CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
3.1 Research Methodology

This chapter details out the research methodology for the present study. It explains the research objective and a suitable methodology to achieve those objectives.

The objectives of this study is to identify the various factors that determine the purchase of a product using social media from a customer's point of view and to facilitate the measurability of social media in terms of return on investment by using social media and develop a model from the retailer's perspective.

This involved an exhaustive study of demographic characteristics and psychographic factors of the customer in order to understand the various factors that the customer takes into consideration about the retailer and the products offered using social media as a tool to get information, understand the decision making journey of the customer and the way it has to be transformed using social media as a tool for the customer to connect with the retailer. Furthermore, there is a high influence of peer review to facilitate the final purchase decision from the well informed customer of the 21st Century.

The retailer in the Indian perspective still sees social media as a new tool that still needs exploration. It is a tool used by retailers to get information but they are unaware about the various strategies that engage the customer and the measurement aspect after the engagement of the customer. On the retailer's front, this study attempts to develop a Return on Investment model that can be used by retailers to measure the engagement of customers and generate sales for the retailer.

The research methodology has been robust and measures have been taken to minimize errors in data collection and analysis. Owing to this, questionnaire method has been administered and data is being collected using "Google Survey" and using internet as a medium.

This chapter describes the pilot study, participants of the study, instrumentation done for the study, data collection and analysis and procedures of the entire study.
The process of research is to discover a new aspect of a study or to contribute a new dimension to the existing body of knowledge. Various authors have coined the term “Research Methodology” as a systematic rigorous process of contributing knowledge by using various data collection tool.

This chapter will focus on the research methodology used, and justify the reason as to why certain methods were chosen over the others. An in-depth discussion of research purpose, strategy, research approach, method adopted in collecting data will be outlined in this section.

3.1.1 Process of Research

The topic of the research, "A Study on the Applicability of Social Media on the Marketing Strategy in Select Retail Outlets" was arrived at after much deliberation on what to write about in the area of social media. The researcher focused on how a company can use social media to measure the activities that happen in social networking websites and the way the retail units can engage the audience and facilitate sales and revenue in the Indian retail
industry. From the topic several research problems to cover different areas of the research were picked. Coherently, literature review and theoretical framework was executed using various resources from books, journals and other forms of electronic data that related to the topic. In addition to that, the research design which acted as a blue print for the entire process paved way to the selection of the methodology applied in this research. Decisively primary data from three industries with five companies in the mass and niche market, the data was collected and analysed.

We must agree that writing thesis is not an easy task, what looks as relevant information in the eye of the researcher, sometimes is very irrelevant when the supervisor reviews the report. Therefore there have been a lot of additions and subtractions in some areas during the entire writing process of this thesis that lead to its accomplishment.

3.2 Research Purpose

The retail landscape has become competitive in nature. Today, retailers have a huge opportunity to tap the development of technology and reach to a larger customer base. It is a challenge for the retailers to keep pace to the development of technology in terms of product communication and delivery to the end consumer.

In India, social media is still in a very nascent stage. Due to the explosion of media and mobile retailers need to be far more innovative to engage and retain their target audience. The purpose of the study is to give an insight on the various marketing strategies used by the retailer to generate revenue for the organization. Also, on the customer front it is being analysed on how the message is being created to facilitate a customer relationship through a decision making journey.

3.3 Objectives of the Study

- To study the impact of social media on the marketing strategy in select retail outlets.
- To assess the measurability of social media and the way it generates revenue for the organization.
• To assess the impact of social media marketing on the consumers’ purchasing decision through the process of retailing in India.
• To get an insight on the essence of social networking marketing in terms of its various dimensions from the consumers’ view point in select retail units
• To give suggestive based on findings.

3.4 Pilot Study
The pilot study formed the pedestal for the study. It was conducted on 30 respondents from the retailer's perspective and 100 respondents from the customer's side.
The survey was conducted at an all India level. There was a positive response from the pilot study. Based on the findings of the pilot study, the survey instrument was being designed.

3.5 Instrumentation
For effective and flawless data collection, survey and interview methods were used. Survey method is the most extensive used technique for data collection, especially in behavioural sciences, while interviews are an appropriate method to use when exploring practitioner's perspectives due to the qualitative nature of information.
Thus, these methods have been widely used to extract the most relevant information and help in better analysis of data.

In order to efficiently use the survey method, a questionnaire was being developed taking all the objectives and hypothesis into consideration.

Table : 3.5 – The research study in a nutshell

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<tr>
<th>PART-A : Customer's Perspective</th>
<th>PART-B: Retailer's Perspective</th>
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<tr>
<td>Various perspectives of social media are being analysed on the customer. The transformation of the consumer decision making journey and the impact the retailer makes through their promotional activities using various social networking tools are being analysed on the customer</td>
<td>Developing a Return on Investment model and to measure customer engagement on a social media landscape in the Indian Retailer's perspective. Also, an understanding on how social media is being used by the retailer to engage the customer, generate new leads, create a positive impact and measure the success or failure of the campaign is being analysed from the</td>
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perspective of the retailer.
3.6 Descriptive Studies

Descriptive studies is an area which focuses on describing a particular scenario, a problem area through an investigated question. It is essential to have clarity on the methods of data collection prior to the formulation of the problem statement.

This field of study is complex and it requires proficient skills of research so that it can be designed and executed effectively. In this study, questions are being investigated and the solutions to those questions are being drawn through primary data.

3.7 Explanatory study

This field of study aims at answering the question of establishing a relationship of two variables. Furthermore, it explains the situation and the problem as it is. This area of study helps to establish a cause and effect relationship that is useful for interpreting and giving a meaning to the data after it is being collected from the respondents.

It is essential for the researcher to be systematic in the processes and procedures of conducting this type of study. The theoretical frame work needs to be translated and tested through the data collection procedures and the structured questionnaire so that the knowledge generated can be related from theory to practice.

3.8 Exploratory study

This field of study facilitates to seek new insights, ask new questions and get solutions in an innovative manner. This study is useful when the researcher lacks clarity about the field of study and the problem statement. Here, the researcher defines a broad research problem that is later being translated and given an informative meaning. There are many ways through which explanatory study can be done which includes literature review, expert interviews, focused group interview, to name a few.
This method has its own pros and cons. One of the main benefit of using this field of study is that it enables the researcher to get an in depth knowledge about the study. However, there are certain biases when one considers the interview method which influences the judgement that is being done on the problem statement due to the response of interviewer and the interviewee. This field of study is also subjected to different kind of biases that are sometimes non-systematic in nature.

When the finding do not represent accurate data in a precise manner it leads to non-representativeness. The finding cannot be generalized and is very specific in nature which is being quantitatively represented i.e. representativeness. However, the researcher faces an issue in case of representativeness due to the rigour in terms of quantitative research. This can be addressed by adopting a fair and accurate sample design process. The objective of exploratory study can be addressed either through qualitative or quantitative research or a combination of both.

3.9 Quantitative Study

Quantitative research is a process of number crunching. It is where the data is being collected and analysed in a numeric form. When the number of respondents are huge data is being analysed by using statistical tools like SAS, SPSS, Excel Stat, etc. The quantitative study is being obtained through testing of hypothesis where the relationship between two variables are being tested and the analysis is being done using various statistical techniques.

This area of study is being done through structured questionnaire and various kinds of interviews. In most cases the questionnaire is structured with a combination of open ended and close ended questions which is being related to the research question and the purpose of the study along with the objective of the study.

3.10 Qualitative Study

The main focus of qualitative research is to extract the central point on what previous researchers state about a specific topic. It describes views of various authors and is being
interpreted to suit the problem of the study. This type of research is not being quantified numerically and is generally done through open ended questions and face to face interviews which is usually qualitative in nature.

3.11 Research design and analysis

The research design is the blueprint that helps in the fulfilment of objectives and gives answers to a particular research problem.

It is the process of collecting and measuring data along with the analysis of the same using various tools like interviews, experiments, simulation or a combination of tools. It is an outline that gives the investigator a plan from formulating the hypothesis till the final analysis of data. It is a framework which develops a relationship among multiple variables of the study from research problem till the data research.

Although it is important to design a study using a diverse perspective in terms of methodologies for greater insight, for the purpose of this exploratory case study investigation, a multiple data collection approaches has been used. Data from different sources such as books, journals and articles were used in order to minimize the chances of getting weak methods while pooling together information from diverse sources to give accurate results.

3.12 Data Collection

Data collection is the systematic gathering of data for a particular purpose from various sources including questionnaires, interviews, observation, existing records and electronic devices.

3.12.1 Data collection methods

There are various data collection methods that are used to investigate various questions from varied fields of study. It is generally done through primary and secondary data collection method. A few problems are being investigated using case study method which involves collection of data from different sources of evidence.
Evidences are generally being formulated either by multiple sources, case study data bases and chain evidence maintenance.

However the main focus of this study is not for the expansion of the given principles and policies but to build on the above mentioned concepts and develop the results based on multiple data collection method i.e. interviews, documents and archives and observation.

3.12.2 Data Collection

**Primary Data:** The data is being collected from the customer and retailer's perspective where both the customer and retailer are being analysed using questionnaire, interview method and telephonic interviews as a tool to collect data.

**Secondary Data:** The data is being collected from secondary sources like websites, journals, white papers, conference proceedings and newspaper articles.

3.13 Sampling

3.13.1 Sample Technique: The technique used to collect the sample is stratified random sampling. It is a random sampling technique where the entire population is divided into smaller groups for the purpose of collecting data. The reason of using this technique is because the sample should be equally distributed among the region considered for the study.

3.13.2 Sample Size: The sample size considered for the study is 1000 from the customer perspective and 150 from the retailer.

3.13.3 Tools for Analysis: The tools that have been used for the analysis of the primary data are logistics regression, T-test and multiple regression with Chi-square.

3.14 Data Analysis Procedure
Statistical Package of The Social Science (SPSS) and ExcelStat is being used for statistical analysis. Certain statistical measures were applied on the data to get the desired results.
3.15 Formulation of Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship between social media and the marketing strategy for select retail outlets
H11: There is a direct relationship that exists between social media marketing strategy and the apparel industry
H12: There is a significant relationship between social media marketing strategy and the mobile industry
H13: There is a direct relationship between social media marketing strategy and the automobile industry
H2: There is a significant relationship between return on investment and social media
H21: There is a direct relationship between social media marketing and return on investment in the apparel industry
H22: There is a relationship between social media marketing and return on investment in the mobile industry
H23: There is a significant relationship between social media marketing and return on investment in the mobile industry.
H3: There is a relationship between social media marketing and consumer decision making journey
H4: There is a significant relationship between social networks and consumer preference

3.16 Plan Analysis

The data was collected through a structured questionnaire and through telephonic interviews. The tables were supported with graphs and charts for better interpretation of the data analysis. The summary of findings stated are based on the analysis to accomplish the objective of study.

3.17 Limitations of the Study

1. The research investigation will be limited to a specific sample size
2. Traditional retail units are not considered for the study.
3.18 Chapter Scheme

Chapter 1 – Introduction
Introduction contains a brief about social media marketing, marketing strategy and return on investment with the perspective of Indian retailing.

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature
It is a compilation of the work done by previous researchers in the topic of study. Review of literature helps in conducting the gap analysis from which the study is based and conducted over a period of time.

Chapter 3 – Research Design
Research design is the plan for collecting and utilizing data so that desired information can be obtained with sufficient precision or so that an hypothesis can be tested properly.

Chapter 4 – Industry & Company Profile
Industry profile consists of the retail industry overview

Chapter 5 – Data Analysis and Interpretation
Data analysis and interpretation consists of the analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire.

Chapter 6 – Summary of findings
This chapter contains the findings collected through the data analysis of the questionnaire. The suggestions are being provided by the customer and recommendations from the researcher.

Chapter 7 – Suggestions and Recommendations
This chapter has all the suggestions from the customer’s point of view and the recommendations from the researcher’s point of view.
Bibliography & Annexure