



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	ANTECEDENTS OF WORK-LIFE IMBALANCE AMONG BANK EXECUTIVES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>S. NAZEER KHAN, DR. A. VENKATACHALAM & DR. T. VANNIARAJAN</i>	1
2.	TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE ON OCCUPATIONAL COMMITMENT IN INDIAN HOSPITALS <i>DR. KENNEDY ANDREW THOMAS, DR. JOHN BRINKMAN & DR. TARA SABAPATHY</i>	6
3.	SERVICE QUALITY PERCEPTIONS OF CUSTOMERS: A STUDY OF THE CUSTOMERS' OF PUBLIC SECTOR AND PRIVATE SECTOR COMMERCIAL BANKS IN INDIA <i>K. RAMA MOHANA RAO & TEKESTE BERHANU LAKEW</i>	13
4.	SELF-ESTEEM AMONG POOR STUDENTS IN IRAN <i>ARMIN MAHMOUDI</i>	17
5.	ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION DRIVERS OF OUT PATIENT DEPARTMENT (OPD): A CASE STUDY <i>GOLAM MOHAMMAD FORKAN</i>	20
6.	PERCEIVED QUALITY OF SERVICES RENDERED BY COMMERCIAL BANKS: A CASE STUDY OF STATE BANK OF INDIA (SBI), PANJAB UNIVERSITY (PU) BRANCH, CHANDIGARH, INDIA <i>DR. TEFATSION SAHLU DESTA</i>	25
7.	BANK CONSOLIDATION AND SOLVENCY: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE <i>DR. MUHAMMAD AMINU ISA</i>	35
8.	ORGANIZATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF FIRM PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF GARMENTS MANUFACTURING FIRMS OF LAHORE, PAKISTAN <i>MUHAMMAD HASSAN & MUHAMMAD RIZWAN SALEEM SANDHU</i>	38
9.	MICROCREDIT AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF MFI FINANCE ENTERPRISES <i>ABIOLA BABAJIDE & TAIWO JOSEPH</i>	43
10.	CREDIT RISK OF THE OFF-BALANCE SHEET ACTIVITIES IN CONTEXT OF COMMERCIAL BANKING SECTOR IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: PRACTICAL EXAMPLE <i>VERONIKA BUČKOVÁ</i>	50
11.	PERCEPTION, EXPECTATION AND SATISFACTION OF CONSUMERS OF STORE BRAND APPARELS IN CHENNAI CITY <i>K. SADASIVAN & DR. JAYSHREE SURESH</i>	59
12.	THE RELATIVITY OF GOALS OF AN INDIVIDUAL ENTREPRENEUR BLESSED WITH VALUES <i>SHALINI SINGH & BHUPENDRA V. SINGH</i>	63
13.	CO-INTEGRATION AND CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GDP AND AGRICULTURE SECTOR <i>P. SRIKANTH & K. SATHYANARAYANA</i>	66
14.	CONSUMERS' RESPONSIVENESS TO INTERNET MARKETING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>SUBASH CHANDRA NATH & DR. MAHESWAR SAHU</i>	69
15.	JOB STRESS AT WORKPLACE: A STUDY OF STRESS LEVEL AMONG MANAGEMENT EDUCATORS <i>RASHMI GUPTA & DR. VILAS CHOPDE</i>	73
16.	STRATEGIES FOR CUSTOMER RETENTION & SATISFACTION IN RETAIL SECTOR <i>AJMER SINGH</i>	78
17.	WOMEN EMPOWERED OR DISEMPOWERED: SCENARIO IN PUNJAB <i>SANGEETA SINGH NAGAICH</i>	80
18.	PERCEPTION OF THE RETAIL INVESTORS TOWARDS INVESTMENT IN MUTUAL FUNDS IN PUDUCHERRY: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>D. KANDAVEL</i>	85
19.	JOB AND WEALTH CREATION THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP <i>HARESH BAROT & ARUN MENON</i>	88
20.	DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS <i>DR. SUSHMA SURI & MONU LAL</i>	91
21.	CSR- AN UMBILICAL CORD RELATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT <i>DR. F. ANDREW SJ</i>	95
22.	INNOVATIVE HR PRACTICES <i>MEGHANA J</i>	98
23.	EXTENSION EDUCATION APPROACHES OF HORTICULTURAL EXTENSION MARKETING: A VIEW <i>JABEEN ARA BEGUM</i>	103
24.	DISABILITY AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA <i>MD.HASANUZZAMAN & SHAZIA KHAN</i>	107
25.	COMPARATIVE ADVERTISEMENT AND INFRINGEMENT OF TRADEMARKS <i>GAURAV ARORA, GUNVEER KAUR, SUPRITHA PRODaturi & VINAYAK GUPTA</i>	111
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	115

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CONSUMERS' RESPONSIVENESS TO INTERNET MARKETING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The internet in its endeavour created a milestone in the way people attached with it. Starting from the ways of use and usage ability of a person, it becomes a part of necessity for surfing. This is the reasons why the perception of Individuals change over time for internet surfing. This study seeks to gain an insight into the perception of people surfing the net and email account users, towards internet advertising and their utility value in terms of impact on the purchase decision. Hence, the attempt was to explore consumers' responsiveness to internet marketing, considering the impact of demographic factors like gender, occupation.

KEYWORDS

Internet surfing, Demographics, gender, occupation, Consumer Perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

Research across a wide variety of fields has extensively studied the link between demographics and Internet use. This is just because of the explosion in the Internet use. Much attention has been paid to the demographic correlates of Internet use, which show that richer and more educated individuals are more likely to use the Internet than less educated and lower income individuals. As well, the Internet user is more likely to be male than female and is typically younger than the non-user.

The Internet can be applied by companies as an integral part of the modern marketing concept since it can be used to support the full range of organizational functions and processes that deliver products and services to customers and other key stakeholders. It is a powerful communications medium that can act as 'corporate glue' that integrates the different functional parts of the organization. It facilitates information management, which is now increasingly recognized as a critical marketing support tool to strategy formulation and implementation. The future role of the Internet should form part of the vision of a company since its future impact will be significant to most businesses.

If Internet marketing is to become integrated and fully established as a strategic marketing management tool, then the focus of attention needs to move towards understanding its broader applications within the total marketing process rather than just using it as a communication and selling tool. The danger for those currently considering developing Internet technology is that the focus of such involvement will be too narrow and the true power of the Internet and its potential contribution to the marketing process will be missed. There is a tendency amongst companies first using the Internet to restrict applications to promotion and selling rather than a relationship building and service delivery tool.

UNDERSTANDING MARKET DEMOGRAPHICS

The Internet can potentially be used to achieve each of the four strategic directions as follows:

- Market penetration: The Internet can be used to sell more existing products into existing markets.
- Market development: Here the Internet is used to sell into new markets, taking advantage of the low cost of advertising internationally without the necessity for a supporting sales infrastructure in the customers' country.
- Product development: New products or services are developed which can be delivered by the Internet.
- Diversification: In this sector, new products are developed which are sold into new markets.

PAST RESEARCH

Demographic factors have been widely studied in the context of Internet use (Hoffman & Novak, 1997). Many studies suggest high correlations between demographic variables and Internet use. Age, gender, education, and income have all received extensive attention of researchers interested in Internet use (GVU, 1999; Hoffman, Kolsbeek, & Novak, 1996). Both education and income have been found to be highly correlated with Internet use, providing the impetus to research on the digital divide (Hindman, 2000; Hoffman & Novak, 1997). (Katz and Aspden (1997)) pointed out that the Internet user was more educated and wealthier than the nonuser. Summarizing the research on the digital divide, Sparrow and Vedantham (1995) argued that "disparities exist in levels of access between rich and poor and between suburban and inner city residents" (p. 19).

The 10th GVU User Survey conducted in 1999 observed that Internet users are educated, with 87.8% having at least some college experience (GVU Survey, 1999). According to a report published by National Telecommunications and Information Administration in 1999, while 61.6% of those with a college degree used the Internet, only 6.6% of those with a high school degree or less used the Internet (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 1999). Similar positive effects of income on Internet use were observed. The average income of the Internet user in the 10th GVU User Survey was \$57,300 (GVU Survey, 1999).

Initial research conducted in the mid 1990s demonstrated that men were more likely than women to use the Internet (Anderson, Bikson, Law, & Mitchell, 1996; Times Mirror, 1994; Yankelovich Partners, 1996). However, the trend underwent a reversal in 2000 when Jupiter Media Matrix reported that the number of women using the Internet had surpassed the number of men (Pastore, 2001a). While women over 18 years of age comprised 40.9% of all Internet users, men over 18 comprised 39.8% of the user segment (Pastore, 2001a). Despite the greater number of women using the Internet, Pastore (2001a) reported that men spent 16% more time per month in 2001 using it than women. While the average man spent 10.5 hours on the Internet, the average woman spent almost nine hours on the Internet (Pastore, 2001a).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this research study is to gain an insight into the perception of people surfing the net and email account users, towards internet advertising and their utility value in terms of impact on the purchase decision. Hence we are attempting to explore consumers' responsiveness to internet marketing, taking into cognizance the impact of demographic factors like gender, occupation, etc.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The research design chosen for the study is conclusive. Our research is mainly based on a survey conducted by distribution of questionnaire.
Data Collection: Basically Primary ways of data collection has been carried out through a questionnaire with Likert Type of scale used. The variables used for this study was Gender and Occupation. The occupational natures of respondents were like Students, Businessmen, Service, Retired & Housewives.
Sampling: Random sampling method was used and the sample size taken for the study was 100.
Technique of Analysis: Quantitative techniques like One way ANOVAs, t-test were used for the Data Analysis where the level of significance was considered as 95%.

An attempt has been made to keep the sample fairly representative across the demographic variables by constructing quotas according to these factors e.g. age, gender, occupation. Almost 54% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 20 to 30 years and approximately 30% of the respondents belonged to the age group of more than 30 years. 30% of the respondents were students, 27% were in service, 14% were housewives and 29% were in business. 59.7% were males and 40.3% were females. Almost 85% of the respondents rated their usage of internet in the range of medium to high. 75% of the respondents used their email accounts primarily for personal communication.

HYPOTHESIS FRAMED

Hypothesis based on Occupation

Ho: There is no significant relation between different types of occupation on Internet marketing
Ha: There is significant relation between different types of occupation on Internet marketing

Hypothesis based on Gender

Ho: There is no significant difference between males & females mail Including Junk mail receivers
Ha: There is significant difference between male & females mail Including Junk mail receivers

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Gender: 1st Variable

Request Clicks

Descriptives

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male	80	1.8500	1.00	.15	1.52	2.17	1.00	5.00
Female	20	1.5000	.70	.22	.99	2.00	1.00	3.00
Total	100	1.7800	.95	.13	1.51	2.05	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.980	1	.980	1.079	.304
Within Groups	43.60	48	.908		
Total	44.58	49			

MARKETING RELATED MAILS

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male	80	2.8750	.96576	.15270	2.5661	3.1839	1.00	5.00
Female	20	3.0000	.81650	.25820	2.4159	3.5841	2.00	4.00
Total	100	2.9000	.93131	.13171	2.6353	3.1647	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.125	1	.125	.142	.708
Within Groups	42.375	48	.883		
Total	42.500	49			

CONVEY RELEVANT INFORMATION

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male	80	2.3250	.82858	.13101	2.0600	2.5900	1.00	4.00
Female	20	3.0000	.94281	.29814	2.3256	3.6744	2.00	5.00
Total	100	2.4600	.88548	.12523	2.2083	2.7117	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.645	1	3.645	5.031	.030
Within Groups	34.775	48	.724		
Total	38.420	49			

TAKE ACTION PERSUASION (PURCHASE)

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male	80	1.9000	.84124	.13301	1.6310	2.1690	1.00	4.00
Female	20	1.7000	.67495	.21344	1.2172	2.1828	1.00	3.00
Total	100	1.8600	.80837	.11432	1.6303	2.0897	1.00	4.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.320	1	.320	.485	.490
Within Groups	31.700	48	.660		
Total	32.020	49			

OCCUPATION: 2ND VARIABLE

Marketing related Mails:

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Student	36	2.8889	1.13183	.26678	2.3260	3.4517	1.00	5.00
Service	40	2.8500	.87509	.19568	2.4404	3.2596	1.00	4.00
Housewife	8	3.5000	.57735	.28868	2.5813	4.4187	3.00	4.00
Businessman	16	2.7500	.70711	.25000	2.1588	3.3412	2.00	4.00
Total	100	2.9000	.93131	.13171	2.6353	3.1647	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.672	3	.557	.628	.601
Within Groups	40.828	46	.888		
Total	42.500	49			

REQUEST E-MAIL

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Student	36	1.7778	.87820	.20699	1.3411	2.2145	1.00	3.00
Service	40	1.9000	1.16529	.26057	1.3546	2.4454	1.00	5.00
Housewife	8	1.5000	.57735	.28868	.5813	2.4187	1.00	2.00
Businessman	16	1.6250	.74402	.26305	1.0030	2.2470	1.00	3.00
Total	100	1.7800	.95383	.13489	1.5089	2.0511	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.794	3	.265	.278	.841
Within Groups	43.786	46	.952		
Total	44.580	49			

CONVEY RELEVANT INFORMATION

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Student	36	2.2778	.82644	.19479	1.8668	2.6888	1.00	4.00
Service	40	2.4000	.68056	.15218	2.0815	2.7185	1.00	4.00
Housewife	8	3.5000	1.29099	.64550	1.4457	5.5543	2.00	5.00
Businessman	16	2.5000	1.06904	.37796	1.6063	3.3937	1.00	4.00
Total	100	2.4600	.88548	.12523	2.2083	2.7117	1.00	5.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.009	3	1.670	2.299	.090
Within Groups	33.411	46	.726		
Total	38.420	49			

TAKE ACTION PERSUASION (PURCHASE)

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Student	36	1.7778	.64676	.15244	1.4562	2.0994	1.00	3.00
Service	40	1.8500	.87509	.19568	1.4404	2.2596	1.00	4.00
Housewife	8	2.0000	.81650	.40825	.7008	3.2992	1.00	3.00
Businessman	16	2.0000	1.06904	.37796	1.1063	2.8937	1.00	4.00
Total	100	1.8600	.80837	.11432	1.6303	2.0897	1.00	4.00

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.359	3	.120	.174	.914
Within Groups	31.661	46	.688		
Total	32.020	49			

RECOMMENDATIONS

Internet advertising can be more useful if organization can incorporate the following attributes in their E-marketing communications:

Personalization: *Marketers can be emailed based on the consumers' local time, location, and preferences*

Time: *Less intrusive than Junk Mail, recipients can read mails at their leisure and choose when to respond, if at all.* Still, organizations must consider the message frequency for the target group and topic.

Location: *Internet Marketing amplifies two key arguments for electronic commerce, location independence and ubiquity.* Consumers increasingly expect tailored and location-based services, thereby underlining the importance of email marketing. Properly applied, location-based services can create or reinforce virtual communities

Preferences: *Personalizing messages increases their impact. Similar to traditional media, a personalized mail campaign relies upon databases with enough active and potential clients to reach the target group profitably.* Such databases regularly contain personal information such as leisure activities, holidays, music and media interests, type of Internet access, occupation, marital status, car ownership and income

Consumer control, permission and privacy: *There is a trade-off between personalization and consumer control.* Gathering data required for tailoring messages raises privacy concerns. Corporate policies must consider legalities such as electronic signatures, electronic contracts, and conditions for sending E-mails.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis we come to a conclusion that there is no significant difference between male & female. Mail receivers therefore we accept Ho for the first hypothesis. For the second hypothesis we come to a conclusion that there is significant relation between different types of occupation on E - Marketing. Therefore we accept Ha & individual with different occupation view sms advertising in different perspectives. An individual's occupation has an impact on his perception of his Email account being a mode of communication, advertisement or information. We also found that An individual's work schedule has an impact on his reactions' towards checking his mails specially JUNK mails. An individual's work schedule has an impact on his perception of his email account being a mode of either communication, advertisement or information Individual's occupation on his reactions' towards Internet advertising, it was found that there were significant differences in the reactions of *Businessmen and other Service class.* The businessmen reacted with confusion towards the plethora of information and advertising that they were subjected on their mails, whereas the service class respondents found the information (pertaining to either their work interests or leisure interests) relayed through their emails useful. It can hence be inferred that incorporating attributes like contextualization, relevant utility value

Summarizing the major findings of the study, we can infer that the relationship that we have sought to examine between Internet marketing/ advertising efforts and the consumers' responsiveness in terms of impact on the purchase/ brand decision, exists. However Internet marketing efforts do not have a substantial impact on the purchase or brand decision of the consumer.

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