

Topic: Effect of using Facebook as a brand creation tool amongst students of Westminster University UK

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide the background of the relevance of Facebook as an effective marketing tool for corporations within the context of UK companies. In order to achieve this aim, the concept of social media marketing is introduced and **analysed as well as an overview of the use of Facebook as an marketing tool. The aims and objectives of the study are introduced as well as well as the research questions. These** will provide the dissertation with a direction. The structure of the dissertation **will** also be mentioned thereafter.

Background of the study

Advertising main aim is to influence the way consumers view themselves and how buying a particular item can be of benefit to them. The message which is used in advertising is meant to appeal and influence the purchasing decisions of the consumers. A key to the use of social media is that it included consumer generated content and this content can be used to influence the image of a certain brand. The viral nature of brand relevant communication is the reasons why social media is an opportunity and threat for marketers and advertises. In order to determine the relative influence as well as the nature of this impact on brand, it is important to consider the content as well as the relative authority of the source (Quester, 2007).

Marketing is very important to businesses and is considered as one of the most important element of a business strategy. Majority of the large corporations in the United Kingdom

spend millions of dollars on marketing their businesses. However, currently, the advancement in technology has led to the use of the internet a more efficient and cost effective marketing mechanisms. In the extremely competitive business environment, social media marketing as such has become a new trend whereby such tools as blogs, community sites, picture and video sharing sites among others (Safko & Brake, 2009).

Popular sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have about five million visitors a day and have been considered as important hubs for marketing. The promotion of business through these sites serves as an attractive mechanism for business as these sites receives a lot of visitor traffic per day. Technological advances have made social networking to be very successful and social marketing an important part in any business venture.

Advertising mechanism that uses social media is different from the traditional product and service marketing as it does not rely on the unidirectional relationship between the advertiser and the audience. Rather it involves a two way communication process whereby the advertiser and the consumer have the opportunity to interact directly. A successful social media advertising and brand creation campaign is designed to create a sensation in the social web. Social media advertising is an entity which works at a continuum and continuously growing creating a wave of brand creation. As such, the success of campaign advertisement is influenced on the marketers' ability to appeal to the social network users in discussion as well as promoting the product (Holzner, 2009).

It is important to understand that the power of advertising is underestimated. Advertising has the influence to persuade, and influence the mind of the potential consumers. It has the power to change the direction of the markets as well as increase sales and profit margins for the companies. Advertising has both a short term and long term power in influencing the decision of the consumers. The short term power include relying of new information about a product

creates brand awareness and enhances the credibility of the company's product. Long term power improves the brand image and builds a positive reputation for the company. It is important to realise that companies are given great power in advertising.

There are a number of social media sites which companies can use for their advertising purposes. However, the social media chosen for this study is the use of Facebook by companies. The reasons being this decision is that Facebook is the most popular social media on the internet today. The followers in the Facebook in the UK are very high and continue increasing daily. This offers an opportunity for companies and corporations to use Facebook as a marketing and brand creation as well as brand awareness tool (Quester, 2007).

Facebook

Facebook has been rated as among the highest profiling sites on the web and it is weighting at a projected value of about ten billion dollars. The reason why Facebook has been so popular is because it opens people and individuals free kinds of communication between genders all over the world, and even across the street in a real time and help individuals to escape the problems of the world for a few minutes.

Facebook as well as the use of social media are anew and more popular means which have come up in the advertising communications with the traditional marketing strategies receiving less attention. This is especially in the situations that the use of traditional marketing strategies does not work. The marketing strategy using Facebook is enormous and there are countless of profiles and fan pages which have been crated on Facebook. Some of the pages have been developed by companies themselves while some are created by ordinary Facebook users or particular fans of a brand (Safko & Brake, 2009). In depth analysis illustrate that not all the companies and organisations gave undertaken much understanding on why they are on Facebook. Most have come to realise that Facebook is a effective area to

promote their businesses but have not really understood the need to be active and to engage with the users in a dialogue. Facebook is among of the most popular social networking site in the western world as well as other parts of the world.

Due to the many Facebook profiles developed by institutions not serving the role they could be serving, there is a need to analyse and offer recommendations to these companies. Facebook profiles created by corporations should be used to connect with their consumers and fans as well as ensure that they build long lasting relationships with them. In this environment, the corporations will have a better understanding of the preferences of their consumers as well as provide an opportunity for the consumers to communicate their needs and demand to the corporations. It has been a common site to get a Facebook page created by a corporation lacking direction and the profile appearing dead as there has been a lack of interaction on it for months (Holzner, 2009).

Further Facebook offers an exceptional marketing and advertising tool for individuals searching a product whether the product is virtual or physical. It has an advanced campaign setup which gives an opportunity to the companies to pick a specific demographic region. This allows that they can target products for specific individuals who are living in a particular area.

Aim of Research study

The main aim of this dissertation is to develop a strategy on how companies and marketers can use Facebook as tool to help them develop and build stronger brands and brand consumer relationships. To focus the research question more, the researcher have chosen to focus on the students of Westminster University as a point of focus. Therefore the research question of this thesis is:

How can the social networking Facebook help UK companies to build a stronger brand and strengthen the relationship between the brand and its consumers?

Objectives of the study

The research objectives are as follows:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of Facebook adverting on customer engagement
2. To investigate the effectiveness of Facebook adverting on brand reputation as well as brand image
3. To analyze the effectiveness of Facebook adverting and customer brand attitude
4. To investigate the contribution Facebook marketing effectiveness on the products and services offered

Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter gives an introduction and background to the research, identifies research objectives and research questions as well as the dissertation structure.

Chapter 2: Literature Review This chapter draws an overall picture of what the research is all about and gives an insight into the subject of studies. Firstly, it looks at a background and an evolution of social media marketing. Moreover, major theoretical explanations of the notion of branding, brand equity and customer brand attitudes. Lastly, various studies carried out by previous researchers on the subject of Facebook and its opportunity for marketing is examined.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter shows how the research was planned and constructed relating to different research philosophies and research approaches. The methods employed to obtain both relevant quantitative and qualitative data are explained. Also, the major limitations and constraints during the investigation are addressed.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

This chapter describes all findings and in-depth analyses with an attempt to answer the prime research question. Various past and current Facebook marketing campaigns from major brands are explained here in order to have an overview of the social media marketing environment in the country. The results of the survey (quantitative) and the interview (qualitative) are analyzed and applied to a theoretical framework; the branding and creation of brand loyalty.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter provides a brief summary of what have been achieved from this research. The summary will look back at the beginning of the research and highlight various important aspects as well as assessing briefly whether the project aims and objectives have been met.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

This chapter addresses the possible opportunities for companies to implement their marketing strategies within this social media platform. Various key success factors are proposed based on the undertaken research and findings; including what could motivate and de-motivate the use of Facebook as a brand creation and improvement tool.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

According to White (2002), the literature review illustrates how the current research relates to other research carried out by other researchers thereby establishing the context of the already existing knowledge. Further, literature review has been described as the selection of published and unpublished documents available on the topic which has ideas, data, and evidence which have been written from a particular viewpoint in fulfilling particular aims on the topic area and how it needs to be investigated. Literature review also includes the effective evaluation of the documents in regards to the research being proposed.

The purpose of the research below is to analyse the concept of using social media as a marketing device to the forefront of marketing literature, a review of the use of Facebook and an evaluations of its impacts as derived from available literature and a discussion of its proposed link with creation of brand as well as customer loyalty. This will be followed by a summary of the key findings from the literature reviews and the proposition of the resulting research hypothesis.

Brand

Kotler and Keller (2006) approved the American Marketing Association's definition of the word brand as a term, name, design, symbol, design or a combination of all these terms which have the intention of identifying services or goods of one seller or a group of sellers and enable the differentiation of the products from those of the competitors. The brand in this case is thus a product or service which add dimension which enable customers to differentiate it in some way from the other products or services which have been produced to satisfy or

meet the same need. Rossetti (2005) also approves of this concept and definition and in support gives an example by linking this to tangibles of a brand whereby in a presentation he argues that the brand is a name, symbol, design, term or their combination which has the intention of identifying goods and services of one seller or a group of them and differentiate them from that of the competition. A brand therefore has the intention of giving a special feature to a product or service which will make the customer to choose or prefer the product from those of the competitors.

Keller (2003), further brings the argument that the idea of creating a brand is the ability to choose a name, logo, package design, symbol or any other attribute which gives an identity to the product and distinguish it from the others producers or sellers. There are two perspectives of the brand which is apparent in most of the secondary sources. One of the perspectives links the elements of the brand definition with the tangibles which help in creating the brand while the other links it with intangible perceptions. The intangible perspective to brand uses marketing communications perspectives while the tangible perspective insists on the classical marketing.

Van den Heever (2000), argues that that a brand is the opinion of the customers and have nothing to do with the name, logo, design etc. He insists that a brand is what the organization offers to its customers with an emphasis on its target market and how they intend to make the customers believe of their product. Nandan (2004), argues that the brand has intangible aspects whereby a brand is assets which has no physical existence and the value which is added to the products. Duncan (2005), mixes the two aspect of the brand and defines a brand as a mixture of both intangible and tangible attributes which is symbolized in a trademark which an organization manages appropriately and generates value from it.

Copley supports this and argues that brands are just basic products but have both tangible and intangible attributes. Duncan (2005) further argues that a brand is a marketing communication perspective which is a result of perception from what experiences a customer has with the brand. More intent, Machado (2005) argues that the means a presentation is acquired is the differentiation a brand has for its unbranded competitions and as such is given equity. He defines a brand as the sum total of consumer perceptions of the product and the experiences they have with the brand, the brand name, what the brand stands for and the company it is associated with.

It thus adequate to conclude that there is a consensus in the literature (Kotler & Keller, 2006: Keller, 2003: Nandan, 2004: Duncan, 2005: Machado, 2005) that a brand is a product or service which is differentiated by its positioning in comparison to its competition. Brands can thus be identified as a mean to identify and a means for customers to identify a product from another similar product. Consumers can thus use their experiences and perception with the relationship they have with the brand and take past experiences with the brand when deciding. A brand can also be looked at as a means a consumer expresses himself or herself. No brand is truly neutral and when purchased will say something about the purchasers vision of himself or herself.

Branding

Brands and branding are often used interchangeably. Kotler & Keller (2006) argue that a brand is a perception entity which reflects the perceptions of the consumer. Branding on the other hand is the endowment of products and services with brand equity and is all about creating differences among the other competition brands. Branding thus involves the creation of a mental structure whereby consumers are helped to organize their knowledge of the

products which further helps them in decision making and as a result creating value for the organization.

Hislop (2001) gives a clear definition of both brands and branding. He argues that a brand is a name or symbol which differentiates the origins of a product or service from that of the competition and the protection of the consumer and producer from those of the competition who might attempt to produce similar products or services. He further gives a description of branding as the process of creating the association between a certain symbol, emotion, object and perception of a product or company with the sole aim of driving loyalty and creating differentiation.

Keller (2003), differentiate the terms by saying that a brand is a product which ensures that the consumers who the product is provided for the name and use other elements to identify it from others. Branding is the creation of the mental structures and help consumers in organizing their knowledge about the brand and help in clarifying their decisions.

In conclusion, branding of products thus is important in creating long term consumer loyalty and ensuring brand equity. The brands help in differentiating a product, sell a product and ensure the product is popular and sells to consumers. Branding makes it relevant to target the market and give it a life and a personality which will build the equity of the brand.

Brand Equity

Keller (2003) created a model which he referred to as the customer-based brand equity (CBBE). He argues that brand equity lies in the things customers see, read, hear, learn and feel about a brand over time. Brand identity is the means to which the brand presents itself to the consumer as such companies has the responsibility of creating the brand identity. Duncan (2005) definition of brand identity is that it's a design which the public is faced with or

otherwise the visual appearance of the brand. Keller (2003) argues that brand identity is the reflection of the contributions of the brand elements to the awareness and image. Swinburn (2004) gives an example of Nestle marketing campaign with the objective of introducing itself with an identity of producing healthy foods by positioning itself as a health, nutrition and well being company. The following are the components of brand identity as illustrated by Nandan (2005):

- Brand vision which combines the core purpose of the brand existence and its presentation of a given set of values
- Brand Culture which gives a brand guidance and directions
- Brand positioning which emphasize the attributes of the brand which makes it unique
- Personality which is a representation of emotional characteristics of the brand to its customers.
- Marketing Communication which ensures that there is brand equity by giving a representation of the brand to the minds of the consumers.
- Relationships of employees, consumers and other stakeholders which are given by the vision and culture of the brand.
- Brand presentation styles which are made to give it a brand identity.
- The brand elements which are chosen to capture the essence of the brand.

Brand elements have been described by Keller as the trademark devices which serve the purpose of identifying and differentiating the brand. These include the brand names, signage, slogans, jingles, spokespeople, characters and symbols. They are important in building of a brand and are chosen carefully to build brand equity.

Kotler and Keller (2006) argue that there is no business which can succeed if the products and services of the business are similar to any other product and services. The businesses have to position and differentiate the products. Positioning the business is the act whereby the brand is designed to occupy a unique place in the mind of the consumer. Duncan (2005) argues that brand positioning is the place given to brand while compared to the brands of the competitors in the mind of the consumers.

Phase 2: Creation of Brand Association and perceptions

Brand associations are the creation using the basis of brand knowledge and brand awareness. Kotler and Keller maintain that the best way to create brand equity is by forming differences to the response of the consumer to the brand as a result of brand knowledge. Brand knowledge consists of the images, experiences, beliefs and thoughts which a consumer associates with a brand. Brand knowledge creates brand equity by conceptualizing the brand node in the memory of the consumer by the associations which the consumer links to it. Brand awareness is the ability of the consumer to identify a brand under the different condition by recognizing the brand and recalling the performance of the brand from past experiences. The brand awareness can be created by creating brand salience with the customers.

Kotler and Keller (2006) further argue that brand equity is created through brand identification strategies which link strong favourable and unique brand association to the memory of the consumer. The strength of the brand association is related to recollections the customer can make to the brand. It is thus important for the business to create favourable brand images which will stand in the customer's memory. Keller(2001) argues that there are three criteria for forming brand images and ensure brand association; how strongly a brand is identified through the use of brand association, value of brand association to the consumers,

and the uniqueness of the brand which ensures brand association. The success of these dimensions will result to positive Responses to the brand and thus ensures brand loyalty. Examples given which have been successful in establishing positive and unique brand with customers include the following; Volvo for safety, Disney for family entertainment, BMW for style and driving performance and Coke as a unique refreshment.

Phase 3: Creation of brand image

Brand image related to the perception and set of beliefs that a consumer hold when it comes to a particular brand. According to Hawkins et al. (2001) argues that brand image is the schematic memory to a certain brand. It refers to the interpretation of the market which is targeted by the business of the attributes and benefits of the products, its characteristics and also its use.

The definition of brand image all go to the consumer notion which he/she constructs of a certain brand. It is important to note that there is a great difference between brand identity and brand image. The brand identity is created by the business while the brand image is the creation of the consumer.

Phase 4: Creation of Brand equity

Kotler and Keller (2006) give the following as the definition and explanation to brand equity. They define it as the subjective and intangible assessment that a customer gives to a brand observe the objectivity given value of the brand. Brand equity is thus a added value which is given to a business products and services. The value is reflected on how the customers perceive and act toward the brands of the customer. Brand equity involves the action of the customers when it comes to the prices of the product and services offered the market share as

well as the profitability that the brand earns. It can thus be regarded as the intangible asset and has financial value to the business.

Eslin (2003) argues that brand equity can be argued to be a barrier to entry for potential competitors. Clow and Baack add to the benefits of the brand equity. They argue that it have an influence on the wholesalers whereby they affect the brands they stock and the brands that they encourage their consumers to buy. It allows companies to charge a higher price to its products. The following is a summary they have given to the benefits o brand equity:

- Enable companies to set higher prices to its products
- Creates higher gross margins
- Ensures additional retail shelf pace
- Ensures consumer loyalty
- Prevent erosion to market share.

It is important for a business to create a strong brand which will ensure greater customer loyalty and reduce the vulnerability of the business to competitive marketing actions of other businesses. Business should thus invest to creating of brand equity by creating a brand image and brand identity (Safko & Brake, 2009).

Social Media

Social media has been defined as one which uses social interaction through the use of accessible and scalable publishing techniques. The social media uses web based technologies in transforming and broadcasting media interaction into social media dialogues. The technologies support democratisation of knowledge and information as well as transforming people from content consumers to content developers. It is important to note that social media

is different from industrial and traditional media such as television, newspapers and film. It is fairly inexpensive and it is accessible to a wide range of people in publishing or access to information when compared to industrial media which requires capital to publish information (Holzner, 2009).

Social media technologies include blogs, picture sharing, wall postings, email, music sharing, picture sharing a voice over IP among others. A number of other social media services can also be integrated through the social networked aggregation platforms such as the Paxo.

Web users use the term social web instead of using social media. Social web is defined as an online place whereby individuals who have common interests are able to gather thoughts, comments and opinions. It includes social networks such as MySpace, Facebook, Eons and LinkedIn among others. It also includes branded web destinations such as the Amazon and eBay (Safko & Brake, 2009).

Marketing to the social web means the adoption of a new way of communicating with an audience within a digital environment. It is not broadcasting of marketing messages but rather it is the web marketers interacting, participating, organising and encouraging social networks which people want to belong to. Marketing in the social web can be done in two ways. One is by provision of compelling and attractive content on a website and developing retail environments which customers want to visit (Holzner, 2009).

Branding on Facebook

When branding on a social network such as the Facebook, the principles discussed earlier have to be integrated. Marketers do not have the power of controlling what the customers say about their brands or their feelings towards their brand as most of the content is generated by the user which is the very essence of the FB culture. Companies and brands as such have to

get used to the idea that the consumers is becoming a co producers of the brand through sharing their opinions and experiences about it in the social web (Quester, 2007).

The general rule is that with the marketing communications , Facebook users are savvy on commercial material placed online and as such banner ads and commercial messages are not effective any more as they tune out majority of the users. Further, modern brand theories give a suggestion that brand builders focus on forming online customer communities in getting their attention. As such features and elements as groups and fan pages where customers are given the opportunity to share, like and follow are considered to be more effective on Facebook for creation of brands. A fan page or a group can as such play the role of being an online brand community whereby the consumers who have shared interests for the brand can connect to each other and communicate at a more direct capacity with the company and brand managers (Safko & Brake, 2009).

Facebook fan page and group is an excellent platform as such to form a brand community. This is due to the fact that it cost nothing for the company. Further, majority of the consumers are already on Facebook and area as such gotten in their comfortable environment where they can openly interact with the company (Quester, 2007). Facebook is considered a good place in developing an online brand community as it was originally developed to be an online version of the relationships individuals have in the real life. Facebook has a visual and personal design which gives a personality to the members. As such, the users and the brand can easily develop an intimate understanding and a profile can be established on the culture and demands of the members. It is important as such for brand managers to have an in-depth understanding of their consumers and ensure that they interact positively with them in creation of more strong brands for their companies (Holzner, 2009).

Benefits of Facebook

According to Zarrella (2009), the impact of social plug-ins of Facebook is not only proving beneficial for business sector but also for education, social and other sectors. Now-a-days, business schools and universities are employing social plug-ins of Facebook at a wider scale for sharing stories, news feeds, recent publications, etc among students. A survey study conducted with the professors of some Australian Universities revealed the fact that social plug-ins of Facebook facilitate and make their task of spreading stories and learning materials among students easier and quicker. For example, posting learning materials on the Facebook page of the university automatically publish such learning materials to the news feeds of students connected with the Facebook page of the university (Zarrella 2009).

On an average, the study has shown that one student is having 130 friends on Facebook. Therefore, as and when one student shares or follows the learning material the same appears in his friends' news feeds also. In this way, Facebook plug-ins makes the task of universities professors of circulating and providing learning materials to each student quite easier. Besides making learning materials and other things accessible, Facebook social plug-ins also enable university experts and practitioners to solicit views and opinions of students on particular aspects through share button (Business Impact of Facebook Like Button. 2011).

More specifically, academic practitioners and research scholars undertake research on various topics at regular intervals. It becomes sometimes necessary for research scholars to solicit views and opinions of students on the research topic. This task is being done in a quite easier manner with the help of Facebook social plug-ins i.e., share and follow. It means students share their views and ideas with the help of share button on the Facebook and professor and research scholars follow such ideas simultaneously with the help of follow button.

Moving further, Kabani (2013) presented some statistics related to Facebook social plug-ins in order to provide insight regarding significance of such plug-ins. The statistics has outlined the fact that Facebook social plug-ins are emerging as wide spreading distribution channels in the business world. More specifically, the capability and power of social plug-ins are leveraged by the business firms in order to reach, provide and distribute ideas, concepts and products to the customers at lowest possible cost and time. Such faster and cost effective distribution channels help business firms to build and develop long lasting relationship with existing customers and driving footfalls of new valuable customers (Kabani 2013).

The author has asserted that business world contain numerous examples where business firms have benefited significantly on account of Facebook social plug-ins. For example, Levis, a leading brand in apparel industry reported that 30% of the customer traffic comes from the Facebook and increased further by 10% when company has added like, share and follow button to its website (Best practices for measuring and optimizing the business impact of the Facebook Like button. 2011). This is so because like, share and follow button allow users to gain deeper insight on the products, schemes, and promotion strategies adopted by the brand. In other words, Facebook social plug-ins develop interest and facilitate users in arriving at purchase decision apart from creating awareness about product offerings. Similarly, American Eagle has also added Like, share and follow button to the next of every product image in order to make it easier for users to like respective offerings and referring it to their friends. It has been identified that Facebook referred users spend more money in purchasing company's products than other users.

CHAPTER 3

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will give a presentation of the research design and data collection methods which will be used for the thesis. The purpose of the methodology chapter is to provide a clarification of how the research was performed on effect of using Facebook as a brand creation tool amongst students of Westminster University UK. The chapter begins by illustrating the research design and a description of how the data was collected. Further a description of the process of collection and analysis of the primary and secondary data.

3.2. Reserach Philosophies and Approaches

Gray (2009) argues that the key influential research philosophies are positivism and Phenomology. The phenomological approach has a basis on social science and argues that our surroundings have no ultimate objective truth or reality but rather it is determined by our shared experiences and interpretations. It is as such impossible to measure or describe in the same way as the physical sciences. This approach is concerned with the study of experience from the view point of the individual and as such ignores any previously held beliefs which had been taken for granted,. It equates to the collection of information and perceptions through inductive qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and observation. The phenomological approach takes the role of understanding the subjective experience as well as getting insights into people's motivations and actions. This approach is qualitative in nature and it mostly requires a small sample (Gray, 2009).

On the other hand positivism assumes the properties of the social world can be studied in an objective manner. It seeks hard facts rather than opinions and takes the view point of natural

scientists which look to identify the trends and patterns in obtained data so that generalisation can be made. The approach adopts quantitative methods and methodologies of collecting data and gathering of information and it often and mostly requires a larger sample.

The research study took on a more phenomenological approach. The approach as described takes on the approach of social sciences which is guided by shared experiences and interpretations. The study took the perspective of the individual participant thereby bypassing any previously held beliefs which had been taken for granted. The study gathered information and perception through the use of inductive qualitative methods through the use of a survey. This approach ensured that the researcher attained an insight into the subjective experience and understanding on people's actions. It helped in giving insight into the effect that Facebook has on the students with regards to brand creation of different brands in the UK.

3.3. Research Design

A research design gives an illustration of the approaches used for the research or the phases which were involved in the course of the study. **The study has chosen a qualitative(ISNT IT QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH????) approach through the employment of the descriptive design.** Further, the study will make use of the deductive and inductive strategies. The deductive approach is suitable for the study in the establishment and development of the research questions with a basis on the literature review. An inductive approach is suitable for the analysis of the data collected in informing and expanding on the theory. Further, the use of a descriptive approach is well suited for the topic as it is useful in illuminating fields which have been subjected to little past research as the case of Facebook as a brand creation tool amongst students of Westminster University UK.

3.4. Research methods

In order to meet the previously listed aims and objectives of this study, the research was conducted into two phases. The first phase was the secondary research whereby information was collected through a review of existing literature. This was to provide knowledge on the subject area and develop the already established underpinnings of branding and the use of Facebook to develop brands. The secondary information was from published materials such as journals and books as well as online articles. The second phase of the research was the primary research which was conducted through the data collection through survey. The survey was conducted in Westminster University.

The manner and techniques for collecting data and information about the research topic is specified and ascertained under this section of the study. The research methods have significant importance in the research study as it helps in gaining new insight and information regarding the topic. The collected information thereby enables researcher to outline some new observations and provide new dimensions to the existing literature available on the study. Primary and secondary serve the two kinds of research methods providing distinct type of information and evidences on the concerned topic. Like, original and first hand information is provided by the primary research method on the other hand secondary research method focuses on already available literature and findings on the topic (Thomas 2003).

The collection of primary data can be facilitated through various tools like survey, interviews, pilot study, etc. As compared to it, secondary data can be collected from the existing literature like books, journal articles, research papers, and so on. Survey method is selected from the given list and will be conducted with appropriate sample size. In this context, there is need of choosing appropriate sample size for conducting survey. It is also necessary as

survey cannot be conducted with entire population due to time and cost limitations. Before selecting sample size, it is also necessary to define population among which sample has to be chosen.

The population for the present study will be the students of Westminster University. But, it will not be feasible and possible to approach all the students of the university due to time and cost constraints (Seale 2004). Due to this **sample size of 120 students (CONSIDER 100 SPECIFICALLY)** from Westminster University will be selected and asked to participate in survey process. The students belong to different streams and courses will be selected and approached in order to have diverse set of responses on the research topic. The questionnaire will be forwarded to the respondents on their email id and responses are solicited accordingly.

3.4.1. Sampling Procedure

(HOW COME RANDOM SAMPLING AND PROBABILITY SAMPLING CONSIDERED TOGETHER?????????????????)

The research study was faced with time and resource constraints and with regards to this the use of probability sampling was applied. Probability sampling is defined as the type of sampling where each member of the population has an equal probability of being selected. The primary sampling unit were selected through simple random sampling. This was to ensure that the study would have a large number of respondents. Simple random sampling is a subset of individuals which is selected from a larger population whereby each of the individual in the population has an equal chance of being chosen and those chosen are done so by chance and randomly. This ensured that there was no bias on the respondents selected to participate in the study. As such, the selected respondents were a representative of the larger student population.

3.4.2. Development of Questionnaire and Pilot Test (I WANT PERSONAL 1 ON 1 DATA COLLECTION NO ONLINE DATA COLLECTION)

A survey questionnaire was developed by the researcher through the use of the literature review and the aims and objectives of the research study. After the development of the questionnaire, the researcher performed a pilot test for the self completion questionnaire to be used in the study. It has been argued that it is important to conduct a pilot test to ensure that the questions are well understood and that the researcher has time to change any issues before the main survey. **A pilot** questionnaire helps in identifying ambiguity in the proposed questions and brings out any possible issues of analysis as such making the final draft more appropriate for the study.

The pilot study was carried out in order to make sure that the questions were set properly and also to tests that the online platform being used for the distribution and collection was functioning well. **The pilot study was conducted two week** to the questionnaire and it involved sending the questionnaire to the researcher email and to some friends through email. Following the pilot test, the introduction and instruction sections as well as unclear questions and confusing words were revised. Further definition of technical terms in the questionnaire was defined to increase the understanding of the respondent on the question. Further, the design layout of the questionnaire was changed to make it more attractive to encourage more participation. **WHAT TYPE OF QUESTIONNAIRE IS CHOSEN BY US TO COLLECT DATA???????????**

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

A web based approach(**PERSONAL DATA COLLECTION FACE TO FACE TELEPHONIC ETC. “NO WEB BASED DATA COLLECTION”**) was used to distribute the questionnaire to the students. It was appropriate as it was quick and cost

effective(MIGHT BE TIME CONSUMING BUT ACCURATE . “NO WEB BASED DATA COLLECTION”) way of accessing a large population sample within a short period of time. The questionnaire was developed through a free online service from Google Documents which automatically records the results of the completed questionnaire into a spread sheet format which is also hosted by Google Documents online service. The university students selected for the study received an email with a direct link to the online questionnaire from hosted by Google. The email was preceded by a letter with the reasons for the study and the requesting of the students to participate in the study. A week after sending he initial questionnaire to the respondents, a follow up reminder notice was sent to the participants.

For the purpose of the data analysis, the spreadsheet which had the result was exported to Microsoft Excel application where further analysis was conducted. The data was then coded and analysed by the researcher. The use of the online platform was an effective way of collecting information and it also increased the participants response as students found it easy to access online.

3.6. Validity and Reliability

The question on the quality of research and the question on whether the findings of the study can be applied to other cases are related to the principles of validity and reliability of the research design which is applied. Validity refers to whether the research focuses on what the study meant to explain and understand. In this case it focuses effect of using Facebook as a brand creation tool amongst students of Westminster University UK. This is related to whether the focus is well suited with the methodology used in getting the conclusions and the generalisations of the findings. Through the use of multiple sources, the strength of the study is assured and insight can be gained on the effect and role played by Facebook.

Reliability focuses on the consistency of the results from repeated measurements. As a result of using multiple sources from which the consistency of the data collected can be derived from, the reliability of the study is secured. It can as such be concluded that the research have produced credible data.

3.7. Ethical considerations

This section of the study will not contribute in attaining research objectives but will help in improving validity and effectiveness of attained objectives. Besides, it has also emerged as legal requirement for the research studies to comply with ethical guidelines and fill ethics related form to assure readers that the concerned study is ethically compliant one. In this context, the present study is also under ethical obligations and will fulfil ethical concerns related to privacy, biasness, free consent, undue influence, message distortion, etc (Kimmel 2007).

In detailed terms, Westminster University students participating in survey process will be assured that their responses will purely utilised for research purpose only. The collected information will not be passed to the business firms, media or press, etc causing any kind of inconvenience to them. Secondly, email id of the students will also be kept confidential i.e., measures should be adopted that such mail id is not accessible by hackers at any cost.

Besides, open and close ended information provided by the students will not be distorted and manipulated in any manner for research purpose. Every possible effort necessary for maintaining integrity and originality of responses will be taken. The students of the concerned university will not be influenced in any manner i.e., in lieu of any kind of monetary awards and returns for participating in survey process. The participation decision of the students will be independent of any such kinds of influence as it can affect validity of research objectives (Seale 2004).

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The study was set out with the aim of investigating the effect of using Facebook as a brand creation tool amongst students of Westminster University UK. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the findings from the conducted primary research. The theoretical concepts from the literature review and the findings from the primary research will be compared and contrasted so as to reach the aims and objectives of this study. The results consist of a demographic profile, some descriptive statistics as well as qualitative information from the questionnaires.

4.2. Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha is used to measure internal consistency. It has been used in the study due to the use of multiple Likert scale applied to the questions in the survey questionnaire. In order to determine whether the scale is reliable, the Cronbach's alpha was used. There is always a tendency to obtain a high value of alpha as it is evidenced by the items measurably the underlying construct. Cronbach's alpha can be determined as the average inters correlation among items. Further, if the average inter item correlation is low, the alphas will

be low. As the average inter item correlation increases, the Cronbach's alpha increases as well. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.722 which indicates a high level of internal consistency for the sale with the specific sample. This indicates that there is correlation among the questions within the survey.

4.3. Primary Data Analysis

The primary data analysis was conducted by analyzing the data collected through the use of the 100 completed questionnaires. Spreadsheet data which had the results from the completed questionnaires through the hosting by Google Documents was exported to the Microsoft Excel application. The information was the represented through the use of charts and graphs and an explanatory discussion which highlighted the key areas of analysis for each of the items researched on. The findings for the research were divided into categories as per the questionnaires used for data collection. After the presentation of the primary data, the implications of the findings will be discussed in depth afterwards. The analysis of the primary data includes the analysis of the demographics of the participants and the effectiveness of using Facebook for brand creation.

The data collected included 120(100 SAMPLE SIZE) completed questionnaires from 120 respondents of which 51 were male (42%) and 69 were female (58%). This is represented in figure 4.1 and table 4.1 below. Based on this analysis, majority of the respondents are female with a significant 58% which is more than half compared to the male participants with 42%.

FIGURE 4.2- 1 GENDER DISTRIBUTION PIE CHART

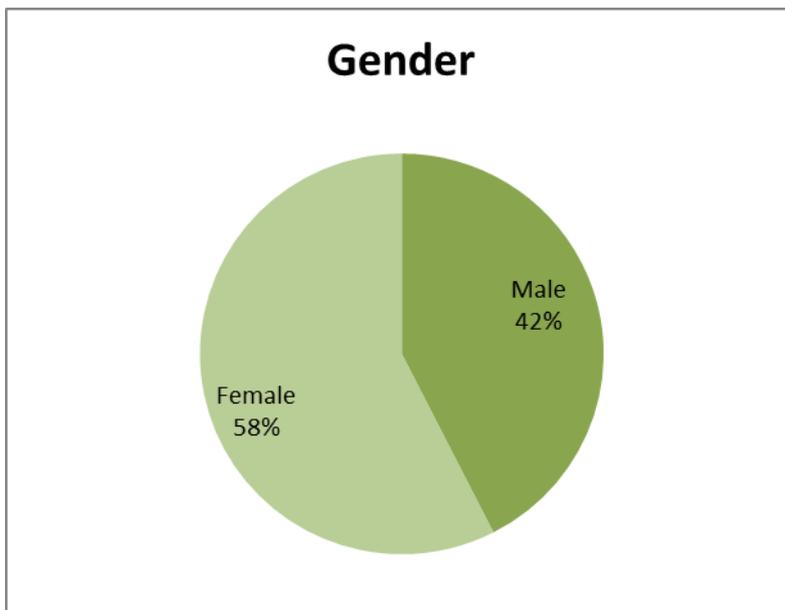


TABLE 4.2- 1 GENDER TABLE DATA

	Frequency	Percentage
Female	69	58%
Male	51	42%

Grand Total	120	100.00%
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Based on the figure above, majority of the respondents fall under the 20-29 age groups, at 46%. This is followed by the 30-39 age groups at 31% of the respondents. 20% of the respondents fall under the 40 and above age group while 3% fall under the below 19 age category. The age distribution data is presented by figure 4.2 and table 4.2 below.

FIGURE 4.2- 2 AGE DISTRIBUTION DATA PIE CHART

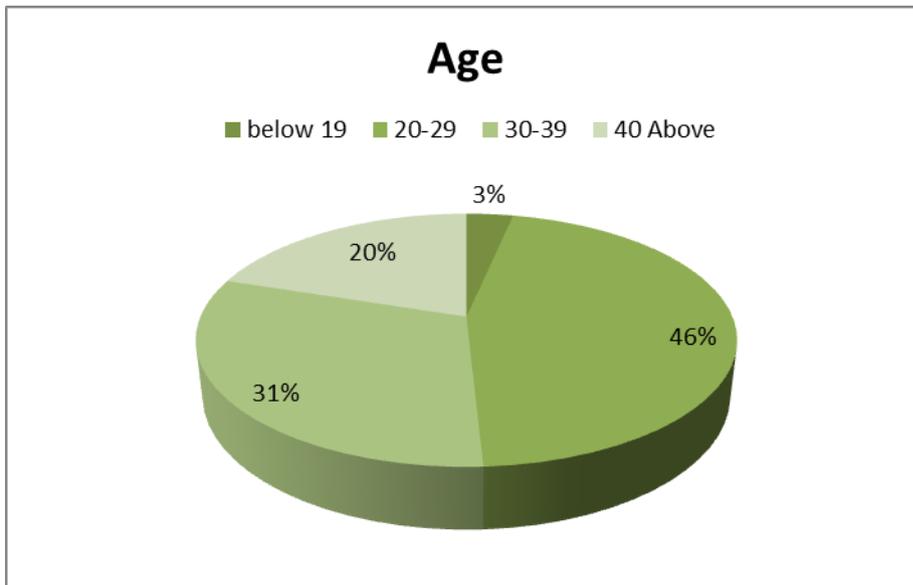


TABLE 4.2- 2 AGE DISTRIBUTION DATA TABLE

	Frequency	Percentage
Below 19	4	3%
20-29	55	46%
30-39	37	31%

40+	24 (NT MORE DEN 4 TO 5 PPL OF 40+ AGE)	20%
Grand Total	120	100.00%

The highest percentage of participants' o the study had higher than a Bachelor's while 28% were those with lower a Bachelors at 28%. 25% of the participants had a bachelor's level of education. The following is the representation of level of education data by figures below.

TABLE 4.2- 3 DISTRIBUTION OF LEVEL OF EDUCATION

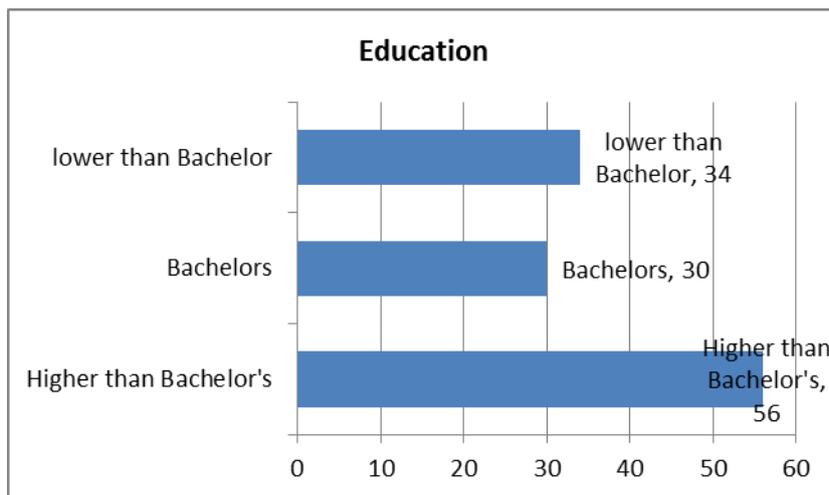


TABLE 4.2- 4 DISTRIBUTION OF LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's	30	25%
Lower than Bachelor's	34	28%

Higher than Bachelor's	56	47%
Grand Total	120	100.00%

98% of the participants reported to have Facebook profiles while 2% of the participants reported that they did not have a Facebook profile. It is evident that majority of the participants in the study had Facebook profiles. Further, 56% of the participants reported that they logged on to Facebook more than once a day, 24% logged in on Facebook once a day while the rest logged in between once a week and once a month. It is evident that more than half of the sampled population logged on to Facebook more than once a day. This suggests that these respondents have the best chances of actually seeing brand creation activities in Facebook by various companies. They would also indicate a great chance of building brand image and develop the brand in the minds of the consumers.

The survey revealed that 58% of the participants were on Facebook between 0 to 30 minutes while the rest used between 31 minutes to more than an hour. This is a clear indication that a small number of users use Facebook for more than 30 minutes at a time. This provides information for the brand managers that enlightening users on Facebook need to focus on the 1-30 minutes period that their advertisement is viewed within this time frame. The brand managers as such should concentrate on the length of time their advertisement is seen while the user is online.

The survey revealed that Facebook advertising was very popular with the participant with the respondents citing to follow a number of brands. Following and liking a certain product allowed the students to recommend the products of these products to their friends on

Facebook. In this case, the participant started acting as the brand advocate of a particular company. It is the aim and objective of brand managers and advertisers to create and encourage brand awareness. Brand awareness has been argued to be the likelihood of the consumers to recognise the existence and availability of a company's product or a particular service.

The participants of the study revealed that one common form of brand awareness used on Facebook is through social ads. For example, if user friends are a fan of a particular brand on Facebook, the advertisement itself will include the name of those friends. This form of endorsement to a brand has an impact on and plays a major role in the effectiveness of Facebook advertising. In this case, the friends of the fans of the brands can be considered as the brand advocates. There is a high tendency of Facebook users to be eligible if one of their friends has previously become a fan of the brand which is running the advertisement. These social impressions carry an added layer of influence. This can be achieved by naming which of the user's friends already have a relationship with the brand and will be correlated to the size of the brand's fan base even before the element of advertisement is put in. The social advertisements are in the middle ground between getting to the direct profile homepage advertisements and the effect of the effective messages and achieving buy in consumers. Majority of the business have a homepage advertisement however there are some things which cannot be bought. This for instance is the influence when a consumer sees a list of his or her friend featured as a fan on the social advertisement.

The study revealed that there is a high brand loyalty which is created in the social arena such as Facebook. However, this brand loyalty cannot be purchased and can only be gained through user engagement and the interactions between the users and the brand. In depth analysis illustrate that not all the companies and organisations gave undertaken much understanding on why they are on Facebook. Most have come to realise that Facebook is a

effective area to promote their businesses but have not really understood the need to be active and to engage with the users in a dialogue. Facebook is among of the most popular social networking site in the western world as well as other parts of the world.

Due to the many Facebook profiles developed by institutions not serving the role they could be serving, there is a need to analyse and offer recommendations to these companies. Facebook profiles created by corporations should be used to connect with their consumers and fans as well as ensure that they build long lasting relationships with them. In this environment, the corporations will have a better understanding of the preferences of their consumers as well as provide an opportunity for the consumers to communicate their needs and demand to the corporations. It has been a common site to get a Facebook page created by a corporation lacking direction and the profile appearing dead as there has been a lack of interaction on it for months (Holzner, 2009).

It is as such important for the brand managers to ensure that they are full and constantly engaged with the users in Facebook. As this loyalty cannot be bought, it can only be created through direct interactions with the fans and users of Facebook. Many organisations have come to appreciate the role played by Facebook in brand creation. However, it is evident that realizing that user engagement and interactions between the users and the brands is the way forward to creating brand loyalty to goods and services being offered by the companies and organisations.

4.4. Summary of Results

Social media is a platform emerges for developing social networks and relations among people. Such networking and social relations enable people to express their views, share interests, activities, connections, associations and many more. It is kind of web based interactive platform allowing users to interact through internet in the form of email or instant

messaging. The users are accessing social media sites for connecting with their friends, communities, relatives, etc instantly and cost-effectively (Zarrella 2009). Due to this, users across the world are depicting high interest towards social media sites and accessing such sites at regular intervals. As a result, users are flooded with large number of social media sites in the past few decades providing them new and creative avenues for interacting and conversing with each other. Facebook is one such American based social media platform growing tremendously and popularly in recent years. The customisation of user interface, installing applications, extended capability of personalising users experience, etc are some of the features making Facebook as a growing online social platform. The statistics showed that around 750 million people across the world are using Facebook for connecting with their friends, colleagues, and classmates. In present years, users are also connecting with the products, services, businesses appearing interesting to them on the Facebook apart from connecting with their friends.

In this regard, the Facebook has developed and introduced social plug-in which include Like, Share and Follow to add new line of code in the social media world. The social plug-in has leveraged the power and dominance of Facebook exponentially as companies are using such social plug-in for developing solutions over the social web. In detailed terms, business firms are driving existing and prospective customers towards their products, services and solutions with the help of social plug-in. The Like option is considered as one of the most widely used and recognised social plug-in by the business firms for measuring impact, ascertaining popularity, and optimising product awareness in the marketplace. The social plug-in are used by the business firms as word of mouth publicity mechanism and for encouraging existing as well as prospective customers to go through the product and evaluate it once (Evans 2010). As such the social plug-in i.e. Like, Share and Follow on the Facebook specifically by the

students of Westminster University illustrate that business and in particular brand managers need to invest more in the use of Facebook as a brand creation tool as it is highly effective.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The main objective of the thesis was to investigate the effect of using Facebook as a brand creation tool amongst students of Westminster University UK. It had the aim of helping companies find out how Facebook can be used as a tool to build stronger brands and better brand consumer relationships. Issues such as media fragmentation as well as technologically savvy consumers have posed new challenges to marketers and brand builders. Students at Westminster University in the UK are a good example of technologically survey consumers and as such the selection to conduct the study in the university.

The emergence of social media has given increased power to the consumers and has forced the marketers to develop new techniques to communicate and develop brands with the consumers. When done right, social media marketing is very effective and extremely

powerful in creating favourable brand associations. Traditional branding theory illustrates that strong brands have a set of assets which helps add their brand equity. These include high name recall, a loyal consumer base and positive associations with them. Marketing communications are very crucial in creating brand awareness and powerful brand consumer relationships. However, the marketing communicating framework has changed from the one way top to down approach to a bottom up and two way process. Modern branding theories argue that consumers are tired of being passive and are eager to participate, give opinions and act as co creators and advocates for the brand.

Facebook is one of the social media platforms which marketers have turned to in trying to reach out to their consumers. Brand builders should as such focus on developing communities in Facebook which give consumers experience. It will also help them to seek consumer opinion and experiences from peers about their brand. By engaging consumers in a dialogue within the online community, it will provide a great source of feedback for the brand as well as create a valuable experience for the consumer. The consumer will be able to get information, request information and interact with other consumers about the brand. This will help in strengthening the brand relationship. An active Facebook fan page will also be a symbol of a strong and loyal consumer base which will make the brand to be attractive to new customers. The role of the marketer in the Facebook page will be to engage the users in a dialogue. The dialogue will bring the consumers closer to the brand. It is important for the marketers to conduct a social media strategy before engaging in social media marketing. Facebook as such is an adequate platform to form brand communities and create as well as develop brand loyalty and awareness. Companies should as such invest in using Facebook as a tool for brand creation.

5.2. Recommendations

Business managers and brand managers need to realise the effectiveness of using Facebook as a tool for brand creation. However, it is important to not only realise its relevance but the most effective way of ensuring brand creation and increasing its effectiveness. As established in the study, brand loyalty through social media cannot be purchased and it is left to the company's engagement to the users and their interaction. It is important as such for a company to ensure that it has an online presence by making sure that its Facebook page is well structured and that it enables a direct communication between the company and the fans. For the fan page, it is important for the brand managers to ensure that it is written in a language and structure which will increase its fan page and customer base. The fan page should also provide informative content which is relevant to the fans. For instance, information on new product and services or plans of opening a new office should be communicated to the fans. Further, it is important for the company to make an effort to involve the customers in a dialogue. For instance, the company can ask the fans to share their experiences, tell their stories on their interaction with the company and come up with new ideas on the products and services. This will ensure that the company is offering information, goods and services which the customers demand. This can only be achieved by interacting with the customers and engaging them to open up to the company.

It is also important for the marketers to accept that they cannot control the conversations going on in Facebook. As such instead of focusing on control, the company should invest in building trust with its customers and fans. It is important to ensure that authentic relationships are created with the customers who are on Facebook. At times, there will be members who will post negative comments about the brand and it is important as a marketer to know how to handle them. The company should not try to stifle the negative comments. By positively and actively engaging with an audience, they can come in handy when negative comments are posted and can step up to the company's defence

6.0. REFERENCES

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