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Impact of Facebook on the Buying Behaviour of Students

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Abstract: *This study assessed the impact of Facebook advertisement on buying behaviour of students. The study used to collect data through questionnaires based survey. 475 college students use Facebook for so many reasons. These include keeping in touch with friends, sharing photos, keeping in touch with family, and entertainment, among others. The collected data were analyzed through chi-square analysis. Results indicated that Facebook advertisement have significant effects on the buying behaviour of the students. Facebook emerged as the preferred site followed by Twitter, while LinkedIn was the least popular site among this group. Overall, ease of use and potential for eclectic tasks are qualities that garnered Facebook most preferred status as a social networking site.*

Keywords: *Facebook Advertisement, buying behaviour, social networking site, Twitter, entertainment.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Facebook facilitates global connectivity and sharing of ideas and experiences. It is a social media that is “web-based which brings different people together on a virtual platform and ensures a deeper social interaction, stronger community and implementation of projects” (Brown, 2009). According to Kahraman (2010), Facebook is “the online platform that people use to share their ideas, experiences, and perspectives and communicate with each other”. Millions of people are using Facebook daily. Statistic provides information on the most popular networks worldwide as of August 2015; ranked by number of active accounts. Market leader Facebook was the first social network to surpass 1 billion registered accounts. Extensive use of Facebook around the globe has created a new and important advertising media, used by businesses to reach their prospective customers. This is probably because Facebook allows businesses to target specific customers and promote their product or service through effective advertisements. As Vahl (2011) argues, Facebook is facilitating the manufacturers and service providers to reach customers of specific age group and interest.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As a concept of research, Facebook has gained much importance among researchers. Preyal Desai, et al (2012), conducted a study on, the effect of Facebook on the purchasing behaviour of the youth. The study concluded that, Facebook advertisement was more effective. Bellarmine Ezumah (2013) examined the, college students’ use of social media, and found that the, ease of use and potential for eclectic tasks were qualities that garnered Facebook the most preferred status as a social networking site. Nima Barhemmati and Azhar Ahmad (2014) examined the Effect of Social Network Marketing on consumer purchase behaviour through customer engagement. A quantitative survey was conducted among 50 respondents. The results showed positive relationships between customer engagement of social networking and their purchase behavior.

Existing evidences vouch for the fact that Social Networking Websites, particularly Facebook have become a source of viral marketing. This has become possible because of the revolutions initiated by the development of IT sector, which now almost rules the world. Connectivity has become cheaper and quicker. The new applications of information sharing that come into usage facilitate sharing of opinions in the form of text, pictures and videos. Several million people all over the world have become now closer to each other than ever before. Social networking website has in fact redefined the meaning of life and

shapes the dimension of life one should lead. Facebook, one such social networking website is the most widely used site and the users are on the increase. Young and the old, men and women are members in the Facebook networking site. Especially, the Facebook has a remarkable attraction towards the youth, who use it very extensively. Being so, it becomes imperative to explore to what extent Facebook influences the decision styles of the youth.

III. OBJECTIVES

Accordingly, the following objectives have been framed:

1. To examine the reasons for using Facebook.
2. To find out the quality of product information in Facebook.
3. To study the impact of Facebook information on buying behavior.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on primary data, collected with the help of questionnaire. A sample of 475 college students of Pollachi has been considered for the study. Students have been selected on the basis of convenience sampling method. To examine the association between selected variables and usage of Facebook, Chi-square test has been used. The levels of confidence chosen are one and five per cent.

Findings

The results of the study are summarised under three broad headings as below:

Reasons for Using Facebook

There are many reasons for the students for using Facebook. Table 1 consolidates the reasons for using Facebook.

Table 1: Reasons for Using Facebook

Reasons	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
Keeping in touch with friends	317	141	08	06	03	4.60
Getting News	226	160	57	23	9	4.20
Enjoying Entertainment	212	163	77	20	3	4.18
Reconnecting with old Friends	275	152	26	16	6	4.14
Sharing Photos	168	183	65	44	15	3.93
Keeping in touch with Family	135	189	70	56	25	3.74
Getting Motivation from friends for my Drawings	122	186	95	52	20	3.71
Sharing information on Products/Brands	142	155	85	71	22	3.68
Meeting new People	131	163	91	54	36	3.62
Sharing Music	106	159	107	73	30	3.50
Getting ideas for shopping	101	121	100	107	36	3.28
Playing Games	92	140	96	102	45	3.27

SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; N- Neutral; DA - Disagree; SDA- Strongly Disagree

Keeping in touch with Friends

Facebook helps connect with friends as well as develop relationship with new friends. Majority of the students, namely 317(66.73%) have strongly agreed that Facebook helps keeping in touch with friends; 141 (29.68%) have agreed; six (1.26%) have disagreed; three (0.63%) have strongly disagreed to the statement while eight (1.68%) have stayed neutral to the statement. The weighted mean score (4.60) reveals that students have strongly agreed that Facebook helps keeping in touch with friends. This seems to be the primary reason for making use of Facebook as the weighted mean is the highest for this reason.

Getting News

Students are getting news and public issues from Facebook. Two hundred and twenty six (47.58%) and 160 (33.68%) information have strongly agreed and agreed respectively, to the statement that Facebook is useful to get current news. On the

other hand, 57(12%) are neutral in this regard; 23 (4.84%) have disagreed, and nine (1.89%) have strongly disagreed. Based on the weighted mean score (4.20) it can be said that students agree to the statement that Facebook enables to get news.

Enjoying Entertainment

Entertainment is one of the purposes for which students use Facebook. Of the 475 students, 212(44.63%) have strongly agreed that they use Facebook for entertainment; 163 (34.32%) have agreed to the statement; 20(4.21%) and three (0.63%) have disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. The rest 77(16.21%) are neutral in this regard. The weighted mean score (4.18) reveals that the students agree to the statement that Facebook is used for entertainment.

Reconnecting with Old Friends

Students have different reasons for using Facebook, but, reconnecting with old friends is one of the main reasons for using Facebook. Two hundred and seventy five (57.89%) have strongly agreed to the statement; 152 (32%) have agreed; 16 (3.37%) and six (1.26%) have disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that Facebook helps to reconnect with old friends. It may be noted that 26(5.47%) are neutral in this regard. The weighted mean score (4.14) reveals that the students have agreed that, Facebook helps to reconnect with old friends.

Sharing Photos

“Sharing photos” is another reason why students are using Facebook. It is found that 168 (35.36%) have strongly agreed that they share their photos through Facebook; 183(38.52%) have agreed; 44(9.26%) and 15(3.16%) have disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, while 65(13.68%) are neutral in this regard. The weighted average score (3.93) reveals that the students use Facebook to share photos.

Keeping in touch with Family

Around 226 (47.58%) students have strongly agreed that Facebook helps to keep in touch with family; 160 (33.68%) have agreed to the statement; 57 (12%) are neutral; 23 (4.84%) have disagreed and nine (1.89%) have strongly disagreed that Facebook will help to keep in touch with family. The weighted mean score (3.74) confirms the fact that the Facebook helps to keep in touch with family members.

Getting Motivation from Friends for Drawings

Students are getting motivation from their friends and relatives for drawings. This is also one of the main reasons for using Facebook. Among the 475 students, 122(25.68%) have strongly agreed and 186 (39.16%) have agreed that, Facebook is used for getting motivation from friends for their drawings; 95 (20%) are neutral in this regard; 52(10.95%) have disagreed and 20(4.25%) have strongly disagreed that they are using Facebook to get motivation from friends. The weighted mean score (3.71) reveals that, students agree that they get motivation from friends, about their drawings, through Facebook.

Sharing Information on Products/Brands

Students make use of Facebook to record their experiences with making use of a product. Comments given by such students help other friends to go for the new product. One hundred and forty two (29.89%) have strongly agreed and 155(32.63%) have agreed that, they are using Facebook for sharing information on products and brands through Facebook; 71(14.95%) have disagreed; 22(4.63%) have strongly disagreed that Facebook helps to know about products and brands; and 85(17.89%) are neutral in this regard. The weighted mean score (3.68) reveals that, Facebook provides more information on products and brands.

Meeting New People

Facebook is a useful social networking site to develop contacts with persons, not known earlier. This kind of creating new network of friends helps in getting the opinions shared. New friends, in all probabilities may suggest new products for use thereby influencing the lifestyle of a person. Of the 475 students, 131(27.58%) have strongly agreed that, Facebook will help to get connected with new people; 163(34.32%) have agreed; 54(11.37%) and 36(7.58%) have disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, while 91(19.16%) have stayed neutral in this regard. The weighted mean score (3.62) reveals that students agree that, Facebook assists to meet new people.

Sharing Music

Music adds meaning to life. Students are listening to /viewing music videos. Being interested in music, students tend to share with their friends the pieces of music they have heard and post it in their page to facilitate their friends to enjoy it. One hundred and six (22.31%) students have strongly agreed, that Facebook helps to share music with friends and relatives; 159(33.47%) have agreed; 107(22.53%) are neutral; 73(15.37%) and 30(6.32%) have disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The weighted mean score (3.50) reveals that, students agree that, Facebook helps to share music with friends and relatives.

Getting Ideas for Shopping

Taking informed-decision always helps to buy better products from the market. Students, who have purchased and used a product, post its description in Facebook page which enables as a guide while one goes for shopping. Among the 475 students, 101(21.26%) have strongly agreed that, they use Facebook for getting ideas for shopping; 121(25.47%) have agreed; 117(24.63%) and 36(7.58%) have disagreed and strongly disagreed and 100 (21.05%) are neutral in this regard. On the whole, the weighted mean score (3.28) reveals that, students are neutral in this regard.

Playing Games

Games are also uploaded in the Facebook page by students. Those fond of playing search the Facebook for games of their choice. Thus, playing games becomes one of the motives for using Facebook. Ninety two (19.37%) students have strongly agreed that, they are using Facebook for playing games; 140(29.47%) agreed to this; 96(20.21%) are neutral; 102 (21.47%) and 45(9.47%) have disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. On the whole, the weighted mean score (3.27) reveals that, students are neutral in this regard.

V. DETERMINANTS OF FACEBOOK USAGE

The focus of this section is to find out the variables that have a bearing upon Facebook usage. Eleven variables, namely age, gender, area of residence, educational qualification, marital status, family type, period of association with Facebook, number of friends in Facebook, frequency of visiting Facebook, average time spent in Facebook and usefulness of Facebook have been tested for their association with level of usage.

VI. LEVEL OF FACEBOOK USAGE

Usage of Facebook has been measured by assigning scores to questions relating to reasons with which the students make use of the Facebook. Twelve reasons are indicated in the questionnaire. The answers to these questions have been rated on a five – point Likert scale. Thus, the maximum score is possible is 60 (12*5). Actual score obtained by each student has been divided by 60 and multiplied by 100 to generate “Usage Index”. The index values calculated for the students range from 36.67 to 100. The overall mean usage index is 77.16. Of the 475 students, 233(49.05%) are with index above the average, while 242 (50.95%) are with index below the average. Based on the usage index, the students have been divided into three groups as those with low, medium and high level of usage of Facebook. To facilitate this, quartiles have been made use of. Accordingly, those with usage index up to 65.53 are called as students with low level of usage of Facebook; those with usage index ranging between 77.16 and

88.79 are termed as students with medium level of usage while students with high level of usage of Facebook. Chi- square test has been used to examine the association between selected variables and usage of Facebook. The levels of confidence chosen are one and five.

Table 2: Usage of Facebook

Particulars	Level of Usage (N=475)			Total	Calculated Chi – Square Value
	Low (n=68)	Medium (n=339)	High (n=68)		
Age					
17-19	25(13.29%)	130(69.14%)	33(17.55%)	188(39.57%)	d.f= 4 $\chi^2=3.153$
20-21	33(14.41%)	167(72.92%)	29(12.66%)	229(48.21%)	
Above 21	10(17.24%)	42(72.41%)	06(10.34%)	58(12.21%)	
Gender					
Male	33(14.47%)	151(66.22%)	44(19.29%)	228(48%)	d.f=2 $\chi^2=9.234$
Female	35(14.17%)	188(76.11%)	24(09.71%)	247(52%)	
Area of Residence					
Pollachi	21(10.71%)	149(76.02%)	26(13.26%)	196(41.26%)	d.f=4 $\chi^2=4.404$
Outside Pollachi	39(17.18%)	154(67.84%)	34(14.97%)	227(47.78%)	
Others	08(15.38%)	36(69.23%)	08(15.38%)	52(10.94%)	
Educational Qualification					
Doing UG	55(14.10%)	276(70.76%)	59(15.12%)	390(82.10%)	d.f=4 $\chi^2=1.726$
Doing PG	08(14.03%)	42(73.68%)	07(12.28%)	57(12%)	
Undergoing Research Program	05(17.85%)	21(75%)	02(7.14%)	28(5.89%)	
Marital Status					
Married	01(4.54%)	16(72.72%)	05(22.72%)	22(4.63%)	d.f= 2 $\chi^2=2.684$
Unmarried	67(14.79%)	323(71.30%)	63(13.90%)	453(95.36%)	
Family Type					
Joint	27(15.16%)	114(64.04%)	37(20.78%)	178(37.47%)	d.f. = 2 $\chi^2=10.610$
Nuclear	41(13.80%)	225(75.75%)	31(10.43%)	297(62.52%)	
Period of Association					
Up to 2 years	51(16.24%)	224(71.33%)	39(12.48%)	314(66.10%)	d.f. = 2 $\chi^2=4.726$
Above 2 years	17(10.55%)	115(71.42%)	29(18.01%)	161(33.89%)	
No. of Friends					
Up to 250	42(15.21%)	204(73.91%)	30(10.86%)	276(58.10%)	d.f. = 4 $\chi^2=7.469$
251-500	19(14.96%)	84(66.14%)	24(18.89%)	127(26.73%)	
Above 500	07(9.72%)	51(70.83%)	14(19.45%)	72(15.51%)	
Frequency of Visiting					
Multiple times a day	13(16.25%)	61(76.25%)	06(7.5%)	80(16.84%)	d.f. = 8 $\chi^2=10.783$
Once –in –a-day	18(11.68%)	104(67.53%)	32(20.77%)	154(32.42%)	
Once –in –a week	19(16.96%)	80 (71.42%)	13(11.60%)	112(23.57%)	
Once –in-a month	04(20%)	13(65%)	03(15%)	20(4.21%)	
Whenever free	14(12.84%)	81(74.31%)	14(12.84%)	109(22.94%)	
Average Time Spent					
Less than one hour	40(15.20%)	192(73%)	31(11.78%)	263(55.36%)	d.f. = 8 $\chi^2= 8.024$
1-2 hrs	21(14.09%)	105(70.46%)	23(15.43%)	149(31.36%)	
2-3 hrs	01(3.84%)	19(73.07%)	06(23.07%)	26(5.47%)	
3-4 hrs	02(25%)	05(62.5%)	01(12.5%)	8(1.68%)	
More than 4 hrs	04(13.79%)	18(62.06%)	07(24.13%)	29(6.10%)	
Usefulness of Facebook					
Highly useful	04(5.71%)	45(64.28%)	21(30%)	70(14.73%)	d.f=4 $\chi^2=20.573$
Useful	55(15.23%)	265(73.61%)	40(11.1%)	360(75.78%)	
Not useful	09(20%)	29(64.45%)	07(15.56%)	45(9.47%)	

Age

Age is likely to create differences in the level of Facebook usage. Accordingly, young students may use Facebook more compared to others. It is found from Table 2 that students between the age of 17 and 19 use the Facebook more as compared to other group of students.

Gender

Gender is likely to create differences in the level of Facebook usage. Female students are found to use Facebook more as compared to male students.

Area of Residence

Students residing outside Pollachi are to use Facebook compared to others. It is found from Table 2 that students residing outside Pollachi use Facebook more compared to other groups of students

Educational Qualification

Educational qualification is likely to create differences in the level of Facebook usage. It is found from Table 2 undergraduate students, opposed to other PG, M.Phil, and Ph.D. students use Facebook to a great extent.

Marital Status

Unmarried students use Facebook very frequently compared to married students, as found from Table 2.

Family Type

Students hailing from nuclear family use Facebook very frequently compared to students hailing from joint family.

Period of Association

Longer period of association with Facebook naturally has to make one to understand the various features available in it and accordingly will enhance the use of the site. It is found that students who have account with Facebook for more than two years are with high level of usage.

Number of Friends

The prime reason with which students make use of Facebook is to keep in touch with their friends. Usage of Facebook, therefore, will be more if friends are more in number. It is found that students with more than 250 friends are found to use Facebook very frequently.

Frequency of Visiting

Frequencies of visiting Facebook page define the limit of usage. Table 2 shows that those students who visit the Facebook very frequently are the ones with high level of usage of Facebook.

Average Time Spent

It is found that students differ in the amount of time they spend in viewing Facebook page. It is natural to expect that the usage level will be more for those who browse through the Facebook for longer hours. It is found that the level of usage of Facebook is high for those who, on an average, spend one to two hours viewing Facebook.

Usefulness of Facebook

Students' usefulness of Facebook significantly influences the level of usage of Facebook.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study depends on the opinions expressed by the students. Further, the extent of freedom the students may have for taking decision on purchase will influence the results of the study. It has broadly brought out the impact Facebook creates on the decision styles of college students. Nevertheless, a vast scope exists for young budding researchers to take up an issue relating to social networking website and carry out a study in detail.

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