



Consumer Behaviour and Social Media Marketing of Tech-Gadgets: A Quantitative Study in Indian Market

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Introduction

Reputation is the core element that signifies the extent of success of branding strategies and marketing strategies within a competitive ecology. Branding strategy provides a vital range of systematic frameworks and techniques for managing the target consumer with the market (Shawky et al, 2019). So, brand is a unique collection of elements and features to create an identity. At the same time it's a relevant study that explores how to build, protect and influence brands to capture the new opportunities to ensure a potential economy. Professor John Roberts, Professor of Marketing in London Business School, shared a narrative about the best minds of marketing to understand the issues involved in this changing situation. *'The role of brands is changing rapidly and dramatically with the rise of digital marketing and addressability, the growing power of emerging markets and the key role of value chains in providing ecosystems of products and services'*

(2016). In the second phase of information superhighway through digitalization, we saw that content and coverage of social media covers the branding by new foundations, facets and felicities.

Advance of social media provides a multidisciplinary view of how to build brand value using consumer –centric, gratification strategies. This changing notion of brand strategy adds a banquet of views with a more palatable and enjoyable content and design (Shang et al, 2019). So, branding and social media would be an interdependent phenomenon that identifies the mode of selection of brand architecture to match with the changing scenario. In this changing scenario, digitized information has become the dominant source of productivity, wealth, empowerment and power. The strategic approach of marketing communication equally depends on maximizing customer value and grows profits (Orzan et al, 2016). The competitive - branding under this



marketing niche struggles to search a distinct market place.

In a social media dominated societal market requires a cognitive location as supposed by the consumers (Moore and Tambini, 2018). Hence social media, more specifically the narratives of social media marketing strategy, redevelop the value chain. Media consumption, extent of technology, changing lifestyle, scope of leisure time, scope of new entrepreneurship and degree of consumer's interaction significantly changed product development and followed by market development. Architecture of branding in the era of social media generates some new approaches of product design, product innovation and the skill to initiate a new product or service in the market. At the same time the market evolves with its pricing, distribution and promotional strategies. So there are two sets of statements of observations in the sphere of branding, consumer identity and consumer's satisfaction. Two consecutive narratives are relevant to make an argument for this situation. One is posting of 'virtual consumers in this network society' and second one approaches 'e - business' in a social media dominated marketing system'. the emergence of internet as a new communication medium and also formed e business but after the proliferation and mammoth -popularity of social media (like Facebook, twitter or WhatsApp) the existing e business gains a new challenge to identity and positioning the brand to its virtual consumer. The

present situation is described as a global multimedia business network where all types of product/ service content (like text, audio, illustration, graphics, visual, animation) have been offered in a single interactive digitized form. So the power and dynamics of the network has changed in this social media based marketing ecology and the promotional strategy of branding would be changed accordingly. This new techno -based social media marketing is not only a business communication but also a cultural communication too (Castelle, M, 2009).

Global social media statistics research summary 2022, reveals a statement of grouping of the newest social media statistics of consumer reception and practice of social networking sites. As of January 2022, it was observed that around 58% of the total world uses at least one platform of social media and on an average the quantity of usage of social media sites is two and half hours. In another global report, Digital 2022: Global Overview Report , discloses that 4.62 billion people use social media as a potential and regular browser, (26th January, 2022). These statistical data explose a changing journey of marketing strategy that could be described as , 'business as usual' to 'business as digital'. 'Great Brand' is the dream of any marketer launching a new product and /or service or introducing a new venture or organization. Speaking truly, great brands are no accident; rather they are results of thoughtful and imaginative planning (Kundu and Chakraborti, 2020).



Considering the preset research problem, there are some crucial steps that the social brand marketers must take in developing a brand to promote a product or service. In social media the brand strategy focuses on maximizing potential marketing value of the product and service, considering a community-based input, interfacing and content-sharing and relationship approach. Branding for social media marketing is the most commanding outline under digital marketing to depict the identity of a product or service in the consumer's mind. Srivastava, (2019), explained the 'digital consumer life cycle' in two ways. Typical 'purchase funnel' structure of AIDA consists of four units, namely awareness, interest, desire and action. Finding a product, thinking about purchasing, purchasing the product, using it and finally recommending the product to others – this consumer cycle was designed in the pre digital era. Then, 'TOFU –MOFU-BOFU' marketing funnel gives an integrated narrative of facilitation about the content at the top of the funnel, middle of funnel and bottom of the funnel in any competitive marketing sphere. This funnel stated that no of people, who have shared their attention about the product would be larger than those people who are actually leading the product, means an active customer. Like this structured funnel, social media marketers try to capture as many chances as possible followed by taking care of those people in every phase of marketing structure (Jung, 2017). Branding has a crucial role in this journey to hold and

manifest the people to an aware and active customer. The TOFU phase supports the awareness that can be built through blog posts, social media updates, E Books, WebPages along with audio and video podcasts in any marketing funnel. The 2022, Social Media Trend Report, says that, 'we learned that social media is the most effective channel marketers leverage, as well as the channel they use most.' But the social media market niche is continuously changing depending on its content, presentation, technology, appeal and attraction to the consumer. Here branding strategy is too critical and challenging to deal with the B2B and B2C sphere. The speed of access, content design and feedback of social media can be threatening. Ogilvy (1983), opined any changes (may be a rapid change), comes as an opportunity to the marketers or the advertisers corporations. He stated that research on any changing scenario will tell the marketers about the new formulation, flavor, fragrance and colour of appeal to consumers. Accordingly, there is specific statistical data on socio-cultural and demographic perspective, regarding the social media status, on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or Twitter should be used by the marketers.

Research methodology

Based on the philosophy of positivism this research has followed a quantitative methodology where quantitative data has been collected from primary data sources. With the help of a positivist research paradigm and a deductive research approach this research has tried to



identify the gap and thereby address them with the help of further data support.

For data collection from primary sources online survey has been used as a tool with the help of which perspective from the respondents have been collected. In this regard for the using a random sampling method a questionnaire was circulated using Facebook WhatsApp and email to different people from various age groups. Thereafter, the primary data collected as for the brand quantitatively analysed to evaluate the factors that are associated with social media marketing especially in case of smartphone in India. This is because Samsung is one of the oldest smartphone brands used in India which has an Android based interface. This can be considered as a budget smartphone for the people of India. On the other hand, Apple is still considered to be a luxury by many but the present-day youth are getting more inclined towards this IOS for its safety and security enabled service as observed from the literature. Hence, the present research has tried to identify if social media marketing contributes towards the motion of these brands which are operating in the smartphone industry or not in India.

For data analysis graphical representation of the data collected from the survey has been used to depict the quantitative variation in the data. Finally, the research is right to develop a core relation between the existing literature and the results that have been drawn from the research. Quantitative data has been used in

research to further reevaluate the perspective of the audience or the potential customers of these brands and thereby understand the factors which are perhaps influencing their choice associated with social media marketing.

A Quantitative Study of Audience Behaviour

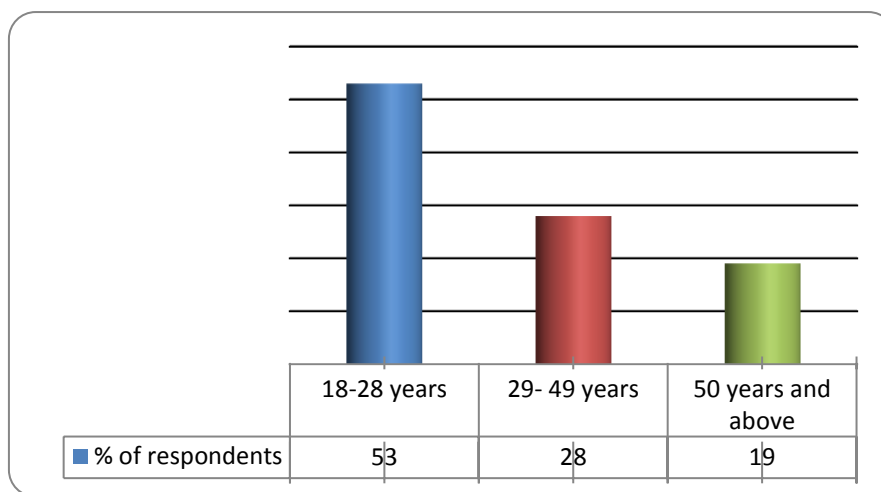
The questionnaire for this research had been subdivided into various agreements where demographic details of the respondents like their age and gender were identified along with their behaviour with the use of social media and their perspective specific to social media marketing and the brands considered under this study. For this study there have been 100 respondents who had expressed their views over the set of questions circulated through the online question.

Demographic Details of the respondents

From the review of literature, it has been observed that smart phones are used by customers across different age groups and gender. Similarly, based on the theory of Technological Determinism it can be argued that use of social media is not just retracted to the youths now a days rather the people from gerontology and beyond are using social media sites at regular interval. Hence, the research design was not specific to any age group or gender and as a result the questionnaires were circulated across different social media platforms and through email. This portion of the analysis reflects the demographic profile of the respondents and thereby depicts the interest across different age groups and gender in participating on

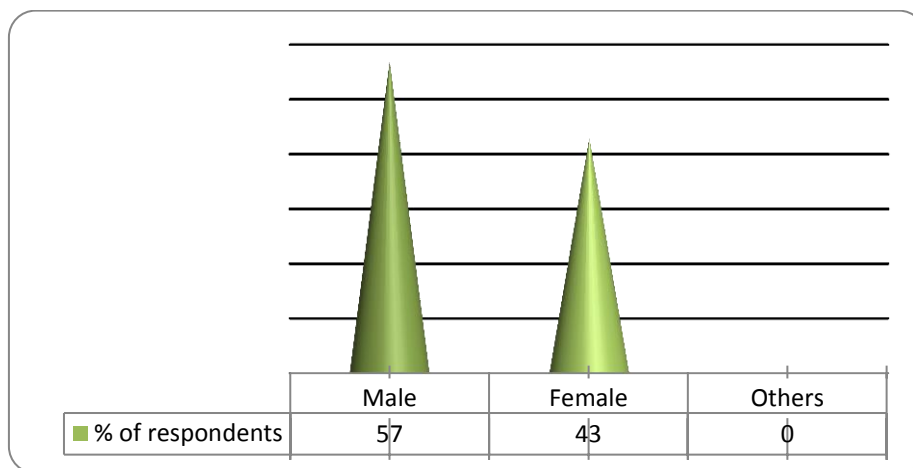


surveys based on tech-gadgets and branding through social media.



Graph 1: Age
 (Source: Sample survey)

This graph in the above section represents the age of the respondents where it can be seen that the majority of the respondents had been from the age group of 18 to 28 years while the minimum number of respondents were from the age group of 50 and above. In this regard it can be said that when it comes to a topic like Smartphone and digital marketing it is the younger generation who is more likely to participate or get interest than that of the old generations here.



Graph 2: Gender
 (Source: Sample survey)

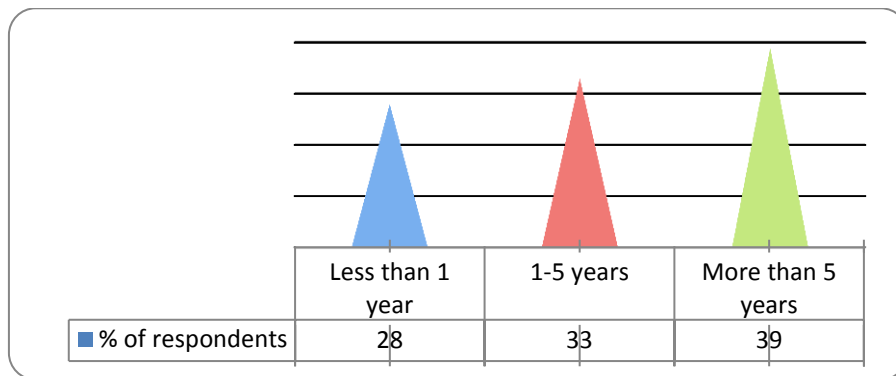
The above figure expresses that there were 57% male and 43% female response who had participated in the survey.

From the demographic data it can be observed that the majority of respondents were male and from the younger generation. So, it can be assumed from this behaviour of participation that male respondents between the age group of 18-28 are more interested in tch gadgets and branding through social media.

Degree and Frequency on Social Media Usage

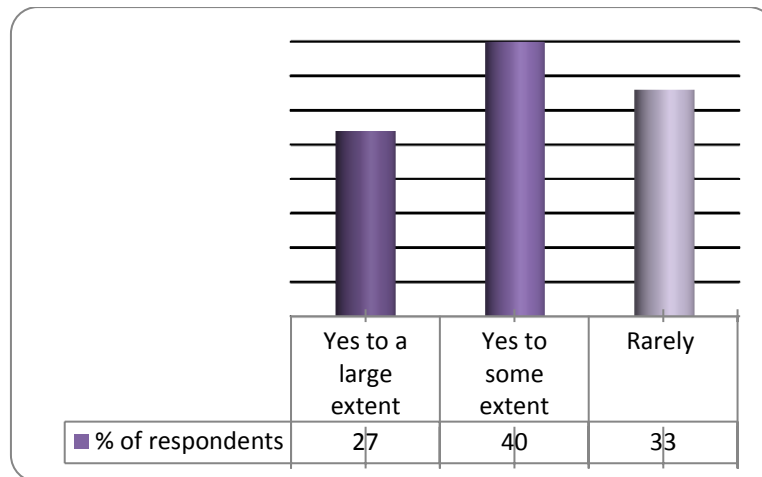
This segment had focused on the degree of social media usage among the respondents of the research. The theory of Technological Determinism highlighted on the fact that “*a society’s technology drives the development of its social structure and cultural values*” (Thorstein Veblen 1857–1929) (Brette, 2003). This research has tried to evaluate if the use of new technology is potential enough for branding especially with the use of social media.

In order to identify the potential of social media for branding, it was necessary to determine the number of hours spent by the respondents on social media. This is because with if a potential customer spends more time on social media, then there is a higher probability that the person would come across the social media branding strategies. In addition to this, the segment has also evaluated if the audience or the potential customers have ever come across any social media branding content of smart phones. From the following graphs the media usage behaviour and their extent of recall has been analysed.



Graph 3: Social Media Usage
 (Source: Sample survey)

It can be clearly observed from the above figure that 39% of the respondents have been using social media for more than 5 years. Yet considering that there were 33% of the other respondents using social media for 1 to 5 years and even 28% of them using social media for less than 1 year it can be said that the majority of the respondents here have not much experience with the use of social media. They are new to these entire concepts and it has already been observed that they are mainly from the present generation of youths. Since, there are respondents from different socio demographic background it has been observed that the pattern of media usage differs among the audience as well.



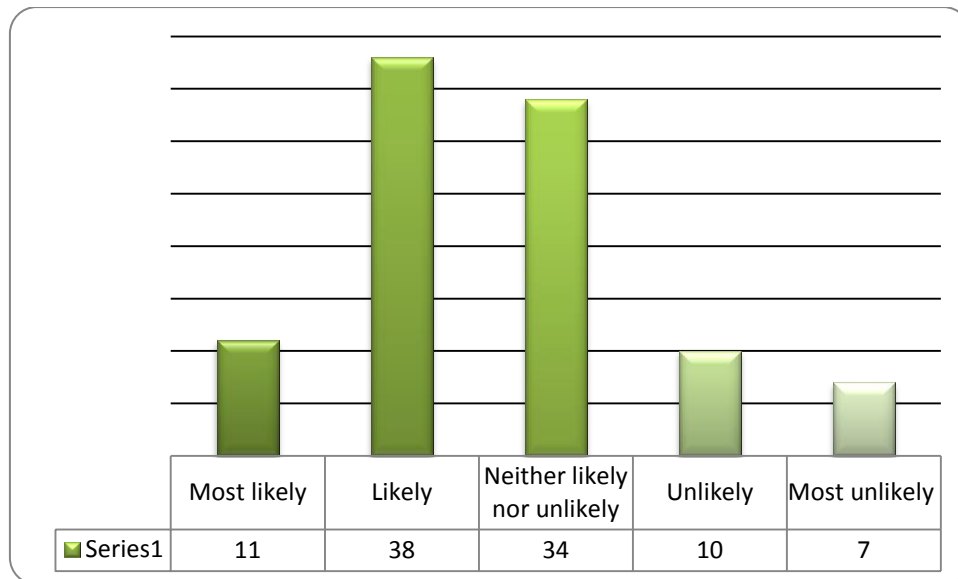
Graph 4: Observing Social Media Promotion and Branding of Smartphones
 (Source: Sample survey)

This graph depicts the behaviour of customers towards observing social media promotion and branding of smartphones in India. According to 27% of the respondents they have observed social media branding of smartphones to a large extent whereas 33% of them have rarely seen any such content. There were 40% of the respondents who expressed that they have seen social media branding to some extent. Since the maturity of the respondents is expressed in a neutral perspective it can be said that perhaps the use of social media branding strategy is not completely satisfactory to the respondents to the highest extent here and the audience in general.

Gadget Specific Recall Factor

In case of content-based promotion and branding there are two major factors which can help to evaluate the impact on the audience. These factors are frequency of coming across the contents and their recall value. In this segment the research has tried to identify if the audience have come across any social media branding strategy taken up by two popular brands one from IOS and the other with Android. Based on Technological Determinism it can be argued that these two technological interfaces are the mostly used technology and has the potential to drive the society. In addition to this it has also helped to determine if the audience has been able to recall the social media sites where they have come across such advertisements or promotional contents used for branding.

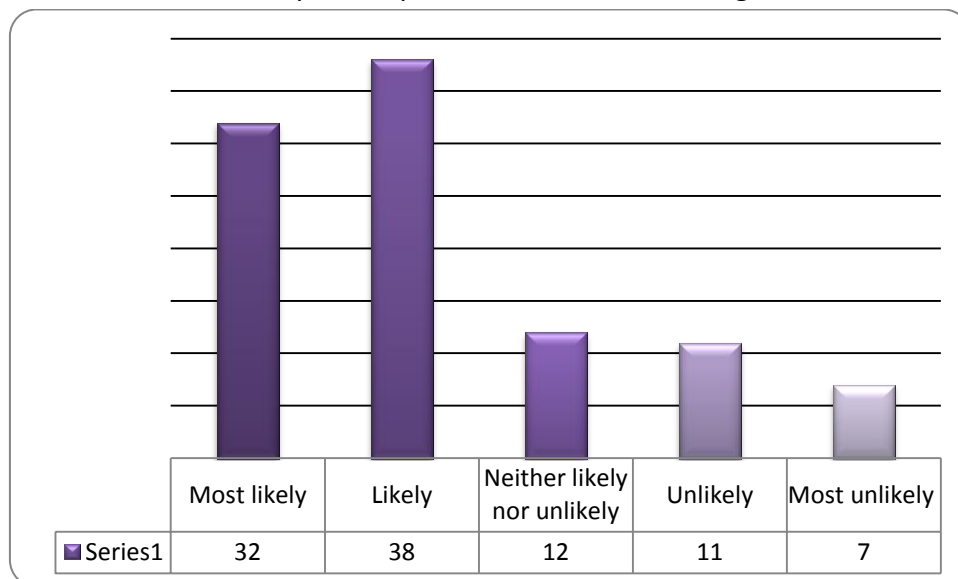




Graph 5: Frequency of Observing Social Media Promotion and Branding of Apple Smartphones

(Source: Sample survey)

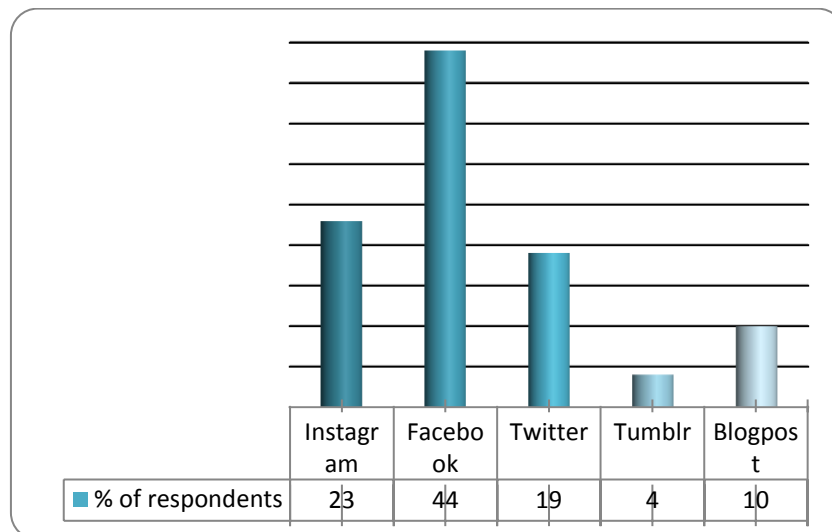
The above graph depicts whether the customers often get to see social media promotions of Apple smartphones in India. It can be noted that the majority of the audience that 38% have said that they likely observe the social media branding strategies used by Apple for promoting its smartphones in India. On the contrary the second majority of 34% of the audience have expressed their opinion in neutral. Again around 10% and 7% of the respondents have expressed the day as unlikely and most likely have watched any social media branding of Apple smartphones in India. So, when it comes to the use of social media as a strategy to promote Apple smartphones it can be observed that the maximum number of respondents have not been quite acquainted with these strategies.



Graph 6: Frequency of Observing Social Media Promotion and Branding of Samsung Smartphones

(Source: Sample survey)

This graph clearly shows that the majority of the respondents that is 38% and 32% have likely and most likely respectively expressed that they have seen the use of social media branding for Samsung mobiles in India. The above graph also highlights that only 12% of the respondents have replied in neutral and the rest of them have replied in negative to the question that was asked to them. Yet since a greater number of the respondents have replied in positive it can be considered that there is considerable amount of social media presence of Samsung mobiles which has helped in their branding and recognition among the audience.

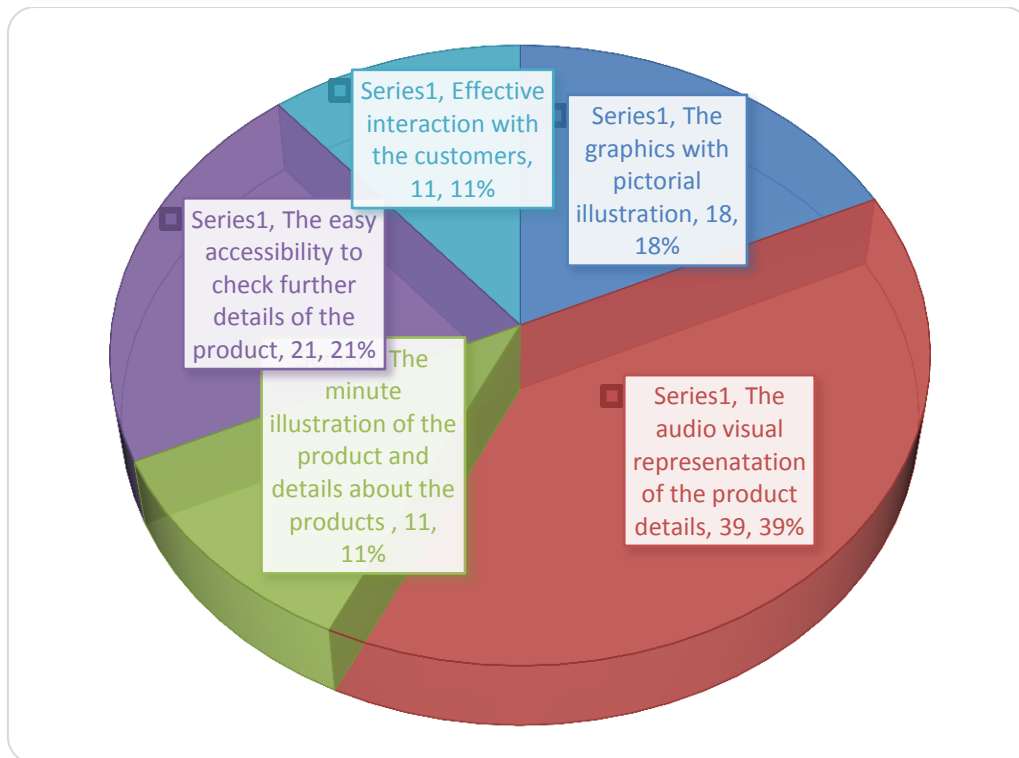


Graph 7: Social Media Sites Where Branding Is Mostly Done
 (Source: Sample survey)

Out of the major forms of social media or internet-based technology it is observed that the majority of the respondents that is 44% said that they have watched branding strategies used by mobile phone organisations on Facebook more than that of the other social networking sites. Followed by this they were 23% of the responding so have seen social media branding on Instagram and only 19% of them have seen social media branding on Twitter. There are a very few of the respondents who have cleaned to see social media branding on blogging terminals and blog posts.

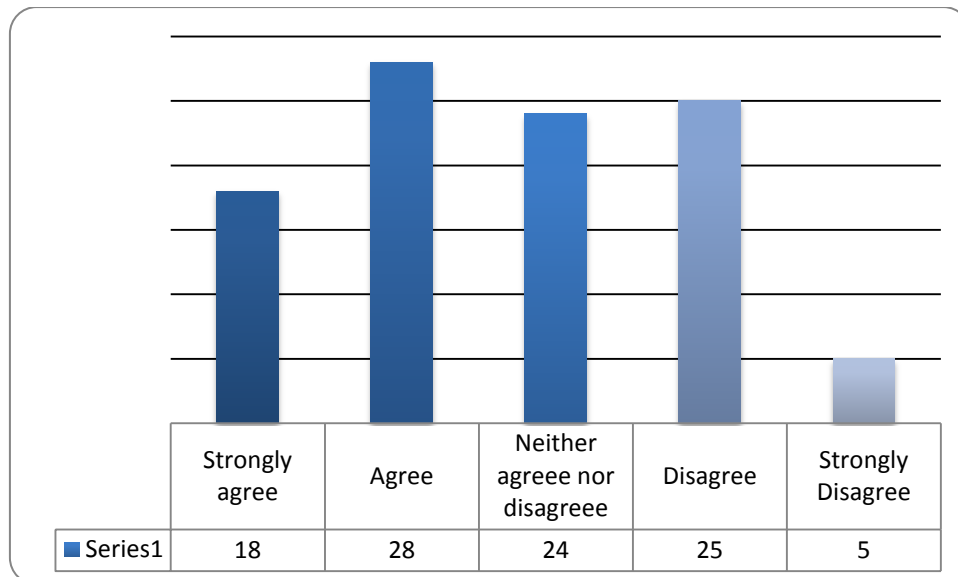
Choice of Strategies

This segment of the research had aimed towards the preference of the audience and the ways in which these can help towards more effective marketing communication in future. Issues like the choice of customers regarding the different factors which draw their attention to these social media branding and their trust on social media strategy has been analysed in this segment. In addition to this the research has also explained that to what extent does the potential customers feel social media marketing strategies to be more effective than that of other mass media platforms. Finally, it has been evaluated if the social media marketing strategies has any influence on the choice of their influence on decision making level and purchasing behaviour of the potential customers. Even though Technological Determinism highlighted on the importance of new technology yet it as important to evaluate if the new technology is being preferred by the audience in this case,



Graph 8: Choice of customers regarding the different factors which draw their attention to these social media branding
(Source: Sample survey)

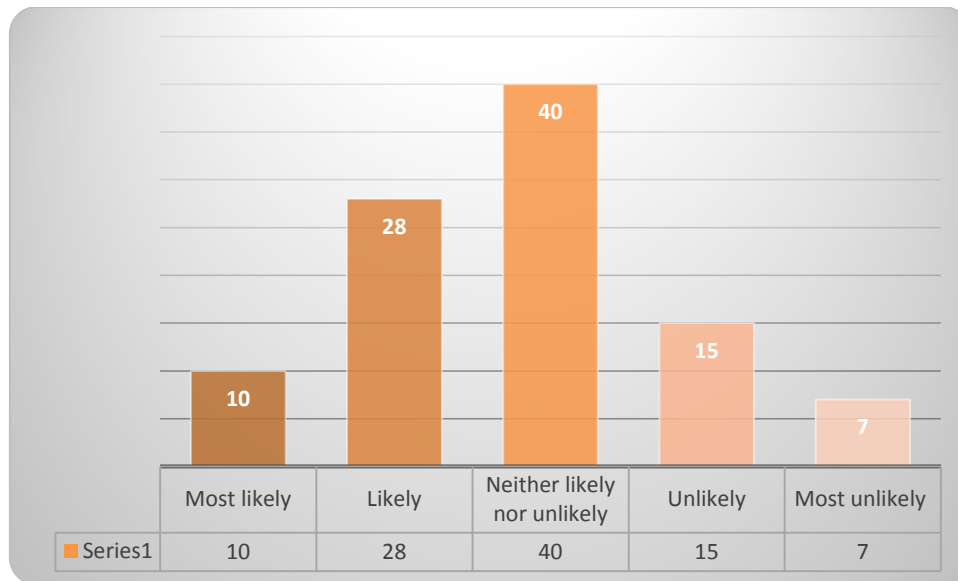
This graph denotes the choice of the customers regarding the different factors which draw their attention to these social media branding strategies used by the popular organisations. Here, it can be observed that the majority of 39% of the response said that it is audio visual representation of the details of the products which draw their attention in the first position while they are watching a social media branding. Furthermore, there were 21% of the response who said that it was the ease of accessibility of checking for the details that makes it easier for them to follow the social media branding strategies. Some of the other factors liked by the audience include use of graphics and pictorial representation, minute details and illustration of the products and effective interaction with the customers.



**Graph 9: Preference for social media marketing over other strategies
(Source: Sample survey)**

Social media not only promotes information to the people but it also encourages its customers to get engaged with the content and express their views. In this regard it can be said that customer interaction and communicating with the organisation can become potential factors to lead towards better customer engagement.

Following the theory of technological determinism, it is known that technology becomes dominant till a better technology is introduced to the society. Following this concept, the present research tries to identify if social media branding strategies are convincing enough for the audience to purchase a smartphone after getting influenced by the social media content. It was observed from this graph that 28% of the audience agreed with the statement that social media branding is better than that of the other branding or marketing strategies taken by the organisations. Yet this is not the absolute majority here because around 24% of the respondents have expressed a neutral opinion where 25% of them have expressed negative opinion towards the strategy of social media branding. And it cannot be clearly stated if social media branding is absolutely being considered to be phenomenal by the audience or not.



Graph 10: Purchasing Smartphones Only Relying on The Social Media Branding Strategies (Source: Sample survey)

In order to understand the behaviour of the audience the last question from the question tried to evaluate if the audience would purchase smartphones only relying on the social media branding strategies. From this graph it is clear that the majority of the respondents have replied in a neutral manner because 40% of them said that they neither likely nor unlikely would purchase mobile phones just relying on these social media branding strategies. Even though 28% of the audience have likely expressed that they would purchase mobile phones if they watch social media branding offered by the organisation get following the majority it can be said that there is still a certain amount of confusion present in the audience regarding the purchase of the products.

Conclusion

It is known that branding and marketing strategies are mainly forms of promotional tools yet the major objective of an organisation is to ensure realisation of sales. In this regard the use of social

media can be seen to be a crucial factor which helps to educate the customer about the product. It can also be said that it is not just sufficient to use social media branding strategies to influence the customers to purchase products especially smartphones. Apple being an existing powerful brand operating in a high range product in the smartphone industry it is not easy for them to convince people to purchase their product in a developing country like India. This is perhaps the reason why there are more people who follow social media branding strategies of Samsung in comparison to that of Apple. Nonetheless, if the overall choice of the audience is considered then even it can be clearly explained that social media branding strategies are useful to a certain extent but they are not the ultimate when it comes to convincing people to purchase the product.

From the perspectives of technology, it has been noted that from one error to the other the dominant technologies change their application as well as behaviour in



terms of the needs of the people. Only on the other hand it can be noted from the present research that in order to convince people to purchase an expensive brand like Apple in comparison to that of Samsung it is just not sufficient for your social media branding. Undoubtedly, social media branding is one of the most important strategies and has been liked by the majority of the respondents yet there should be some other branding strategies used in the campaigns so that customers from different age groups as well as different income levels can be properly targeted as for the market segment. Hence from this research it can be concluded that social media marketing all branding is an essential tool in the present day but considering the high range of the products some other strategies for branding as well as marketing should be taken up by the organisations dealing in the smartphone industry.

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