

Available online @ www.iaraindia.com
 RESEARCH EXPLORER-A Blind Review & Refereed Quarterly International Journal
 ISSN: 2250-1940 (P) 2349-1647 (O)
 Impact Factor: 3.655 (CIF), 2.78 (IRJIF), 2.62 (NAAS)
 Volume IX, Issue 31
 April – June 2021
 Formally UGC Approved Journal (63185), © Author

THE DIGITAL – VIRAL NEXUS – A STUDY OF THE ‘SHARE RATE’ OF DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENTS OVER SOCIAL MEDIA

KALLOL SAHA

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce
 Barrackpore Rastraguru Surendranath College & Ph.D Research Scholar
 West Bengal State University, West Bengal, India

&

PRANAM DHAR

Associate Professor & Head
 Department of Commerce and Management
 West Bengal State University, India

Abstract

In this metamorphosed world of marketing, we are well aware of the concept of Digital marketing which basically uses the internet and web based services for the purpose of spreading product and service related information among the mass. With the growth and advancement of internet usage and availability and affordability of web connectivity, the use and success of digital marketing is increasing by leaps and bounds. On the other hand we can define Viral Marketing to be a by-product of Digital Marketing where the advertisements on the digital platforms are received, shared and re-shared by viewers in such a way that the content gets viral over the web platform. This can be defined as a low-cost or no-cost mode of promotion using the digital platform. The conversion of a digital marketing message into a viral marketing message is done by a group of people who may be called “Netizen” or “Market Mavens”. In a nutshell, therefore, the rise in number of Netizen or market mavens is the principle cause behind the greater usage and success of Digital Marketing & Viral Marketing. Keeping in mind the digital and viral marketing concepts in mind, the paper further examines the share –rate of advertisements over the social media in order to find out to what extent the digital gets viral.

Keywords: Netizen, Market-mavens, Digital Marketing, Viral Marketing.

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M37

INTRODUCTION

The modern world of marketing is characterized by several changes in techniques and strategies and one such important change is found in the form of

increased usage of digital marketing along with the traditional techniques of marketing. The companies nowadays do not only put stress on digital marketing but also take steps to ensure that their

digital marketing campaigns are seen and understood by more and more people. The phenomenon of spreading of the digital advertisements and their becoming widespread and famous over the web-space is termed as viral marketing. In simple words, when digital advertising stuff gets shared over the web space and gets noticed by more and more people, it takes a turn towards a viral marketing campaign. Almost all companies and organisations have their web pages and social marketing sites, which they use for the purpose of getting their products and services popular. A study has been conducted to show the extent to which digital advertisements are shared by viewers of social marketing sites, namely Facebook.

1. Objectives of the study:

This research is carried out with the following objectives:

1. To explain the process of how the digital becomes viral in the world of marketing.
2. To find out the general 'share rate' of advertisements over the social media.
3. To find out whether seasonal factors or special events/situations have any effect on the share rate of advertisements over the social media.

3. Research Methodology:

For the purpose of research, both **primary** and **secondary** sources of data are used.

The primary data is collected using **Observation method**, where the digital advertisements shared over the social media have been carefully observed and some of their digital parameters are noted for careful analysis. (The primary data is collected over a period of 4 months from August 2020 to September 2020)

The secondary source includes a careful study of books, journals and reports for collection of relevant information.

4.1. Digital and Viral:

The present world has been experiencing several changes in marketing and promotional techniques & strategies. Among the most highly used modes of marketing to reach the potential customers, Digital Marketing even today continues to be a predominant one. **Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan (2016)** opine that digital marketing is a set of processes that employs all digital media and channels for the promotion of a product or a service or for building a digital brand. This helps marketers and companies to navigate easily and effectively in the web-connected world. The growth of web connectivity and the affordability of data plans have made the internet available for many people for longer duration. Factors like global reach, lower transmission cost, ease of access, easy shareability, better conversion rates etc have made Digital Marketing a highly effective mode of promotion. Nowadays it is clearly noticed that almost all organizations have their digital marketing departments which carefully look after promotion of the products and services of the company over the digital platform. These include e-mail marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing, pay-per click advertising etc.

Now, once the promotional materials and advertisements are posted or floated in the digital space, it is to be ensured that they are seen by most number of people. This is necessary to ensure that the benefits from such digital advertisements are maximized and multiplied. Here comes in the concept of Viral Marketing. Viral Marketing refers to a concept in marketing management which actually takes the form of e-word of mouth marketing (e-WOM). Here, a marketing message originally posted or floated in the digital space is seen, shared and re-shared by people in such a way that the advertising campaign becomes viral over the internet. Here, people share the messages to others due to the

entertaining and interesting content in it , or for helping others with product and service related information etc.

4.2. Market Mavens & Netizens:

The introduction clearly explains that whenever a digital marketing message is liked by the audience and is shared again and again by the audience, it becomes viral marketing. This Viral Marketing can be termed as a by-product of Digital Marketing. The power of viral marketing depends on how much and to what extent it is spread and re- spread over the internet based platforms. The groups of people who carry out this sharing activity are known as “market mavens” and “netizens”.

Feick & Price (1987) define market mavens as “diffuser of marketplace information”. According to **Clark & Goldsmith (2005)** market mavens are the people (consumers) who come across a wide range of products and services and marketplace information and play an important role in sharing such information with other consumers. **Hauben & Hauben (1998)** explains that Netizen are the people active over the internet and help others by spreading information over the internet. They respect participation and knowledge sharing over the e- platform. According to **Sazuki** netizen are the people who use digital network in order to find information, for communication with others and to disseminate information with the objective to make the digital world a better and more informative place.

Thus it is clear that any Digital Marketing information available over the internet becomes viral due to the advertisement or the content being shared again and again. This is done by a group of people who continually search, find and share information with an objective to make the digital space more informative. This is how the Digital advertisements and marketing messages becomes Viral.

The following figure depicts in a nutshell, how the Digital gets Viral:

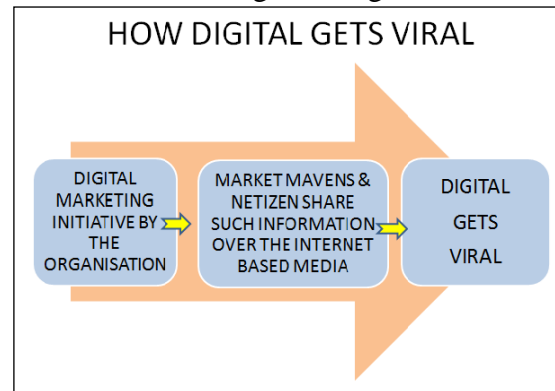


Figure 1: How Digital gets Viral

(Source: Prepared by the Researchers)

5.1. A Study of Share Rate of Advertisements uploaded on Social Media:

An observation was made for sponsored advertisements uploaded over the most popular social networking site- Facebook to find out the general rate at which such advertisements are shared by the people who have noticed & understood such advertisements. This rate is hereafter called the share rate.

Type of Data: Primary

Method of Data Collection: Observation Method

Period of Data collection: August 2020 – September 2020

Sample size: 150 digital advertisements shared as sponsored ads over Facebook

Method of sampling: 150 digital advertisements randomly selected over a period of two (2) months as they appeared on the Facebook news feed page.

Caution during sample selection/ inclusion: At the time of finally selecting the advertisement, for calculation of share rate, caution is taken to ensure that the advertisements are those which a considerable number of people have seen and understood. This is ensured as follows:

1. Only those advertisements having at least 100 like/love/care reacts (in Facebook terminology) are considered. This is a firsthand confirmation of the fact that such advertisements are not

only merely seen by the people but their contents have also been noted & understood by them.

2. Further, the advertisements are not selected on the basis of views, but on the basis of likes / love/ care reacts in order to ensure that the viewer has simply not scrolled past the advertisement, but has seen/ understood the message behind the advertisement.

Description of the sample: Out of the 150 selected advertisements, 20 advertisements are relating to Covid Care products like Lung care medicines, masks, throat infection tablets, immunity boosters, Covid treatment packages, oxygen concentrators, disinfectants, Covid insurance packages etc , whereas

the remaining 130 are general products like car paints, smart phones, computers, photography equipments, home paints, water purifiers, hair oils , cosmetics, MBA courses, hair removers, beauty products, real estate products, food products, financial products etc.

5.2. Calculation, Analysis and interpretation of results:

The ‘Share rate’ of all the 150 selected advertisements is calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Share Rate of a digital advertisement} = \frac{\text{No. of Shares}}{\text{No. of like, love or care reacts}}$$

Using the above formula, the following are found:

Table 1
Share Rate Statistics

	Share Rate (%) - All Selected Facebook Advertisements (150 Advertisements)	Share Rate (%) - Non Covid-19 Associated Advertisements (130 Advertisements)	Share Rate (%) - Covid-19 Associated Advertisements (20 Advertisements)
Mean	8.04	6.46	18.32
Median	5.97	4.89	12.68
S.D	7.53	4.98	12.19
Highest Share Rate	47.06	26.42	47.06
Lowest Share Rate	0.60	0.60	8.59

Source: Prepared by the Researchers

5.3. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

a. Highest & Lowest share rates

The highest share rate of 47.06% is noticed in case of Tata Nutrikorner (Home Remedy for Shortness of Breath) - which is a product for Covid 19 Care.

On the other hand the lowest share rate of 0.60% is found in case of Preganews- Pregnancy Detection Kit – which is a non Covid- 19 related product. The probable reason for its low sharing rate is perhaps due to the fact that the Indian population is still not comfortable in sharing these

kinds of advertisements which are related to adulthood/ pregnancy etc.

b. Effect of Special events /situation on share rate of advertisements over social media:

The mean share rate of non Covid – 19 associated advertisements is 6.46%, whereas that of Covid-19 associated advertisements is 18.32%. This shows that during the occurrence of any special event/situation (in this case Covid -19 outbreak) people tend to share such event related advertisements much more in order to create awareness and

to ensure that this sharing may help the people in need.

c. General Share Rates:

In order to get an idea about the general share rate of advertisements over social media, it is best to consider the figures of Non- Covid – 19 related products. Here the results are considered to be best for developing a general idea because they are most likely to be not affected by any kind of seasonal variances / special fluctuations (like Covid 19 outbreak, in our study). Thus it can be concluded that the average share rate of advertisements of social media is about **6.46%** with highest rate of **26.42%** in case of Diabetes Care & Management (Diabetic Socks) & Lowest Of **0.60%** in case of Preganews- Pregnancy Detection Kit

Conclusion:

It can therefore be concluded that any type of marketing and promotional activity conducted using the digital media is called digital marketing. However, being digitally present is not enough nowadays. It is highly necessary that apart from being digitally present, a marketing campaign should also become digitally viral. A digital campaign becomes viral in nature only when market mavens and Netizen play a positive role by sharing the message or the advertising content again and again. The study has also found that people in general do tend to share advertisement which they come across the social media. The share rate of such advertisements can generally range from 0.60% to 26.42%. However special events, seasonal factors or specific situations may even push the share rate of such advertisements to as high as 47%.

Bibliography

Books:

1. Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2017). *Marketing 4.0: Moving from traditional to digital*. New Jersey : John Wiley & Sons

2. Petrescu, Maria. (2014). *Viral Marketing and Social Networks*. Business Expert Press, New York

Research Journals:

3. Bajpai, V., & Pandey, S.(2012). Viral Marketing through Social Networking Sites with Special Reference of Facebook. *International Journal Of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research*. 1(7), 194 -207
 4. Clark R.A., & Goldsmith, R.E. (2005). Market Mavens: Psychological Influences. *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 22(4): 289–312.
 5. Clifford Marsh, E. (2009). Viral marketing [Electronic version]. *Revolution*, 50-52
 6. Datta, P., Chowdhury, D., & Chakraborty, B. (2005). Viral marketing: New form of word-of-mouth through internet .*The Business Review*, Cambridge, 3(2), 69-75
 7. Feick , L.,& Price, L.L.(1987). The Market Maven: A Diffuser of Marketplace Information. *Journal of Marketing*. 51(1), 83-97
 8. Granata, G., & Giancarlo,.S. (2018). The Evolution of Viral Marketing to Improve Business Communication. *International Business Research*. 11(12), 105-112.
 9. Hauben, M., & Hauben, R. (1998). Preface: What is a Netizen? *First Monday*, 3.
 10. Ho, J. Y.C , & Dempsey, M. (2010). Viral marketing: Motivations to forward online content. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9), 1000-1006.
- Websites/ weblinks:
11. <https://idportal.gsis.jp/~idportal/wp-content/uploads/a30727.pdf>
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/viral>