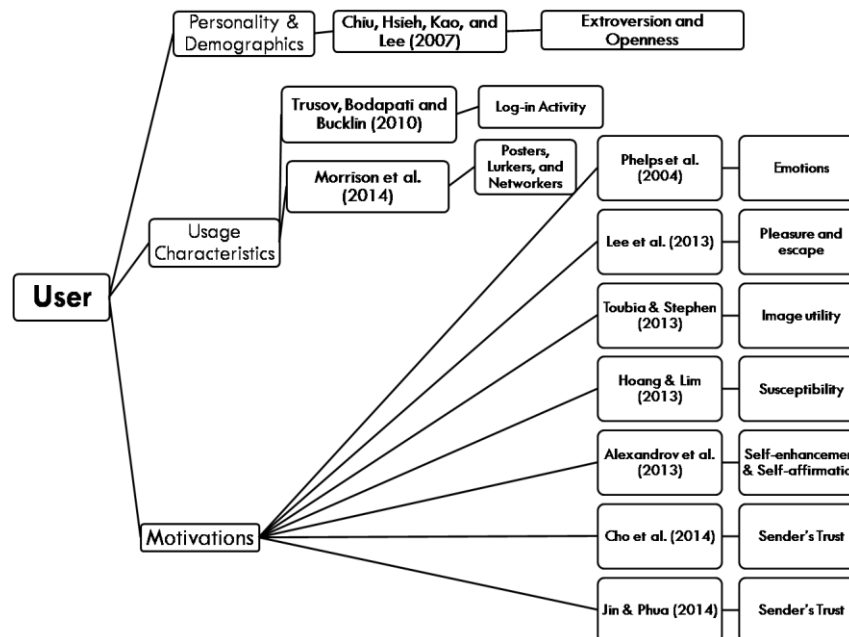
Figure 1:

Characteristics as Driver of Virality

Content

Individual characteristics as drivers of virality: Besides message characteristics, individual characteristics of consumers also play a critical role in the viral marketing process. Literature in this area shows that consumers’ personality traits like extraversion and conscientiousness as well as demographics (Chiu, Hsieh, Kao, and Lee (2007) and social media usage characteristics (Trusov, Bodapati and Bucklin, 2010; Morrison et al., 2013) predict users’ sharing intentions.

Other motivating factors identified behind users' sharing were pleasure-seeking behavior (Lee et al. (2013), image-related utility (Toubia and Stephen, 2013); need for self-enhancement and need for self-affirmation (Alexandrov et al., 2013). However, these studies failed to account for the varying response of users when exposed to different kinds of advertising appeals, e.g. emotional vs. rational and whether such responses vary with the structure of the social media platform. For example, introverts tend to use Facebook such more of because indirect



communication allows them to compensate for their lack of interpersonal skills (Moore and McElroy, 2012). Figure 2 represents the major user-focused studies in this area.

Figure 2: Individual Characteristics as Drivers of Virality

Social network structures as drivers of virality: The central argument from this flow of research is that the structure of the social network through which a viral message spreads can affect the ultimate reach and influence of the message (Bampo et al., 2008; De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008). This literature can be easily classified as: (1) studies focusing on optimum seeding strategies based on the ties of users with advertisers and with own social group members (Stonedahl et al., 2010; Liu-Thompkins, 2012), (2) studies that investigate the role of social network structures in driving information diffusion (Susarla et al., 2012; Narayan et al., 2011) and (3) studies that attempt to predict the reach of the viral content (Van der Lans et al., 2010).

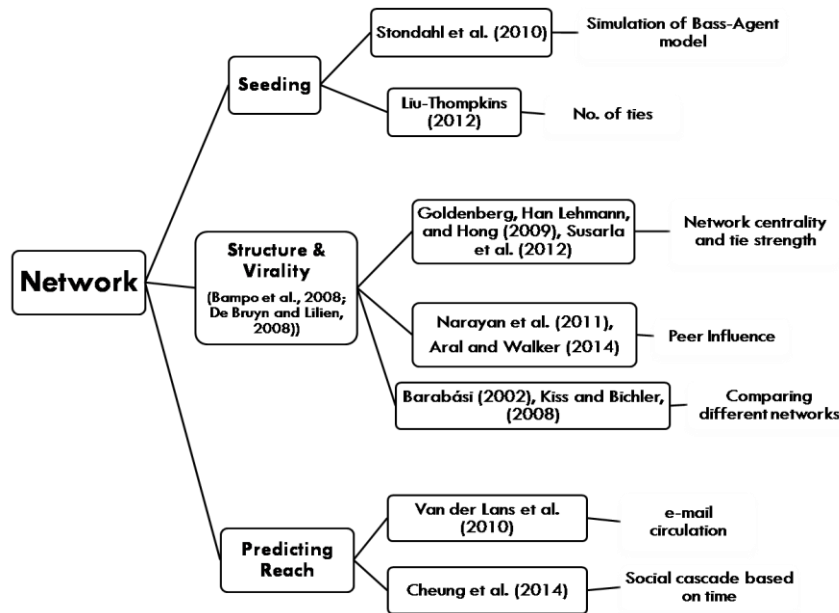


Figure 3: Social Network Structure as Driver of Virality

Figure 3 highlights the major representative studies in this area. However, individual users are an integral part of social networks and not all users respond similarly when exposed to same message (Mooradian, 2010). Hence understanding user's personality variables like cognitive abilities and motivations and their attitude towards different forms of content is utmost important in making any ad viral.

Research Gaps: As mentioned earlier, the extant literature investigating drivers of content virality undermines the relative impact these individual drivers can have on users' sharing behavior when considered together (Figure 4). We found some important research gaps and these, if addressed, will provide richer understanding of the viral phenomena. These research gaps are discussed below.

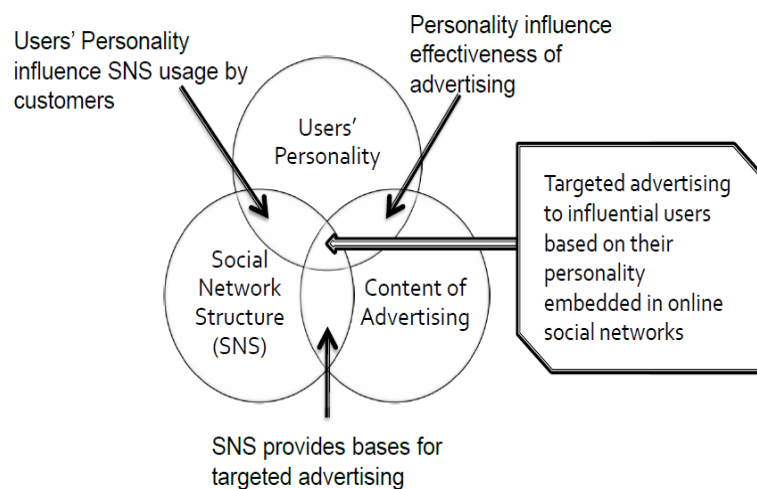


Figure 4:

Research Gaps

Matching content with users' personality: While attitude towards ad could depend on personality traits (Myers et al., 2010) as well as products (Ratchford, 1987), personality traits like extraversion

is considered as a key predictor for ad evoked feelings and consequent consumer attitudes (Mooradian, 1996). Also, such personality variables are positively related to market mavenism and brand evangelism, behavior associated with opinion leaders recommending selected brands to their friends and peers. Recent literature provides a link between personality characteristics and social media usage (Correa et. al., 2010) indicating that personality plays an important role in attitude formation as well as information processing on social media. Ads are evaluated as more positive if they are tailored to the customer's personality (Hirsh et al., 2012). Hence, it is only reasonable to suggest that different people may react differently when exposed to a viral ad depending on their personality.

Therefore, it is important to address the question - how personality affects sharing intentions on exposure to different types of viral ads. Popular 'Five Factor Model' (FFM) also known as 'Big-Five Personality' theory, propounded by Costa and McCrae (1992), where we divide personality into five elemental traits, and according to these five traits we can describe every person's personality. Such studies may offer potential approach for brand managers in segmenting their audience using personality characteristics and tailor their branding campaigns accordingly. Viral advertising literature lacks any study, which offers explanations for such *interplay between personality variable and types of viral ad content*.

Matching content with Users' Social Network: We see that there are some conflicting findings in literature. For example, as earlier studies show that positive appeals and emotional tones elicit greater sharing behavior in narrowcasting (personal or one to one like email) networks; negative messages gets more shared in microblogging websites like Twitter (Bruni et al., 2012). This means it is evident that the influencers are not susceptible to every type of stimulus (content) they receive. When we connect this segmented literature that talks about the viral marketing components, it is observed that the network specific literature is devoid of any study that links how the network characteristics of an individual affect his/her response to the different types of content he/she is exposed to. Still the vast majority of network studies today remain "Content Agnostic" (Hansen, p.83, 1999), which means that the true values of certain claims in explaining virality are still unknown. Hence, combining the analysis of network structures with the analysis of the content that flows through networks can help in understanding how networks affect variety of phenomena. (Sundararajan et al., 2013)

Further, social media networks like Twitter and Facebook differ in their network design; hence, the type of content shared on these platforms must be having differences in the way the content gets spread. The network structure may alter the type of information people are willing to share and with whom, it will be interesting to understand that do they forward each of the content they receive from brands or only selective content. And if the latter is true, does their position in the network play any role in that.

Link between Users' Personality traits & Social network: Various studies have investigated the role of personality traits as a motivating factor for the social network site (SNS) use by Internet users (Hamburger & Artzi, 2000; Ross et. al., 2009; Correa et.al, 2010; Zhong et. al., 2011; Muscanell and Guadagno, 2012). Moreover, Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) posit that individuals use SNS like Facebook to satisfy their 'need to belong' and 'need for self-presentation'. Studies conducted by Back et.al. (2010) and Tosun and Lajunen (2010) confirmed that the SNS profiles of individuals reflect 'actual self' and not the 'Ideal self' making a way for other researchers to use these online profiles of users to predict their personality.

It is possible to gauge user's personality from his/her 'digital footprints' on social media platforms. Even personal information from Internet users' social media accounts e.g. Facebook can provide meaningful insights about personality traits (Golbeck, 2011; Gosling et al., 2011). Recently, Amnieh and Kaedi (2015) identified users' personality traits by applying the graph theory principles to social network structures. Hence, managers may choose to utilize these personality traits as a useful filter in identifying 'influencers', together with network structure-based targeting methods suggested by Trusov, Bodapati, and Bucklin (2010). However, the authors concluded that it was not possible to identify these influential users simply by looking at their profiles, number of friends, and profile views, and noted that more sophisticated tracking methods are required. Hence, we recommend that marketers can leverage on personality predicting methods suggested by Golbeck (2011), Gosling et al., (2011) and Amnieh and Kaedi (2015) to target advertisements matching to users' characteristics.

Conclusion: A multidimensional approach where all the three drivers of virality are considered together, will help brand managers and digital agencies to produce content that is relevant to their target audiences' personality characteristics, which can be easily captured from users' position in network or content shared by him/her on social media platforms. This approach will result in increased persuasiveness of viral branding ads and will sought better response in term of minting millions of shares for the ad and accomplishing ROI goals set for social media spending.

APP-QUAL: Developing a measure for App quality from user perspective

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Introduction

App is an abbreviated form of the word "application", which is a self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfill a particular purpose that are designed to run on Smartphones, tablet computers, wearable devices, televisions and automobiles. Today there are Apps every purpose. There is an increase in the popularity of Apps because of increase in mobile phone users and penetration of Internet based services. Over the years there has been a major transformation in the phone industry is the digital world of Smartphone. The industry though has evolved from nothing to a multi-million dollar industry. Every nook and corner of even the most remote villages we find people smart phones.

The use of apps ranges across a diversified assemblage of services, from booking a cab to finding places to photo-editing, games and even reading e-books, watching movies etc. Some of the common categories of mobile apps include games and entertainment, productivity, social and personalization, music and lifestyle, travel and navigation, and others (PRNewswire, 2015). Even the trending business plans use apps extensively. In general, the use of these apps is going to increase overtime with the growing demand for technology.

The growth of App market has resulted in economic and employment contribution. In 2012, apps generated an impressive USD 12 billion with a total of 46 billion apps being downloaded, making the cumulative all-time total downloads since the app game began, to 83 billion. This shows a trend where the market for is increasing multi fold. The forecast for 2017 is that downloads will exceed 200 billion a year, and revenues will reach 63.5 billion US dollars (Portio Research, 2015).

The explosion of Apps has made increased number and variety of Apps for similar purpose. This has made the discovery and choice of Apps difficult. In addition there are many reviews, comments and recommendations of Apps that makes it difficult for the users to find the right one for their requirement. Many times users will have to install the App and latter remove it because they are not worth the purpose. Incase if it is a paid App then users lose money. Also managing and removing Apps has become a challenge for users. Preinstalled Apps are difficult to remove. Frequent installation and removal of Apps makes the Operating System (OS) vulnerable for crashing.

Play Store and I Store have more than a million applications that have registered that have more than a billion people using them. There are so many applications that are available in the market, yet we have no way of measuring the credibility of these applications. If we could standardize the quality of these applications it would help users identify apps with great quality which would lead to a greater customer experience. Therefore, determining the quality of these apps is of relative

importance, this proves why the following findings are imperative. Now the question is how do we standardize the quality applications?

OS vendors propose quality guidelines and checklists for entire app delivery process from initial concept through app and UI design, coding and testing and onto a process of monitoring feedback and making improvement after launch (Android, n.d.). There are government regulatory agencies that are trying to regulate and curate apps, especially medical apps (Yetisen, et al, 2014). Though this can give a manufacturing and product based quality, it is necessary that a user based quality is developed to make apps for usable. Following the previous attempts in developing measures like WebQual (Barnes and Vidgen, 2000; Loiacono, Watson, & Goodhue, 2002) and SiteQual (Harold & Linda, 2004), this research envisages developing an app quality measure to assess the quality of app from the user perspective.

Methodology

This study follows the methodology used by Barnes and Vidgen (2000) for developing WebQual. They recommended the quality function deployment (QFD) as a framework for exploring web-site quality that uses “voice of customers” as the criteria for quality. Chen and Susanto (n.d.) quoted Akao’s (1990) definition of QFD (quality function deployment) as “method for developing a design quality aiming at satisfying the consumer and then translating the consumer's demand into design targets and major quality assurance points to be used throughout the production phase”. They proposed that “QFD can be seen as a process where the consumer’s voice is valued to carry through the whole process of production and services”.

De-villes (2012) recommends eight steps in scale construction, and the same is followed for the developing the App-Qual measure. Initially a pool of items is generated through brain storming sessions and focus group discussions and post graduate students of Business administration at Christ University. The pool of items is also added with items from WebQual and Android’s developer guidelines. The items are then framed with suitable measurement scale. The initial pool of items is reviewed by experts from industry and academics. At the first level of tool validation, the instrument is administered to a development sample comprising of actual users of apps. The items are evaluated and the scale is optimized for length by dropping the redundant and problematic items. In the next stage the instrument is put to a pilot testing. After the validation of the instrument through pilot, a survey is conducted to among varied sample of app users. The data collected is tested for reliability and validity of the measures. Future direction of the research suggests testing the instrument for specific applications like travel, healthcare, gaming, entertainment etc.

Measuring and Managing the Customer Experience at Business Trade Shows

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Existing research in marketing on customer engagement has focused on products and services in a B2C setting (Kumar et al 2010; Henderson, Steinhoff and Palmatier 2014). In this study, we investigate

customer experiences in a novel B2B setting (a business trade show) that helps us understand the drivers and consequences of positive experiences. The setting offers face-to-face opportunities for buyer–seller interactions, and fulfills other objectives different stakeholders may have for attending the event.

Valued at over \$11 billion, the trade show industry attracts over 1.5 million exhibitors and 60 million attendees every year in the U.S. (CEIR 2011). Trade shows are big business in Europe too and are an integral part of the B2B communications mix, representing an average of 20 % of total marketing budgets, ahead of print advertising and direct mail (Stevens 2005). Typical engagement research focuses on the relationship between customers and a brand, but the trade show features three stakeholders: the show organizer, the attendee and the exhibitor. Thus, it is an example of a two-sided market where two groups of customers create interdependent demand. The Engagement literature is split between scholars who study the psychological and motivational aspects of engagement (e.g., Vivek et al. 2012; Calder, et al. 2009; Mollen and Wilson 2010; Isaac et al. 2015) and the behavioral aspects (e.g., Van Doorn et al. 2009; Kumar et al., 2010). Our research synthesizes the two streams and is the first to include measures of psychological and behavioral engagement in a single model.

Conceptual Framework

Isaac et al. (2015) define engagement as “a multilevel construct that emerges from the thoughts and feelings about one or more rich experiences involved in reaching a personal goal.” Customers have various motivations for interacting with a product or service, forming *experiences*, with engagement arising “out of the different ways in which a product or service is experienced”.

Both the motivational experiences and CEBs then cause affective and behavioral outcomes such as returning to the show next year, spreading positive word of mouth and recommending the show to others. An open research question is the extent to which the CEBs mediate the relationship between engagement and outcomes. In addition to the motivational experiences and CEBs, there may be other situation-specific variables that either moderate the relationships or must be controlled for in the analysis.

Data and Methods

We collaborate with a B2B trade show organization that hosts ProMat, a show for the materials handling industry that attracts thousands of attendees and hundreds of exhibitors who display their equipment and have representatives on the floor to meet with prospective buyers. Industry circles consider this show as an important event – all the major vendors and buyers generally attend it.

Our data involve survey responses by attendees before and after the show. We assess the impact of the trade show experience on outcomes such as purchase intention, likelihood to spread positive word of mouth, etc. The outcomes from the show are linked to eventual purchases via a second post-show survey conducted 120 days after the show.

We hypothesize three categories of experiences based on interviews with show organizers: (1) educational, (2) purchase-related, (3) social. Our results show interesting and complex interactions between variables that relate to the attendee show experience. We provide some useful managerial implications that can help show organizers develop a more effective strategy to improve the show experience for everyone.

Is Mobile Apps making a destination tourist-friendly”: Revisiting Black Box model

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University of Jammu

Tourism travel apps are transforming the landscape of tourism and mediate in tourism experience to change tourist's behavior. For this purpose, the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) after an a uninspiring travel app Incredible india , launched an official app “Tripigator” to enhance the travel experience in India for both domestic and international travelers and satisfy tourist's conditions. This study is an attempt to theoretically analyse the attributes of Tripigator app and its applicability in the destination choice decision process. The focus will be on addressing few questions: Is tripigator app contributing to make India a tourist friendly place? Is it satisfying the tourists through affordances and providing level of customization to user? Is it fulfilling demand of tourist as a customer? The study further builds on the existing literature as tourist friendly destination to uncover app development trends as well as gaps in the mobile app landscape. The results of this study will provide implications for policy makers, travel app designers and service providers to formulate strategies to encourage travelers. Consequently, it contributes to dynamic travel decisions to facilitate sustainable travel and confront emerged challenges for users. Implications and future research directions of tourist friendly concept are discussed.

Growth and prospects for medical tourism in India

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It is interesting to know that six billion people travel for medical treatment from one country to another, and if you add those who travel a distance within a country-it exceeds ten billion a year. A recent joint report by consultancy firm KPMG and industry body FICCI has stated that the medical tourism market in India is projected to hit \$3.9 billion mark this year and the inflow of medical tourists is expected to cross 320 million by 2015 compared with 85 million in 2012. After Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology enabled Services (ITES), which are currently good contributors to our nation's GDP, the next big thing happening (which has already begun!!!) could be 'medical tourism', which has enormous potential, if rightly tapped, to make great contributions to the nation's GDP. The medical tourism industry in India gets maximum patients for heart surgery, knee transplant, cosmetic surgery and dental care as the cost of treatment in India is considered to be the lowest in Asia, much lower than Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and Hong Kong, This is not going to help the growth for medical services but this growth in medical tourism is going to have a direct impact and phenomenal growth in the sectors which are closely associated with medical tourism. The growth of medical tourism in India is due to the following reasons.

1. Low Cost
2. Less waiting Time
3. World Class Quality Service
4. Personalized Services and
5. Rich Cultural Heritage
6. Special facilities for yoga, Ayurveda treatments.

India's total Contribution from Service Sector to GDP is 57% and out of this, 9.6% is from medical tourism. The medical tourism industry in India has a potential to contribute around 25 per cent to the country's gross domestic product over the next five years if fully-tapped, according to Varsha Lafargue, founder and

chairperson of Indian Medical Tourism Conference and Alliance (IMTCA). It is a well fact that development is achieved in any sector by the influence and opinion of others who has a fair idea to comment about it and this is done by opinion leaders. The role and the contribution of opinion leaders for promotion and development for any product will be significant. Seeking of opinion is generally done for assessing and to form an opinion or to clarifying the opinion which one has already. Thus the opinion seeker refers a person who is the opinion leader for this situation. Hence an opinion Leader is referred to as an Influential member in a community, group, or society to whom reach out to them for seeking advice, to decide. He influences others with his past experience for solving any problem or guiding others to improve. Earlier, it has been reported that the opinion leaders were found at various levels and they have certain unique factors such as Technical Competence, Homomorphism, Polymorphism, Social and Physical Accessibility, Homophily and Hetrophily and their role in Medical Tourism is not an exception. People with confidence approach hospitals for treatment. Especially a patient who got a better treatment will force others also out of interest and this opinion is given when the treatment is not available in their native place or even if the cost of treatment is higher in their place. Thus, for the medical tourism the travel made by a patient from country to county for medical treatment and generally people would travel from less developed countries to highly developed countries. Further, the medical tourism may be also due to the non- availability of laws permitting the people to go for some treatments since it has been prohibited by the law of those countries such as some fertility issues. Already as per records for medical tourism alone patients travel from various countries to India apart from the travel by people living in different parts of India travelling for this purpose. Hence, in this study an attempt will be made to find out the growth of medical tourism in India and the contribution made by the opinion leaders for the growth of medical tourism in India. The role of opinion leaders will be analyzed in the angle of Social Media which plays a major role of an opinion leader taking advantage of today's modern technology by taking the needed information from mouse to mouth instead mouth to mouth as already done. The study will be conducted in selected hospitals in Chennai in Tamilnadu to towards this objective and the respondents will be identified through convenience sampling and they will be patients who came as tourist, their attenders, doctors, administration staff of the hospitals and web sites. Data will be collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data will be collected from the respondents through a well-structured pre tested questionnaire and suitable modifications if required will be made after pilot study. The results of this research will be of use to the planners and policy makers since the development and growth of medical tourism in India which will not help for the growth of medical tourism but also for the growth of all other allied sectors of medical tourism and thereby helping to boost the economy of India.

Identifying Lapsed Buyers in Direct Marketing

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Purpose – Marketing executives generally agree that it is 5-7 times more costly to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing one. Furthermore, long-term customers are usually more profitable than new customers, who intend to buy less and are more costly to serve. The purpose of this paper is to propose a predictive model that provides an early indication of the intention to lapse at individual consumer level, so marketers can intervene and attempt to prevent a lapse.

Design/methodology/approach – In direct marketing context, we suggest a three part model of inter-purchase time combining two sources of variation: within and between. The “within” variation in inter-purchase times is captured by the purchase timing patterns for each buyer based on their past purchases and “between” variation is modeled as a function of buyer demographics that are not time varying. The average

inter-purchase time is a function of some demographics, such as the length of relationship of the customer with the company and the size their workplace etc.

In order to demonstrate the usefulness of the models we use empirical data provided by a business to business marketing company. Past history on the customers includes what items were ordered, when they were ordered, and the value of those orders. In addition some demographic information on each customer is also available.

Findings – Using transactional data from a large industrial products vendor, we find that the inclusion of covariates such as the length of relationship and purchase size dramatically increases the predictive power of the model. We also propose and test simple rules to identify lapsing accounts and compare them with the results from the model.

Our empirical findings also suggest the existence of many other types of buyers. The existence of these other buyers with various purchasing patterns results in a fundamental need to go beyond exponential distribution to gamma distribution when describing inter-purchase times, and to allow both the shape and scale parameters in gamma distribution to vary across customers.

Research limitations/implications – This study focused on data from B2B direct buyers. While our model predicts when the next purchase will occur, it does not estimate the amount of that purchase. Therefore, future research may use data in different contexts through a longer period of time to test our model. Also researchers can expend our model to include predictions on the amount of purchase in a customer-lifetime-value setting.

Practical implications – Managers need to better understand B2B buyers' purchase behavior and purchase timing. Because B2B buyers display a great variety of purchase behavior because of their hierarchical order structure, a B2B product vendor should always learn their customers' profiles well. On a cost perspective, lapse not only represents a loss of revenue from those former customers, but an enormous and expensive effort to recover or replace them. Realizing the importance of preventing lapse, our model is consistent with customer relationship marketing suggesting companies to utilize consumers' regency, frequency and monetary value.

Originality/value – To the best of our knowledge, this research is one of the earliest attempts to model inter-purchase time for lapsing B2B buyers, a crucial problem almost every industrial organization is facing. This paper also contributes to a better understanding of B2B purchase behavior as we study the co-variants of inter-purchase times.

Brand Resonance Score for CBBE Model-An Application in Financial Services

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Purpose-Brand Resonance will significantly improve the profits of the services industry in the 21st century. The purpose of the study is to find the resonance score for modified customer based brand equity (CBBE) model in mutual fund financial services and improve the conceptualization of customer based Mutual fund services brand equity through brand resonance.

Design/methodology/approach-The path values of SEM model was used to estimate the relative weights of criteria and sub-criteria in Analytic Hierarchy Process Model and it was empirically tested with a sample of 240 mutual fund investors

Findings-The brand resonance using Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) has been quantified. The resonance quantification of each brand has been demonstrated using two renowned Indian mutual fund services brands SBI and HSBC.

Research limitations/implications-The interdependency of the factors which influence the resonance score is not explored.

Practical implications-Research findings provide useful guidelines for fund managers/analysts of mutual fund services companies while improving the brand equity and strong brand's resonance with investors.

Originality/value-The paper examines quantification of resonance for modified CBBE model in mutual fund services using data from a sample of investors in India with two mutual fund brands. The AHP structure model helps firms effectively quantify the resonance score.

What happens after Consumption? Role of Reminiscence in post consumption Evaluations

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The aim of the article is to bring in the scope of reminiscence in the service marketing literature. The focus is the role of reminiscence in post consumption experience evaluation. Even though it has been widely used in Gerontology the origin is not the same. The article first discusses the complexity of services, consumption experience stages and how the post consumption stage is being formed then it describes its role on behavioral intentions. Due to the complexity of services and the fading memory of unpleasant experiences Cason 1932, Managers and Researchers must understand reminiscence, since it is very important in influencing word of mouth

Service marketers face different challenges than those who market products and goods. The reason behind the complexity is the very nature and the uniqueness of the Services i.e. intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability of production and consumption (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). There are three type of goods: search goods, experience goods and credence goods(Rathmell, 1966; Zeithaml, 1981) . A consumer can identify the attribute of the Search goods (Cloth, Jewelry, and Furniture etc) before we can consume or use them and he can identify the attribute of Experience goods (restaurant meals and vacation) only after purchase and consumption. But even after consumption it's tough to identify the quality or attributes of credence goods (medical diagnosis, automobile repair). Marketing literature has tools to measure the quality of Goods and Services(Parasuraman et al., 1985). Enough research has been done with the help of those tools. But critical review has been pointed out about the inability of measurement tools capacity to measure those attributes(Tsapovsky & Frosh, 2015).

Every Goods and Services provides experience (A car provides its owner driving experience). Every consumption activity provides experience. Favorable and unfavorable customer experiences seem to be more and more important in forming quality perceptions. So we can define quality, by the way we experience it during the consumption. Pine and Gilmore (1999) said that all experiences are memorable whether it is a clothing or medical diagnosis. So by the memorabilia we can identify that the services is good or not. A study (Sherman, 1991) suggested that cherished objects and other memorabilia as "reminiscentia," (i.e., as inducers of reminiscence).

From the experiential stages of consumption (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2004), (Carù & Cova, 2003) remembering previous experience is also an experience that activates photographs to re-live a past experience, which is based on accounts of stories and on arguments with friends about the past, and which moves towards the classification of memories.

Hence it can be argued that even remembering and recalling the previous experience is also one of the stages of consumption which leads to post consumption activities like nostalgia word of Mouth and Revisit Intention (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) Amalia Triantfillidou (2013).

For Remembered consumption experience, the author would like to borrow the concept from social psychology/ gerontology, called Reminiscence. Plato (circa 429-347 BCE) used the term earlier in his "reminiscence theory of knowledge". The reality of the phenomenon was of course widely known before Oehrns (1895) first explicitly demonstrated it experimentally; afterwards in 1913 Ballard used this as a technical term, indicating improvement in the performance of a partially learned act that occurs while the subject is resting. He argues that it is one of the learning techniques. Hovland (1951, p. 653) defines it in terms of increments in *learning* which occur during a rest period; Buhler approached this as a cognitive deterioration (Bühler, 1935). Butler describes reminiscence as "a naturally occurring, universal mental process characterized by the progressive return to consciousness of past experience" (Butler, 1963), Bluck and Levin described Reminiscence as "the volitional or non-volitional act or process of recollecting memories of oneself in the past". Even though we have enough empirical support to address the originality of Reminiscence and reminiscence techniques" social psychological researchers embraced this as potential tools for addressing many late-life ills; from alleviating depression (Magee 1988) to encouraging the development of integrity (Havighurst and Glaser 1972).

By referring his research numerous researches has been done to limit stress and depression, increase satisfaction and to enhance self-esteem. Even though Butler distinguishes between simply recalling past experiences (reminiscing) and the more evaluative life review, these two concepts often are used interchangeably in the literature.

Customer Stewardship: The road less traversed

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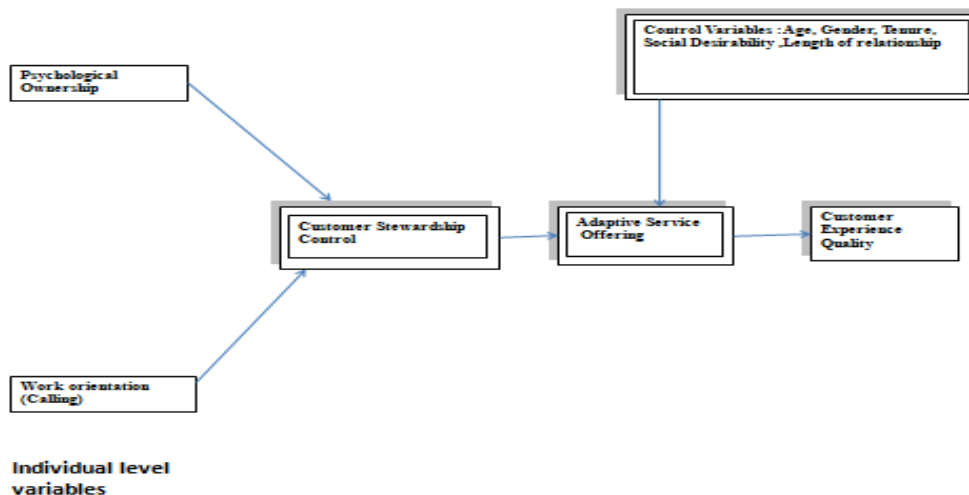
As FLE's are representatives of their organizations for the customers, they need to pay attention towards any impact, which their actions may have on service delivery and customer's total experience (e.g. Pine & Gilmore, 1998). However, there have been many instances in the past where mismanagement of customers and mis-selling products to customers has been increasing particularly in the BFSI⁴ sector (Smith, 2012). These instances have necessitated awareness among all stakeholders of the business to curb such practices. In fact in UK, a stewardship code exists which provides guidelines for safeguarding financial consumers' interests (Financial Reporting Council, 2010). In addition, "coping with legal and ethical issues" is one of the top 15 research priorities in the financial industry (Robertson, Dixon, & Curry, 2006). The reason for employees indulging in such practices can be attributed to the incentive or quota system used for motivating and ensuring employee performance which has its roots in agency theory (e.g. DelVecchio & Wagner, 2011). Hence, there is a renewed focus on effective management of service encounters for

⁴ BFSI- Banking Financial Service and Insurance sector.

success and survival of organizations (Estelami, 2000). In addition, there is an emerging consensus to reconsider traditional control systems, which favor self-centered behaviors in a dynamic service environment (Kwortnik, Lynn, & Ross, 2009). Synergy exists between employees' performance goals and customer interests if the control systems employed regard FLE's as stewards of customers (Block, 1993; Davis et.al , 1997). When employees find serving customers inherently enjoyable they evaluate their job positively and experience greater job satisfaction(e.g. Brown et al., 2002).Hence, employees acting as stewards for their customers would perform better because they become vested in customer outcomes (Schepers,Falk, Ruyter, Jong, & Hammerschmidt, 2012).

Our contribution to literature is in terms of identification of antecedents that facilitate and explain the emergence of stewardship behaviors (Hernandez, 2008; 2012).Second, we wish to uncover the link between stewardship and adaptability of service offering which remains unexplored in literature. This is due to the fact a renewed interest in understanding the concept of adaptability in the context of services has emerged due to its benefits (e.g.Gwinner & Bitner, 2005; Homburg, Wieseke, & Bornemann, 2009).An FLE acting as steward would be more accommodating towards identifying customer's needs and adapting the service offering as per his needs. Lastly, we want to look at how this adaptation leads to enhanced customer experience since it has been asserted that a good customer experience is good customer service(Berry, Wall, & Carbone, 2006).Hence, when FLE's act as stewards it would lead to enhanced customer experience.

3. Conceptual Framework:



4. Proposed Hypothesis

Hypotheses 1: There exists a positive relationship between psychological ownership & customer stewardship control.

Hypotheses 2: There exists a positive relationship between work orientation (calling) & customer stewardship control.

Hypotheses 3: There exists a positive relationship between customer stewardship control and adaptability of service offering.

Hypotheses 4: There exists a positive relationship between adaptability of service offering and customer experience.

5. Research Methodology and Findings:

Established scales for measuring all the constructs while controlling for the effect of age, gender, tenure, social desirability, and length of relationship. All the items were measured on a 7 point scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). The data was collected using a self-administered survey to FLE's and their customers (employee-customer dyad) from BFSI sector selected by convenience sampling and data was analyzed using smartpls-3. For this purpose, three versions of questionnaires were created (English, Hindi and Marathi) and data was collected across 4 Indian cities i.e. Nagpur, Delhi, Pune, and Indore. Upon analysis, all the constructs exhibited good reliability, and discriminant and convergent validity. Also upon hypothesis testing using bootstrap option of smartpls-3 we found that all proposed hypothesis got supported.

6. Contribution

Our research contributes to the literature by identifying the individual level variables resulting in stewardship. It also helps in establishing the link between CSC, adaptive service offering, and customer experience. It reemphasizes the importance of informal control system by extending support to the fact that employees take self-regulative responsibility for customers and its viability as an alternative to agency control. By recruiting candidates having a stewardship orientation, managers can ensure their success as a steward's thereby increasing employee performance and thereby firm's performance. They can emphasize the employees "walk the talk" and act as role models for other employees. New knowledge generated at customer interfaces may be transferred upwards in the organization for turning it into actionable strategy. FLE's acting as stewards would be more engaged and productive at work, leading to performance outcomes such as favorable customer ratings, profitability and reduced employee turnover and absenteeism (Sorenson, 2013).

7. Limitations & Future Research Areas

This study has a cross-sectional research design. Usage of a convenience sample may lead to generalization issues. A longitudinal study would create more insights. The role of culture may be taken up in future studies and other important variables influencing stewardship can be studied.
