

RESEARCH PROJECT ON
IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR
FOR THE PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF:
DR. WASEEM AHMAD KHAN

SUBMITTED BY:
UJJAWAL SINGH
2018-2021



**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,
GALGOTIAS UNIVERSITY.**

Certificate from Faculty Guide

This is to certify that the project report CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR has been prepared by Mr. UJJAWAL SINGH under my supervision and guidance. The project report is submitted towards the partial fulfillment of 3 year , full time Bachelor of Business Administration.

Name and Signature of Faculty

Date:

DECLARATION

I Ujjawal singh student of School of Business Studies Galgotias University Greater Noida, hereby declare that the project report on **“IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR”** is an original and authenticated work done by me.

I further declare that it has not been submitted elsewhere by any other person in any of the institute for the award of any degree.

MR.Ujjawal singh

18GSOB1010327

TABLE CONTENT

- Declaration

CHAPTER NO	PARTICULAR	PAGE NO
1	INTRODUCTION	5-7
2	OBJECTIVE	8-9
3	LITERATURE REVIEW	10-25
4	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	26-27
5	DATA ANALYSIS	28-41
6	CONCLUSION	42-43
7	QUESTIONNAIRE	44-48
8	BIBLIOGRAPHY	49-50

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Traditional marketing is not dying – it’s dead!” (Zynman 1999)

The emergence of Web 2.0 is one of the most formidable development in the history of commerce. *Social media*, another buzzword that came along with, is an evolution based on the Web 2.0, where not only it encourages user-generated contents, but also extends the focus to the users by allowing them to exhibit contents to share among networks.

This particular technical revolution during the last decade has drastically revolutionized the traditional marketing approaches and brought marketers to a new era. In the new marketing era, the social media has likely to revolutionize the *relationships* marketers have with retailers, channels of distribution, their ultimate consumers, etc. It is an Information Age, and consumers are inundated with overwhelming quantities of information each and every day.

Based on the findings from McKinsey (2011), it has revealed that when companies go about their business and interact with individuals, they are generating a tremendous amount of digital “exhaust data,” i.e., data that are created as a by-product of other activities. Social media sites, smartphones, and other consumer devices have allowed billions of individuals around the world to contribute to the amount of big data available. (McKinsey 2011.)

By looking at the enormous amount of social media campaigns, e-commerce websites, sales emails, forums, etc., it appears that companies of all sizes have been translating their marketing approaches to the Internet because of its *accessibility* to their target audience and the money required to do so. (Chui and Manyika 2012.) By contrast, the traditional advertising approach of mass media communication, for instance newspaper, magazines, and televisions, aims at conveying messages to a broader group of audience in the hope of reaching the few interested ones.

Traditional advertising via mass media is on decline; Sergio Zyman (1999), former Chief Marketing Officer, Coca Cola, believes, “The era of marketing as we have known it is over, dead, kaput – and most marketers don’t realize it...” he further clarifies that technology has given people many more options than they had in the past and has created a *consumer democracy* in which people around the world constantly use social-media platforms to *seek and share information* from discussing consumer products to organizing political movements (see Chui and Manyika 2012).

With more stimuli bombardments, individuals are more cautious and adept in allocating attention to information; thus it is essential for marketers to find the reasons that speak to particular customers’ concerns, and to seek ways to speak to customers *individually*, or in smaller communities (Zyman 1999). Internet offers favorable solutions to marketers these days. Marketing through social media would be an alternative perspective of interfacing with individuals, and yet the most influential applications of social technologies in the global economy are largely untapped (Chui and Manyika 2012).

CHAPTER 2

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze why, when and how social media has impacted on consumer decision making process
- To identify reasons that tempt consumers to purchase online

Consumers and businesses around the globe have been more connected than ever before with the presence of Internet. An average Internet user has 669 social ties (Hampton et al. 2011); Facebook has more than 600 million daily active users, with over 1.5 million business pages (Facebook 2013), and 30 billion pieces of content shared on a monthly basis (McKinsey 2011).

Approximately 500 million Tweets sent per day, at about 600 Tweets per second (Tweeter 2012). LinkedIn has more than 225 million professionals worldwide, including all Fortune 500 companies (LinkedIn 2013). The global average time spent per person on social networking sites is 6.9 hours per month (Delaney and Salminen 2012). Changes in consumer behavior due to social media are one of the most intriguing aspects in the contemporary marketing.

Acknowledging that consumer behavior is a relatively general and broad topic, which it would be challenging for the researcher to gather, inspect and conclude all the necessary data and findings into one research; thus, the researcher has narrowed down the focus in association with the decision making process, which associates with marketing through social media. The objective of the research is to explain *why, when, and how* social media has impacted on consumer decision making process. Besides, perhaps, with this particular perspective the research holds, it can help to identify what are the opportunities and pitfalls companies are facing with this impact on consumers' decision making in order to seize and embrace the possibilities in the new marketing era

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media have changed how buyers and sellers interact, and increased involvement through social media may yield positive results for sales organizations if salespeople utilize it in facilitating their behaviors. (raj agnihotri,2016) The influence of social media on buying behavior can be in any services or products. Quality, brand, advertising or price could effect consumer decision-making.

In 2003, Western Kentucky University used a sample of 249 consumers' purchases to analyze the type of product purchased, and the cost of item. The results of this research present that consumers are buying either inexpensive or expensive items, and are doing so based on recommendations from social media by their contacts or friends on social media (Forbes & Vespoli, 2013).

Marketers could consider that social media does influence buying behavior. According to the recommendations on purchases, 59% of all respondents were using Facebook as their social media tool when they received a product recommendation. Thirty seven percent of all users were using Twitter. From these results, social media has influenced their buying behavior.

The relationship between social media and consumer decision-making present that social media affects advertising attitudes, brand attitudes, and purchasing intentions of consumer. It will not necessarily affect consumer's decision-making, but might possess a mediating effect (Taining, 2012).

Social media can build brand attitudes that affect buying behavior. The good image of brand or product can lead the consumer to make decision on their purchases. When consumer's friend on social media shares or recommends services or products on their social media, it affects brand attitude and influences their decision-making. Yet, advertising on social media, which is provided by commercial sources affect both consumer brand attitudes and purchasing intention (Yang, 2012). From that information, it helps marketers plan their marketing strategies. Many marketers use social media for marketing campaigns. It is the easy way to communicate with consumers; also it is

inexpensive to advertise their brands or services.

Social media is not only for advertising, but it can also be a tool for brands or services to connect with their consumers. Another study shows that social media allows consumers and

prospective consumers to communicate directly to a brand representative.

They have some problems on products or services, consumers could reach the company via social media, which is an easy way to connect and contact with them. Companies are challenged by how they chose to react to comments or responses on social media. Their reactions and responses can build strong brand images and get more consumers to purchase products or services. When a consumer wants to make decision on product, every single detail could be an influence to their decision-making. Consumer motives for engaging in social media provide insights into consumers' activities.

Consumers have three main gratifications or motives for using the Internet as a medium, namely, information, entertainment, and social aspects (Heinonen, 2011). The motivation is in two main groups:

rational motives, such as knowledge-sharing and advocacy, and emotional motives, such as social connection and self-expression (Krishnamurthy & Dou, 2008). Consumers' activities in social media have been found based on consumers' conduct online. Nowadays consumers are using Internet as their tools to achieve their motivations. Their motivation could be connected to their old friends, business, or reviews to support their decision-making. Reviews on social media become second-hand resources to support consumer's decision-making because they want they want value from their dollar.

Social media does not only effect consumers' decision making on products or services, but also

it helps in other fields of studies or careers such as political or juror impartiality and fair trials too. In context of justice system, the easily accessible nature of the Internet has results in jurors having the ability to consult an online social media source in order to

aid their decision-making and deliberations(Simpler, 2012)

Another study examined the effect of social media on a person's decision-making by sharing

health information on news and social media. The study observed the coverage of influenza vaccination on Dutch news sites and social media websites. Dutch news sites and social media websites were promoting the campaigns of influenza vaccine during February, March, and April, 2012. From this study the results showed that news media and social media give different tones in messages. News media reports tended to be more objective and non-judgmental, while social media more critical of behaviors of Internet users and may influence the success of vaccination campaigns and recommendations made by health authorities (Lehmann, Ruitter & Kok, 2013).

CONSUMER

Consumers are *actors* on the marketplace stage. Consumers, in general, can be referred as individuals who purchase or consume products and services; however, in terms of *buyer* and *consumer*, there is a slight difference. *Buyers* are the people who are acting either as ultimate, industrial, or institutional purchasers. The latter one, *consumer*, refers to individuals who purchase for merely *ultimate use*, which is more *restrictive* in terms of meaning (Sternthal and Craig 1982); that is, the *end-users* for whom the products or services are ultimately designed.

CONSUMER DECISION PROCESS

Inevitably, businesses encounter bottlenecks where the message is not reaching their consumers and prospects, with the fact that, at times, consumers and prospects are facing significant blocks in their decision process. If not, each of them should be fully committed, loyal, enthusiastic, repeated consumers; however, this is not the case. Today the *accessibility and transparency* of information has profoundly influenced the decision making process; therefore, it is important to examine what are the hurdles and fiction points that hold prospects becoming consumers, or keeps consumers hesitating from repurchasing. (Silverman 2001.)



The 5-Stage Decision Making Model (Silverman 2001)

Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (EKB) have presents a comprehensive model dealing with *ultimate consumer's behavior* in 1978, which attempts to capture the critical aspects of individuals' consumption behavior. As the figure (Figure 1) shows, the model has interpreted consumer behavior into five stages – 1) *Problem recognition*, 2) *search of information*, 3) *evaluation of alternatives*, 4) *final decision*, and 5) *post purchase decisions*. (Sternthal and Craig 1982).

PROBLEM RECOGNITION

Problem recognition takes place whenever a consumer recognizes a significant difference between the desired and the actual state of affairs, which is in sufficient magnitude to *arouse and activate* the decision process (Solomon, Bamossy and Askegaard 2002), or need triggered by internal or external stimuli. After the realization of a problem, it initiates the search for information before any typical buying action.

When an individual is triggered externally, for instance, a person may see a television advertisement for a vacation, the stimuli triggers thoughts or ideas about the possibility of making a purchase (Kotler and Keller 2009). Nowadays, *the mass media is no longer the only source of information, which may serve as a trigger of a purchase to individuals*. As a result, consumers are exposed to vast amount of information, in order to get through the consumer's *filter*, marketers have to identify a claim or promise about their services or products, which are strongly penetrative.

Search of Information

The final purchase decision *will not be made at once*, even when individuals acknowledge, recognize their problems, and pay attention to the available products; likewise, when prospects have a certain interest in a product or service, they tend to go through the following steps before carrying out any action – *identifying available options, studying information of selected options, and eventually judging* which of these options can most likely deliver the best outcome (Silverman 2001).

The information sources can be divided into two types: *internal and external*. Internal search indicates former information and experience of an individual will result in future behavior that the consumers will be likely to take (Solomon, Bamossy and Askegaard 2002).

EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

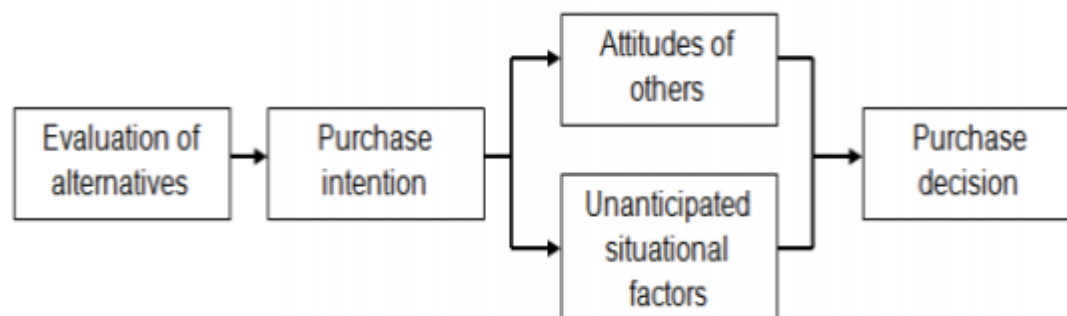
Once an option is identified as the *best/suitable solution* according to the individual's needs after accumulating sufficient information, they undertake alternative evaluation (Sternthal and Craig 1982, 46). Depending on their motives or goals, consumers establish a criteria for evaluating choice alternatives (Sternthal and Craig 1982, 46), for instance which alternative is the simplest to use or to arrange, or what are *other users' experiences*, because there is a need to confirm whether or not the information is reliable and to verify that the product will work out as anticipated.

In order to ensure the outcome within the expectation, individuals require relevance of *experience*. *Direct and indirect experience*, which individuals, serve as indicators during the buying process. Direct experience is not always preferred since individuals are inexperienced towards specific products, which may result using it in an unskilled manner and have negative experience with it. Most often, if negative experiences take place, they are most likely to be costly (both financially and time), risky, or even

damaging to reputation. (Silverman 2001.)

After the assessment of the choice alternatives, consumers *formulate beliefs* regarding the alternatives, which guide their *attitudes, intentions, and ultimately their choice* among alternatives.

Final Decision



Steps between evaluation of alternatives and a purchase decision

Kotler and Keller (2009) have suggested that during the course of evaluation, consumer eventually forms preferences among the brands in the choice desk, however, there are two factors, which can interfere between the purchase intension and purchase decision – attitude of the others and unanticipated situational factors (172).

Attitudes of others is the extent to which another person's negative attitude towards the preferred alternatives or reluctance to meet the terms of supporting the purchase intention, this may result in a readjustment of the consumer's purchase intention (Kotler and Keller 2009,172).

Likewise, Kotler (2009) has also stated that consumers are undoubtedly influenced by the infomediaries who publish their evaluations (e.g. customer reviews on Amazon.com, blogs, bulletin boards, and so on). Unanticipated situational factors refer to those may erupt to alter the purchase intention, for instance, there might come an unexpected purchase that is more urgent compared to the purchase the consumer was firstly stimulated to buy. In other words, preferences and purchase intentions cannot be served as completely reliable predictors of purchase behavior. (Kotler and Keller 2009.)

The stages in the decision process are not followed sequentially, but rather in a *cyclically order*, that is, in reality there are loops, for instance *between information search and evaluation*, consumer learns about new criteria not previously considered (Bettman 1979).

Post Purchase Decision

After the consumption, the consumer then experiences certain levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and evaluates the wisdom of the choice made in selecting the alternative. Two potential outcomes are derived from this phase – satisfaction or dissonance. When consumer experiences dissonance towards the purchase, the choice is 'devaluated' and the consumer begins the process of searching, obtaining information and evaluating other options for future buying decision, in which triggers new behavior. (Sternthal and Craig 1982).

It is a phase when the consumer decides whether or not to move from merely implementing the product to a *full adaption*; that is, whether to use the product repeatedly or repurchase or not. Since consumer always has a choice regarding the products priority, frequency of usage, and new circumstances of new uses.

ATTITUDE

Personal attitude towards products and brands, has been underlined in the buying model, due to the fact that attitudes are closely related to consumers' *information process* in which judgments are presumably based.

There are other factors influencing the consumer buying decisions, yet attitudes regarding the product and brand are powerful predictors of the process and the patterns of exposure to information (Fennis and Stroebe, 2010, 112). Attitudes are learned through past associations/experience, through trials, as well as through information processing. It is composed of three elements – cognitive, affective, and conative. Cognitive refers to the awareness or knowledge, such as, a brand; affective are the positive and negative feelings associated with a certain brand; and conative is the intention to purchase (Smith 1993, 82).

Information Process Theory

For the purpose of this research, information processing theory regarding the consumer choice has denoted how information is preformed, evaluated, and post-evaluated during the course of the deicison process. The framework is interpreted into six dominant components – processing capacity, motivation, attention and perceptual encoding, information acquisition and evaluation, decision processes, and effects of consumption and learning (Bettman 1979).

Exposure

When consumers are exposed to information via mass media, it is considered as a

passive process in respect of information processing. However, since the information is delivered in a faster rate, it tends to decrease consumers' attention and disrupt cognitive elaboration (Moore, Hausknecht, and Thamodaran 1986). Adversely, in situations where consumers typically seek out information initiatives, the perspective in viewing information is considered as an active approach (Sternthal and Craig 1982).

Sliverman (2001) has stated "most prospects are unwilling to take in relatively low priority new knowledge" in other words, information overload makes businesses harder to draw the attention of potential customers and to encode messages in their memories (Shapiro and Varian 1998). Also, buying decisions are often made very quickly, such as consumers are likely to reduce the dimensions they consider during brand choice under the pressure of time (Wright 1974, see Ratneshwar, Mike and Reitingen 1990). At this stage, it is crucial to outbreak the clutter/ noise. Individuals' attention must be drawn to the incoming information (Sliverman 2001, 69), in which attention serves as an essential "tuning" mechanism in the active selection of information for additional processing (Bargh and Pietromonaco 1982; Broadbent 1977; Kahneman 1973; Neisser 1976; see Ratneshwar et al. 1990).

The fact that human beings have a limited capacity for processing information is a very important notion, because it impacts the various components in the decision process; such components as motivation, attention, information search and retrieval, and so on are subjected to the constraints imposed by the processing capacity limitation (Bettman 1979).

Motivation

Bettman (1979) has hypothesized that choices are made to accomplish certain goals or purposes; thus, it is a crucial concept in any theory of consumer behavior (18). Since individuals make choices continually, therefore motivation impacts not only on the direction (affecting choice of one behavior over another) but also on the intensity of behavior (the capacity allocations on a particular activity)

Attention and Perceptual Encoding

Attention and perception are essence elements in explaining, partially, the selection of information to attend to. Once an individual is physically exposed to the presented information, the extent of the information reception depends upon the recipient's **attention** regarding the incoming information (Sterthal and Craig 1982, 88). In the perspective of psychology, attention refers to the amount of mental effort or cognitive capacity allocated by an individual to the stimulus environment or task at hand (Foxall et al.1998, 80). According to Sliverman (2001), in order for the information to be processed, the recipient must pay attention to it; in like manner to selective information exposure, attention is selective. Individuals are highly selective in the kinds of stimuli that they pay attention to – focal attention, and tend to neglect stimuli that are nonfocal (Fennis and Stroebe 2010, 51).

Focal attention is typically divided into two types – voluntary and involuntary (Kahneman 1973). Voluntary allocation of attention is, most often, impelled by the need to attain some goal or is driven by long-standing involvement with the product area (Foxall et al. 1998), for instance when individuals are hungry, they tend to pay attention to cues or seek related information in the environment that signal "food" (Fennis and Stroebe 2010, 51). Since voluntary attention is highly selective, thus it is commonly found marketers devoting vast amount of money and time in reaching involved consumer (Foxall et al. 1998). In contrary, involuntary attention is attracted by environment stimuli (Foxall et al. 1998), such as salience, vividness, and novelty (Fennis and Stroebe 2010, 51).

Many researchers (Krugman 1965; McLaughlin 1965; Posner 1973) have studied about the phenomenon of learning about the environment (see Bettman 1979), it can be either with voluntary attention involvement or with little

Many researchers (Krugman 1965; McLaughlin 1965; Posner 1973) have studied about the phenomenon of learning about the environment (see Bettman 1979), it can be either with voluntary attention involvement or with little conscious allocation of attention, however all findings refers to the basic idea that learning about the environment is closely tied to current goal (Bettman 1979).

Information Acquisition and Evaluation

Howard and Ostlund (1973) have stated that often times the consumers' media selections of the information source are determinants of the information to which the consumers will be exposed (see in Healey 1974); that is, in the situation, consumers may have their preferences regarding which online communities or blogs or so on whenever they seek for information.

Sternthal and Craig (1982, 83) have also indicated that consumers' information exposure is highly selective during the initial stage of information acquisition. When information is sought externally – for instance from friends, packages, advertising, and so forth, the actual external information found would significantly influence the future course of the search in which it may involve changing the goal, and redirecting attention and perceptual encoding.

Organizing the acquired information entails the combination of the bits of information that the consumer has acquired (Sternthal and Craig 1982, 89). During this stage, consumer relates incoming information to his or her existing structure of beliefs and values (Bettman 1979). Many studies (Bettman 1979;

DECISION PROCESSES

In general, decision process takes place throughout the course of selecting information and comparing purchase alternatives. Bettman (1979) has indicated that the decision process does not follow a sequential flow, but rather a cycling procedure; that is, if conflict arouses, attention and perceptual encoding may be redirected regarding the solution of the conflict, eventually it may result in a change of decision choice.

EFFECTS OF CONSUMPTION AND LEARNING

The consumption of the purchased products will most likely serve as a source of information to the individual on future purchase decisions. Depending upon how consumers interpret the outcomes they experienced, different inferences may

developed accordingly regarding the cause of the outcome, which can result in differing actions on future purchases (Bettman 1979).

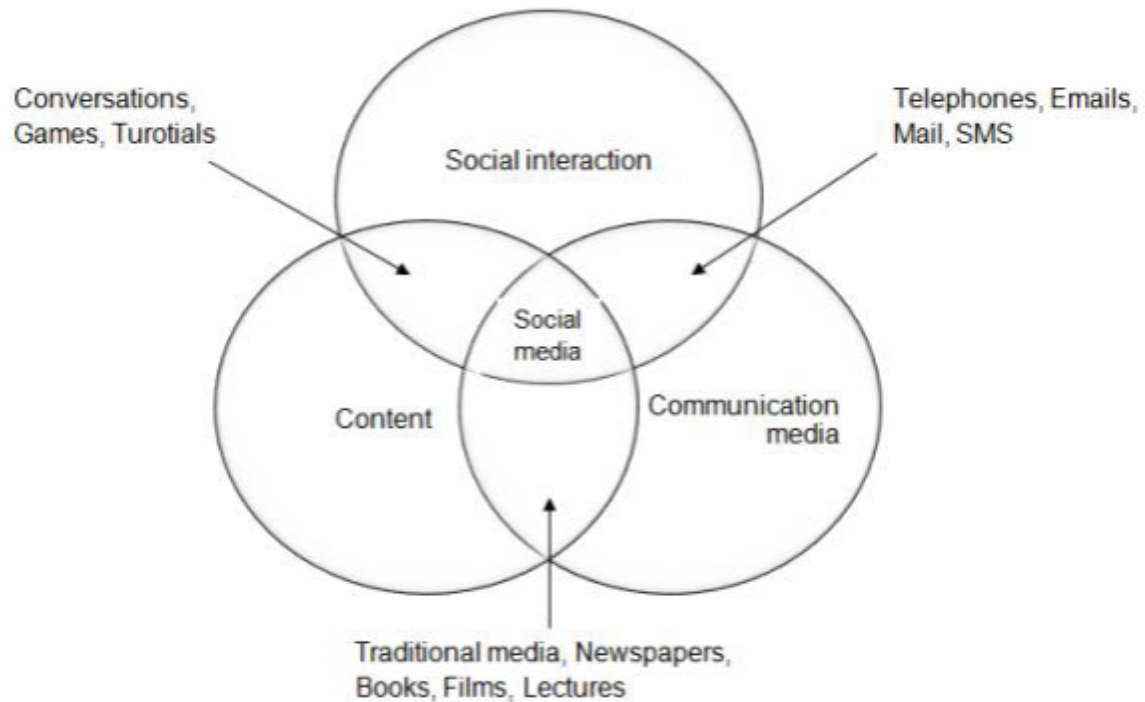
SOCIAL MEDIA

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA

Many researchers have come across the interchangeable usage of the terms “social media” and “Web2.0” (Safko and Brake 2009, 6; Kaplan and Haenlein 2009, 60); however, Safko and Brake (2009, 6) have stated out that these two terms are closely related yet not exactly synonymous, and they differ in terms of usage. For the purpose of this research, and in order to avoid any confusion, the above mentioned terms will be defined, despite the fact that social media is the central gravity of the research.

In regards of the term Web 2.0, Tim O'Reilly, the founder of O'Reilly media, has coined that "Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the Internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform." He has further provided a general business aspect in relations of Web 2.0 as the “harnessing of collective intelligence”, in which Web 2.0 provides platforms and fills the Web with user-generated content where all individuals – the former audience are able to take part in instead of important decisions made by a few people. (O'Reilly 2006.) Alternatively, Web 2.0 is a platform whereby content and applications are continuously modified and exchanged by all users in participatory and collaborative manner, and no longer merely created and published by individuals (Kaplan and Haenlein 2009).

There are still many ongoing debates and discussions regarding social media’s universal definition; as social media has been transforming and merging into the evolving development of New Media (Solis 2010). Regardless of what the standardized definition per se would be, many of the existing studies and articles have stated out the common core purpose of social media.



Social media components (Dann and Dann 2011, 345)

Dann and Dann (2011) have demonstrated how social media is formed based upon the interconnected elements – *social interaction, content, and communication media*. Social media has created a new landscape in supporting the socialization of information (Solis 2007), as a result it has facilitated and enhanced communication flow by making it easier and to more people, and to spread useful information with potentially vast online audiences (Smith and Zook 2011, 10), in which the conversation may be taken place on media locally but lead to a global impact.

Safko and Brake (2009, 6) have supported the concept proposed by Kaplan and Haenlein (2009), as they have referred social media to “activities, practices, and

behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media”. Nonetheless, social media expedites the flow of communication by encouraging contributions and feedback from everyone who is interested, and it is a two-way conversation when comparing to the traditional media because social media outlets are open up to feedback and participation (Mayfield 2008).

TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

In the discussion regarding different categories of social media, five distinct types of social media outlets are focused on – 1) social networking sites, 2) social news, 3) media sharing, 4) blogs, and 5) microblogging. Each of these social media platforms has provided unique features and experiences to individuals and entities, for instance marketers and consumers, in the social media sphere.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are platforms where individuals are able to connect with others, for instance Facebook and MySpace. Social networking sites, as Weinberg (2009, 149) states, “are generic terms for sites that are used to connect users with similar backgrounds and interests”. These platforms, generally, have few common elements across most of them – (1) users are able to create interactive and customized profiles, either a public or a semi-public, within a bounded system, (2) a list of suggested “friends” with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd and Ellison 2007, 211).

To consumers, they are the outlets, which present wealth opportunities for establishing a closer relationship with the brand via several functions – fan pages, plug-in applications, and groups.

Recently, Empathica have conducted a survey about the U.S. consumers’ usage of social media to make shopping decisions. The survey population is more than 6,500 U.S. consumers, of these consumers, over half (55 percent) have “Liked” a brand’s Facebook

page, and 73 per cent have claimed that their choice of recent store visit is influenced by a social networking site (Dugan 2012).

Social News and Bookmarking Sites

Social News sites and *Social Bookmarking sites*, for instance Digg, Reddit, and Scoop.it, are fairly similar, and are very much in the trend of online community. Social News enables users not only to be in control of their news streams, but also allows individuals to “submit and vote on content around the Web” but the core value of the latter one is to allow users “to collect and interesting links they have discovers and may wish to revisit.” (Zarrella 2010, 103.)

MEDIA-SHARING SITES

Media-Sharing sites are outlets where individuals can upload, store, and share their multimedia files, for instance photos, videos, and music, with other users. There are myriad opportunities through the engagement to these websites, because these certain platforms within the social media segment has always been a stronghold to online societies, as they provide users opportunities to create their own podcasts with affordable technology and to propaganda their identical “channels” via subscriptions. One of the major elements of these media-sharing sites has to be highlighted is the *tag*. “A tag is a word assigned to a piece of content that helps describe it”, which means that businesses have to acknowledge the importance of the search words on the search engines.

BLOGS

A **blog** is an online journal which is as refer to a type of content management system (CMS), typically maintained by individuals or groups, and featured commentary and ideas for a larger group of audience (Safko and Brake 2009). Blogs create good hubs for other social media marketing tools (videos, hyperlinks, pictures, and so on), because they can be integrated into the platforms and posts; besides, blog software provides a variety of social features such as comments, blogrolls, trackbacks, and subscriptions

(Zarella 2010, 9). On the other hand, Weber (2009) has pointed due to the fact that blogs allow everyone to publish and to join multithreaded conversations online, in which some of the bloggers have no editorial restraints and have access to the entire Web; as a result, their posts can impact personal, products, or brand reputation harmfully.

MICROBLOGGING

Micro blogging is a real-time information network, which shares similarity to blogging, yet it limits the size (number of words) of each post and encourages a faster mode of communication. Micro blogging allows users to spread their short-texted messages via instant messages, mobile phones, e-mails, or the Web. For instance, Twitter, launched in 2006, is one of the primal and leading micro blogs that currently has over 140 million users as of 2012 and handles over 1.6 billion search queries per day (Twitter 2011).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING

Social Media Marketing is an umbrella term that can be described as the utilization of social media platforms as marketing tools. According to Weinberg (2009), he refers social media marketing as leveraging the 'social' through the 'media' to 'market' businesses' constituents; in other words, it is a process in empowering individuals to promote their websites, products, and/or services through online social channels, to interact with and to tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional advertising channels.

It is no longer a striking fact that most of the advertisements via mass media are not as efficient as in the past, because by advertising through the mass, the message is generally reaching far more people than the potential customer intended to reach (Weber 2009; Weinberg 2009). Social web is where people with a common interest can gather to share thoughts, comments, and ideas; hence, instead of continuing as broadcasters, marketers should become aggregators of customer communities.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

TYPES OF RESEARCH DESIGN

This study will adopt descriptive research design and will reveal the impact of social media on consumer decision making process. This research will be quantitative in nature.

SAMPLING PLAN

-sampling method

Multistage sampling

Purposive sampling

Convenience sampling

-sample size

Researcher will be collecting data from 108 respondents.

TOOL OF DATA COLLECTION

The tool for primary collection data is self-administered questionnaire.

SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data are those collected specifically by, or for, the data users by Questionnaire Method.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data are those that have been collected by other organizations, such as government agencies, newspapers and magazines, etc.

AREA OF THE STUDY

The study will be conducted in areas of Delhi and NCR.

UNIVERSE

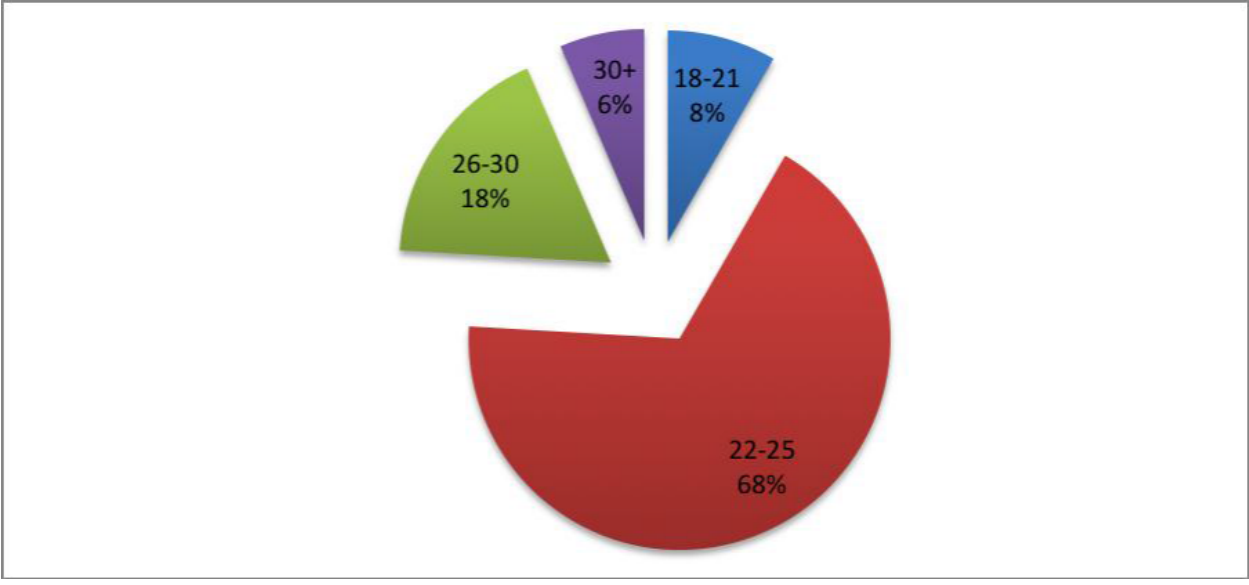
People who are using social media for purchasing.

DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The researcher will collect the data by using the tools and the data will be coded , tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical techniques.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS



By asking these two general questions – gender and age may help to identify whether social media has impacted the decision making processes differently based on these two segmentations. From the received 108 questionnaires, 62 (%) of the respondents were female, and 38 (%) were male. Four different age groups are covered by collected data, they are 18 – 21 years old (8%), 22 – 25 years old (68%), 26 – 30 years old (18%), and 30 years old or more (6%). Since the collected data covers a wide range of demographic, therefore the following analysis is carried out in examining the general consumers behavior in Turku, instead of a particular segmentation.

Questions in this section were aimed to find out how individuals are exposed to information on social media platforms in comparison to mass media channels .

EXPOSURE

With the third question, it was identified that, among 4 age groups, social networking sites are being used most (98%), and microblogging is being used least (11%); the rest were: blogs/ forums with 32 (%), social news with 12 (%), and photos and videos sharing with 63 (%). As the responses are illustrated in the following chart, it shows that the pattern of using different social media platforms among different age groups are similar that social networking sites are mostly used on daily basis.

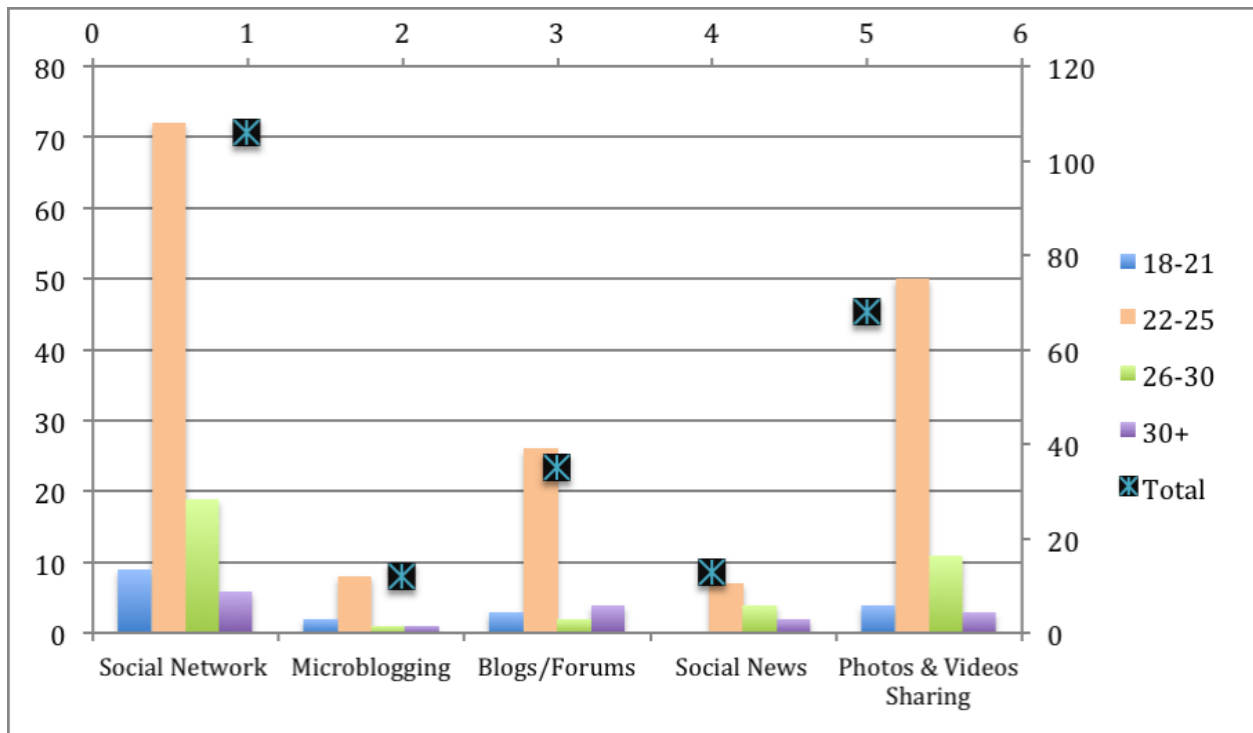


fig2. Types of social media sites used on daily basis

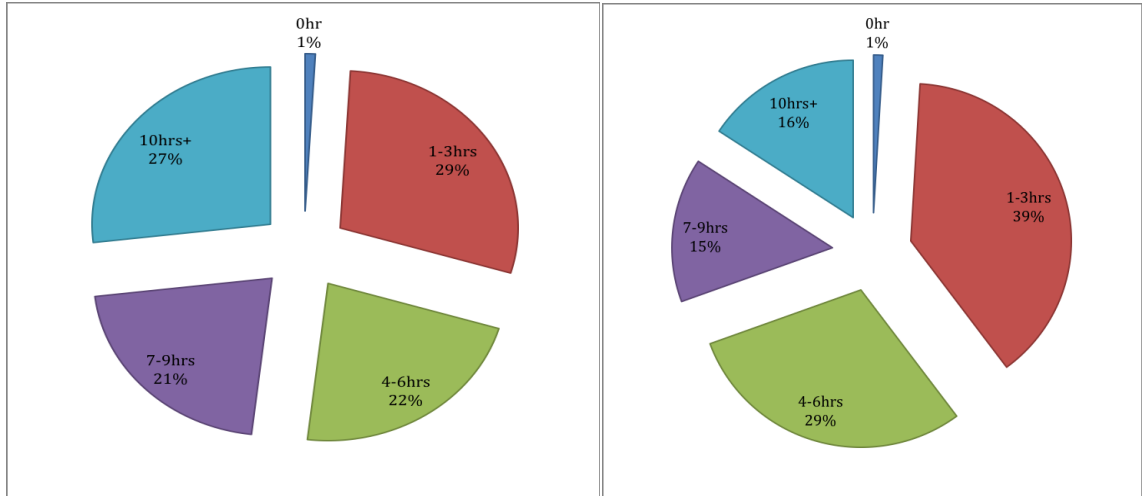


Fig.3 Time spent on social media per week fig.4 Time spent on mass media per week

In the following questions (4 & 5), respondents were asked how much time they spend on social media platforms and mass media channels per week. The reason is to examine whether the time of exposure to information via social media platforms comparing to mass media channels may imply to one of the reason that advertising via mass media may not be as effective as it was before (see Smith and Zook 2011, 282). Figure 3 and 4, above, have demonstrated that only 16 (%) of respondents tend to spend 10 hours or more per week on mass media whereas 27(%) of respondents spend on social media platforms. As it is seen, there is a sudden drop in between 4-6 hours (30%) and 7-9 hours (15%) usage in mass media channels per week. Despite the age groups, in combination of the answers, an individual spends an average of 6.2 hours on social media sites per week.

Also, with question 6, 58 (%) of the respondents had shown agreement that they are able to seek out information initiatively with the social media sites. According to Sternthal and Craig (1982, 83), consumers in this case are considered as an active information process; whereas in the passive process, information is delivered in a faster rate, it tends to decrease consumers' attention and disrupt cognitive elaboration (Moore, Hausknecht, and Thamodaran 1986).

ATTITUDE

Besides taking the type, duration, and method of exposure into consideration, attitude of individuals is one of the critical factor in associate with the buying model. In order to understand better the factors which cause attitude, and how attitudes affects and altered during the course of decision making process, several questions were asked. Answers were combined into the fig.5

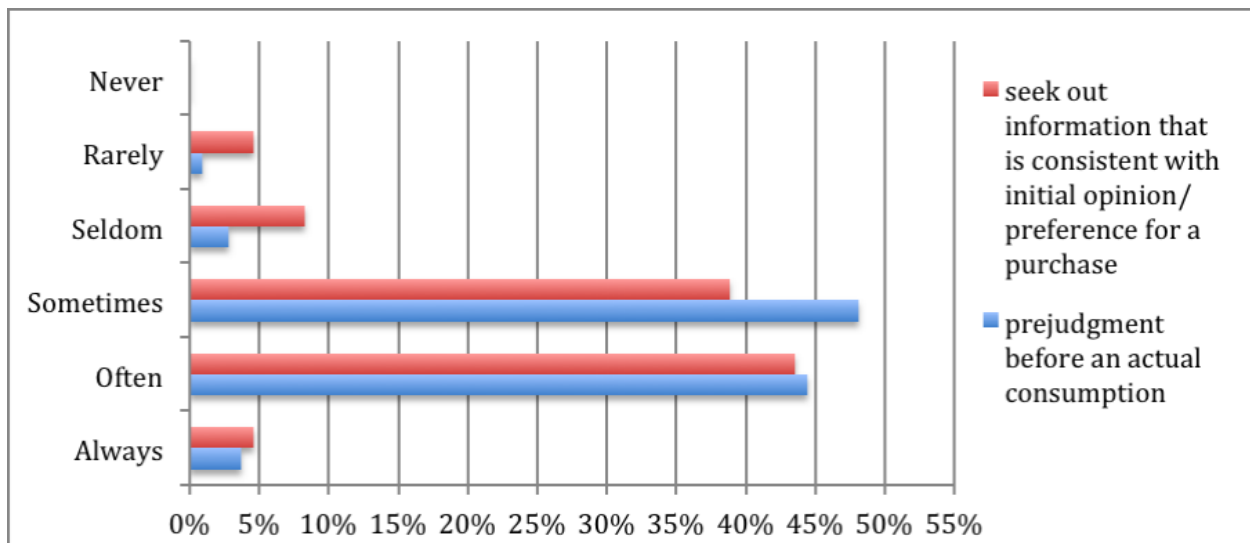


Fig.4 Prejudgment and initial search of information

With 48 (%), 44 (%), and 4 (%) of the respondents claimed that they sometimes, often, or always have prejudgment towards products or services before any actual consumption. An actual consumption in this case refers as trying or using the particular product or service. As a matter of fact, the responses regarding question 11, "Do you tend to seek out information that **is consistent with your initial opinion/preference for a purchase**", has shown similar results as the tendency of having prejudgment before a consumption. Prejudgment leads to the types of information which individuals would seek for. As Sternthal and Craig (1982) have stated that individuals' initial opinions (attitudes) are important determinants of the information they will seek out; it provides the fact that information exposure is *selective*.

There are many factors causing the individuals' attitudes regarding particular products and services, thus the selection of cause in question 10 was narrowed down into 6 factors, both including direct and indirect experiences. Figure 6, below, indicates that besides "information from mass media" (28%), the rest of the factors are fairly spreaded.

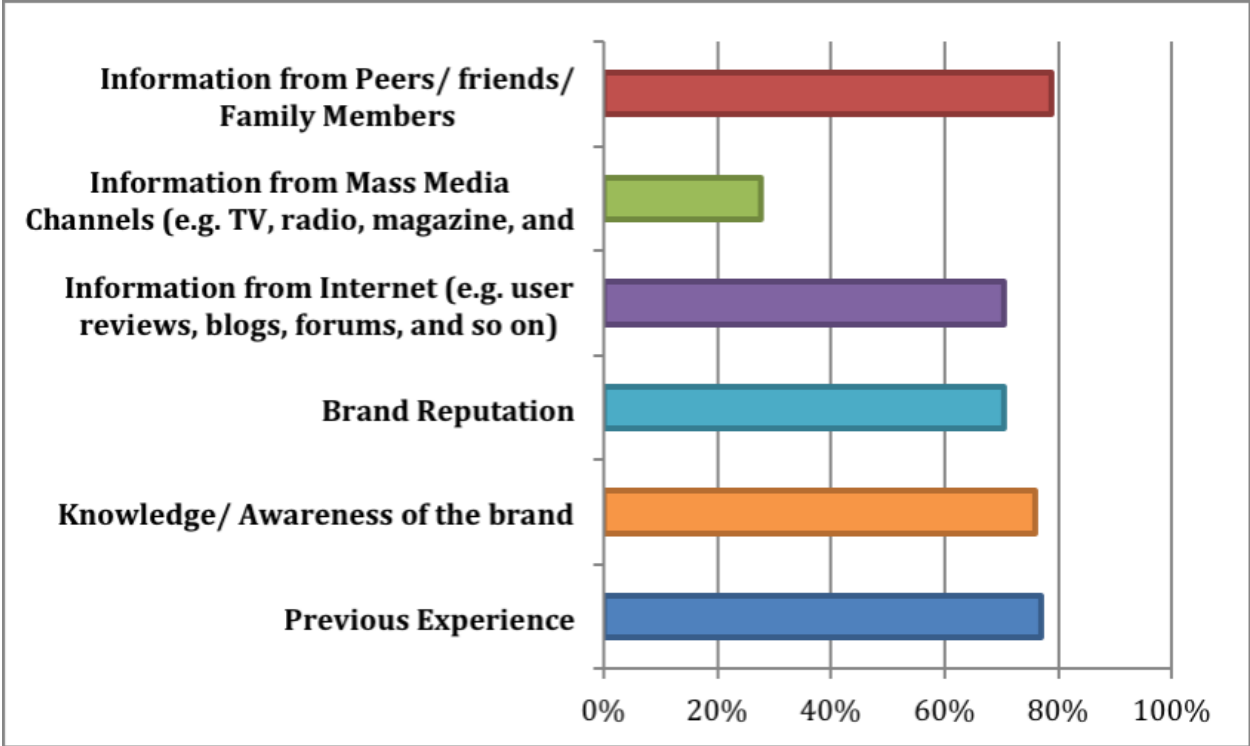


Fig.6 Factors causing prejudgments

Among the list of factors, 79 (%) of respondents expressed that information from peers, friends, and family members are the cause of their prejudgment, in which the credibility of source of information is high. In contrary to the source of information from mass media, 70 (%) of the respondents claimed that information from the internet (such as user reviews, blogposts, forums, and so on) are one of the factors that influenced their attitudes towards a product or service. The reasons of causing this phenomenon are discussed in the upcoming sections in associating with the relevant questions.

PROBLEM RECOGNITION

In the stage of problem recognition, an individual may be triggered by an internal or external stimuli; that is, in this research, social media sites and mass media channels are considered as the external stimuli. By looking at the gathered data from the survey, there were 32 (%) and 35 (%) of respondents were not sure and doubted about social media as a trigger to purchase; whereas, 32 (%) of respondents believed it is a trigger to perform a purchase. On the other hand, the responses regarding the attractiveness of advertisements on mass media channels were proportionally spread, with a 45 (%) no, and a 55 (%) yes. Besides, advertisements on television are still considered as the most attention drawing approach, in which 39 (%) of the respondents pointed out.

As aforementioned in the social media marketing chapter, although advertising through mass media does not consider as powerful as it used to be, they still have a certain influence in triggering or drawing consumers' attention. Adversely, the data cannot tell if social media has a great effect in triggering individuals to realize their problems or needs which would lead to a purchase

SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES

As the data shows, social media allows individuals to seek out information actively (see question 6) instead of receiving information passively; therefore, it is important to identify how information is accessed with the mentioned platforms, types of social media platforms are used during the search of information, as well as how it can be beneficial to companies at this stage via the available outlets.

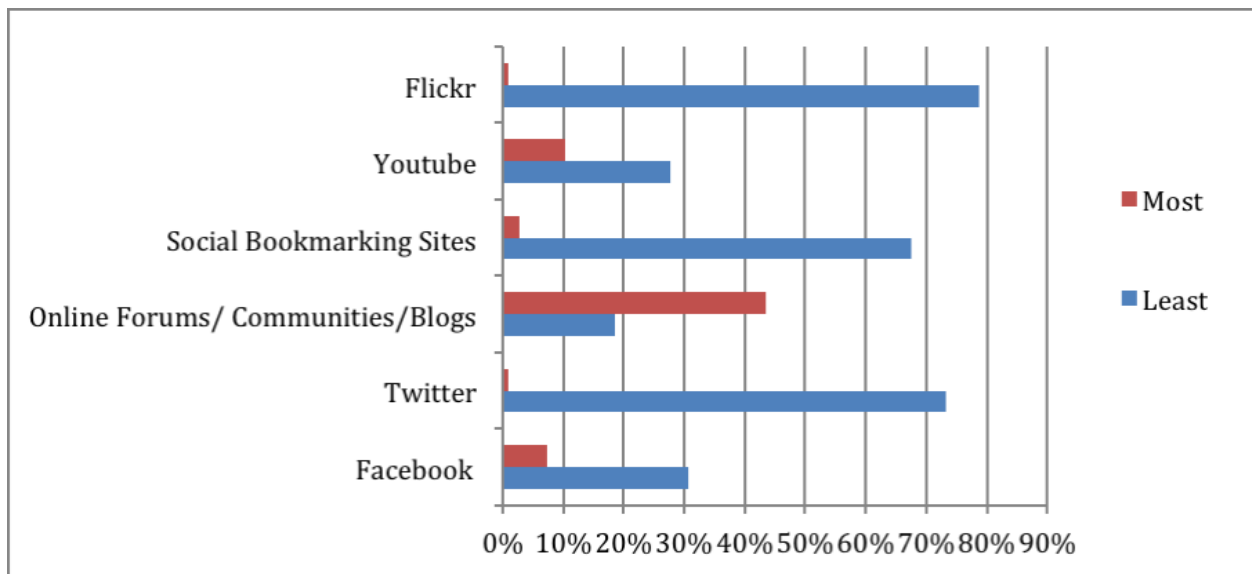


Fig. 7 The source of information on social media used most and least

A majority of respondents (in total 72%) has indicated that information searching is easier through social media comparing to mass media, which has proven that social media has created a new landscape in supporting the socialization of information (Solis 2007). However, information searching does not necessarily mean the search is relating to products or services. Therefore, in responding to this question, respondents were asked about the frequency of performing a search via the social media before a purchase; as a result, “sometimes” was chosen the most (37%) in comparing to “often”

(25%) and “always” (8%). This indicates that there are certain reasons which keep individuals in performing a search via social media before a purchase, such as the credibility of the source, the available time, the available information, etc.

Respondents were inquired the source of information on social media which they use before a purchase base on the frequency, figure 17. Among the 5 categories of social media, “online forums/ communities/ blogs” (44%) is the source of information being used most before a purchase; whereas most of the respondents (78%) have used the photo sharing platforms least. As it is shown, the researcher has split the category of video and photo sharing platforms into two – video sharing, and photo sharing, because the researcher has believed that a video sharing platform (Youtube) will have a relatively greater impact to individuals as a source of product/service information comparing to a photo sharing site (Flickr).

Due to the decline in the effectiveness in traditional mass media, it is noticeable that new products, services, or brands are oftentimes neglected and are not able to overcome consumers’ *filter*. However, social media at this point helps these young products, services, or brands to deliver their presence to individuals. 68(%) of the respondents has expressed that new products, services, and brands are able to draw attention via social media sites comparing to mass media; whereas there was only 9 (%) of respondents who has taken an opposite stand.

EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Age Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18-21	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%
22-25	12%	58%	19%	10%	1%
26-30	0%	58%	16%	21%	5%
30+	14%	14%	57%	14%	0%

Fig. 8 Influence of social media on age groups to try new products/ services/ brands

As in previous section, the findings have shown that social media has provided a more powerful platforms where new products, services, or even new brands to be noticed in the marketplace. However, this does not imply that social media could influence

consumers to actually try these products and services. In the gathered data, it reflects that individuals (64 %) are indeed influenced to try new products, services, or brands because of the user-generated contents (blogposts, Facebook status, user reviews, and so on) available on the social media. According to the data, it reveals that contents available on the social media have a different degree of effect on different age groups, which is presented in the following table.

In the theoretical part, it is mentioned that the determinants in the impact of indirect experience, in which affects an individual's attitude formation as well as the decision of the final choice, are *the expertise and the credibility* of the source of information (Fazio and Zanna 1981). Since both mass media and social media have provided certain amount of information to consumers, and the critical determinant which differ them is the credibility of them. Thus, respondents were inquired to mention their beliefs in how credible and reputable the information on social media is comparing to those on mass media. 58 (%) of respondents believes that contents available on social media have a higher credibility than thos on mass media.

FINAL DECISION

According to five-stages buying model and information processing theory, they both have indicated that stages in decision process are rather in a cyclic order, due to perceptual interpretation of stimuli and attention are continually interacting. In other words, consumers may learn about the purchase environment while the course of information, for instance to reduce the risks of making an uncertainty, negative or unsatisfactory purchase, which leads to a change in their purchase preference, establish new criteria not previouslt considered, and eventually the search of information repeats again.

The data in Figures 18 and 19 have revealed that the percentage of respondents that has reflected "sometimes", "often", and "always" as the frequency of pursuing an initial preference before a purchase is 48 (%), 44 (%), and 4 (%); whereas, 57 (%) of the respondents sometimes encounter changes in their initial preference after searching

relevant information on social media. 55 (%) of the respondents have stated that they are likely to change their attitudes towards a certain brand or product or service after reading positive contents on social media sites, yet there are 36 (%) of the respondents expressed uncertainty regarding the issue.

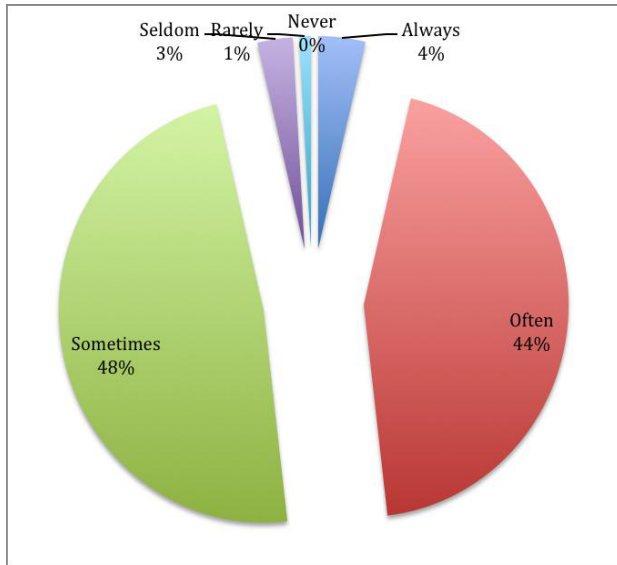


Fig.9 Initial preference/ attitude before a purchase

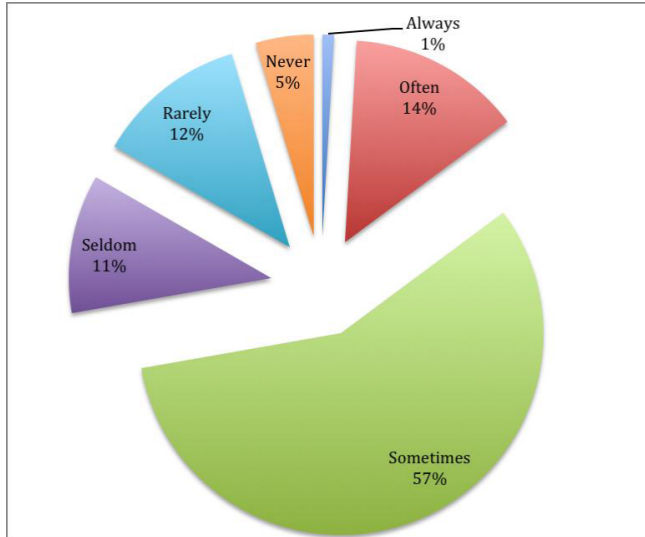


Fig.10 Change of initial preference after a search of information on social media

From the above, one can observe that information available on social media has a certain degree of influence on consumer behavior; that is, a change in attitude (positive or negative) can be made prior to purchase. Likewise, companies can utilize the

platforms on social media to interact with consumers in order to strive for building up a better and stronger relationship. Also, as it is shown, social media can serve as a "second chance" for companies to project their products, services, or brands even if consumers did not consider initially.

Post-purchase Evaluation

As the below Figure 20 shows, when respondents were asked if they were likely to share their opinions (comments, reviews, or related articles etc.) to peers or friends via social media after a purchase, only 4 (%) and 8 (%) of the respondents have shown that they "always" or "often share their comments regarding the purchase".

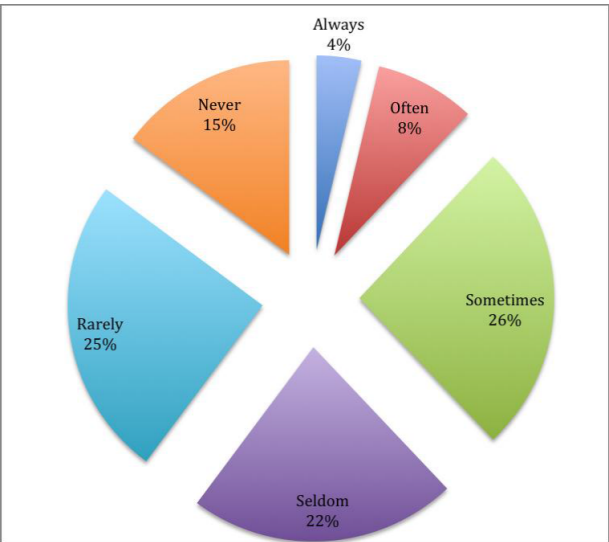


Fig.11 Tendency in passing of information on social media after a purchase

Then, the following questions were asked "do you agree that social media has provided an effective and powerful platform for *consumers to communicate with each other and with the companies*", and the answers were within expectation that majority of the respondents (78 %) have agreed or strongly agreed upon the statement, while 3 (%) of them have shown disagreement. However, when they were inquired *wether they feel encouraged to voice their opinion after a purchase via social media platforms or not*, the data has revealed that many of the respondents do not feel the encouragement even if there is available platforms on social media.

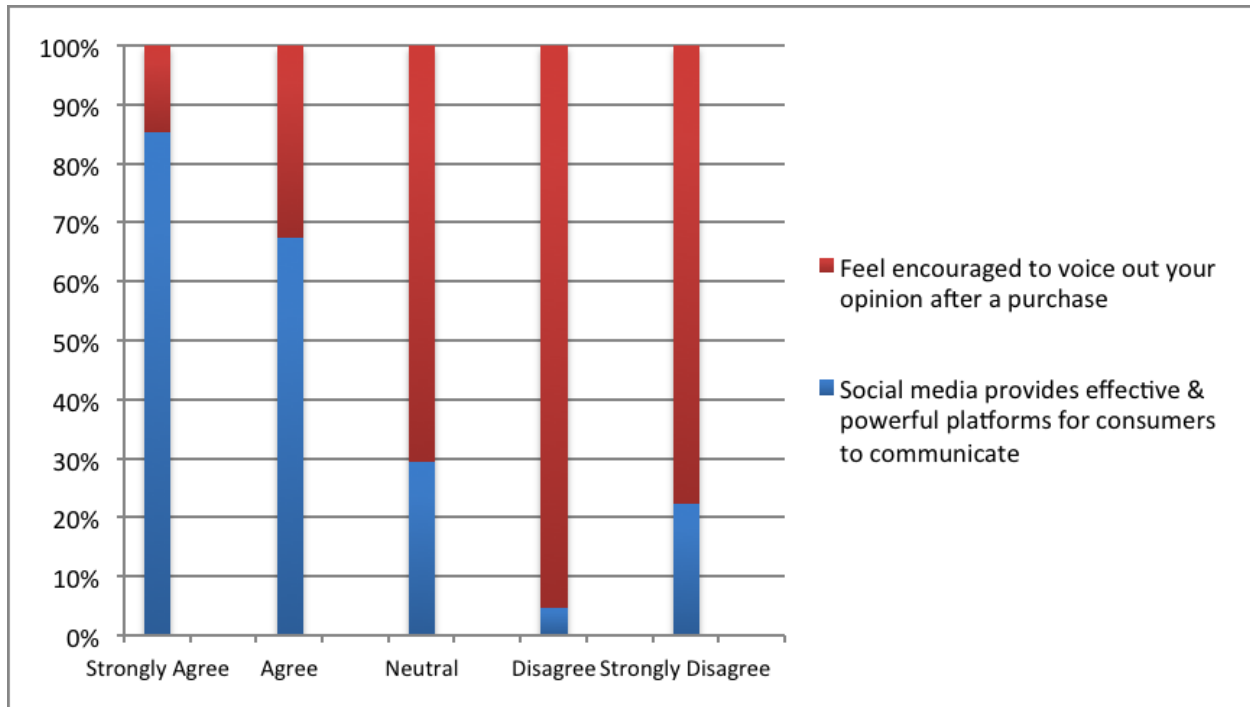


Fig. 12 Available platforms vs. Willingness to voice out

As Figure 12 has shown the comparison in percentage between two variables – available of effective communication platforms and whether individuals are encouraged or not. It is observed that even social media has provided an effective communication platform to consumers, yet individuals do not feel encouraged to join the conversation. In this circumstance, as a purchase validation tool (Evans 2008), social media cannot be used to the fullest in promoting consumers to “talk” and linking these “talks” back to the *consideration stage* of the decision process among the respondents.

Big Picture of the Entire Process

As a consumer, the researcher has always realized that social media has affected her decision making processes without paying much attention to it; thus, the last two questions were based on the researcher’s personal interest that to find out whether individuals are well-aware of the **degree of impact** that social media has brought to the stages involved in their buying decision, and their opinions regarding the **biggest difference** in making a buying decision between using information from the social media and information from the mass media, the findings are demonstrated in below table.

Response	Exposure	Problem Recognition	Search for the alternatives	Evaluation of information	Post-purchase Evaluation
Most affected	21%	11%	17%	13%	11%
Affected	31%	34%	34%	38%	27%
Neutral/I don't know	23%	24%	27%	27%	27%
Less Affected	15%	19%	12%	15%	13%
Least Affected	10%	11%	11%	7%	22%

Fig13. Impact on stages in decision making process

After comprehending the results, one can notice that the stage of exposure is the most affected while the stage of problem recognition is less affected; in which corresponding to the previous question of asking whether respondents are triggered to make a purchase because of social media and the result has shown that only 32 (%) of the respondents have answered "yes".

Last but not least, respondents were given a chance to express their opinions freely regarding the usage of information from social media and those delivered through mass media before making a purchase decision, which researcher believes it as a profound factor of differing social media from mass media and eventually has created a new landscape in today’s marketing.

“When using social media, you can actually search for the aspects that interest you”
Many of the respondents have stated that social media not only enables them to obtain *independent, reliable, detailed, and a great range* of information about the products and services, but also empowers them to control their information in the own interest, for instance the ability *to skip advertisements on social media sites*. The provision of information is made by *different entities/ a third*

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The objective of the research was to to explain *why, when, and how* social media has impacted on consumer decision making process. Research questions were designed to narrow down the subject and to help the researcher to identify the explanations of the issue

the five-stage decision making model has provided a systematic approach in outlining the general stages that consumers engage in all purchase, while the information process theory addresses an in-depth perspective of how information is in used of throughout the course of decision making.

The aforementioned theories and the data analysis of the research have both proven that, no matter it is in association with social media or mass media, consumers are highly selective in attending, process, and selecting the information before a purchase takes place. Information exposure is highly selective in the initial stage of information, because consumers have the selections of information source, in which determinates the type of information that consumer will be exposed to. To be noted, personal attitude is a crucial factor which underlines during the course of information acquisition and evaluation. As a result, not ony judgments regarding products or services are presumably based, but also it is an vital determinant of the information consumers will seek out, in which it eventually affects the extent of the information reception.

At the essence, all platforms available on social media have offered a two-way communication flow, which is highlighted theoretically and practically. Consequesntly, this principle feature of social media has created a new landscape in supporting the socialization of information, and has forced marketers to give up what they old mindset in dealing with mass media marketing. As the collected feedbacks from the individuals,

it has emphasized that, in particular with social media, consumers are able to access to customer experiences and word of mouth, in which supasses the marketing and advertising mumbo-jumbo or polished slogans.

In other words, marketing via social media is more about creating high-quality contents that are consumer relevant (Drury 2008), instead of being a brash product placement. Moreover, marketing through social media focuses on building relationships between consumers and companies. The research findings have shown that the position of the consumer in the new marketing approach is the centralized gravity, because consumers are empowered. As many respondents have reflected that social media has provided a more effective platforms to communicate with one another and with the company.

CHAPTER 7

QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Age

- Under 18
- 18-21
- 22-25
- 26-30
- 30+
- 40+
- 50+

2) Gender

- Female
- Male

EXPOSURE

3) Which of the following social media sites you are using on a daily basis?
(Please select all the platforms you are using)

- Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook)
- Microblogging (e.g. Twitter)
- Blogs/ Forums
- Social Bookmarking Sites/ Social News (e.g. Reddit, Digg)
- Photo & Video Sharing Sites (e.g. Flickr, Youtube)

4) What is the time (approx.) spent by you on social media sites per week ?

- 0 hour
- 1-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- 10 hours or more

5) What is the time time (approx.) spent on the mass media (TV, radio, magazine, newspaper and so on) per week?

- 0 hour
- 1-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-9 hours
- 10 hours or more

6) Do you think that with the social media sites, you are able to fetch products/services information actively?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7) Do you have pre conceived notion towards a particular product and/or service **before an actual consumption?**

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom

- o Rarely
- o Never

ATTITUDE

8) Which of the following factors are the cause of your pre conceived ?
(You may select more than one answer)

- o Previous experience
- o Knowledge or awareness of the brand
- o Brand reputation
- o Information from the internet (e.g. user reviews, blogs, forums, and so on)
- o Information from the mass media (e.g. TV, radio, magazine, and so on)
- o Information from peers, friends, or family members

9) How often you tend to fetch the information that is consistent with your initial opinion/preference for a purchase?

- o Always
- o Often
- o Sometimes
- o Seldom
- o Rarely
- o Never

10) Does social media triggers you to purchase a product/service?

- o Yes
- o No
- o Not sure

11) Do you think advertisements on mass media are attractive?

- o Yes
- o No

12) Which of the following mass media channels you find most attractive?

- o TV

- o Radio
- o Newspaper
- o Magazine

SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES

13) Do you agree that information searching is easier via social media comparing to mass media (e.g. TV, radio, newspaper, and so on)?

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

14) How often you search for related information on social media before a purchase?

- o Always
- o Often
- o Sometimes
- o Seldom
- o Rarely
- o Never

15) Rank on a scale of 1 to 5 for the source of information on social media you use before a purchase. **1 being least, 5 being most**

1	2	3	4	5
Facebook				
Twitter				
Online Forums/ Communities/Blogs				
Social Bookmarking Sites (e.g. Digg)				
Youtube				
Flickr				

16) Advertisements/blog posts/ FB pages/user reviews on social media influence you to try new brands/products/services?

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

17) Social media has provided more effective platforms to new products/services/brands to draw consumers' attention than mass media channels?

- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

CHAPTER 8

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- www.google.com
- <https://www.simplilearn.com/real-impact-social-media-article>
- https://scholar.google.co.in/scholar?q=impact+of+social+media+towards+consumer+behavior&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholar
- <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2501/IJMR-2014-025>
- <https://www.feedough.com/what-is-consumer-behaviour-ultimate-guide/>.

Thank you

