THE WORLD WIDE WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA AS COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR PROPAGATING BRAND MESSAGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Syma Ahmed, Assistant Professor of Marketing
Forman Christian College School of Management, Pakistan
Ahmed Shuja, Founder and Interaction Designer
Rehan Mahmood Chaudhry, Research Assistant
Obscure UX, Pakistan.

Abstract

Rapid developments in digital technology and World Wide Web capabilities have changed the playing field for almost all the stakeholders in the private and public sectors. Internet usage has risen dramatically in the previous decade and recently, social media has introduced a new model of interaction and engagement. This evolution in the way humans interact offers implications for entities to communicate with their audience. Social media and the World Wide Web can be gainfully employed by educational institutions, especially in developing countries to effectively communicate with current and prospective students, faculty, parents, and donors. The top universities in the developed nations have already embraced this model and are effectively using social media and World Wide Web to engage students. Social media gives the ability to have ongoing and candid conversations with people, and develop mutually beneficial relationships. Organizations that are taking it seriously and using it to leverage their strengths are being rewarded. Effective use of social media for engaging target audiences can help shorten the gap between the intended brand message and the brand message that is actually received or perceived.

Keywords: Social media; social media marketing; WWW; academia; marketing; brand building

Overview

The communication of the brand message to target audiences is a very critical and challenging objective for any business organization. It holds equally true for academic institutions such as universities. Just as a business needs to target and acquire the "right" customers, a university needs to attract a good student body and faculty. In today's intensely competitive academic environment, universities have to constantly reinvent their marketing strategy and activities according to shifting trends. It is important to have a strong brand reputation in the marketplace and the points of differentiation need to be effectively communicated (Keller, 2003). The primary purpose of the research conducted here was to evaluate the benefits of using social media for brand building of academic institutions in developing countries, particularly those involved with Higher Education in Pakistan.

To be effective, the brand message should address all the key stakeholders, namely current and potential students, current and potential faculty, staff, donors, and alumni. One way of addressing these stakeholders is the use of traditional marketing media such as letters, newspaper advertisements, printed brochures, and prospectuses. Unfortunately, these media are often very expensive, and do not create a seamless and ongoing two way communication

with the audience.   Fortunately, the advancement in web-based media and availability of social media networks now provides an excellent opportunity to reach target audiences.

Social media marketing is one of the major forces but it itself forms a part of a holistic and primary communications strategy that also includes websites, email, and blogs. All these touch points have to be strategically formulated and integrated with each other. This enables the organization to communicate a clear and consistent brand message that enhances brand recognition and builds reputation.

Universities can benefit from the advantage of having a large student community at their disposal because people in the 18-25 demographic segment are the biggest users of social media (Inside Facebook, 2010) and information-seeking is an important reason for people to use social networking sites (Lin and Lu 2011). Students can be empowered and used to harness and drive the social media strategy. For instance, a social media student ambassador can be employed to represent each department. Nowadays, young people are connected and exposed to social media in one form or another throughout the day. If an organization wants to target this demographic, it is easy to decide which media to use for marketing if the amount of time and attention given to reading a newspaper is compared to the amount of time and attention given to social media networks.

Importance of communicating the Brand Message through the WWW androgen Social Media

It can be said that a university is only as good as the quality of its faculty and student body. When a university is competing to attract top students, it is no longer enough to have a glossy brochure and bland newspaper advertisements. Some students can view brochures as school propaganda and be averse to the claims of perfection that are presented in a polished language. Potential students often visit websites for information, and Facebook to communicate with current students to find out about their experiences at a university. All these activities (blogs, student videos, testimonials, free online courses, virtual tour etc) give potential students a sense of what the campus culture is actually like. One of the biggest advantages of using social media is the ability to have a conversation with people as compared to simply pushing an advertisement directed at them. It offers a chance to enter into a two way dialogue with the audience, engage with them, and ultimately, form a positive and mutually beneficial relationship. According to research by Nielson (2012), the forms of advertising that are trusted the most are recommendations by peers (92%), consumer opinions posted online (70%), newspaper articles (58%), and brand websites (58%) (see Appendix 4). When searching for information about products, the forms of advertising that are cited to be most relevant are recommendations by peers (90%), consumer opinions posted online (75%), brand websites (59%), and newspaper articles (51%) (see Appendix 4). With people world over trusting governments and corporations lesser by the day, it is the people they know that matter more now than before, particular family and friends.

The communication on the World Wide Web (WWW) and social media is many-to-many, instead of the traditional one-to-many, and it is very important to listen to what the audience and key stakeholders are saying. Therefore, universities should avoid posting content on social media that presents a sugar coated and pristine image of the institution. Social media efforts should not be treated like public relations activities (Pidaparthy, 2011). In this regard, blogs are useful because they are personal, reflective, and honest. Students can use blogs to document their experiences or to suggest improvements; the faculty can highlight and discuss their research and talk about issues that they are passionate about; and the management can showcase events and activities taking place at the university. A limitation of Facebook and Twitter is that personal conversations on these networks are generally informal and revolve around entertainment and friendship. However, blogs allow students and instructors to easily have a constructive and professional dialogue. In an attempt to engage

students in learning outside the classroom, instructors sometimes use their own websites to post topics on which students are encouraged to share their insights and thoughts (Ahmed, 2013) (see Appendix 2). Such interaction between students and instructors can be multifaceted and importantly it has the potential to bring a whole new dimension to learning, sometimes from the experiences of each other.

Major international universities like Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Oxford, Cambridge and LSE have realized the importance of social media and are reaching out to engage with potential students on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and through blogs. These universities have realized that a robust social media campaign, along with creative activities like student blogs can attract viewers. The importance of social media for universities can be seen from the fact that the American website "Student Advisor" now compiles a list of the top 100 social media colleges in USA and ranks them against benchmarks (see Appendix 3). Each of the top ranked university has its own unique way of delivering the marketing messages. The following examples highlight a few activities of the universities at the top of the list (Student Advisor, 2013).

Harvard incorporates videos, Facebook and Twitter etc into its own "Harvard Social Media Dashboard". Harvard has 211,780 followers on its Twitter account (see Appendix 1). The high number of followers reflects how Harvard uses Twitter to inform its audience about research and teaching, and how it uses tweets to highlight blog posts and events

Johns Hopkins has a dedicated "Hopkins Interactive" website that includes various activities and student blogs

Stanford has introduced five free online courses after a pilot project that attracted more than 350,000 students from around the world. Stanford's YouTube channel has approximately 53 million views (see Appendix 1) because the channel is used to post videos of lectures and various courses

Ohio State e-mailed more than 100,000 high school students with the pitch, "Why not get to know the real Ohio State?" The activity was conducted to match up current and potential students through social media

• University of Oregon has an extensive social media index that provides links to various Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, and YouTube channels being used by the university

The LSE Impact blog team has analyzed and disseminated the results of a study by Searchmetrics that calculates the social media presence of British universities belonging to the Russell Group. Each university has been given a social media visibility score. The LSE team has standardized the results by giving different weights to universities depending on their size. The results indicate that larger universities are finding it difficult to leverage the benefits of social media (LSE Impact Blog, 2012). This is probably because larger organizations tend to be more conservative and the turnaround from decision making to execution is slower (LSE Impact Blog, 2012). The analysis shows that Facebook is being used for over 80% of the social media activities (LSE Impact Blog, 2012). The social media visibility of the studied universities is shown in the figures below (LSE Impact Blog, 2012):
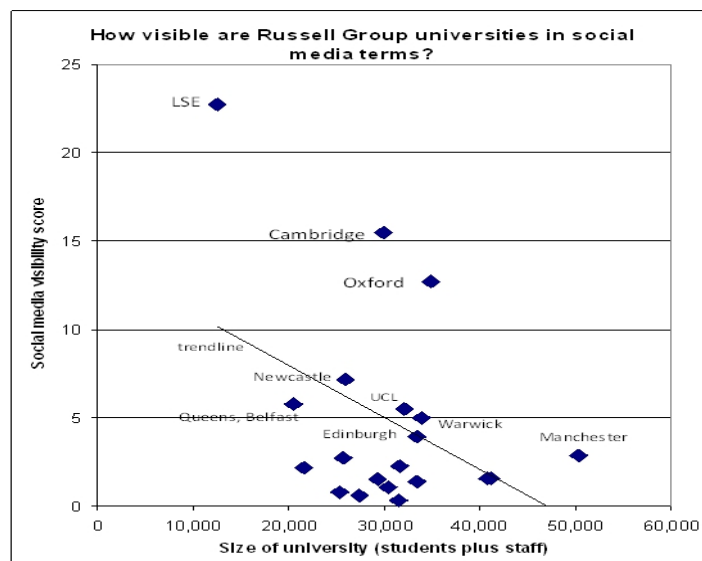
(LSE Impact Blog, 2012)

Table of social media visibility scores and scores standardized for university size, for 20 Russell Group universities in the UK

University	Searchmetrics visibility score	Number of staff	Number of students	Total University size	Visibility score/ size
London School of Economics	286,859	3,055	9,560	12,615	22.74
University of Cambridge	462,823	9,145	20,750	29,895	15.48
University of Oxford	442,758	10,375	24,465	34,840	12.71
Newcastle University	186,184	5,755	20,250	26,005	7.16
Queens University Belfast	118,137	3,500	17,000	20,500	5.76
University College London	176,202	8,890	23,225	32,115	5.49
University of Warwick	169,462	5,005	28,870	33,875	5.00
University of Edinburgh	131,053	7,735	25,690	33,425	3.92
University of Manchester	143,186	9,950	40,400	50,350	2.84
University of Bristol	70,656	5,520	20,190	25,710	2.75
University of Glasgow	72,211	6,080	25,600	31,680	2.28
Imperial College London	47,321	6,750	14,865	21,615	2.19
University of Nottingham	64,381	7,045	34,120	41,165	1.56
University of Leeds	63,802	7,230	33,585	40,815	1.56
University of Southampton	44,106	5,545	23,735	29,280	1.51
Cardiff University	46,053	5,880	27,555	33,435	1.38
King's College London	31,762	5,965	24,500	30,465	1.04
University of Liverpool	20,444	4,755	20,590	25,345	0.81
University of Birmingham	15,873	2,560	24,835	27,395	0.58
University of Sheffield	9,912	5,515	25,970	31,485	0.31

(LSE Impact Blog, 2012)

While not exhaustive, these examples nonetheless indicate that social media is no longer a fad. The organizations that are taking it seriously and using it to leverage their strengths are being rewarded. An effective use of social media for engaging target audiences can help shorten the gap between the intended brand message and the brand message that is actually received or perceived. It can provide a glimpse into the actual culture and happenings of the university beyond the listless pages of a brochure or prospectus. Ambitious students need to be targeted, because they expect a high academic standard and value for their money. However, they also seek a sense of adventure from their chosen institution; a sense that it is not perfect and should not claim to be. Such students prefer an institution that offers an environment that is conducive to learning, growth, and maturity, which will give them memories that they cherish for life. All these elements feed into the culture of an institution and should become a part of the brand message. The strength of social media is that it allows all these elements to be regularly communicated as they happen.

What Do the Statistics Say?
General Statistics
It was expected that 88% of organizations would be employing social media marketing by 2012, increasing from 42% in 2008 (Williamson, 2010)

More than 50% of social media users followed brands on social media in 2011 (Van Belleghem, Eenhuizen, and Veris, 2011)

People are 65% more likely to buy a product after engaging with the community of customers and experts therefore organizations should actively monitor social media conversations (Tsai, 2009)

Organizations are leveraging social media to handle customer service issues, mine innovation ideas, and 'authentically' engage with customers; and not just to advertise and promote their products (Solis, 2010)

Worldwide marketing spending on social networking sites is approximately $4.3 billion (Williamson, 2011)

People who become fans of brand pages tend to be loyal, and are more open to receiving information about the brand (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006)

Brand fans generate more positive word-of-mouth, and are more emotionally attached to the brand than non-brand fans (Dholakia and Durham, 2010)

Entertainment value is an important factor in using social media (Cheung, Chiu, and Lee, 2011; Lin and Lu, 2011). Entertainment leads people to consume, create or contribute to brand-related content online (Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit, 2011)

40% of people socialize more on WWW instead of face to face (Creotivo, 2012)

• 74% of brand marketers have seen an increase in website traffic after investing 6 hours per week on social media (Creotivo, 2012)

62% of marketers say that social media has become more important to their campaigns in the last 6 months (Creotivo, 2012)

Globally, 91% of mobile internet is accessed for social activities (Creotivo, 2012)

People between the ages of 45 to 54 years were the highest growing group of social media users from 2011 to 2012 (Edison Research, 2012). This makes social media significantly important as parents are often active participants in the decision making process of their children's university choices, especially in the developing world where education is considered to be a life changer of sorts and a guarantee to a successful future in the wake of poor government support in terms of infrastructure, medical care, investment opportunities and more.

The global average of time spent on social networks daily is 3.6 hours (Ipsos Open Thinking Exchange, 2013)

Facebook

Facebook has 552 million daily users (Creotivo, 2012)

Facebook is the number one social marketing tool for brands at 83% (Creotivo, 2012)

Facebook is the most visited website in Pakistan (Alexa, 2013)

58% of Facebook users use it daily (Creotivo, 2012)

23% of Facebook users check their account five or more times daily (Edison Research, 2012)

An average Facebook user has 229 friends (Creotivo, 2012)

The use of Facebook has been found to be positively associated with higher levels of self-satisfaction and social trust (Valenzuela et al., 2009)

Twitter

Twitter has 6.9 million daily users (Creotivo, 2012)

Twitter is the second most used social marketing tool at 53% (Creotivo, 2012)

• 92% of re-tweets on Twitter are based on interesting content (Creotivo, 2012)

LinkedIn

LinkedIn has 25 million daily users (Creotivo, 2012)

• 42% of LinkedIn users update their profile information regularly and 61% use it as their primary professional network (Creotivo, 2012)

Pakistan is at number 10 in terms of worldwide LinkedIn users (Social Bakers, 2013)

• LinkedIn is the ninth most visited website in Pakistan (Alexa, 2013)

Social Media Marketing: A Strategic Process

Organizations can sometimes view marketing as a functional discipline rather than an integrated business process. This leads to the belief that "the discipline is about tactical and generally superficial segmentation and positioning rather than real innovation and the creation of sustainable competitive advantage" (Doyle, 1995). The same applies to the WWW and social media marketing. In order to stay ahead of the game the creation and propagation of all communication needs to be based on a properly defined strategy and every tactical activity should be goal-oriented and judged against pre-defined performance indicators. Knowledge about current and future trends and an ability to evolve and innovate can in general turn the Web and more specifically social media marketing into a source of sustainable competitive advantage for the organization.

The Challenges of communicating through Social Media

The above discussion and statistics highlight the strengths of the WWW and social media as a playing field for marketing and communication. However, as with any other marketing tool and technique, social media also offers some challenges; despite its intrinsic strengths that include low costs, ability to pinpoint specific market segments and tailor messages to them, interactive capabilities, and the possibility of content going viral (Belch and Belch and Purani, 2013). A noteworthy advantage of social media sites compared to traditional media includes the consulting role that platforms like Facebook and Twitter provide for their business customers such as advice on how to improve the brand's online presence. It is important to be aware of the limitations as well as potential risks before formulating the communications strategy.

Social media has shifted the control of the brand from the organization to the consumer. Fournier and Avery (2011) define this shift as "Open Source Branding". Open source branding is when "the consumers gain an equal, if not greater, say than marketers in what the brand looks like and how it behaves" (Fournier and Avery, 2011). It means that the consumers become the creators and disseminators of branded content. In this scenario, it is important for the organization to become an active listener and be aware of what the audience

is collectively talking about (Fournier and Avery, 2011). The interests and behaviour of the audience are not always in an organization's favour. The convenient access to information empowers people and they can easily highlight an organization's shortcomings or unethical practices (Fournier and Avery, 2011). The relative lack of controls and regulations as compared to traditional media makes the World Wide Web alluring yet dangerous. It is important to be authentic, open, and honest while communicating through social media. Users grouped together can be powerful advocates of a brand but can also criticize it as a group. However, this also provides an opportunity to listen to valid criticism, learn from it, and improve the quality of the product/service and the experience. Attempts made to control the negative word of mouth communication of unsatisfied users are known to backfire. The social media playing field not only encourages, but demands, flexibility, opportunism, and adaptation (Fournier and Avery, 2011). Therefore the ability to identify communication opportunities and act on them also becomes critical. To be constantly involved with the audience and to be a welcome partner in the social media conversations, collaboration is the key to success. Again, in the form of students and faculty, universities are in the lucrative position of having scores of collaborators present within their walls.

Further Research

Analyzing the use of various types of interactive media by the highly ranked Universities of the world can provide some guidance for brand building of academic institutions in the developing world. A limitation of this study is that the only country reviewed was Pakistan and while some social networking sites are very popular here, namely Facebook and LinkedIn, and some are banned (namely YouTube), the popularity of social networking sites may vary from one country to the other. Further research must be conducted to develop a better understanding of user behaviour on social media in general and the presence of brand messages on the same in particular, the factors that play a role in attracting and engaging users, and the activities that create value for them. An ethnographic study to understand the behaviour of users in terms of the information they access and how they actually interact with this information on interactive media can help determine the effectiveness of the medium for the purpose of brand building of academic institutions in the developing world.

Appendix 1

The following table shows the social media presence of some universities. Some of these universities are the top social media universities in the US and UK and they are communicating their brand message through social media networks, websites, and blogs. A comparison of the numbers from 2012 to number from 2013 shows that social media presence is growing quickly and steeply.

Institution	Facebook		Twitter		YouTube	
	Mar '13	Feb '12	Mar '13	Feb '12	Mar '13	Feb '12
Johns Hopkins (USA)	37,490	16,976	29,368	4,324	806,024	89,501
Harvard (USA)	2.5 million	1.2 million	211,780	95,352	13.4 million	89,501
Columbia (USA)	71,526	33,321	16,834	2,426	2.6 million	184,071
Stanford (USA)	513,000	N/A	111,799	N/A	52.9 million	N/A
Notre Dame (USA)	73,456	52,569	21,301	5,014	3.6 million	1.3 million
Ohio State (USA)	485,000	407,848	49,607	25,111	502,973	153,575
Oxford (UK)	987,000	N/A	64,413	N/A	1 million	N/A
Cambridge (UK)	342,000	N/A	52,318	N/A	5.3 million	N/A

LSE (UK)	71,862	N/A	9,082	N/A	1.5 million	N/A

Appendix 2
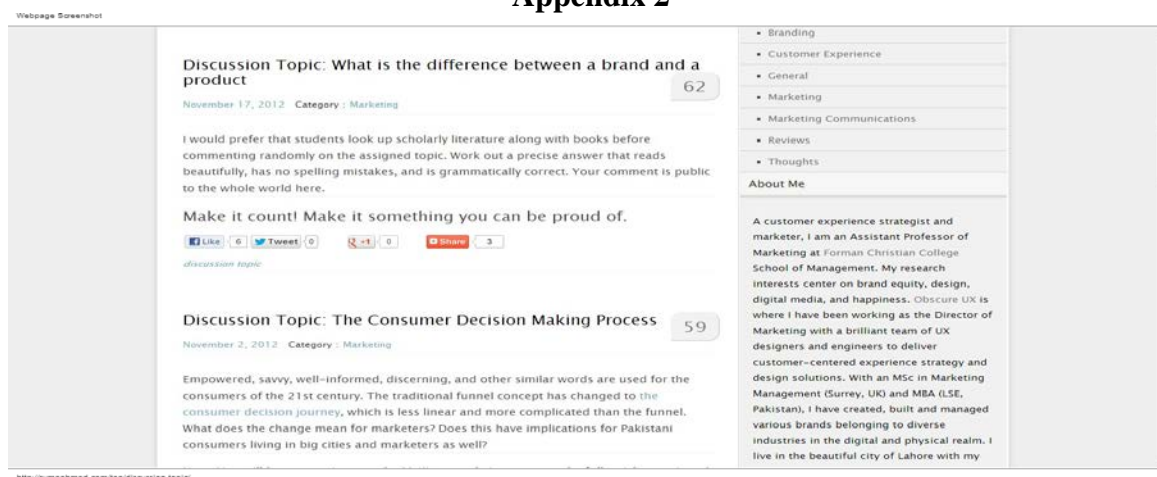
(Ahmed, 2013)

The numbers displayed on the right beside every post title are comments by students.

Appendix 3

Top 20 Social Media College in USA			
1	Harvard University	11	University of Oregon
2	Johns Hopkins University	12	University of Texas at Austin
3	University of Notre Dame	13	Emerson College
4	Columbia University	14	University of Florida
5	Stanford University	15	Yale University
6	Ohio State University	16	Princeton University
7	University of Kentucky	17	Dartmouth College
8	Louisiana State University	18	University of Miami
9	University of Washington – Seattle	19	Full Sail University
10	United States Military Academy	20	Butler University
Full list available at: http://www.studentadvisor.com/top-100-social-media-colleges			

(Student Advisor, 2013)

Appendix 4

To what extent do you trust the following forms of advertising?

Global Average

	Trust Completely/ Somewhat	Don't Trust Much/ At All
Recommendations from people I know	92%	8%
Consumer opinions posted online	70%	30%
Editorial content such as newspaper articles	58%	42%
Branded Websites	58%	42%
Emails I signed up for	50%	50%
Ads on TV	47%	53%
Brand sponsorships	47%	53%
Ads in magazines	47%	53%
Billboards and other outdoor advertising	47%	53%
Ads in newspapers	46%	54%
Ads on radio	42%	58%
Ads before movies	41%	59%
TV program product placements	40%	60%
Ads served in search engine results	40%	60%
Online video ads	36%	64%
Ads on social networks	36%	64%
Online banner ads	33%	67%
Display ads on mobile devices	33%	67%
Text ads on mobile phones	29%	71%

Source: Nielsen Global Trust in Advertising Survey, Q3 2011

(Nielsen, 2012)

When looking for information about the products you want and need, to what extent are the following advertising most relevant to you?

Global Average

	Highly/ Somewhat Relevant	Highly/ Somewhat Irrelevant
Recommendations from people I know	90%	10%
Consumer opinions posted online	75%	25%
Branded Websites	59%	41%
Editorial content such as newspaper articles	55%	45%
Emails I signed up for	51%	49%
Ads on TV	50%	50%
Brand sponsorships	46%	54%
Ads in newspapers	46%	54%
Ads in magazines	46%	54%
Billboards and other outdoor advertising	45%	55%
Ads served in search engine results	42%	58%
Ads on radio	41%	59%
TV program product placements	39%	61%
Ads before movies	37%	63%
Online video ads	36%	64%
Ads on social networks	36%	64%
Online banner ads	33%	67%
Display ads on mobile devices	33%	67%
Text ads on mobile phones	31%	69%

Source: Nielsen Global Trust in Advertising Survey, Q3 2011

(Nielsen, 2012)

Appendix 5
Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Brand Recognition	Requires consumers to identify the brand under a variety of circumstances and can rest on the identification of any of the brand elements (e.g. logo, packaging, tagline)*
Brand Reputation	It is the accumulation of views about the brand externally. It is a positive image that is reinforced over time and is relatively stable***
Points of Differentiation	Attributes or benefits that consumers strongly associate with a brand, positively evaluate, and believe that they could not find to the same extent with a competitive brand*
Positioning	Designing the company's offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customer's minds*
Segmentation	Dividing the market into distinct groups of homogenous customers who have similar needs and consumer behaviour, and who thus require similar marketing mixes*
Sustainable competitive advantage	A firm's ability to achieve and advantage in delivering superior value in the marketplace for a prolonged period of time*
Target Audiences	People who receive the marketing message*
Touch-points	Every point in time the customer 'touches' or connects with a company throughout the entire product/service delivery; pre-, during and post-purchase**
*Keller, 2003; **Touchpoint Experience, 2013; ***Veloutsou and Scott, 2005	

References:
Ahmed, S., 2013. Symaahmed.com blog, [blog], Available at: < http://symaahmed.com/tag/discussion-topic/> [Accessed 16 April, 2013]
Alexa, 2013. Facebook.com. Available at: < http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/facebook.com>
Alexa, 2013. Linkedin.com. Available at: < http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/linkedin.com>
Bagozzi, R.P., and Dholakia, U.M., 2006. Antecedents and Purchase Consequences of Customer Participation in Small Group Brand Communities. International Journal of Research in Marketing, 23, 1, 45–61.
Belch, G.E., and Belch, M.A., and Purani, K., 2013. Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective, 9th Ed., McGraw Hill Education.
Cheung, C.M.K., Pui-Yee C., and Matthew K.O.L., 2011. Online Social Networks: Why Do Students Use Facebook? Computers in Human Behavior, 27, 4, 1337–43.

Creotivo, 2012. 100 Amazing Social Media Statistics, Facts, and Figures. Available at: <http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/100-social-media-stats_b33696>

Dholkia, U.M., and Durham, E., 2010. One Café Chain's Facebook Experiment. Harvard Business Review, 88, 3, 26.

Doyle, P., 1995. Marketing in the new millennium. European Journal of Marketing, 29 (12),

Edison Research, 2012. 10 New 2012 Social Media Statistics = WOW! Available at: < http://www.socialnomics.net/2012/06/06/10-new-2012-social-media-stats-wow/>

Fournier, S. and Avery, J., 2011. The uninvited brand. Business Horizons, 54, 193 – 207.

Inside Facebook, 2010. December data on Facebook's US growth by age and gender: Beyond 100 million. Available at: <www.insidefacebook.com/2010/01/04/december-data-on-facebook% E2%80%99s-us-growth-by-age-and-gender-beyond- 100-million>

Ipsos Open Thinking Exchange, 2013. Social Networking Eats Up 3+ Hours Per Day For The Average American User. Available at: < http://www.marketingcharts.com/wp/interactive/social-networking-eats-up-3-hours-per-day-for-the-average-american-user-26049/>

Lin, Kuan-Yu and Hsi-Peng Lu, 2011. Why People Use Social Networking Sites: An Empirical Study Integrating Network Externalities and Motivation Theory. Computers in Human Behavior, 27, 3, 1152–61.

LSE Impact Blog, 2012. How visible are UK universities in social media terms? A comparison of 20 Russell Group universities suggests that many large universities are just getting started. LSE Impact blog. Available at: < http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/02/03/university-social-media-visibility/>

Muntinga, D.G., Marjolein, M., and Edith G.S., 2011. Introducing COBRA's: Exploring Motivations for Brand-Related Social Media Use. International Journal of Advertising, 30, 1,

Nielsen, 2012. Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages. New York: Nielsen Holdings

Osborne, C., 2011. How do universities use social media successfully? ZDNet [Online] 7 February. Available at: < http://www.zdnet.com/blog/igeneration/how-do-universities-use-social-media-successfully/15059>

Pidaparthy , U., 2011. How colleges use, misuse social media to reach students. CNN [Online] 20 October. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/20/tech/social-media/universities-social-media>

Social Bakers, 2013. Pakistan LinkedIn Statistics. Available at: < http://www.socialbakers.com/countries/linked-in-country-detail/pakistan>

Solis, B., 2010. Engage! Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Student Advisor, 2013. Top 100 Social Media Colleges. Available at: < http://www.studentadvisor.com/top-100-social-media-colleges>

Touchpoint Experience, 2013. Touchpoint. Available at: <http://www.touchpointexperience.com/>

Tsai, J., 2009. Everyone's social (already). CRM Magazine 13 (6), 34–38.

Valenzuela S., Park N., and Kee K., 2009. Is there social capital in a social network site? Facebook use and college students' life satisfaction, trust, and participation. Journal of Computer- Mediated Communication 14, 875–901.

Van Belleghem, S., Marloes, E., and Elias V., 2011. Social Media Around the World 2011. InSites Consulting. Available at: <http://www.slideshare.net/stevenvanbelleghem/social-media-aroundthe-   world-2011/download? lead=394fd930572c9b62fb082021af5a6d0922046ec4>

Veloutsou, C., and Scott, A., 2005. Brand Expression and Brand Reputation: Developing Consistency. 33rd EMAC Conference, Milan.

Williamson, D.A., 2010. How Much Will You Spend on Social Media Marketing Next Year? Ad Age Digital. Accessible at: <http:// adage.com/article/digitalnext/social-media-marketing-spend-year/147544/>

Williamson, D.A., 2011. Worldwide Social Network Ad Spending: A Rising Tide. eMarketer.com.   Available   at: <http://www. emarketer.com/Report.aspx?code=emarketer_2000692>