



## A study on the influence of social media on the purchase behaviour of college students with special reference to Gwalior city

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### Abstract

Social media have become one of the most powerful platforms today that exudes the power to influence decisions of consumers in all walks of life. In our country it is the younger generation which has vigorously embraced the social media and it reflects in the way they use it and have become used to it. The same has provided with a pleasant opportunity to the marketers, who incessantly keep searching for those factors and variables which may have any impact upon the decision making process of young consumers, so that they can work out on providing better offers and services to the target market. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore and describe the social media use by youngsters and its impact upon their buying behaviour. The results may provide insight to the advertisers and marketers towards their investment decisions on social media platforms.

**Keywords:** social media, purchase behaviour, student purchase behaviour

### Introduction

Social media has become a popular means of interaction among young generation, in which they create, share, and exchange their views, feelings and expressions in virtual communities and networks. Social media allows its users to create and consume the content that is discussed, modified and shared within a matter of time all across the world.

Social media is a new avatar of technology that includes various digital tools which enable people communicate and share their mind easily through internet. These new trends have changed the face of communication among consumers and thus have given rise to new type of opportunities to the marketers and advertisers, utilizing which they could understand their customers and connect them to create a business on different avenues. A recent report published at emarketers.com exhibited following different activities committed on social media, that have great impact upon the shopping behaviour of digital buyers.

#### Social Media Activities that Influence Their Digital Shopping Behavior According to Digital Buyers Worldwide, Sep 2015

% of respondents



Note: n=22,618 ages 18+; among respondents who conduct each activity on social media

Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), "They Say They Want a Revolution: Total Retail 2016," Feb 29, 2016

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In the past, the marketing people have never had got the opportunity to connect with or address to millions of customers and deal with them in real time that too at relatively low costs. At the same time consumers also have never met with an opportunity to interact and get feedback or reviews about product usage with the help of hundreds of unknown consumers. Such a huge power the social media has that could exert influence on the buying behaviour of people. This study aims to explore and describe the social media usage habit of college students and to identify the most preferred social media which influences their purchase decision.

### Literature Review

Boyd and Ellison (2007) <sup>[1]</sup> reported that the top ten social networking sites developed with the passage of time, and its number of users increases from 46.8 million to 68.8 million. This rating reveals the important information about how new generation interacts with each other. Hensel and Deis (2010) <sup>[6]</sup> are of view that marketers should consider positively the use of social media to influence the consumer behavior. There are benefits, drawbacks, and challenges associated with any social media strategy, and these must be addressed before a specific social media strategy is implemented. Businesses need to assist in facilitating the social media inputs and discussions. In addition, social media strategies should also be used to track a business presence online, and to make sure that clients are not degrading the branding value. Chung and Austria (2010) <sup>[2]</sup> have conducted a study to determine the factors related with social media gratification and attitude toward social media marketing messages. The results of the study show that attitude toward social media marketing messages are strongly related to social media usage gratifications such as interaction and information, but not entertainment gratification. Diffley and Kearns (2011) <sup>[4]</sup>

studied focused groups of different age groups for their perception about social networking sites. They suggest that companies must seek to integrate advertisements and engage consumers rather than disturbing on their privacy or irritate customers. If a company can engage consumers, they will choose to listen to the messages that are being told and potentially pass these messages on to others. The potential of social networking sites to be utilized as an effective marketing tool is in involving consumers to participate in marketing on social networking sites. A different approach is required by companies that “pull consumers in rather than push” marketing messages onto them. 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) [5]; 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) [3]. Changes in consumer behavior due to social media are one of the most important aspects in the marketing.

**Research Methodology**

For purpose of conducting the research work, Descriptive research design is adopted. With the help of a structured questionnaire, a survey was conducted among the students from different graduate and post graduate institutions of Gwalior city to obtain the responses of college going students. A sample size of 50 was undertaken to collect the response using Judgment sampling method.

**Data Analysis**

**Hypotheses**

**H0:** There is no significant difference between male and female students with respect to purchase made through social media.

**H0:** There is no significant difference among students having different educational qualification with respect to purchase made through social media.

**H0:** There is no significant difference among students having different economic background with respect to purchase made through social media.

**Since the dependent variable is Nominal in nature, Chi square test is being used for data analysis.**

**Relation between Gender and Social media purchase**

Using Chi square test of independence, we obtain following result.

**Table 1**

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.366 <sup>a</sup>	1	.124		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	1.566	1	.211		
Likelihood Ratio	2.398	1	.121		
Fisher's Exact Test				.158	.105
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.319	1	.128		
N of Valid Cases	50				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.68.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Source: Author’s compilation

**Result**

A Chi-square test for independence indicated no significant

association between gender and social media purchase,  $\chi^2 (1, n=50) = 1.566, p=0.211$ .

**Relation between Educational qualification and Social media purchase**

**Table 2**

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.469 <sup>a</sup>	1	.226		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.858	1	.354		
Likelihood Ratio	1.480	1	.224		
Fisher's Exact Test				.264	.177
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.439	1	.230		
N of Valid Cases	50				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.12.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Source: Author’s compilation

**Result**

A Chi-square test for independence indicated no significant

association between educational qualification and social media purchase,  $\chi^2 (1, n=50) = 0.858, p=0.354$ .

**Relation between Economic Background and Social media purchase****Table 3**

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.411 <sup>a</sup>	1	.011		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	5.048	1	.025		
Likelihood Ratio	6.548	1	.010		
Fisher's Exact Test				.022	.012
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.283	1	.012		
N of Valid Cases	50				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.56.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

*Source:* Author's compilation

**Result**

A Chi-square test for independence indicated a significant association between economic background and social media purchase,  $\chi^2 (1, n=50) = 5.048, p=0.025$ .

**Result and Discussion**

1. The analysis shows no significant relationship between purchase made through social media and gender of population. In male population 46.4% respondents made purchases influenced by social media, whereas in females this figure came out to be 68.2%. The result exhibits the fact that social media has almost similar influence on purchase behaviour across the gender.
2. Among the students, the purchase behaviour influenced through social media is not a consequence of the level of qualification they possess. This fact is substantiated by the figures obtained during analysis. It shows that the 48.1% undergraduate students and 65.2% post graduate students favour social media while making purchases.
3. The social media usage for purchasing shows a significant relationship with the economic background of students. The analysis shows that only 37.5% of students coming from families having annual income of upto 4 lakhs use the social media for their purchase, whereas 73.1% students from family income of above 4 lakhs annually, make use of social media.

**Conclusion**

The present research work was undertaken to explore influence of social media on the purchase behaviour of college students in Gwalior city. It was found that the students were indeed using social media for decision making during their purchase process. However the impact of social media was different on students coming from different economic backgrounds. The students from high family income background were more used of referring to social media as compared to those coming from lower income background. The significant difference in purchase behaviour was not found among students having different qualification or gender. Therefore we may conclude that the social media had a uniform degree of influence over male and female students from graduate or post graduate courses. However this influence varies with the economic background of students.

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