



A STUDY ON THE DIGITAL PUBLIC RELATIONS OF QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS

(With Special reference to uses of Instagram By Domino India and
McDonalds India during COVID-19)

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ABSTRACT:

The Public Relations Society of America (2012) defined public relations as "a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics". And the emergence of digital and social media provides the advantage to public relations professionals to reach maximum of people in minimum of time.

The research aims to study the tools of digital public relations, to analyze the type and frequency of posts in the Instagram handles of Dominos India and McDonalds India, and to find which brand is having higher engagement and popularity. To fulfill the research objectives the study is based on the descriptive design with qualitative and quantitative approach. The research has used content analysis method with purposive sampling technique to select the food brands (Dominos and McDonalds).

KEY WORDS:

Digital Public Relations, Food Brands, Social Media and Covid 19

INTRODUCTION

The industrialization and liberalization in the world made organizations to work on their public relations effectively. Public relations, as an important element of the marketing communication mix help the corporates to manage their organizations' reputation, image, and crises to maintain the smooth functioning of the organization. Public Relations helps to establish a credible image of the organization and its products, it also supports the other activities and functions of the organization.

The emergence of technology and the world wide web have replaced the Annual reports and news releases, common tools of printed media, with digital tools, it has shifted the public relations process to instant communication. Due to the digitization and introduction of various tools like backlinks, official sites, social media and social media influencers, blogs, vlogs and so on. The organizations are more equipped to connect and share their ideas, views, and pieces of information with their publics around the world. Through digital public relations,

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organizations are able to communicate their publics in a more engaging manner, now they are more responsive towards queries and grievances of customers.

The urbanization and changing lifestyle of people have given a boost to the food industry in India. The attitude of consumer for food and food brands depends on number of attributes like: quality and taste, brand image, and most importantly the experience, which lead them to select or reject some. And that is why food brands specially quick service restaurants need to develop a good marketing as well as public relations strategy. Which can allow them to break the clutter and make their brand identity in the market. The outbreak of covid19 affected the whole world, from health to corporate to food. The businesses started facing decline because of the lack of raw material, manpower, fragmented supply chains, and most importantly the trust among people.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Public relations is “the creating and maintaining good relationships with different publics” by Smith and Zook. Publics mainly consist of various groups such as employees, clients, media, consumers, and regulatory bodies. Among these, customers are the most important public of the organization and who deserve maximum of attention by the organization. Because a satisfied customer can be loyal towards the organization and also can help the organization to have positive word of mouth in market.

“The convergence of Public Relations and the Internet with the potential to transform the way communication experts are reaching to their customers and other publics of the organisation by using social media strategies” by Breakenridge. The usage of online communication has made a great impact on the internal and external communication of the organization. The Internet features have improved communication speed, personalization, interactivity, high reach, budget friendly, efficiency, and measurability, and now it's more attractive than conventional channels of communication. Public Relations officers are using Digital Public Relations tools extensively to reach their stakeholders effectively.

“Online Public Relations is not an alternative to other forms of relationship building, communication, and interaction; it is an extension of what has gone before” by Philips and Yong. In the digital era, public relations goes beyond the standard boundaries. Along with traditional communication, digital platforms such as blogs, social media, online press release, websites, etc has widened the reach of the organization and added a value in their presentation.

“Consumer behaviour at the food market” by Paweł Nowicki, and Tadeusz Sikora, said concluded that the most important factors determining the behavior of buyers in the food market are the sensory characteristics, nutritional value and price, which remains in certain social groups is an important factor in shopping.

“Digital media has changed the face of Public Relations because of its popularity among the consumers and the target audience is the reason for the change because they feel that digital media is more convenient, more interactive and easily accessible medium” Chhibber.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The aim is to fulfill the following objectives:

- To analyze usage of Instagram by Dominos and McDolands in 2020 and 2021,
- To find which brand is having higher engagement and popularity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

To fulfill the research objectives the research has used a descriptive research design with quantitative and qualitative approach. The content analysis research method has been used.

Data: Secondary data from research papers, articles, social media handles of the brands have been used in the research.

Sample: Purposive sampling technique has been used to select the food chain brands Dominos and Mc Dolands. for selecting posts 1 April 2020 to 19 May 2020 and 1 April 2021 to 19 May 2021 timeline has been selected.

DATA ANALYSIS:

Table 1:

Name of the Social Media Handle	Date of Join	Number of Followers
Dominos India	August 13, 2013	345K
Mcdonalds India	September 25, 2013	198k

Note: The table mainly shows the beginning and the popularity of quick service restaurants Dominos and McDolands Instagram handle. Both the handles were started in 2013, but with 345K dominos is having higher number of followers.

Table 2:

Brand Name	Year	Number of Post	Picture	Video	GIF	IGTV
Dominos India	2020	36	22	13	1	0
	2021	42	35	5	2	0
Mcdonalds India	2020	63	54	7	2	0
	2021	38	32	6	0	0

Note: This table highlights the types and frequency of content in the Instagram handles of QSR Dominos and McDonalds. In 2020 the Dominos India was having total 36 posts and in 2021 it has increased to 42 posts, but in 2020 McDonalds India was having 63 posts and in 2021 it has reduced to 38 posts. Among different types of content the brands have used pictures more in their handles, because being a food brand it is easy to appeal their target audience with help of visuals. Dominos India was having 22 and 35 number of posts in 2020 and 2021 and McDonalds India was having 54 and 32. Dominos India has posted 13 and 5 videos in 2020 and 2021, and McDonalds India has posted 7 and 6 in 2020 and 2021.

The Dominos India is also having user generated posts on their handles, it has also communicated about their social activities and covid precaution taken by organisation during first wave of covid 19 in 2020, which has contributed a lot in their organizational reputation. On the other hand, McDonalds have communicated about Covid precautions and their delivery services with some post on their social activities.

Table 3:

Type of Post		Name of The Social Media Handle			
		Dominos		Mcdonalds	
		Like	Comment	Like	Comment
Pictures	Mean	7037.21	116.86	2494.78	76.02
	N	57	57	86	86
	Std. Deviation	11958.551	127.532	3695.290	356.252
Videos	Mean	294259.78	90.72	8354.69	15.77

	N	18	18	13	13
	Std. Deviation	473175.984	103.600	11192.333	25.817
GIF	Mean	78174.00	75.00	4758.50	11.50
	N	3	3	2	2
	Std. Deviation	111189.360	30.348	600.334	10.607

Note: This table is talking about the audience engagement on the content and the popularity of Instagram handle of QSR Dominos India and McDonalds India. The mean value of like and comments on each category of posts of Dominos India is higher than the McDonalds India. The mean value of Likes and comment on the pictures of Dominos India is 7037.21 and 116.86 and the mean value of McDonalds is 2494.78 and 76.02. Similarly in other categories also Dominos India is having higher mean value for Videos and GIF and which says that the Dominos India is working more efficiently with social media handle in creation of organizational reputation and image.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

The emergence of technology and internet has empowered Public Relations professional to perform effectively in their respective fields. Now Public Relations practicers can use various digital PR techniques like, Official Websites, Blogs, Vlogs, Backlinks, Search Engine Optimization, different social media platforms and so on, to communicate their organization. Social media handles which actually helps the organizations to communicate directly with their target market, it also gives an opportunity of two way communication between the organization and its publics, which helps the organization to generate a positive user experience towards their organization and product.

The study's findings show that both brands started their social media handle on Instagram on 2013, but Dominos India is having a higher number of followers 345K than Mcdonalds India. Both the brand's handles have used a higher number of picture based posts in their handles, Dominos India 57 and Mcdonalds 86 followed by videos 18 and 13 and GIF. But the mean value of likes and comments of Dominos India represents its popularity and its audience engagement in the market.

If we will talk about the difference between the post of Dominos India and Mcdonalds India in 2020 and 2021. In 2020 the brands were more concentrated on covid19, like the safety initiatives they are having in their stores, precautionary steps for Covid 19, brands corporate social responsibility activities, etc. But in 2021 brands are not that focused on covid 19 related communication, now they are also focusing on their promotion of foods, offers, customers satisfaction, etc

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