

THE STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS AND POPULARITY OF VIRAL MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

Marketing is a business function responsible for creating and retaining customers. According to AMA “marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of goods, services and ideas to create exchanges with the target group that satisfy customer and organisational objectives.

Marketing remains one of the most challenging and complex aspects of business compared to other functions. Internet known as “network of networks” had its dawn in 1962.

In today’s faced passed environment with our lives becoming busy, online shopping has become a culture and an inevitable part of ones life. The best thing about shopping online is that it provides consumer freedom and control and choice of wide range of products, with the favourite items being only a few mouse clicks away.

Viral marketing is one of the new marketing techniques which is now very popular in the world of marketing techniques that uses pre-existing social networks to produce exponential increases in brand awareness, through self-replicating process, similar to the spread of computer virus. The objective of the study is to find out popularity of the concept of viral marketing. For the purpose of analysis, primary and secondary data were used.

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a business function responsible for creating and retaining customers. According to AMA “marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of goods, services and ideas to create exchanges with the target group that satisfy customer and organisational objectives.

Marketing remains one of the most challenging and complex aspects of business compared to other functions. There are no easy solutions in marketing since most important factors of customers and competitors in a market are beyond the control of a firm. Now a days, digital technologies give us fantastic new platforms on which to reach and collaborate with billions of people fast and efficient. Marketing is still a human challenge, with more competitors and opportunities.

Internet known as “network of networks” had its dawn in 1962. Since then it has been conquering new heights in each and every dimensions of modern man’s life with a tremendous pace, helping them to claim the ladders of real success.

The internet is word wide accessible of computer networks that transmit data by packet switching using started internet protocol. It is a network of networks that commits of million of smaller, domestic, academic, business and government networks which together carry various informational services.

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Viral marketing is one of the new marketing techniques which is now very popular in the world of marketing techniques that uses pre-existing social networks to produce exponential increases in brand awareness, through self-replicating process, similar to the spread of computer virus.

‘Viral marketing’, ‘viral advertising’ or ‘marketing buzz’ are buzz words referring to marketing techniques that use pre-existing social networks and other technologies to produce increase in brand awareness or to achieve other marketing objectives through self replicating viral processes, analogous to the spread of viruses or computer viruses. It can be delivered by word of mouth or

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enhanced by the network effects of the internet and mobile networks. Viral marketing may take the form of video clips, interactive flash games, advergaming, e-books, brandable software, images, text messages, email messages or web pages.

The ultimate goal of marketers interested in creating successful viral marketing programs is to create viral messages that appeal to individuals with high probability of being potential and that have a high probability of being and spread by these individuals and their competitors in their communications with others in a short period of time.

There arises the need to think over the importance and influence of online shopping and viral marketing.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Analyzing consumer behaviour is not a new phenomenon. Since online retailing is a new retailing medium and online consumer behaviour is diverse from traditional consumer behaviour, this study helps to identify the factors that the online consumers go through when deciding and making a purchase over the internet and ultimately to find out the perception towards viral marketing, the emerging phenomenon.

OBJECTIVES

This study is undertaken with the following objectives:

- To find out the popularity of the concept of viral marketing.
- To find out whether consumers have been really influenced by viral messages.
- To analyse the benefits received on account of viral marketing.

METHODOLOGY

- 1. Type of data :** For the study both primary and secondary data are collected and used.
- 2. Data collection :** Primary data is collected by issuing questionnaire, while secondary data is collected from various sources like internet, books and journals.
- 3. Sample :** The study is conducted among a sample of 60 respondents selected on the basis of convenience sampling.
- 4. Area of study :** The area of study is confined to Kottayam Taluk.
- 5. Tools for data analysis and presentation:** Collected data are analysed by the use of various statistical tools like: *Percentage analysis, Scaling techniques, Chi – square test*

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Marketing is the economic process by means of which goods and services are exchanged and their

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values determined in terms of money prices. It is that phase of business activities through which human wants are satisfied by exchange of goods and services. It is a skill of selecting and fulfilling consumer desires in such a way that a dose of money put in, brings back maximum return. Marketing is a total system of interacting business activities designed to plan, price, promote and distribute want satisfying products and services, to present to the potential to the potential customers.

This chapter important of viral marketing. There are 60 sample respondents selected on the basis of convenience sampling method.

Table: 4.14 : Impact of viral marketing on buy or sell decisions

Type of impact	Number	Percentage
Positive impact	45	75
No impact	15	25
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data

Three fourth of respondents feel that viral marketing techniques have a positive impact on buy or sell decisions as shown in Table 4.14.

Table: 4.15 Receipt of messages through social networking sites and YouTube

Particulars	Number	Percentage
Sometimes	25	41.66
Frequently	22	36.66
Never	13	21.66
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that from the total respondents i.e. 41.67 percent have sometimes got messages through social networking sites and through youtube links. 36.67 percent have got messages frequently and 21.67 percent respondents have never got such messages.

Table: 4.16 : Length of messages

Particulars	Number	Percentage
Short messages	26	55.31
Normal	20	46.80
Lengthier	1	2.12
Total	47	100

Source: Primary data

Of the 47 respondents who have got messages through social networking sites and youtube, 26 respondents are of the opinion that the messages are brief in content. 20 opine that the messages have normal marketing content. Only 1 respondent feel that the messages are lengthier than normal.

Table: 4.17 :Benefits derived from message forwards.

Benefits	Number	Percentage
Cash back	3	11.53
Discount coupons	8	30.76
Gift coupons	8	30.76
Benefits like mob. Recharge	7	26.92
others	-	-
Total	26	100

Source: Primary data

From the 26 respondents who have got benefits from forwarding of messages, 11 % of respondents got cash back benefits, 31 % respondents got discount coupons, same number of respondents got gift coupons and 27 % got benefits like mobile recharge.

The benefits received from forwards or messages through social networking sites or YouTube are summarised in Table 4.17

Table: 4.18: Effectiveness of modern marketing techniques

Particulars	Number	Percentage
Effective	44	73.33
Not effective	16	26.66
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data

Almost three fourth of respondents i.e. 73.33 percent respondents agree that modern marketing techniques are effective than traditional marketing techniques.

Table: 4.19 :Reasons for preferring viral marketing techniques

FACTORS	Weight	5		4		3		2		1		∑Weighted rank values	Rank based on values
	Ranks	I		II		III		IV		V			
		F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S		
Cost effective		10	50	12	48	12	36	17	34	9	9	177	III
Better product specification		12	60	8	32	10	30	19	39	11	11	172	IV
Easy access		11	55	19	76	15	45	6	12	9	9	197	II
Time saving		18	90	14	56	10	30	10	20	8	8	204	I
Info about innovative products		9	45	7	28	13	39	8	16	23	23	151	V

Source: Primary data

The above table shows the ranking given by the respondents with regard to reasons for preferring viral marketing techniques. The weighted index point of each of the factor is obtained by assigning a weightage of 5 points for the first rank, 4 points for the second rank and so on.

While analysing the weighted rank values, it is clear that time saving scored first rank with a weighted value of 204 points. Easy access option with 197 points secured 2nd position. Cost effectiveness and better product specifications come next. While information about innovative products have got the lowest rank.

Table: 4.20: Medium for marketing commonly used

Medium	Number	Percentage
Social networking	30	63.82
You tube	6	12.76
Mail	9	19.14
Pay per click	2	4.25
Total	47	100

Source: Primary data

Majority of the respondents (63.82 percent) says that social net working sites are the most

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commonly using medium for viral marketing techniques. In the opinion of 12.76 percent respondents YouTube is the popular medium for such marketing techniques. 19.14 percent and 4.25 percent respondents support mails and pay per click respectively.

Table: 4.21: Awareness on the concept of viral marketing

Particulars	Number	Percentage
Aware	33	55
Not aware	27	45
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is clear that 55 percent of the respondents are aware about the concept of viral marketing and 45 percent of respondents are not aware about this marketing technique. However many of those who are not aware have been a part of these techniques.

Table: 4.22: Product popularised through viral marketing

Products	Number	Percentage
Songs	24	42.85
Books	6	10.71
Mobile phones	17	30.35
Financial products	3	5.35
Websites	4	7.14
Others	2	3.57
Total	56	100

Source: Primary data

42.85 percent of the respondents who have opine that songs are mostly popularised product through viral marketing. The second position is occupied by mobile phones as rated by 30 percent. The subsequent order of preferences go for books, web sites and financial products.

Table: 4.23 :Level of agreement on viral marketing become popular

Particulars	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	9	15
Agree	39	65
Neutral	12	20
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data

15 percent of respondents strongly agree that viral marketing will be the order of the day in the near future. Majority of the respondents i.e. 65 percent opine that viral marketing will be more popular

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than traditional marketing. 20 percent have no opinion in this regard. It is noteworthy that no respondents feel that traditional marketing techniques will dominate viral marketing techniques.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

1. Majority of the respondents do not share email with marketing content to others.
2. The major benefit received from forwarding of mails with marketing contents are mobile recharge and gift coupons.
3. A huge majority of the respondents (75%) agree that viral marketing has an impact on purchase decisions.
4. Social networking sites and youtube are being utilised for marketing purposes. More than three fourth of respondents have received forwards through the media.
5. The content of marketing mails and messages are usually short.
6. The study shows that the modern techniques like viral marketing are effective than the traditional marketing technique.
7. Easy access and time saving mainly attract the customers towards viral marketing.
8. Most of the respondents are aware of the concept of viral marketing. However, many of those who are not aware have utilised viral marketing technique in advertently.
9. Artistic products like film songs is the most popularised item through viral marketing followed by mobile phones.
10. A huge majority of consumers feel that viral marketing techniques will be the order of the day in near future.

Testing of hypothesis reveal that

SUGGESTIONS

- As viral marketing is becoming fast popular, marketers may resort to such techniques, especially targeting the youth segment.
- Online marketing and viral marketing are likely to expand the marketing space. As such, innovative viral marketing message models may be developed.
- Consumers are likely to discard messages as spam. Messages from trusted sources may be sent and publicity may be strengthened.
- Marketers may expand the product range, popularised through viral marketing.

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- As consumers do not trust online reviews, setting up of agencies like ASCI may be considered.

CONCLUSION

Globalization continues to expand the universe of the trendsetter and make viral marketing more exportable across the border for the promotion of products and services. Advancement in mobile telephony, PC Networking and communication bandwidth would open more forums and avenues for the marketers doing viral marketing.

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