Consumer Behaviour & Netnography Applicability & its Adoption in Commerce

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Abstract - Researchers and practitioners in the field of services must prioritize learning about their target audience. Customers are spending more time online, which means more opportunities to collect useful data about their thoughts, feelings, and actions. The availability of client data online opens up new avenues for the development of tailored, high-caliber service. Successful service businesses need to focus on customer understanding, which is why this area of study is so vital. Retailers, eateries, retail banks, healthcare providers, government agencies, non-profits, and telecommunications corporations are just few of the daily service providers that customers deal with. However, as a result of rapid developments, especially in information technology, the context in which service is offered, experienced, and evaluated is shifting. Customers of modern service providers are increasingly engaged online before, during, and after their interactions with those providers, generating vast troves of data about those interactions. Much of this data is already out there, and it can be used to provide better, more tailored service. However, one of the primary obstacles in present-day service marketing research and practice is the collection and analysis of such massive data.

Keywords - Netnography, Ethnography, Service research, Internet research, Qualitative research, Method.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper delves into how the technique known as netnography might be used by those studying service delivery to analyze data collected online. Netnography is widely recognized as a powerful method for studying online consumers' behaviors and attitudes. Netnography is a research method based on ethnographic principles that was designed to better understand the consumer's experience online. Netnography is more important than ever in our increasingly digitized world. Some service-related research has been conducted using netnography, but the method has much more to offer in this area. Innovations in technology have an impact on how consumers currently use services, as well as how they might use such services in the future. By conducting netnographic research, scholars can either expand their understanding of conventional forms of service or discover novel forms of digital service (e.g. online streaming of entertainment, online storage space, or online gaming). Netnography's popularity skyrocketed among academics and professionals as the number of people using the Internet grew and more aspects of people's life moved online (Kozinets, 2015). There has been a lot of attention paid to the technique of "netnography," and two recent reviews (Bartlett et al., 2016; Costello et al., 2017) both reflect and emphasize this.

Despite these evaluations' comprehensive coverage of the netnographic literature across disciplines, a more in-depth, systematic examination of how netnography has been employed in marketing research and the prospects it presents for service researchers has yet to be conducted. While Bartlett et al. (2016) and Costello et al. (2017) discuss the ideal applications of netnography, the purpose of the present study was to demonstrate how the technique is currently being employed and to suggest future directions for its development. Therefore, this study set out to systematically review the literature on three distinct types of netnographic marketing research: contextual (research setting), conceptual (research topic), and procedural (methodological application). With a service marketing lens as the starting point, this evaluation and analysis aimed to highlight promising avenues for future service research. The older service management theories look at services from an exchange perspective, while the newer service perspective emphasizes the value-creation processes involved in providing those services (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2004, 2008). As part of this analysis, the discovered netnographic marketing studies were classified as either focusing on traditional services, a service viewpoint, or none of these. As a result of this in-depth examination, we have several suggestions for how to improve future studies of netnographic services, both in terms of empirical findings and theoretical frameworks. We hope that the in-depth evaluation and suggestions

made here will encourage and aid service researchers as they adopt and implement the methodology. Furthermore, the practical importance of netnography for service managers needs to be more clearly defined. The current study did not seek to advance or improve the netnography approach, as the guidelines for doing so have already been thoroughly examined. Instead, the goals were to examine how netnography has been used in marketing research and to promote its use among service researchers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Netnography is widely recognized as a powerful method of study from a theoretical perspective (Bartl & Stockinger, 2014). Researchers can tap into the collective wisdom of the online community, which in turn can shed light on the buying habits of individual customers.

Netnography, a word created by Robert V. Kozinets (2002), is a method for studying consumer behavior on the Internet. The author emphasizes the importance of a rigorous and ethical online environment for Market Researchers. It's done in a coffee-themed internet forum, where its consequences are also debated.

Based on her findings, researcher Lisa Marie Mewcer (2014) has identified many noteworthy tendencies in the realm of social media. These tendencies include things like the recent resurgence of MySpace, the growing popularity of Google Plus, and the use of predictive analytics in advertising. The majority of these tendencies represent market growth. Clearly, there is a lot of room for expansion in the realm of social media.

In a separate piece of research, Jayson Demers (2014) identifies five social media trends that every business owner should be aware of. Among these developments is the increasing importance of visual material, the merging of social media and content production, and the employment of such platforms in general for the purpose of brand development. Only by strengthening their brand will the Lifestyle market be given a boost.

As S.Sathish and Dr. A. Rajamohan (2012) point out, competition is heating up in the consumer durables market. More and more young people are moving there in search of a higher quality of life and greater economic prospects. A greater knowledge of lifestyle choices among Indian young can be attributed in part to the increasing influence of the West.

Lifestyle luxury products are discussed at length by Linda Daurizand and Thomas Tochtermann (2013), who highlight a number of key aspects of this market. They believe that brands should do everything it takes to ensure that their products remain distinct from the competition. They also say that maximizing a brand's core potential to provide a better Lifestyle experience is crucial.

The most difficult task in the lifestyle industry is targeting a narrow demographic with relevant information. MossartFarhanaMossavar (2014). The growth of lifestyle and related topics is also highlighted in the article as a result of the proliferation of digital media. Having access to the right website and the right electronic device is also essential.

According to a 2015 analysis by A&A Associates, there has been a dramatic shift in the way young Indians live compared to earlier generations. Indian youngsters also place a premium on having a strong value orientation. There has been a dramatic shift in disposable income, and new technologies have contributed to this.

NETNOGRAPHY

The disciplines of Ethnography and Netnography are extremely intertwined. Ethnography is the study of people and their customs. That phenomenon where a researcher watches a civilization in order to learn more about its cultural practices.

Netnography = Inter (net) + Ethon (graphy)

To put it another way, internet ethnography is a branch of anthropology that focuses on people's actions in the virtual world. It employs strategies for conducting market research via the Internet. This idea was developed by Dr. Robert V. Kozinets. When compared to ethnography, focus groups, and interviews, netnography has the potential to be a faster, easier, and cheaper option (Kozinets, 2009, del Fresno, 2011, del Fresno 2014).

Netnography is similar to ethnography in the following sense:

1. It is naturalistic

2. It is immersive

3. It is descriptive

4. It is multi-method

5. It is adaptable

Whether you call them "online consumer groups" (Kozinets, 2010) or "online communities" (consumption-unrelated but online sociability based on the exchange of information), the data it provides can shed light on the symbolism, meaning, and consumption patterns of these groups' respective memberships (del Fresno, 2011). Understanding cultural and symbolic information is central to the field of netnography.

In today's world, computers are a vital means of expression and interaction. This is the foundation for a whole way of life and the selection of brands people like. Users also participate in online social

sharing formats such as virtual communities, where they can network and exchange ideas with other users. Researchers may easily collect data from a massive sample size thanks to the openness with which people share their views in this social environment. In addition, the researcher has access to a wide range of resources and ways to record interactions and conduct insightful analysis. One form of netnographic research examines the substance and frequency of online conversations between and among these communities. Virtual Communities is a common name for these online meetups.

LIFESTYLE

Lifestyle is a catch-all term for how people act and behave in general. The way someone spends their money is a reflection of their values, beliefs, mindset, interests, and hobbies as well as their overall outlook on life. As people's discretionary incomes rise, they can afford to indulge in more high-end goods and services, and as a result, they want to improve their standard of living and join the ranks of the elite. One's social class, family, and friends can all have an impact on their way of life. Jewelry, timepieces, cars, clothes, homes, gyms, cookware, artwork, hobbies, and jobs are all examples of the kind of things that can be found in the Lifestyle area.

MARKETING RESEARCH FIELDS

Nearly half of the publications in this study were consumer research studies, while branding studies, general marketing studies, and tourist studies each made up approximately a fifth of the articles reviewed (Table 1). Moreover, it was analyzed to what extent, if any, these netnographic studies in various branches of marketing research used conventional services, a service viewpoint, or neither. Slightly more than half of the research did not take a service viewpoint or was not conducted in a service setting. These studies tended to look at consumer behavior in relation to specific products, brands, or cultural norms. In addition, studies in the tourism, restaurant, healthcare, and financial services sectors accounted for around a quarter of all service sector research. About a sixth of the studies took what we would call a "service perspective," in that they employed service-based theories or ideas like co-creation or co-production.

Table 1: Research areas that focus on netnographic marketing

Field	Service (%)	Services (%)	None (%)	All (%)
		No. papers (n=321)		
Consumer research	23 (7.2)	21 (6.5)	93 (28.9)	137 (42.6)
Branding	14 (4.4)	3 (0.9)	50 (15.6)	67 (20.9)
Marketing (general)	17 (5.3)	11 (3.4)	32 (10.0)	60 (18.7)
Tourism	2 (0.6)	51 (15.9)	4 (1.3)	57 (17.8)
Total	56 (17.5)	86 (26.7)	179 (55.8)	321 (100.0)

Consumer research

Many study in consumer culture and consumer behavior have been investigated through the use of netnography. All types of consumers are more active on the Internet with the advent of netnography by Kozinets (1998) for analyzing the consumer behavior of cultures and communities present on the Internet. As with so many other aspects of modern life, many consumer habits and routines are mirrored in cyberspace. As an illustration, Giesler and Pohlmann (2003) envisioned the file-sharing system Napster.com as a community founded on a culture of sharing music and utilized netnography to explore the meanings and actions around Napster.com. Another example is research into why people put off making purchases they want to make soon, which found that factors including skepticism about online security, high prices, a lack of agency, and a lack of familiarity with the purchasing process all played a role (Negraetal., 2008)

Branding

In addition to traditional consumer surveys, netnography has become an increasingly popular tool for investigating and comprehending phenomena associated with brands. Companies' branding efforts increasingly focus on various internet communities. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, for instance, now play a significant role in modern businesses' brand management efforts (Larocheet al.,2013). The Internet, with its global reach, has also become the primary medium through which consumers share their thoughts, feelings, and stories about brands (Edelman, 2010). So, marketing scholars have utilized netnography to investigate how businesses employ branding online (Tynanet al., 2010; Rosenthal &Brito, 2017) and how customers interact with various brands in the digital space (Colliander and Wien,2013; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014).

Marketing (general)

In addition to consumer research, brand development, and the tourism industry, netnography has been implemented in a number of other marketing contexts. Multiple studies in this overview, for instance, addressed the issue of how businesses handle their marketing budgets and initiatives. For instance, Moraes et al. (2014) looked into how businesses promote their wares on social media platforms. The impact of social media on salespeople's daily routines and interactions with clients and colleagues has also been demonstrated through netnographic research (Rollins et al., 2014). In addition, studies of netnographic marketing frequently focus on the health-care and medical-services industries (e.g. Liang and Scammon, 2011; Keelinget al., 2015). Due to the delicate nature of some health-related topics, netnography provides the option of anonymity. For instance, Langer and Beckman (2005) utilized netnography to learn about clients' perspectives, motivations, and worries in relation to cosmetic surgery.

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Tourism

Within the last decade, a plethora of travel-centric websites and discussion boards have cropped up on the web. As a result, netnography has gained traction among tourism and hospitality marketing academics. For instance, Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2012) used the discussion forum on TripAdvisor (the largest travel site in the world) to inquire into travelers' views on the safety of four different vacation hotspots. The feedback and reviews of past travelers are a gold mine of information for anyone planning their next trip. Therefore, various studies on tourism experiences have found netnography to be a natural methodological choice. Customers' accounts of their travel and tourism experiences have also been gleaned through blogs (Woodside et al., 2007).

KEY FACTORS OF ONLINE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

In order to keep people connected in an online group, these three things are necessary. When it comes to online communities, first and foremost, the relationships between participants are crucial. Another name for this is 'identity' or 'place'. Second, it's the members' shared morals and ideals; third, it's the members' shared sense of obligation to look out for one another as fellow community members.

The method of Netnography has been employed in this research to delve into and make sense of the symbols and meanings. Knowing and remembering the sign system and its meanings is, in fact, useful in its own right. Changes of this magnitude have also occurred in the online lifestyle sectors.

Three lifestyle communities were selected for this study. The websites in question were gaiaonline.com, community.com, sukhduhk.com, and asmallworld.com. The most popular website among them was gaiaonline.com, thus that's the one that won out. There are around 40 new topics of conversation started every day. There are over 350 registered users, with over 295 actively contributing. It also demonstrates that the majority of the community members are good people who are also quite creative. Gaiaonline.com ranks first among these online communities in terms of the amount of fresh topics being discussed there. It makes use of a rudimentary approach to network analysis. In most internet subcultures, the people who are already part of the inner circle hold the most sway over public opinion. The area is also frequented by tourists and minglers. Statistics show that both sexes and trans people are represented among the community's poster population. There are a disproportionate number of 22- to 25-year-olds.

CONCLUSION

In order to provide a full overview and synthesis of the use of netnography in marketing, this study analyzed publications published in the field from 1997 to 2017.

While previous studies on netnography as a research method have focused on the proper application of the method and highlighted Kozinets' (2002, 2006, 2010, 2015) methodological guidelines, the goal of the present study was to create a map of the work that has been done under the label of netnography in the field of marketing and to identify potential avenues for future work in this area among service researchers. This study's results show that netnography is becoming more used in market research, which may be reflective of the heightened online activity of consumers. With more and more of their daily activities taking place online, customers are increasingly interested in being studied by service researchers using netnography. Expect both interest in and demand for netnography among service researchers to rise as the first generation of "digital natives" matures into the consumers of the future. As this research shows, netnography has been used to investigate a wide range of subfields and themes in the field of marketing research. In addition, almost one-sixth of these researches focused on services. Netnography has naturally focused on various facets of consumer behavior and society in the digital realm. The results also demonstrate the variety of applications of netnography by researchers in the field of marketing. This diversity in netnographic research exemplifies the adaptability of this qualitative research strategy, which has many applications for market researchers. In conclusion, it is worth noting that there were some issues with this study. The researcher's bias might still creep in, even though systematic literature reviews are often seen as more objective than traditional literature reviews. For instance, if you searched for "netnography OR netnographic," you might have missed several relevant articles that used synonyms like "digital ethnography" or "virtual ethnography" or "online ethnography" or "cyber-ethnography" instead. More databases may have been searched, increasing the number of potential netnographic marketing studies for evaluation.

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