PERCEPTION TOWARDS SNAPCHAT: A STUDY ON COLLEGE STUDENTS IN DELHI

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ABSTRACT

Social networking that once began in the online space has rapidly spread to mobile platforms. Currently, the consumption of mobile internet usage is being driven by mobile social networking.

With the proliferation of mobile devices and wireless technologies, mobile social networking systems are increasingly available. Mobile apps have become part and parcel of a daily life for hundreds of millions all over the world. A mobile social network plays an essential role as the dissemination of information and influence in the form of "word-of-mouth".

Personalization apps, which include features like Android lock screens and emoji keyboards, have witnessed an increase in sessions. With the increase in the number of messaging apps, like Facebook Messenger, Whatsapp, LINE, and Snapchat, users now want to be able to customize their texts to friends.

Snapchat is the next big thing in social networking. Its popularity is growing as it attracts the teenagers and youth to constantly stay in touch with snaps. The present study was undertaken to investigate the usage pattern of the app Snapchat amongst the students of an undergraduate program in the Delhi. The respondents were in the age group of 16 to 21 years of age. This study will reveal the consumer's perception towards Snapchat and also gives some suggestions to make this app more engaging and consumer friendly.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Perception, Mobile Apps, Snapchat, Social Networking

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80 | P a g e

1. INTRODUCTION

Social networking websites may be defined as web based services that allow individuals to construct a profile within a bounded system and communicate with a share of other users with whom they share a connection.

With the advent of new technology, social media has had sea change every few years. Since the inception of ORKUT, individuals experienced a wave of new social networking sites that come with unique and more engaging features than their predecessors. Facebook, Twitter, Hike, Whatapp are all social networking platforms that offer numerous exciting features to make themselves more popular and demanding than their competitors. The most recent of all these platforms, Snapchat is gaining momentum since it was introduced in 2012 and provides opportunities to marketers to exploit this medium to advertise their products.

Snapchat is an image messaging app that was created by Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy, and Frank Reginald "Reggie" Brown IV when they were students at Stanford University.

The following reasons accentuate the fact that Snapchat should be given more significance in terms of advertising:

- Snapchat has an estimated 26 million active users in the U.S.
- About 400 million snaps (photos and videos) are sent per day.
- The core audience on Snapchat is ages 13-25.
- Women make up 70% of Snapchat's user base.
- 18% of people who own an iPhone are on Snapchat.

This research attempts to evaluate at a fundamental level, the attitude and behaviour towards Snapchat. The output of the research will give a fair understanding of the users' likes and dislikes towards the app and the scope of marketing in the Indian market which eventually will guide the marketers to consider pros and cons of advertising on this platform.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Simeon Edosonwan, Sitalakshmi Kalangot Prakasan(2011) propounded that the interaction and communication of individuals throughout the world has modified through the social media phenomenon. Social networking has become daily practice in many people's lives. Social media has impacted multiple facets of human communication in recent times.

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81 | P a g e

Sliva, Bhuptani, Menon & D'Sliva (2011) indicated that social media is a very important tool for networking among youngsters. It proved that the current generation thrives on the popularity and easy access to social media and prefers to connect through more than one social media platform.

Gretchen Harnick & Kyera Giannini(2014) Snapchat opined that the fact that the image sent through the app lasts for only a few seconds and then vanishes forever, makes Snapchat brilliant, innovative and popular among youngsters. The sender can choose between one and 10 seconds for the "life" of the photo before it is deleted from the recipient's phone and Snapchat's servers.

Of the total 77% of respondents using the app, more than half of them agreed that they would open a snap from a brand they have never heard of. The brevity of the message makes it easy for the marketers to make sure that their advertisement is seen because the user doesn't mind looking at the content as he knows it will only last a few seconds as compared to Youtube where an advertisement is at least 30 seconds.

Amanda Lenhart, Dana Page(2015) found out that 24% of the teens go online almost constantly, facilitated by the widespread availability of smart phones. Facebook is still the more popular social media app, almost half the teens use Instagram and Snapchat. It also revealed that 71%teens used more than 1 social media platforms.

Maeve Duggan(2013) in his research, explored the fact that 54% of adult internet users post photos/or videos that they themselves have created while 47% of internet user view photos/videos online and repost or share them with others. According to this research, 9% of mobile phone owners use Snapchat in comparison to 18% using Instagram.

Franziska Roesner, Brian T. Gill and Tadayoshi Kohno(2014) revealed that however Snapchat is largely fun and popular amongst a large audience but a more secure platform would prove to a value addition that would encourage a user to freely share content without worrying about its consequences. I t also revealed that 79.4% of respondents knew that Snapchat's message destruction is insecure resulting in distrust towards the app.

Martin Pielot and Nuria Oliver(2014) researched that some specific features of Snapchat like its non committing communication that allows users to maintain secrecy may enable a path to modern communication through ephemeral messaging. However, this change will come along with challenges of ethics and a fear of invasion of privacy.

Joseph B. Bayer, Nicole B. Ellison(2015) concluded in their research that however Snapchat has a positive word of mouth from its users but it still has lower social support from the public at large. Their research clarified that people use Snapchat to share their "small

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82 | P a g e

moments" rather than the big moments that are still shared on Facebook. The study describes Snapchat as a light weight channel that is used to share spontaneous moments among trusted ties.

Dash (2011) explored the relevant factors applicable for online marketing awareness, Purpose of use and usage of social networking sites and concluded that college students are well aware about different social networking sites and their use and popularity is growing thus serving as the most preferred medium to connect students.

L2 Research Briefing (2016) conducted research on US teens and explored that Snapchat's user penetration increased from 24%(2013) to 58%(2015) in just two years. It revealed that average monthly hours spent on Snapchat were 5.9 hours and that the net mobile ad revenues increased from 100 million to 300 million from 2015-2016.

The major find was that Snapchat users generally adopt sportswear, beauty and fashion brands more easily than other areas.

3. OBJECTIVES

Based on the review of literature and the growing prospects of social media, the following objectives were identified specifically for Snapchat:

1. To find out the students' perception towards Snapchat
2. To find out the reasons for increasing use of the app
3. To analyse the behaviour towards advertising prospects in Snapchat
4. To explore the popularity of Snapchat in comparison to its competitors.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design & Instrument

A systematic and organized methodology was obtained for the research study. The research design was descriptive. Based on growing popularity of the social networking and exhaustive literature review primarily in West, objectives of study were chalked out. Focus group discussions were then conducted with the students of various batches of the undergraduate programme to gain insight into the overall attitude towards social networking sites in general and Snapchat in particular. Questionnaire was intricately designed to tap not only the demographic variables but also the students' view point on various aspects of Snapchat.

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83 | P a g e

6.2 Sampling

After successful pre-test of questionnaires, stage was prepared for the main study. For the main study, random sampling and stratified sampling were used. The stratified sample consisted of a leading management institute of Delhi, India. From this institute, the students were randomly selected. Convenience sampling was used, depending on the number of students present in the campus in a given week. Data were collected through questionnaire and recorded on Likert scale. Percentage analysis was carried out.
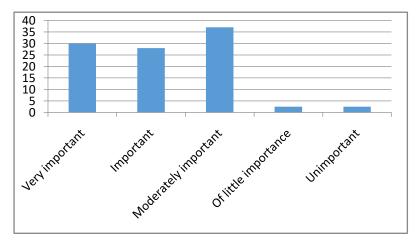
5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Framework of analysis:

1. How many felt that staying connected was important?
2. Which SNSs were preferred?
3. Identification of appealing features
4. Frequency of usage of Snapchat
5. Rating of Snapchat
6. Recommendation to family/friends

ANALYSIS

1. How many felt that staying connected was important:

37% opined that it was moderately important, 28% important and 30% considered it very important. 5% considered it to be of very little or no importance. In fact 95% believed that it was important to connect with their near and dear ones through social networking sites. This represents a large majority of the youth for whom staying connected is important.

Percentage of respondents rating the importance of staying connected.

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84 | P a g e

2. Which SNSs were preferred?

The most preferable app was Facebook, having a strong following of about 70%. The next preference was for Snapchat with a following of 26%. Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp and others together accounted for about 4% respondents.

SUGGESTION

Since majority still preferred Facebook over other apps, the task of the software developers is to

- Identify specific features of Facebook that appealed to the users.
- Try to incorporate those features and/or improved versions in Snapchat.

3. Identification of appealing features

Respondents were required to identify specific feature/s of Snapchat that appealed to them. Several features were listed in the questionnaire and the respondents were required to identify/mark all the features that they considered appealing. In doing so , they could mark one or more options.42% respondents believed that it was more personal, 34% found it easy to use, 10% found it quicker than other apps. 10% used it because their friends used it. Among the teenagers, 16% articulated that they loved to watch the live stories of their friends/peers while 10% wanted to keep their friends updated about developments in their own lives by sending their photos and stories to their friends.

This brought out another interesting fact about teenagers and young adults who wanted to know everything that was happening around them. In addition, they also sought recognition and approval from their friends by telling them about their own achievements.

The above findings indicate that majority of the respondents felt that it was more personal, efforts should be made to enhance the privacy and security features of the app., while projecting this as the key feature by the marketers. It is noteworthy that 70% of them were comfortable with the feature 1-10 seconds whereas 30% were not.

Further study should be carried out to find out that those who were unsatisfied wanted a longer time frame and of what duration.

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85 | P a g e

4. Frequency of usage of Snapchat

When questioned about the frequency of usage, 40% responded that they used it frequently while 26% were very frequent users. The respondents who used it occasionally or rarely stood at 25%. 9% never used it.

There may be three reasons for this:

1. They are not aware of the features of Snapchat.
2. May be comfortable using the traditional social networking sites.
3. May not like to change.

Regarding the first category, the marketing team may work to promote the features of their product and create awareness among the potential users. Better articulation of the prominent features would help the existing users to promote the product through 'word of mouth'. Regarding the second, a strong need based campaign may be carried out which would force the users of other apps to move out of their comfort zone and try newer options.

5. Rating of Snapchat

On a scale of 10, about 81% gave Snapchat a rating of 5 and above while 19% gave a rating below 5. This figure reflects a wide scope of improvement.

6. Recommendation to family/friends

Regarding recommendation to family and friends, 72% agreed while 28% disagreed. The need is to find out what made them not recommend it. In this regard, question 5 throws some light on the direction of further studies.

RELEVANCE OF STUDY

To have a better understanding of perception of college students towards immensely popular social networking app 'Snapchat' so as to help the marketers build marketing strategies accordingly.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The study was carried out on a limited number of respondents in Delhi region.

CONCLUSION

Snapchat is the new kid around the block when it comes to social networking websites. When we compare it to the more popular competitors like Facebook and Twitter, it still has a long

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86 | P a g e

way to go in terms of acceptance and popularity. The research aims at understanding the users' attitude towards Snapchat and learns their preferences and apprehensions towards the app. The youth of today gains instant gratification by posting pictures that lasts only a few seconds and Snapchat hits the bull's eye. The ephemeral nature of pictures, videos/stories makes it unique and loved among users.

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GE-International Journal of Management Research (GE-IJMR) ISSN: (2321-1709)

87 | P a g e

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GE-International Journal of Management Research (GE-IJMR) ISSN: (2321-1709)

88 | P a g e