MOTIVATIONS TO USE INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN MARKETING: A STUDY IN INDIAN SERVICE BUSINESSES

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Interactive technology helps marketers to inexpensively engage consumers in one-to-one relationships fueled by two-way conversations via mouse clicks on a computer, touch-tone buttons on a telephone or surveys completed at a kiosk. Several organisations especially in services businesses are increasingly strengthening their marketing function by effectively interacting with their customers with the help of sophisticated interactive technologies in an integrated manner. Enough research in the usage or adoption of electronic data interchange (EDI) can be found both in information systems and marketing literature. A careful review of available literature further shows that the usage or adoption of Internet and e-mail has been studied in detail by various researchers across the world. Therefore, it appears that different interactive technologies have been studied individually by different researchers. We did not come across any study making an attempt to understand the motivation for usage of all adopted interactive technologies together in an organisation for the purpose of marketing activities in particular. This gap is wider when one tries to find out studies related to interactive technologies and their usage or adoption especially for marketing activities in a developing country like India. This paper attempts to understand the factors influencing the usage of interactive technologies in services businesses with the intention to derive implications for the development of interactive technologies to suit its intended users.

INTRODUCTION

Interactive technology helps marketers to inexpensively engage consumers in one-to-one relationships fueled by two-way conversations via mouse clicks on a computer, touch-tone buttons on a telephone or surveys completed at a kiosk. Interactive technologies include interactive telephony (Call centers, customer relationship centers, CTI, etc.), Internet (Interactive websites, customization enabled web sites, etc.) and digital technologies (multimedia kiosks, ATMs etc.). Pre - industrial society did not have the privilege of enjoying the benefits of such technologies and was based largely on agricultural economy and the trade of art and artifacts. During the agricultural days, most

farmers sold their produce directly in bazaars. Similarly, artisans sold their art and artifacts in these markets. Consumers and producers gathered in a common place where producers traded their products face-to-face. The role of the producer was not separated from that of the trader, and the former functioned as both "manufacturer" and "retailer" for their own products. Also, producers and consumers developed strong relationships that led to production of customized products made by artisans for individual customers. Hence, direct interaction with cooperation, reliance, and trust was possible among marketing actors.

The emergence of mass production and mass consumption during industrialization resulted in key consequences. First, people moved away from small subsistence farms to jobs in industrial towns and needed retailers to supply an assortment of the basic conveniences of food, shelter, and clothing. Second, manufacturers were motivated to produce in mass quantities for achieving the economies of scale. These consequences led to the emergence of the transaction orientation of marketing whereby marketers became more concerned with sales and promotion of goods and less with building ongoing relationships.

The growth of a relationship orientation of marketing in the postindustrial era can be viewed as the rebirth of direct marketing between marketers and customers. Rapid advancement in information and communication technologies in general, and Internet based technologies in particular, is the key factor responsible for the impetus to direct marketing activities between marketers and customers. The technological revolution is changing the nature and activities of marketing function. Entry of Internet-based technologies into our society is making it easier for customers to interact directly with marketers. Marketers are also becoming more knowledgeable about their customers at considerably lower cost with the help of sophisticated systems available for capturing the information related to each interaction with individual customers. This enables them to practice one-to-one marketing. Unlike the traditional media, interactive technologies present a unique opportunity for marketers as they facilitate two-way communication between the seller and buyer. Visitors at a corporate web site or a kiosk can communicate directly with the business without concern for distance or time. Thus organisations using these

technologies as a marketing communication tool can now hear from the site's visitors in the form of a sale or customer feedback.

Success of any technology depends on the adoption by its expected users. The application of technology by the user in his / her environment also creates opportunities for further development. Enough research in the usage or adoption of electronic data interchange (EDI) can be found both in information systems and marketing literature (e.g. Bamfield 1994; Germain and Droge, 1995; Teo *et al.* 1995). A careful review of available literature further shows that the usage or adoption of Internet and e-mail has been studied in detail by various researchers across the world (e.g. Moon and Kim, 2001; Lederer, *et al.* 2000, Teo et al, 1999 and Taylor and Todd, 1995). Therefore, it appears that different interactive technologies have been studied individually by different researchers. Several organisations especially in services businesses are increasingly strengthening their marketing function by effectively interacting with their customers with the help of sophisticated interactive technologies in an integrated manner. We did not come across any study making attempt to understand the motivation for usage of all adopted interactive technologies together in any organisation for the purpose of marketing activities in particular. This gap is wider when one tries to find out studies related to interactive technologies and their usage or adoption especially for marketing activities in a developing country like India. In this backdrop this paper attempts to understand the factors influencing the usage of interactive technologies in services businesses with the intention to derive implications for the development of interactive technologies to suit its intended users. The paper is based on a study conducted during November 2001 to April 2002.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Deci (1972) argued that behavior is determined by intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity for no other reason other than the satisfaction derived from the activity itself (Davis *et al.* 1992). Extrinsic motivation is defined as the performance of an activity because it is perceived to be instrumental in achieving valued outcomes that are distinct from the activity itself (Teo *et al.* 1999). Davis *et al.* (1992) are of the opinion that perceived

usefulness is an extrinsic motivator, while enjoyment is an intrinsic motivator. Perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment of few interactive technologies such as Internet has been studied by various researchers.

Davis (1989) developed Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to explain the usage of information technology (IT). TAM addresses IT adoption, implementation and diffusion in terms of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness can be defined as the prospective user's subjective belief that using a specific application system will increase his or her job performance within an organisational context (Teo *et al.* 1999). Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which the prospective user expects the use of the target system to be free of effort (Teo *et al.* 1999). Perceived ease of use was posited as an antecedent variable for both perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment of Internet usage (Teo *et al.* 1999).

Straub *et al.* (1997) studied TAM in the adoption of an information technology innovation namely, e-mail among employees of three different airlines across three different countries: Japan, Switzerland and United States. Dishaw and Strong (1998) studied information technology utilization behavior. They proposed and tested an integrated information technology utilization model, which is an extension of TAM with the inclusion of task-technology fit model (it's a kind of model which focuses on the match between user task needs and available functionality of the information technology).

Triandis model was used as theoretical foundation by Chang and Cheung (2001) to explain the factors influencing the intention to use the Internet. This model includes constructs such as social factors and facilitating conditions. It postulates that the probability of performing an act, such as using Internet, is a function of (i) habits, (ii) intention to perform the act, and (iii) facilitating conditions. Facilitating conditions refer to the objective factors, 'out there' in the environment that makes an act easy. The intention of performing certain acts is a function of the (i) perceived consequences of the act, (ii) the person's conception of what he or she should do or social factors, and (iii) what one would enjoy doing. Chang and Cheung (2001) modified and extended Triandis model that fitted the data, which shows interrelationships between the determinants using confirmatory factor analysis.

There are a few studies that touch on organisational adoption of high technology products for its use. Frambach and Schillewaert (2002) identified factors affecting the organisational adoption at two levels viz. organisation and individual. They found that the organisational level adoption is determined by perceived innovation characteristics, adopter characteristics, supplier marketing activity, social network and environmental influences, whereas Individual level adoption in organisational context is determined by attitude toward the innovation, organisational facilitators, personal innovativeness and social influences. Vijayasarathy and Tyler (1997) studied the adoption factors for electronic data interchange (EDI). They empirically ascertained a variety of factors identified from the conceptual and empirical literature. They also assessed the importance of these factors in the context of the retail industry. The present study discussed in this paper draws from Vijayasarathy and Tyler's (1997) work.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF STUDY

In India, services sector is considered to be the 'tertiary sector' of the economy. In 2001-02, the services sector contributed for 49.0 per cent of the total GDP and it recorded a growth rate of over 6.2 per cent during the same period (Economic Survey, 2002). The sector currently employs more than 20 million people in India. Services sector covers a wide gamut of activities like trading, banking & finance, infotainment, real estate, transportation, security, management & technical consultancy, education, health care, communication, hospitality among several others. Interactive technologies play an important role to serve the customers in these sectors. Growing importance of services sector in our society motivated us to study organisations engaged in services businesses only.

The motivations to use interactive technologies in marketing were identified with the help of available conceptual and empirical literature in this area (Vijayasarathy and Tyler, 1997). The importance of these motivations was assessed by conducting a survey. This methodology conforms to the methodology followed by Vijayasarathy and Tyler (1997). The questionnaire was prepared to study the motivations to use interactive technologies in marketing. The motivations to use

interactive technologies were measured by two sets of factors. In the first set of factors we used rank order. In the second set of factors, we used 7-point semantic differential scale (1 being extremely unimportant and 7 being extremely important) to facilitate the respondents to answer without much difficulty.

Geographically, the study was limited to the organisations having their corporate office in and around Mumbai due to the limitation of time and resources available for this study. The study was conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire which was self administered in case of e-mail survey and personally administered in case of field survey from key informants of the respondent companies.

DATA ANALYSIS AND KEY RESULTS

Of the 48 complete responses finally received, 16 were from the banking sector, 1 from the insurance sector, 4 from the hotel industry, 13 from the express industry, and 14 from the travel industry. Out of these 48 responses, 10 respondents' organisations did not use any interactive technologies for marketing activities including marketing communications. All the respondents belonging to the travel, express businesses gave an affirmative answer when asked about the usage of interactive technologies. Of the 10 negative responses, 1 came from the insurance sector and the remaining 9 came from the banking sector. These 9 responses in the banking sector came mainly from the public sector and cooperative banks.

Motivations to Use Interactive Technologies in Banking Sector

The banking sector globally is probably a sector most influenced by the developments in interactive technologies in general. The banking sector's core service basically involves handling money wherein the importance of interaction between the banks and customers is being felt on both sides. Customers expect more and more convenient services from their banks, which were difficult and costly in past. Lately, it has become easier and cost effective to meet such expectations due to the advancement of interactive technologies. In recent times, banks worldwide have made huge investments in advanced interactive

technologies to serve their customers better. In India, most of the private sector banks and some public sector banks provide multiple channels of interactions with their customers with the help of advanced interactive technologies. An Indian customer today has the option of mobile banking, automatic teller machines (ATMs), phone banking, and Net banking at anytime of the day.

What motivated Indian banking companies to go for interactive technologies has been shown in Table 1(a) and 1(b). As discussed earlier, the motivations to use interactive technologies were measured by two sets of factors. Table 1(a) depicts the mean scores and respective rank orders of responses. This is based on the first set of factors measuring motivations to use interactive technologies using rank order. It could be inferred from table 1(a) that 'selling core product' is the most important motivation for the usage of interactive technologies followed by 'establishing an interactive channel of communication with the customer' for Indian banks.

Table 1(a): Motivations to Use Interactive
Technologies – Banking Sector

Factors	Mean Score	Rank Order
Selling core product	1.71	I
Establishing an interactive channel of communication with the customer	2.29	II
Providing information about the organisation	3.00	III
General awareness about the organisation	5.00	IV
Projecting a favorable organisational image	5.14	V
Providing opportunity for feed back	5.29	VI
Accessing previously inaccessible customers	5.86	VII
Generating qualified leads for sales people	7.71	VIII

Table 1(b). shows mean responses of the second set of factors measured in 7-point semantic differential scale for banking sector. In banking sector, 'brand positioning', customer loyalty' 'one-to-one marketing opportunities' were perceived to be almost equally but extremely important factors influencing the usage of interactive technologies.

Table 1b: Motivations to Use Interactive Technologies - Banking Sector

Factors	Mean
Reach a global market	2.00
Create brand positioning	6.43
Establish customer loyalty	6.43
Create database of customer information	4.29
Enable one-to-one marketing opportunities	6.10
Reduce marketing costs	5.90
Reach a desirable demographic	5.00

Motivations to Use Interactive Technologies in Express Industry

Leading players in express industry heavily used the Internet to obtain information regarding the status of delivery. Express industry comprises of courier companies providing express (time bound) and door-to-door deliveries of documents and parcels to domestic and international destinations. The introduction of wireless application protocol (WAP) enabled devices has provided companies in express industry an additional avenue for relaying package-tracking information to their customers.

What motivated companies, in express industry that operate in India, to go for Interactive technologies has been shown in Table 2(a) and 2(b). Table 2(a) indicates the mean scores and respective rank orders of responses for express industry. This is based on the first set of factors measuring motivations to use interactive technologies using rank order. Information about the organisation' is ranked as the most important motivation for the usage of interactive technologies by express industry followed by 'Opportunity for feed back'. Surprisingly, 'selling core product' was ranked as the least important motivation.

Table 2a: Motivations to Use Interactive
Technologies –Express Industry

Factors	Mean score	Rank Order
Providing info about the organisation	1.23	I
Providing opportunity for feed back	2.46	II
Establishing an interactive channel of communication with the customer	2.77	III
General awareness about the organisation	3.62	IV
Projecting a favorable organisational image	5.54	V
Accessing previously inaccessible customers	6.23	VI
Generating qualified leads for salespeople	6.46	VII
Selling core product	7.69	VIII

Table 2(b). shows mean responses of the second set of factors measured in 7-point semantic differential scale for express industry. Factors such as 'Reduce marketing costs', 'establish customer loyalty' and 'create brand positioning' were perceived to be almost equally but extremely important in influencing the usage of interactive technologies in express industry.

Table 2b: Motivations to Use Interactive
Technologies-Express industry

Factors	Mean
Reach a global market	2.21
Create brand positioning	6.36
Establish customer loyalty	6.43
Create database of customer information	4.50
Enable one-to-one marketing opportunities	5.36
Reduce marketing costs	6.57
Reach a desirable demographic	4.71

Motivations to Use Interactive Technologies in Travel Services

The travel agencies are the most endangered organisations, as their job is increasingly being seen as replaceable by the advanced interactive technologies (Bloch and Segev, 1996). Travel agencies play multiple

roles: as information brokers to pass information from product suppliers to customers, as transaction processors to print ticket or forward money, and as advisors to provide value added information to their customers, assisting them in their choice of specific products and destinations (Bloch and Segev, 1996). Internet is used to increase convenience (product leadership) in buying travel workflow automation, links with information servers, reservations from a laptop while travelling), reduce transaction costs (cost advantage, by suppressing unnecessary human intervention) and improve the service delivered to individual users (customer focus) (Bloch and Segev, 1996). Purchasing a holiday package is frequently not a very pleasant experience because of long wait times, shuffling through paper catalogs and waiting for phone calls from the suppliers. Interactive technologies eliminate these shortcomings through kiosks, supporting multimedia clips, databases of relevant travel, visa and destination information, etc. (Bloch and Segev, 1996).

What motivated Indian travel agencies to go for interactive technologies has been shown in Table 3(a) and 3(b) Table 3(a) shows the mean scores and respective rank orders of responses for travel services. This is based on the first set of factors measuring motivations to use interactive technologies using rank order. Here, 'selling core product' was found to be the most important motivation for the usage of interactive technologies followed by 'establishing an interactive channel of communication with the customer'.

Table 3(a): Motivations to Use Interactive
Technologies – Travel Services

Factors	Mean score	Rank Order
Selling core product	1.85	I
Establishing an interactive channel of communication with the customer	2.46	II
Providing opportunity for feed back	3.31	III
Accessing previously inaccessible customers	4.46	IV
General awareness about the organisation	4.85	V
Providing info about the organisation	5.69	VI
Generating qualified leads for salespeople	6.46	VII
Projecting a favorable organisational image	6.92	VIII

Table 3(b) shows mean responses of the second set of factors measured in 7-point semantic differential scale for travel services. In travel services, 'establish customer loyalty' was perceived almost equally but extremely important factor influencing the usage of interactive technologies.

Table 3b: Motivations to Use Interactive
Technologies - Travel Services

Factors	Mean
Reach a global market	1.85
Create brand positioning	2.07
Establish customer loyalty	6.08
Create database of customer information	4.69
Enable one-to-one marketing opportunities	3.92
Reduce marketing costs	5.38
Reach a desirable demographic	3.23

Motivations to Use Interactive Technologies in Hotel Industry

Hotel firms always look for filling their rooms to increase the utilization of property and maximize the revenue from each sale. They achieve this goal by devising and managing reservations process in such a way, which can turn potential demand into actual demand. Reservation management is a way by which these firms gain clear competitive advantage (Sigala *et al.* 2001). The arrival of the Internet added significantly to the distribution channels to facilitate the reservation management (Sigala *et al.* 2001). Hotels now promote directly to customers and sell their rooms more cheaply with the use of Internet than using the expensive call centers, global distribution systems (GDS) and central reservation systems (CRS) of their hotel affiliation. The arrival of digital TV and the wireless application protocol (WAP) has further increased the number of available distribution channels for this industry.

What motivated Indian hotels to go for interactive technologies has been shown in Table 4(a) and 4(b) Table 4a. shows the mean scores and respective rank orders of responses for hotel industry. This is based on the first set of factors measuring motivations to use interactive technologies using rank order. It could be inferred from the table that 'providing information about the organisation' is the most important motivation for the usage of interactive technologies followed by 'providing opportunity for feed back'.

Table 4(a): Motivations to Use Interactive
Technologies – Hotel Industry

Factors	Mean score	Rank Order
Providing info about the organisation	1.00	I
Providing opportunity for feed back	2.25	II
Establishing an interactive channel of communication with the customer	3.25	III
General awareness about the organisation	3.75	IV
Generating qualified leads for salespeople	5.00	V
Projecting a favorable organisational image	5.75	VI
Accessing previously inaccessible customers	7.25	VII
Selling core product	7.75	VIII

Table 4b. shows mean responses of the second set of factors measured in 7-point semantic differential scale for hotel industry. Factors such as, 'Create brand positioning' and 'reach a desirable demographic' were perceived to be almost equally but extremely important in influencing the usage of interactive technologies in hotel industry.

Table 4b: Motivations to Use Interactive Technologies - Hotel Industry

Factors	Mean
Reach a global market	1.75
Create brand positioning	6.50
Establish customer loyalty	6.00
Create database of customer information	4.25
Enable one-to-one marketing opportunities	4.25
Reduce marketing costs	4.30
Reach a desirable demographic	6.25

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to understand the motivators for the usage of interactive technologies in marketing activities by services businesses of India. The implications of the results of the two sets of factors are discussed separately in the following lines. In the first set of factors, which were measured by rank orders, 'selling core product' was the most important motivation for the usage of interactive technologies in the banking industry. The result was the same for travel industry as well. It implies that the interactive technologies should be able to provide facilities that could enable the banking and travel industry to sell their core product, which is necessarily a service by its nature. For express and hotel industries, providing information about the organisation was the most important motivation for using interactive technologies, which implies that development of interactive technologies should enable the express and hotel industries to provide information about the organisation in an effective and efficient manner. In other words R&D in interactive technologies should focus to suit the specific requirements of the target industry.

Amongst the second set of factors, which were measured by 7-point differential scale, the most important aspect of interactive technologies for the service sector businesses was to establish customer loyalty. It is a widely recognized fact that the customer loyalty is the fundamental variable for building and maintaining relationships with the customers. Therefore, services businesses emphasize the use of interactive technologies for the purpose of building and maintaining relationships with the customers. This could be considered as an impetus to the growth and development of interactive technologies.

LIMITATIONS

This research basically explores the motivational factors for the usage of interactive technologies, in Indian services businesses. Of course, this study is a small exercise with a small sample of organisations in services businesses located only in Mumbai city. This exploratory study could act as a base for future research in testing TAM in services businesses with proper constructs and larger sample size for all adopted

interactive technologies together in an organisation for the purpose of marketing activities in particular. The authors of this paper plan to carry out such a research in future.

CONCLUSIONS

Interactive technology helps marketers interact one-to-one with their customers inexpensively via mouse clicks on a computer, touch-tone buttons on a telephone or surveys completed at a kiosk. Research focusing on the motivational factors influencing the usage of all adopted Interactive technologies together is found to be lacking. Hence, an attempt was made in this paper to understand the motivational factors influencing the usage or adoption of all Interactive technologies specifically, in Indian services businesses. In the first set of factors of motivations to use, 'Selling core product', which is a service by its nature has emerged as the most important motivation for the usage of interactive technologies in the banking and travel businesses. 'Providing information' about the organisation is the most important motivation for the usage of interactive technologies for express and hotel industry. In the second set of factors of motivators for usage, 'creating of brand positioning', 'establishing customer loyalty' and 'enabling one-to-one marketing opportunities' were perceived to be almost equally but extremely important factors of motivations to use interactive technologies in banking sector. 'Reduction in marketing costs', 'establishing customer loyalty' and 'creating brand positioning' were perceived to be almost equally but extremely important factors of motivations to use interactive technologies in express industry. In travel services, 'establishing customer loyalty' was perceived almost equally but extremely important factor of motivations to use interactive technologies. 'Creating brand positioning' and 'reaching a desirable demographic' were perceived to be almost equally but extremely important factors of motivations to use interactive technologies in hotel industry.

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