Use of Student Review on Social Media in Higher Education

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Use of Student Review on Social Media in Higher Education

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Article Info	Abstract
	This paper on customer review on social media sheds lights on use of social media as a source of customer's feedback borrowing examples from higher educational institutes. The objective of this paper is to trace out the customer review on social media to examine their evaluations of the students of their respective higher educational institutes. The information is collected from verified websites of selected private universities. The paper founds that students are critical about student services. Differences of opinion exists between male and female students. Future research is suggested with a wider sample in order to make the results more acceptable.

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutes that provide higher education are considered service-providing organizations that help with building an educated and progressive nation. This goes without telling that Bangladesh has developed in this sector by providing education in both public and private institutes.

Since public universities have limited seats, a huge number of people lean towards receiving education from private universities. The service they provide comes with numerous pros and cons, including the procedures they follow to maintain it. Additionally, there are both similarities and dissimilarities in the kind of services they provide.

This report sheds light on the various categories of service which define the core service, quality, service system, physical evidence, environment, and behavior. The analysis has been done based on authentic reviews accumulated from a popular social networking site. The verified pages feedback section has brought forward the real scenario of services.

Literature Review

The virtual world of social media plays a significant role as a massive source of marketing information. The tools of interacting with consumers have changed enormously with the emergence of social networking sites. Therefore, businesses and potential businesses are in the process of learning how to make the best use of these sites to accumulate feedbacks and suggestions. There is a possibility that social media will be recognized as the biggest and the most significant tool to gather such feedbacks for a scope of improvement and improvisation wherever required. To begin with, the purpose and activity of social media need to be specified. "The phrase social networking sites' is often used interchangeably with social media. However, social media is different because it allows participants to unite by generating personal information profiles and inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles" (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, 63). Thus, social media is the environment in

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which social networking takes place and has altered how consumers gather information and make buying decisions. For instance, when students from the universities gave their reviews based on core service, they wanted other social media users to check the reviews so that they are aware of the certain services provided in the universities.

Social media has faced an advancement in their procedures from simply providing a platform for individuals to stay in touch with their family and friends to reach the world for business purposes. At present, it has turned into a place where consumers can learn more about their favorite companies and the products and services they sell and provide. Marketers and retailers are utilizing these sites as another way to reach consumers and provide a new way to shop and informed. "Technology-related developments such as the rise of powerful search engines, advanced mobile devices and interfaces, peer-to-peer communication vehicles, and online social networks have extended marketers' ability to reach shoppers through new touchpoints" (Shankar et al. 2011, 30), meaning even the advanced search engines in browsers have the built-in system to figure out what the potential consumers look for. For instance, if they search for 'service system at a university, they would be automatically directed to the originally posted reviews on popular social networking sites within a moment.

"It is vital for retailers and marketers to be aware of the factors that affect consumer attitudes and motives because consumers are increasingly creating content about brands, something previously controlled solely by companies" (Heinonen 2011). To the majority of the interested consumers, be it services or products, brand image will always remain the topmost priority. Before choosing their preferred brands, progressive consumers will look at authentic reviews provided by authentic consumers, not the ones that the company controls. For example, negative comments like having the worst kind of advising system will make the potential consumer reconsider his or her choices.

"While social media provides never-ending avenues for communicating, it is the individuals who serve as the influencers, not the technology" (Gonzalez 2010, 23), meaning no matter how attractive and promising the online campaigns and advertisements may be, the users ultimately have the control of whether they are interested or not. As per the research analysis, having highly qualified faculty members is seen as a huge positive factor indicating the high quality of education. Therefore, this university will have an advantage over other universities for certain.

"Consumer Generated Advertising (CGA) is a form of user-generated content, which refers to specific instances where consumers create the brand, focused messages to inform, persuade, or reminding others" (Campbell et al. 2011).

"Social media such as Facebook allow target consumers to become message senders by passing on ads to friends, connecting them to the advertisers explicitly, or commenting on the ad and having those comments passed along viral channels" (Interactive Advertising Bureau 2009 as cited in Chu 2011, 32). As a student posted about the rude behavior of certain security guards, the friends from her Facebook friend list will see the review. Also, she will most likely inform her friends, classmates, and relatives about the incident which will create a negative image in their eyes.

"Research has shown that exposure to electronic word of mouth (eWOM) messages can generate more interest in a product category than can exposure to information produced by marketers" (Birkart and Schindler 2001 as cited in Zhang, Jansen, and Chowdhury 2011, 161). "Today, consumers are more knowledgeable of the products they consume due to the internet empowering them to gain access to information thus, creating active co-producers of value" (Zhang, Jansen, and Chowdhury 2011). For a reputed private university, having only three printers and other computer lab issues add to the problem with the physical evidence, according to a student. The students facing the trouble will most likely spread such information through word of mouth which is a huge form of feedback accumulation among the general people of the country both online and offline.

METHOD

The methodology that has been followed to complete this report was based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through social media reviews posted by current and potential students of the universities which were sorted into various categories afterward. On the other hand, secondary data were collected by looking at reports related to using consumer-generated feedback to improve the quality of services and making marketing as a tool for better communication and better service. Information is gathered from the websites of selected private universities.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Private universities are prominent examples of higher educational institutes in Bangladesh. While checking the social media feedbacks of selected private universities, reviews from several students, former students, and potential students have been found. The verified online pages of these renowned universities included numerous reviews belonging to multiple service categories.

Core Service

Firstly, the core service included four different categories based on gender and positive or negative feedbacks (See APPENDIX: Table 1). Positive reviews from males were 45, positive from females were 15, negative from males were 20, and negative from females were 4 in number.

The noteworthy positive comments were "University gives such opportunities which help its students building up a strong career and successful life. The standard of education can compete with other renowned foreign universities." from a male, "First of all, it's the number one ranked private university in Bangladesh. It has many facilities which other universities of Bangladesh barely have. The faculties here all have foreign degrees. The teachers are very kind and helpful. The campus is also like abroad campuses. The cafeteria is hygienic and food is cheap but high quality. The quality of education is in one word amazing with a 100% employment rate within 3 months of graduation." from a male.

The noteworthy negative comments were "Teachers are really good but the administration is very bad" from a female, "System of probation is too bad and they do not get enough idea about probation." from a male.

Service System

Secondly, the service system included four different categories based on gender and positive or negative feedback as well (See APPENDIX: Table 2). Positive reviews from males were 58, positive from females were 14, negative from males were 33, and negative from females were 16 in number.

The noteworthy positive comments were "Higher education with a practical orientation and learning resources." from a male and "Best university with special teaching processes that make every student confident and shows ways to knowledge." from a male.

The noteworthy negative comments were "Please do not waste your time and money here." from a male and "Their advising system, management system, and cafeteria food quality are very poor . They cannot provide enough courses every semester and change their advising policy every time. So students need extra 2-3 years for completing their graduation." from a female.

Quality

Thirdly, the service quality included four different categories based on gender and positive or negative feedback as well (See APPENDIX: Table 3). Positive reviews from males were 60, positive from females were 17, negative from males were 15, and negative from females were 13 in number.

The noteworthy positive comments were "It is a great university with highly qualified faculties." from a male and "It's a beautiful learning environment and attractive campus." from a male.

The noteworthy negative comments were "I would not recommend this University" Business center until they provide a proper campus. There are too many freshers and very few places to go between classes." from a female and "Expensive -which is beyond the reach of a middle-class family" from a male.

Environment

Next, the service quality included four different categories based on gender and positive or negative feedback as well (See APPENDIX: Table 4). Positive reviews from males were 9, positive from females were 5, negative from males were 4 and negative from females were 1 in number.

The noteworthy positive and negative comments were "It has creative and smart ambiance." from a male and "very small campus" from a male.

Employee Behavior

There was one negative review from a female who said "Guards behave so rudely with guardians." on employee behavior. Positive reviews from males were 2, positive from females were 1, negative from males were 0, and negative from females were 1 in number (See APPENDIX: Table 5).

Physical Evidence

Finally, the physical evidence included four different categories based on gender and positive or negative feedback as well (See APPENDIX: Table 6). Positive reviews from males were 1, positive from females were 1, negative from males were 6, and negative from females were 6 in number.

The noteworthy negative comments were "A lot of problems in the computer labs and using the pre-advising processes." from a male and "Only three printers for the whole pharmacy department."

Overall, the whole categorized analysis sheds light on feedbacks given from different levels of perceptions of people who might have valued one service category over another. Therefore, more detailed feedbacks are required for more intricate research for ensuring better service of these institutes.

CONCLUSION

Social networking sites are being utilized to enhance a company's brand appeal and increase their target market because "new technologies allow for more personal, targeted communications, as well as increased consumer participation in the creation of marketing and brand-related information" (Cappo 2033; Jaffe 2005 as cited in Muñiz and Jensen Schau 2007, 35). The target market for both the universities are students who have completed the prerequisites for applying to an undergraduate or graduate program as well as their parents, in the case of Bangladesh. To reach them, the verified

pages need to be more communicative and prompt in replying to queries, which will result in upholding their brand image and interactive power.

To conclude, social media is undoubtedly a massive platform for service organizations to promote themselves, but they have to keep in mind that it can also be used to improve the quality of services based on authentic user-generated feedbacks. The organizations can grab the opportunity and carefully go through the numerous comments and criticism, be it destructive or constructive, rectify the image of the organizations. Social sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are highly used to provide such comments, therefore the ones who monitor the websites and verified pages should keep a close watch on where the problems are mostly detected, rather than removing the actual feedbacks of negativity. Thus, it will build a solid image of transparency and reliability in front of the current and potential users, which are two of the most important characteristics of a renowned service organization.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Core Service

Gender	Positive/Negative	Total
M	P	45
F	P	15
M	N	20
F	N	5

Table 2. Service System

Gender	Positive/Negative	Total
M	P	58
F	P	14
M	N	33
F	N	16

Table 3. Quality/Service Quality

Gender	Positive/Negative	Total
M	P	60
F	P	17
M	N	15
F	N	13

Table 4. Environment

Gender	Positive/Negative	Total
M	P	9
F	P	5
M	N	4
F	N	1

Table 5. Employee Behavior

Gender	Positive/Negative	Total
M	P	2
F	P	1
M	N	0
F	N	1

Table 6. Physical Evidence

Gender	Positive/Negative	Total
M	P	1
F	P	1
M	N	6
F	N	6