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Impact of Media with Respect to Public Opinion During the Times of Crisis

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ABSTRACT

The media is playing a crucial role in the day-to-day environment. It shows the way of reaching out to the public in an understanding manner. Media is essential in both the ways of interpreting the problems as well as the solutions to the mentioned problems. It mainly allows the way to reach the minor and marginalised people. It is one of the pillars of our emerging economy. The public is the main tool that paves the way in the aspect of opinion or recommendation in shaping the views and policies given by the governing bodies of institutions of our economy. They are a reflection of the framed policy framework and the crisis-experienced personalities in society. The public is the fuel for the vehicle economy, which is driven through the path of development. Both the media and the public are important to society. Both working enhances knowledge of more about the policies and the suggestions needed in the future aspect of development. This study shows the interconnectivity between media and the public during the time of crisis with respect to their understanding and reflection of awareness. It also elaborates on the suffering experienced by the people during that time.

KEYWORDS: Media, Public, Crisis, Awareness, Interconnectivity.

INTRODUCTION

Media is the tool or channel which provides different aspects of disseminating information to the people and the economy. It helps to know more about the ways of spreading the information in the enlightened ways of action. The major role of the media is to keep connected with the people and the environment in a positive manner. It can also be defined as the intermediate between the people and the development in the economy. The various strategies of spreading the information through newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, cinema, social media, podcasts, broadcasts, etc. Public relations is a major aspect of big coverage, like the media. PR helps to build the reputation of the organisations, maintain positive rapport between people and the environment, and create a positive impact when a company is dropping down with negative marks. A public

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relations campaign is mainly needed for the rural and marginalised people in society to raise awareness among themselves regarding any crisis, or to know what is happening around the environment. Mainly, the campaign helps to bring a positive rapport between the people and the mass media communication. A crisis is a threat to people in which unable to react to a sudden critical incident. It develops people with anxiety and fear who would be stuck with nothing to do, especially in a trap or pit. It can be spread in different forms like economic, social, political and financial crises in the society. Crisis is mainly separated into two parts: one is natural disasters or diseases like (COVID-19 pandemic, and another is human-made things like crime, war, cyber-attacks, etc.

In this study, we are going to examine the impact of public relations in shaping public opinion during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, and also the impact of social media platforms with respect to adolescents during the time period of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a random sample of 50 using the statistical analysis method.

RESEARCH ISSUE OF THE STUDY:

Public relations always plays a vital role in maintaining relationships with customers or people in the environment. The main role is to place the positive image of any company's brand, organisation's reputation, and to do crisis communication and management. During the period of COVID-19, PR plays a significant role in maintaining the company's reputation and building the same level of strategic consumers for the products and services. But it doesn't impact in the case of rural regions and marginalised people living in society. The rural people are severely affected, and mainly, daily wage workers are in a position of starving for one day's meal in a day.

The adolescents are being reflected in a lack of concentration, and the education level has dropped after the pandemic situation. It has been shown from the work and attitudes of the behaviour. The students are feeling very lazy to prepare for exams and write notes from the day-to-day classes. They have enjoyed during the pandemic period with actions like not listening to class, no proper preparation, cheating during the test series, and all kinds of malpractices. Post-COVID-19 gave them a big bang condition, like totally reversed and unable to bear with the usual happenings. The adolescents are totally corrupted by the social media platform and are now feeling stressed to react to the present environment.

The current study attempts to answer the general research question "Does Media have a huge impact on public opinion during COVID-19, and what will be the major effect of sustainability of public relations on the environment?".

Another general research question with respect to the same study: "Did social media platforms have a huge impact on addiction to usage by adolescents during the period of COVID-19, and what will be the impact of those same adolescents post-COVID-19 in the present environment?".

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H0: There is no significant impact between public relations and public opinion during the COVID-19 period

H1: There is a significant impact between public relations and public opinion during the COVID-19 period.

H0: There is no significant relationship between social media platforms and adolescents during the COVID-19 period.

H1: There is a significant relationship between social media platforms and adolescents during the period of COVID-19.

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of public relations on public opinion during the period of COVID-19, and also to examine the impact of social media platforms with respect to adolescents during the period of COVID-19, with a random sample of 50 using the statistical method.

LITERATURE REVIEW

EMPIRICAL STUDIES:

Gunasekeran D et al., (2022). Numerous potential advantages and disadvantages of social media platforms for public health have been documented in the literature. Public health responses in many areas have suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has revealed our incomplete understanding of the possible health effects.

Silvia, Etim et al. (2019) social media provides a platform for exchanging opinions, convictions, information and stances, and it can be used to raise a concern and prompt questions regarding emerging situations. Companies are often turning towards social media channels to raise awareness of their services, relying on users to repost and share relevant information and ultimately increase financial performance.

Kim et al. (2019) The Covid-19 pandemic has been accompanied by a so-called “infodemic”- a global spread of misinformation that poses a serious problem for public health. The propagation of inaccurate or misleading information has the potential to alter transmission patterns, which in turn can alter the scope and severity of a pandemic, which is why infodemics are a matter for concern.

Depoux et al. (2020). The use of social media and search queries to obtain information about the course of the disease is constantly expanding, and includes Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, Google Trends, Bing, Yahoo, and other more widely used websites, including Wikipedia, blogs, and forums.

Lima et al. (2020). In association with the generalised panic and the constant concern that COVID-19 caused, this culminated in the appearance of physical and psychological disorders, in addition to reduced immunity in the general population.

Eysenbach (2020). In this context of uncertainty, there was a need for new information about the virus, clinical manifestations, transmission and prevention of the disease.

Tangcharoensathien et al. (2020). The population became uncertain as a result of the quick deployment of these measures and the large number of fatalities brought on by the virus.

World Health Organisation (WHO) (2020) The World Health Organisation has worked closely to track and respond to the most prevalent myths and rumours that can potentially harm public health.

Naeem et al. (2020). The term "fake news," which refers to the abundance of information combined with false and fraudulent news, first appeared in the 20th century. It describes the fake news that is created and disseminated by mass media platforms, which have taken over traditional

and social media and are becoming a bigger part of many people's everyday lives. Fake news multiplies rapidly and acts as narratives that omit or add information to facts.

Glynn et al. (2015). Although it is difficult to define, public opinion is crucial to democracy. Researchers have summarised four common definitions that are distinct but overlap to some extent.

Berinsky (2017); Druckman and Jacobs (2006). The first definition is that public opinion is an aggregation of individual opinions, which is the most common definition in contemporary American politics.

Noelle-Newmann (1974). In this definition, through random selections, individual opinions are equally treated and efficiently aggregated to make general claims about the entire population. According to the second definition, the majority's beliefs are reflected in public opinion. This definition is comparable to social norms, according to which the actual foundation of public opinion is the values and beliefs of the majority.

Gray et al. (2004). This definition is not to judge the majority as being right or wrong_ it is often used to reveal that people tend to conform to the majority opinion. According to the third concept, group interests represent public opinion. Public opinion shows how interest groups, such as political parties and activity organisations, develop and spread individual viewpoints.

Woodward (1948). This definition assumes that interest groups are constantly engaged in defining social problems and providing solutions. According to the fourth criterion, elite and media influence are reflected in public opinion. Adherents of this definition argue that the common citizen could not possibly stay informed on all public issues and therefore could hardly produce meaningful opinions.

Asker and Dinas (2019); Claassen (2020); Reeskens et al. (2021); Segovia and Defever (2010). Four dimensions—direction, intensity, stability, and information content—are typically used to examine public opinion.

Asker and Dinas (2019); Claassen (2020). The direction dimension displays the public's position on many subjects, including whether they support, oppose, or are unsure. How strongly the public feels about topics is indicated by the intensity component. The stability dimension refers to the consistency of public opinion over time. The information content reveals the particular content of public opinion and is critical for the public to form reasonable opinions on public issues.

Asker and Dinas (2019). The direction of public opinion is often indicated from a sentiment perspective, such as indicating support via positive sentiment.

Sasahara et al. (2013). The intensity of public opinion is often obtained by counting the number of individual opinions, such as the number of individuals supporting an issue.

Adams (2004). It is an approach that organises public meetings or hearings for sharing information and discussing proposals.

Gundry and Heberlein (1984). Although public meetings are meant to include a wide variety of people, they frequently only reach a small portion of the population, which makes them less able to indicate public opinion for the entire community.

Morgan (1996) Public meetings have multiple time-consuming processes, such as pre-meeting notice (e.g., three working days before the meeting) and post-meeting follow-ups. A focus group interview is a popular method for examining public opinion in a detailed manner.

Ragini et al. (2018); Wang and Taylor (2018). The solutions are less effective since they do not completely eradicate the population-size-related variances in the amount of social media activity of comparing public opinion intensity among various regions. In addition to the intensity dimension, scholars have thoroughly examined the direction of public opinion through social media analysis.

Chen et al. (2020); Wang and Ye (2018). Social media has been widely used to research a range of emergency-related subjects, such as evacuation behaviour and damage assessment.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter works to analyse the impact of public relations with respect to public opinion during the period of COVID-19, and also to analyse the impact of social media platforms with respect to adolescents during the pandemic period, with 50 random individual samples using statistical methods.

IMPACT OF PUBLIC RELATION AND PUBLIC OPINION

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: (Age) The period contemporary with a person's lifetime or with his or her active life. In research, the study of age and ageing processes across different disciplines, including human resource management, biology, medicine, and social sciences.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:

(People) The people are generally essential for the living and upliftment economy. They are the products of the manufacturing industry, like emerging and developed economies. It can be categorised with respect to four groups in my research, like marginalised, rural, semi-urban and urban people.

(Public Relations) It is the major aspect of media which connects easily with the public in the present world economy. It helps to spread information and awareness to consumers regarding any immediate or important issues revolving around the environment. It has a beautiful rapport with the public.

(Impact) Public relations work in a magnified and intellectual way to promote awareness campaigns in and around all regions of the economy. It plays a significant role in corporate companies and the development sector, especially in rural regions in the economy.

(Rural Sector) The people, housing and territory are not within the urban community. The people reside in the country. It gives the largest agricultural cover in India and it is the major occupation of the residents. The other types of work carried on by the residents are self-employment, services and construction work.

(Awareness and connect) The spreading of information and consumer awareness to get a positive connection and stay informed by the public at any time of crisis. It is the way to educate the general public and livelihood people.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND ADOLESCENTS

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: (Age) The period contemporary with a person's lifetime or with his or her active life. In research, the study of age and ageing processes across different disciplines, including human resource management, biology, medicine, and social sciences.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:

(Social media) It is the fourth pillar of our economy. It is divided into three categories like print media, electronic media and digital media. The main role is to spread information quickly to the public and provide awareness to them on related issues.

(Social media knowledge) It is the way of enrichment by day-to-day stuff through media and getting updated. It depends on the level of information with regular updates, and stay tuned for the future aspects of regulation and challenges.

METHODOLOGY:

This study examines the impact of public relations with respect to public opinion during the COVID-19 period and also the impact of social media platforms with respect to adolescents during quarantine duration, with the help of a regression statistical tool for finding the cause and effect of dependent and independent variables.

In this study, the correlation tool was also enhanced to check the correlation and interaction between the dependent and independent variables.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1it} + \beta_2 X_{2it} + \beta_3 X_{3it} + \beta_4 X_{4it} + \beta_5 X_{5it} + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

Equation (1)

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1it} + \beta_2 X_{2it} + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

(Y_{it}) = Age,

(X_{1it}) = People, (X_{2it}) = Public relation, (X_{3it}) = Impact, (X_{4it}) = Rural sector, (X_{5it}) = Awareness & connect.

Equation (2)

(Y_{it}) = Age, (X_{1it}) = social media, (X_{2it}) = Social media knowledge.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

VARIABLES	DESCRIPTION	MEAN	STD.DEVIATION
AGE	AGE	1.46	0.908
PPL	PEOPLE	2.26	1.084
IMP	IMPACT	0.72	0.453
PR	PUBLIC RELATION	2.98	1.186
RUS	RURAL SECTOR	2.44	0.907
AWC	AWARENESS & CONNECT	0.9	0.303

VARIABLES	DESCRIPTION	MEAN	STD.DEVIATION
AGE	AGE	1.46	0.908
SM	SOCIAL MEDIA	2.66	0.658
KNW	SOCIAL MEDIA KNOWLEDGE	1.8	0.571

CORRELATION:

AGE	PPL	IMP	PR	RUS	AWC
1	0.145	-0.085	0.021	0.021	0.096

Age is positive and strongly correlated with public relations, people getting affected, awareness awareness-driven campaigns during the COVID-19 period.

AGE	SM	KNW
1	0.086	0.086

Age is positive and strongly correlated with social media and knowledge about media, which shows the relationship between them during the pandemic.

REGRESSION

AGE	COEFFICIENT	T-STATISTIC	P> T
PPL	0.092	0.676	0.502
IMP	-0.040	-0.340	0.735
PR	0.063	0.676	0.854
RUS	0.033	0.184	0.847
AWC	0.204	0.192	0.666
CONSTANT	1.060	1.225	0.226

R-SQUARE	0.028		
NO. OF OBSERVATION	50	F-STATISTIC	0.259

AGE	COEFFICIENT	T-STATISTIC	P> T
SM	-0.367	-1.917	0.061
KNW	-0.238	-1.079	0.285
CONSTANT	2.866	4.542	3.870
R-SQUARE	0.100		
NO. OF OBSERVATION	50	F-STATISTIC	2.620

For equation (1)

The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The p-value is greater than the value of 0.05 (95%) confidence interval, which shows that there is a significant impact between public relations and public opinion during the pandemic period.

For equation (2)

The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The p-value is greater than the value of 0.05 (95%) confidence interval, which shows that there is a significant relationship between adolescents and social media platforms during the COVID-19 period.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The media plays a significant role in the present working economy. It consists of various sections and participation in society in a good relationship connected manner. It establishes a strong rapport with consumers, either on awareness or new brands in the market. One aspect of social media is public relations. It is the work role done by people to people in the way of helping, spreading, participating and enriching the given content to the public. It is a major part of the corporate companies like Hyundai, Apple, Nike, Amazon, McDonald's, Spotify, etc. The main role is to reach out to consumers in a good and positive manner. PR also has the capacity to change the negative, dropping down names to reputed positive company names. Social media is an important backbone during the period of COVID-19, with benefits and challenges which depend on the way of using it is used.

In this study, the impact of public relations with respect to public opinion during the period of COVID-19 and the relationship between adolescents with social media platforms during the period of the pandemic were investigated with 50 random individual samples using statistical methods. It was observed that the variables are positively correlated, and the null hypothesis framed in the research issue was rejected. Hence, there is a huge impact between public relations and public opinion during the pandemic. There is a significant relationship in using huge media platforms by adolescents during the quarantine period.

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