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Emerging Trend of Affiliate Marketing- A New Edge in the Field of Marketing (With Special Reference to West Bengal)

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Abstract

"Affiliate Marketing" a term known to few but unknown to many. The concept of Affiliate marketing though existed but it gained tremendous popularity (in West Bengal) during the Lockdown period.This study is based on the emerging trend of Affiliate Marketing with the objective to analyze the popularity parameter of Affiliate Marketing Pre and during lockdown period along with the benefit parameter among individuals of varied age group. For the study researchers have used descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests like Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test and the overall result denotes their exists significant difference between Pre and During lockdown popularity of Affiliate Marketing and also between benefit parameter and individuals of varying age group.

Keywords: Marketing, Affiliate, Lockdown, Survey, Non-Parametric Test.
JEL Classification: *C12, C14, C83, C88, M31*

Introduction

The concept of affiliate marketing is that it is a kind of performance based marketing where business houses gives rewards to those affiliates who could successfully drive customers with their own marketing efforts for that particular business house.

When the entire world got locked into their own houses several New Normal strategies concerning work, education, business etc. started to intervene in every part of the world. Survival strategies was the only thing people were concerned about that lead to people irrespective of age groups , gender try their hands and luck into various fields and Affiliate Marketing being one of them.

The companies targeted mainly students group to increase their number of affiliates and students got a scope of earning just by sitting at home. Not only several new companies emerged but the old companies also took a higher position with the immense popularity that Affiliate Marketing gained. Companies like Flipkart Affiliate ,Amazon Affiliate ,HostGator Affiliate , GoDaddy Affiliate,Bizgurukul etc. got the popularity that wouldn't have been possible to this extent if Lockdown period of the year 2020 didn't come into the picture.

Review of Literature

Researchers have revived several research works relating to Affiliate Marketing and some of them are given below:

Haq (2012) studied Indian consumer's attitude towards Affiliate Marketing and reflects the need of innovative affiliate links to cater to consumer perception that might result in framing the future prospect of affiliate marketing.Prabhu & Satpathy (2015) focused on the future prospect of Affiliate Marketing in India. The study suggests organization to have a broader sight i.e. beyond their present business models by adopting more cost effective models based on affiliate networks.

Study conducted by Suresh, VetriSelvi, Maran, & Shanmuga (2018) highlights the impact of Affiliate Marketing in E-business taking into consideration the consumer perspectives. The study analyses the significant role of consumer in the affiliate marketing cycle and that this marketing acts as a major revenue driver as it successfully develops good relationship with customers.

Dwivedi (2017) analysed the impact of Affiliate Marketing on consumer behaviour by taking into consideration the M-Commerce perspective. The research shows a positive consumer behaviour with

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respect to M-Commerce in spite of several constrains. The study also concludes the interdependence of attitude, trust, advertisement utility that plays a significant role in impacting consumer behaviour.The study conducted by Phan (2015) provides a basic understanding of the concept of Affiliate Marketing and analyses the need of good It system, affiliate links etc. for the success of Affiliate Marketing. The study also addresses issues such as Spamming, Black SEO and Malware that needs to be taken care off.

Research Gap

Based on the above review of literatures researchers are of the opinion that several works based on general understanding of Affiliate Marketing , impact of Affiliate Marketing on Consumers, impact on M-commerce etc. have been conducted .But work reflecting the enhanced popularity that Affiliate marketing gained during the lockdown period(in West Bengal) that almost gave a new edge to our marketing field and also the benefit earned by individuals through Affiliate Marketing irrespective of gender ,age groups , demographic structure was rarely found. So the researchers were keen in probing and researching on that particular area.

Research Objectives

Based on the above well-defined research gap, the following research objectives has been formulated:
1. To know whether popularity parameter of Affiliate Marketing varies pre lockdown and during lockdown scenario.
2. To know whether the benefit parameter of Affiliate Marketing varies across age groups.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been developed based on the research objectives:
1. Does popularity parameter of Affiliate Marketing vary pre and during lockdown period?
2. Does benefit parameter of Affiliate Marketing vary across age groups?

Research Hypothesis

Based on the above objectives, the following research hypothesis has been developed:
1. H_{01}: There is no significant difference between popularity of Affiliate Marketing before Lockdown and Popularity of Affiliate Marketing during Lockdown.

2. H_{02}: There is no significant variation in benefit parameter of Affiliate Marketing across age groups.

Research Methodology

The researchers have conducted this study based on data collected through primary survey, to fulfil the above research objectives. Total 132 samples have been collected from various locations of West Bengal by sending the questionnaire in online form to the respondents. A questionnaire was prepared through Google Form application. Following information has been collected from the respondents:
1. Gender of the respondents.
2. Which age group do you belong to?
3. Which area do you belong to?
4. How much do you know about the tending concept of Affiliate Marketing?
5. How much popular the concept of Affiliate Marketing was before Lockdown?
6. How much popular the concept of Affiliate Marketing was during Lockdown?
7. How much beneficial is this Affiliate Marketing for the affiliates?
8. How much popular will be this new trending concept of Affiliate Marketing in the upcoming days?

The researchers have given tabular presentations of dependent variable and independent variables separately, with absolute figures, percentage figures and cumulative percentage figures of total respondents under each sub-group of variables. The researchers have conducted Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the validity of the questionnaire and Cronbach's Alpha (α) is used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test is applied to see statistically test the above mentioned hypothesis.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Validity Test of Questionnaire

To test the validity of the questionnaire, Pearson Product Moment Correlation is used. The basic rule for decision making in validity test is followed (sig. value < 0.05 and if the value of $r_{xy} < r$ table product moment, the instrument is declared valid).

Table 1: Correlations (Validity test)

		Total
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.277(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	132
Age	Pearson Correlation	.394(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	132
Area	Pearson Correlation	.332(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	132
Knowledge about Affiliate Marketing	Pearson Correlation	.653(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	132
Popularity of Affiliate Marketing was before Lockdown	Pearson Correlation	.613(**)

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	132
Popularity of Affiliate Marketing was during Lockdown	Pearson Correlation	.760(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	132
How much Beneficial is this Affiliate Marketing for the affiliates?	Pearson Correlation	.807(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	132
Popularity of Affiliate Marketing in the upcoming days	Pearson Correlation	.733(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	132

Source: Computed by the researchers through IBM SPSS 15

Based on the above rule, it is observed that all the variables are statistically valid.

Reliability Test of Questionnaire

To test the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha (α) is used. The test results are as follows:

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.740	.715	8

Source: Computed by the researchers through IBM SPSS 15

The Cronbach's Alpha value for the questionnaire is 0.740 which is greater than 0.70, which indicates good level of internal consistency for our scale.

Table 3: Knowledge about Affiliate Marketing

	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Very High	8	6.1	6.1
High	20	15.2	21.2
Neutral	65	49.2	70.5
Low	24	18.2	88.6
Very Low	15	11.4	100.0
Total	132	100.0	

Source: Computed by the researchers through IBM SPSS 15

From the above table, it is evident that out of 132 respondents, 49.2% have responded neutral which signifies that they have no knowledge about the concept of Affiliate Marketing. It is also seen that only 6.1% of the respondents have very high knowledge and 15.2% have high knowledge about Affiliate Marketing. Again, 18.2% have low knowledge and 11.4% of respondents have very low knowledge about the concept of Affiliate Marketing.

Table 4: Popularity of Affiliate Marketing pre (before) Lockdown

	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Very High	6	4.5	4.5
High	27	20.5	25.0
Neutral	49	37.1	62.1
Low	36	27.3	89.4
Very Low	14	10.6	100.0
Total	132	100.0	

Source: Computed by the researchers through IBM SPSS 15

From the above table, it is evident that out of 132 respondents, 37.1% have responded neutral which signifies that they have no knowledge about the popularity of Affiliate Marketing was before lockdown. It is also seen that only 4.5% of the respondents have very high knowledge and 20.5% have high knowledge about the popularity of Affiliate Marketing before lockdown. Again, 27.3% have low knowledge and 10.6% of respondents have very low knowledge about the popularity of Affiliate Marketing before lockdown.

Table 5: Popularity of Affiliate Marketing during Lockdown

	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Very High	19	14.4	14.4
High	42	31.8	46.2
Neutral	48	36.4	82.6
Low	15	11.4	93.9
Very Low	8	6.1	100.0

Source: Computed by the researchers through IBM SPSS 15

The above table depicts that out of 132 respondents, 36.4% have responded neutral which signifies that they have no knowledge about the popularity of Affiliate Marketing was during lockdown. It is also seen that 14.4% of the respondents have very high understanding and 31.8% have high understanding about the popularity of Affiliate Marketing during lockdown. Again, 11.4% have low knowledge and 6.1% of respondents have very low knowledge about the popularity of Affiliate Marketing during lockdown.

Table 6: How beneficial is this Affiliate Marketing for the affiliates?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High	20	15.2	15.2
High	50	37.9	53.0
Neutral	39	29.5	82.6
Low	13	9.8	92.4
Very Low	10	7.6	100.0
Total	132	100.0	

Source: Computed by the researchers through IBM SPSS 15

The above table depicts that 29.5% of respondents have responded neutral which signifies that they have no knowledge about the benefits of Affiliate Marketing for the affiliates. It is also seen that 15.2% of the respondents have very high credence and 37.9% have high credence about the benefits of Affiliate Marketing for the affiliates. Again, 9.8% have low credence and 7.6% of respondents have very low credence about the benefits of Affiliate Marketing for the affiliates.

Table 7: Popularity of Affiliate Marketing in the upcoming days

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very High	44	33.3	33.3
High	44	33.3	66.7
Neutral	32	24.2	90.9
Low	4	3.0	93.9
Very Low	8	6.1	100.0
Total	132	100.0	

Source: Computed by the researchers through IBM SPSS 15

From the above table, it is evident that out of 132 respondents, 24.2% have responded neutral which signifies that they have no knowledge about the extent of the popularity Affiliate Marketing will gain in the upcoming days. It is also seen that 33.3% of the respondents have very high credence and 20.5% have high credence about the extent of the popularity Affiliate Marketing will gain in the upcoming days. Again, only 3% have low credence and 6.1% of respondents have very low credence about the extent of the popularity Affiliate Marketing will gain in the upcoming days.

H_{01}: There is no significant difference between popularityof Affiliate Marketing before Lockdown and Popularity of Affiliate Marketing during Lockdown.

H_{11}: There is significant difference between popularity of Affiliate Marketing before Lockdown and Popularity of Affiliate Marketing during Lockdown.

Table 8: Test Statistics (b)

	Popularity of Affiliate Marketing was before Lockdown - Popularity of Affiliate Marketing was during Lockdown
Z	-4.953(a)
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

(a) Based on positive ranks.
(b) Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
Source: Computed by the researchers through IBM SPSS 15

Based on the above results, it is clearly visible that null hypothesis is being rejected at 5% level of significance with a P value of 0.000 (P<.050). Hence there is significant difference between popularity of Affiliate Marketing was before Lockdown and Popularity of Affiliate Marketing was during Lockdown.

H_{02}: There is no significant variation in benefit parameter of Affiliate Marketing across age groups.
H_{12}: There is significant variation in benefit parameter of Affiliate Marketing across age groups.

Table 9: Test Statistics (a,b)

	How beneficial is this Affiliate Marketing for the affiliates
Chi-Square	8.451
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.038

(a) Kruskal Wallis Test
(b) Grouping Variable: Age
Source: Computed by the researchers through IBM SPSS 15

Based on the results given in the above table, it is clearly visible that null hypothesis is being rejected at 5% level of significance and at 3 degree of freedom, with a P value of 0.038 (P<.050). Hence there is significant variation in benefit parameter of Affiliate Marketing across age groups.

Conclusion

Marketing is said to be a blend of Art and Science by several eminent personalities and art is what is defined by the creativity. Therefore it wouldn't be wrong to say that Affiliate marketing is another showcase of the creativity factor and that indeed proves that Marketing is an Art.

The objectives with which the researchers have started is fulfilled as the study depicted a significant difference in the popularity parameter of Affiliate Marketing pre and during lockdown period and it gives a very clear picture based on the overall percentages so calculated that on a five point scale each point shows a higher percentage count in popularity of Affiliate Marketing during lockdown in comparison to the popularity of Affiliate Marketing in the pre lockdown period. The study also shows that benefit of Affiliate marketing varies across age groups and also the popularity of Affiliate Marketing will increase in the upcoming future days.

Limitations

The study is based on primary data and sample size being 132 is quiet small, so more samples could have been collected and also the study is based on a particular area which could have been further enhanced .More related variables could have been taken into consideration and higher order statistical tests like regression, factor analysis could have been performed.

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