

Abstract

The use of social media by organisations in recent years has increased to a somewhat astonishing level, leaving consumers constantly surrounded by various organisation engagement techniques. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of consumers, to find out whether they believe the use of social media by organisations is positive or negative and the impact it has on brand engagement. The study found that social media seemed to have a negative impact on brand engagement affecting the trust of consumers. Furthermore its clear additional research could to be carried out through different methods such as social groups to gain further understanding of the impacts social media has.

Preview from Notesale.co.uk
Page 5 of 64

insight into what they are really about. A range of methodologies will be discussed and the appropriate types for this study will be acknowledged and put into action.

Primary research aims to cover the key topics and address any areas that are not identified through the literature review. The data will then be analysed using a range of descriptive statistics and other analysis techniques leading to the conclusion in which the key themes will be discussed matching against objectives. The final part of the document will discuss the hypothesis in relation to the findings and address any limitations and recommendations for future research.

Aim

- To investigate the positive and negative impact of social media on brand engagement.

Objectives

- To investigate the most used social media network
- To investigate why consumers use social media brand communities and whether they are a first choice for product or service research.
- To identify consumer opinions on organisations using social media and online communities.
- To investigate social media usage trends.

(Source: Muniz and O'Guinn 2001 cited in McAlexander et al 2002:39)

This model is a fairly basic model however it does show the clear point which is the customer has higher involvement and it is three way communications between the brand and customers.

Why do Consumers join Online Communities?

Linking to Lee et al (2011) theory Zhou et al (2013:2439) discusses in depth why consumers can often become a member of an online community without thinking much into it. In an online community consumers don't often have to be members to start however access is often restricted meaning they cannot connect with other users in the community giving them the desire to want more and in turn end up joining to get involved with the brand This Forms a link with Lee et al (2011) theory of consumers wanting to raise their social identify.

Similarly O'Sullivan et al (2011:892) stated 'Brand communities can be considered such a method of recomposing one's social universe'. This is very similar to both Zhou et al (2013) and Lee et al (2011) theory as to why people choose to join online communities and in analysis of the three theories the most common reason is for social status and to raise their identity.

Social Media

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:61) discuss and define social media to be "a group of internet based applications that build on ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content". This definition of social media is fairly recent however Bhanot (2012) developed an even later definition two years later.

Bhanot (2012:47) defines social media as "Social media are media for social interaction using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. Social media is the use of web based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue". The two definitions discuss the 'web' however with Bhanot (2012) is more updated and incorporates the use of

The Research paradigm under Ontology is Interpretivism; this research paradigm looks at social reality being subjective and is based majorly around people's perceptions (Collis and Hussy 2014:45). An interpretive view focuses on the social world around and the need to develop empathy for participants in the research carried out to really understand their views (Saunders et al 2012:137).

The most suitable Research Paradigm

The Research paradigm that best fits this study is Epistemology using the positivist approach as stated by Grix (2004) epistemology is focused on gaining knowledge on social realities which fits with the project. The obvious scenario would then be to use the positivist approach as this also focuses on the study of social reality and is an epistemological approach (Bryman and bell 2011).

Quantitative and Qualitative Research Method

Quantitative research is the most appropriate research method to use as this fits best under the Epistemology, Positivist approach whereas Qualitative research uses the Ontology, Interpretive approach (Grix 2004). Figure 3.1 discusses quantitative and qualitative research, showing the common uses for each and the positives and negatives.

Research Process

The Deduction process is the best fit approach to the research, it is discussed as starting with a theory developed from academic reading moving on to develop a strategy to test the stated theory and produce a set of results (Saunders et al 2012:144). This is the process that will be followed from the literature review onwards and carried out throughout the project. The deduction process forms different links between the conclusion and reasoning in comparison to the induction process, to prove the deduction process to be correct in the long term of the project it must result in being a true process, this doesn't necessarily mean the research question will be (Cooper and Schindler 2008:72).

Research Strategy

Survey Method

The most appropriate research strategy method for the project is the survey method; this method focuses on the present and on human respondents assessing their feelings on specific topic areas (Jankowicz 2005). This research strategy fits in line with the deductive research approach; this type of strategy allows the collection of standardised data from a larger amount of participants in a quicker and easier way than other research strategies. Using the survey method should allow greater control over the research project as whole (Saunders et al 2012:176).

Data Collection

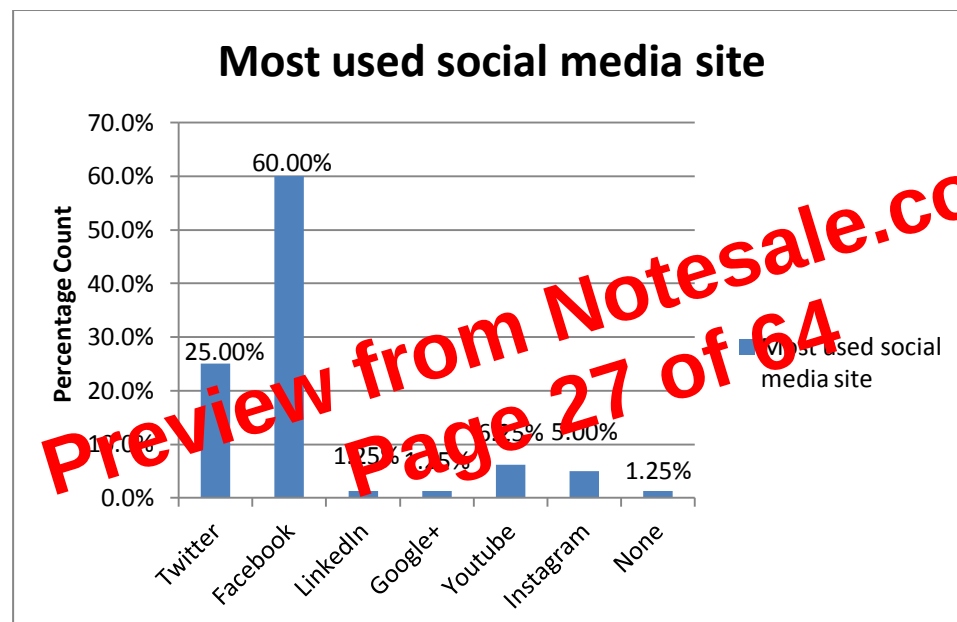
The data collection process will consist of primary data collected through an Online Questionnaire which will best meet the research objectives set as the questions need to be fairly widely spread therefore interview style questions would not be suitable. Quantitative data collection allows links to be made between variables which can then be analysed using different types of numerical techniques (Saunders et al 2012). Although quantitative research is

Research Objective:

To investigate the most used social media network.

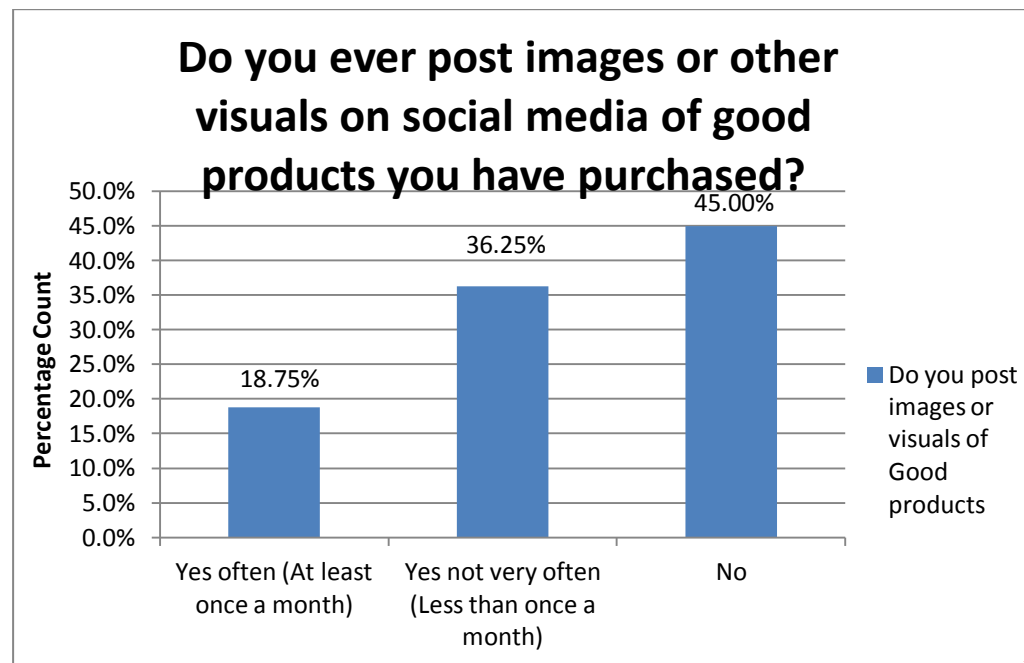
The primary research questionnaire showed a range of findings covering some of the research objectives. This was a base question to gain an insight into the most used social media platform and to answer one of the research objectives. It helps to understand what social media platform participants were mainly focusing on when answering further questions. Figure 4.3 shows the results of the question which clearly states Facebook to be the most used site by the respondents with 60% of them stating this, which is over half of the total survey participants.

Figure 4.3: Most used social media site.



Twitter was seen to be the second most popular social media site with under half that amount with 25% of the respondents.

Figure 4.7: Do you post images or visuals on social media of good products



In relation to figure 4.6 this question shows that respondents seem to act more positively on social media as a larger amount are stating that they would post images or visuals of good products. The 'no' category is at 45% which is significantly different to figure 4.6 at 71.25%.

Figure 4.8: Would bad social media about products or services prevent a purchase

Research Objective: To investigate consumer opinions on organisations using social media and online communities

Figure 4.13: The use of social media by organisations

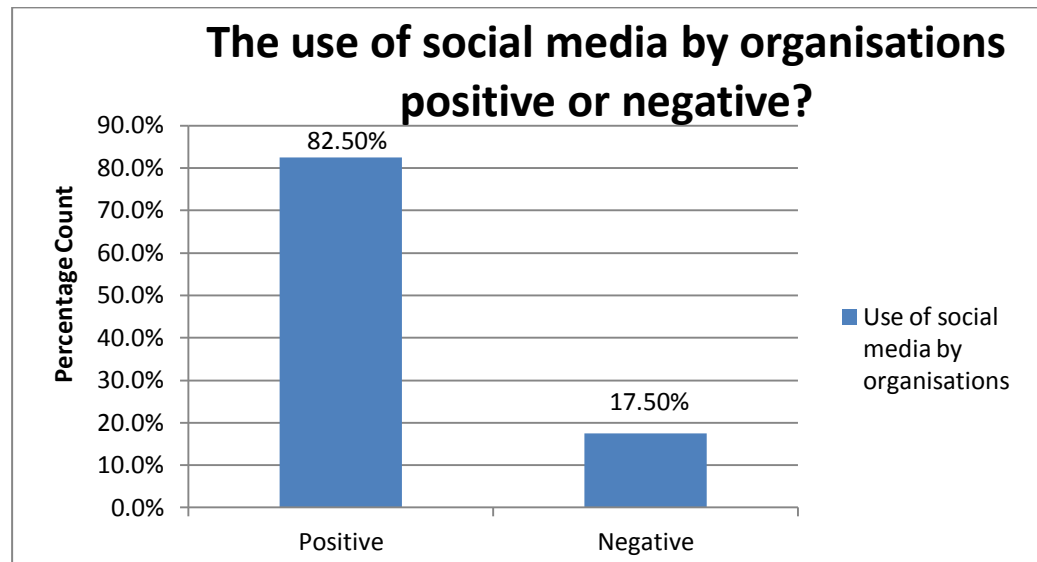
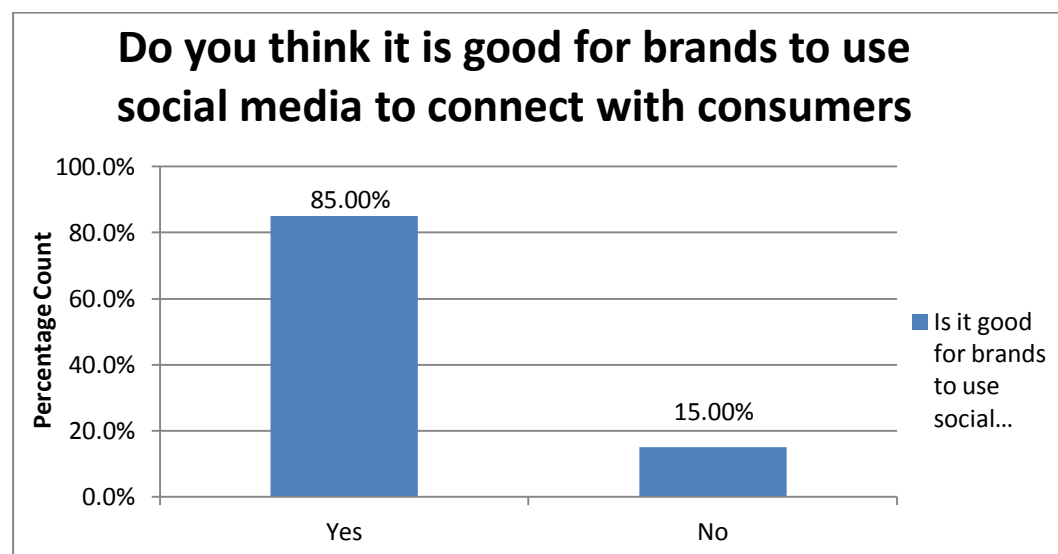


Figure 4.13 shows respondent's views on the use of social media by organisations and whether they think it's positive or negative. The majority of respondents at 82.5% feel that organisations using social media is positive. In contrast 17.5% of respondents disagree stating it to be negative. This sets out a fairly positive outlook for organisations use of social media.

Figure 4.14: Is it good for brands to use social media to connect with consumers



Cross tabulations, Chi square tests and Correlations

Figure 4.26: Cross Tabulation of Gender and if respondents think the use of social media is positive or negative.

Cross tabulation					Total
			Do you think the use of social media by organisations is positive or negative?		
			Positive	Negative	
Are you Male or Female?	Male	Expected count	27.2	5.8	33.0
		% of Total	37.5	3.8%	41.2%
	Female	Expected count	38.8	8.2	47.0
		% of Total	45.0%	13.8%	58.8%
Total		Expected count	66.0	14.0	80.0
		% of Total	82.5%	17.5%	100.0%

Figure 4.26 shows the cross tabulation between gender and whether respondents believe the use of social media by organisations to be positive or negative. It shows a higher percentage of males, 37.5% state it to be positive issue with only 3.8% stating it to be a negative issue. In contrast to this female respondents state a similar response with the majority 45.0% stating it to be positive and only 13.8 stating negative.

Figure 4.27: Chi-Square test for Gender and if respondents think the use of social media is positive or negative.

Chi-Square Test					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sign. (2-Sided)	Exact Sign. (1-Sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.751 ^a	1	.097		
Continuity Correction ^b	1.849	1	.174		
Likelihood Ratio	2.943	1	.086		
Fishers Exact Test				.137	.085
Linear-by-Linear association	2.717	1	.099		
N of Valid Cases	80				
a. 0 Cells (0.0%) have expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.78 B. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Figure 4.27 shows the significance value to be .097 which shows there is not a strong significance between gender and whether respondents believe the use of social media to be positive or negative (chi-square = 2.751, df = 1, p >0.05).

Figure 4.28: Cross Tabulation of Age Range and if respondents think the use of social media is positive or negative.

Cross tabulation					Total
			Do you think the use of social media by organisations is positive or negative?		
			Positive	Negative	
What age range are you?	18-20	Expected count	18.2	3.9	22.0
		% of Total	25.0%	2.5%	27.5%
	21-24	Expected count	27.2	5.8	33.0
		% of Total	33.8%	7.5%	41.2%
	25-29	Expected count	8.3	1.8	10.0
		% of Total	10.0%	2.5%	12.5%
	30-34	Expected count	2.5	.5	3.0
		% of Total	2.5%	1.2%	3.8%
	35-39	Expected count	4.1	.9	5.0
		% of Total	3.8%	2.5%	6.2%
	40 and over	Expected count	5.8	1.2	7.0
		% of Total	7.5%	1.2%	8.8%
Total		Expected count	68.0	14.0	80.0
		% of Total	82.5%	17.5%	100.0%

Figure 4.28 shows the cross tabulation between Age Range and whether respondents believe the use of social media by organisations to be positive or negative. The cross tabulation shows that 21-24 age range seems to have the overall majority stating that social media use by organisations is positive with 33.8% of respondents stating this. The 40 and over category shows the highest of positivity out of its own individual age range total at 7.5% out of 8.8%