CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 Conclusions

A new era began in the first few years of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, referred to as the attention era, indicative of the ability to access or share information instantly, using the internet as the medium (Hensel and Deis, 2010). Several social media platforms gained popularity during this period and the number of users increased. In 2015, the number of social media users in India was 197 million (Taneja, 2016). It was reported that one out of three individuals preferred texting with the help of online platforms over other forms of communication such as talking (Saravanakumar et al., 2012). The marketers made use of this effect for customer acquisition and consequent growth of their companies. In 2012, India ranked seventh in social media marketing with the rate of market growth of 11.2\% (Pandya, 2012).

The current study was performed to understand how social media is used as a tool of marketing in FMCG sector in India. Various interesting aspects of social media marketing were uncovered as a result of this study.

6.1.1 Impact of social media marketing on the FMCG companies

All the thirty companies included in the present study practiced both traditional and social media marketing for promotion of products. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn were used by all the respondents of the study for social media marketing while a few companies also used Google plus, Instagram and Pinterest. Other studies also exhibit Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to be the cornerstones of marketing strategies all over the world (Saravanakumar et al., 2012). However, not many of the respondents involved in the study preferred Snapchat, Foursquare, Blogs or Chat rooms for marketing.

6.1.1.1 Benefits of social media gained by the companies

Based on the results, the following factors are listed out to explain the reasons for adopting social media marketing by the companies and the benefits reaped by them in the process.
**Dynamic and interactive**

Several benefits of social media marketing were uncovered as a result of the present study. The results exhibit the content of social media marketing to be dynamic and interactive. Unlike traditional marketing, two-way communication between the customer and the company is made possible in social media marketing. The increasing number of internet based messages transmitted through several social media platforms influenced the opinion, awareness, attitude, purchase decision and evaluation of the product through word of mouth (Hu, Liu and Zhang, 2008; Kim and Srivastava, 2007). In fact, studies have found that every two out of three conversations that occur in social media refer to a service, brand or a product (Arca, 2012). Moreover, the companies get to track and evaluate the reception of a product instantly, thus increasing the scope for product improvement and customer satisfaction. Studies have proved that interactive marketing strategies, making use of online product reviews increase the sales revenue of the company (Dellarocas, Zhang and Awad, 2007; Ye, Law and Gu, 2009). Therefore, the advantage of social media marketing is that it pays equal focus on people as well as the products (Diamond, 2008).

**Brand exposure, awareness and interest**

The virality of social media marketing refers to the speed and extent of content distribution among the internet users. In the study, the respondents reported on using viral social media marketing strategies to improve brand exposure, awareness and customer interest. Brand exposure in consumers occurs through any of the five senses, sometimes subconsciously, and is indicative of the first stage of a potential purchase. It has been proved that increased brand exposure increases sales of a company (Stelzner et al., 2012). The companies also take initiatives such as Social Media Optimization (SMO) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to enhance the online presence of the brand (Ben, 2010). Further, the present study also revealed that the respondents used several social media platforms at the same time as it was found that the degree of exposure to products increased with increasing number of platforms.
Brand leadership, attention and recall

The study also recorded improvements in brand leadership, brand association, attention and recall in the case of FMCG products. Other studies found that almost 61% of companies in US participate in social media marketing for the sole purpose of lead generation (Arca, 2012). Blogs were reported as valuable social media tools for promoting brand leadership (Droge, Stanko and Pollitte, 2010). Many companies included in the study promoted their products using Blogs. Further, a particular study that was conducted to evaluate customer attention using an eye-tracking experiment found that the number of facings had a strong influence on the attention and recall value of the customers, which in turn might lead to increase in sales (Chandon, Hutchinson, Bradlow and Young, 2009). Therefore, the marketers try to achieve a number of facings using dynamic social media marketing techniques.

Impulse buying behaviour

From the study, it was also found that social media marketing promoted impulse buying behaviour among customers. Since 1970s, several studies have proved that a substantial volume of sales occurring every year is owing to impulsive behaviour of the customers (Bellenger, Robertson and Hirschman, 1978 and Han, Morgan, Kotsiopulos and Kang-Park, 1991). Impulse buying refers to a powerful urge that drives the customer to buy a product in spite of the emotional conflict that occurs regarding consequences of the purchase (Hausman, 2000). The shopping experience of an impulsive buyer is entirely different from non-impulsive buyers into that impulse buyers experience with respect to arousal of emotions (Verplanken et al., 2001). Even though this behaviour is prevalent among all product categories, it is reported to be most common among food products (Verplanken et al., 2005). The results of the present study also showed that companies dealing with food and beverages entered E-commerce more readily than other companies involved in the study.

Competitive benchmarking

Competitive benchmarking is another important element of social media marketing. Several brands may target the same subset of consumers using similar tactics. A number
of tools such as TweetDeck, Social Mention and Google Alerts are available to track competition among marketers using social media platforms (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Abroms, Schiavo and Lefebvre, 2008; Freeman and Chapman, 2009). The companies can set up keywords related to the product and monitor them using such tools, thus gaining valuable information regarding customer response. However, the companies involved in the present study were not satisfied that competitive benchmarking can be performed using social media networks. This suggests that the companies lack information regarding the matter. In fact, the respondents stated that competition thrives with traditional marketing and that any brand is judged as trending based on traditional media marketing rather than social media.

6.1.1.2 Limitations of social media reported by the companies

Even though marketers gain numerous benefits as a result of social media marketing, several limitations were also reported by the respondents of the study. All the respondents of the study exhibited the use of social media platforms, but most of them also used traditional methods adjunct to social media, owing to the perceived limitations of social media platforms.

High-cost

The major disadvantage of social media marketing reported by the respondents was the high cost involved. Even though all the companies included in the study displayed an increase in turnover in the last five years and their expenditure on social media marketing displayed 5% to 30% increase in the last few years, the companies found the cost involved with installation and upgradation of new equipment and programs to be high. Trained personnel were required to conduct and maintain the department resulting in additional expenses. This is on par with other studies which also suggest that social media networking is more expensive than traditional marketing. The social media channels available can mostly be used free of cost. For instance, expenditure on television or billboard advertisement would be more than advertising using Facebook. Even though setting up a social media platform can be done free of cost, managing a social media channel might
involve high cost, unlike the traditional television or billboard options (Kirtis and Karahan, 2011).

*Non–generic nature*

The respondents of the present study perceived that social media marketing was non-generic in nature, meant for targeting the younger generation. Studies show that 22% of teenagers access any social media network, at least 10 times a day (O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson, 2011). However, studies also state that in 2012, 65% of the adult internet users in the US participated in social media networks (Saravanakumar et al., 2012). The situation in India is unclear and needs to be researched. In search for generic options, the respondents reported the use of traditional methods, some of them as old as 30 years, such as print media, danglers and banners. These techniques were reported to bring success, in spite of the ideas being outdated. The marketers adopted such strategies owing to the increased rural setting of India.

*Infrastructure constraints*

The respondents also reported of lack of infrastructure in India, which limited the efficiency of social media marketing. They reported that the companies sometimes profited more from conventional methods of marketing such as TV when compared to other forms of social media. The fact that the availability of the internet is not ubiquitous in all regions of a country, especially India, accounts for this statement. In India, 70% of the population live outside metropolitan cities, in rural areas, where internet connection is sporadic (Wolcott and Goodman, 2003). Unlike the internet, TV is a popular option among rural as well as the urban areas of India. Therefore, products meant for the rural as well as urban community are better marketed using TV along with other social media platforms. However, this trend is fast changing in India. According to the Regus Global Survey of 2010, acquirement of new customers using social media platforms was achieved by 52% of the Indian companies while only 35% of the American companies could achieve the same (Neti, 2011). This report shows the rapid growth of internet and internet users in India, thus exhibiting great scope for social media marketing.
**Explosion of information**

Information overload was reported as a disadvantage of social media marketing by the respondents. It was found that consumers tend to feel confused owing to the explosion of information. Studies have proved that information overload leads to confusion among the consumers, which causes negative effects on the brand name (Agarwal et al., 2010).

**Easy evasion of advertisements**

Yet another disadvantage reported by the respondents was the ease of ignoring advertisements in social media. Several researches have been conducted to study the attitude of the audience towards advertisements and found subjects chose to ignore most of the advertisements appearing in the social media platforms (Kelly, Kerr and Drennan, 2013). The traditional media on the other hand displays one advertisement at a time; therefore the consumer cannot ignore an advertisement as easily as with the social media.

### 6.1.1.3 Integration of social media marketing with other marketing strategies

The study uncovered that experiential marketing and event marketing strategies were also used along with social media marketing by the respondents, for promotion of products. Such strategies were adopted by the respondents in order to attract a larger section of the audience for the brand.

Studies report that an effective way of marketing is to create experiences for the customers based on the product, in order to acquire new customers as well as retain the existing customers (Yelkur, 2000). Experiential marketing appeals to the customers in five ways, namely, sense, feel, think, act and relate (Schmitt, 1999). Several respondents in the study reported by using eclectic methods meant for creating entertainment and fun for the customers in order to establish a sound brand to consumer relationship. Certain respondents of the study dealing with food products reported that the promotion was carried out by conducting competitions involving the product. The respondents integrated experiential approach with social media marketing by announcing such contests on Facebook or other platforms which in turn increased the number of followers in the online brand community. Experiences resulting from such strategies can either be passive or active, with active
experiences resulting from actual interaction with the product (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). For instance, while watching television, the customer gains a passive sensory stimulation about a product, whereas while taking part in a contest such as ‘taste talent’, the customer actively experiences the product. Based on the effectiveness of marketing methods, the extent of resulting experiences can be classified as absorption or immersion with the latter leading to increased chances of creating an unforgettable experience with the product (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). Therefore, experiential marketing is a step ahead of traditional marketing, as it can provide the customers with cognitive, sensory and recall effects.

The respondents of the study preferred to sponsor song/dance events during special occasions such as New year’s eve, Durga Puja and local fairs taking place in urban as well as rural areas. Several studies report the effectiveness of event marketing strategies in increasing sales of the company (Martensen, Grønholt, Bendtsen and Jensen, 2007). Such events were advertised in the brand community pages on social media sites by the marketers. Research shows that the enthusiasm of the attendees during an event has a positive influence on brand association, thus increasing the purchase intention (Close, Finney, Lacey and Sneath, 2006).

Therefore, it is observed from the results that the companies are not convinced on independent functionality of social media platforms for achieving sales targets. Instead, they believed that the integration of social media platforms with traditional advertising, experiential marketing and event marketing will help in availing the complete benefits of social media marketing.

6.1.1.4 Monitoring the effectiveness of social media marketing

The effectiveness of social media does not necessarily increase with time. The change in effectiveness with respect to time depends on the quality of information in question. For instance, useful information presented in a social media platform such as YouTube has the ability to increase the number of views, whereas, monotonous content forced upon the users will affect the brand negatively. When a company uses social media marketing extensively, it becomes important to measure the impacts of the implemented techniques. Brand
exposure, brand influence and customer engagement are the three main factors to be evaluated by marketers (Nichole, 2010).

From the results, it is evident that most of the companies used different means to measure effectiveness of the content written on behalf of their company, once in a fortnight or once every week. Some companies who used Facebook as the social media platform responded that they assessed the effectiveness of their social media campaign through a number of likes, number of followers for the page and the nature of comments from customers, in response to the posts. Companies could also obtain information from Facebook by making use of its insights tool which presents the engagement rate of the page using graphs. With such data, companies are able to compare the customer response to that of other pages, thus giving them insights about the effectiveness of their approach. Companies that used twitter measured effectiveness based on the frequency of tweets about the product. Only one respondent of the study reported the use of monitoring tools such as Radian6 or Alterian SM2. Radian 6 is a social media listening tool used to analyse brand based information shared online (Laine and Frühwirth, 2010). Alterian SM2 is another similar intelligence solution that can offer useful leads by monitoring social media (Stavrakantonakis, Gagiu, Kasper, Toma and Thalhammer, 2012). Another company reported of using manual calculation for engagement rate and using market share report of the company for monitoring social media effectiveness.

The study also exhibited that several respondents failed to possess the knowledge or tools used to measure efficiency. Some respondents were unclear regarding the translation of a positive response given by the customer in any social media platform, into sales. However, it is important that all the companies equip themselves with respect to monitoring social media responses. Information arises from several sources in the case of social media platforms; therefore control over information is lost by the company. Biased opinions about the products and control issues stemming from bad product reviews are major concerns that should be addressed by the marketers.
6.1.2 Impact of social media marketing on customers

Brands have acquired such supremacy that products that would not be traditionally treated as brands such as schools and nursing homes are also marketed so (Schmitt, 1999). Since brands rule the market, customer engagement has become the main motive of companies. Customer engagement is a concept that refers to behavioural activities of a customer towards a brand (Gummerus, Liljander, Weman and Pihlström, 2012). Customer engagement not only refers to the degree of loyalty towards a brand, but also includes all kinds of behavioural manifestations, both positive and negative (Libai, 2011). Marketers all over the world agree social media marketing to be the latest approach for customer acquisition and customer satisfaction.

A social media platform is expected to serve the following three purposes, to allow the social presence of a brand using visual or acoustic effects, enable communication without ambiguity or uncertainty and to control the self-presentation of a brand (Kaplan et al., 2010). These aspects in turn affect the purchase behaviour of customers. The effectiveness in achieving such goals varies due to several factors controlling consumer behaviour, which are analysed by the present study. As a result of the study, several advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing were recorded.

Of the survey participants, the majority of them belonged to the age group of 18 to 30 years with most of them being married, male respondents and postgraduate students. Their choice of social media platforms was found to be Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn with Facebook being the most frequently used social media platform.

6.1.2.1 Benefits of social media marketing gained by the customers

The following factors derived from the customer’s point of view not only represent the benefits of social media marketing, but also the recent developments and breakthroughs achieved in the field.

Volume of information

The present study states that most of the respondents visit social media sites seeking information about the products. Other studies have also found that 70% of the social media
users visit websites in order to obtain product information. Among them, 49% make purchase decisions based on the information and 60% of them involve in word of mouth (Fisher, 2009). Several respondents of the study agreed that they gathered information about a product using the online platforms, but made the actual purchase offline. However, studies report that the habit of searching online for information is itself an important predictor of online buying behaviour (Bellman, Lohse and Johnson, 1999). It indicates that the consumer is already ‘wired’, meaning, the consumer encourages a lifestyle dependent on the internet, thus implying that the consumer uses social media platforms frequently.

A few respondents in the study reported that the content in social media sites failed to introduce the conviction to buy. This can be explained based on the nature of the content and its effects on customer engagement. Studies show that the quality of content in a brand community decides customer engagement and persuasion, which in turn affects the purchase decision (Powers, Advincula, Austin, Graiko and Snyder, 2012). While the traditional media dictates its content, the social media platforms build relationships based on their content. The nature of content varies with different stages of the purchase decision. The customer generated content is ‘undirected’ in manner, carrying an informative and persuasive tone that can result in better customer-customer interaction, thus promoting the product. On the other hand, the marketer generated content is ‘directed’, encouraging customer-brand relationship resulting in persuasion of the customers to make a purchase (Goh, Heng and Lin, 2013).

While one part of the customers in the study preferred social media networks to obtain information on new product launches and trending items, a few customers denied the same owing to their doubts regarding the credibility of the content posted on social media sites. Further, a part of the customers were happy with the fresh information made available to them by social media through frequent updating of contents, while others reported lack of updating by a few companies.

**Customer feedback**

The readers are exposed to two types of content while using an interactive social media platform; professional content made available by the marketers and user generated content
describing their experiences with the product. This combination results in customer engagement as it encourages the users to interact about the product, which is rarely achieved through traditional means of marketing. In the present study, the customers agreed that they valued customer feedback while buying very expensive products, especially high technology electronic goods. This shows that customer feedback is capable of providing them with the assurance required to continue with the purchase.

The gap between expectations of the customer and actual delivery of a product is expressed in terms of grievances by the customers. The brands take care to answer such grievances, thus changing the opinion of the customer towards the product. The customers of the present survey were happy about the grievance redressal made possible by social media marketing. Other studies have proved that the number of customer reviews has a positive impact on sales of the product (Chen, Wu and Yoon, 2004).

**Comparison of prices**

Every retailer sells products at different prices resulting in variation of prices for the same product. Researching this variation is performed easily with the help of online shopping. Several studies have reported price advantage made available by social media marketing to be an important factor of appeal to the customers (Chung Hoon Park et al., 2003). Most of the respondents in the study stated that they were not frequent users of social media networking, however, preferred online shopping just to avail the price advantages. The number of deals and offers available in the online platforms is more than retail stores could offer, thus saving cost, time and energy of the consumers.

**Comparison of brands**

The consumers in the survey reported the comparative analysis of brands and the range of choices made available to them as important advantages of social media marketing. While shopping online, the customers are exposed to an array of alternatives for a product which gives them an overall idea of the market (Childers, Carr, Peck and Carson, 2002). Therefore, even under time pressure, online shopping enables the customers to make an efficient purchase.
User-friendliness

Respondents in the present study mentioned online shopping to be a convenient option. Several studies have concluded convenience to be an important influencing factor for adoption of online shopping attitude (Hofacker, 2001). Since social marketing presents the customers with an opportunity of shopping any time of the day with the comforts of home, the customers consider online shopping to be highly convenient and time effective. Moreover, the frustrations caused by billing queues, parking spaces and traffic lights are eliminated in the case of online shopping, which in turn improves consumer behaviour towards the product (Childers et al., 2002).

Brand awareness, brand interest, attention and recall

Until the recent past, the role of social media in marketing extended only up to creating brand awareness in the customers. However, the developments in social media platforms have now enabled them to influence purchase decisions of customers and affect sales (Neti, 2011). The present study also confirms that brand awareness was made possible by social media marketing.

Advertisements play a major role in attracting customer attention, thereby creating brand interest and recall value. The advantage of the interactive nature of advertisements in social media platforms is that they are not thought of as intrusive, instead encourage customer-customer or customer-brand interactions. However, the present study also reported that a few advertisements failed to generate interest or the conviction to make a purchase in the customers, owing to their intrusiveness. Other studies have also proved that excessive advertisements can be perceived as intrusive and result in annoyance of customers (Taylor et al., 2011).

Further, the study shows that social media marketing enhances recall among the customers. Emotional and cognitive relationship with the shopping environment that is formed while making a purchase results in recall value, thus increasing the chances for a second visit by the customer (Koufaris et al., 2002). Several social media sites try to enhance the shopping experience of frequent visitors by introducing options such as one-click-purchase by Amazon.
**Impulse buying behaviour**

Part of the customers in the study agreed that social media interactions and advertisements had a way of tempting them to make a purchase, which can be referred to as impulse buying behaviour. Temptation is a form of positive response, as a result of which customers tend to indulge in more exploration, leading to cognitive etching of the product in their memory (Koufaris et al., 2002).

6.1.2.2 **Limitations of social media marketing reported by the customers**

In the present study, it was found that not all customers preferred to shop using social media platforms. This observation leads to two implications; social media is still in its early stages of growth and that apart from the several benefits of social media gained by the customers, there are a few practical limitations associated with social media marketing that tend to reduce the number of followers. A few limitations reported by the study are discussed as follows,

**Credibility of content**

In the present study, most of the customers doubted the credibility of a source of content and the content itself that gets posted on social media platforms, unlike traditional advertisements. Credibility of content source is assessed in two stages, the expertise of the source and the source bias (Brown, Broderick and Lee, 2007). Based on the competence of the source, the readers may evaluate the validity of furnished information. The source is also expected to render information without bias as the quality and authenticity of content play an important role in social media marketing. The present study reported that customers came across desperate sales push messages which introduced an element of doubt in them regarding the authenticity of such messages. Other studies have also proved that the consumers tend to discount a message as lacking credibility, when it is overly positive and inaccurate in nature (Buda, 2003). In an online environment, evaluation of knowledge of the source or background of the source becomes difficult, owing to the impersonal nature of interactions. Further, most of the websites either alter or reduce the information concerning the identity of sources, thus leaving the readers of the community to accept opinions from strangers (Brown et al., 2007). This scenario needs to be altered as the
consumers like to rely on the information furnished by expert sources while making a purchase decision, as it is considered to be accurate (Tadelis, 2002). The credibility of content source is also a crucial aspect of building trust among consumers. However, issues such as fake blogs are reported so frequently that several users have begun to turn away from online shopping (Miller and Lammas, 2010). A good example of the misuse of social media is the fake blog ‘Walmarting across America’. In 2006, it was revealed that a trending blog that shared information regarding a new organization created by Walmart, known as working families, was a fake stunt planned by the marketing department of Walmart (Burns, 2008).

**Engineered customer feedback**

According to a European survey, 82% of the consumers read through product reviews before making a purchase (Malbon, 2013). Several studies report that fake online reviews have undermined the faith of customers in social media marketing (Malbon, 2013, Luca and Zervas, 2016). According to a study conducted in 2015 using Yelp’s filtering algorithm to detect fake restaurant reviews, it was found that 16% of the online user reviews were fraudulent (Luca et al., 2016). Certain studies reveal the existence of fake reviewer groups who work in a collaborative fashion (Mukherjee, Liu and Glance, 2012). The act of rendering false information in order to deceive an average customer is considered illegal in several countries (Malbon, 2013). In the present study also, the respondents expressed their concern regarding engineered and fake customer feedbacks.

**Security breach of personal information**

Companies investing in social media report of safety concerns with respect to private information which is an important step in building trust. For instance, matchmaking websites such as ‘match.com’ spend much capital in assuring the customers regarding confidentiality of information. The respondents of the study expressed their concern regarding the same.

The study also exhibited that respondents failed to participate in social media marketing fearing leak of personal information. Spamming poses a huge problem in social media platforms such as twitter. For instance, spammers on twitter use a technique called link
farming to acquire links of random followers in order to appear among the top search engine results (Ghosh et al., 2012). Reports on the risks associated with social networking sites such as the spread of malware and hack attacks have increased among web users (Langheinrich and Karjoth, 2010). Clicking on fake links that appear to have been sent from friends or families can result in the spread of malware infection, which poses the risk of sensitive information about the user getting escaped (Everett, 2010). Further, according to another survey, nearly half of the consumers commented that they were concerned about the security of their credit card details (Bellman et al., 1999).

### 6.1.2.3 Purchase behaviour with respect to FMCG products

An important aspect of traditional shopping that is not made available to consumers by social media marketing is the chance for personal examination of the product with multiple senses (Rosen and Howard, 2000). Respondents of the study were comfortable purchasing personal care products and household items using online platforms, but failed to buy food and beverages owing to concerns such as expiry date. According to a few other studies, the purchase of grocery items and food products is an experience involving the indulgence of taste, smell, scent, texture, visual appeal, etc. (Hornik, 1992) which cannot be replaced by social media marketing. However, the present study shows that a few consumers who do not value such sensory efforts buy them online in order to make use of other advantages such as reduced pricing, home delivery, etc.

### 6.2 Suggestions

From the study it was seen that a few respondents still followed the traditional methods of marketing. While doing so, the companies should remember that the models and assumptions defining traditional marketing are outdated and the quantitative, analytical and verbal methods used in traditional marketing cannot fully predict the psychology of the present day customers. According to the traditional marketing principles, customers are believed to make rational decisions, based on the overall utility of the product, while making a purchase. But the culture of branding has introduced changes in the approach of customers. The customers today do not expect just product information from an advertisement, but wish to relate to it, emotionally. On the other hand, social media
platforms use sensory and cognitive approaches to consider both rational and emotional aspects of the customers.

Customer doubts regarding the credibility of the content source and the content itself should be addressed by the companies. By providing clear information regarding the impartiality and ownership of a site, by verifying customer reviews and by responding to consumer grievances, a company can project honesty and build trust among the consumers. Information regarding the credibility of the source should be made available to the readers. The companies can provide the consumers with explicit source information such as feedback profile, photograph or location, in order to deal with the credibility issues. Since social media marketing is meant for building of the brand name, the companies should make use of online reputation mechanisms meant for trust building (Dellarocas, 2003).

The companies involved in social media marketing must ensure that the topmost positions in the hierarchy of the company understand the influence of technology on marketing and educate themselves about social media marketing, encouraging the others to do the same. Frequent training should be conducted in the company regarding effective implementation of social media marketing.

While marketing using brand communities such as Facebook, the companies should ensure not to reveal sensitive company information as it introduces the risk of online break-ins and hacks, destroying the company reputation (Langheinrich et al., 2010). The power of mass communication should be handled with considerable amount of caution as the social networks are also capable of quickly destroying the reputation of a company. Several security risks associated with social media marketing were uncovered by the customers of the study. However, one must realize that, with the growth of social media platforms being inevitable, user education regarding the security risks is the only solution. According to Swedowsky (2009), the risk of not using social media platforms is larger than the other risks associated with it.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

Survey respondents were self-selected and the answers to the questionnaire were self-reported. Therefore, the results are vulnerable to social desirability bias and recall bias. The
former refers to modified responses for the sake of social acceptance. The latter refers to mismatch in answers when the respondents are asked the same questions over a period of time. Future studies should be conducted by negating such effects which may influence the results of the study. Further, only a few determinants of the effects of social media marketing were included in the study. Therefore, the results do not explain all the reasons for success or failure of social media marketing in the FMCG sector.

6.4 Scope for Future Research

Since the marketers use more than one platform for social media marketing, the effects of one platform over the other can be studied. For instance, the effects of rising numbers of Facebook messenger users on the number of users of e-mail can be studied based on which the marketers could reinvent their marketing strategies.

The advantages and disadvantages of every social media platform with respect to marketing communications and incorporating the findings to bring positive effects on customer engagement can be studied. For instance, a study conducted on brand communities of Facebook in order to understand the perceived customer engagement found that, customers were not involved in member-member relationship in spite of Facebook being a social network; instead customers only sought latest information about the brand from such communities (Gummerus et al., 2012). The researcher can analyse ways of exploiting this result or improving this result, so that customer engagement is achieved as a result of Facebook marketing.

In the current study, the majority of the participants were students. The same study can be conducted in a different demographic group to gain better understanding of the results. Further, every aspect of customer engagement can be studied separately with respect to every social media platform. For instance, the effects of Facebook on the recall effects of the customers can be studied to gain depth of knowledge. Studies based on financial aspects of social media marketing such as comparison of revenue before and after introduction of social media marketing by the company can result in a clear understanding of the scenario.
6.5 Summary

When social media was analysed as a tool of marketing communications in the FMCG sector, it was found that all the FMCG companies included in the study implemented marketing communications using social media. The study identified improved brand image for the companies as well as purchase behaviour of the customers as a result of social media marketing. At the same time, certain limitations associated with social media usage were also uncovered, which were found to impede the progress of social media marketing in the FMCG sector. Being an evolving media, its viral effect and the advancement in technology can bring down the marketing cost and make it a viable solution for marketing. Social media marketing is sure to grow into a remarkable self-sufficient marketing strategy in the course of time. In summary, the study concludes that social media marketing can be an extremely powerful tool with respect to increasing the sales, revenue and profit of a company, as well as improving the purchase behaviour of customers, when implemented strategically.