

DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND CAR BUYING : A STUDY OF POTENTIAL DETERRENENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to identify the potential deterrents of digital marketing communication while buying a car. Data was collected from 801 respondents from Delhi using area wise proportionate sampling. 75% of the respondents used at least one digital channel of communication while buying a car. There were 25% of the respondents who didn't use digital channels of communication while buying a car and relied exclusively upon traditional channels of communication. The study analyzed the respondents believing only in traditional channels of communication while buying a car to know the deterrents impeding the usage of digital channels of communication. The study also aimed to identify the distinct customers segments using traditional channels of communication while buying a car. Data was analyzed with the help of chi-square test and cluster analysis. 'Technicality' of the medium followed by 'lack of knowledge and time' were identified as the major deterrents of digital marketing communication. Two customer segments were identified in the study that made use of only traditional channels of communication while buying a car. First segment comprised of respondents 'above 40 years of age' belonging to 'business' category. Second segment was composed of respondents in 'service' occupational category belonging to '26 to 30 years age' group.

Keywords : Digital Marketing Communication, Deterrents of Digital Marketing Communication, Indian Passenger Car Market, Cluster Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies have considerably affected nearly every business regardless of its 'size', 'nature', 'location' and 'type'. 'Internet', the most prominent digital technology, has revolutionized the every facet of business namely the 'communication', 'product development', 'supply chain management', 'brand management', 'customer relationship management', 'buying and selling' and 'customer service' to name a few (Hudson, Roth and Madden, 2012). Digital technologies have shed the most significant impact on business communication process (Edelman and Heller, 2015). These modern

technologies have reshaped the marketing communication landscape with its exceptional competencies viz. 'interactivity', 'customization', 'measurability', 'accessibility', 'customer engagement' and capability of handling huge 'informational bases'(Smith, 2011). A marketing practice becomes 'digital' if it depends upon a 'digital medium' to function. Bird (2007) defines digital marketing as a communication activity conducted over media using digital transmission that establishes a 'direct' relationship between a company and its customers or 'prospects' as an individual. The term 'medium' used here refers to the 'channels', 'instruments', 'applications',

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'manners' and 'devices', which for their functioning use 'digital codes'(Rowan, 2002). Content based platform like 'websites', 'social networking sites', 'online communities' and 'search engines' using primarily the 'internet technology' and devices such as 'mobile phones', 'digital TV', 'digital outdoors' using both 'internet' and 'mobile technology', are the most powerful digital media (Wertime and Fenwick, 2011). Digital marketing communication can be defined as an 'integrated', 'individual', 'targeted' and 'measurable' communication with the customers by using digital technology which in turn helps marketer to 'acquire' new customers and 'retaining' existing customers along with nurturing long-term and fruitful business relations with them (Adobe, 2014; Ryan, 2014).

Academicians and marketers are very deeply observing and studying the effects of digital especially the online marketing communication on consumer behaviour for last about two decades. Consumers are also getting accustomed to the digital technology and make efficient use before making a purchase decision (Pralhad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Consumers solicit information from various 'digital sources', 'search online', 'check the manufacturer's or supplier's websites', 'give weightage to others' opinions and recommendations', 'read the reviews of the other customers', 'seek the experts' advice', 'support and advocate their preferred brand' over digital platforms and 'express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction online' (Alexa Shayne Robert and Michael, 1996; Gay, Charlesworth and Esen, 2007). Customers in digital environments have become 'empowered' and 'demanding' as digital media offer them superior networking with 'peers' and 'friends', 'more choices', 'unbelievable access' to information, 'superior experience and control' over decision making process which leads to 'value creation' for a customers in the form of 'enlightenment', 'entertainment' and 'utility' (Lee, 2013). Consumers' possession of digital devices is on rise and they are comfortable using digital information for various purposes ranging from 'navigation', 'comparing', 'networking', 'searching', 'buying and selling' and

'expressing' and 'giving feedback' (Sople, 2011). Marketers are banking upon digital marketing communication as it permits marketers to deliver 'real-time', 'personalized services and content', and deals with an 'individual' rather than aiming at masses (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). Companies around the globe are also increasing their digital spend. Digital channels are emerging as preferred promotional avenues for the marketers; just behind TV. Innumerable internet enabled digital devices like 'desktops', 'mobile phones' 'digital TV', 'digital outdoors', 'digital watches' and others, along with interactive platforms like 'websites', 'e-mails', 'social media' offer themselves as a cost effective substitute for traditional marketing in almost every industry (Kierzkowski, Mcquade, Waitman, and Zeisser, 1996; Ferrar, 2010; Hubspot, 2013).

DIGITAL INDIA : IMPRESSIVE AND OPTIMISTIC STATISTICS

India has all the potential to be a leader in digital technology. Reduced 'data prices', availability of 'inexpensive' digital devices, possession of required 'skill set' by large number of young consumers, year by year improving 'data transmission speed', 'enthusiasm' and general 'adoption' of technology by masses, are the vital factors fuelling the digital revolution in India. According to the latest report published by the 'Internet and Mobile Association of India' (IAMAI), the internet users' base in India stood at more than 400 million by December, 2015 (Sharma, 2015). 'Mobile phone' is acting as major catalyst fuelling the growth of internet. 60% of internet users use their 'mobile phones' to access internet. India saw a surge in 'mobile internet users' to 213 million in the year June 2015 from 173 million in the year December 2014. One can expect the 'mobile internet user' base expanding to 314 million by the year 2017 (Statista, 2016). 55% of mobile internet traffic came from 'urban' area and rest 45% was credited to 'rural' area. The broadband subscribers' industry in India also witnessed a total of 108.85 million users by the end of second quarter of the year 2015. On an average, an internet user in India spends nearly 5

hours online every day. 590 million people in India have 'mobile phones' whether feature or Smartphone. India had a total of 980.81 million mobile subscriptions out of which 89.93% are active users with a penetration level of 80 % (TRAI, 2016). India has emerged as a leading contributor along with China towards 'smartphone' usage. However, 'smartphones' users still make a smaller part of phone users' pie. India has 167 million 'smartphone' users and expected to have 200 million smartphones users by the end of year 2016. The number is further expected to reach over 317 million 'smartphone' users by the year 2019 (Gartner India, 2016). There are 134 million social networking sites users' in India with 10% penetration level. 97 million users access 'social media via their 'mobile phones'. Social networking giant 'Facebook' has 125 million users in India. 59 million 'Facebook' users in India access their account daily. India has 22.2 million "Twitter" users (IAMAI & IMRB, 2015; Statista, 2016).

DIGITAL MARKETING IN INDIAN PASSENGER CAR MARKET

Digital marketing communication is affecting every industry and Indian passenger car market, the 'fifth' largest market in the world, is no exception in which digital's 'Midas' touch is affecting both the customers and marketers (Maklan, Knox and Watson, 2001). Spend on digital media by Indian car marketers is registering an increase with each passing year. In the year 2013, 13% of total advertisement's budget was spent through digital media (IAMAI and IMRB, 2013). 'Display advertising' in automobile sector got doubled in the year 2013. Automobile sector has been one of the largest producers of the 'on-line conversations' and one of the top digital spenders since the year 2009 (Mehra, 2012). Digital marketing practices by Indian car marketers include the deployment of digital technologies that include leveraging the power of 'search engines' and continuously expanding 'social media and networks', individually targeted marketing and promotion, 'lead generation' through carefully designed

'landing page', 'micro sites' and other strategies like 'participatory games', 'apps' 'contests' and many more. Specific campaigns are being run by companies to attract and involve the customers. 'Moment of the Day' and 'Live the Moment' "#coolcatsintown", 'Urban Discoveries' 'Guess the Price' and "Planet Volkswagen", are few of the well-known digital campaigns in Indian car industry (Kumar and Singh, 2013; Naidu, 2015; Awasthi, 2015; Das, 2016).

There are many industry reports by marketing research firms over the years (Google, 2012; Infosys View Point 2011, Capgemini, 2013; Accenture, 2015; J.D. Power Report, 2015; Nielsen, 2014) that state that buying a car for customers also is no longer a 'unidirectional' process. Today's digital consumers come to know about new products at a faster rate than before, they continuously 'compare and evaluate' the brands and make 'informed decisions'. Digital channels 'dominate' the 'purchasing journey' of the customers. During their purchasing journey, customers increasingly rely on digital channels, e.g., 'checking brands' websites', 'reading reviews', 'visiting social networking sites' and 'community forums' in the 'consideration' phase. Internet has become one of the top 'information sources' for taking automotive buying decisions. Consumers are increasingly following the 'ROPO' (Research Online, Purchase Offline) method in car buying.

DETERRING THE USAGE OF DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION: A BRIEF REVIEW

Digital marketing offers numerable benefits to both marketers and consumers thereby making its strong contender ship for the most contemporary communication media. However this brighter side has many shades of grey. Many studies also tried to investigate the reasons for not using digital channels of communication while making buying decisions. Technicality which deals with complexity of the digital medium in comparison to traditional medium has been cited as the most common deterrent for usage of digital marketing communication (Bird, 2007; Ryan 2014; Wind and Mahajan, 2002).

Usage of digital marketing communication requires possession of basic skill set including knowledge about digital devices and basic nuances of internet technology (Egan, 2007; Ryan and Jones, 2012). People lacking this basic knowledge might feel demotivated and prefer using traditional channels of communication rather than using digital communication channels. Farrel (n.d.) attributed digital media time consuming and diversely varied in nature, so people with time constraints might find it difficult to use digital marketing communication. Moreover, continuous proliferation of digital technology might make it difficult for customers to be aware about all the communication channels (Sharp, 2016; Stokes, 2013).

Maklan, Knox and Watson (2001) in their study accepted that online communication channels suffer from 'lack of human touch' and 'instant gratifications'. Google India (2013) highlighted barriers to online shopping which included 'fraudulent practices', 'sub-standard products', 'inability to bargain', 'touch' and 'try' the product before purchase, and 'sharing of personal and financial details'. Study conducted by eMarketer, (2015a), also cited 'non-authentic' and 'technical' nature of digital communication inhibiting the use of digital communication while

buying. Forrester and Google India study (2014) cited 'poor internet speed', 'dissatisfactory customer service' and 'complex return process' as major deterrents towards e-shopping. Ioanas and Stoica (2014) in their study attributed 'information overload' over digital channels as major barrier that leads to confusion in the consumers' mind. The study further stated that consumers might stop searching all the information available because of increasing 'search cost' and 'confusion' and may apply traditional 'rule of thumb' to arrive at a decision.

Lack of trust in digital technology and platforms has shifted many people away from using digital communication (Chau and Hu, 2001; Jackson, Mun and Park, 2013; Samudra and Phadtare, 2012; Thakur, 2013). Study conducted by Charan (2014) cited 'misleading, offensive and malicious information' as primary factor discouraging the use of digital communication. Singh (2014) in his study attributed 'security and safety of the information' as the prime concern of the customers using 'mobile banking'. Given below is the tabular representation of the reference studies used for identifying the potential deterrents impeding the usage of digital marketing communication.

Sr. No.	Potential Deterrents	Reference Studies Used
1.	Technical	Sharp (2016); eMarketer (2015a); Moon and Kim (2001); Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002); Venkatesh, Morris, Davis and Davis (2003); Amin (2008); Leng, Lada, Muhammad, Ibrahim, and Amboala (2011); Samudra and Phadtare (2012); Thakur (2013); Wang, Wang, Lin and Tang (2003); Gay et al. (2007); Bird (2007); Ryan (2014); Wind and Mahajan (2002)
2.	Costly	Egan (2007); Wong (2007), Chand (n.d.), Stokes (2013); Gay et al. (2007); Bird (2007); Rowan (2002); Ryan and Jones (2012); Wind and Mahajan (2002)
3.	No Time	Egan (2007); Sharma (2013), Sharma (2014); Gay et al. (2007); Bird (2007); Rowan (2002); Ryan and Jones (2012); Wind and Mahajan (2002); Farrel (n.d.)
4.	No Knowledge	Egan (2007); Ranjan (2012); Banerjee (2012), Stokes (2013); Gay et al. (2007); Bird (2007); Rowan (2002); Ryan and Jones (2012)
5.	No Trust	Yurovskiy (n.d.); Ranjan (2012); Khan & Kamran (2013); Charan (2014); Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky and Vitale (2000); eMarketer (2015a); Chau and Hu

6.	Not Interesting	(2001); Jackson et al. (2013); Samudra and Phadtare (2012); Thakur (2013); Rowan (2002); Ryan and Jones (2012); Wind and Mahajan (2002)
7.	Not Aware	Egan (2007); Banerjee (2012); Ryan and Jones (2012); Ryan (2014)
8.	Other (Lack of human touch, instant gratification, Frauds, Lack of Security etc.)	Digital Skill Port (2016); Sharp (2016); Stokes (2013); Gay et al. (2007); Bird (2007); Wind and Mahajan (2002); Farrell (n.d.) Ranjan (2012); Ioanas and Stoica (2014); Singh (2014); Maklan et al. (2001), Google India (2013); Gay et al. (2007); Bird (2007); Rowan (2002); Ryan and Jones (2012); Ryan (2014); Wind and Mahajan (2002)

Factors like being technical, costly, uninteresting nature, lack of trust and awareness and others emerged as the most probable deterrents curbing the usage of digital marketing communication. Today one can observe the upsurge optimism around digital marketing communication across various product categories. There is no denial to the fact that consumers are making use digital marketing communication for getting information, comparing and evaluating products and buying and selling to name the most important activities. A high involvement product category like car is also getting affected in digital realms and consumers are getting affected in terms of their choice for dealers, brands and model type. Still issues of trust, complexity, security, invasion of privacy, lack of human touch and instant gratification are not fully resolved, which pose a significant challenge to the marketers also. eMarketer (2015c) in its study asserted that for a developing country like 'India', digital marketing is still in 'nascent' stage and people doubt the 'authenticity' of the medium while making financial transactions. Moreover, car is a 'high involvement product' with substantial investment, so a customer would like to physically see the product before making the final purchase decision. In developed countries like 'Germany' also, only 15% of consumers booked a car online and only 6% paid online for their new car (eMarketer, 2015b). However this trend may change in future as many of the 'young car buyers'

in India have their 'latent desire' to complete the entire car-buying process online (Harwani, 2015; Accenture, 2015). Saxena (2016) emphasized that for high priced items like cars, a customer conducts 'online research' to 'evaluate and compare' the car brands but final 'purchase' happens in 'offline' settings after physically examining the product.

If these barriers are dealt with efficiency, the results of digital marketing campaigns can be both motivating and fruitful for the marketers. The study identifies the need for conducting a study which focuses on highlighting the potential deterrents which motivate customers to use traditional channels of communication rather than digital channels of communication while buying a car.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was descriptive in nature that aimed to understand the potential deterrents barring the use of digital marketing communication while buying a car in Indian car market. The study also aimed to understand the demographic profile of the customers using traditional channels of communication while buying a car. During the study, researcher made one time contact with the customers to collect the desired information which made the study cross sectional in nature. The study made use of primary data to arrive at conclusion.

Population proportion approach was used to determine the sample size. For the current

study, z was taken as 95% whose table value was ± 1.96 as for most educational and social sciences studies, this was the most common alpha level used (Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, 1996). Margin of error (d) was taken as 3.5% or .035 as normal range for margin of error taken for educational researches are 3 to 5% (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). P value (estimated proportion) was taken as .5 indicating the maximum variability in the population as exact proportion in population is not known (Chawla and Sondhi, 2011). Area wise proportionate Cluster Sampling (Malhotra and Dash, 2012) was used to collect the data from the respondents. Census (2011) was considered as a frame of reference which divided Delhi into 9 districts. Deliberately two districts namely New Delhi and Central Delhi were not included in the sample as both were composed of urban population only whereas all other districts were heterogeneous in terms of composition as they had urban, semi-urban and rural population within them. Researcher conveniently chose areas in each district. A total of 801 responses were collected from the study's sampling area Delhi. The proportion of respondents in the sample was kept same as it was in the population in each district. Chi-Square and Cluster Analysis were used as test of significance to validate the results of the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the potential deterrents that might prevent customers using digital channels of communication while buying a car.
- To understand the demographic profile of the respondents using traditional channels of communication while buying a car.

DATA ANALYSIS

Responses were collected from 801 Respondents from 'Delhi'. It was found from the study that out of 801 respondents, 603 respondents used at least one of digital channels as an 'information source' during their car buying journey. 198 respondents didn't use any digital channel and used only the traditional channels namely 'TV', 'Radio', 'Newspaper' and 'visiting

dealers' showroom'.

Digital channels are emerging as an important contemporary communication channel. The same was being validated from the results also as three fourth (75%) of the respondents used at least one digital channel of communication while buying a car along with traditional channels of communication. However, a quarter (25%) of the respondents believed only in the traditional channels of communication. The section given below represents the analysis of the respondents using only traditional channels of communication.

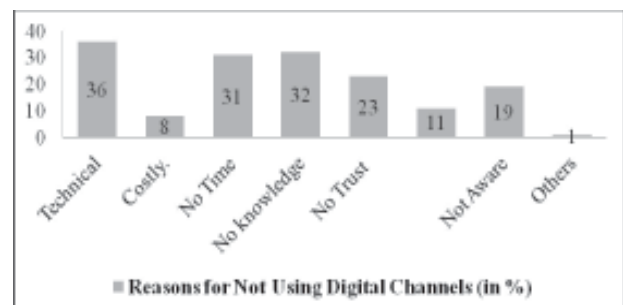
It was found in the study that 198 (25%) respondents didn't use digital channels of communication while buying a car and only used traditional channels of communication. Table 1 presents the details of the reasons for which people avoided using digital channels of communication.

Table 1. Reasons for Not Using Digital Channels of Communication

Sr. No.	Reason for Not Using Digital Channels	Number of Respondents
1.	Technical	71
2.	Costly	16
3.	No Time	61
4.	No Knowledge	63
5.	No Trust	45
6.	Not Interesting	21
7.	Not Aware	37
8.	Other	3

Source: Authors' Analysis

Figure 1. Reasons for Not Using Digital Channel of Communication



Source: Authors' Analysis

It can be seen from the Fig. 1 that 36% of the respondents didn't use digital channel of communication because of its 'technical' nature. About one third (32%) of the respondents accepted that they didn't have 'enough knowledge' about the digital channels, which prevented them using digital channels of communication. 31% of the respondents also expressed that they didn't have enough 'time' to explore the digital marketing communication. Little less than a quarter (23%) of the respondents didn't use digital channels of communication because they didn't 'trust' the information available over digital channels. 19% respondents in the study expressed that they were 'not aware' of all the digital channels. 11% of the respondents stated that they didn't find digital communication 'interesting' enough to entice them. 8% respondents cited 'cost' as a reason for not using digital channels of communication.

Statistical significance of the descriptive results was checked with the help of non-parametric test. 'Chi-Square' was applied as a test of significance in order to see the significance of the result as variables of interest namely the 'reasons for not using digital channels of communication' dealt with 'categorical data'.

Following hypotheses were set for the test:
 H₀: All the factors indiscriminately caused for non-use of digital channels of communication while buying a car.
 H_a: Some factors contributed more than others towards non-usage of digital channels of communication.

Table 2. Test Statistic for Reasons for Not Using Digital Channel of Communication

Sr. No.	Reason for Not Using	Chi-square	df	Asymp. Sig.
1.	Technical	15.838 ^a	1	.000
2.	Costly	139.172 ^a	1	.000
3.	No Time	29.172 ^a	1	.000
4.	No Knowledge	25.589 ^b	1	.000
5.	No Trust	58.909 ^a	1	.000
6.	Not Interesting	122.909 ^a	1	.000
7.	No Awareness	77.657 ^a	1	.000
8.	Other	186.182 ^a	1	.000

- a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 99.0.
- b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 98.5.

Source: Authors' Analysis

A significant value of .000 (Table 2) for all the reasons causing non-use of digital channels of communication indicated that factors like 'technicality', 'lack of knowledge' and 'time' and 'unawareness' contributed more towards non-usage than other factors.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE CUSTOMERS USING TRADITIONAL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Age', 'income', 'occupation', 'gender' and 'education' were the major demographic variables used in the study. The association between channel of communication (traditional and digital) and demographic variables was seen by applying the non-parametric test (Chi-square at 5% level of significance) and it was found that 'age' (Chi-square value of 40.753 with .000 sig.) 'occupation' (Chi-square value of 12.299 with .006 sig.) and 'gender' (Chi-square value of 4.046 with .044 sig.) found 'significant' association with digital channels of communication. However, insignificant association was for 'educational' background (Chi-square value of .2585 with .460 sig.) and 'income' categories (Chi-square value of 4.610 with .203 sig.).

Table 3 given below displays the descriptive statistics for significant demographic variables of the respondents using only traditional channels of communication while buying a car.

It can be seen from the table 3 that 'male' respondents belonging to 'above 40 years' age group and 'service' occupational category made the maximum use of traditional channels of communication while buying a car. The study tried to identify the customers' segments which didn't believe in using digital channels of communication. 'Cluster analysis' was used to identify the customer segments.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Use of Traditional Channel of Communication

Age		Occupation		Gender	
Age Category	Usage (In %)	Occupational Category	Usage (In %)	Gender	Usage (In %)
18-25 years	27.3	Student	24.2	Male	57.6
26-30 years	14.6	Service	37.4	Female	42.4
31-35 years	10.6	Business	24.2		
36-40 years	11.1	Home-maker	14.1		
Above 40 years	36.4				

Source: Authors' Analysis

Table 4. Clusters for Traditional Channels of Communication

Clustering Variable	Cluster	
	1	2
Age	Above 40 years	26-30 years
Occupation	Business	Service
Gender	Male	Male

Source: Authors' Analysis

Total 10 iterations were performed and clusters given in table 4 were formed after the analysis. It can be seen from the table that first cluster composed of 'male' respondents 'above 40 years' of age belonging to 'business' category.

This cluster can be named as '*Accomplished Magnate*'. The cluster was named so because it was believed that respondents in 'business' occupational category by the age of '40 years' must have achieved many things in life. Second group was composed of 'male' respondents in 'service' belonging to '26 to 30 years' age group. This segment can be known as '*Stripling Warrior*' because it was believed that young employed customers would not use the digital channels of communication only when they don't have time to do so and are always busy in competing their official assignments. The two clusters formed had a 'Euclidean distance' of 3.170.

Table 5. ANOVA Table for Cluster Analysis (Traditional)

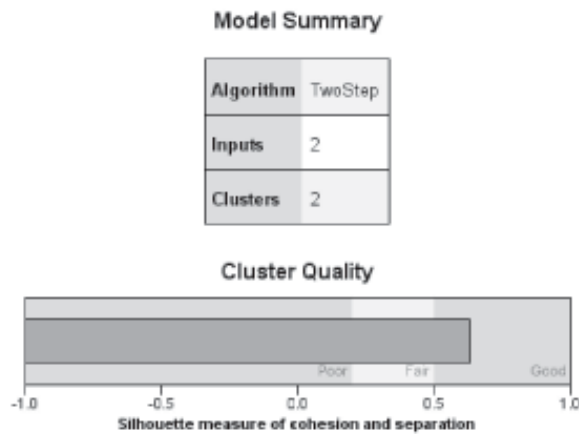
Clustering Variable	Cluster		Error		F	Sig.
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df		
Age	465.667	1	.434	196	1072.689	.000
Occupation	31.638	1	.819	196	38.630	.000
Gender	.000	1	.247	196	.002	.965

Source: Authors' Analysis

ANOVA table (5) given above describes which variables contributed the most towards clustering. It can be seen from the table that 'age' of the respondents contributed the most towards clustering and was found associated with very high F value 1072.689 with a significance value of .000. It can also be seen from the table that 'gender' of the respondent was not significant in making its contribution towards clustering.

'Silhouette measure of cohesion and separation' was applied as a measure of the clustering solution's overall 'goodness-of-fit'. The value of the statistic is normally based upon the average distances between the objects and can vary between '-1 and +1'. For the present study by looking at the horizontal bar (Fig. 2), the measure value was found around .60 (approx. value), which meant that clusters formed were

Figure 2. Cluster Quality Measure for Customer Segments Using Traditional Channels of Communication



Source : Authors' Analysis

of 'fair quality'.

Conclusion and Implications of the Study

25% respondents in the study didn't use digital channels of communication. The study aimed to assess the reasons which accounted for non-use of digital communication while buying a car. 'Technicality of the medium', 'lack of knowledge and time' and 'no trust' for digital information, were the major reasons leading towards non-use of digital communication while buying a car. George (2002), Google India (2013) and Maklan et al. (2001) also expressed similar factors causing non-use of digital channels of communication. Another study conducted by Negi and Saklani (2003) attributed 'technicality', 'unfamiliarity/unawareness', 'less authentic information', and 'cost', as factors impeding the usage of digital media.

Two customer segments were identified in the study that made use of only traditional channels of communication while buying a car. First segment comprised of respondents 'above 40 years of age' belonging to 'business' category and was named as 'Accomplished Magnate'. Second segment was composed of respondents in 'service' occupational category belonging to '26 to 30 years age group' and was named as 'Stripling Warrior'. Such findings were not observed with

earlier studies and findings of the present study make a significant addition to the available literature.

The findings reveal important insights for marketers which include that, customers don't use digital channels of communication because of being 'technical' in nature. Given the 'technical' nature of digital marketing communication, marketers might find it challenging to eliminate this particular belief impeding the use of digital marketing communication. Many customers are not using digital channels of communication because of 'lack of knowledge' about the digital channels. Marketers must understand that their target customers should have 'adequate knowledge' about all the digital channels used by the marketers in order to use them while buying a car. Marketer might find it difficult to target customers who don't have sufficient 'time' to explore the digital marketing communication channel while buying a car. Such customers' buyer readiness stage can be known with traditional channels of communication and can be targeted at the time of purchase with succinct yet effective piece of digital communication. Marketers must develop consumers' trust in digital technologies which would promote the use of digital channels of communication.

SUGGESTIONS

The study highlighted that many respondents were apprehensive in using digital channels of communication while buying a car mainly due to the 'technicality' of the media followed by 'lack of knowledge' and 'uninteresting' nature. The major suggestions related to the barriers limiting the use of digital media have been given as under:

- Marketers were recommended to design the 'websites' which are 'easy to navigate', develop 'Apps' which produce user specific content in their preferred language, send 'SMS' and 'MMS' in their language and designing digital platforms supporting 'voice based commands' to reduce the 'perceived technicality' of the media.
- Marketers can also design a promotional

campaign whereby they can showcase the 'happy and satisfied' customers using digital channels of communication who initially used traditional channels of communication while buying a car by exhibiting the benefits like being 'interactive', 'easy to access' and 'relevant'.

- Marketers can also overcome the 'lack of knowledge' barriers by providing help in the form of 'help pages' and 'video tutorials' to the customers while using digital channels of communication.
- 'Uninteresting' nature of digital marketing can be dealt by presenting the content in an 'interesting' manner. Marketers can initially target the customers using both traditional and digital channels of communication. Also, they could influence the target customers by approaching to their 'reference groups' such as 'friends', 'family' and 'peers' and encourage them to 'advocate' the use of digital communication channels to the target groups.
- The study determined the positive association between use of digital channels of communication with 'age' 'occupation' and 'gender' of the respondents. It also identified the specific segments using only the traditional communication channel. Marketers should identify the preferred channel of communication for these significant demographic variables and prioritize their efforts towards specific customer segments via their preferred communication channel.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The car buyers consisted of both 'actual' and 'potential' buyers and study didn't differentiate between the two. A study with a clear distinction between the 'actual' and 'potential' buyers might offer different insights. The study collectively used the term digital channels of communication for diverse digital technology enabled platforms and devices like 'websites', 'phones', 'digital TV', 'emails' and 'social networking sites'. So, the results obtained can't

be specifically and precisely applied for a particular channel of communication. The present study made use of quantitative data whereby it sought the desired information from 198 respondents belonging to 'Delhi' area. The study made use of 'cross sectional descriptive research design' whereby respondents were contacted once. The proposed study can produce different results with longitudinal research design and increased sample size. It is also quite possible to have different results if the study is conducted in 'non-metro' cities. Moreover restrictions of 'time', 'money' and 'other resources' can't be avoided in such 'descriptive studies', which held true for the present study as well.

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