UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

B.Sc. (HONOURS) FINANCIAL MATHEMATICS & INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS

LEVEL II – SEMESTER I

PROJECT

Course Unit & Administrative Information

Course Unit	Research Methodology - MSF2122
Description of Assessment	Research - Analysis Report The Relationship between social media and the Online Consumer Behavior of University Students
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Introduction

Today social media is the service on the Internet with a major number of users counting more than 4.48 billion participants around the world (Backlink, 2022). Despite the recent success of social media, its origins go back as early as 1995, with the pioneers Clasmates.com and SixDegrees.com in 1997 (Shih, 2009) which settled the basis for the foundation of what today have become rather popular social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or WhatsApp for instances. Clearly, social media is where consumers congregate and businesses want to be. Contemporary society has accepted the presence and use of social networks in their daily life; to the point that a high percentage of individuals access these platforms as soon as they awake (Staad, 2013). People want to feel more connected and informed than ever before, and social networks have become the perfect service to satisfy their needs. Some of the reasons for individuals to join social networks are to self-express and to feel connected with the members of the community (Heinonen, 2011).

For many years, marketing practitioners and policy-makers have analyzed and tried to understand consumer behaviors and the factors that shape and influence it in different environments. For businesses, understanding why and how consumers shop and consume in the ways they do is important to develop products, market them adequately and to effectively communicate with customers during and after the purchase. In general, the low barriers and the facility to become a member boost user to join social media networks. Instead, of access to the company's website and sign up with all their information, consumers can go to the community brand page and join with just a click (Shih, 2009). On this paper, the terms social media and social networks are interchangeably used to refer to those 'websites and other digital communication and information channels in which active consumers engage in behaviors that can be consumed by others, both in real time and long afterward, regardless of their spatial location (Hennin-Thura et al., 2010). The online brand community is defined as a place on the Internet where companies and customers can interact and engage with each other' (Gummerus et al., 2012), 'share ideas, information and opinions about a certain brand' (Kim and KO, 2010b, Habibi et al., 2014. The most mundane everyday tasks such as what to eat for breakfast, which clothes to wear or what perfume to put on involve consumption decisions. As a result, humans develop patterns of consumption from an early age.

Firms are taking advantage of this dominant marketing tool; engaging directly and in real time with consumers at relatively low cost and high levels of efficiency (Kaplan and Haelein, 2009). One of the industries most benefited with the use of social media, which has best adopted the advantages offered by this new communication channel, has been the fashion industry (Kim and KO, 2010b). Further, the visual strength of social media and the facilities offered as a medium of self-expression have converted social networks to the perfect place where consumers and companies from the online shopping industry congregate and live in harmony, developing different types of activities and behaviors. This intensive use of social media by both companies and consumers, and the higher interest to understand consumer behavior on the Web, have improved the need of developing studies that focused on consumer behavior towards social networks. Due to the existence of previous researches and studies, marketers are able to develop better marketing strategies on social media (Heinonen, 2010), as well as to define the market and identify threats and opportunities affecting consumer's receptivity to the product or service (Salomon and Ra bolt, 2004). Despite the study of consumer behavior on social media has become a topic of great interest among scholars and marketers in the latest years (e.g., Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008; Shao 2009; Heinonen, 2011, Sashi, 2012, Brodie et al., 2011a, b; Gummerus et al., 2012), the literature available is still limited (Habibi et, al., 2014) and little is known about the magnitude to which consumers engage in online behaviors (Gummers et al., 2012). Further, no research has been conducted to identify consumers' motivations for following online shopping on social media in the scope of the fashion industry. Hence, what this study proposes is an analysis of consumer behavior in social media, identifying consumers' motivation to follow/like online shopping and the level of consumers' engagement toward the online shopping on the media.

Abstract

- Purpose: -

This study aims to describe and analyze consumer behavior in social media toward online shopping. Specifically, it is analyzed consumers' motivations to follow online shopping on social media, activities developed on social media concerning online shopping and level of engagement regarding online shopping on social media.

- Keywords:

social media, social network, brand community, engagement, online shopping

- Design/Methodology/Approach: -

The methodology conducted for this research is a quantitative approach through an online survey with valid responses. The sample frame is for Undergraduate students at University of Ruhuna. The data was gathered using a self-designed questionnaire method, administered by Google Forms, whose link was shared on the social media.

It was determined that a hybrid methodology is the ideal option to conduct this study in order to fully address the research topic and to be able to firmly and accurately accept or reject the suggested hypothesis.

First, a qualitative literature review will be conducted in which significant publications and research that are pertinent to this study will be gathered, reviewed, and analyzed. This will give researchers a better understanding of the existing studies and research on the topic of consumer behavior. This will be accomplished using an academic search engine, and it will assist in developing the theoretical framework that will direct the study.

Social Media $\longrightarrow$ Online Consumer Behavior

Second, a closed-ended questionnaire will be used in a quantitative method. University students will receive this questionnaire in order to share their honest ideas and experiences that are pertinent to the study. The sample will be for students from the University of Ruhuna in Sri Lanka. The gathered information will then be organized and analyzed to look for any broad patterns that might provide insight into the study's goals.

Finally, in order to answer the research question and decide whether to accept or reject the proposed hypothesis, the theoretical framework will be merged with the results from the questionnaires to wrap up the study.

Analysis

we collected 150 responses using the google form. There were 69 male and 81 female undergraduate responders. (Figure 1)
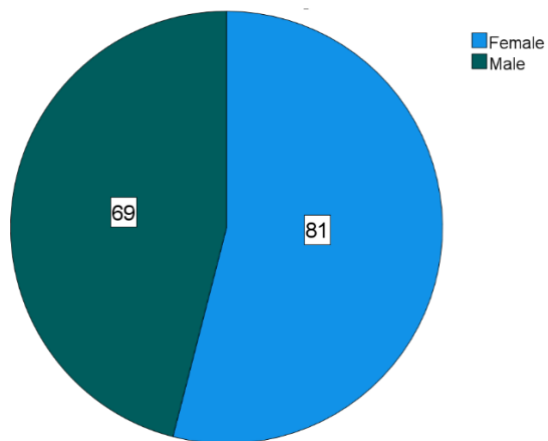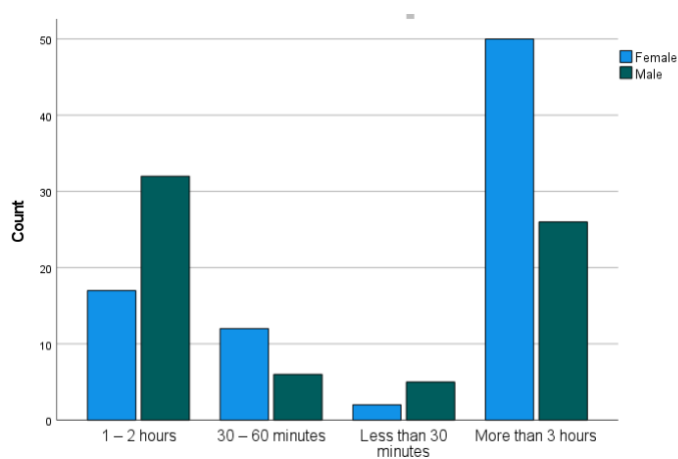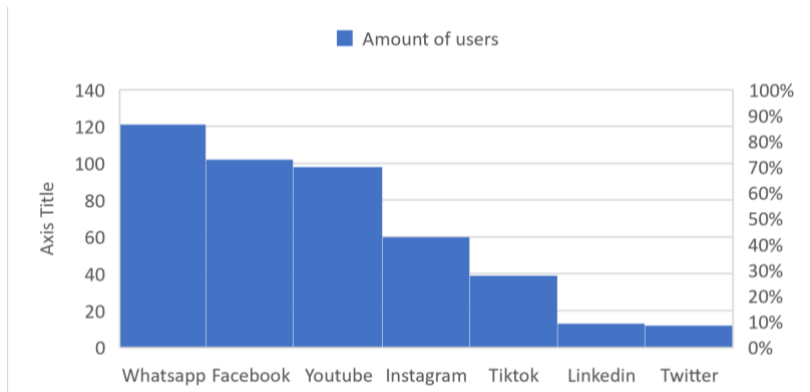

Figure 1

Then we were concerned about some factors which are effect to make relationship between social media and online consumer behavior
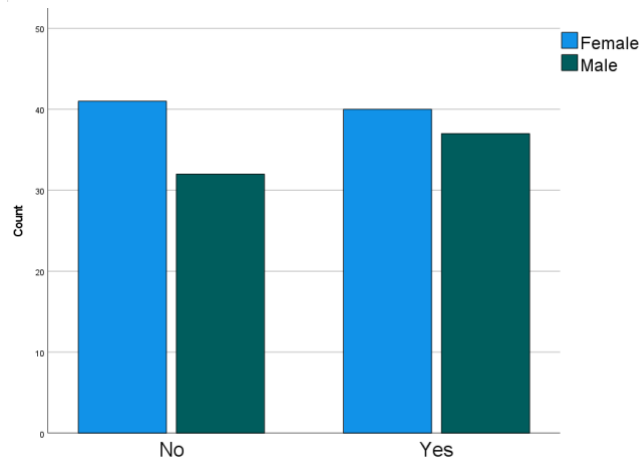

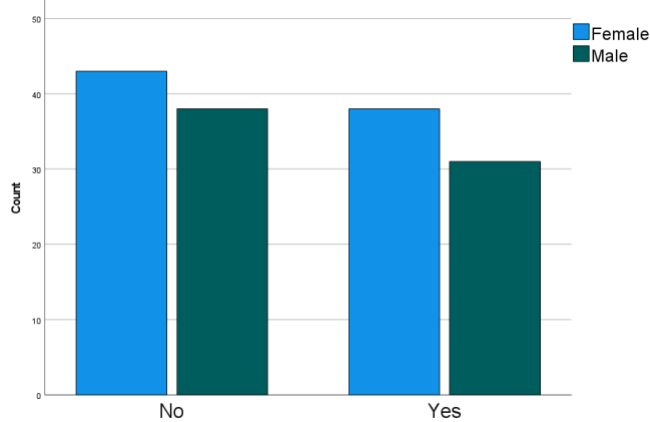Hours that do responders spend on social media (Figure 2)

Figure 2

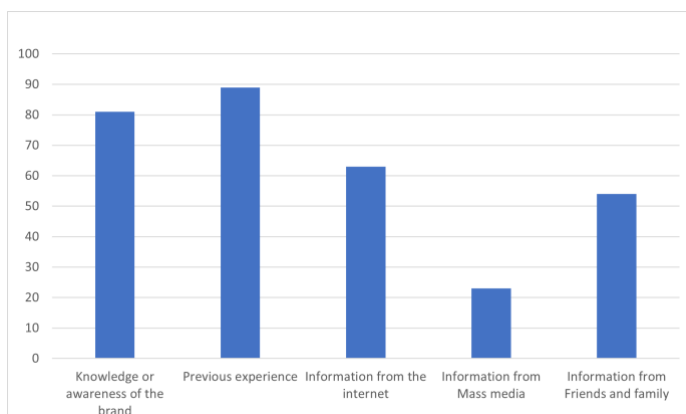Social Media platforms which use the most (Figure 3)

Figure 4

Attention to business ads on social media according to gender (Figure 4)
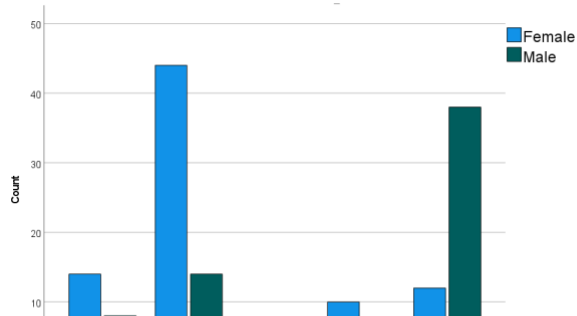

Figure 5

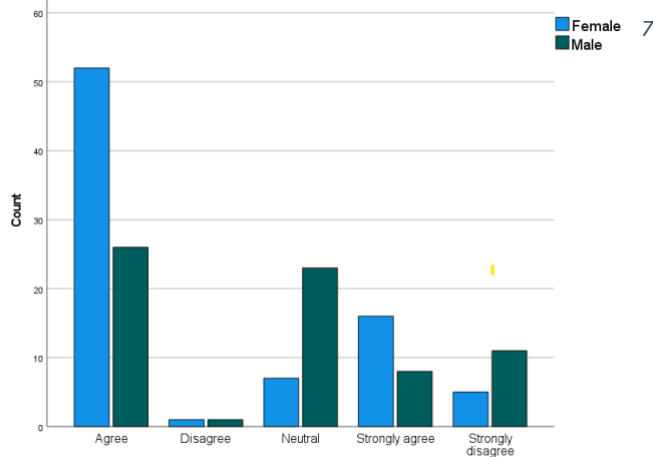Do they follow any company or store on social media (Figure 5)

Figure 6

Factors that can influence your decision to purchase a product online
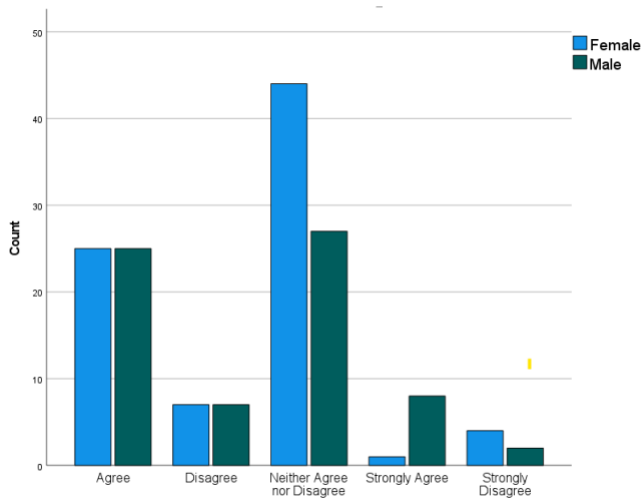
(Figure 6)

Mostly concerned with item type from social media ads according to gender (Figure 7)

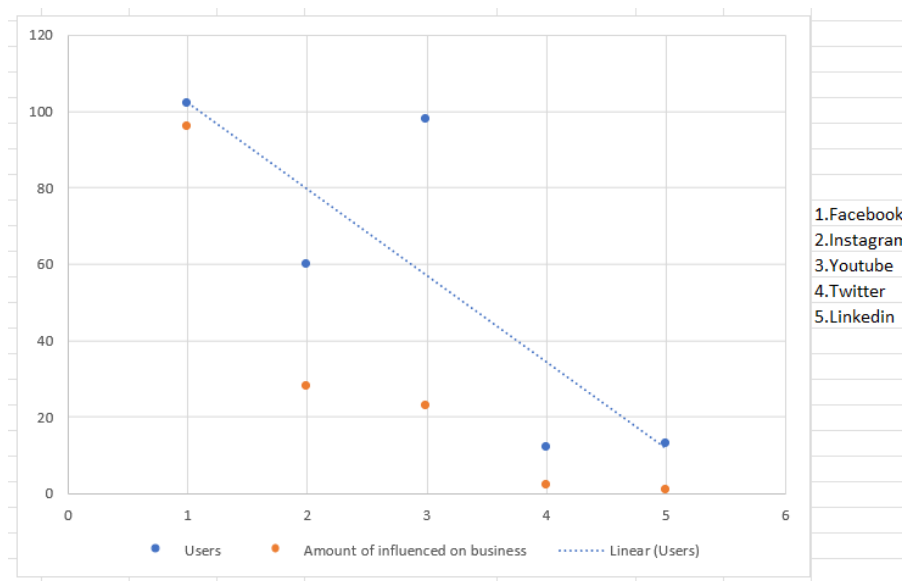Status of consumer agreed that reviews, comments, and posts about products on social media affect your online purchasing decision behavior (Figure 8)

Figure 8

Safety about online shopping on social media (Figure 9)

Figure 9

1.Facebook
2.Instagram
3.Youtube
4.Twitter
5.Linkedin

Relationship between the number of users and how much they influenced business among selected social media platforms (Figure 10)

Figure 10

Descriptive Analysis

We collected data according to our main factors which are affecting the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Then analyze descriptive statistics of those factors using IBM SPSS software. (Figure 11)

Descriptive Statistics

	N Statistic	Range Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Hours which do responders spend on social media	150	3	1	4	3.29	.856	.732	-1.062	.371
Attention about business ads on social media	150	1	0	1	.51	.501	.251	-.054	-2.024
online purchase as a result of an AD that appeared on your Social Media	150	2	0	2	1.09	.736	.542	-.149	-1.131
Does they follow any companies or stores on social media	150	1	0	1	.46	.500	.250	.162	-2.001
4d that reviews, comments, and posts about products on Social Media affect your online purchasing	150	4	1	5	3.61	1.110	1.232	-1.156	.872
Mostly concerned item type from social media ads	150	4	1	5	2.33	1.313	1.725	.654	-.520
Safety about online shopping on social media	150	4	1	5	3.20	.890	.792	-.579	.542
Valid N (listwise)	150								

Figure 11

Correlation Analysis

For making Correlation analysis, we got two factors which are related to independent and dependent variables. The responses about 'the mostly concerned item category on social media' and 'social media platform which are mostly used for online shopping advertisement' are used respectively as dependent and independent variable for calculate correlation matrix.

(Figure 12)

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	
150	100.0%	0	0.0%	150	100.0%	

Correlation between Vectors of Values

	Mostly concerned item type from social media ads	online purchase as a result of an AD that appeared on your Social Media	Gender
Mostly concerned item type from social media ads	1.000	-.483	.270
online purchase as a result of an AD that appeared on your Social Media	-.483	1.000	-.117
Gender	.270	-.117	1.000

Figure 12