

Perception and Effectiveness of social media in agriculture marketing with special reference to the Erode District

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Abstract

Marketing in social media has changed the entire trend of marketing. Promoting the product or service by exhibiting its physical appearance and making the customer to feel the comfort of the product has been changed. To day producers are selling their product through social medias and customers are buying it even without seeing it. But this not applied to all the products, certain products like agricultural products cannot be effectively marketed in social medias. This study has been conducted with the objective of knowing the perception and effectiveness of social media marketing of agricultural products. the data needed for the research was collected through questionnaire. The required sample was collected from the population of Erode social media users. the results explained significant association of demographic factors with perception and effectiveness and the respondents consider YouTube as the effective mean of agricultural marketing.

Keywords: social media, marketing, agricultural products

1. Introduction

Agriculture marketing refers to the process of promoting and selling agricultural products, including crops, livestock, and related services. It involves various activities aimed at connecting agricultural producers with consumers, wholesalers, retailers, and other stakeholders in the supply chain (Laith Tashtoush, 2021)

Key components of agriculture marketing include:

1. Product Promotion: Farmers and agricultural businesses use marketing strategies to create awareness and promote their products. This can involve advertising, branding, packaging, and labelling to differentiate their offerings and attract customers.

2. **Market Research:** Understanding consumer preferences, market trends, and competition is crucial in agriculture marketing. Research helps identify target markets, assess demand and pricing, and make informed decisions about product development and positioning.
3. **Distribution Channels:** Selecting the right distribution channels is vital for reaching the intended market. This can involve direct sales to consumers at farmers' markets or through community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, as well as indirect channels such as wholesalers, retailers, and online platforms.
4. **Pricing and Negotiation:** Determining appropriate pricing strategies based on production costs, market demand, and competition is essential in agriculture marketing. Negotiation skills play a role in securing fair prices for agricultural products and services.
5. **Relationship Building:** Building and maintaining relationships with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders is crucial. This includes fostering trust, providing excellent customer service, and engaging in effective communication to establish long-term partnerships.
6. **Market Access and Regulations:** Understanding and complying with regulations, certifications, and standards related to agriculture marketing is necessary to ensure product quality, food safety, and compliance with legal requirements. Accessing international markets may involve additional considerations, such as export regulations and trade agreements.
7. **Sustainable and Ethical Practices:** Increasingly, consumers are seeking products produced using sustainable and ethical practices. Agriculture marketing should consider incorporating environmental stewardship, animal welfare, and social responsibility to meet evolving consumer expectations.

Effective agriculture marketing involves a combination of traditional marketing methods (such as advertising, direct sales, and networking) and leveraging digital tools, including websites, social media, and e-commerce platforms (Shanthi & Desti Kannaiah, 2015). It requires understanding the target audience, adapting to market dynamics, and continuously evaluating and adjusting marketing strategies to achieve desired outcomes (Brindha & Rajakrishnan, 2018).

Social media has significantly influenced agriculture marketing by providing farmers, agricultural businesses, and consumers with new opportunities and challenges.

Perception: The perception of social media in agriculture marketing varies. Some view it as a valuable tool for expanding market reach, building brand awareness, and engaging with customers. It enables direct communication, allows farmers to share their stories, and facilitates knowledge exchange among stakeholders. Others may perceive social media as time-consuming, with potential privacy and security concerns.

Effectiveness: social media can be highly effective in agriculture marketing when used strategically. It offers cost-effective advertising options, targeting specific audiences and geographic regions. It helps farmers promote their products, share farming practices, and connect with potential buyers or partners. Social media platforms allow for real-time feedback, enabling businesses to address customer queries and concerns promptly (Arijit Banerjee, 2013). Additionally, social media provides opportunities for networking, collaboration, and accessing market trends.

However, the effectiveness of social media in agriculture marketing depends on various factors. These include the target audience's social media usage, the platform's popularity among the agricultural community, content quality and consistency, and the ability to leverage social media analytics to refine marketing strategies. Furthermore, social media should be seen as a complement to traditional marketing methods rather than a standalone solution. It requires thoughtful planning, content curation, and active engagement to maximize its benefits.

This study specifically focusses on the role of Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and Blogs on agricultural marketing.

2. Review of Literature

Balkrishna & Deshmuck, (2017) have conducted A Study on Role of social media in Agriculture Marketing and its Scope. Social media is the new upcoming area in agricultural marketing that has blogs, microblogs, pages, groups etc. this study was conducted from the farmers using social media through structured questionnaire. The results stated that, social media is very useful tool in agricultural marketing. It saves time and cost of the farmers for getting information. Facebook is the most likely social media for pages and profiles. YouTube videos are most popular for information getting with applications. WhatsApp is is the handy use of social media and mostly preferred for related groups. Many officials are having their

official pages, blogs, and groups on social media and it helps in getting information and solving the problems. Challenges were adoption of social media as tool of marketing. People are less trusted on e-buying, e-selling of agricultural commodity on social media.

Ajay Mamgain, Udit Joshi, & Jaidev Chauhan (2020) have made a study on “Impact of Social Media in Enhancing Agriculture Extension”. The researchers have stated that Platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp have 2.6 billion, 2 billion, and 1.6 billion active monthly users respectively as of 2020. YouTube videos are an excellent source of dissemination of knowledge using audio-visual aids. WhatsApp is the handy use of social media and mostly preferred for related groups. Social media is continuously growing and getting the attention of users with the emergence of several smartphones. However, it has not grown widely for agriculture in India because of various challenges prevalent in rural India that are the shortage of infrastructure, limitation in participation, illiteracy in rural zones, non-institutionalization, lack of quality control, etc. Nowadays, social media is gradually being appreciated in agricultural extension service delivery but continuously facing several challenges. Thus, the need of the hour is to put structures in place and efforts to be made by training and other methods by all stakeholders to ensure good use of its benefits in agricultural extension and rural development.

2.1. Objectives

To study the perception on social media marketing of agricultural products

To analyse the effectiveness of social media marketing on agricultural products

3. Research Methodology

To study the perception and effectiveness of social media marketing of agricultural products the researcher mainly relied on primary data, for collecting data the researcher has distributed 120 questionnaires to social media using farmers based on judgemental sampling technique. Out of that 110 completed questionnaires were collected back and 6 were found incomplete. Hence the researcher has took 104 data for the purpose of research and it was analysed using chi-square technique.

4. Analysis

4.1. Association of demographic variables with Perception on social media marketing of agriculture products

Demographic Variable	Perception on social media marketing of agriculture products		
	Chi Square Value	P value	Status of Hypothesis
Gender	234.23	0.001	Rejected@1%
Age	341.45	0.001	Rejected@1%
Qualification	121.23	0.041	Rejected@5%
Income	132.43	0.021	Rejected@5%
Marital Status	332.43	0.001	Rejected@1%
Family Type	412.44	0.001	Rejected@1%

Table 4.1 explains the association of demographic variables with perception on social media marketing of agriculture products. The demographic Variables such as gender, age, marital status and family type has p value less than 0.01 hence the null hypothesis assuming no relationship between demographic factors and perception on social media marketing is rejected at 1 per cent level of significance. Likewise, qualification and income have p value less than 0.05, though the null hypothesis assuming no relationship between those variables and perception on social media marketing is rejected at 5 per cent level of significance.

It can be concluded that, all the demographic variables of the study have significant association with perception on social media marketing of agriculture products.

4.2. Association of demographic variables with Effectiveness of social media marketing of agriculture products

Demographic Variable	Effectiveness of social media marketing of agriculture products		
	Chi Square Value	P value	Status of Hypothesis

Gender	334.56	0.001	Rejected@1%
Age	441.12	0.001	Rejected@1%
Qualification	521.23	0.001	Rejected@1%
Income	921.43	0.001	Rejected@1%
Marital Status	710.43	0.001	Rejected@1%
Family Type	913.63	0.001	Rejected@1%

Table 4.2 describes the association of demographic variables with effectiveness of social media marketing of agricultural products. since the p value of gender, age, qualification, income, marital status and family type is less than 0.01. Hence the null hypothesis assuming no relationship of demographic factors with effectiveness is holds no good at 1 per cent level of significance.

It can be stated that, all the demographic factors have significant association with effectiveness of social media marketing of agricultural products.

4.3. Rank of social medias in agricultural marketing

Social Media	Rank of usage in agricultural marketing
Facebook	III
YouTube	I
WhatsApp	II
Blogs	IV

Table 4.3 shows the rank usage of various social medias for agricultural marketing. The respondents have ranked YouTube as the prime media followed by WhatsApp, Facebook and Blogs.

4. Findings

- All the demographic variables have significant association with perception and effectiveness of social media marketing of agricultural products
- YouTube is the most used media for agricultural products followed by WhatsApp and Facebook

5. Conclusion

The social media platforms offer interactive features, allowing users to comment, like, and share content, which can increase the visibility and reach of agricultural marketing efforts. Additionally, they provide opportunities for farmers and businesses to engage with their audience, address queries, build relationships, and gain valuable feedback. It is important to select the appropriate platform(s) based on the target audience's preferences and usage patterns (Pratiksinh Vaghela, 2014). Integrating these digital tools into an overall marketing strategy can help farmers and agricultural businesses effectively communicate their brand, products, and values to a broader audience, ultimately driving engagement, sales, and long-term customer relationships.

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