Social Media as an Effective Marketing Tool : An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Social media has introduced a unique aspect to marketing strategy, where once companies dictated what was said about their brands to a passive audience, consumers have now become the creators and distributors of these messages. Designing communication for social media is a different ball game with increasing awareness and impatient audience, rising competition, and cost. Management education in India has lately turned into more of a business than an attempt to educate the people of the county. This field has felt a dire need of most effective promotional media. Besides conventional forms of promotion, social media can be one of the tools which can keep the institutions in limelight. The existing empirical study was directed to focus on social media as an effective marketing tool for management institutes in Pune city. A structured and undisguised questionnaire was developed and was used to collect primary data from 566 respondents. A conceptual model was investigated by using structural equation modeling and the impact of external constructs on the internal construct was tested. This study provided detailed insights on various elements used for analysis and revealed that electronic word-of-mouth and social image influenced impression management, which in-turn influenced opportunities of branding through social media. Furthermore, this study confirmed the mediating role of impression management in electronic word-of-mouth and social image on branding of management institutes.

Keywords : Social media, management institutes, branding, electronic word-of-mouth, social image

Paper Submission Date : April 13, 2018 ; Paper sent back for Revision : June 6, 2018 ; Paper Acceptance Date : June 9, 2018

The roots of social media stretch far deeper than one might imagine (Kemp, 2015). Facebook like sites are the natural outcome of many centuries of social media development, which may seem like a new trend. Social media refers to the collective intelligence of Internet users, the communities and web real estate they frequent, and the content and relationships generated as a result. Cohen (2014) and Bullas (2015) observed that social media marketing tapped into a growing segment by actively engaging with the audience for the purpose of delivering positive returns.

As Okazaki and Taylor (2013) observed, due to an information overload, many consumers are skeptical about listening to traditional marketing messages. Traditional advertising is no longer the best strategy for attracting new business prospects (Radcliffe, 2015). As observed by Papasolomou and Melanthiou (2012), social media has helped to build a community centered on brands, in turn providing another targeted mechanism to communicate and extract valuable information (Cromity, 2012). As a form of market research, social media participation leads to monitoring conversations about brands and interest trends within social media communities. Monitoring social media, according to Annie Jin (2012), is an important part of brand management as this aids in understanding how supporters of a brand are talking about the business.

Social media has introduced a unique aspect to companies' marketing strategy (Yang & Wang, 2015), where once companies dictated what was said about their brands to a passive audience, consumers have now become the

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creators and distributors of these messages. Knoll (2015) noted that aside from increasing a company's brand touch-points, social media marketing provides a company with an opportunity to build valuable relationships with the consumers and improve brand loyalty among them and their communities by engaging in meaningful dialogue. By integrating social media into a company's marketing and communications strategy, a company can facilitate reaching to consumers which leads to target branding.

Social media is not about the takeover of traditional media, at least not in the immediate future. Social media marketing is an expansion of ordinary e - marketing. With rapid dispersion of broadband technology across the globe, the Internet is emerging as the most favorite medium among consumers. However, as pointed out by Xiang and Gretzel (2010), identifying new media activities that complement traditional marketing activities in an integrated manner, in turn, targeting audience in both their offline and online environments is a step towards building valuable relationships.

Conventional media like television, newspapers, magazines, and radio are slowly becoming not as much attractive. As the Internet becomes a more integrated part of the consumers' lifestyle, consumers spend more time online establishing personal associations via Internet phone calls, instant messaging, and online forums. Online viewers are frequently found to be members of the so-called millennial generation, who were born around 1980 and prefer online media more than conventional TV. Estimates have discovered that these millennials spend an average of 2.48 hours a day online and about 2.2 hours a day listening to music. Moreover, media consumption approach of the society, particularly teenagers, has shifted from the customary media experiences to the interactive media experiences, and lifestyle media has gained extensive social acceptance (Naidu, 2014).

The study conducted by Evans (2010) and Evans (2012) observed that the Internet is the fundamental connecting factor among other things that contributed to the rise of social media. Social media has evolved as a mixture of personalized media experiences, with a social context of participation empowering consumers to utilize their productive leisure and social time around converged media experiences. Sharma (2012) noted that social media further allows consumers to communicate with each other through any access device or network. Social media provides participatory, dynamic, and hyperlinked features that make content platforms more independent and support interaction based on consumer preferences. Social media offers an untapped resource for advertisers to promote their brands through viral marketing and word-of-mouth (Qualman, 2010) to prospects. Social media marketing lets customers associate with brands by creating opportunities. Andreasen (2002) emphasized that social media allows managing reputation and customer dialogue, which in turn leads to being proactive in engaging with these conversations. He further noted that social media marketing provides opportunities to investigate the target market's feelings, opinions, and experiences about a product, which again provide opportunities for competitive advantage.

Social media has permitted building associations with customers (Sandler, 2015), to learn from them, become friends, and ultimately extend the relationship with them. It is a fact that social media marketing is an exceptional addition to almost every business where personal affiliation with customers and buzz plays a vital role. The reason for prioritizing the importance of social media marketing is its constantly growing platform that attracts a large audience, engaging in meaningful dialog and content. Today, through social media, consumers themselves are becoming a far more integral part of the brand communication strategy and process. Internationally, it is not wrong to say that most of the marketing media has gone social. Now a days, a lot of social media conversations are around trends, brands, and experiences, which directly influence other consumers than traditional media. Social media facilitates consumer research and communication, and it can result in strong brand loyalty within the target market.

Defining the Role of Social Media as a Marketing Tool in Educational Institutes

The development in information technologies has made higher learning institutions change the way they communicate with their stakeholders. Facebook (Galan, Lawley, & Clements, 2015; Tantiponganant &

Laksitamas, 2014), Twitter (Palmer, 2013), and YouTube (Constantinides & Stagno, 2011) have been used to communicate with current and prospective students by higher learning institutions. With a focus on Facebook and Twitter, universities have active social network accounts to answer students' questions and serve as an online news channel.

As noted by Kuzma and Wright (2013), it is an undeniable fact that higher education institutes all over the world are identifying the potential of using social networking as an outreach technique for their marketing campaigns, which could act as a catalyst for strategic change within the education sector. Ernest and Ronald (2015) revealed that social media sites offer universities a great opportunity to listen to the wants and needs of the stakeholders as well as to show to their stakeholders that they are listening, thus increasing trust.

Social media provides new avenues to educational institutes for communication and collaboration with their stakeholders. Palmer (2012) described the use of social media marketing in a small academic program and suggested a supplementary study to design and develop Facebook as part of a strategic departmental communication and marketing tool. The development of techno- and social media-marketing campaigns has assisted the engagement of university students in voluntary activities on campus, which endorses active citizenship and community cohesion (Thorpe & Lim, 2013). At present, universities are developing online communities in higher education, where social networking sites are used as marketing tools (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011) to get students during admission processes. It is noticeable that the use social media as a marketing tool is penetrating in promoting, branding, and marketing of universities and institutions across the globe.

Purpose of the Study

The liberalization policy promoted by the Indian government in the year 1991 has made a significant impact on the higher educational institutions in India in general and management institutions, in particular (Saha, 2012). A rapid growth has been observed in the number of management institutions offering programmes at both the graduate and undergraduate levels (Menon, 2014).

Kumar and Dash (2011) claimed that the Indian management education is almost an imitation of the U.S. business education, predominantly in the area of teaching methodology, curricula, industry interface, and academic research models. The Indian management institutes are struggling hard to introduce several adaptations because of differences in the work culture system. Owing to globalization, lots of changes are noticed in the functioning of industries across the world. Industries require manpower with multiple skills rather than simply knowledge-oriented personnel. The top management institutes are continuously changing the contents and delivery modes in the same context and are managing the trend.

The field of education has been lately turned into more of a business than an attempt to educate the people of the country. There are private universities extending across the country, and most of them are providing management education by offering management degrees. We are observing a paradigm shift from management education to professional education, emphasizing on the professional approach in its working. The students in modern institutions aspire on grabbing placements than acquiring knowledge required for making them employable that would place them into desired jobs.

Management education, once upon a time, was considered to be the sure source of getting employment for students. Students having good scores in management education were sure to get placed in a good company with a good pay package. As a result of the same, a large number of students entered into higher education in the stream of management.

However, as Anita (2016) observed, the current scenario in management institutes is not promising at all. Due to dilution in quality, most of the institutes have failed to maintain the required standard of education. With a decreased demand, most of the institutes have started facing the problem of sustenance. Industries have been

expressing their resentment at the lack of quality education in management institutions in our country. This situation poses a number of challenges before the management institutes in terms of retaining their name in the field of higher education and motivating the prospects to regain faith in the management education in India. Many institutions are on the verge of closing down for want of appropriate number of students. It is high time for them to take hard steps to acquire the students.

The immediate solution to this problem seems to be skillful promotion on social media that may fetch them admissions and would also be helpful in regaining their position in the minds of the prospects. Management institutions can be successful in reaching their target audience by using social media as their marketing tool. In Pune city, out of 190 management institutes surveyed, 76 have their presence on Facebook, 64 on YouTube, 55 on Twitter, and 41 on LinkedIn. Thus, the present study is focused on knowing the potential of social media as an effective marketing tool for management institutes in Pune city.

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development

(1) Impression Management : Chandel, Sethi, and Mishra (2017) opined that corporate communication represents a strategy to create corporate image. Social networking platforms like Facebook are a popular means of communicating individual and organizational-personality. Heinonen (2011), in his study, pointed out that online platforms help consumers to involve themselves into a variety of activities, consuming content to participating in discussions with other consumers. Krämer and Winter (2008) identified that impression management was a major motive of individuals and organizations for their active participation in social networking platforms. Thus, presentation of self, self-expression, and self-actualization as elements of impression management are motives of participation in social networking platforms.

(2) Electronic Word - of - Mouth : Since the recent past, electronic word-of-mouth communication is gaining considerable attention in academic communities (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Word-of-mouth is one of the most important information sources when a consumer is making a decision related to purchases. This influence is especially important, where products are difficult to evaluate before their consumption. Electronic word-of-mouth certainly offers large scale and anonymous ways of influencing consumers. According to Cheung, Lee, and Rabjohn (2008), social media platforms have shaped numerous opportunities for electronic word-of-mouth communication from business-to-customers, customers-to-customers, and customers-to-business.This phenomenon has impacted businesses as it offeres easy access of information to customers to ease their decision making process. As discussed by Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, and Chowdury (2009), electronic word-of-mouth was an online tool for communication to connect with customers and is a part of overall organizational marketing strategies.

Based on the existing review of literature, it is likely that electronic word-of-mouth will influence impression management. Therefore, this study proposes :

✤ **H$_1$:** Electronic word-of-mouth will have a positive effect on creation of impression (impression management) for management institutes in Pune city.

(3) Social Image : Technologies are intensely changing public relation strategies of organizations, where trust developed by producers has a substantial direct effect on intention to buy. Social media platforms, facilitating the social interaction, are effectively leading to increased trust, as put by Kwak, Lee, Park, and Moon (2010) and intention-to-purchase among consumers (Hajli, 2014). Bruhn, Schoenmueller, and Schäfer (2012) found that social media communication by producers had a positive impact on functional brand image. Producers use social media marketing to maintain brand loyalty of the consumers and to influence brand trust (Habibi, Laroche, &

Richard, 2014). Social image construct has a strong affective component that repetitively drives process of creation of impression management. Therefore, the study thus proposes :

✥ **H₂:** Social image will have a positive effect on creation of impression (impression management) for management institutes in Pune city.
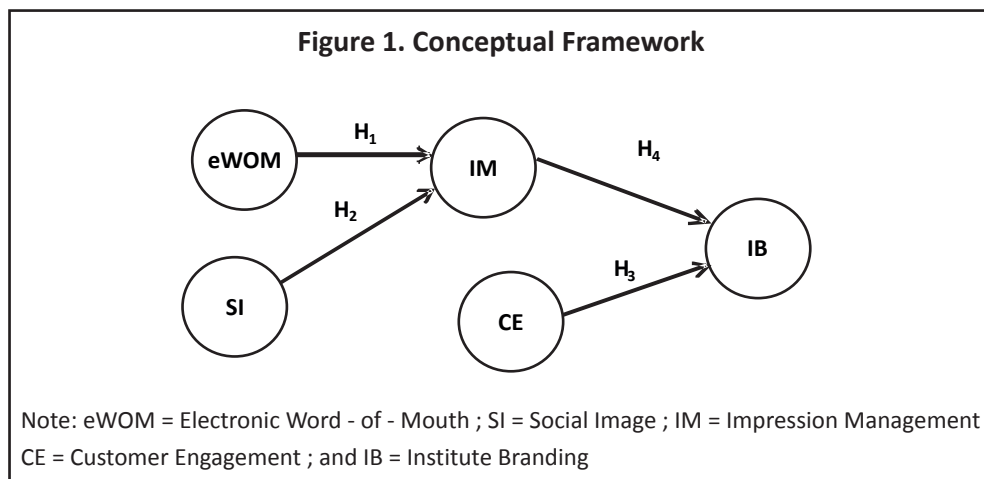
(4) Customer Engagement : Consumer brand involvement acts as brand engagement antecedent as studied by Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014). Consumers are now using more and more online platforms to create, modify, share, and discuss content, which significantly impacts a firm's reputation, sales, and revenue, and sometimes even survival (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). These online platforms are also used by marketers mainly to facilitate customers into more emotional engagement with a brand (Sashi, 2012). Experiential image and exclusivity messages are some of the customer engagement tactics marketers use frequently (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Engagement through social media has become a marked feature.

(5) Branding Through Social Media : As observed by Edelman (2010), consumers nowadays are connected with brands in fundamentally new ways, often through social media channels that are beyond manufacturers' and retailers' control. These social media platforms provide numerous opportunities for brands to foster their relationships with customers. Social media has made it possible for marketers, with consumers participating, in the development of brand image (Lim, Chung, & Weaver, 2012). According to Singh and Sonnenburg (2012), marketers use social media platforms to create brand image by enhancing consumers' engagement with brands.

Brand communities established on social media have positive effects on customers' relationships, which in turn have positive effects on brand trust and lead to brand loyalty (Shen & Bissell, 2013). Based on the existing literature and current analysis, it is likely that customer engagement will influence opportunities of branding through social media. This study thus proposes that :

✥ **H₃:** Customer engagement through social media will have a positive effect on branding of management institutes in Pune city.

(6) Moderating Role of Impression Management : Considering the likelihood of electronic word-of-mouth and social image influencing impression management, which in-turn is likely to influence opportunities of branding through social media, this study proposes the mediating role of impression management in electronic word-of-mouth and social image on branding of management institutes.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Note: eWOM = Electronic Word - of - Mouth ; SI = Social Image ; IM = Impression Management ; CE = Customer Engagement ; and IB = Institute Branding

↳ **H₄:** Impression management mediates the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and social image on branding of management institutes in Pune city.

Based on the relevant review of literature, a conceptual framework is proposed (Figure 1).

Methodology

A descriptive research design was adopted in this study to test the proposed model (Figure 1) through the survey method with a large sample size. To identify incorrect data entry and missing values, the data set was screened and examined. Normality and outliers in the data set were checked before analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to facilitate validation of psychometric properties of the perception scale. To validate the hypotheses, as proposed in the model, structural equation modeling was used.

(1)   Measures : Structured, undisguised questionnaire was designed and used as a research instrument with items from validated scales for measuring electronic word - of - mouth, social image, impression management, customer engagement, and institute branding (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire was tested through pilot survey to find out relevancy of the questions, understanding of the questions by the respondents, willingness of the respondents to share the information, ease and time taken by the respondents for completion of the questionnaire, likely range of responses, etc. The study was focused on responses of graduate students willing to opt for their further education in management studies, preferably in Pune city.

(2)   Sampling Method : The research has used multi-stage sampling technique to select the samples from Pune city. At the outset, the cluster sampling technique was used by selecting the electoral constituency of Pune region. Out of 21 constituencies in this region, 10 belong to rural parts ; whereas, 11 constituencies are from urban areas which are : Chichwad, Pimpri, Bhosari, Vadgaon-Sheri, Shivajinagar, Kothrud, Khadakwasala, Parvati, Hadapsar, Pune Cantonment, and Kasba Peth. Subsequently, convenient sampling technique was applied for selection of samples from these 11 clusters. The data were collected for the period of October 2017 to February 2018.

(3)   Sample : To collect the primary data, 800 questionnaires were distributed among final year UG students (pursuing BA, BBA, BBM, BSc, BCA, BE, BTech, etc.) who wished to pursue PG courses, preferably MBA or MCA in Pune city. In response to that, 566 appropriate responses were received, which is 65.25% rate of response. As stated by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (1998), this sample size exceeds the recommended minimum sample size required for statistical analysis.

(4) Statistical Tools Used : In this study, descriptive statistics followed by inferential statistics, including structural equation modeling, were applied to test the hypotheses. SPSS version 17.0 and IBM AMOS 20 were used for all the statistical assessments. The data set was screened and examined for incorrect data entry, missing values, normality, and outliers.

Analysis and Results

Cronbach's alpha reliability method was applied to check the reliability of all items in the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient value was highly significant, that is, 0.783 and depicts high reliability of the questionnaire.

(1)   Kaiser - Meyer - Olkin Measures of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity : The Kaiser - Meyer - Olkin measure of sampling adequacy value was 0.763, indicating that the sample was adequate to consider

Table 1. Co - Variances of Latent Variables

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
IM	<-->	SI	0.145	0.029	5.071	***
IM	<-->	eWoM	0.108	0.04	2.71	***
IM	<-->	CE	0.209	0.038	5.475	***
IM	<-->	IB	0.132	0.041	3.219	***
SI	<-->	eWoM	0.288	0.039	7.448	***
SI	<-->	CE	0.177	0.031	5.808	***
SI	<-->	IB	0.299	0.039	7.585	***
CE	<-->	eWoM	0.116	0.035	3.347	***
eWoM	<-->	IB	0.609	0.056	10.952	***
CE	<-->	IB	0.178	0.038	4.69	***

Note: eWOM = Electronic Word - of - Mouth, SI = Social Image, IM = Impression Management, CE = Customer Engagement, and IB = Institute Branding

Table 2. Measurement Fit Index Model

Model Fit Index	Recommended Value	Structural Model	Remarks
X^2/df	≤ 5	4.989	Borderline Fit
RMSEA	$\leq .08$	0.084	Accepted Fit
RMR	$\leq .90$	0.066	Accepted Fit
NFI	$> .90$	0.912	Accepted Fit
GFI	$> .80$	0.940	Accepted Fit
AGFI	$> .80$	0.893	Accepted Fit
PGFI	$> .50$	0.530	Accepted Fit
PNFI	$> .50$	0.595	Accepted Fit

Note: RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, RMR = Root Mean Square Residual, NFI = Normed Fit Index, GFI = Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI = Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index, PGFI = Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index, PNFI = Parsimony-Adjusted Measures Index

Figure 2. Measurement Model
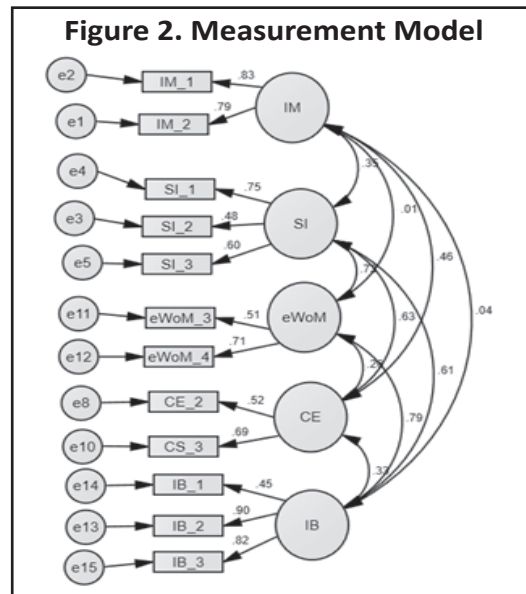
the data as normally distributed. The Bartlett's test of sphericity tests the null hypothesis that the item-to-item correlation matrix was an identity matrix. The hypothesis was tested through chi-square test ; the value of chi-square was found to be 445.935, which is significant at the 1% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that the item-to-item correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and is ,therefore, suitable for factor analysis.

(2) Measurement Model and Confirmatory Factor Analysis : Confirmatory factor analysis was carried out with the help of 'maximum likelihood' extraction method. The data is presented with the help of the measurement model (Figure 2). The Table 1 and Table 2 represent the data on co-variances of latent variables measurement and fit index model, respectively.

The model tested subsumed the specified relationship proposed in the hypotheses. The overall fit indicates that the structural model reveals a chi-square of 219.522 with 44 degrees of freedom. For this model, RMSEA = 0.084, which is within the acceptable level. The GFI = 0.940, RMR = 0.066, NFI = 0.912, PGFI = 0.530, and PNFI = 0.595, all are acceptable.

(3) Model Fit Summary : The Tables 3, 4, and 5 represent the data on regression weights, reliability statistics, and fit index model, respectively. The conceptual model is investigated by using structural equation modeling and the impacts of external constructs on internal construct are tested. In addition, investigating the measuring and structural section of model judgment is made based on the fitness indices of the model. In the measuring section, the relationship between the items and the related structure is clarified, in other words, factor loading of items is larger than 0.40 and the t - value of the same is greater than 1.96. This value supports the reliability of the structure

Table 3. Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
IM	<---	SI	0.87	0.159	5.473	***
IM	<---	eWoM	0.188	0.091	2.062	***
IB	<---	CE	0.515	0.12	4.279	***
IB	<---	IM	0.215	0.06	3.583	***

Table 4. Reliability Statistics

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	't'	R^2	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Impression Management (IM)	IM_1	0.86	-*	0.856	0.809
	IM_2	0.78	9.393	0.78	
Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)	eWOM_3	0.45	-*	0.452	0.859
	eWOM-_4	0.8	2.167	0.802	
Social Image (SI)	SI_1	0.76	-*	0.763	0.883
	SI_2	0.43	6.93	0.652	
	SI_3	0.65	7.164	0.398	
Customer Engagement (CE)	CE_2	0.67	-*	0.672	0.813
	CE_3	0.54	4.204	0.538	
Institute Branding (IB)	IB_1	0.43	-*	0.428	0.845
	IB_2	0.76	8.741	0.815	
	IB_3	0.72	12.206	0.723	

Note : *The parameter set equals to 1.0 for the identification model.

Table 5. Fit Index Model

Model Fit Index	Recommended Value	Structural Model	Remarks
X^2/df	≤ 5	4.350	Accepted Fit
RMSEA	$\leq .08$	0.051	Accepted Fit
RMR	$\leq .90$	0.216	Accepted Fit
NFI	$> .90$	0.961	Accepted Fit
GFI	$> .80$	0.835	Accepted Fit
AGFI	$> .80$	0.843	Accepted Fit
PGFI	$> .50$	0.535	Accepted Fit
PNFI	$> .50$	0.501	Accepted Fit

Figure 3. Structural Model
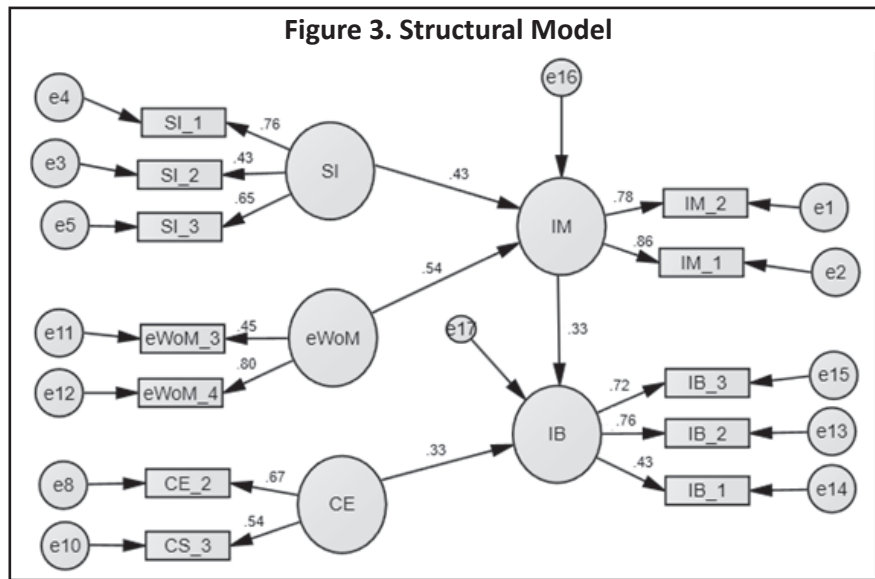
using measurement. As it can be seen in Table 4, all factor loadings are above 0.40 since the overall fit of the model is acceptable. The reliability of the construct is assessed based on Cronbach's alpha.

The model tested subsumes the specified relationship proposed in the hypotheses. The overall fit indicated for the structural model reveals a chi-square of 217.50 with 50 degrees of freedom. For this model, RMSEA = .08 and RMR = .083, both within the acceptable level. The GFI = 0.835, NFI = 0.961, and PNFI = 0.501, all are acceptable. The analysis of SEM on the proposal model has generated results which are illustrated in the Figure 3.

(4) Comments on Validation of the Hypotheses : Based on the output of the above model, the following observations are made on the validation of hypotheses proposed in the study :

✎ The results of the study indicate that electronic word-of-mouth has a positive effect on creation of impression (impression management) for management institutes in Pune city, and provide support for H_1.

✎ The results of the study confirm that the social image has a positive effect on creation of impression (impression management) for management institutes in Pune city, hypothesized in H_2.

✎ H_3 predicts a positive effect of customer engagement on branding of management institutes in Pune city.

✋ H_4 anticipates a mediating role of impression management between electronic word-of-mouth and social image on branding of management institutes in Pune city.

Discussion

The existing study is directed to focus on social media as an effective marketing tool for management institutes in Pune city. The power of social media is phenomenal. Today, from the corporate point of view, there are a plethora of options available to communicate online to inform and influence prospects (Yadav, 2017). However, designing communication for social media is a different ball game with an increasing awareness and impatient audience, rising competition, and cost. Social media is the ultimate direct advertising medium. In recent years, it has become so powerful that its existence simply cannot be ignored (de Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). Besides adopting the traditional tools for promotion, the management institutes must have social media presence, failing which it may result into losing opportunity to communicate with the stakeholders.

Social media facilitates users with various modes of text and graphics, audio visual, and interactive aids that result into creating higher impacts on audience. Social media marketing allows for high impact advertising. While designing communication for social media, it is imperative for management institutions to remember that social media is not just a promotional medium, but also a transactional medium (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010) and a distribution channel. This study provides a detailed insight on various elements used for analysis and reveals that electronic word-of-mouth and social image influence impression management, which in-turn influences opportunities of branding of management institutes through social media. Furthermore, this study confirms the mediating role of impression management in electronic word-of-mouth and social image on branding of management institutes, which strongly supports the findings of the earlier studies conducted by Chauhan and Pillai (2013) and Olajide and Alao (2015).

At present, social media used by various management institutes is one of the most basic and potent tools of marketing. Undoubtedly, the awareness of higher-education institutions in social media as a part of the marketing toolkit is increasing; however, little is known about the potential of these channels in higher-education marketing strategies. As the scope of social media is widening, while exhibiting strong potential, management institutions from Pune city are attempting to capture their share by various strategic moves.

Managerial Implications

In this study, the relationship between impression management, electronic word-of-mouth, social image, customer engagement, and institute branding are observed. The findings of the research have a number of managerial implications for institute branding by management institutes in Pune city. It is suggested that the management institutes should consider the elements like electronic word of mouth, customer engagement, social image of the individuals, and impression management as the vital issues that need to be addressed while branding institutes through social media. The institutes could formulate their social marketing strategies on the basis of the research results as they highlight the relationship between the variables under study. Eventually, the research provides an overview of the way management institutes could influence and market themselves among prospects. The findings of the study empirically validate the importance of customer engagement and electronic word-of-mouth in view of social media communication. Thus, management institutes are advised to put in place the initiatives to increase customer engagement and focus on effective electronic word-of-mouth.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

For this study, primary and secondary data collection techniques were used. Thus, it is likely that the data is to be

affected directly or indirectly, however, care was due taken to see that the results would be representative of the universe. The following are the limitations and future scope of the study :

The geographical spread of Pune city was chosen for the study. However, the study could have been conducted on a larger geographical area with availability of sufficient resources. The study had an instinctive constraint of time frame during which it was conducted. It may not be exaggerating to say that on account of the highly dynamic nature of the social networking media, it is always possible that the data, references, and periodicals may become obsolete. Management educational organizations are coming up with novel ideas to tap the market as well as influence the students with the help of marketing tools. Every effort was made to account for these 'happenings' in the sector, but it is beyond the scope of the study to cover all the happenings. At the outset of the need of secondary data, reliability of the presumption and observations naturally depend on the authenticity of the secondary source of information and also the information itself. Of course, while doing so and being aware of these limitations, care was taken at every possible stage to not to allow any prejudice or bias in the work.

While considering the limitations of the existing study, the following scope for further studies is proposed : the statistical model developed can further be refined to predict the outcomes. A similar kind of study can be conducted in other parts of the country to get more insights into the subject. It is also suggested that similar studies can be taken-up in respect of different industries.

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Appendix 1. Items Used for Survey

Item Code	Item Description
Impression Management (IM)	
IM_1	Social media presents me with utmost connectivity with peers.
IM_2	Social media is a good way to disseminate information.
Social Impact (SI)	
SI_1	I trust the information available on social media.
SI_2	I follow social media for purchase decisions.
SI_3	Social media can influence my selection of a post graduate institute.
Customer Engagement (CE)	
CE_1	I would like to join the social media networking of my future institute.
CE_2	I would prefer to contact the admission counselor on the institute's social networking platforms.
CE_3	I would join the forum related with the institute's admission on social networking platforms.
Electronic Word - of - Mouth (eWoM)	
eWoM_1	On social media, I tend to pass institute - related opinions to my contacts.
eWoM_2	On social media, I wish to seek the opinion from my contacts regarding the management institute I intend to opt for.
eWoM_3	I am likely to recommend the institute to others, after receiving relevant comments about that institute on social media from my contacts.
eWoM_4	The opinions I receive on social media from my contacts influence me.
Institute Branding (IB)	
IB_1	Management institutes having existence on social media are effective.
IB_2	Management institutes having existence on social media are more successful.
IB_3	Management institutes having existence on social media are into social responsibility.

About the Author

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