

Impact of Social Media Marketing Activities on Consumer Preferences for Kitchen Tools and Equipment

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Abstract

It also states the growing influence of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs) on the buying behavior of customers in the kitchen equipment and tools industry. With more customers making online purchases, marketing activities have to be re-engineered in a bid to keep abreast of changing demands. This exploratory case study conducted a survey of 214 consumers to analyze the impact of five dimensions of social media marketing activities (SMMAs), namely entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and customization, on consumer engagement, trust, and kitchen tools and equipment selection. Embedded in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Social Presence Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this study develops and tests a conceptual model linking SMMAs to phases of the consumer decision process. Results show that effective utilization of SMMAs reinforces brand awareness, loyalty, and positive consumption behavior. The study contributes by extending theories of persuasion and engagement to the kitchenware sector and offering practical recommendations for marketers operating on social networking websites within competitive consumer markets.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA), Consumer Preferences, Purchase Decision, Kitchen Tools, Kitchen Equipment.

1. Introduction

The backbone of any business is the consumer working selflessly for success and development. Coupled with varying satisfaction levels, this influences the direct tastes and needs of consumers in the profitability and sustainability of any large business. Furthermore, it encourages planning and goal setting, is more science-oriented towards decision making and management, and also allows businesses to achieve a greater degree of brand loyalty as it provides direct access to new product development and helps in gathering data related to markets and consumer behavior. It is then the duty of the business to place the customer first and maximize their enjoyment and satisfaction through the qualitative delivery of commodities and services in order to excel or at least meet consumers' expectations in the most efficient way to form customer base long-term allegiance relationships with the customer base.

It is defined by the American Marketing Association as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." To create value for customers, clients, partners, and society, marketing should create financial rewards which are going to be accretive to earnings and to investments in the future. This broader vision of marketing was promoted by Kohli & Jaworski in (1990) as market orientation, where a business philosophy necessitates the entire company to be customer need-oriented and fosters fruitful interaction across various departments such as finance and marketing.

However, as marketing theorists argue, e.g., Pahud de Mortanges & van Riel (2003), the ultimate goal of marketing is not just to create value for the shareholders but also for the customers of the firm. One of the ways to create value for the shareholders is by building good brand equity. A company generates brand equity by producing quality goods and fostering a positive brand image in the minds of customers through marketing communication, as stated by Aaker in (1996). Social media marketing is, therefore, a process that enables people to promote their web pages, products, and services using web-based social networks, allowing for access and interaction with many more people than would be possible using traditional means of advertisement. It is, therefore, important to use social media marketing for mass accessibility to reach customers, vast marketing, effective B2B marketing, better search rankings, and a short return spans.

Five characteristics: "entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and perceived risk" would be the best SMMAAs, as noted by Seo & Park in (2018). The SMMAAs are the main platform to promote brand and product images, enhance engagement to drive electronic word of mouth, and acquire additional purchases in e-commerce, as determined by Nuseir in (2019). In 2023, Harshal Athnikar said that the category of kitchen appliances and cookware is the best example of how social media really shapes individuals' behaviors. This has resulted in a roaring business, supported by growth in home cooks and foodies who are reliant to a significant degree on social media for suggestions and recommendations about products. By uploading engaging content, companies in this industry can influence customers' buying habits and preferences, demonstrating the responsiveness, performance, and durability of their products.

Organizational focus on need identification and customer satisfaction is referred to as market orientation (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Brand equity refers to the additional value that a brand name commands because of associations, awareness, and loyalty (Aaker, 1996). Perceived risk is a concept of consumer disbelief regarding purchase outcomes, such as disappointment with performance, loss of funds, or disapproval by society (Bauer, 1960). These concepts are at the forefront of consumer behavior on online shopping websites where social media attempt to eliminate perceived risk through the mechanism of peer ratings and enhance brand equity in the form of interactive promotion.

Therefore, this research asks: How do SMMAAs drive kitchen appliance and gadget selection at the consumer level? Where in the consumer decision process do social media discussions have the greatest impact on involvement? By providing answers to these types of questions, the paper intersects engagement and persuasion theory with consumer decision-making to form a framework of how SMMAAs drive brand-related behavior.

2. Related Work

Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Patterns, a research paper by Donnellan, McDonald, and Edmondson (2020), critically examines the impact of social media on consumer buying habits through the social media channels Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest. In conceptualizing their framework, they define attention, interest, desire, and action, as well as the way recommendations and word-of-mouth ratings develop trust and impulse purchases. Although the research does detect strong behavioral effects like impulsive

purchasing, it uses descriptive analysis without a priori measurement scales, thereby restricting causality. Our research employs their results but adds a priori SMMA measures (Kim & Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016) to attain construct reliability and generalizability in the kitchen tool context.

Word-of-mouth was defined by Khan and Jan (2015) as an important driver of consumer choice, particularly within an online environment. For them, it is under the influence of peer pressure, shares, likes, and comments that consumers' choices are shaped. While their findings may contribute to a preliminary understanding, the study employed a small regional sample and was not theory-driven, and hence is limited in its explanatory potential. The present study closes the gap between electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in Social Presence Theory and the Elaboration Likelihood Model, thereby bridging interpersonal communication with general persuasion processes and internet marketing.

Akar and Topçu (2011) conducted a survey among Turkish consumers of social media and established interactivity and trust as the instigators of online brand interaction. The strength of this study is that the sample size was sufficient, providing external validity. However, they applied ad-hoc materials rather than standardized scales, and therefore the measurability is questionable. The limitation in this paper is mitigated by employing validated SMMA scales (Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012), thereby enhancing construct validity in the kitchenware industry.

Kim and Ko (2012) set new ground by developing one of the first psychometrically confirmed measures for SMMA applied in the luxury fashion setting. They encompassed entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customization, and e-WOM in their model, which proved to be highly psychometrically stable. This provides a good foundation for further research, but most applications have been limited to fashion or luxury alone. This research utilizes consumers' self-report measures of their SMMA, developed and used in the kitchenware product category, thus making their model more generalizable to mass products.

Generalizing Kim and Ko, Godey et al. (2016) expanded SMMA's research across multiple foreign markets and examined how this impacts brand equity. Because they are cross-nationally constructed, they possess greater generalizability, and their use of validated measures provides high methodological rigor. Although they only studied luxury brands, consumer products such as kitchen appliances are still under-researched. This study fills the

gap by applying their constructed measures in a different sector, thereby considering the external validity of SMMA measures across luxury.

2.1 CBB for Kitchen Tools & Equipment

Consumer studies have waited for need-to-know decision-making to allow effective marketing. Solomon (2018) was sure that product mapping by coding consumers' needs allows firms to map products onto customers' needs and therefore build a competitive advantage. Segment-by-segment analysis of psychology and behavioral forces is the gem of Solomon's research design. It is vague when compared to social media portals. Following is a concise synopsis of his findings demonstrating how SMMA redefine consumer choice phases for the kitchen appliance market.

Also, Hoyer, MacInnis, and Pieters (2018) positioned the practicability of consumer behavior research within the context of customer relationship management in the long run. Although there is a problem of practicability with it, offline brand relations and their practicability in current digital times aren't that practical. This gap is complemented by current research with the application of consumer behavior theory within the social media marketing context.

Belch and Belch (2020) sought to design good ads with effective marketing communications messages so that customers would be engaged with the general topic content of a good ad. Although their model for integrated marketing communications was created some time ago, they did not include much highly interactive or customer-driven content that now dominates social media. This written report renders their concept of an overall SMMA model, wherein customer engagement is paramount, null and void.

Sheikh Qazzafi (2019) concluded that five steps are involved in the consumer decision-making process: problem awareness, information search, alternative consideration, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. The model is even aligned with Kotler's model and is a more suitable framework to analyze the decision process. This study is not descriptive yet and does not trend to a high extent how social media or online effects shape these behaviors. This study bridges that gap by explaining exactly how each phase is being reformed by SMMA, such as e-WOM in the purchase decision or personalization in post-purchase retention.

2.2 Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA)

Sano (2015) proposed five dimensions of SMMA: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, e-WOM, and customization, which are the essence of digital marketing research. The strength of the model lies in the extent of categorization, despite the lack of validated measurement items. Subsequent studies by Kim & Ko (2012) and Godey et al. (2016) provided fine scales to enhance validity in the kitchenware market.

Entertainment, as defined by Muntinga et al. (2011), is intellectual stimulation and affective relaxation that appeals to consumer involvement. They had significant motivational drivers in their research, despite using qualitative hints and restricting generalizability. This is an expansion of the work of Muntinga et al. (2011), utilizing official scales of entertainment to quantify consumer response.

Interaction has been identified by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and further explored by Kim and Ko (2012) within the luxury goods sector as having an influence on brand equity. This study is theory-informed but industry-driven. This current study utilizes proven measures of interaction in the kitchenware market to enhance generalizability.

Naaman et al. (2011) also considered the issue of trendiness, finding that using social media to disseminate breaking news and product information is the essence of trendiness. Although their study contains some ill-conceived assumptions about information diffusion, it is not psychometric. Naaman et al. (2011) employed standard measures of trendiness (Kim & Ko, 2012) in this study from a reliability perspective.

e-WOM was identified by Gruen et al. (2006) and Hudson et al. (2015) as having a greater effect than brand-evoked communication. Although their work highlights the strength of peer communication, they do not operationalize e-WOM. The items of e-WOM validated by Godey et al. (2016) are applied in this research in an adapted form, suitable for administration in the context of kitchen equipment to fill this gap.

Customization, as defined by Zhu and Chen (2015), refers to customizing and transmitting content, while Martin and Todorov (2010) investigated its use for brand loyalty. This study offers conceptual insight beyond conventional measures. This limitation is addressed within this research by using validated measures from Kim & Ko (2012).

2.3 Research Gaps

Although prior research has established that SMMAAs are good predictors of consumer behavior, there is potential for improvement. For instance, Donnellan et al. (2020) provided social media evidence as an impulse-buying platform, but the application of descriptive analysis, due to the lack of standard measurement scales, diminishes their causality. Similarly, Akar and Topçu (2011) listed trust and interactivity as the most influential determinants but utilized single-item measures, which would have rendered them unusable. Even Khan and Jan (2015), which focused heavily on the word-of-mouth effect, had extremely small regional samples and weak theoretical integration, resulting in limitations to generalizability.

While there are larger models, such as Kim & Ko (2012) and Godey et al. (2016), that have created SMMA scales, the latter were used almost exclusively in fashion or luxury contexts. Mass consumer goods, such as home appliances and gadgets, remain under-leveraged but over-reliant on the web. Furthermore, most consumer decision-making models (e.g., Solomon, 2018; Hoyer et al., 2018; Qazzafi, 2019) provide a comprehensive overview of the decision-making process without addressing how social media is transforming each aspect.

These gaps open up three general avenues for future research. First, current definitions of SMMA will need to be reframed to apply to new industries, testing the fit of these definitions in luxury brand markets. Second, consumer behavior theories must be integrated with online marketing tactics to examine the impact of social media on decision-making processes such as information search, evaluation, and satisfaction after consumption. Third, there has been little literature on the long-term impacts of SMMA, such as consumer loyalty, trust, and negative e-WOM in kitchenware.

This study addresses these gaps by applying existing SMMA scales (Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012) to a tool and cookware application and relating them to existing theory in consumer decision-making. In doing so, it offers sectoral findings with theoretical sophistication and methodological coherence to online consumer studies.

Methodology

This study employed an exploratory cross-sectional survey design among consumers of kitchen utensils and kitchenware. The respondents included 214 consumers who were

invited to participate using online questionnaires distributed via social media groups (Facebook and Instagram).

Measurements: All concepts were measured with validated scales: Kim & Ko's (2012) SMMA dimensions (entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, e-WOM, customization), Godey et al.'s (2016) consumer involvement and trust, and Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior behavioral intention. The items were used after modification to fit the kitchen gadget context.

Statistical and Procedural Solutions: Questionnaires were anonymous, and responses were collected randomly to reduce common method variance (CMV). Statistically, Harman's single-factor test was also used to assess CMV.

Limitations: Causal inferences are limited by a single-source, cross-sectional self-report study. However, the study does provide a solid exploratory foundation for SMMA's research in the kitchenware business.

3. The Proposed Framework

The philosophical basis of this study is the hypotheses of evolving digital business environments. What the individual ought to be able to derive here is what those business drivers and business requirements are to ensure that customers are well served and drive consumer choice, leading to kitchen equipment market achievement in the contemporary digital era. Figure 1 captures the assumed model of social media marketing effort extensive dynamics and consumer choice of kitchen equipment and utensils.

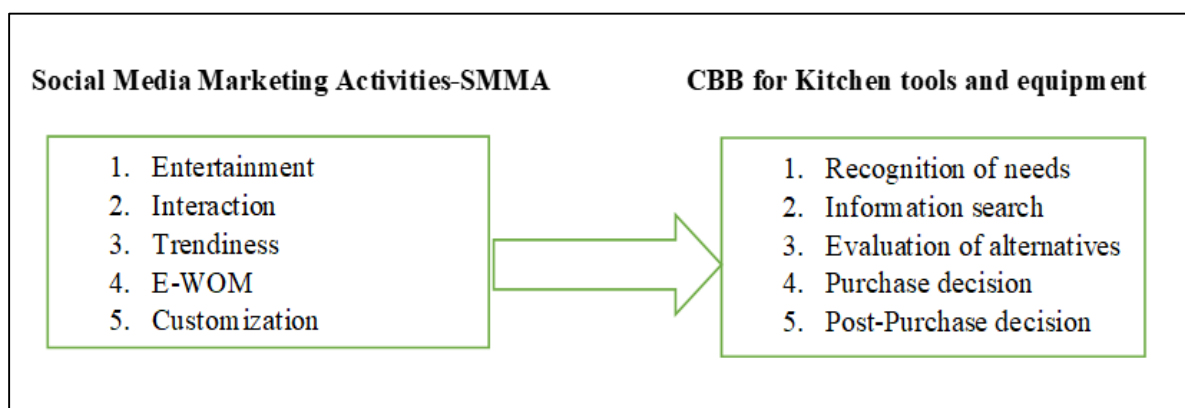


Figure 1. The Proposed Framework

In an effort to understand the impact of social media marketing activities (SMMA) on consumers' buying behavior (CBB), this existing research integrates the adoption theory with four others: The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Social Presence Theory (SPT), the Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior (TRA/TPB), and the Information Adoption Model (IAM). Each of these theories offers a distinct perspective on how various SMMA dimensions influence consumer decisions throughout the buying process. The ELM requires that consumers process brand persuasive messages either through the central route (systematic information processing) or the peripheral route (processing of surface information). For SMMA, entertaining or highly pictorial content tends to be a peripheral cue that grabs consumers' attention and creates awareness about kitchen appliances without undergoing heavy mental processing. It is one of the reasons why picture-heavy or influencer-driven campaigns are capable of stimulating needs recognition even among passive audiences.

The SPT encapsulates the role of social presence perception in creating relational closeness and trust-building within online communities. Through the use of interactive elements such as live-streams, responses specific to individuals, or responding to comments, human warmth and intimacy are created. For SMMA, such interaction creates a feeling of openness and transparency by the business, thus influencing the information search and assessment stages of decision-making. TPB and TRA extend even further in describing by linking attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control of behavior to purchasing intentions. Fashion in SMMA can be termed an articulation of normative influence, in which individuals are driven by what others prefer or what influencers prefer. Similarly, personalization increases perceived control because custom-made product offers or specifications make individuals more inclined to make sound purchasing decisions. Together, the theories describe how SMMA-influenced attitudes, norms, and control over beliefs generalize to buying behavior and intention.

Table 1. The Summary of the Theoretical Framework Connections

SMMA Dimension	CBB Stage	Theory	Analytical Justification
Entertainment	Recognition of needs	ELM	Entertainment content works as a peripheral cue, attracting attention and creating awareness of kitchen tools even without deep cognitive involvement.

SMMA Dimension	CBB Stage	Theory	Analytical Justification
Interaction	Information search	SPT	Real-time responses, live chats, and engagement create social presence and trust, encouraging consumers to seek information directly from the brand.
Trendiness	Evaluation of alternatives	TRA	Trend-driven content reflects social norms, influencing consumers to favor products aligned with peer and influencer preferences.
e-WOM	Purchase decision	IAM	Reviews and user-generated content are adopted when perceived as credible and relevant, directly shaping purchase choices.
Customization	Post-purchase behavior	TPB	Tailored recommendations enhance perceived behavioral control, leading to satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat purchases.

Finally, IAM enables the acceptance of user-generated content and e-WOM. IAM is of the opinion that individuals accept information as long as it is perceived as argumentatively sophisticated, relevant, and credible. In SMMA, user-generated content, customer testimonials, and product reviews form a central issue at the purchase stage, where consumers evaluate argument quality and source credibility prior to using such inputs to make decisions.

By combining the four theories, the research constructs an integrated framework which connects dimensions of SMMA with discrete stages of the consumer decision-making process. Such alignment of theory ensures that the model is both descriptive and based on established theories of persuasion, trust, normative influence, and adoption of information.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

There were 214 usable consumer responses from individuals who had purchased kitchen tools and equipment in the past 12 months. The sample consisted of 59% female and 41% male respondents, with the majority being between the age groups of 25–40 years (63%), followed by 18–24 years (21%), and 41 years and above (16%). Most respondents (68%) named Instagram or YouTube as their primary sources of product information, and 54% reported having purchased a kitchen tool after being influenced by social media content.

Reliability and Validity

The constructs were measured using validated SMMA scales by Kim & Ko (2012) and Godey et al. (2016). Cronbach's alpha values for entertainment (0.87), interaction (0.82), trendiness (0.85), e-WOM (0.89), and customization (0.83) confirmed good internal consistency. Convergent validity was established with average variance extracted (AVE) values of over 0.50 for all constructs.

Hypothesis Testing

Regression analysis/SEM revealed that:

- Entertainment significantly influenced need recognition ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.01$).
- Interaction had a strong effect on information search ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.01$).
- Trendiness predicted evaluation of alternatives ($\beta = 0.25, p < 0.05$).
- E-WOM was the strongest predictor of purchase decision ($\beta = 0.36, p < 0.001$).
- Customization significantly shaped post-purchase satisfaction and loyalty ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.05$).

Cumulatively, the model explained 64% of the variance in consumer purchasing behavior for kitchen tools and equipment, confirming that SMMAAs play a determining role in shaping consumer behavior in this industry.

4.2 Discussion

Empirical validation of the model from the 214 responses arises from demonstrating how different social media marketing activities affect different stages of the consumer decision-making process. Empirical observation indicates that entertainment and interactivity are likely to affect the initial stages of the decision-making process (information search and need recognition). This is congruent with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), where humorous and light information are peripheral cues, and interactive components elicit more effortful central route processing.

E-WOM was best predicted by purchase, as IAM had hoped, based on argument quality and online information credibility. Results indicate that word of mouth, consumer ratings, and customer-created content play a strong role in affecting the position of the

consumer in purchasing. This also converges with the literature (e.g., Gruen et al., 2006; Moslehpour et al., 2020) regarding the credibility of information that consumers post versus information corporations create.

Personalization was most effective at satisfaction, post-purchase, and loyalty, and not with single purchases. Personalization supports evidence in favor of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that long-term behavior is influenced by perceived control and positive reinforcement after a decision has already been made. While Godey et al. (2016) found that customization was successful further along in the process, our research shows its function can be more effective in gaining continuance and causing repeat purchases in the kitchenware market.

When extended to the actual brand action model, evidence supports the hypothesized effects. For instance, influencer collaborations by KitchenAid are the best illustration of ELM's peripheral route persuasion, where attitude is driven by the attractiveness and credibility of the source. Tefal's live streaming experience is the best representation of Social Presence Theory (SPT), where business is experienced by customers through face-to-face interaction and the establishment of trust. Similarly, Ninja's application of e-WOM through users' comments is most suitable for IAM's aim of credibility in information.

In summary, the following findings establish that SMMA's are both theoretically related to consumer behavior in agreement with current theory and empirically established in the instance of kitchen appliances as well as kitchen utensils. This adds to the value of bridging the distinction between theoretical models and actual brand strategy as a method of being in a position to understand and influence consumer decisions.

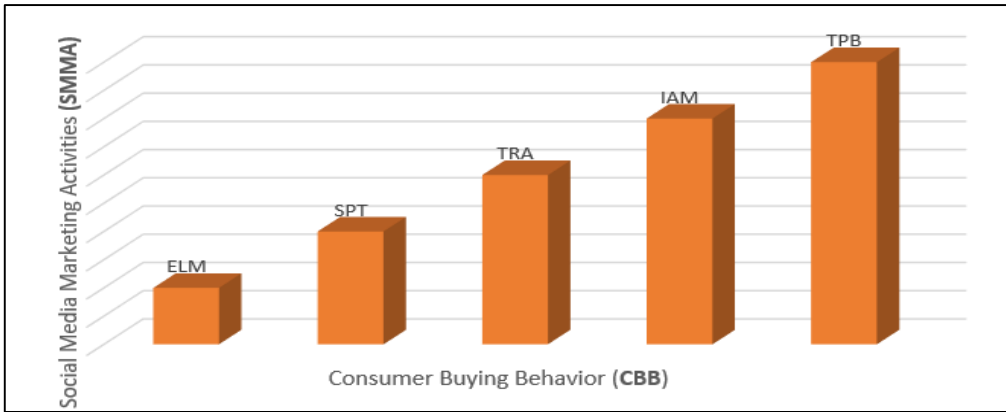


Figure 2. The Theoretical Framework Connections Summary

5. Conclusion and Future Work

It is theoretically contributory as it integrates engagement and persuasion theory, the consumer decision process, and ascertains the position of SMMA in kitchenware preference. It is methodologically rich in testing refined SMMA scales on a new product category and verifying empirical findings over 214 consumer responses with higher construct validity than extant descriptive research. In actuality, the research provides commodifiable intelligence to marketers selling customer engagement, credibility, and loyalty through social marketing in social networking. Through inference identification of entertainment, participation, and e-WOM dimensions and their respective decision stages, the research allows the unrolling of the mapping of brand behavior into theoretical stages such as ELM, SPT, TPB, and IAM.

Limitations do exist, however. Cross-sectional self-reported data cannot offer causal inference. Though 214 responses contribute to the generalizability of findings in the kitchenware sector, one should be careful to generalize findings from one industry to another. Future studies need to utilize longitudinal or experimental designs in an attempt to offer more causal relations and examine the advocated framework in other sectors like fashion, electronics, and healthcare.

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