



FACTORS MOTIVATING TO FORWARD VIRAL MARKETING MESSAGES- A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO CHENNAI CITY

R.Subhasri* Dr.T.N.Rama**

*Assistant professor, Department of Commerce, S.D.N.B.Vaishnav college for women, Chromepet.

**Associate professor (retd), Research Department of Commerce, S.D.N.B.Vaishnav College for women, Chromepet.

Introduction

The explosion of the Internet and quick rapidity of encroachment in the areas of Information and Communication technology has opened up an opportunity for the markets to stay linked with their customers 24x7. Nowadays, companies feel that usual form of advertising (conventional advertisement) has become too expensive and not that much effectual. Hence, companies shift their toll to more targeted communication tools as Internet with low cost. Like companies, consumers are also shifting to the online for the information as well as for the purchase.

In early days people have used word- of- mouth to get/ convey their network's positive and negative experience about the companies, products and services. At present, Consumers are using online Word-of-Mouth to share the companies information about their product/ services and to get/ express their friends' and family members' view about the company's performance, products/ services that is Viral Marketing.

According to Helm 2000, Viral marketing is described as "a communication and distribution concept that relies on customers to transmit digital products via electronic mail to other potential customers in their social sphere and to animate these contacts to also transmit the products".

Origin of Viral Marketing

The internet has totally transformed the concept of Word-of-Mouth to Viral Marketing. The term "Viral Marketing" has been first coined in the year 1996 by **Jeffrey F Rayport**, faculty member at Harvard Business School. In 1996, his Fast Company article "The virus of Marketing" has introduced the concept and coined the term Viral Marketing. Later, the term is used by venture Capitalist **Steve Jurvetson** in 1997. The term is used to describe Hotmail's email practice of appending advertising for themselves to outgoing mail from their users. The postulation is that if such an advertisement reach a "susceptible user", that user will become tainted and then go on to infect other susceptible users.

Elements of a Viral Marketing Strategy

According to Wilson (2000), six basic principles should be followed to make the viral Marketing campaign effective.

1. Gives away products or services.
2. Provides for effortless transfer to others.
3. Scales easily from small to very large.
4. Exploits Common Motivations and Behaviours.
5. Utilizes Existing Communication Networks.
6. Takes Advantage of Others' Resources.

Review of literature

Joseph E. Phelps, Regina Lewis, Lynne Mobilio, David Perry, Niranjan Raman (2004), found that in Emails the information like crime, warning and good causes are frequently forwarded and opened by the receivers. The researcher has also found that the message content like enjoyment, entertaining, relaxing, helping other people and keeping in touch with people motivated to forward and receive E-mail messages to others.

Esther H C Sprong (2010), has examined the intention of consumers to forward viral video in two points- sender's intent regarding the viral message and the content of the viral video message. By using convenience sampling data was collected from Erasmus University. 94 responses data have been analyzed by simple percentage, multiple regression and factor analysis. The researcher has acknowledged that intention to forward viral messages to their network is more when the sender of the message is a close tie rather than when the message has been received from the company.

Middleton (2012), has proved that viral marketing message carriers are individuals that are aspiring to be customers, satisfied customers, journalists and experts in the field. These carriers can transmit the viral message in active and passive ways. Active transmission means viral marketing message carriers making direct recommendation via internet to their

network. Passive transmission means, carriers making indirect promotions through letting others know about the act of purchasing from a specific brand.

Rohini B (2012), has identified five top marketing strategies which makes ton of cash. Instead of commercial, they use strategies like Evoke emotion, shock, awe or surprise and delightful. This method of marketing is one of the best ways to increase the attractiveness of the website and targets the niche audience by creating a higher demand for the products in the market.

Empirical Gap

The review of literature has revealed that significant number of studies carried out to know what type of E-content makes the Consumers to forward Viral marketing messages to their friends and relatives in E-mail and FaceBook but why and what factors influence the consumers' to forward viral marketing messages is not identified. At the same time newly emerged social media channel- Whatsapp is not still taken for the study. Hence this study tries to fill in this gap by studying the same.

Objectives of the study

1. To identify the demographic aspects and Whatsapp usages of consumers.
2. To ascertain the factors that motivates the consumers to forward viral marketing messages.

Methodology

Convenience sampling method has been adopted to collect the responses from the Whatsapp users. The present study is executed on 252 respondents residing in Chennai city during November- December 2017. Structured questionnaire is used for the data collection. Out of 300 questionnaires distributed, 18 questionnaires are incomplete and 30 questionnaires are not returned. Finally 252 completed questionnaires are received out of 300 questionnaires distributed to the respondents. Frequency Distribution Analysis and Factor Analysis are used to answer the research objectives.

Limitation of the study

The researchers have taken only one E- media channel for the study.

The researchers has analysed the motivation factors only from the sender point of view

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1: Demographic Aspects And Whatapp Usages Classification

Demographic Aspects	Classification	No of Respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 25	100	40
	25-50	76	30
	Above 50	76	30
	Total	252	100
Gender	Male	121	48
	Female	131	52
	Total	252	100
Education qualification	Upto Higher Secondary	25	10
	Graduates &Diplomas	103	41
	Post Graduates	76	30
	Professionals	48	19
	Total	252	100
Category	Students	78	31
	Salaried	83	33
	Self Employed	35	14
	Professional	28	11
	House wife	28	11
	Total	252	100
Residential area	East Chennai	50	20
	West Chennai	41	16

	South Chennai	61	24
	North Chennai	50	20
	Central Chennai	50	20
	Total	252	100
Whatsapp Usages	Classification	No of Respondents	Percentage
Time spent per day	Less than 1 hour	25	10
	1-4 hours	60	24
	5-8 hours	38	15
	9-12 hours	41	16
	More than 12 hours	88	35
	Total		252
Number of contacts	Up to 50	35	14
	51-100	65	26
	101-150	76	30
	Above 150	76	30
	Total		252
Electronic content forwarded in whatsapp	Text messages	50	20
	Games	13	5
	Videos	88	35
	Photos	88	35
	Music	13	5
	Total		252
To whom e-content about products/ services is forwarded	Family members	100	40
	Friends	100	40
	Colleagues	35	14
	Neighbours	16	6
	Total		252

Source: primary data

1. It is evident from the above table 1 that, 40 % of respondents belong to the age group below 25 years, 30% of respondents belong to the age group of 25-50 years and above 50 years.
2. 52% (131 respondents) are female and 48 % (121 respondents) are male.
3. 41% of respondents are graduates and diploma holders, 30% of the sample respondents are post graduates, 19% are professionals and 10% are qualified up to higher secondary.
4. 33% of the Whatsapp users are salaried people, 31% of respondents are students, 14% of the respondents are self-employed, 11% of respondents are house wives and 11% are professionals.
5. 24% of the respondents are residing in South Chennai, 20% of the respondents are residing in East, North and Central part of Chennai, and 16% of the respondents are residing in West Chennai.
6. In Whats app, the maximum of 35% of the respondents' spent time is more than 12 hours a day and a minimum of 10% of the respondents' spent time is less than one hour.
7. In Whatsapp, the maximum of 30% of the respondents have between 101-150 contacts and above 150 contacts and minimum of 14% of the respondents have 50 contacts with their network.
8. The majority of Whatsapp users shares, Videos and photos messages 35% and only 5% of them are sharing games and music as Electronic content in the Whatsapp.
9. 40% of the respondents forward the electronic content information about products and services information to their friends and family members, 14% of respondents share the E-content to their colleagues and 6% of respondents share with their neighbours.

Factors of Motivation To Forward Viral Marketing Messages

Nine independent variables are grouped to find out the motivational factors which influence the consumers to share about products/ services to their networks.

Table 2:KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.693
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	327.038
	Df	36
	Sig.	.000

Source: Computed data.

Bartlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin (KMO) measures are applied to test the sampling adequacy. The above table shows the value of KMO is 0.693. Bartlett's tests of sphericity with approximate chi-square value is 327.038. The significance value is less than 0.05, this shows the variables statistically significant at the 5% level. These individual variances are presented in the following communalities table

Table 3: Communalities

Motivation factors	Initial	Extraction
Willingness to be different from others	1.000	.348
Need to belong in a group	1.000	.383
To express my love and affection	1.000	.388
To the welfare of others	1.000	.515
To Develop knowledge & experience about various products /Services	1.000	.500
My experience with new products / Services	1.000	.348
Sharing news & information consumed from online.	1.000	.641
To Develop new relationship	1.000	.503
To share the Financial benefits derived from the company	1.000	.338

Source: Computed data.

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The principal component method is considered to be appropriate as the primary purpose is to determine the minimum number of factors that would account for the maximum variance in the data collected. The above table depicts that nine variables proposed the ranging from 33.8% to 64.1%. This variance derived the factors as shown in the Total variance explained table below.

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.619	29.102	29.102	2.227	24.747	24.747
2	1.344	14.937	44.039	1.736	19.292	44.039
3	.965	10.717	54.757			
4	.897	9.969	64.725			
5	.872	9.694	74.420			
6	.731	8.127	82.546			
7	.640	7.111	89.658			
8	.517	5.741	95.398			
9	.414	4.602	100.000			

Source: Computed data.

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

From the above table, it is found that two factors have been extracted with cumulative variance of 44.039% from the data collected. Only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are retained and others were ignored. These two factors individually possess the variance of 24.747 and 19.292 respectively.

Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix(a)

Motivation factors	Component	
	1	2
Sharing news & information consumed from online.	.801	
To the welfare of others	.691	
My experience with new products / Services	.576	
To share the Financial benefits derived from the company	.529	
To express my love and affection	.507	
To Develop knowledge & experience about various products /Services		.703
Need to belong in a group		.598
Willingness to be different from others		.579
To Develop new relationship		.554

Source: Computed data.

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

Principal component analysis is applied. The most general pattern of relationship could not be identified through the component matrix. So Rotation matrix is produced. As shown in the above table, Rotational component matrix has identified two main factors

The First Factor Consists of Five Variables Which Are Given Below

Table 6: Personal Growth

Variables	Factor loading Value
Sharing news & information consumed from online.	.801
To the welfare of others	.691
My experience with new products / Services	.576
To share the Financial benefits derived from the company	.529
To express my love and affection	.507

Source: Computed data.

The first factor named as **“Altruistic”**. Altruistic mean for the benefit of others. For the concern of others, respondent sharing information about products/ services to their friends, family members and other network.

The second factor represents four variables, namely

Table 7: Inclusion

Variables	Factor loading Value
To Develop knowledge & experience about various products /Services	.703
Need to belong in a group	.598
Willingness to be different from others	.579
To Develop new relationship	.554

Source: Computed data.

The second factor can be termed as **“Inclusion”**. Inclusion refers to the need to be recognized as a participant in human interaction and to maintain a satisfactory relationship makes to share the messages about products and services to their friends and family member.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study has examined the factors that motivate to forward Whatsapp messages, they are Altruistic and Inclusion. It is also found that the messages are forwarded to the friends and family members of the users. It is identified that contents in the form of photos and videos attract the Whatsapp users.



Next, it is found that majority of Whatsapp users are

1. Female.
2. Graduates/ Diploma holders.
3. Fall in the age group of below 25.
4. Salaried.
5. More than 150 contacts.

At present the business environment is witnessing national and international players and cut throat competition amongst them. To make viral marketing strategy through Whatsapp as effective method, an understanding of Whatsapp users- Demographic profile and motivational factors to forward the messages is crucial.

Reference

1. Esther H C Sprong (2010), "From viral marketing to epidemics: Message and sender characteristics to increase the intention to forward", Master thesis, Erasmus university Rotterdam, pp.1-81.
2. Helm S (2000), " Viral marketing- Establishing customer Relationship by Word of Mouth", *Electronic Markets* 10, No3, pp. 158-161.
3. Jeffrey F Rayport (1996), "The Virus of Marketing", *Fast Company*, December – January, pp. 68-69.
4. Joseph E Phelps, Regina Lewis, Lynne Mobilio, David Perry, Niranjana Raman(2004), "Viral Marketing or Electronic Word-of-Mouth Advertising: Examining consumer responses and motivations to pass along e-mail", *Journal of advertising research*, December, pp 333-348.
5. Middleton.S(2012), "What you need to know about marketing", John Wiley and Sons, <http://research.methodology.net/viral-marketing-as-a-marketing-strategy-a-brief-literature-review/>.
6. Rohini B (2012), "Overview on Viral Marketing strategies for Business promotion", *Competitive Business for sustainable Development*, Volume 11, pp. 35-36.
7. Wilson R F (2000), "The six simple principles of Viral Marketing", *Web Marketing Today*, Volume 70, February 1, pp.1-3.