



User Generated Contents in Digital Media – A Study on Customer Perception

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ABSTRACT: User generated contents are any type of contents which are created and shared by the customers voluntarily through any digital platforms from their experiences with the product or service. User generated contents make positive or negative impact to the business. So user generated content acts as both opportunity and challenge to the business. In this study the researcher is aimed to study the customer's perception on user generated contents in digital media. Both primary and secondary data are used. Primary data are collected from 26 males and 24 female respondents. Primary data is analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent sample t test and one way ANOVA. The results of the study revealed that respondents are perceived that user generated contents are reliable, informative, builds trust, helps to take purchase decisions, user generated contents are authentic and relevant. And this study also tested the influence of demographic factors like gender and age on the perception of customers on user generated contents on digital media.

KEYWORDS: Customer perception, Digital media; User generated content.

INTRODUCTION

Customers in the digital generation are interested to explore the digital media while taking their purchase decisions. They start with identifying their needs and end with post-purchase behavior by sharing their opinions in the digital media publicly. Increase in the internet connectivity, use of smart devices, and explosion of social media enhanced the significance of customer's role in digital media. Customers share their opinions on their experiences with the brand publicly in digital media with different intentions. Those intentions may be to help other customers in taking their purchase decisions, express their dissatisfaction. It changed the ordinary customers to content creators with or without earning monetary benefits. Customers act as creators, critics, collectors, joiners and spectators simultaneously by creating, publishing, sharing and connecting the contents in the digital media.

Increased role of digital media changed the social communications and social behaviors. Traditional inter personal communication transformed to technology aided inter personal communication. Changes happened in this area raised the significance of user generated contents. Customers in the digital generation prefer more authentic contents to traditional video advertisements. It enhanced the significance perception of customers on user generated contents.

(Ozuem, Pinho, & Azemi, 2016) conducted a macro level study on user generated content and perceived customer value and argued that now a days values are derived from the personal experiences of the consumers. Customers can freely express their opinion as self-reflective and can produce wide range of self-generated contents through digital media. The findings of the study shows that that customer generated contents have an influence on the perceived customer value and customer decision making process.

(Kim, Jin, Kim, & Namchu, 2012) identified three quality dimensions of user generated contents are content, design and technology and categorized user generated content value into functional value, emotional value and social value. The researcher evaluated the standard model fit with Normal chi-square, Goodness of fit index, Normal fit index, Comparative fit index and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. The results can be inferred that the quality factors of user generated contents are positively influenced by the functional, emotional and social values of contents. And functional and emotional values are significantly contributed to user generated contents utility.

As user generated content is a significant part in the new knowledge society. This study is intended to examine the perception of customers on the user generated contents in digital media.



OBJECTIVES

1. To study the perception of customers on user generated contents.
2. To analyze the influence of gender on perception of customers on user generated contents.
3. To examine the influence of age on perception of customers on user generated contents.

METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data are used in this study. Primary data are collected from 50 sample respondents through questionnaire. Sample respondents are selected using purposive sampling technique. Customers are actively participating in the digital media are included in the sample. Reliability of the variables in the questionnaire are tested and ensured using cronbach alpha. Responses are recorded in a 7 point scale, ranging from strongly agree-7 to strongly disagree-1. Descriptive analysis, Independent Samples T Test and Oneway ANOVA are applied to analyze the data. Secondary data are collected from various published sources.

DIGITAL MEDIA

Digital media is a new generation mass media used to create and share different types of contents through the use of digital devices which are connected through internet. Digital media opened numerous opportunities and also caused some challenges to the marketers. User generated contents are the products of digital media and act as both opportunity and challenge. Marketers can be benefited with favorable user generated contents and at the same time marketers need to be very cautious with the unfavorable user generated contents and take necessary measures to change the unfavorable to favorable contents. Digital media platforms include websites, social media, search engines etc.

USER GENERATED CONTENTS

User generated contents refers to any type of contents like reviews, comments, feedbacks, blogs, images, videos etc. which are created and shared by customers through digital media. User generated contents are based on customer's personal experiences with the products. It includes both positive and negative opinions. User generated contents are also termed as electronic word of mouth. Unlimited contents from the customers can be accessed by any one from anywhere at any time. User generated contents are more memorable and influential than the advertisements created by brand. Customer's electronic word of mouth helps the marketer to build and maintain an online present. So the user generated contents are cost-efficient branding method. It can also contribute to the search engine optimization efforts of the marketer. On the other hand Marketer should be very cautious to the unfavorable user generated contents.

User generated contents can be paid or organic. Paid user generated contents refers to those contents which are created purposefully by the marketer with the help of some social media influencers. On the other hand organic user generated contents are created by the customers based on their experiences with the product, which are not purposefully created.

User generated contents may be texts, images, videos or audios, Which are published as social media posts, influencer campaigns, user reviews, comments, ratings, rankings, product reviews, blogs, live streams, testimonials, you tube contents etc. User generated contents are also termed as consumer created contents, because consumers or the end users are create such contents to express their high satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the products.

CUSTOMER PERCEPTION

Customer perception refers to how a customer feels or thinks about a particular item. Perception is derived from awareness, experience and feelings. In this study Customer perception on user generated content is considered. It refers to how a customer aware, feel and think about the contents available in the digital media created by the consumers. It is important for a marketer to consider how the customers look on other's opinions about a product and how they react to it.



DISCUSSIONS, DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Sample Demographics

Table 1

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	26	52
Female	24	48
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 2

Age	Frequency	Percentage
<25	17	34.0
26-35	20	40.0
36-45	9	18.0
>45	4	8.0
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Sample respondents includes 52% males and 48% females and 34% of respondents are in the age category of less than 25, 40% are in between 26 and 35, 18% are included in the age category of 36 to 45. Only 8% of the respondents are from the age category of more than 45.

1. To study the perception of customers on user generated contents.

Descriptive Statistics on Perception of Customers User Generated Contents

Table 3

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
User generated contents are reliable.	50	5.5200	1.16479
User generated contents are informative.	50	5.3800	1.22708
User generated contents build trust.	50	5.3200	1.15069
User generated contents helps to take purchase decisions.	50	5.3000	1.47427
User generated contents are authentic	50	5.1200	1.27199
User generated contents are relevant	50	5.0200	1.26958

Source: Primary data

Interpretation

Table 3 on shows the descriptive statistics on perception of customers on user generated contents. Respondents are perceived that user generated contents are reliable, informative, build trust and helps the customers to take purchase decisions, And the respondents are also perceived that user generated contents are authentic and relevant.



2. To analyze the influence of gender on perception of customers on user generated contents.

H0 : Gender does not significantly influence on perception of customers on user generated contents.

H1 : Gender significantly influences on perception of customers on user generated contents.

Independent Samples t –Test on gender influences on perception of customers on user generated contents.

Table 4

		F	Sig.	t	df
User generated contents are reliable.	Equal variances assumed	.114	.737	.356	48
	Equal variances not assumed			.360	46.819
User generated contents are informative.	Equal variances assumed	1.248	.270	-.201	48
	Equal variances not assumed			-.204	44.135
User generated contents build trust.	Equal variances assumed	.003	.959	-.078	48
	Equal variances not assumed			-.078	47.540
User generated contents helps to take purchase decisions.	Equal variances assumed	6.172	.017	-.920	48
	Equal variances not assumed			-.938	41.428
User generated contents are authentic	Equal variances assumed	1.500	.227	-.026	48
	Equal variances not assumed			-.026	46.194
User generated contents are relevant	Equal variances assumed	2.289	.137	.327	48
	Equal variances not assumed			.323	42.500

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

Results of independent sample t test reveals that there is no significant difference on perception of customers on user generated contents among males and females except the fact that there is a significant difference on the perception that user generated contents helps to take purchase decisions. Since the p value of all variables except user generated contents helps to take purchase decisions are greater than the significance level 0.05.

3. To examine the influence of age on perception of customers on user generated contents.

H0 : Age does not significantly influence on perception of customers on user generated contents.

H1 : Age significantly influences on perception of customers on user generated contents.



One way ANOVA on age influences on perception of customers on user generated contents

Table 3

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
User generated contents are reliable.	Between Groups	5.165	3	1.722	1.292	.289
	Within Groups	61.315	46	1.333		
	Total	66.480	49			
User generated contents are informative.	Between Groups	9.733	3	3.244	2.330	.087
	Within Groups	64.047	46	1.392		
	Total	73.780	49			
User generated contents build trust.	Between Groups	14.500	3	4.833	4.413	.008
	Within Groups	50.380	46	1.095		
	Total	64.880	49			
User generated contents helps to take purchase decisions.	Between Groups	13.079	3	4.360	2.147	.107
	Within Groups	93.421	46	2.031		
	Total	106.500	49			
User generated contents are authentic	Between Groups	15.866	3	5.289	3.836	.016
	Within Groups	63.414	46	1.379		
	Total	79.280	49			
User generated contents are relevant	Between Groups	2.701	3	.900	.543	.655
	Within Groups	76.279	46	1.658		
	Total	78.980	49			

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

Results of oneway ANOVA shows that p value of all other variables except user generated contents builds trust and user generated contents are authentic are more than significance level (0.05). So it can be inferred that age is not significantly influences the perception that user generated contents are reliable, user generated contents are informative, user generated contents helps to take purchase decisions and relevant. But age is significantly influences the perception that user generated contents build trust and user generated contents are authentic.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the perception of customers on user generated contents. And the analysis revealed that Majority of the customers are perceived that user generated contents are reliable, informative, build trust and helps the customers to take purchase decisions and user generated contents are authentic and relevant. The demographic factor gender is a significantly influences in the perception that user generated contents helps to take purchase decisions among males and females. All other cases gender is not significantly influences. There is no significant difference in the perception that user generated contents are reliable, user generated contents are informative, user generated contents helps to take purchase decisions and relevant among all age groups. Marketers should take necessary actions to maintain favorable user generated contents in the digital media. Future research can be conducted on influence of user generated contents on purchase decision of customers.



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