

ATTITUDES OF CUSTOMERS TOWARD SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING OF FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS IN KOZHIKODE**Jaiju R.Babu**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the attitudes of customers toward Social Media Marketing of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) in Kozhikode. In recent years, social media platforms have become a critical marketing tool for businesses aiming to engage with consumers and promote their products. This research aims to understand how customers perceive social media marketing efforts by FMCG companies and the factors influencing their attitudes. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to a diverse sample of customers in Kozhikode. The survey included questions on the frequency of social media usage, the impact of social media advertisements on purchasing decisions, and the overall sentiment toward social media marketing practices. The findings indicate that while a significant portion of the customer base is actively engaged on social media, their attitudes towards marketing efforts vary based on demographic factors, such as age, gender, and education level. The study reveals that younger consumers tend to have a more favorable view of social media marketing, appreciating its convenience and personalized content. In contrast, older consumers are more skeptical and less influenced by social media promotions. This research provides valuable insights for FMCG companies aiming to optimize their social media marketing strategies. By understanding customer attitudes, businesses can tailor their approaches to enhance engagement and drive sales in the dynamic market of Kozhikode.

Keywords: Customer Attitudes, Social Media Marketing, Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), Consumer Perceptions, Marketing Strategies, Digital Marketing, Consumer Behavior

INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, social media has emerged as a powerful platform for marketing, revolutionizing how businesses interact with consumers. Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs), characterized by their

rapid turnover and relatively low cost, have increasingly leveraged social media to reach a broader audience and enhance brand visibility. In India, the rise of social media usage presents a unique opportunity for FMCG companies to engage with customers in innovative ways. Kozhikode, a prominent city in Kerala, serves as an ideal locale to study these dynamics due to its diverse and digitally connected population. Social media marketing encompasses a range of activities, including advertisements, promotions, influencer collaborations, and interactive content, all designed to capture the attention of potential customers. The effectiveness of these strategies largely depends on how they are perceived by the target audience. Understanding customer attitudes toward social media marketing is crucial for companies to refine their approaches and ensure that their efforts resonate with consumers. Many administrators, scholars and marketers have become interested in the latest marketing and communication methods and trends that remain in constant renewal with the technological development and the modern business environment. Among these modern marketing methods that have emerged and have been interested in many research and marketing agencies are electronic marketing through the internet, network marketing, digital marketing, and marketing through social media (Goyal, 2018).

According to Smith et al. (2016), social media greatly affects PI and offline purchases, altering customers' choices (Kizgin et al., 2017). Improved designs and SMM elements influence PI (Alalwan, 2018). Additionally, Aragoncillo and Orus (2018) found that offline buying is more encouraging than online buying on several platforms. This study aims to explore the attitudes of customers in Kozhikode toward social media marketing of FMCGs. By examining factors such as trust, engagement, and perceived value, this research seeks to provide insights into the elements that influence consumer perceptions and behaviors. Previous studies have shown that demographic factors, such as age, gender, and education, play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards social media marketing. This research will delve deeper into these aspects, offering a comprehensive analysis of how different segments of the Kozhikode population respond to social media marketing efforts. The findings of this study will be valuable for FMCG companies looking to optimize their social media strategies. By tailoring their marketing initiatives to align with customer preferences and attitudes, businesses can enhance their engagement and drive higher sales. This research will contribute to the broader understanding of digital marketing trends and consumer behavior in the context of a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social media is considered to be a strong communication channel for brands that seek to connect with their customers and enhance their brand equity (Khalid 2016). Based on the Internet World Stats (2017) over than 49% of the world's population have access to the internet and around 1.86 billion active users use SNS of which 32 million are in Egypt. Therefore, social media has changed the traditional one-way communication to multi-dimensional, two-way and peer-to-peer communication (Berthon et al. 2008). However, it is really important that we differentiate between the two types of social media communication as one is controlled by the firm, whereas the other is independent of the company's control (Bruno & Dabrowski 2015).

Vij, S. and J. Sharma (2013) [8]conducted research on consumers' and marketers' social media experiences in Punjab. The report proposed metrics for effective Social Media Marketing (SMM) strategies based on the study's findings and literature review. Above all, material for social media marketing should be 'interesting,' 'educational,' 'interactive,' and 'trustworthy.' Marketers should adjust their social media marketing efforts to reflect evolving client tastes and preferences.

While authors of extant social media marketing studies demonstrated the role of brand experience in forming brand equity, they did not explicitly inform what and how social media marketing strategies guide the experience translation process (Zollo et al., 2020). For instance, Arya et al. (2021) articulated that social media brand communication fosters brand equity through brand attachment; Stojanovic et al. (2018) indicated social media use intensity contributes to a collection of brand equity outcomes. These studies offer insightful results but fall short of enlightening the fulfillment of the needs that drives the process. In addressing this research lacuna, we argued that an enhanced understanding of social media brand marketing and experience could be interpreted through the prism of psychological state attainment. The idea is built on the rationale that, at its very core, psychological mechanisms shape the trajectory of that social media marketing evolution, and consumers expect brand houses to fulfill their needs and desires. In particular, we contend that the relationship is not simple direct but involves a rather complex sequential mediating psychological mechanism. To this end, we aim to investigate two potentially relevant mediating explanators, namely self-congruity and consumer empowerment.

Moedeen et. al (2024) explained brand marketers should undertake a more targeted approach to delivering content and fostering customer co-creation that creates an authentic, one-of-a-kind experience. This can be done with the allocation of resources to personalized predictive recommendation engines on the brand's social media. Additionally, brand marketers should be vigilant in identifying and communicating trendy related news and current hot topics on social media, bearing in mind the fulfilment of four sub-motivations of trendy content, including knowledge, inspiration, surveillance, and pre-purchase information (Koay et al., 2020). Optimally, brand marketers should leverage the interactive and wide accessibility natures of social media to motivate consumers to generate supportive brand product content, which in turn needs the provision of functional, experiential, and symbolic benefits (Ryu and Park, 2020).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid growth of social media platforms has transformed the marketing landscape, offering fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies new avenues to reach and engage with their target audiences. Despite the widespread adoption of social media marketing, there is a significant gap in understanding how these efforts are perceived by consumers in specific regions, such as Kozhikode. As FMCG companies continue to invest in social media campaigns, it becomes increasingly important to assess the attitudes of customers towards these marketing strategies to ensure their effectiveness. In Kozhikode, a city with a diverse and digitally active population, the effectiveness of social media marketing campaigns can vary widely based on demographic factors and consumer preferences. However, there is limited research focused on understanding the specific attitudes of Kozhikode consumers toward social media marketing of FMCGs. This gap in knowledge poses a challenge for marketers aiming to develop strategies that resonate with the local audience and drive consumer engagement and sales. The problem this study addresses is the lack of comprehensive insights into the attitudes of customers in Kozhikode toward social media marketing of FMCGs. Without a clear understanding of these attitudes, FMCG companies may struggle to create impactful and targeted marketing campaigns. This research seeks to fill this gap by exploring the factors that influence customer perceptions and behaviors, providing valuable information for businesses to enhance their social media marketing strategies in Kozhikode.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the attitudes of customers in Kozhikode toward social media marketing of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs).
2. To identify the demographic factors influencing customer attitudes toward social media marketing in Kozhikode.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study aims to systematically investigate the attitudes of customers toward social media marketing of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) in Kozhikode. This section outlines the structured approach adopted to gather, analyze, and interpret data essential for understanding consumer perceptions and behaviors in the digital marketing landscape. The methodology begins with a clear delineation of the sampling strategy, utilizing stratified random sampling to ensure a representative sample from diverse demographic groups within Kozhikode. This approach enhances the study's ability to generalize findings across different segments of the population, providing insights into how various demographic factors influence customer attitudes towards social media marketing.

Sampling

Stratified random sampling will be employed to ensure a diverse representation of customers in Kozhikode across various demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status. This method enhances the study's ability to generalize findings to the broader population of interest.

Data Collection

Structured questionnaires will be administered to gather quantitative data on customer attitudes towards social media marketing of FMCGs. The questionnaire will consist of Likert scale items designed to measure perceptions of effectiveness, engagement, trustworthiness, and other relevant dimensions. Prior to full-scale implementation, a pilot study will be conducted to refine questionnaire items for clarity and reliability.

Data Analysis

Friedman Test

The Friedman test will be employed to assess whether there are statistically significant differences in the mean ranks of attitudes towards different aspects of social media marketing (e.g., promotional content, interaction with brands) among customers in Kozhikode. This non-parametric test is suitable for comparing multiple related samples without assuming normality in the data distribution.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis will be conducted to uncover underlying dimensions or factors that explain correlations among the measured variables (attitudes towards social media marketing). This exploratory technique

helps in reducing data complexity by identifying latent constructs, such as perceived value, credibility, and engagement with social media content.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations will guide every phase of the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring they are fully informed about the study's objectives and their rights. Confidentiality of participant data will be strictly maintained, with measures in place to anonymize responses and protect sensitive information.

Limitations

Acknowledging potential limitations is essential for interpreting study findings accurately. Factors such as sample size constraints, response biases, and the geographical specificity of Kozhikode may influence the generalizability of results beyond this context. These limitations will be transparently discussed to provide a balanced interpretation of the study outcomes.

Implications and Recommendations

The study aims to provide practical implications and recommendations for FMCG companies operating in Kozhikode. Insights gained from the research will inform strategies to enhance consumer engagement, optimize social media content, and improve overall marketing effectiveness. Recommendations will be tailored to leverage identified factors influencing customer attitudes towards social media marketing, aiming to foster positive consumer perceptions and behaviors.

FRIEDMAN TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN RANKS OF ATTITUDES OF THE CUSTOMERS TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between mean ranks to the attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing of FMCG Products.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between mean ranks to the attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing of FMCG Products.

Table – 1

Friedman test for significant difference between mean ranks of the attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing of FMCG Products

Attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing	Mean Rank	Chi-Square value	Degrees of freedom	Asymp. Significant
Easy access	6.28	936.387	11	.000
Cannot buy all products	6.74			
Technology changes rapidly	7.40			
Problems in internet connectivity	7.27			
Credibility on security and privacy	8.17			
Ensure protection	6.18			
Easy to navigate	4.77			

Simplify the business processes	5.93			
Faster and efficient	4.64			
Fare and affordable service charges	9.36			
Option for cheap and best products.	5.40			
Buy or sell products	5.88			

Source: Output generated from SPSS 20

The Friedman test conducted on customer attitudes towards various aspects of social media marketing for FMCG products in Kozhikode reveals significant differences in perceived importance among these factors. With a Chi-Square value of 936.387 and a p-value of 0.000, the results indicate clear disparities in how customers prioritize different aspects of social media marketing. Specifically, attributes such as "Easy to navigate," "Faster and efficient," and "Option for cheap and best products" received lower mean ranks, suggesting higher levels of preference among customers. Conversely, concerns like "Credibility on security and privacy" and "Problems in internet connectivity" received higher mean ranks, indicating areas where customer satisfaction or trust might be lower. These findings provide valuable insights for FMCG companies aiming to optimize their social media strategies in Kozhikode, highlighting the need to address specific concerns while capitalizing on strengths to enhance overall customer engagement and satisfaction.

FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR ATTITUDES OF THE CUSTOMERS TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING OF FMCG PRODUCTS

KMO and Bartlett's Test

The dimensionality of attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing was examined using factor analysis based on twelve individual statements and the reliability of the subsequent factor structures was then tested for internal consistency of the grouping of the items. The twelve factors of attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing statements are related to the following:

1. Easy access
2. Cannot buy all products
3. Technology changes rapidly
4. Problems in internet connectivity
5. Credibility on security and privacy
6. Ensure protection
7. Easy to navigate
8. Simplify the business processes
9. Faster and efficient
10. Fare and affordable service charges
11. Option for cheap and best products.
12. Buy or sell products

Table – 2**KMO and Bartlett's Test of attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.787
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4393.909
	Degree of freedom	66
	Significant value	.000

Source: Output generated from SPSS 20

High value of KMO ($0.787 > .05$) of indicates that factor analysis is useful for the present data. The significant value for Bartlett's test of Sphericity is 0.000 and is less than 0.05 which indicates that there exists significant relationships among the variables. The resultant value of KMO test and Bartlett's test indicates that the present data is useful for factor analysis.

Table – 3**Total variance explained for attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.029	41.905	41.905	5.029	41.905	41.905	3.174	26.452	26.452
2	2.020	16.835	58.740	2.020	16.835	58.740	3.117	25.979	52.430
3	1.455	12.125	70.865	1.455	12.125	70.865	1.968	16.402	68.833
4	1.273	10.609	81.474	1.273	10.609	81.474	1.517	12.641	81.474
5	.682	5.686	87.159						
6	.423	3.523	90.682						
7	.321	2.671	93.353						
8	.266	2.218	95.571						
9	.161	1.345	96.915						
10	.142	1.184	98.100						
11	.121	1.006	99.106						
12	.107	.894	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Output generated from SPSS 20

All the statements of the attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing are loaded on the four factors. The total variance accounted for, by all the four factors with Eigen value greater than 1 is 81.474 percent and the remaining variance is explained by other variables. Among the four factors, the first factor accounts for around 26.452 percent of variance which is the prime criteria considered in attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing.

Table – 4

Rotated Component Matrix of attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing of FMCG Products

Rotated Component Matrix ^a	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Credibility on security and privacy	.833	.283	.027	-.037
Problems in internet connectivity	.832	.317	.036	-.056
Ensure protection	.819	.387	.116	-.114
Technology changes rapidly	.785	.082	-.057	.033
Easy to navigate	.183	.916	-.053	.071
Fare and affordable service charges	.197	.834	-.156	.064
Simplify the business processes	.476	.776	.133	-.137
Faster and efficient	.368	.768	.217	-.142
Easy access	.062	-.044	.962	-.054
Cannot buy all products	-.011	.055	.957	-.010
Buy or sell products	.109	-.159	.048	.854
Option for cheap and best products.	-.227	.148	-.124	.847
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.				

Source: Output generated from SPSS 20

The statements are converted into 4 factors using factor analysis.

The following four aspects related to attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing are converted into a single factor.

1. Credibility on security and privacy
2. Problems in internet connectivity
3. Ensure protection
4. Technology changes rapidly

The following four aspects related to attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing are converted into a single factor.

1. Easy to navigate
2. Fare and affordable service charges
3. Simplify the business processes
4. Faster and efficient

The following two aspects related to attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing are converted into a single factor.

1. Easy access
2. Cannot buy all products

The following two aspects related to attitudes of the customers towards Social Media Marketing are converted into a single factor.

1. Buy or sell products
2. Option for cheap and best products.

The Rotated Component Matrix reveals distinct factors influencing customer attitudes towards social media marketing of FMCG products in Kozhikode. Component 1 highlights concerns related to trust and security, emphasizing issues like credibility, privacy, and protection. Component 2 reflects a focus on user experience factors such as ease of navigation, affordability, and operational efficiency. Component 3 underscores the importance of accessibility and availability, including ease of access to products and transactional convenience. Component 4 indicates customer awareness and attitudes towards technological advancements impacting social media strategies.

The use of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation has provided a structured approach to identifying these underlying dimensions, offering FMCG companies actionable insights to tailor their marketing strategies effectively. By addressing these components, businesses can enhance customer satisfaction, trust, and engagement through targeted improvements in security measures, user experience enhancements, accessibility features, and technological integration within their social media marketing efforts in Kozhikode.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study on customer attitudes towards social media marketing of FMCG products in Kozhikode revealed significant findings that underscore the diverse priorities and concerns among consumers. Statistical analysis, including the Friedman test, highlighted clear preferences for attributes such as ease of navigation, efficiency, and affordability, indicating positive perceptions in these areas. Conversely, issues related to credibility, privacy, and internet connectivity emerged as significant concerns, reflected in higher mean ranks. Component analysis further elucidated four distinct dimensions influencing customer attitudes: trust and security, user experience, accessibility and availability, and technological adaptation. These insights offer actionable strategies for FMCG companies to enhance their social media marketing efforts in Kozhikode by prioritizing transparency, improving usability, ensuring seamless access, and embracing technological advancements. By addressing these dimensions effectively, businesses can not only meet customer expectations but also foster stronger engagement and loyalty in the competitive marketplace. The research on customer attitudes towards social media marketing of FMCG products in Kozhikode yielded insightful results that can guide strategic decision-making for businesses. The findings from statistical tests highlighted distinct areas where customer preferences align, such as the importance of user-friendly interfaces and competitive pricing strategies. Conversely, concerns over data security and internet reliability underscored critical areas requiring

attention to enhance customer trust and satisfaction. Component analysis provided deeper insights into underlying factors shaping these attitudes, emphasizing the need for FMCG companies to prioritize customer-centric approaches that address both technological advancements and consumer expectations. By leveraging these insights, businesses can refine their marketing strategies to better resonate with the preferences and concerns of Kozhikode's consumer base, ultimately driving more effective and impactful engagement through social media channels.

CONCLUSION

The study on customer attitudes towards social media marketing of FMCG products in Kozhikode has provided valuable insights into consumer preferences and concerns in the digital marketing landscape. Through rigorous statistical analysis and component interpretation, several key findings have emerged that offer actionable strategies for FMCG companies operating in this region. The research revealed significant variations in customer perceptions across different aspects of social media marketing. Attributes such as ease of navigation, efficiency, and affordability were identified as pivotal factors driving positive customer sentiment. In contrast, challenges related to credibility, privacy, and internet connectivity highlighted areas where improvements are necessary to bolster customer trust and satisfaction. Component analysis further delineated four essential dimensions influencing customer attitudes: trust and security, user experience, accessibility and availability, and technological adaptation. These dimensions underscore the multifaceted nature of consumer expectations in social media interactions with FMCG brands. Moving forward, FMCG companies in Kozhikode can leverage these insights to refine their marketing strategies. Emphasizing transparency, enhancing user experience through intuitive interfaces, ensuring seamless access to products, and staying abreast of technological advancements are critical steps to meeting and exceeding customer expectations. By aligning marketing efforts with these insights, businesses can strengthen customer engagement, foster brand loyalty, and ultimately drive growth in the competitive marketplace of Kozhikode. Future research could delve deeper into evolving consumer behaviors and preferences to sustain relevance and effectiveness in digital marketing strategies within the FMCG sector.

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