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## A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE PURCHASE DECISION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KOZHIKODE DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

*The use of social media is growing rapidly. For marketing professionals, social media is a new outlet that can potentially be used to help increase the interest in a product or service. In this paper, we report, analyze and interpret the results of a survey that asked several questions concerning the relationship between social media use and the overall impact social-media marketing has on purchase behavior. In addition to demographics, key questions included the membership status in several social-media sites and the frequency of visit to these sites as well as the frequency with which selected opinions were expressed during these visits. Our analysis provides preliminary statistical evidence to help evaluate the impact of social-media usage on customer purchase. This has implications for customer lifetime value (CLV) considerations, as well as related interest for advertisers deciding whether investments in social-media are cost effective and if so, which ones?*

### KEYWORDS

social media, consumer, buying decision, communication, word of mouth (WOM).

### INTRODUCTION

The advent of social media has grown tremendously today. It's the only media which does not have any 'hartsals' or 'lock outs' and practically no vacation. The advent of this media led to the growth of mobile users in Kerala. Thus, Kerala is one of the supreme market for Handset and technological devises producers at recent times. Most of the people are buying product or services through social media. It plays a significant role to influence the purchase decision of people in Kerala. This study mainly focusing to the buying decision of college students regards to social media.

The major intention of social media is to communicate. Hence, it can be said that social media is not a new or alien concept. People were communicating even before communication tools were invented. Discussions have always existed but the speed to which the connections happened changed eventually which gave rise to social media platforms. Traditionally these discussions used to spread through word of mouth (WOM). Social media has recently become part of mainstream culture and business world where people have started using digital technologies for networking, socializing, information gathering and spreading. Social media, in one form, or another has been around since the 1970's. Although the look and feel has changed greatly since the early days, the communication concept remains the same. Today technology allows for a greater interaction and real-time communication but similar to its roots, social media allows individuals to broadcast to the masses.

According to internet world stats (2011), once in the last 11 years Internet users have grown up from 360 million in 2000 to 2267 million in 2011. Moreover, focusing India alone, it has 122 million internet users in 2013, which was 5 million in 2000, against a population of 1189 million. There are 45 million Face book users registered as on March 31, 2012. It shows an internet penetration of 10.2%. Latest trend noticed these days is that people are asking each other for their Face book IDs rather than noting down cell numbers. This shows the intensity of people for using social media websites. These days, there are social and user-generated sites for just about every activity one can imagine. There are social shopping sites, social financial planning sites, websites for getting reviews for book, movie, or an applications , sites to share your goals and meet like-minded people, sites to plan your travels and share them with others, and sites to help you make decisions on just about anything. Hence, this enormous number of internet and social media users in the world and in India has raised the importance and interest on the topic.

Across networks, a good or bad experience will be shared, potentially on a huge scale, Between 7,00,000 and 1.3 million blog posts are made daily and, according to Google, a new blog post is being created every second of every day (James, 2009). This new environment has fundamentally changed the relationship between the brand and the consumer. Concerning this changing relationship between brand and consumer, this study is about how social media influences consumers.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social media basically is a new age of technology that includes various online tools that enable people communicate easily through internet to share information and resources like words, pictures, videos and audios etc. These new trends and changed face of communication among consumers have given rise to new kind of opportunities for organizations to understand their customers and even employees, connecting them and linking them to create a social business. Companies have never before had the opportunity to talk to millions of customers, send out messages, get fast feedback, and experiment with offers at relatively low costs. In addition, never before have millions of consumers had the ability to talk to each other, criticizing or recommending products without knowledge or input from a company. However, Social Media influence the buying behavior of people. Especially college students, those who made purchase decision while using various social media sites. The study aims at understanding the usual habit of college students towards social media and to identify the most preferred social media to influence purchase decision. Companies have started using social media to influence the youth knowing that purchasing decision of youth is greatly influenced by it. The study analyses the usage pattern and reliability of social media which they rely on it.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To Know the usual habit of college students towards social media
2. To identify the most preferred social media to influence purchase decision
3. To know the usage pattern and reasons why the youth purchase products and services using information obtained on social media platform



**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY****SAMPLING DESIGN AND SAMPLE SIZE**

The study adopts a stratified random sampling method for sample selection. The Calicut district were selected for this study, there are five government arts and science colleges in district. From each college twenty students were selected at random by way of simple random sampling method. The sample size is restricted to 100 students from five colleges.

**TOOLS OF THE STUDY AND LIMITATIONS**

Tools that are to be used for analysis are Percentage Analysis, Chi-square analysis/test, Correlation analysis and Likert scale analysis. As the time given for the study was less, extensive the data collection was not possible in depth. There is chance of bias since the respondents were unwilling to give the correct details. The data was collected during the busy schedule of time.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary 7, the term social media refers to the forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. Social Advertising Bureau (SAB), New York, in 2009 released standard definitions of social media and its metrics to bring consistency to the measurement of social media campaigns. According to the report Social media sites are characterized by the inherent functionality that facilitates the sharing of information between users within a defined network. Fred cavazza (2008) published a social media landscape, where he has explained social media as places, tools, services, allowing individuals to express themselves in order to meet and share. Brian Solis (2008) introduced – “The Conversation Prism” with Jesse Thomas of JESS3, to create a new graphic that helps chart online conversation between the people that populate communities as well as the networks that connect the social web. The conversatioOn prism is made free to use and share by the inventors, they feel it is their contribution to a new era of media education literacy. Chan, A. (2008) 32 published a white paper on – Social Media Personality Types – A view from social interaction Design. According to author, individual exhibit psychological consistency and behaviours that can be characterized and observed online. The benefit of this approach is a better understanding of user psychology, an appreciation of the user’s behavior as an expression of motives, deep perspective on mediated social interaction, communication, actions and behaviors. A study, by Iyenger, Han and Gupta (2009) – Do friends influences purchases in social network published by Harvard Business School, showed that there is a significant and positive impact on the purchase probability of a user influenced by friends purchases on social network. Users who have limited connection to other members are not influenced by friends purchases. Stileman (2011) conducted a study for his MA dissertation – To what extent has social media changed the relationship between brand and consumer. At Bucks New University, United Kingdom. The author has explained the effect of social media on the relation ship between brand and consumer. According to him \_ The aim of advertising is still the same; the environment in which it operates has changed. People now have the opportunity to create and share their own brand related content. This shows to have a direct impact on brand affinity and even sales as people tend to trust people.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

For the purpose of collecting primary data 100 respondents were taken, using structured questionnaire. It contains the details of the respondents regarding age, discipline of study, interest and appeal towards advertisement etc.

**GENDER**

Table 1 describes the gender wise distribution of the respondents selected for the study. Gender is classified as male and female.

**TABLE 1: GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Gender	No of respondents	Percentage
Male	65	65.00
Female	35	35.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Primary data

It is found from table 1 that 65(65%) of the total respondents are males and 35 (35%) are females. It is concluded that among the total respondents selected for the study, majority (65%) are females.

**AGE**

Table 2 represents the age wise distribution of the respondents selected for the study. Age is classified as 15-20, 21-25, 26-30, above 30

**TABLE 2: AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Age(in years)	No. of respondents	Percentage
15-20	56	56.00
21-25	36	36.00
26-30	8	8.00
above 30	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary data

It is found from the table 2 that 56(56%) of the total respondents age are between 15-20, (36%) respondents are between 21-25. 26-30 age group peoples are 8(8%). There will be no respondents above 30 years.

**DISCIPLINE OF STUDY OF RESPONDENTS**

Table 3 describes the Discipline of study of the respondents selected for the study. Study Discipline classified as Graduation and Post-Graduation.

**TABLE 3: STUDY WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Discipline	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Graduation (Arts)	40	24	64	64.00
Post-Graduation (Arts)	20	16	36	36.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary data

It's found from table 3 that 64(64%) of the respondents are graduation students, 36(36%) of the respondents are post-graduation students. From the graduation students 37.5% are female, 62.5% are male. From the post-graduation 44.44% are female and 55.55% are male.

**USE OF MEDIA TO CONNECT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

Table 4 describes the use of media to connect with family and friends. It includes all types of Medias which are used to connect family and friends.

**TABLE 4: USE OF MEDIA TO CONNECT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

Used or Not	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Yes	60	36	96	96.00
No	0	4	4	4.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary data

The table shows that 96% of the respondents are users of social media to get along with their family and friends. Only 4% are not using social media to connect family and friends. Male respondents are more than female respondents.

**NUMBER OF HOURS SPEND DAILY**

Table 5 describes the number of hours spend daily by college students.

**TABLE 5: NUMBER OF HOURS SPEND DAILY**

Hours spend	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	40	25	65	65.00
Between 1-2	16	11	27	27.00
More than 2	5	3	8	8.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is clear that majority of the sample respondents uses social media for less than an hour per day. Out of which 40 respondents are male and 25 are female. 27% uses media for 1-2 hours and 8% for more than 2 hours. Male candidate dominates in all 3 categories.

**USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN INFORMATION TOOL FOR PURCHASING**

Table 6 describes the use of social media as an information tool for purchasing

**TABLE 6: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN INFORMATION TOOL FOR PURCHASING**

Used or Not	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Yes	43	20	63	63.00
No	21	16	37	37.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary data

The table shows that majority of the respondents opined that they consider the use of social media as an information tool for making purchase. They include 62% of the total number of respondents. The rest, 38% do not prefer social media for making purchase decision.

**TYPE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USED BY RESPONDENTS**

Table 7 describes the type of social media used by respondents

**TABLE 7: TYPE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USED BY RESPONDENTS**

Social Media	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Website	24	14	38	38.00
Blog and forums	14	8	22	22.00
Facebook	10	18	28	28.00
You Tube	8	0	8	8.00
WhatsApp	0	0	0	-
Google plus	0	0	0	-
Twitter	4	0	4	4.00
Pinterest	0	0	0	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary data

From the table it is clear that websites, social media site like facebook, blogs and forums...etc directs people in making social media referrals. Respondents are of an opinion that WhatsApp, Google plus, Pinterest...etc publishes no ads and do not influence them in making purchase decision.

**MONEY SPEND FOR MAKING PURCHASES**

Table 8 describes the money spend by respondents for making purchases

**TABLE 8: MONEY SPEND FOR MAKING PURCHASES**

Amount	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
<1000	36	20	56	56.00
1000-5000	18	14	32	32.00
>5000	6	6	12	12.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary data

The table shows that majority of the respondents ie 56% spend around less than 1000 for making their online purchases. 32% spend up to 1000-5000 for purchases. Only 12% make purchases for above 5000 rupees.

USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Table 9 describes the comments on the usage of social media by respondents

TABLE 9: TABLE SHOWING COMMENTS ON THE USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree/Nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(a) Made purchases through online contacts	-	14(14%)	34(34%)	30(30%)	22(22%)
(b) Availability of favorite brands on social media	-	10(10%)	36(36%)	22(22%)	32(32%)
(c) Experts provide Pre-launch reviews for a product	32(32%)	14(14%)	10(10%)	16(16%)	28(28%)
(d) Latest information about new releases from favorite brands	52(52%)	14(14%)	8(8%)	22(22%)	4(4%)
(e) Social media provides alternative in buying a product	24(24%)	6(6%)	12(12%)	52(52%)	6(6%)

From the table it is clear that, 34 respondents are neither agree nor disagree in sharing experience of interacting while purchasing a product with his or her online contacts. It is in the same case of availability of favorite brands, it is near 36(36%). 28 respondents are strongly that they follow experts who provide pre-launch reviews for a product. 52 of the respondents do not like to hear the latest information about new releases from their favorite brands. 52% are agree with social media provides alternative in buying a product.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

1. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

**Hypothesis 0:** There is no significant relationship between educational qualification and use of social media as an information tool for purchase.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is significant relationship between educational qualification and use of social media as an information tool for purchase.

Chi square test is used to test the hypothesis. Details of the test of hypothesis are as follows.

(a) Level of significance = .05

(b) Test statistics: Chi-square

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum(O-E)^2}{E}$$

(c) Test criterion : Reject Ho if  $\chi^2 > 3.841$  with degrees of freedom 1\*

(d) Calculation

CONTINGENCY TABLE

Yes	No	Total
43	21	64
20	16	36
63	37	100

(e) Calculated value of  $\chi^2 = 0.01336$

\*Degree of freedom = (r-1) (c-1) = 1

O	E	(O-E)2/E
43	40.32	0.178
20	22.68	0.316
21	23.68	0.303
16	13.32	0.539
	$\chi^2$	1.336

(f) Inference

Since table value is more than calculated value, hence Ho is accepted which means there is no significant relationship between educational qualification and use of social media as information tool for purchase.

2. RELATION BETWEEN GENDER AND MONEY SPEND FOR PURCHASE

**Hypothesis 0:** There is no significant difference between male and female respondents and money spend for making purchases

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a significant difference between male and female respondents and money spend for making purchases

Chi square test is used to test the hypothesis. Details of the test of hypothesis are as follows.

(a) Level of significance = .05

(b) Test statistics: Chi-square

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum(O-E)^2}{E}$$

(c) Test criterion : Reject Ho if  $\chi^2 > 3.841$  with degrees of freedom 1\*

(d) Calculation

CONTINGENCY TABLE

Male	Female	Total
36	20	56
24	20	44
60	40	100

(e) Calculated value of  $\chi^2 = 0.00973$

\*Degree of freedom = (r-1) (c-1) = 1

O	E	(O-E)2/E
36	33.6	0.171
24	26.4	0.218
20	22.4	0.257
20	17.6	0.327
	$\chi^2$	0.973

(f) Inference

Since table value is more than calculated value, hence Ho is accepted which means there is no significant difference between male and female respondents and money spend for making purchases.

CORRELATION

Correlation is an analysis of the association between two or more variables.

Variable 1- Number of hours(respondent) $\Sigma$

Variable 2- Money spend (respondent)

$$\text{Correlation} = \frac{n\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

X	Y	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>	XY
36	36	1296	1296	1296
24	20	576	400	480
18	18	324	324	324
12	14	144	196	168
6	6	36	36	36
4	6	24	36	24
<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2400</b>	<b>2328</b>	<b>2328</b>

Calculated value = 0.97

(f) Inference

It indicates there is high positive correlation between variables

## FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

More than 95% of the respondents are users of social media to get along with their family and friends. Majority respondents are regular users of social media. They use around an hour per day through this media. Majority of the respondents( i.e. 63%) opined that they consider the use of social media as an information tool for making purchases. Around 50% of the respondents are states that social media site like Facebook, blogs and forums..etc. directs people in making social media referrals. More than 56% of the respondents are spend around less than 1000 for making their online purchases. 32% spend up to 5000 for purchases. More than one fourth of the respondents are agree that the product reviews from their friends on the social media are helpful to them in making purchase online. The respondents make a neutral response that it is easier to compare products using social media than in-store shopping. From the chi-square analysis it is found that there is no significant relationship between educational qualification and use of social media as an information tool for purchase. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents and money spend for making purchases.

Students and youth are more affected by the social media advertisements so positive and ethical advertisement should be provided through the media. Trust is an important factor influence the sales, so social media advertisement should be more reliable and ethical. Preloaded advertisements should be made avoidable at any point of time. Efficiency of low and regulations regards social media advertisement in India must be increase. Government should provide more awareness about low or regulations to control unnecessary social media advertisement in India.

## CONCLUSION

The research deals with a survey on the usage of the social media networking in the domain of youth. This study has proven that there is an increasing trend in the usage of social media among the youth. The platform of social media had undergone a substantial change in the past 20 years and is still at the stage of growth. Social media is all about answering the basic human question on how we can help one another. That basic notion of communication will prosper and should remain the focus as marketers learn to navigate the social media world. In conclusion, marketers are encouraged to keep the lines of communication open with consumers in order to create real value for their customers. There was a time in 60s and 70s when the main target audience of advertisers were house-wives but this gave way to youth being the target of the advertisement. The focus then shifted to children, which changed to students and youngsters. Social media plays an important role in the present advertisement era. It has a great on purchase decision of youth.

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