THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes” - William James

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Social media is hot. Social Media is now the trend and for businesses it represents a marketing opportunity that transcends the traditional middleman and connects companies directly with customers. This is the reason, why nearly every business on the planet—from giants like Starbucks and IBM to the local ice cream shop—are exploring social media marketing initiatives. Companies are rapidly adopting social media marketing.

For the purpose of effective discussion of the theoretical framework of the present study this Chapter has been classified into four major Sections, namely,

Section I: deals with Social Media (SM)
Section II: explains Social media marketing (SMM)
Section III: describes Consumers’ Attitude and Adolescent Consumers’ Attitude
Section IV: discusses the Impact of Social Media on Consumer Attitude
3.2 SECTION I

3.2.1 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Evans (2008), “Social Media relates to a self-generated, authentic conversation between people about a particular subject of mutual interest, built on the thoughts and experiences of the participants”. Therefore, Social Media is definitely all about sharing and aiming at a collective vision, often intending to offer a more-appropriate or informed choice at the end. Furthermore, Social Media changes over time as it allows people to generate the content in a participative way whenever they want to add any additional piece of information.

“Social media” refers to a type of website, application or communications vehicle where people connect with one another; discuss and interact; share content and ideas; and build relationships” (Anita Campell in McAlear (ed), 2009, p. 1)

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as “a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content”.

Social Network Sites (SNS): A Definition

Define of social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to

1. construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system
2. articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and
3. View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

3.2.2 MEANING OF SOCIAL MEDIA
The meaning of the term ‘social media’ can be derived from two words which constitute it. Media generally refers to advertising and communicates ideas or information through publications/channels. Social implies the interaction of individuals within a group or community. Taken together, social media simply refers to communication/publication platforms which are generated and sustained by the interpersonal interaction of individuals through the specific medium or tool. Wikipedia has a general definition of the term Social Media is the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into content publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers.

3.2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- It is a multi-way dialogue Brands talk to customers, customers talk to brands, and perhaps most importantly, customers talk to each other. This is a new type of interaction that was never possible until the arrival of Web 2.0.
- It is participatory Social media marketing depends on user participation – that’s what makes it social. To truly be social media marketing, the users must participate.
- It is user-generated Most of the content and connections in an online community are created by the users, and not by the brand. There will be content and conversations that are brand-generated, but they will be the minority.

3.2.4 MARKETING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

According to the American Marketing Association, Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders. (Marketing power.com 2012). In the above definition, the key words are “organizational function, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers”. From an organization perspective, the aspects of these processes
referred in the definition above are brand awareness, advertising, public relations etc. Therefore for the sake of this study, Marketers focus only on one branch of marketing which is brand awareness or brand management as a process of communicating or delivering value to customers as already shown in the definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association.

3.3 SECTION II

3.3.1 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

“Social media marketing (SMM) is a form of internet marketing that utilizes social networking websites as a marketing tool. The goal of Social media marketing is to produce content that users will share with their social network to help a company increase brand exposure and broaden customer research”

“Social media marketing helps a company get direct feedback from customers (potential customers) while making the company seem more personable. The interactive parts Social media give customers the opportunity to ask questions or voice complaints and feel they are being heard. This aspect of social media marketing is called social customer relationship management (Social CRM)”

3.3.2 MEANING OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media marketing consists of the attempt to use social media to persuade consumers that one’s company, products and/or services are worthwhile. Social media marketing is a marketing using online communities, social networks, blog marketing and more.

Social media marketing is not merely about hitting the front page of Digg or any other social news website. It is a strategic and methodical process to establish
the company’s influence, reputation and brand within communities of potential customers, readers or supporters.

3.3.3 NEED FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Businesses can use social media to engage with their customers, prospects and partners in ways that have never before been possible. Social media marketing is making a profound impact of marketing strategies for organizations of all sizes. The need for social media marketing is felt by the business due to the following reasons:

❖ Use of Social media marketing by the competitor

The competitors of the business may be leveraging social media to build global link popularity and brand awareness. The customers know who the competitors are and know that they are faster, more efficient and will keep them happy. They have implemented the technology to minimize overhead and are treating customers better.

❖ Use of Social media by customers

No matter how non-technical customers were – social media impact on their consumption decisions. Social media’s impact on traditional media is increasing on a daily basis. Newspapers, television, and radio, are realizing that Dig, Reddit, and Twitter are able to share and discuss current topics instantaneously. This impacts which news is presented in a traditional sense. The geeks, webmasters, trendsetters, and other folks who are on the bleeding edge are now watching social media outlets and republishing to the channels that customers are consuming from.

3.3.4 BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

• It is natural Not only do the businesses get natural links without any discernible pattern, their website is exposed to large groups of people in a spontaneous fashion. This differs from paid advertising which has overt commercial overtones.
- **It is defensible** Only successfully mastered social communities can be a great source of web traffic, on top of any traffic that the business may already be receiving from search engines. While the businesses cannot easily increase search engine traffic, social media traffic can be very easily controlled through strategic marketing.

- **It involves low-cost but usually brings high returns** Usually costs are limited to only time and perhaps the expenses involved in hiring a freelance programmer / designer. The benefits will most often exceed the cost.

- **It complements other efforts** Social media optimization and marketing is usually community specific. It does not interfere with any other methods of getting traffic to the website. It can and will fit perfectly with an advertising campaign targeting other websites or search engines. Social media marketing is all about transforming customers into marketers and advertisers. This requires a concerted effort on the part of the businesses, both online and offline, to deliver valuable information, insight, products, services, and customer services, so that existing as well as prospective customers will have only good things to say about the business.

### 3.4 SECTION III

#### 3.4.1 DEFINITION OF CONSUMER ATTITUDE

Social psychologists, unfortunately, do not agree on the precise definition of attitude. In fact, there are more than 100 different definitions of the concepts. A few prominent definitions are:

- “An attitude is how positive or negative, favorable or unfavorable, or pro or con a person feels toward an object” - This definition views attitude a feeling or an evaluative reaction to objects.

- “Learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way” - This definition is slightly more complicated than the first, because it incorporates the notion of a readiness to respond toward an object.
• “an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive process with respect to some aspect of the individual’s world” - This views attitudes as being made up of three components: (1) the cognitive or knowledge component (2) the affective or emotional component and (3) the conative or behavioral tendency component.

As consumers, each of us has a vast number of attitudes towards products, services, advertisements, direct mail, the internet, and retail stores. Whenever we are asked whether we like or dislike a product (e.g. a Samsung HDTV set), a service (e.g., satellite TV from Direct TV), a particular retailer (e.g., Wal-Mart) a specific direct marketer (e.g., www.buy.com) or an advertising theme (e.g., “Chrysler-inspiration comes standard”) we are being asked to express our attitudes.

3.4.2 MEANING OF CONSUMER ATTITUDE

Attitudes represent what the consumers’ like and dislike. Usually consumers do the things that they like to do while avoiding things that are disliked. Hence holding a favorable attitude toward a product is almost always an essential prerequisite in order for consumers to hold a favorable purchase or consumption intention. If consumers don’t like a product, they will most probably not buy it. At the same time, however, favorable attitudes towards a product do not automatically translate into favorable purchase intentions. Consumer attitudes are sometimes measured in the form of preferences. Preferences represent attitudes toward one object in relation to another.

3.4.3 THEORIES/MODELS ON ATTITUDES

✧ The attitude – toward-behavior model The attitude-toward-behavior model is designed to capture the individual’s attitude towards behaving or acting with respect to an object rather than the attitude towards the object itself. The appeal of the attitude-toward-behavior model is that it seems to correspond somewhat more closely to actual behavior than does the attitude-toward-object model.
According to the tri-component attitude model, attitudes consist of three major components: a Cognitive component, an affective component, and a conative component. This is illustrated below.

Diagram 3.1 Tri-component Attitude Model


The theory of reasoned action model represents a comprehensive integration of attitude components in a structure that is designed to lead to both better explanation and better predictions of behavior. This is illustrated in the figure below.
3.4.4 ATTITUDE FORMATION

Suppose one evening while watching TV a consumer sees a commercial for a new restaurant that interests his/her, he/she give extra attention to the commercial, much more than what he/she would normally do. The consumer carefully processes the information presented in the advertisement about the restaurant’s attributes (seafood cuisine, reasonable prices, relaxing atmosphere, waterfront location, and so on). It looks as if it is a place that would provide the most enjoyable dining experience while being inexpensive or at least not too expensive. We make a mental note to ourselves to dine at that restaurant the next time the opportunity presents itself. This is in fact nothing but the formation of a favorable attitude towards that restaurant.

3.4.5 SOURCES OF ATTITUDE DEVELOPMENT

(i) Personal experience

People come into contact with objects in their everyday environment. Some are familiar, while others are new. We evaluate the new and re-evaluate the old, and this evaluation process assists in developing attitudes toward objects. There are three aspects of personal experience influencing attitudes
- **Needs** Since people’s needs differ and also vary over time, they can develop different attitudes toward the same object at different point in their life.

- **Selective perception** We have seen that people operate on their personal interpretation of reality. Therefore, the way people interpret information about products, stores, etc. affects their attitudes toward them.

- **Personality** is another factor influencing how people process their direct experiences with objects. How aggressive passive, introverted-extroverted, etc, will form their attitude.

(ii) **Group Associations**

All people are influenced to one degree or another by other members in the groups to which they belong. Attitudes are one target for this influence. For example, our attitudes toward products, ethics, warfare, and a multitude of other subjects are influenced strongly by the group that we value and with which we do or wish to associate. Several groups, including family, work and social groups, and cultural and sub-cultural groups, are quite important in affecting a person’s attitude.

- **Family** The family is perhaps the most influential group in shaping a person’s attitudes. Parents orient a child’s early thinking and this influence on attitudes is often so strong that it carries over to adult life.

- **Peer groups** The norms, standards, and influence attempts of important groups in the consumer’s work and social life make a strong impact on a wide variety of the person’s attitudes.

- **Culture and sub-culture** Cultural and sub-cultural inheritances are a result of the socialization process. This legacy results in a sense of identification about who we are, and it strongly affects attitudes about a variety of objects in our environment.

### 3.4.6 THE CONSUMER DECISION–MAKING PROCESS
Traditionally, marketing campaigns encouraged customers to buy products and/or services, i.e., they sought to close the deal. Marketers too often simply listed features of the product. Earlier, this may have been enough to satisfy customers, but nowadays customers are seeking information on benefits, etc. and they are quite happy to enjoy themselves while they are looking for and gathering such information. The main theme of the research deals with social media consumer but not in general consumers.

However, the advent of social networks has shifted the emphasis to helping consumers to make decisions prior to the purchasing itself. Businesses should ask themselves the question “Are we now engaged in trying to sell what we think they want?” Or “is it a case of finding out what information consumers need to make better decisions?” If businesses are too focused on trying to close the deal, it
could lead to disaster. The above Figure shows the traditional B2C decision-making process and illustrates how social network sites, blogs and other user-generated tools now impact on consumer decisions.

3.4.7 ADOLESCENTS CONSUMERS’ ATTITUDE

Derived from the Latin verb "adolescere", the literal meaning of "adolescence" is apparent; "to grow "or "to grow to maturity". The term "adolescence", as it is used today, has a broader meaning. It includes the process of mental, emotional and social maturation. The concept of adolescence as a period of life distinct from childhood or adulthood has some roots in writings from the far distant past. Plato (1961, thought that males under the age of 18 should not be permitted to drink, because "fire must not be poured on fire". Aristotle (1955) conceived of the adolescents as distinct from their elders especially of bodily desires and sexual instincts to which they are mostly disposed. Adolescence is the period of life bounded by puberty and assumption of adult responsibilities.

The Modern world economy is characterized by fast changing consumerism on one hand, and competition among enterprises to have market opportunities in terms of better performance, on the other hand. The companies are leaving traditional commercial strategies and are looking for unique ways to compete more effectively on a global basis. In this content, the information technology is playing a great role for the marketing of products. The internet, in particular, has created a global market by connecting the sellers and customers. It has been found that out of 20 to 30 Million internet subscribers, approximately 50% are Adolescent age or younger.

3.5 SECTION IV

3.5.1 IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMERS’ ATTITUDE

Various industry bigwigs have conducted researches and surveys to know the impact of social media on consumer behavior, and it has been found that consumers would like to have an interactive relationship with a company, so that
they can easily pass on feedback, suggestions, and anything – positive or negative – that is being said about your product or company is easily accessible to a global community of consumers, which essentially means that the business and marketing strategy can be hailed or harmed in a matter of hours. Social media has opened up a new opportunity, both for the business and consumers, to interact with each other on a real-time basis.

**(i) Social media websites have become an information resource for customer**

Millions of people go to social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs every day to interact with others who share their interests. When they see something they like (or dislike), they share it instantly with their friends, who share it with more friends, making it an extremely fast way to communicate.

People rely on various types of social media websites as much as company websites for product and brand information. Seven out of ten (70%) customers have visited social media websites such as message boards, social networking sites, and blogs to get information and 49% of these consumers make a purchase decision on what they gathered according to Open Threat Exchange (OTX) research.

The report, by the Neilsen company, a provider of consumer insight and social media analysis, shows that social networks and blogs dominate people’s online time by accounting for almost a quarter of total time on the internet.

**(ii) Consumers who visit social media websites are more likely to take action**

Feature such as blogging, photo sharing and video sharing are the norm. Nowadays, politicians, celebrities, brands and family members all seem to have an account. The rise of social media is not only changing the relationship between brand and audience, it is affecting the traditional marketing and PR metrics. Social networking is evolving fast. Consumers who visit social media websites are more
likely to take action. This has implications for businesses, because they should now pay sufficient attention to marketing, advertising and promoting their products on social media.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher acquired depth knowledge and understanding of the concepts pertaining, to the study area such as definition, meaning, classification and characteristics of social media, social networking sites, social media marketing, adolescent consumers’ attitude and impact of social media marketing on adolescent consumers’ attitude.