Mediating The Relationship Between Social Media Marketing Features And Consumers' Decisions To Buy Fast Food; An Investigation

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The current study has investigated the relationship between Job Satisfaction and their effect on organizational citizenship behavior among college faculties. The data were collected from 189 respondents from different colleges in Tamil Nadu. Job Satisfaction is positively associated with all the dimensions of OCB by the faculties of the colleges. Therefore, it was suggested that colleges should facilitate the process leading to Job satisfaction, so that staffs are better engaged in additional role behavior resulting in improved single and organizational effectiveness. **KEYWORDS:** Job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, college faculties, Tamil Nadu.

Introduction

The primary objectives of the study is to explore how social media marketing activities contribute to increased brand awareness and brand loyalty among consumers within the fast food industry. Given the pervasive influence of social media platforms in contemporary society, understanding the efficacy of social media marketing strategies is paramount for businesses seeking to maintain a competitive edge in the market. Hadi and Zainol (2018)[7] the authors seek to discern the extent to which social media marketing influences consumers' decisions when it comes to fast food consumption[5]. The study employs a quantitative research approach, likely utilizing survey methods to gather data from consumers regarding their exposure to social media marketing campaigns by fast food companies and subsequent purchasing decisions. By examining various variables related to SMM, such as the frequency of exposure to social media advertisements, engagement with branded content, and perceptions of brand image and reputation on social media platforms, the authors aim to elucidate the impact of these factors on consumer preferences and purchasing behavior [7]. The research may reveal those consumers who are exposed to frequent and engaging social media advertisements are more likely to develop positive perceptions of fast food brands and exhibit a greater propensity to purchase from these brands.

Evolution of Social Media Marketing

Over the years, brands like McDonald's, KFC, and Taco Bell have leveraged platforms to engage with their target audience in creative and impactful ways. From launching viral marketing campaigns to offering exclusive promotions and behind-the-scenes glimpses, fast-food chains have utilized SMM to cultivate brand loyalty and stay relevant in an increasingly competitive market. SMM in the fast-food industry encompasses a wide range of features and strategies tailored to capture the attention of digital-savvy consumers [1]. These include visually appealing content such as mouth-watering food photography and eye-catching videos,

interactive elements such as polls, quizzes, and challenges, influencer partnerships to reach new audiences, and real-time engagement through comments, messages, and live streams. Moreover, brands often employ data analytics and targeting capabilities to personalize content and deliver tailored experiences to consumers based on their preferences and behaviors [11].

Impact on Consumer Behavior:
Social media serves as a virtual storefront where consumers can discover new menu items, read reviews, and share their dining experiences with friends and followers [3]. Furthermore, the viral nature of social media allows brands to amplify their messaging and reach a wider audience, driving foot traffic to brick-and-mortar locations and boosting online orders.. By focusing on charity organizations, the study fills a crucial gap in the literature concerning the specific context of nonprofit entities. The findings of the study shed light on how charity social media marketing efforts influence the perception of the charity brand among potential donors. Additionally, the research explores the role of social media in fostering trust between charity organizations and their stakeholders. Furthermore, the study investigates how these factors ultimately impact individuals' intentions to donate to charitable causes. Bilgin and Kethuda (2022) [3].

Social media marketing; quantitative research
The study explored various dimensions of social media marketing, including the frequency of exposure to social media advertisements, engagement with branded content, and perceptions of brand image and reputation on social media platforms. Khatri and Vaswani's (2018) [11] study adopts a quantitative research approach, likely utilizing survey methods to collect data from consumers regarding their exposure to social media marketing efforts and subsequent purchase intentions. These variables are examined in relation to consumers' purchase intentions, providing insights into the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies in driving consumer behavior. Brand equity encompasses consumers' perceptions of a brand's value, reputation, and overall appeal, and plays a crucial role in shaping their purchasing decisions.

Objectives:
1. To examine the extent of adoption and utilization of social media marketing (SMM) techniques by fast-food companies.
2. To explore the role of SMM in shaping consumer perceptions of fast-food brands and influencing their purchase decisions.
3. To investigate the effectiveness of different SMM strategies in enhancing brand engagement and loyalty among fast-food consumers.
4. To identify challenges and opportunities associated with the integration of SMM into fast-food marketing strategies.
5. To provide recommendations for fast-food brands on optimizing their SMM efforts to achieve marketing objectives and drive business growth.

Methodology, Analysis, Presentation and Results
The effectiveness of SMM features in influencing consumers' decisions to buy fast food depends on a combination of factors such as content relevance, brand reputation, engagement strategies, incentives, personalization, and convenience. Fast food companies that understand and leverage these factors effectively can build stronger connections with consumers and drive sales growth through social media platforms. Quantitative data may be collected through surveys distributed to fast-food consumers to assess their perceptions and behaviors related to SMM. Analyze the social media presence of selected fast-food brands across various platforms to identify common themes, trends, and engagement strategies. This may involve examining the type of content posted, frequency of posts and interaction with followers. The research investigated possible moderating variables that impact the correlation between social media marketing and customer purchase choices, including demographic traits, brand loyalty, and individual preferences. The essay is likely to provide significant insights for fast food firms and marketers that want to successfully utilize social media platforms to interact with customers, increase brand recognition, and boost sales. By comprehending the subtle distinctions in customer behavior in reaction to social media marketing endeavors, organizations may formulate more focused and influential marketing tactics to augment their competitiveness in the fast food sector.

Table 1: **Features influencing consumers' decisions to buy fast food**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank
Accessibility	2.85	1.137	4.73
Brand Reputation and Trust	3.10	1.079	4.86
Content Relevance	2.88	1.117	5.00
Quality	3.08	1.132	5.01
Convenience	2.79	1.082	4.41
Incentives	3.17	1.079	5.27

Interactivity and Engagement	2.60	.990	3.80
Personalization	3.53	1.008	5.99
Promotions	3.50	1.079	6.15
Social Proof	2.01	0.082	3.41
Visual Appeal	3.33	0.079	5.66

Personalization: (5.99) Tailoring social media marketing efforts to individual consumer preferences and behavior can enhance their relevance and effectiveness. Personalized recommendations, targeted advertisements, and customized offers based on consumer demographics, interests, and past purchase history can increase engagement and influence purchase decisions. Visual Appeal: (5.66) Visual content such as images and videos are highly effective in driving engagement on social media platforms. High-quality visuals showcasing delicious food items and enticing promotions can stimulate consumers' appetite and desire to purchase fast food. Content Relevance and Quality: (5.01 and 5.00) The relevance and quality of the content shared on social media platforms play a significant role in influencing consumers' decisions to buy fast food. Engaging and informative content that resonates with the target audience can capture consumers' attention and encourage them to consider purchasing from a particular fast food brand. Incentives and Promotions: (5.27) Offering exclusive discounts, deals, and promotions to social media followers can incentivize them to choose a particular fast food brand over competitors.. Brand Reputation and Trust: (4.86) Consumers' perceptions of a fast food brand's reputation and trustworthiness can impact their willingness to engage with the brand on social media and ultimately make purchase decisions. Engagement (3.80) Social media platforms provide opportunities for two-way communication between fast food brands and consumers.. Social Proof: (3.41) Social proof refers to the influence of others' behavior on an individual's own decisions. Convenience and Accessibility: (4.41) Social media marketing can also influence consumers' decisions to buy fast food by highlighting the convenience and accessibility of ordering options such as online delivery, mobile ordering, and drive-thru services. Promoting fast and hassle-free ordering experiences through social media platforms can attract busy consumers seeking quick and convenient meal solutions.

Table 2: Test Statistics

N	200
Kendall's W	0.076
Chi-Square	366.457
df	10
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

The Kendall's W test in the table above indicates that the ranking result is statistically significant. The Chi-Square value (366.457) estimated for 10 degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the 1% level (p < 0.000).

Age

Age significantly impacts social media marketing features and consumers' decisions to buy fast food. Younger generations, particularly Generation Z are more immersed in social media platforms and are often influenced by features such as targeted ads, influencer endorsements, and interactive content.

Table 3 Age and satisfaction

Age	Level of Satisfaction			Total
	Less	Moderate	High	
Less than 35	30	36	30	96
	31.3%	37.5%	31.3%	100.0%
35-45 years	16	26	6	48
	33.3%	54.2%	12.5%	100.0%
More than 45 Years	11	29	16	56
	19.6%	51.8%	28.6%	100.0%
Total	57	91	52	200
	48.0%	24.0%	28.0%	100.0%

It can be inferred that the biggest percentage (31.3%) of respondents with a high degree of satisfaction belonged to the age group of younger than 35. The highest percentage of respondents with a low level of satisfaction was observed among those in the 35-45 age categories (54.2%), while the lowest percentage (33.3%) was found among respondents older than 45 years. The investigation revealed that the age group with the highest level of satisfaction among respondents is 35-45 years. To determine the correlation between the age of the participants and their degree of satisfaction, a Chi-square test was conducted. The resulting data is presented in the following table.

Table 4 Age and satisfaction

Test	χ²	df	CC	Sig.
Result	2.152	4	0.067	0.759

Based on the table provided, it is evident that the calculated chi-square value (2.152) is lower than the table value, indicating that the result is statistically insignificant at a 5% significance level. Therefore, the statement "Age of the respondents and level of satisfaction are not associated" is acknowledged as valid. These characteristics have a pivotal role in influencing their perceptions and decisions about the intake of fast food. Younger customers are more susceptible to the influence of visually captivating food commercials and captivating promotional initiatives on platforms. The older age groups may depend more on conventional advertising platforms or suggestions through personal communication. Hence, comprehending the inclinations and actions of diverse age demographics is vital for formulating efficacious social media marketing tactics inside the fast food sector.

Gender
Gender also plays a significant role in influencing social media marketing features and consumers' decisions to buy fast food. Marketers often tailor their advertising strategies to target specific genders based on perceived preferences and interests.

Table 5 Gender and Satisfaction

Gender	Level of Satisfaction			Total
	Less	Moderate	High	
Male	29	45	37	111
	26.1%	40.5%	33.3%	100.0%
Female	28	46	15	89
	31.5%	51.7%	16.9%	100.0%
Total	57	91	52	200
	28.5%	45.5%	26.0%	100.0%

It was found from the analysis that the maximum level of satisfaction was by female (51.7%) respondents. Research suggests that men and women may respond differently to advertising approaches, with factors such as health consciousness, convenience, and taste preferences influencing their fast food purchasing decisions. Therefore, understanding the nuances of gender dynamics is essential for creating effective SMM campaigns in the fast food industry that resonate with diverse consumer groups.

Table 6 Chi-square test

Test	χ²	df	CC	Sig.
Result	1.742	2	0.078	0.561

According to the data in the table, there is no statistical significance (at the 5% level of significance) in the calculated Chi-Square value for the 2 degrees of freedom. Below 1, we get the CC value of 0.078. Therefore, the null hypothesis that was presented is confirmed to be valid. It may be inferred that the pleasure of the respondents is not influenced by their gender. Advertisements featuring traditionally masculine or feminine imagery may resonate more with male or female audiences, respectively. Moreover, influencer endorsements and promotional campaigns often leverage gender stereotypes to appeal to different demographic segments. Additionally, the type of content and messaging used in SMM can vary based on gender demographics.

Implications of the study
The implications of integrating social media marketing (SMM) into the fast-food industry are profound and far-reaching. The power of social media platforms, fast-food brands can significantly enhance their marketing effectiveness, customer engagement, and overall brand performance. Through interactive content, real-time engagement, and influencer partnerships, brands can create immersive experiences that resonate with consumers and differentiate themselves in a crowded market. Moreover, SMM allows for precise targeting and customization of marketing messages, enabling brands to tailor their promotions. This not only maximizes the impact of marketing efforts but also optimizes return on investment by minimizing wastage. Social media serves as a valuable source of feedback and insights, enabling brands to gather real-time data on consumer sentiment, trends, and preferences. By listening to their audience and adapting their strategies accordingly, fast-food companies can stay agile and responsive to changing market dynamics. However, the integration of SMM also presents challenges, such as maintaining authenticity, managing crises, and navigating the complexities of online reputation management. Therefore, it is essential for fast-food brands to approach social media marketing strategically, with a clear understanding of their objectives, target audience, and competitive landscape. Ultimately, by embracing SMM as an integral component of their marketing mix, fast-food brands can unlock new avenues for growth, innovation, and success in the digital age.

Conclusion

Social media marketing has become an indispensable tool for fast-food brands seeking to engage with consumers, drive sales, and stay ahead of the competition. By harnessing the power of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, brands can create compelling content, foster meaningful connections with their audience, and ultimately, influence purchase decisions. However, success in social media marketing requires a strategic approach, a deep understanding of consumer behavior, and a willingness to adapt to changing trends and technologies. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, fast-food brands must remain agile and innovative to capitalize on the vast opportunities afforded by SMM. While social media marketing offers numerous benefits for fast-food brands, it also presents its fair share of challenges. Chief among these is the need to maintain authenticity and transparency in an era of heightened scrutiny and consumer skepticism. Brands must navigate issues such as negative feedback, controversies, and crises with tact and sensitivity to preserve their reputation and credibility. Additionally, the rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms requires brands to stay agile and adapt their strategies to keep pace with changing trends and consumer preferences. The role of SMM in the fast-food industry is poised to expand further as technology continues to advance and consumer behavior evolves. Emerging trends such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and immersive experiences offer exciting possibilities for brands to create engaging content and enhance the customer journey. Moreover, the rise of social commerce presents new avenues for fast-food brands to drive sales directly through social media platforms, blurring the lines between marketing and e-commerce. By staying attuned to these developments and embracing a customer-centric approach, fast-food brands can continue to thrive in an increasingly digital-centric world.

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