The Impact of the Advertisements on the Social Networking Sites: A Case Study on the Social Networking Users of Bangladesh

Khonika Gope[1]

Abstract- *The major benefit of social network advertising is that the advertisers can take advantage of the users' demographic information and target their advertisements appropriately. But recently targeted advertisements have created some controversies as many consider it as an invasion of privacy. This paper tried to find out the impact of advertisement on Social Networking Sites on the users. The study found that most of the users consider targeted advertisement as invasion of privacy regardless of the extent to which they consider privacy as an important factor in Social Networking Sites. The paper also found that response towards ads can be changed through innovative ads. The enthusiasm and demand for different features and innovativeness were evident among the users. This paper also found a relationship between priorities for logging into Social Networking Sites and the habit of going through an advertisement.*

Key Words: *Advertisement on Social Networking Sites, Targeted Advertisement, Invasion of Privacy, Innovative Advertisement*

1. Introduction

Creating Social Networks is something which is imbued in human nature since ancient times. "A social network is a social structure made up of a set of actors (such as individuals or organizations) and the dyadic ties between these actors (such as relationships, connections, or interactions). A social network perspective is employed to model the structure of a social group, how this structure influences other variables, or how structures change over time"[1].

Social networks are trusted because of shared experiences and the perception of shared values or shared needs. Social Networking service can be defined like this, "A Social Networking service is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on facilitating the building of Social Networks or social relations among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections."

Social Networking sites can be classified into the following categories [2]:

- Social News Sites (such as Digg, Reddit, Yahoo Buzz)
- Social Bookmarking Sites (such as Delicious, StumbleUpon)

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1. Lecturer, Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka,
    email: khonika@iba-du.edu

- Social Networking (such asFacebook, Myspace, LinkedIn)
- Social Knowledge (such as Wikipedia, Yahoo Answers)
- Social Sharing (such as YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, Urban Spoon, Yelp)

Social network advertising is a term that is used to describe a form of online advertising that focuses on Social Networking Sites. Major benefits of advertising on a Social Networking site are that advertisers can take advantage of the users' demographic information and target their advertisements appropriately.

Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through Social Media sites [3]. Many people also perform searches at Social Media sites to find Social Media content. Social media websites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter provide unlimited means for internet users to interact, express, share and create content about anything, including brands. Such consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRAs) have significant consequences for firms [4].

There are numerous ways how companies advertise in the Social Media. Nowadays, even blogs are being used as an advertising tool. Companies that recognize the need for information, originality, and accessibility employ blogs to make their products popular and unique, and ultimately reach out to consumers who are privy to Social Media [5].

Since creating an account is free, SNSs have to generate their revenues elsewhere, through a venue such as advertising but in examining the typical users of Social Networking Sites, it becomes evident that many people join these sites for socializing, not shopping. As such, many members are annoyed at Social Networking ads, and do their best to ignore them.

This paper aims to find out the impact of advertising on Social Networking Sites on the members or users of different Social Networking Sites. The findings will help the advertisers to know about different aspects of an advertisement which have stronger impact on the users of Social Networking Sites. Advertisers can learn from this report what to avoid and what to do regarding getting the attention of the members or users of Social Networking Sites.

2. Literature Review

In its early days advertising was present in print media like newspapers and after that on other support such as television. With the Internet revolution, advertising has moved to another channel with much more possibilities to influence and persuade customers. It is projected that the online advertising industry will grow three times faster than advertising in any other media [6]. Social networks are used as a marketing tool for many different purposes. Those marketing companies use these sites to gain information on their target market, and how people feel about their products. They can also use these sites to gain information on their competition. Small businesses may also use these sites to promote their brand.

The most valuable part of marketing using Social Networks is that it allows people to market their services to a large market at no cost. Facebook alone has 750 million users and each user spends 15 hours 33 minutes on an average every month on Facebook [7]. Therefore Social Networks are able to reach a mass market free of charge. One large benefit to marketing on Social Networks is the sharing factor. Users of these networks tend to share items that are of interest to them, or that they believe their friends will find interesting. Social networks are also beneficial to companies who are wishing to create e-mail lists to send coupons or advertisements through the mail. Companies may post bulletins on websites encouraging people to sign up for their daily newsletters, etc. Marketers are also able to monitor how people are viewing their brands, what their competitors are doing, and how customers are viewing the competition. Receiving this feedback from customers allows marketers to understand what the target market looks for, what people like about their products or services, and what needs to be improved. Different aspects of advertising on Social Networking Sites are discussed below:

A. Targeted Advertisement on Social Networking Sites-Invasion of Privacy:

While many users feel their personal data is safe on Social Networking Sites because they have set high levels of security settings, research suggests this is not the case. According to a 2010 Northeastern University and Max Planck Institute for Software Systems study, researchers created an algorithm to discover an individual's personal attributes by examining the one thing that most people leave public - their friend list. Using the algorithm, researchers were able to infer many personal traits merely from friend lists, including educational level, university attended, hometown and other private data.

Another research done by L. Sørensen and K. Skoubythat examined high-level user requirements of future web-based Social Networks showed that "users have high concerns towards the handling of their private data in web-based Social Networks generally calling for a higher focus on securing trust and privacy" [8],[9].

B. Usefulness of Advertisement on Social Networking Sites to the Users:

As found in [10], there are 12 major benefits for business when it comes to marketing in Social Networking Sites:

- Increased awareness of the organization
- Increased traffic to website
- Greater favorable perceptions of the brand
- Able to monitor conversations about the organization
- Able to develop targeted marketing activities
- Better understanding of customers perceptions of their brand
- Improved insights about their target markets
- Identification of positive and negative comments

- Increase in new business
- Identification of new product or service opportunities
- Ability to measure the frequency of the discussion about the brand
- Early warning of potential product or service issues.

There are also certain disadvantages regarding using Social Media Networks as marketing vehicles:

- Problem regarding choosing the appropriate Social Networking Sites,
- Skill of the marketer regarding the use of Social Marketing Sites,
- Maintaining advertisement requires considerable time investment,
- Negative feedback provided by the customers will be visible to other potential customers,
- It is not easy to measure the results of advertisement on Social Networking Sites.

The technology behind the Networking Sites has enabled its users to fully display their unique personalities online). According to [11], the users have the following benefits:

- Build one's personal reputation
- Display one's resume
- Find a job
- Showcase one's talents and establish oneself as an expert
- Enhance one's business contacts and personal relationships
- Share information with like-minded people

C. Why people use Social Networking Sites?:

According to [12], the top three reasons for people to join Social Networking Sites like Facebook are:

- To make an identity,
- To make connections with others,
- To be a part of a community.

Another way, it can be said that people use online Social Networking for the following reasons:

- To connect with people,
- For collaboration at work,
- The quest for popularity,
- To hide from real life.

Every day there are more reasons for companies to use blogging platforms to their Social Media repertoire. Platforms like LinkedIn create an environment for companies and clients to connect online [13].

D. Attention Grabbing Aspect of Advertisement on Social Networking Sites:

People are spending increasing amounts of time online, especially on Social Networking websites, at the expense of traditional advertising media such as television and newspapers. As a result, Advertisers are increasingly looking for ways to reach out to consumers who are spending more and more time online. The biggest challenge with learning how to advertise on Social Networking Sites is learning to catch people's attention. An advertisement is going to occupy a tiny square of real estate on people's Social Networking Sites' walls. It is going to compete with other ads as well as with funny pictures, comments, jokes, and live updates from people's closest friends. So the advertisers need to know how to stand out from the crowd [14].

E. Innovative Advertisements on Social Networking Sites and Their Impact:

Social Networking sites are investing energy and resources in innovating novel ad units that serve the needs of both advertisers and users. Facebook and other Social Networking Sites are now developing new types of ad units that allow marketers to do an ever-better job of homing in on their target customers.

Some examples of innovative advertisement on Social Networking Sites and their impacts are given below:

In 2011, Johnson & Johnson's launched its advertising campaign for Polacrilex Gum, an anti- smoking Nicorette with an innovative Facebook application. Penn-Olson reported that its Facebook page gathered about 33,500 fans in a period of just two months of its launch. The Facebook page featured an application known as Nicorette Support through which the user could enter their quitting timeline or could invite loved ones to quit smoking. The application also encouraged existing quitters to help others to do the same [15].

Hippo, a unique baked wheat snack food brand launched in the Indian snack market in 2010 and successfully deployed an innovative Social Media brand awareness-cum-customer engagement-cum-advertising campaign. In February 2010, Hippo launched a Twitter campaign asking consumers and retailers to tweet Hippo's availability on retail shelves on Hippo's Twitter page, because they were facing difficulties in tracking distribution across India. The company promised to take action on the tweets which stated unavailability in specific stores. Parle Agro claimed that they received such stock related tweets from 25 cities and that the number of people tracking Hippo stocks on Twitter equaled 45 per cent of Parle Agro's foods sales team. Their sales had jumped by 76% after this campaign [15].

3. Methodology

    A. *Topic Research:* This report was written based on the secondary resources and primary research based on a survey. The source for secondary data was the internet.

B. *Survey Method:* The primary data was collected through a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed in a structured manner with one check-list question, seven category-scale questions, one question for measuring behavioral intention, one frequency determination question and four determinant choice questions.

C. *Sample Design:* The primary target was the users of the Social Networking Sites especially the Facebook users. The 118 respondents were chosen by convenient sampling method.

D. *Data Processing & Analysis:* The gathered data were processed by SPSS. Cross-tabulation and chi-square analysis were used to explain the data. After processing the data, the findings were interpreted and analyzed in the report.

4. Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between the extent to which users consider "privacy" as an important factor in "Social Networking Sites" and the extent to which users consider "targeted advertisement" on Social Networking Sites as invasion of privacy.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between the extent to which users consider "giving ad" on Social Networking sites as a good idea and the extent to which users consider "the violation of privacy" aspect of "targeted advertisement" as an issue.

Null Hypothesis 3: The notion that whether advertisements in Social Networking Sites are unable to grab attention and user's preference for attention grabbing features in advertisement, are independent of each other.

Null Hypothesis 4: Types of response towards a common/familiar advertisement on Social Networking Sites and the issue of the users' desire for innovative ads on Social Networking Sites are independent of each other.

Null Hypothesis 5: There is no difference between the opinions regarding enthusiasm about advertising in Social Networking Sites and the types of priority for maintaining an account in Social Networking Sites.

Null Hypothesis 6: Difference between priorities for logging into Social Networking Sites and the habit of going through an advertisement on Social Networking Sites, are independent of each other.

Null Hypothesis 7: There is no relationship between the extent to which users think of advertisement on Social Networking Sites as useful and preference for clothing shop advertisement.

Null Hypothesis 8: There is no relationship between the extent to which users like the idea of innovative advertisement on Social Networking Sites and preference for local boutiques advertisement.

Null Hypothesis 9: There is no relationship between the types of features of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites that attract the users and preference for food shop advertisement.

Null Hypothesis 10: There is no relationship between the types of features of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites that attract the users and preference for local boutiques advertisement.

Null Hypothesis 11: There is no relationship between the types of features of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites that attract the users and preference for educational institutes' advertisement.

5. Findings And Analyses

5.1 Hypothesis 1

To find out the answer to the hypothesis, the respondents were asked two questions regarding whether the privacy aspect is an important factor for the users in Social Networking Sites and to what extent the users of Social Advertisement Sites consider targeted advertisement as an invasion of privacy. The Chi-Square test was used in this regard.

Table 1: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 1			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.861[a]	9	.221
Likelihood Ratio	11.044	9	.273
Linear-by-Linear Association	.006	1	.940
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 10 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .15.			

It can be seen from the Chi Square table that the value of Chi Square is 11.861 but for degree of freedom 9 and level of significance of 5%, the critical value of Chi Square is 16.919 which is greater than the computed value of Chi Square. It is also found that the p-value is 0.221 which is greater than the level of significance 0.05. So the Null Hypothesis cannot be rejected.

There is no relationship between the extent to which users consider "privacy" as an important factor in "Social Networking Sites" and the extent to which users consider "targeted advertisement" on Social Networking Sites as invasion of privacy.

5.2 Hypothesis 2

To find out the answer to the hypothesis, two questions were asked. One tried to find out to what extent users consider giving ad on Social Networking sites as a good idea and another tried to find out to what extent the users of Social Networking Sites consider targeted advertisement as an invasion of privacy.

Table 2: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 2			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.493[a]	12	.017
Likelihood Ratio	25.143	12	.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	.501	1	.479
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .31.			

The Null Hypothesis is rejected at 5% significance level as that the value of Chi Square is 24.493 but the critical value of Chi Square is 21.026 for degrees of freedom 12

So, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the extent to which users consider "giving ad" on Social Networking sites as a good idea and the extent to which users consider "the violation of privacy" aspect of "targeted advertisement" as an issue.

5.3 Hypothesis 3

Two questions tried to find out what aspects of an ad attracts the users and whether the users accept or reject the notion that advertisements on Social Networking Sites do not have attention grabbing capability. The question regarding the notion that "advertisement in Social Networking Sites does not grab attention" had five options- 1. Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Somewhat Agree, 4. Disagree, 5. Strongly Disagree. Strongly agree, Agree and Somewhat Agree were categorized as "Accept' and Disagree and Strongly Disagree were categorized as "Reject".

Table 3: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 3			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.223[a]	3	.527
Likelihood Ratio	2.312	3	.510
Linear-by-Linear Association	.361	1	.548
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.25.			

It can be seen from the Chi Square table that the value of Chi Square is 2.223 but for degree of freedom 3 and level of significance of 5%, the critical value of Chi Square is 7.851 which is greater than the computed value of Chi Square. It is also found that the p- value is 0.527 which is greater than the level of significance 0.05. So the Null Hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The notion that whether advertisements in Social Networking Sites are unable to grab attention and user's preference for attention grabbing features in advertisement, is independent of each other. It may mean that attention grabbing aspect of an ad in Social Networking Site may not be related to the characteristics of the ad itself. It might be related to some other issues.

5.4 Hypothesis 4

To find out the answer to the hypothesis, two questions were asked. One asked the users about the extent to which they would welcome or like innovative ads on Social Networking Sites. Another asked about the type of response that the users usually provide towards an ad on Social Networking Sites.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 4			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.914[a]	2	.004
Likelihood Ratio	10.823	2	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.816	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.32.			

The Null Hypothesis is rejected in this case. So, the types of response towards a common/familiar advertisement on Social Networking Sites and the issue of the users' desire for innovative ads on Social Networking Sites are not independent of each other. So it means types of response towards ads and preference for innovative ads has a relationship which may indicate that innovativeness of ads might result in a changed response among the users.

5.5 Hypothesis 5

Two questions were asked for testing this hypothesis. One asked the users about their priority for logging into Social Networking Sites. Another asked about to what extent the users think of advertisement on Social Networking Sites as useful.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 5			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.810[a]	4	.771
Likelihood Ratio	3.219	4	.522
Linear-by-Linear Association	.030	1	.863
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36.			

The Null Hypothesis is not rejected and thus it can be said that there is no difference between the opinions regarding enthusiasm about advertising in Social Networking Sites and the types of priority for maintaining an account in Social Networking Sites.

5.6 Hypothesis 6

Two questions were asked for testing this hypothesis. One asked the users about their priority for logging into Social Networking Sites. Another asked about the habit of going through an advertisement on Social Networking Sites.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 6			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	44.045[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	22.934	12	.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.905	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	118		

The Null Hypothesis is rejected in this case. Thus it can be said that the difference between priorities for logging into Social Networking Sites and the habit of going through an advertisement on Social Networking Sites is not independent of each other.

5.7 Hypothesis 7

Two questions were asked for testing this hypothesis. One asked the users about the extent to which users think of advertisement on Social Networking Sites as useful. Another asked about whether they like advertisement related to branded clothing shop or not.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 7			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.932[a]	4	.012
Likelihood Ratio	13.524	4	.009
Linear-by-Linear Association	.734	1	.392
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 3 cells (30.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .64.			

It can be seen from the Chi Square table that the value of Chi Square is 12.932 but for degree of freedom 4 and level of significance of 5%, the critical value of Chi Square is 9.488 which is less than the computed value of Chi Square. It is also found that the p-value is 0.012 which is less than the level of significance 0.05. So the Null Hypothesis is rejected.

There is a relationship between the extent to which users think advertisement on Social Networking Sites as useful and preference for clothing shop advertisement.

5.8 Hypothesis 8

To find out the answer to the hypothesis, two questions were asked. The users were asked about the extent to which users like the idea of innovative advertisement on Social Networking Sites. They were also asked whether they like advertisement related to local boutiques or not.

Table 8: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 8			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.947[a]	4	.041
Likelihood Ratio	15.384	4	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	.626	1	.429
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16.			

The Null Hypothesis is rejected. So, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the extent to which users like the idea of innovative advertisement on Social Networking Sites and preference for local boutiques advertisement.

5.9 Hypothesis 9

To find out the answer to the hypothesis, I had come up with two questions. One has asked the users about what characteristics of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites attracts them. Another asked about whether they like advertisement related to food shop or not. I have used the Chi-Square test in this regard.

Table 9: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 9			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.588[a]	3	.006
Likelihood Ratio	16.223	3	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.904	1	.342
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.27.			

It can be seen from the Chi Square table that the value of Chi Square is 12.588 but for degrees of freedom 3 and level of significance of 5%, the critical value of Chi Square is 7.815 which is less than the computed value of Chi Square. It is also found that the p-value is 0.006 which is less than the level of significance 0.05. So the Null Hypothesis is rejected.

There is a relationship between the types of features of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites that attract the users and preference for food shop advertisement.

5.10 Hypothesis 10

The users were asked what characteristics of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites attract them. They were also asked whether they like advertisement related to food shop or not.

Table 10: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 10			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.243[a]	3	.041
Likelihood Ratio	10.371	3	.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.534	1	.006
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.93.			

It can be seen from the Chi Square table that the value of Chi Square is 8.243 but for degree of freedom 3 and level of significance of 5%, the critical value of Chi Square is 7.815 which is less than the computed value of Chi Square. It is also found that the p-value is 0.041 which is less than the level of significance 0.05. So the Null Hypothesis is rejected.

There is a relationship between the types of features of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites that attract the users and preference for local boutiques advertisement.

5.11 Hypothesis 11

For testing this hypothesis, one question asked the users about what characteristics of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites attract them whereas another asked about whether they like advertisement related to educational institutes or not.

Table 11: Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 11			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.902[a]	3	.012
Likelihood Ratio	13.751	3	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.569	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	118		
a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.75.			

The Null Hypothesis is again rejected. So, it can be said with 95% level of confidence that there is a relationship between the types of features of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites that attract the users and preference for educational institutes' advertisement.

6. Conclusion

From the survey and research, it was found that people who consider privacy on Social Networking Sites important do not consider targeted advertisement an invasion of privacy. Again users who think of providing one's own ad is a good idea also think of the violation of privacy concept regarding targeted advertisement as an issue. According to the respondents, attention grabbing aspect of an advertisement is not related to the advertisement's feature. Secondary analysis shows that the biggest challenge with Social Media advertising is to catch people's attention as an advertisement is going to occupy a tiny square of real estate on people's Social Networking Sites' walls. It is going to compete with other ads as well as with funny pictures, comments, jokes, and life updates from people's closest friends. So the advertisers need to know how to stand out from the crowd and this is where the question of innovativeness comes. The research has shown that types of response towards a common/familiar advertisement on Social Networking Sites and the issue of the users' desire for innovative ads on Social Networking Sites is not independent of each other, which means that response towards ads can be changed through innovative ads. It was also found out that there is no difference between the opinions regarding enthusiasm about advertising in Social Networking Sites and the types of priority for maintaining an account in Social Networking Sites. So anyone with any priority to log into Facebook would not have difference in opinion regarding the advertising on Social Networking Sites. It was also evident that difference between priorities for logging into Social Networking Sites and the habit of going through an advertisement on Social Networking Sites is not independent of each other. There is a relationship between the types of features of an advertisement on Social Networking Sites that attract the users and preference for food shop, local boutiques and educational institutes' advertisement. So it can be inferred that if rightly positioned, the impact of advertisement on Social Networking Sites will be huge.

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