

Impact of Social Media on Customer Purchase decision: An analysis

Dr Jaideep Kaur
Associate Professor
jaideep.god@gmail.com
Amity Business School

Abstract

Objective: Companies have started leveraging social media platforms to know what a customer wants, what he think about a particular product or service and how a company can address the needs of the customers. Large chunk of data is generated on social media platforms and this data can prove to be the best resource for company to re-design or re-implement the marketing strategy accordingly. **Methods** The study was done on the sample size of 104 customers with the help of questionnaires. **Conclusion:** Social media is helping the companies in direct touch with customers and develop marketing strategies that influence customer decision making process. On the other side for customer it has become easier to gain necessary input for purchase decision making. **Implication:** With the rising competition and changing customer needs through social media, companies have started learning the importance of Social Media and are adapting change accordingly.

Key Words: Social Media, Customer Purchase decision

INTRODUCTION

Social Media is a virtual platform where people can convey and exchange their views and opinions, spread and control messages by reaching out to friends and families. As compare to earlier days Social Media is not only used by consumers but today big corporate houses are using it as a marketing channel to promote their goods and Services and execute their advertising campaigns. Latest Data has revealed that regularly 200,000 tweets are send on Twitter, 12, 5000 pieces of content is circulated on Face book, and 50,000 hours of videos is uploaded on YouTube. This shows the power of Social Media as lot of data is generated regularly and companies can leverage this data by analyzing it and using it to formulate their online marketing strategies accordingly. This data can be converted into valuable information

and has the power to influence customer purchase decision process. This world where competition is rising, customers are getting more and more knowledgeable and internet penetration is rising, social media has occupied a unique space in our life and has started affecting our purchase decision process which we can see. This has given a signal to companies to stay more focused on the world of social media and create their marketing strategies accordingly.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Forbes and Vespoli (2013) enquired people who had purchase a product based on the recommendation of a friend or contact via social media results indicate that consumers are buying either very inexpensive, or very expensive items, and are doing so based on recommendations from people they would consider “opinion influencers or leaders”. In addition, results also indicate that a slow shift from more traditional forms of social media like Facebook to quicker types of social media like Twitter. Numerous respondents indicated their urge for information now, not even a day or two old, and this research tells a shift towards that form of social media which is consistent with general themes of today's social media.

Leerapong and Mardjo (2013) studies the elements that influence customer online purchase decision through online social network, especially Facebook. The customers are ranked in order of importance relative advantage, trust, and perceived risk, compatibility as the elements that encouraged or discouraged them from purchasing a product through Facebook.

Sharma and Rehman (2012) find that positive or negative information about a product or services available on the Social Media sites have significant influence on consumers purchase behavior. The customers spread positive word of mouth through social media create a positive impact for a company.

Pietro and Eleonora Pantano(2012) investigate as to what extend social networks, as Facebook influence consumer's purchasing decision. It finds that enjoyment is a key determinant people are using social networking sites and act as a tool for supporting the purchasing decision. They also tell show useful are the recommendations and suggestions of products and services on Face book. It also suggests a casual positive relationship between

attitude of customers towards social media and behavioral intention. Social media has also influenced consumer behavior from information acquisition to post-purchase behavior such as dissatisfaction statements or behaviors.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The techniques used for primary data collection is survey method using questionnaire and for secondary data collection previous research papers are refereed Primary data is collected from 104 respondents by adopting non-probability convenience sampling. The type of sampling used is non-probabilistic convenience sampling. Sample size use for analysis is 104.

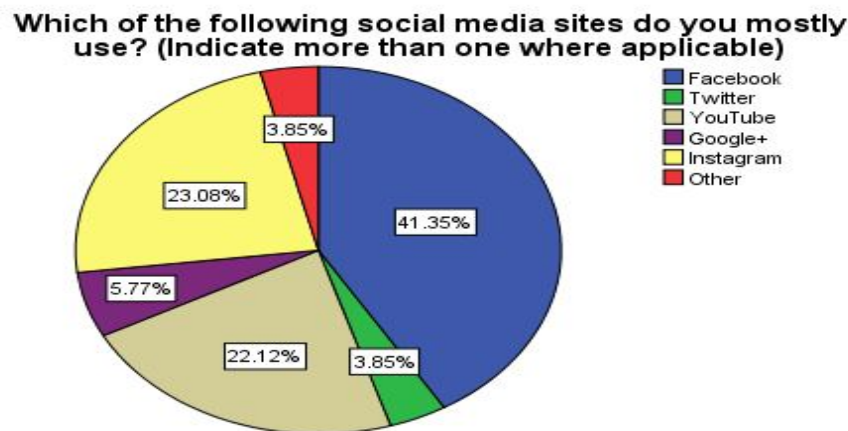
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPETRATION

- Which of the following social media sites do you mostly use? (Indicate more than one where applicable)

Table 4.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Face book	43	41.3	41.3	41.3
	Twitter	4	3.8	3.8	45.2
	YouTube	23	22.1	22.1	67.3
	Google+	6	5.8	5.8	73.1
	Integra	24	23.1	23.1	96.2
	Other	4	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.1



Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents most of the respondents use Face book (41.35%) followed by Integra (23.08%) YouTube (22.12%) Google+ (5.77%) and others (3.85%). This indicates that Face book is most used social networking site by respondents and marketers must make best use of Face book to promote their products.

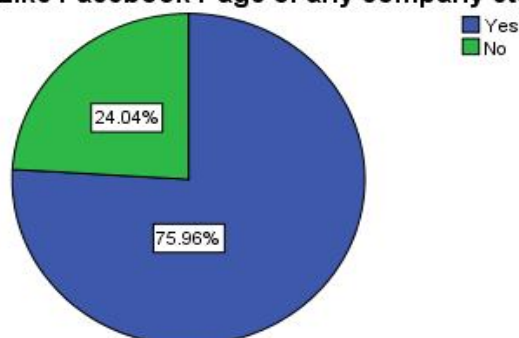
- Do you follow any Company/Brand social media page (Like Face book Page of any company etc.)?

Table 4.2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	79	76.0	76.0	76.0
No	25	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.2

Do you follow any Company/Brand social media page (Like Facebook Page of any company etc.)?



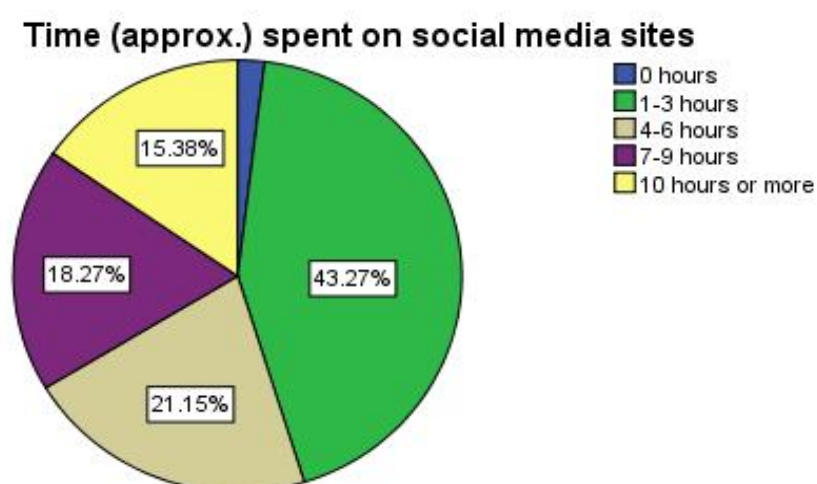
Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents 75.96% respondents follow social media page of company/brand and 24.04% respondents don't follow it. This indicates that respondents apart from networking on social media also want to get informed about updates on new product or services offered by companies.

- Q-3 Time (approx.) spent on social media sites.

Table 4.3

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0 hours	2	1.9	1.9	1.9
1-3 hours	45	43.3	43.3	45.2
4-6 hours	22	21.2	21.2	66.3
7-9 hours	19	18.3	18.3	84.6
10 hours or more	16	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.3



Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum respondents i.e. 43.27% respondents spend 1-3 hours on social media sites followed by

21.15% respondents who spend 4-6 hours, 18.27% respondents spend 7-9 hours and 15.38% respondents spend 10 hour and more. This indicates that respondents spend considerable amount of time on social media sites and companies can adopt social media as a channel for marketing.

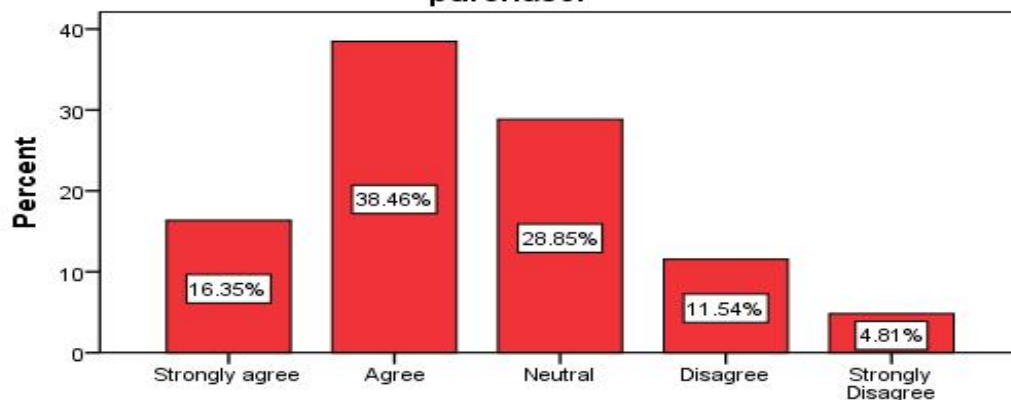
- I use social media to seek opinions about product/services before purchase.

Table 4.4

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	17	16.3	16.3	16.3
Agree	40	38.5	38.5	54.8
Neutral	30	28.8	28.8	83.7
Disagree	12	11.5	11.5	95.2
Strongly Disagree	5	4.8	4.8	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.4

I use social media to seek opinions about product/services before purchase.



I use social media to seek opinions about product/services before purchase.

Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (38.46%) agree with the fact that they seek opinions from social media before product/service purchase followed by (28.85%) respondents who have neutral opinion, (16.35%) respondents strongly agree, (11.54%) respondents disagree and (4.81%)

respondents strongly Disagree. It is an important indication for marketers to build up their customer service on social media sites.

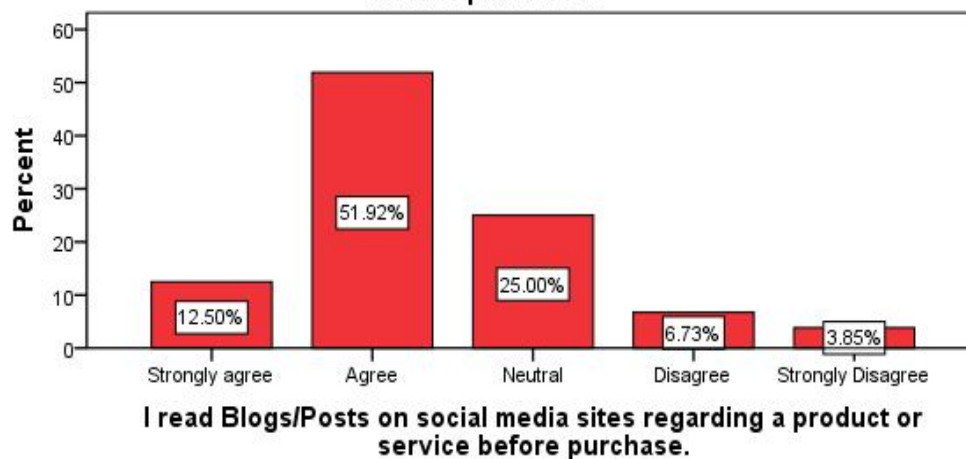
- I read Blogs/Posts on social media sites regarding a product or service before purchase.

Table 4.5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	13	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Agree	54	51.9	51.9	64.4
	Neutral	26	25.0	25.0	89.4
	Disagree	7	6.7	6.7	96.2
	Strongly Disagree	4	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.5

I read Blogs/Posts on social media sites regarding a product or service before purchase.



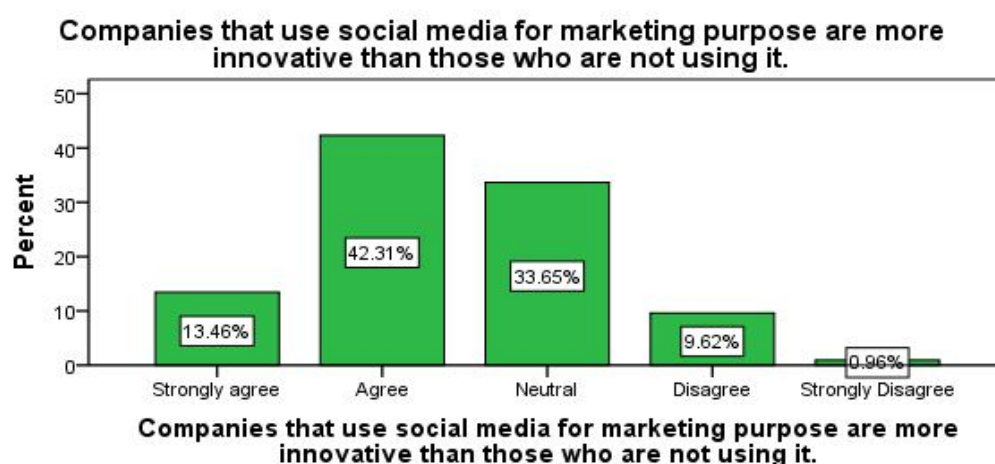
Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (51.92%) agree with the fact that they read Blogs/Posts on social media sites regarding a product or service before purchase followed by (25.00%) respondents who have a neutral opinion, (12.50%) respondents strongly agree, (6.73%) respondents disagree and (3.85%) respondents strongly Disagree. This indicates that blogs/post engages the customers and can influence their purchase decisions.

- Companies that use social media for marketing purpose are more innovative than those who are not using it.

Table 4.6

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	14	13.5	13.5	13.5
	Agree	44	42.3	42.3	55.8
	Neutral	35	33.7	33.7	89.4
	Disagree	10	9.6	9.6	99.0
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.6



Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (42.31%) agree with the fact that companies that use social media for marketing purpose are more innovative than those who are not using it followed by (33.65%) respondents who have a neutral opinion, (13.46%) respondents strongly agree, (9.62%) respondents disagree and (0.96%) respondents strongly Disagree. This tells that customers believe that using social media for marketing motive is an innovative idea to promote company goods.

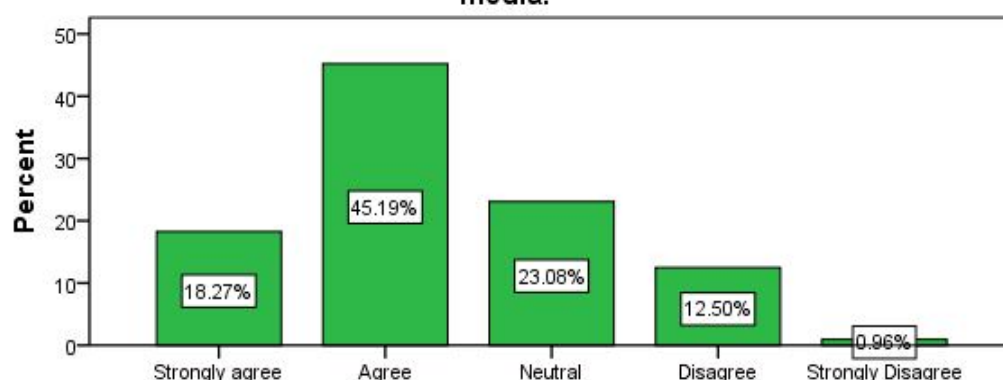
- Advertisements on social media sites are more interactive than traditional media.

Table 4.7

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	19	18.3	18.3	18.3
	Agree	47	45.2	45.2	63.5
	Neutral	24	23.1	23.1	86.5
	Disagree	13	12.5	12.5	99.0
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.7

Advertisements on social media sites are more interactive than traditional media.



Advertisements on social media sites are more interactive than traditional media.

Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (45.19%) agree with the fact that advertisements on social media sites are more interactive than traditional media followed by (23.08%) respondents who have a neutral opinion, (18.27%) respondents strongly agree, (12.50%) respondents disagree and (0.96%) respondents strongly Disagree. This tells that that to large extent advertisements on social media sites may have influence the purchase decisions of customers.

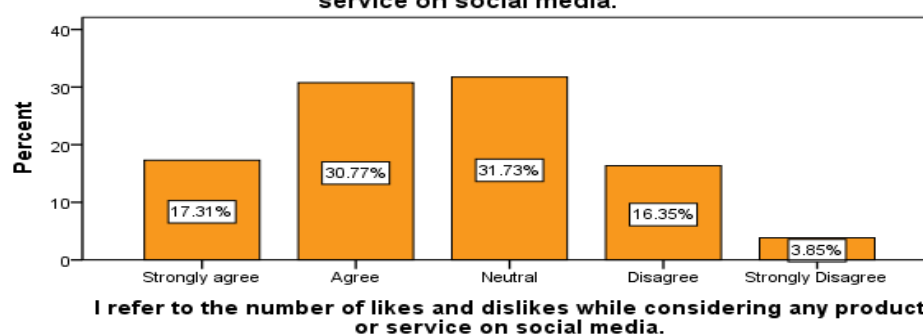
- I refer to the number of likes and dislikes while considering any product or service on social media.

Table 4.8

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	18	17.3	17.3	17.3
	Agree	32	30.8	30.8	48.1
	Neutral	33	31.7	31.7	79.8
	Disagree	17	16.3	16.3	96.2
	Strongly Disagree	4	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.8

I refer to the number of likes and dislikes while considering any product or service on social media.



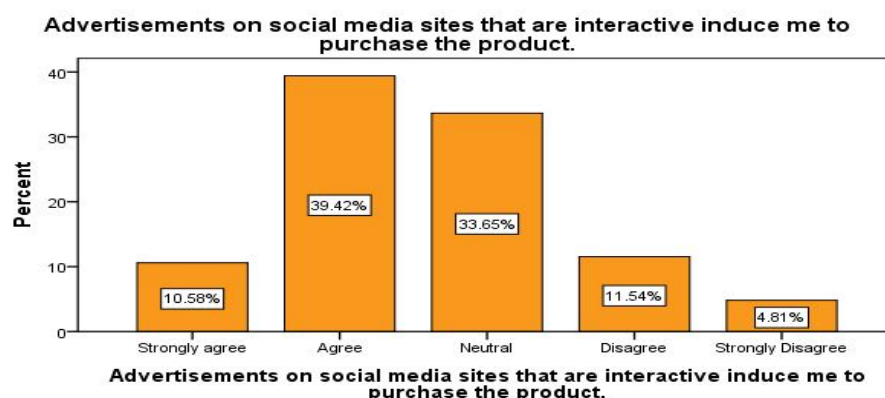
Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (31.73%) have a neutral opinion with the fact that they refer to the number of likes and dislikes while considering any product or service on social media followed by (30.77%) respondents who have a agreed, (17.31%) respondents strongly agree, (16.35%) respondents disagree and (3.85%) respondents strongly Disagree. This indicates that previous performance of the product has an effect on the purchase decisions of customers.

- Advertisements on social media sites that are interactive induce me to purchase the product.

Table 4.9

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	11	10.6	10.6	10.6
Agree	41	39.4	39.4	50.0
Neutral	35	33.7	33.7	83.7
Disagree	12	11.5	11.5	95.2
Strongly Disagree	5	4.8	4.8	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.9



Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (39.42%) agree with the fact that advertisements on social media sites that are interactive induce me to purchase the product followed by (33.65%) respondents who have a neutral opinion, (11.54%) respondents disagree, (10.58%) respondents strongly agree and (4.81%) respondents strongly Disagree. This indicates that advertisements on social media are effective enough to induce customer in purchasing a product.

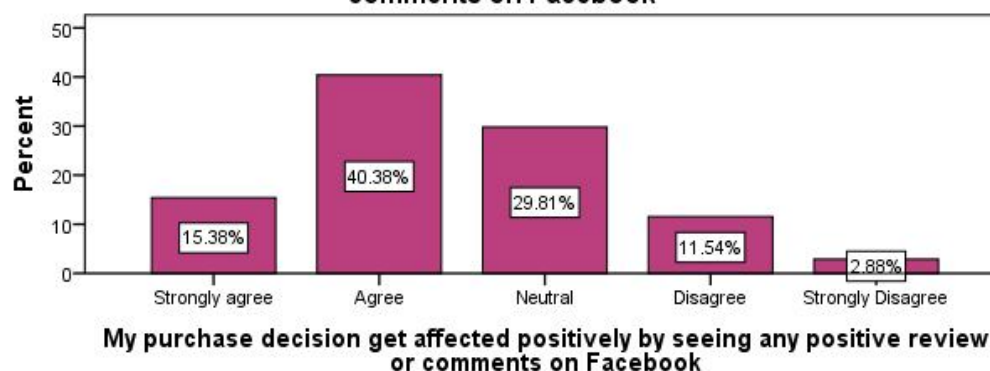
- My purchase decision gets affected positively by seeing any positive reviews or comments on Face book.
-

Table 4.10

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	16	15.4	15.4	15.4
	Agree	42	40.4	40.4	55.8
	Neutral	31	29.8	29.8	85.6
	Disagree	12	11.5	11.5	97.1
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.10

My purchase decision get affected positively by seeing any positive review or comments on Facebook



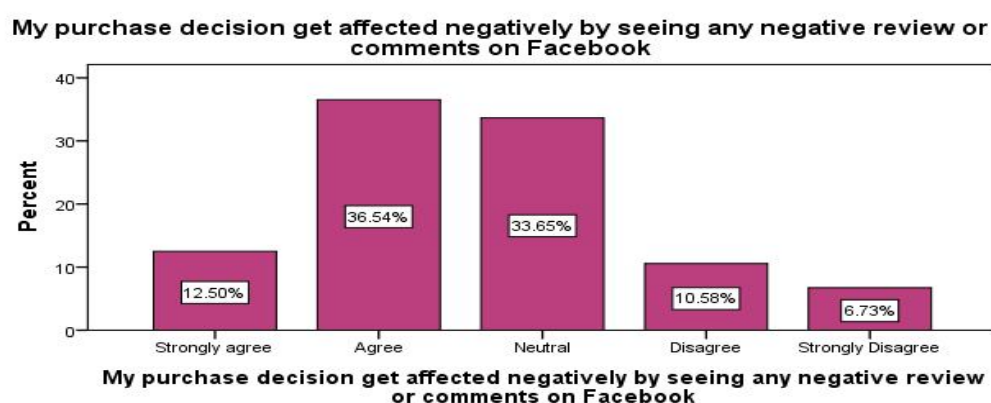
Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (40.38%) agree with the fact that their purchase decision get affected positively by seeing any positive review or comments on Face book followed by (29.81%) respondents who have a neutral opinion, (15.38%) respondents strongly agree, (11.54%) respondents strongly agree and (2.86%) respondents strongly Disagree. This indicates that companies must focus on giving positive experience to a customer as a customer positive review for a company help company to attract more customers

- My purchase decision gets affected negatively by seeing any negative reviews or comments on Face book.

Table 4.11

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	13	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Agree	38	36.5	36.5	49.0
	Neutral	35	33.7	33.7	82.7
	Disagree	11	10.6	10.6	93.3
	Strongly Disagree	7	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.11



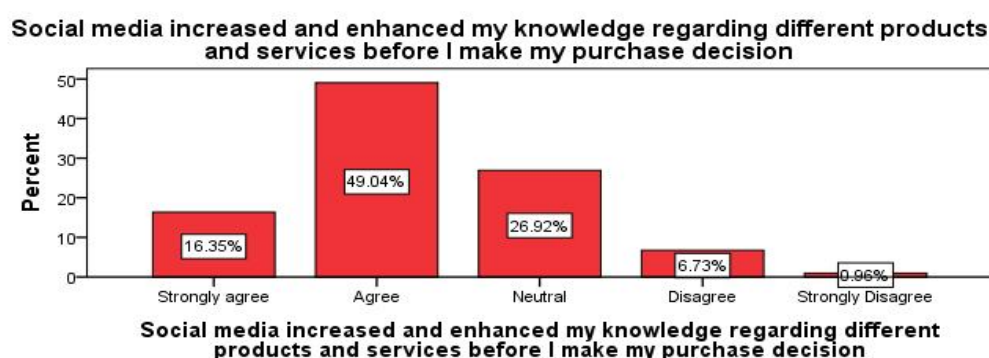
Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (36.54%) agree with the fact that their purchase decision get affected negatively by seeing any negative reviews or comments on Face book followed by (33.65%) respondents who have a neutral opinion, (12.50%) respondents strongly agree, (10.58%) respondents disagree and (6.73%) respondents strongly Disagree. This indicates that if companies give negative experience to a customer than negative reviews of customers demotivate other customers to not buy product from that company.

- Social media increased and enhanced my knowledge regarding different products and services before I make my purchase decision.

Table 4.12

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	17	16.3	16.3	16.3
	Agree	51	49.0	49.0	65.4
	Neutral	28	26.9	26.9	92.3
	Disagree	7	6.7	6.7	99.0
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.12



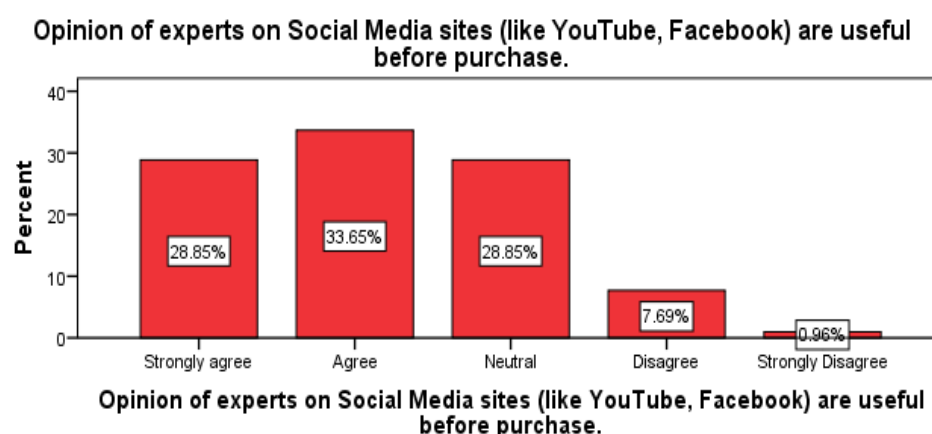
Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (49.04%) agree with the fact that social media enhanced their knowledge regarding different product and service before they make purchase decision. followed by (26.92%) respondents who have a neutral opinion, (16.35%) respondents strongly agree, (6.73%) respondents disagree and (0.96%) respondents strongly Disagree. This indicates that companies can't mislead customers by false information as with the help of social media they are becoming knowledgeable about product and services before they make a purchase decision

- Opinion of experts on Social Media sites (like YouTube, Face book) is useful before purchase.

Table 4.13

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	30	28.8	28.8	28.8
	Agree	35	33.7	33.7	62.5
	Neutral	30	28.8	28.8	91.3
	Disagree	8	7.7	7.7	99.0
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.13



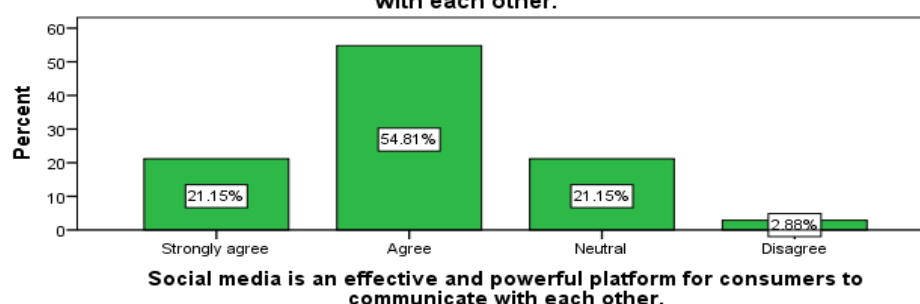
Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (33.65%) agree with the fact that opinion of experts on Social Media sites (like YouTube, Face book) are useful to them before purchase followed by (28.85%) respondents who have a neutral opinion, (28.85%) respondents strongly agree, (7.69%) respondents disagree and (0.96%) respondents strongly Disagree. This implies that companies must provide with expert opinions on social networking sites.

- Social media is an effective and powerful platform for consumers to communicate with each other.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	22	21.2	21.2	21.2
	Agree	57	54.8	54.8	76.0
	Neutral	22	21.2	21.2	97.1
	Disagree	3	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.14

Social media is an effective and powerful platform for consumers to communicate with each other.



Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (54.81%) agree with the fact that Social media is an effective and powerful platform for consumers to communicate with each other followed by (21.15%) respondents who have a neutral opinion, (21.15%) respondents strongly agree, and (2.86%) respondents disagree. This implies that companies should start using social media as a channel to communicate with customers.

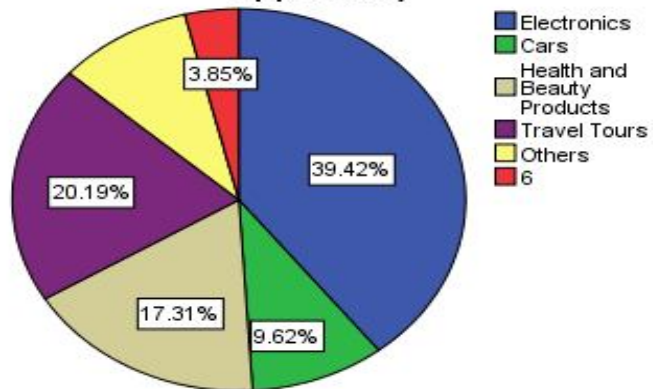
- For what kind of product/service purchase do you use social media for information search? (Indicate more than one where applicable)

Table 4.15

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Electronics	41	39.4	39.4	39.4
	Cars	10	9.6	9.6	49.0
	Health and Beauty Products	18	17.3	17.3	66.3
	Travel Tours	21	20.2	20.2	86.5
	Others	10	9.6	9.6	96.2
		4	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.15

For what kind of product/service purchase do you use social media for information search? (Indicate more than one where applicable)



Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that 39.4% of respondents use social media for information search for electronics item followed by 20.2% for Travel Tours, 17.3 for Health and Beauty Products, 9.6% for cars and 9.6% for other products. This indicates that Electronics, Health and Beauty Products and Travel tours must keep a check on social media sites and design their content accordingly.

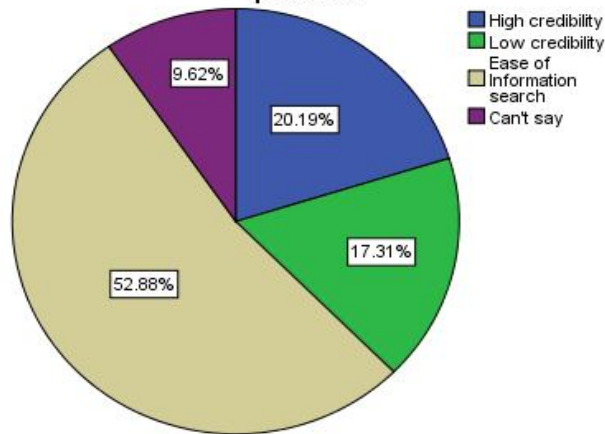
- What is your Perception towards social Media as an Informative tool before purchasing any product?

Table 4.16

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High credibility	21	20.2	20.2	20.2
	Low credibility	18	17.3	17.3	37.5
	Ease of Information search	55	52.9	52.9	90.4
	Can't say	10	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.16

What is your Perception towards social Media as an Informative tool before purchasing any product?



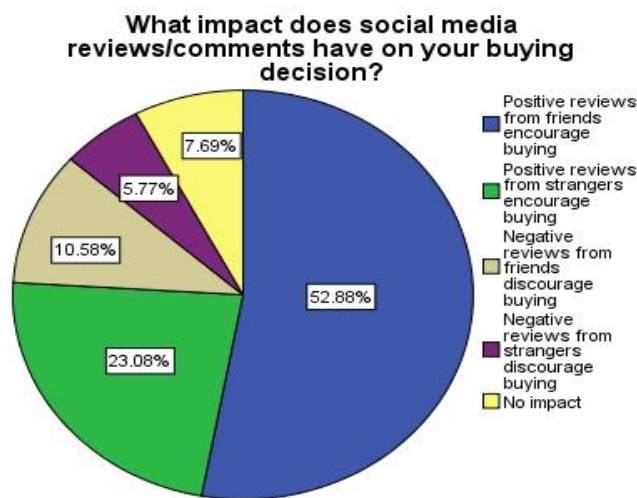
Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that 52.9% perceive social media as an informative tool before purchasing any product because of its ease of information search followed by 20.2% who think social media is highly credible, 17.3% think social media has low credibility and 9.6% respondents have no say. This indicates that companies should focus more on the right information delivered to customers.

- What impact does social media reviews/comments have on your buying decision?

Table 4.17

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Positive reviews from friends encourage buying	55	52.9	52.9	52.9
	Positive reviews from strangers encourage buying	24	23.1	23.1	76.0
	Negative reviews from friends discourage buying	11	10.6	10.6	86.5
	Negative reviews from strangers discourage buying	6	5.8	5.8	92.3
	No impact	8	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.17



Interpretation: From the analysis we have found that 52.9% are impacted by positive reviews from friends and it encourage buying followed by 23.1% who are impacted by positive reviews from strangers and it encourage buying, 10.6% are impacted by negative reviews from friends and it discourage buying, 5.8% who are impacted by negative reviews from strangers and it discourage buying and 7.7% are not impacted.

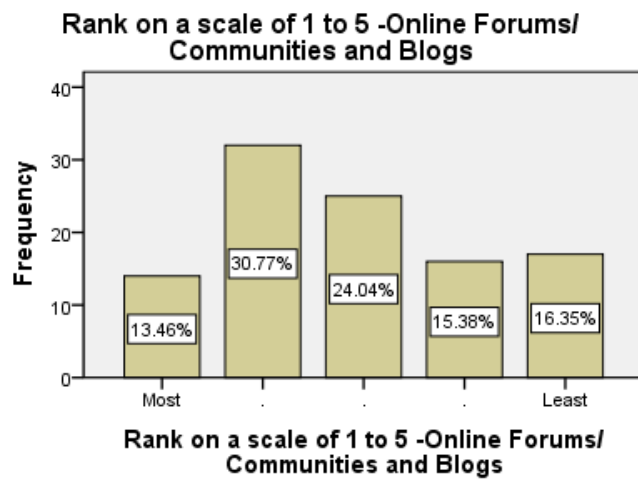
- Rank on a scale of 1 to 5 for the source of information on social media you use before making purchase decision.

1. Online Forums/ Communities and Blogs

Table 4.18

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Most	14	13.5	13.5	13.5
	.	32	30.8	30.8	44.2
	.	25	24.0	24.0	68.3
	.	16	15.4	15.4	83.7
	Least	17	16.3	16.3	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.18



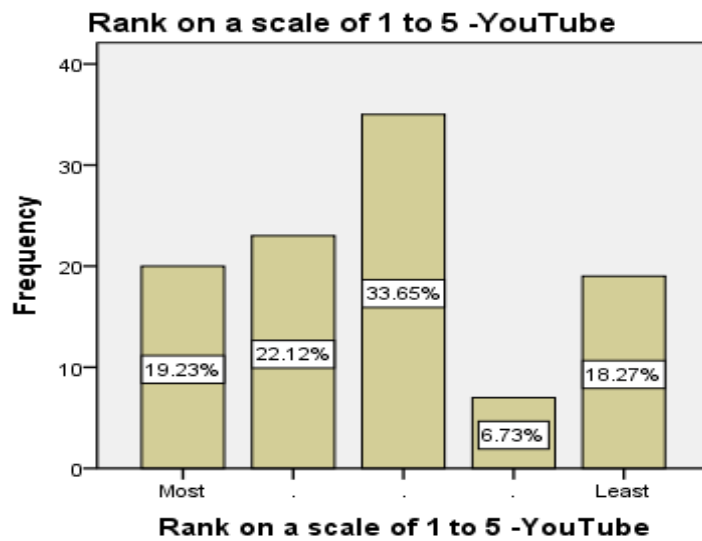
Interpretation: 13.5% of total respondents mostly use Online Forums/Blogs as a source of information.

2 YouTube

Table 4.19

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Most	20	19.2	19.2	19.2
	.	23	22.1	22.1	41.3
	.	35	33.7	33.7	75.0
	.	7	6.7	6.7	81.7
	Least	19	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.19



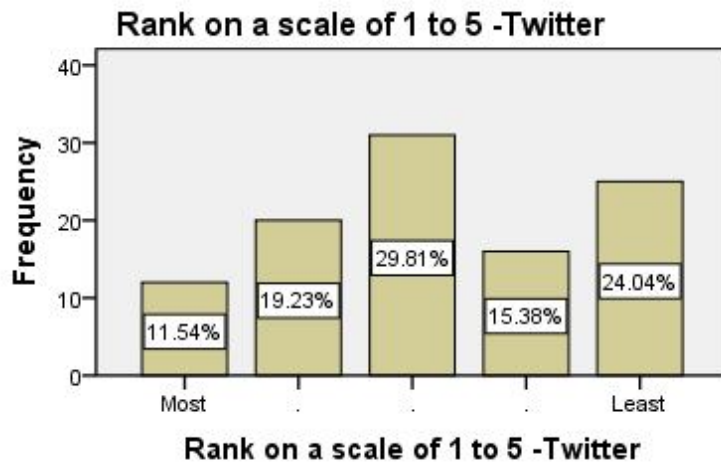
Interpretation: 19.23% of total respondents mostly use YouTube as a source of information.

- Twitter

Table 4.20

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Most	12	11.5	11.5	11.5
	.	20	19.2	19.2	30.8
	.	31	29.8	29.8	60.6
	.	16	15.4	15.4	76.0
	Least	25	24.0	24.0	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.20



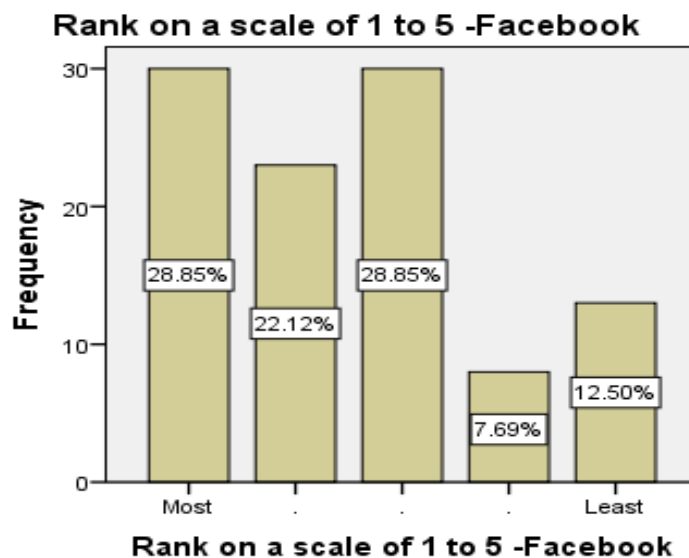
Interpretation: 11.54% of total respondents mostly use YouTube as a source of information.

- Face book

Table 4.21

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Most	30	28.8	28.8	28.8
	.	23	22.1	22.1	51.0
	.	30	28.8	28.8	79.8
	.	8	7.7	7.7	87.5
	Least	13	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.21



Interpretation: 28.85% of total respondents mostly use YouTube as a source of information.

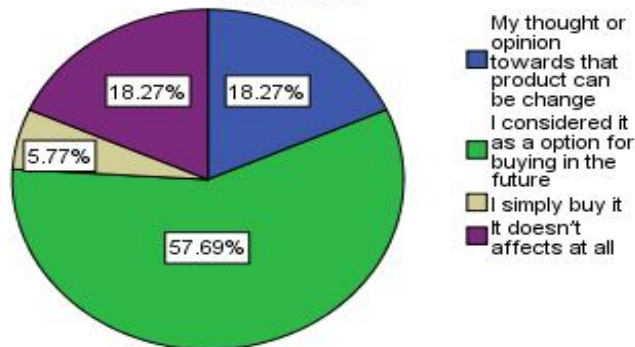
- If a product goes viral on social media, how do you think it affects your purchase decision?

Table 4.22

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	My thought or opinion towards that product can be change	19	18.3	18.3	18.3
	I considered it as a option for buying in the future	60	57.7	57.7	76.0
	I simply buy it	6	5.8	5.8	81.7
	It doesn't affects at all	19	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.22

If a product goes viral on social media, how do you think it affects your purchase decision?

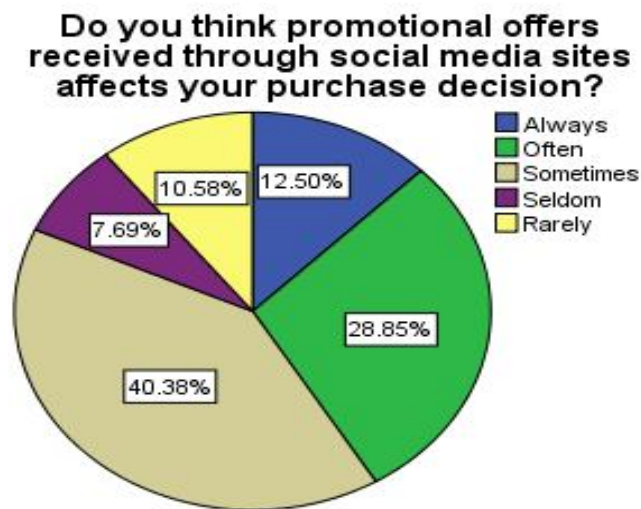


Interpretation From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (57.7%) are in the opinion that if a product goes viral on social media they considered it as a option for buying in future followed by (18.3%) who think that their opinion towards that option can be change, (18.3%) think it doesn't affect at all and (5.8%) simply buy it. This implies that companies must use buzz or viral marketing strategies to viral their products.

- Do you think promotional offers received through social media sites affects your purchase decision?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	13	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Often	30	28.8	28.8	41.3
	Sometimes	42	40.4	40.4	81.7
	Seldom	8	7.7	7.7	89.4
	Rarely	11	10.6	10.6	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.23



Interpretation From the analysis we have found that out of total respondents maximum percentage of respondents (40.4%) sometimes think that promotional offers received through social media sites affect their purchase decision followed by (28.8%) who often think about it, (12.5%) always think about it, (10.6%) seldom think and (10.6%) rarely think. This implies that promotional offers are very effective.

Correlation

Role of social media sites on purchase decision

Table 4.30

Correlations

			Time (approx.) spent on social media sites	Age
Spearman's rho	Time (approx.) spent on social media sites	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.079
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.425
		N	104	104
	Age	Correlation Coefficient	.079	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.425	.
		N	104	104

Interpretation: Correlation coefficient between social media sites and purchase decision is positively correlated as 0.79. Hence this indicates that social media sites have increased the purchase decision.

Conclusion

The finding indicates that Face book is most used social networking site by respondents. The respondents spend around 1-3 hours on social media sites which indicate that respondents apart from networking on social media also want to get informed about updates on new product. The maximum respondents agree that they seek opinion about product service before purchases. The that maximum people agree that they read Blogs/Post on social media before product purchase or service purchase. Companies must use social media sites to create their own blogs so that it enhance customer pre-purchase experience and it support them in taking the purchase decision. The respondents agree that companies that use social media for marketing purpose are more innovative than those who are not using it. The respondents agree that advertising on social media sites are more interactive than traditional media and it induce them to purchase the product which may imply that customers are not much interested in traditional form of advertisements. So companies must gradually shift their focus from traditional advertisements to advertisements on social media to serve to the customers. In social media for people a tool to check the performance of product or service is the number of likes or comments. This indicates the power of social media in influencing customer purchase decision. Companies must track and analyses such activities that are happening on social media and re-design themselves to serve to the needs of customers. From our survey the maximum of respondents use social media for information search for electronics products and travel tours followed by health and beauty products and automobiles. This is an opportunity for automobile companies and travel companies to maximize their use of social media as a marketing tool. Customers too benefit from social media. They seek opinions about product or service from social media before purchasing any product. They interact with existing customer to get an idea of product before purchase. They read blogs on social media before making a purchase decision. Their probability of purchase gets affected by seeing any positive reviews/comments or negative reviews/comments on social media sites. If a product goes viral on social media they may consider it to purchase later. Social media keep customer updated about product or service and they are protected from the marketers who mislead customer. Customers proactively purchase the product. They can avail the benefits of promotional offers receive through social media. Evolving development in social media is creating a paradigm shift in marketing field where companies are getting social and

technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Big Data make social media a channel which can take company to new heights and customer's decision making process become simpler.

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