



CUSTOMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS ONLINE PROMOTIONAL TOOLS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MALE AND FEMALE CUSTOMERS

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ABSTRACT

This paper intended to study the difference in perception of customers towards various online promotional tools. . This paper is based on primary data collected from a sample of 440 respondents from Delhi/NCR through a well structured questionnaire. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is conducted using SPSS version 20 to study perception of customers towards various online promotional tools and independent t test is used to study the differences in the perception of male and female customers. Major findings of the study revealed both male and female customers are appreciative of online promotional tools. They have overall positive attitude towards these tools. Also statistically no significant difference was found in perception towards online promotional tools across gender which shows that these tools are prevalent among both male and females. These promotional tools are perceived to be credible, appropriate, convenient and trustworthy by both male and female customers.

Introduction

In marketing mix promotion is one of the main components. Promotion is an integral part of the marketing mix. Promotion is the effective communication about the product offered by the manufacturer to the customers. Promotion is very important for any business because it helps to inform, persuade and remind customers about the products and services they offer. In today's technological environment, as internet has become a new intermediary for companies to promote their businesses. The advancement in information technologies has changed the way of communications between consumers and companies. It allows businessmen to offer

unlimited range of products and services to all consumers from around the world at any point in time. So in today's scenario of cutthroat competition online promotion is the key to promote and increase traffic of a company's website. In comparison to other forms of promotion, online Promotion presents the advantage of reduced budget and storage cost. It also presents a fast and cost effective option for penetrating new markets. Marketing communication to promote their products and brand is now a day's becoming more and more challenging task for organisation. The online marketing techniques have become vital communication tools for the marketing department of a company to promote its websites, services and products in the online environment. In today's technological environment there are various online promotional tools available such as online advertising, search engines, social media, websites etc.

Literature Review

With the advent of the Internet technologies, the interaction between consumers and marketers is becoming increasingly more pronounced. Technology gave consumer the power to investigate products to label them and criticize them. The internet user of the twentieth century is young, professional, and wealthy with higher income levels and higher education. Internet and online communities have changed consumers, societies, and corporations with fast and wide access to information, better social networking and improved communication abilities (Kuruk, 2007). The rapid development of the Internet, particularly in the past two decades has changed consumer behaviour dramatically. The Internet is intensifying and it is influencing consumers which are their shifting behavior. Behaviour of internet users plays a significant role in their online behaviour (Amichai-Hamburger, 2002).

Consumer attitude towards online advertising can be demonstrating through their favourable or unfavourable response towards a particular online advertisement (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). This view is also supported by Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) by stating that they consumer will then form either positive or negative attitudes towards the advertising when they are exposed to online advertising. Kireyev et al (2013) developed a multivariate time series model to examine the interface between paid search and display ads. They standardized the model using empirical data from a large number of commercial banks that uses online ads to attain new checking account customers. They found that display ads significantly enhance search conversion. The study also explored that search and display ads improve effectiveness and ROI over time of the banks. Goldfarb and Tucker (2011)

attempted to explore what influences the effectiveness of online advertising. They revealed that matching an ad to website content and increasing an ad's obtrusiveness independently enhance purchase intent. But collectively these two strategies are ineffective. In a study conducted on online users in Thailand, Chiu et al (2005) concluded that online stores are perceived as more user friendly to facilitate online store visits.. Attitude formation, motivation, value orientation, income, socialization during childhood and education levels will influence one's social class. Guha (2013) observed the changing perception of consumers and compared the consumer buying behavior for working and non - working women in Urban India. The study suggested that women influence their own and family members' buying behaviour women because of their multiple role. It also revealed that working women are price, quality and brand conscious and highly influenced by the others in shopping. From the study it was concluded that working women are more quality and price conscious and store loyal than non-working women. Working women are developing as important segment for marketers. Tavor (2011) studied the online advertising development and their economic effectiveness in terms of two modes of online advertisements banner and pop up ads. The study found that customers are more interested in banner ads rather than pop up ads and concluded that through online advertisement advertisers connects with potential customers at no cost. Mehta (2000) concluded that consumer's attitude towards online advertising is one of the influential factors of effectiveness of online advertising because their cognitive ability towards the online advertisement is reflected in their thoughts and feelings. Priyanka (2012) studied the impact of online advertisement on consumer behaviour with reference to e-mails. She found that internet users have the same perception towards websites. Also interactive advertisements allow the customer to commence the action. The study revealed that people of all age group agree that online advertisements are informative but irritating some times. Diffley and Kearns (2011) explored the perception of focused groups of different age groups about social networking sites. They suggested that companies should try to integrate advertisements and engage consumers rather than disturbing on their privacy or irritatating them. The potential of social networking sites should be used as an effective marketing tool to make consumers to participate in marketing on social networking sites.

Rationale of the study

The fast growth of internet users in India provided a lot of opportunities for marketers. With changing customers' expectations in online environment businessmen need to rethink new and alternate ways to promote their products and services. Online promotional tools are one of the latest and emerging tools in the marketing world. Therefore, it is necessary for marketers to understand how consumers perceive benefits of online promotional tools. So the present study focuses on studying perception of customers towards online promotional tools.

Objectives of the study

The present study intends to compare perception of male and female customers towards online promotional tools.

Research methodology

Research Design: The present study is an exploratory study that aims to study customers' perception and perception differences towards online promotional tools across gender.

Sampling size and Design: The sampling frame comprises various Internet users in Delhi. Data was collected from a sample of 470 respondents, out of which 30 were rejected due to half filled responses. So total sample of 440 respondents is retained for further analysis.

Sources of Data Collection: Both primary and secondary data is used in present study. Primary data was collected through observation and a well structured questionnaire. 5-point Likert scale was used to indicate responses where 1 stood for strongly disagree and 5 stood for strongly agree. Secondary data is collected from various search engines, websites, books and articles.

Tools of Data Analysis: The quantitative data was analyzed first using factor analysis and then independent sample t test was used to study the difference between perception of male and female respondents through SPSS version 20.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female customers towards online promotional tools.

Result and Discussions

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is conducted using SPSS version 20 on data collected from 440 respondents using 5 point Likert scale. There are 29 statements used to study the differences in perception of male and customers towards online promotional tools. The Bartlett test of sphericity is used to assess the overall significance of the correlation matrix. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) for individual variance is studied. The value is 0.897, which indicates that the sample is good enough for sampling.

Table 1 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.897
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6198.193
	df	406
	Sig.	.000

Reliability of the construct: Test reliability refers to the degree to which a test is consistent and stable in measuring what it is intended to measure. The most widely used reliability coefficient is Cronbach's alpha which can range from 0 to 1, with higher figures indicating a better reliability. The reliability of this construct is 0.879.

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.879	29

There are five factors extracted in this study each having an Eigen value exceeding 1 which explains 58% of the variance. These factors are:

Table 3 Factor analysis results

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Credibility					
Online promotional tools are credible	0.632				
Online promotional tools are convincing	0.569				

Online promotional tools are believable	0.585				
Convenience					
Online promotional tools are informative		0.677			
Online promotional tools are convenient to use		0.686			
Online promotional tools are useful		0.748			
Online promotional tools are entertaining		0.690			
Online promotional tools are time saving		0.626			
Trustworthiness					
Online promotional tools are reliable			0.557		
Online promotional tools are attractive			0.620		
Online promotional tools are trustworthy			0.699		
Online promotional tools are valuable source of information			0.706		
Online promotional tools are easily accessible			0.600		
Online promotional tools provide real time benefits			0.528		
Appropriateness					
Online promotional tools are easy to manage				0.608	
Online promotional tools are creative				0.643	
Online promotional tools are a reference for purchase				0.677	

Online promotional tools are the best tools of promotion				0.670	
Online promotional tools are appropriate according to needs				0.683	
Online promotional tools are enjoyable				0.639	
Annoyance					
Online promotional tools are irritating					0.652
Online promotional tools are annoying					0.680
Online promotional tools are disruptive					0.793
Online promotional tools are objectionable					0.803
Online promotional tools are easy to ignore					0.593
Online promotional tools are time consuming					0.756
Online promotional tools are boring					0.825
Online promotional tools are deceptive					0.785
Online promotional tools are wastage of time					0.740

Results of Independent t test

The independent samples t-test is used to compare the difference in the means from the two groups to a given value. In present research mean of all factors is compared with regard to male and female respondents. The test assumes that variances for the two populations are the same. Results of independent t test are shown in Table 4.

Credibility: For first factor credibility mean score of male respondents is slightly high than female respondents. The significance of this difference is tested on the basis of p value at 5% significance level. As the for factor credibility $p > 0.05$, so there is statistically no difference

between the perception of male and female towards online promotional tools. So the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4 Independent t test results

Factors	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Differences	p value
Credibility	Male	3.67	.696	0.092	0.207
	Female	3.58	.756		
Convenience	Male	3.85	.700	0.082	0.241
	Female	3.76	.782		
Trustworthiness	Male	3.72	.619	1.00	0.139
	Female	3.62	.744		
Appropriateness	Male	3.68	.665	0.073	0.073
	Female	3.56	.636		
Annoyance	Male	3.14	.863	0.087	0.335
	Female	3.06	.767		

Convenience: The mean score of factor convenience of male respondents is high than female respondents. As $p > 0.05$ (0.241), so null hypothesis is accepted. There is statistically no significant difference male and female perception towards convenience provided by online promotional tools.

Trustworthiness: The mean score of factor convenience of male respondents is quite high than female respondents. As $p > 0.05$ (0.139), so null hypothesis is accepted. There is statistically no significant difference male and female perception towards trustworthiness of online promotional tools.

Appropriateness: The mean score of factor trustworthiness of male respondents is high than female respondents. As $p > 0.05$ (0.073), so null hypothesis is accepted. There is statistically no significant difference male and female perception towards appropriateness of online promotional tools.

Annoyance: The mean score of factor Annoyance of male respondents is slightly high than female respondents. As $p > 0.05$ (0.335), so null hypothesis is accepted. There is statistically no significant difference male and female perception towards annoyance of online promotional tools.

Also the value of mean value of four factor for both male and female is greater than 3.5 which shows that customers have positive perception towards online promotional tools.

Conclusion and suggestions

It is concluded from the study that both male and female customers are appreciative of online promotional tools. They have overall positive attitude towards these tools. Also statistically no significant difference was found in perception towards online promotional tools across gender which shows that these tools are prevalent among both male and females. In the era of internet technology, the online promotional tools are very effective in reaching out to the target audience. They are perceived to be credible, appropriate, convenient and trustworthy by both male and female customers. These are one of the best tools of promotion in today's technological environment. For customers they are reliable source of information. So marketers should use these tools in such a way so that it can compete against thousands of new companies going online every day and satisfy changing needs of the customers. Although, users sometimes find the online promotions irritable, annoying, deceptive and easy to ignore, yet they are convincing. Customers can also engage in online shopping as these tools may be used as a reference for purchase.

Increasing use of World Wide Web has completely changed the scenario of business sector. Now-a-days it is vital for every businessman to attract their target customers towards their products through all valuable modes of promotion and communication. Easy accessibility of online promotional tools made these very popular with customers. These tools are 24X7 accessible, so these tools provide real time benefits for customers. In today's technological environment it is nearly impossible for a business to be successful without using online promotion through which customers can easily search about their required products and services because it saves their time.

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