

A Perceptual Study towards Emergence of Text Messaging as a Marketing Tool

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ABSTRACT—Text messaging, also known as "texting", refers to the exchange of brief written messages between mobile phones over cellular networks. The use of mobile phones has increased significantly over the period of time. Text messaging is gaining popularity as an advertising medium because it is relatively inexpensive and allows businesses to reach out to highly targeted consumers. Millions of people all over the world have the ability to receive text messages. In order to study the perception of people towards increasing use of mobile technology for advertising, the present study has been undertaken on 120 mobile users from the state of Punjab. The data has been analysed using descriptive statistics, Friedman's two-way ANOVA, Chi-square and Factor analytic approach. The study revealed that the companies are making use of mobile technology at an increasing rate for advertising their products and the preferences of the customers are also widely changing in terms of source of purchase. Also the study revealed that respondents consider mobile advertising as informative though the negative aspects are there.

Keyword Perceptual, Emergence, Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA)

1. INTRODUCTION

Information Technology, Internet and Outsourcing have changed the way every business is managed by providing capabilities business demands. The small or large organizations which adopted Information Technology and Internet have achieved competitive differentiation, operational excellence and flexibility to adapt to ever changing business conditions. The next big thing that is going to alter the ways business is conducted is the mobile technology. The biggest challenge for an enterprise is the adoption of mobile technology to create competitive edge, improve profitability and productivity. (<http://www.arimaan.com/innovation/whitepapers/download/Influenceofmobiletechnology.pdf>)

Advertisers and service providers use texts to notify mobile phone users about promotions, payment due dates, and other notifications that used to be sent by post or left as voicemail. There are internet services available that allow users to send text messages free of direct charge to the sender. The latest mobile phones are capable of sending as much as 20 pages.

Text messaging is considered as the fastest and most reliable means of communication. It has gained worldwide popularity and has attracted billions of subscribers. Text messaging technology uses an SMS gateway in order to hook up any mobile SMS service to an existing instant message service, Word Wide Web, PDA devices, personal computers as well as to any landline phone. Some of the devices, which have Bluetooth devices, can connect to a

mobile phone as a modem can also send SMS through wireless networks. SMS have been widely used with either GSM or non GSM systems. During the 1990s only few messages were being sent through SMS. But during the year 2000, there have been a gradual increase in the use of text messaging. As the text messaging system has been developed, it had gained popularity. Text messaging will provide many profound benefits in marketing, customer care, collections, and more.

The scope of text messaging has increased in the last years. Earlier text messages were used for social purposes only. But now a days Text messaging can be used by the customers in order to check the availability and pricing of the particular product, also the companies can ask the customers whether they are interested in buying the product or not. In the today's world, people buy the product on the basis of the review given by the existing consumer. Text messaging can be used as one of the source to get the rating and reviews about the particular thing. Sometimes consumers are not able to get the particular product, text messaging can help the consumers to get the list of the available substitute good which can provide a better replacement. Consumers do have doubt in mind about the shape, size of color of the product. Text messaging can be used to bring the photo of the products so that they reduce the element of doubt from their minds. The people find it difficult in order to find the location and timing of the different stores, text messaging can reduce this problem. The ways texting could be used in retail are

endless. Like, busy restaurants in malls can keep waiting customers happy by allowing them to keep shopping while waiting for a table. A quick text message informs them when their table is ready. HSBC uses text for product promotions, sending text messages asking for a customer's email address to send more detailed information on their offerings. The bank also uses mobile short codes within their offline advertising, encouraging those who read ads in newspapers about a product for example, to follow-up on them immediately. For healthcare providers, "no shows" mean lost revenue. Direct mail or phone reminders can be costly and time consuming. Doctors are now using SMS to remind patients of their upcoming appointments. As publishers migrate toward digital products and services, text messaging is fast becoming part of the mix. In addition to promotions, newspapers and magazines are offering mobile classifieds, mobile dating services and breaking news alerts. Many offer customer support and problem resolution via text. Customers are also able to check order status, track their packages and receive back order notification alerts. When coupled with in-store promotions and coupons, texting becomes a strong vehicle for retail establishments.

Text messaging is gaining popularity as an advertising medium because it is relatively inexpensive and allows businesses to reach out to highly targeted consumers. Millions of people all over the world have the ability to receive text messages. Text message marketing is the practice of taking the marketing message directly to the personal pocket of the prospect. It can appear to be very intrusive, so marketers must tread carefully. The ownership and use of cellular and mobile telephones has gained huge market penetration. Their use as a marketing tool is in its infancy. These days' businesses large and small are increasingly using a full range of communication methods including email, web and fax to enhance relationships with existing customers, as well as a low-cost means of acquiring new ones. However, the text marketing has its negatives too. Too much of messages to the customers can irritate them.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tähtinen and Salo (2004) studied about permission-based mobile advertising and its specific features, which make it a different form of advertising. The research discussed the unused features of mobile advertising that retailers of Finland can utilize. They also suggested ways to fully utilize the potential of mobile advertising.

Griffin, Trevorrow and Halpin (2006) examined the effect of text messaging on democratic participation by the young citizens and its effect on the processes of the political administration. They found that mobile phone was not an important source to invigorating consultation with young people by the local public administration They identified a number of organizational, social and cultural

issues which may limit the scope for using this technology to increase youth participation and change the relationship between young people and their local elected representatives.

Dale and Strauss (2007) determined the effect of mobile technology to encourage young people to vote. The research design consisted of a nation-wide field experiment that tested the basic effectiveness of text messaging as a mobilization tool. The result showed that a text message reminder to voter produces a strongly positive and statistically significant effect on the likelihood of voting.

Batat (2009) studied about the symbolic consumption with specific reference to mobile phone devices in the teenage market. The research was conducted on young people of four different age groups which suggested that mobile usage was closely bound to the adolescent's self-need like social, entertainment, self-construction, the consumption skills and the self-creation.

Reimers and Stewart (2009) tested the effectiveness of text messaging as a way of responding through simple psychology experiments. They examined anchoring effects in an SMS-based auction and delay discounting with participants indicating their inter-temporal preferences using SMS. They found many limitations of SMS text messaging like time taken to enter and send text, different time taken to reach the message to other person.

Waldt, Rebello & Brown (2009) studied the perceptions of the younger consumer segment towards SMS advertisements. They found that consumer perceptions towards the SMS advertisements in the fields of entertainment, informative and credibility are positively correlated. However, they concluded that consumers have generally negative attitudes towards SMS advertisements and it must be cautiously used when attempting to gain the attention of a younger segment of consumers.

There are various studies conducted in the field of text messaging where the researcher studied on different aspects of text messages. The researcher studied the social and psychological effects of text messaging on the people, effect of text messaging while driving and involvement in democratic activities such as vote etc, perception about the young consumers on SMS advertisement etc. There is still a wide gap existing in the research field with the same aspect in Indian context. Considering the emerging importance of mobile market in India, the study is conducted in order to determine the impact of text messaging on the sales of the small and big scale industries in the country.

3. NEED AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The brief study on review of literature revealed the fact that number of studies has been carried out in the arena of text messaging and mobile advertisements. However, there

is still a wide gap existing in the research field on mobile text advertisements in Indian context. Considering the emerging importance of mobile market in India, the need for current study was felt to determine the impact of text messaging as a marketing tool on the sales of the small and big scale industries in the country. The present study focused on the primary objective of getting an idea regarding the impact of text messaging in marketing. The explicit objectives of the study were:

1. To explore the formats of text messages adopted by companies.
2. To study the utility of mobile advertising.
3. To explore the market opportunities created by text messages.
4. To investigate into the relationship between the demographic features and the purchase decision due to text messaging.

Hypotheses

In order to empirically verify the above objectives the following null hypotheses were framed and tested:

Ho₁: There is no significant association between gender and purchase decision due to text messaging.

Ho₂: There is no significant association between current status and purchase decision due to text messaging.

Ho₃: There is no significant association between monthly income and purchase decision due to text messaging.

Survey Instrument

Since the current study is based on primary data covering 100 respondents, questionnaire has been used as survey instrument that was divided in three sections. First section consisted of demographic profile of the respondents which included gender, marital status, current status, monthly income and family members. In the second section, respondents were asked about the frequency and type of text messages received by them. Respondents were asked about the factors for not reading text messages advertisements, preference and behavior towards text messages. In the last section, respondents were asked about their preference towards different source of advertisements.

4. STATISTICAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

In order to analyse the data, descriptive statistics, Friedman's two-way ANOVA, Chi-square and Factor analytic approach have been used. For this purpose, SPSS has been meticulously used.

Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study has been carried out on 120 respondents from the state of Punjab. Table 1 depicts the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographics	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Gender		
Male	52	43.33
Female	68	56.67
Total	120	100
Marital Status		
Single	102	85
Married	18	15
Total	120	100
Current Status		
Student	90	75
Service man	18	15
Professional	6	5
Business man	6	5
Total	120	100
Monthly Income		
Below 5000	44	36.67
5001 – 15000	24	20
15001 – 25000	14	11.67
Above 25000	38	31.67
Total	120	100
Family Members		
1 – 3	36	30
4 – 6	66	55
7 – 10	4	3.33
More than 10	14	11.67
Total	120	100

It is analyzed from the table that majority of the respondents i.e. 85% were single and most of the respondents i.e. 75% were students. The income or pocket money of most of the student's lies under Rs.5000 per month and 85% of the total sample has 4 to 6 members in the family.

Time duration being a mobile user

It is analyzed from the table 2 that majority of the respondents had used mobile for more than 2 years which constitute to 48% of the sample and 43% of the respondents had used mobile for more than 5 years. It is interpreted that the consumers have been using the mobile phones from a long time.

Table 2 Time Duration Being a Mobile User

Years	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
0 – 2	10	8.34
2 – 5	58	48.33
More than 5	52	43.33
Total	120	100

Services Used on Mobile

Majority of the respondents said that they used mobile phones for calling and messaging purpose. Also respondents used mobile phones for music and videos and games purposes. It can be interpret that respondents used mobile phone for basically for two purposes which are calling and messaging.

Table 3 Services Used on Mobile

Services	Number of Respondents
Calling	40
Messaging	42
Games	21
Music and Videos	25
E-mail	7
Internet	7
Total	142

Information received about new product via text message

From the table 4, it is analyzed that majority of the respondents received information about the new product via text message i.e. 78% of total sample. It can be interpreted that the companies had started this source of media to reach the consumers.

Table 4 Information Received about New Product via Text Message

Information Received	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	94	78.33
No	26	21.67
Total	120	100

Number of Text Message Advertisements Received

The table 5 indicated that 53% respondents received 1 to 3 text message advertisements and 20% respondents received 4 to 6 text message advertisements in a day. By this it can be interpreted that the companies have already started this medium and covering a large portion of mobile users but not able to cover the entire mobile users which increases the scope of mobile advertisements.

Table 5 Number of Text Message Advertisements Received

Number of Text Messages	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
0	14	11.67
1 – 3	64	53.33
4 – 6	24	20
7 – 10	6	5
11 – 15	2	1.67
Above 15	10	8.33
TOTAL	120	100

Duration of Receiving Text Message Advertisements

From the responses received, it has been analysed that the majority of the respondents has been receiving text messages advertisements i.e. 38% for more than 2 years. 33% respondents admitted that they had been receiving such kind of messages from more than 3 years. It can be interpreted from the above table that the companies have started to use this means and understand the growing importance of sending text messages to consumers.

Table 6 Duration of Receiving Text Message Advertisements

Years	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Up to 1 yr	20	16.67
2 yrs	46	38.33
3 yrs	14	11.67
More than 3 yrs	40	33.33
Total	120	100

Responses about Reading Text Message Advertisements

It is analyzed from the table 7 that respondents spend some time to read the text message advertisement i.e. 77% of sample. 23% of respondent said that they didn't read text message advertisements at all. Thus, it can be interpreted that majority of the respondent give some time to read text message advertisements which increase the scope of mobile advertisements.

Table 7 Responses about Reading Text Message Advertisements

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Never	28	23.33
Sometimes	70	58.34
Often	12	10
Always	10	8.33
Total	120	100

Reasons for not Reading Text Message Advertisements

The respondents were provided with a list of criteria and were asked to rank the reasons for not reading text messages. The results have been extracted using Friedman's two-way ANOVA.

Table 8 Reasons for not Reading Text Messages as Advertisements

Reasons of not Reading	Rank	Mean	SD
Boring	1	2.03	0.81
High frequency	5	3.56	1.74
Time consuming	2	2.78	1.82
Useless	3	3.1	1.23
Irrelevant	4	3.15	0.84

Notes: The mean is the average on a scale of 1=Most Important and 5= Least Important; SD=Standard Deviation; scores are significantly different on Friedman two-way ANOVA test ($p < 0.001$); N=120

The perusal of the results revealed that table it can be analyzed that by using Friedman ANOVA test, reason of boring has got 1st rank followed by time-consuming. However, high frequency of messages has got the last rank.

Type of Text Message Advertisements Received

Maximum number of respondents said that they received advertisement from their service providers followed by text messages regarding discounts and special offers. Thus, it can be interpreted that the respondents are receiving the maximum text messages from the service providers as compare to others.

Table 9 Type of Text Message Advertisements Received

Type	Number of Respondents
Job advertisement	30
Banking services	25
Discount & special offers	54
Advertisements by service providers	62
Others	0
Total	170

Sources of Best Media for Advertisements

The respondents were provided with a list of criteria and were asked to rank the sources considered as best as advertisement media. The results have been extracted using Friedman's two-way ANOVA.

Table 10 Best Media for Advertisements

Reasons of not Reading	Rank	Mean	SD
Television	1	1.25	0.21
Radio	5	3.75	1
Newspaper	3	2.3	0.826
Emails	4	3.45	1.13
Mobile advertisement	2	1.9	1.17
Notes: The mean is the average on a scale of 1=Most Preferred and 5= Least Preferred; SD=Standard Deviation; scores are significantly different on Friedman two-way ANOVA test ($p < 0.001$); N=120			

The perusal of the results revealed that by using Friedman ANOVA test, television has got 1st rank followed by mobile advertisements. However, radio as source of advertisement has got the last rank.

Number of Products Bought by Mobile Advertisement

Majority of the respondents i.e. 68.33% haven't bought anything which is being advertised through text messages. 31.67% respondents said that they have bought something which is being advertised through text messages.

Table 11 Number of Products Bought by Mobile Advertisement

Number of Products	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
0	82	68.33
1 – 2	26	21.67
3 – 5	6	5
5 – 10	4	3.33
More than 10	2	1.67
Total	120	100

Table 13 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	
	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
V1								
2.677	38.244	38.244	2.677	38.244	38.244	2.641	37.726	37.726
V2								
1.409	20.124	58.367	1.409	20.124	58.367	1.445	20.641	58.367

It can be interpreted that though the majority of the respondents haven't bought anything which is being advertised through mobile but still companies are able to create some market opportunities through text messages

Utility of Mobile Advertising

The respondents were provided with a list of seven statements to see their agreement with the utility of mobile advertisements. For this purpose, Factor analysis has been undertaken. The reliability analysis of the scale was undertaken using Cronbach α reliability test. It was found to be .625 which is considered a satisfactory level of construct reliability. In order to know whether the sample is adequate or not, sampling adequacy test has been undertaken. The sampling adequacy is depicted in table 12.

Table 12 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.663
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	198.035
	Df	21
	Sig.	.000

KMO recommends accepting value greater than .5 as acceptable (value below this leads either to collect more data or to rethink which variable should be included or excluded). And Bartlett recommends the accepting value less than .05. Bartlett's test finds that the correlations, when taken collectively are significant at .0001 level whereas measure of sampling adequacy looks at the patterns between the variables. In this case, the overall Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) value falls in the acceptable range (above .50). Since the accepting value for variables is .663 (more than .5) for KMO and .000 for Bartlett's test (less than .5), these measures indicate that the set of variables is appropriate for factor analysis and the analysis can proceed to next stage. The analysis for KMO indicated that factor analysis was suitable as correlations between the pair of variables can be explained by other variables. Also the study of MSA revealed and confirmed the suitability of factor analysis. The default solution (eigen values > 1) indicated resulted in extraction of two factors that accounted for 58.367 percent of total variance. Table 13 and 14 summarizes the orthogonal solution resulting from a varimax rotation of the measures.

V3								
.773	11.037	69.404						
V4								
.727	10.388	79.793						
V5								
.654	9.344	89.137						
V6								
.499	7.122	96.259						
V7								
.262	3.741	100.000						

Table 14 Rotated Component Matrix and Factor Labels

Statements	Factor Label	Component	
		1	2
Mobile ads are informative	Informational content	.844	
Mobile ads help you to make a decision to buy product or service		.736	
Mobile ads save time as give customized information in inbox		.720	
Mobile advertising helps you to remember and recall the ads easily		.665	
Mobile ads are more interesting than any other ads source		.599	
Mobile ads can make you pay more attention to the ads	Behavioral Impact		.792
Mobile ads does not cause disturbance at work			.656

The factor 1 has been labeled as “*Informational Content*”. Factor 2 was named as “*Behavioral Impact*”.

Results of the Hypotheses

In order to test the hypothesis (H_{01}) that there is no association a between gender and purchase decision due to text messaging, (H_{02}) that there is no association a

between current status and purchase decision due to text messaging and (H_{03}) that there is no association between monthly income and purchase decision due to text messaging, Pearson Chi Square test was applied.

Table 15 Association between Purchase Decision and Demographic Profile (Gender, Income and Status)

Decision to Purchase	No. of Products Purchased	Demographics				
		Gender				
		Male	Female	-----	-----	
Purchase*	<1	20	39	-----	-----	51
	1-2	14	6	-----	-----	20
	3-5	7	6	-----	-----	13
	6-10	5	8	-----	-----	13
	>10	6	9	-----	-----	15
Total		52	68	-----	-----	120
		Current Status				
Purchase*		Students	Serviceman	Professionals	Businessman	
	<1	7	6	7	7	27
	1-2	5	6	6	6	23
	3-5	7	5	5	5	22
	6-10	5	6	6	7	24
	>10	5	6	8	5	24
Total		29	29	32	30	120
		Monthly Income				
Purchase*		<5000	5001-15000	15001-25000	>25000	
	<1	7	6	7	7	27
	1-2	5	6	6	6	23
	3-5	7	5	5	5	22
	6-10	5	6	6	7	24
	>10	5	6	8	5	24
Total		29	29	32	30	120

*Significant at 5%level of significance

The empirical results of the test are given in Table 15. A close examination of Table 15 indicates that there exists a strong association between gender and purchase decision due to text messaging; current status and purchase decision due to text messaging; and income and purchase decision due to text messaging. Thus, the results led to rejection of null hypotheses.

5. CONCLUSION

Text messaging, also known as "texting", refers to the exchange of brief written messages between mobile phones over cellular networks. The use of mobile phones has increased significantly over the period of time. The respondents in the study have been using the mobile phones from a long period of time. Mobiles have increased the scope of the companies by providing a cheaper medium of advertisement with large coverage. The majority of the respondents admitted that they had received text message advertisement regarding new products on daily basis and has been able to create some market opportunities. Respondents feel these are informative and time saving. However, they were of the opinion that these messages disturbed them while at work. Respondents were neutral about the decision making regarding buying of product advertised via text messages. The respondents preferred television as the most effective source of advertisement followed by mobile advertisement. Text messages are able to create market opportunities to some extent for the companies but still there lies a wide scope for the companies as text messaging is the cheapest medium of advertisement with large coverage. The companies need to improve their strategies in order to improve this new advertisement channel.

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