

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333852892>

The influence of social media on consumer buying behavior: a case study of Ho Technical University, Ho

Experiment Findings · June 2019

CITATIONS

0

READS

12,845

1 author:



[Dotsey Timothy](#)

Ho Polytechnic

8 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR: A CASE STUDY OF HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, HO [View project](#)



ASSESSING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CHOICE OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS" (A CASE OF HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY) [View project](#)

HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

**ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER
BUYING BEHAVIOUR: A CASE STUDY OF HO TECHNICAL
UNIVERSITY, HO**

DOTSEY, TIMOTHY

TETTEY ODOI, DAVID

JULY, 2017

HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

**ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER
BUYING BEHAVIOUR: A CASE STUDY OF HO TECHNICAL
UNIVERSITY, HO**

DOTSEY, TIMOTHY

TETTEY ODOI, DAVID

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
MARKETING, FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
STUDIES, HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF HIGHER NATIONAL
DIPLOMA (H.N.D) IN MARKETING.**

JULY, 2017

DECLARATION

We, the undersigned hereby declare that this dissertation has never been presented either in whole or in part for any purpose anywhere.

.....

DOTSEY, TIMOTHY (03141147)

.....

TETTEY ODOI, DAVID (03141182)

JULY, 2017

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned certify that I supervised and examined this dissertation entitled
ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING
BEHAVIOUR: A CASE STUDY OF HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, HO submitted by
DOTSEY, TIMOTHY; TETTEY ODOI, DAVID to the Department of Marketing, Faculty
of Business and Management Studies, Ho Technical University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Marketing.

Signature:

Date:

MATTHEW OPOKU AGYEMAN-DUAH

Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to express our greatest gratitude to the Almighty God for his care and guidance for bringing us this far in our academic pursuit.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to Mr. Matthew Opoku Agyeman-Duah for his critical supervision, guidance, suggestions, and his proficient attitude towards the success of this research work and to Mr. Joseph Kwami Degbley for his support.

Dotsey Timothy

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my Father Mr. Maxwell Tettey for his immense cooperation. Finally, I am most grateful to all those who in diverse ways have contributed to making our project work a success. God richly bless you all.

Tettey Odoi David

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation in the honor of all my, lecturers, friends not forgetting the Togbi Ahevi family, Mad. Sabah Aku Ivy and Mrs. Perfect Titati who all have played an extraordinary role in my academic ladder and exceptional parental care and to my supervisor for immense support and critical supervision. May the good Lord richly bless you all!

Dotsey Timothy

I dedicate this dissertation in honor of all my lecturers, friends not forgetting my Father Mr. Maxwell Tettey and most of all, my supervisor for immense support and critical supervision. May the almighty God bless you all abundantly!

Tettey Odoi David

ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the influence of social media on consumer buying behavior: a case study of Ho Technical University, Ho. The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of social media on buying behavior of consumers. Specific objectives of the study are to identify potential factors that influence consumer buying behavior under social media context, to examine students' perception towards shopping online, to examine factors that motivate student buyers to shop through social media platforms, to examine how social media channels have affected buying behavior of Ho Technical University students and to identify the challenges with the use of social media in shopping. Questionnaire was used for collecting data. Out of two hundred copies of the questionnaire distributed, two hundred were retrieved which represented response rate of 100%. A purposive sampling method was used to sample the student of the University. In analyzing and interpreting the data collected, Statistical Product and Service Solutions [SPSS] software and Micro-soft Excel 2010 was used at the end of the findings, study revealed that 30% of students use social media for shopping, while 70% of students don't use social media for shopping online. Also the most preferred social networking site used by students, was Facebook with a percentage of 39.7%, followed by Whatsapp representing 38.2%, Twitter with a percentage of 14.7% , Instagram representing 5.9% and Google + also representing 1.5%. Students use social media mostly for social engagement thus chatting with friends more often than making buying decisions. In addition students indicated that when social media is used in shopping, it fostered quick access to product information, reduce stress of face to face bargaining, enhancing customer 'students' engagement and improving communication among seller and buyer. On the part of challenges of using social media network in buying decision making, distraction from hackings, cyber bullying, reduced face-to-face communication, publication of offensive materials. In assessing the influence of social media in consumer buying behavior, it is observed that out 100% consumers using social media, 47.7% does not use it for buying decision whilst 53.3% used it to make product decisions. The study recommends among others that, businesses and entrepreneurs are advised to increase the usage of social networking sites in all their business operations for the purpose of reaching out to customers with an ease and to improve customer feedback handling. This will help to foster communication, identifying emerging customer needs and boosting interaction as well enhancing customer engagement product/service decisions. Students should also be encouraged to visit the social networking sites to get new information's and to be abreast with the changes in the operations of the businesses. In curbing the challenges associated with the use of social media, management should develop policies and ensure that these policies are adhered to in their business operations. In assessing the influence of social media on consumer buying behavior, social media has not been effectively utilized in terms of communication business information to/among students of Ho Technical University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY	i
HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY	ii
DECLARATION	iii
CERTIFICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
DEDICATION	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of studies	1
1.2 Problem statement	4
1.3 Research question	5
1.4 Research Objectives	5
CHAPTER II	6
LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Definition of social media	6
2.3 Social media in Ghana	11
2.4 The Characteristics of social media	13
2.5 Purchase Intention	16
2.6 Summary of Literature Review	21
CHAPTER III.....	22
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	22
1.1 3.1 Research design	22
1.2 3.3 Study population and Sample Size	23
1.3 3.4Sampling method	23

1.4	3.5 Sources of Data	23
1.5	3.6 Data Collection Techniques.....	23
CHAPTER IV		25
PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS		25
4.1	Demographic characteristics.....	25
CHAPTER V		38
5.1	Conclusions of the study	38
5.2	Managerial recommendations.....	39
APPENDIX A.....		43
BIBLIOGRAPHY		43
APPENDIX B.....		46
QUESTIONNAIRES FOR STUDENTS		46

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1.1: Gender	25
Table 4.1.4: What Students use Social media for?	28
Table 4.1.11: How social media channels affect buying behavior	35

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1.2: Level of students	26
Figure 4.1.3: social networking site used by students	25
Figure 4.1.5: Use of social media for shopping	28
Figure 4.1.6: Social media Networking sites used in buying	30
Figure 4.1.7: Information search on Social networking sites	33
Figure 4.1.8: Benefits of using social media in buying decision	34
Figure 4.1.9: Challenges of using social media for buying	35
Figure 4.1.10: Factors that influence buying behavior under social media	36
Figure 4.1.11: How social media channels affect buying behavior	37

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

New technological inventions can have a great impact in organizations through its contributions to change the social environment while expediting sharing of knowledge and the development of new ideas (Kling et al, 2005). Because of the rapid growth in online shopping market in Ghana, more and more vendors and sellers rush into e-commerce platforms to share the product. However, the growth of online buyers cannot keep up the pace with the growth of sellers. Therefore, social media platforms become the best and efficient source to attract more customers and exploit new sources. In addition, according to the results from CNNIC Online Shopping Report (2014), several factors of social media triggers the consumers' purchasing motivation and social media purchasing has developed into a new consumption pattern online. Social media purchasing consists of two steps: 1) seeking and obtaining product information through social media platforms 2) developing purchase intention or making purchase.

In a survey carried out in 2009 by McKinsey and Company, it was discovered that with the appropriate use of the social media a lot of organizations were able to benefit from each other in ways such as sharing of ideas, communication becoming better and the workplace environment becoming enhanced. The value that social media adds in organizations is huge as an increasing number of organizations are already endorsing and exploiting the various opportunities in social media technological innovation. This is to enable them find support for their various organizational and business practices (Starmark, 2008).

Social media hold a lot of interesting opportunities, but it is important to understand how to utilize it with its accompanying impact in an organizational context beside where it is applicable in real-life projects. The present day organizations should ask questions like how can employees use social media technologies to do their work and what impact these have on employees. These should be pivotal questions for modern day organizations (Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). These questions can help organizations to understand how social media technologies work effectively at workplace. Thus, it affords them the opportunity to review and understand how to utilize what it offers with its impact on how people interact and work among them as earlier discussed.

Hill (2009) portrayed Globalization as the deviation towards a more unified and co-dependent economy which is historically merging different national markets into one global enormous marketplace. The Economic Intelligence Unit (2009) announced that, the global market place was overwhelmed by variations in exchange rates, the purchasing behavior of consumers and inflation in the course of the recession that started in 2007. These economic developments have ended up compelling organizations to redesign their business strategies so they can be able to communicate their brands more effectively.

Davis (2001) writes that brand is one of an organization's most prized assets which simply imply that there is a demand on the present day organization to understand that it is important for them to capitalize on their brand. There are various means of building brands, which can come in form of advertising, meeting specific needs of customers, attaching a particular image to a service or product, identifying and meeting a need that competitors are to identify, combative communication and strategizing price (Burger et al, 2009).

As recessions is towering in recent times of high, it became very imperative for organizations to maintain honest, clear medium of communication and retain a good image in a cost effective means (Unit for Economic Intelligence, 2009).

Social media marketing was one of the popular channel organizations used to communicate their brands during the recession. Some of those mediums are; online electronic media which helps facilitates participation, responsiveness, consultation, connectivity and networking amongst online end users (Mayfield, 2008).

Social media channels like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, etc are some of the dynamic tools that have helped facilitate online rapport (Golden, 2011). Relatively, it is a low cost pattern of marketing which allows organizations to engage direct end-users through their contacts (Heinlein and Kaplan, 2010).

Brands and consumers have a changing role to play in the organization's strategy given the choices made available to consumers and the prominent role of social media marketing being that they now have an impact on the economy (Mayfield 2004, Lindeman, 2008). Brands have huge influence on customer choice and customers influence other customers. Affecting repurchases are these series of events, which goes on to affect earnings in the future and long term organizational continuity (Oliveira and Sullivan, 2003).

Thus, consumer's buying behavior is often influenced by a leading brand. This value is created by generating demand (via repurchases) and securing of future earnings for the organization (Sullivan and Oliveira, 2003). Therefore social media marketing serves as opportunities for communication and depends upon new and unusual thought patterns (Heinlein and Kaplan, 2010; Kweskin, 2008). This helps customer's product and brand

experience.

This new era of digital communication and social engagement is preminent for strategizing in business. Therefore as organizations are becoming more competitive globally, it is pertinent for them to explore marketing strategy in a more compelling and innovative way so as to attract larger number of customers (Rockendorf, 2011).

1.2 Problem Statement

The coming of the Internet and its acceptance by the public, have altered quite a lot in the way organizations promote their services and products as well as the channels of communication between them and their customers. This is seen in the way they market and communicate their brands and products nowadays which is becoming a challenging project. Customers are overwhelmed by marketing commercials and promotional events. The sensitivity of customers to get excited is fading out on promotional events and consumers are beginning to resist the efforts of some companies at marketing them. However, Miller (2010) stated in his research that social marketing has made very important role in persuading consumers to buy online. He found that 70% of consumers are visiting Social Media to get useful information, 49% of them made the decision to buy certain product and 60% of consumers prefer to share their information about the products with others online. However, the actual transactions of purchasing processes occur for only 7% of consumers (Miller and Lammas, 2010). Basically, the promotional focus of some organizations is on the conventional mass media advert style which includes commercials on TV, radio jingles and advertisements in print formats such as newspapers and magazines along with billboard placements. It is now on record that as the Internet is fast advancing across the global marketplace, the effectiveness of traditional mass media is fast on the decline.

1.3 Research Questions

- What factors motivate student buyers to shop through social media platforms?
- How have social media channels affected buying behavior of Ho Technical University students?
- What are the challenges associated with the use of social media to shop?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of social media on buying behavior of consumers. Specific objectives of the study are:

- To examine factors that motivates student buyers to shop through social media platforms.
- To examine how social media channels have affected buying behavior of Ho Technical University students.
- To identify the challenges with the use of social media in shopping.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of literature covering topics like the definitions of social media, the classification of social media, Social network sites, Social media in Ghana, the characteristics of social media, purchase Intention, the definition of purchase intention, current study on purchase intention and summary of Literature review. These will be examined and discussed from textbooks and other publications on the topic.

2.2 Definition of Social Media

Researchers and media experts have proposed various definitions for social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) give a general definition of social media in consideration of Web 2.0 and User-Generated Content. Social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, s. 61).

Parr (2010) defines social media as the use of electronic and Internet tools for the purpose of sharing and discussing information and experiences with other human beings in more efficient ways. Jantsch (2008) considers social media as the use of technology combined with social interaction to create or co-create value.

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, social media is defined as forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content. Dykeman (2008) regards social media as “the means for any person to: publish digital, creative content; provide and obtain real-time feedback via online discussions, commentary and evaluations; and incorporate changes or corrections to the original content” (Dykeman, 2008). The online encyclopaedia wiki defines social

media as media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques.

Despite all kinds of definitions, it is not hard to identify three fundamental elements that support the existence and prosperity of social media that is content, communities and Web 2.0. Without the technology, social media is just empty talk. The Web 2.0 technology enables people to use various platforms to share, discuss and create contents with each other in the community. Nevertheless, technology becomes meaningless by itself unless people employ it to create value.

2.2 The Classification of Social Media

Just as much as variety in social media definitions, there are also different kinds of applications and platforms that represent social media. Therefore, it is necessary to summarize some general types of social media in order to set boundaries between what belongs to social media and what is not. According to Mayfield (2008), there are basically seven kinds of social media, including social networks, blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, content communities and micro blogging. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) propose a similar classification of social media which includes collaborative projects, blogs and micro blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, virtual social worlds. In this study, the classification by Mayfield will be considered as the criterion in evaluating whether a platform belongs to social media or not.

I. Social Network Sites (SNSs)

Social network sites or social network services allow people to establish personal web pages and then connect with friends for the purpose of sharing information and communication (Mayfield, 2008).

Just like the majority of social media platforms, the connections made on social network sites are primarily based on user's social networks in real life and users are encouraged to provide real personal information. In that sense, social networks sites along with other social media tools merely provide platforms for real world friends to communicate in the virtual world. Nevertheless, social network sites nowadays are far more than just platforms rather it has gradually been integrated into people's daily life. The original version of social network sites dated back to 1995 where community such as classmates.com tried to help people find back their old friends and school mates by having people's email addresses linked to each other.

It was not until early 2000s, with the development of user profile functions, social network sites entered the second stage and the new generation of social network sites emerged and became popular soon (Taprial&Kanwar, 2012, s. 18). The best examples are Friendster in 2002 and MySpace in 2003.

The real fever of social media sites started with the birth of Facebook founded by Mark Zuckerberg and his colleagues in 2004. By the end of December 2013, it had 1.23 billion active users monthly worldwide. Almost all the basic functions of social network sites can be found in Facebook and it keeps delighting people with new features and innovation (e.g. timeline, maps).

II. Blogs

The term 'blog' appeared as both noun and verb in 1999 which is shortened form of 'Web log'

(Andrew, 2009, s. 49). Blogs are online journals and it is most often arranged in the chronological order containing text, data, images and other media objects recorded and retrievable through a web browser. There are number of features that distinguish blogs from portal website and other general websites. Blogs tend to write in a personal tone and conversational style. There is usually a topic before bloggers start to write. Blogs are flexible and extensive in the way that bloggers can create links and make references from other sources which enable both readers and bloggers track back while they are reading blogs. Blogs also allow comments and subscription which promote online interaction and form of community group.

III. Wikis

Wikis are websites that allows people to add, modify or delete contents in collaboration with others(Mayfield, 2008).Usually a wiki is supported by a database that keeps track of all changes, allowing users to compare changes and also revert to previous version. All previous contributions are stored permanently and all actions are visible and reversible in wikis (Andrew, 2009, s. 57). Different from the traditional printed encyclopaedias, the open-access authoring environments of wiki causes the content to be divergent without a standard style or format. This means wikis require rigorous version control afforded by the system (Emigh& Herring, 2005). The most popular wiki is Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia that was started in 2001. It has now more than 4.5 million articles in English alone as well as articles in other nine languages (Mayfield, 2008).

IV. Podcasts

The definition of podcast by Merriam-Webster dictionary is a program (as of music or talk) made available in digital format for automatic download (Merriam-Webster.com, 2014). Audio and video files are published on the internet that allows users to subscribe to. The feature of subscription truly represents the sociability and community characteristics of social media. People have long been able to upload video and audio files on the internet, but with the subscription feature, each individual is doing their own marketing by notifying subscribers as soon as they have updates.

This enables everyone to build their own audiences and communities which is the basic formation of social media. Apple's iTunes is the most widely used podcast platform around the world. The podcast can be either listened to on the computer or downloaded onto mobile devices with iTunes application.

V. Forums

The internet forum is also known as community bulletin board or message board. The formation of forum starts with a group of people who share the same interests or would like to discuss a specific topic. Forum can be considered as the longest form of online social media. Not surprisingly, forum has a strong sense of community with one or several administrators serve the role as moderators that regulate improper posts on the forums. The discussion on the forum is called thread in which different forums members participate for the purpose of online debate, enquiring advice or seeking help, etc. The threads do not necessarily started by the administrator and unlike blogs which is owned and managed by the bloggers, threads are started by any members in the forums who want to discuss and share something with others (Mayfield, 2008).

VI. Content Communities

Content communities can be regarded as a combination of social network sites and podcasts. It shares some common features from these two social media forms. However, content community has a particular focus on sharing a certain type of content such as photo, video, music and bookmarks (Mayfield, 2008). Examples of popular content communities are Flickr, Instagram (both focusing on sharing photography), YouTube (world's largest video sharing service), delicio.us (bookmarks)

VII. Micro Blogs

Literally, micro blogs are supposed to be mini versions of blogs. However, micro blog is more than just a blog. It combines the basic elements of blogs with the functions of instant messaging and social networking from other social media platforms. Twitter is no doubt the dominant player in the micro-blog field with over 200 million active users. Tweets are the messages send by users through various platforms including twitter websites, mobile device applications and SMS. Messages are limited to 140 characters which is the most obvious feature of 'micro' blog.

Different users treat twitter for different purpose but the fundamental aim is to simply keep in touch with own networks and share thoughts or start conversation even though nowadays following celebrities have become a trend.

2.3 Social Media in Ghana

According to the GSMR (2016) internet live stats; there is currently over 3,424,971,237 internet users globally, with an internet penetration of about 46% of global population, a growth difference of 3% from the previous year. Facebook, the largest social media network according to its September 2016 data, reports a monthly active user base of 1.79

billion with 1.09 users active on mobile also making it the most active social media channel (GSMR, 2016).

The trend shows that 1-2 out of 3 persons found online is using Facebook probable using mobile to access it, a total social media usage is far higher when all the numerous social media channels are considered (a total of 2.31 billion, wear social report, 2016).

The trend is no different in Ghana as the 7,958,675 of the population can be found online (28.4% penetration) ranking the country the 47th highest internet user base closely following that of the United Arab Emirates in the global internet user base rankings. Social media usage in Ghana is also continuously growing and estimated at 40% social media penetration (2.9 million social media users as at January 2016, wear social report) with almost every online mobile user having a social media account or on a social messaging channel such as Whatsapp.

According to Social Bakers daily statistical reports, Ghana have brands and personalities that have audience of over 4 million followers such as John Dumelo and Yvonne Nelson, both actors, with some of the fastest growing social media pages such as MichealBlackson and Bishop Agyin-Asare.

Research also shows that the average Ghanaian spend not less than 3hours 30 minutes browsing the internet on his/her phone, out of which 3hours 13 minutes of this is spent on social media (wearesocial report, 2016) which shows the changing behavioral patterns of human activities away from the traditional lifestyle to most time spent on social media.

2.4 The Characteristics of Social Media

With the mature of Web 2.0 technology, social media has reached almost everyone around the world as long as you have electronic devices connected to Internet (Mayfield, 2008). It has already been integrated into part of our daily life. Nevertheless, when people are discussing the widely-circulated term social media, very few have truly understood the essence of social media. Understanding the characteristics of social media is not only important for individuals but also crucial for companies who want to compete in the market. Consumers who have good command of social media skills and perception of social media characteristics will make their life easier and bring themselves additional value (personal marketing, product information seeking, job search, etc.). Companies employing social media as part of their marketing strategy without essentially understanding the characteristics of social media are doomed to failure. Even though thousands of articles and blog posts have been discussing social media from different aspects, there is quite little theoretical literature which systematically describes the properties of social media. To my delight, several articles still give great description of social media characteristics.

Mayfield (2008) pointed out five fundamental characteristics that shared by almost all social media platforms: participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness. Taprial and Kanwar (2012) identify five properties that are more powerful and distinguish the social media from the traditional media. They are accessibility, speed, interactivity, longevity and reach.

Based on the literature on social media, 9 characteristics of social media can be summarized as follow:

2.4.1 Community

Community in social media share same features with other online and virtual communities, which are formed based on people who share the same interests or background. However, there are differences in which the network formed in social media is often an extension of the network in the real world and trust in social media network is usually higher than other communities.

2.4.2 Connectedness

Social connectedness is defined as interpersonal, community, and general social ties (Teixeira, 1992, p.36). From Mayfield's point of view, connectedness is closetointegration in the sense that sites, resources, and people are connected through links and shared by users on various social media platforms.

2.4.3 Openness

Almost all the social media platforms are free to join and anyone can use social media as medium to create, edit, communicate, consumer and comment contents (Mayfield, 2008). Social media creates an atmosphere that encourages participation and sharing information.

2.4.4 Speed

One of the advantages of online social network compared with real life network is the communication and spread speed. In contrast of traditional WOM, where opinions may disappear into thin air, online WOM spreads consistently results in viral effect. Contents published on social media platforms are instantaneous and are available to everyone in your network as soon as they are published. (Taprial&Kanwar, 2012)

2.4.5 Accessibility

Like the traditional media which relies on technology and platforms to function, the same applies to social media which is the product of web 2.0 technologies and user generated content. The development of different electronic devices, anyone can access social media anywhere and anytime as long as it is connected to internet (Mayfield, 2008).

2.4.6 Participation

Burgoon et al. (2000) defines participation as the extent to which two or more parties are actively engaged in the interaction in contrast to lurking, passively observing or monologues. As mentioned before, social media encourages participation and feedbacks. One party creates content and shares on the platform to arouse the interest of the other party so that they will actively contribute and give feedbacks. Drury (2008) argued that social media allows people to share and engage with each other so that they enable content shared to become more democratized than ever before. While varying in the degree of participation, social media has been employed by a number of organizations in order to facilitate a participative culture (Rosso et al., 2008). From this point of view, the line between media audience becomes blurred as everyone can become creators, communicators, readers and consumers of contents on the platforms and each individual's identity is shifting all the time (Mayfield, 2008).

2.4.7 Conversation

Traditional media communicates in one way in which content is created by media and distributed to audience while social media is based on user-generated content which means everyone becomes the source for communication (Rosso et al., 2008). This means two-way or multi-way communication is formed in the social media which aims at fostering

interaction among users and other parties. Compared to traditional media, social media enables two-way conversations rather than one-directional transmissions or distributions of information to an audience (Mayfield, 2008)

2.5 Purchase Decision making: Purchase Intention

The study on consumer buying behavior based on purchase intention has been developed in marketing for more than 20 years. One issue remains disputable is whether purchase intention can effectively predict consumer buying behavior. Armstrong, Morwitz and Kumar (2000) applied four intention-based methods to forecast sales of existing consumer goods and services. The results proved that purchase intention is better at forecasting sales than simple extrapolation of past sales trends.

Nowadays, in order to better understand consumer behavior, smart companies dig deep into analysis of customer's buying decision process which focuses on their experiences in learning, choosing, using and even disposing of a product (Kotler et al. 2009).

Marketers developed a stage model of buying decision process to simplify the complexity of real world situation and at the same time capture the core processes and stages involved. Five key stages, which are problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase behaviour, are involved in the buying decision model.(Kotler et al. 2009).

Marketing researchers generally posit purchase intention in the phase of purchase decision. In this stage, consumers have already formed preferences among various brands and ready to make the final purchase decisions. However, according to Kotler et al. 2009, preferences and even purchase intentions are not completely reliable predictors of purchase behaviour.

Two general factors may somehow intervene between the purchase intention and the purchase decision. They are attitudes of others and unanticipated situational factors. These two factors are crucial in the conceptual model proposed in the next part even though they are expressed in different terms.

The simple definition of purchase intention from Business Dictionary is a plan to purchase a particular good or service in the future. But purchase intention comes from behavioral science and evolves from the term intention. According to Fishbein(1975, 1991), intention is the subjective probability that one perform a particular action.

The concept was then extended to purchase intention which described the probability that consumers are willing to execute the buying action. Similar definition has also been proposed by Dodds (1991), Grewal, Monroe and Krishnan (1998), Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) focusing on the probability of consumer's willingness to buy a specific product.

Fandos&Flavian (2006) stated that purchase intention indicates consumer's predictable behavior, meaning purchase intention can be used to predict what products or brands consumers will buy next time when they do shopping. Positive purchase intention not only indicates high probability of actual purchase but also reflects a consumer's positive commitment or loyalty towards products and brands (Moorman, Deshpandé, &Zaltman, 1993).

As discussed before, purchase intention is crucial in the decision making process and closely related to consumer buying behavior. Researchers have developed different theories and models to identify the formation of purchase intention as well as the understanding the

mechanism from different views and perspectives. At present, there are several views on the study of consumer purchase intention (Rosso et al., 2008).

2.5.1 Purchase Intention and Consumer Attitudes

Consumer attitudes are a composite of consumer beliefs, feelings and behavioral intentions. The three components are highly interdependent and reflect the process of how consumers react to a particular product or brand. By applying Fishbein model, Kim and Littrell measured tourists' attitudes and proved that tourists' attitudes toward the destination culture will influence their purchase intentions on souvenirs (Kim & Mary, 1999).

Sondergaard, Grunert and Scholderer (2005) studied the formation of consumer attitudes towards different enzyme production methods, suggesting that the formation of consumers attitudes follow a top down approach more often. This means that before the formation of purchase intention, consumers have general attitude towards the particular food. The more positive these attitudes are the more positive purchase intentions will be.

Concluding current literature, it can be detected that is during the pre-conceptual stage of purchase decision making process, the formation of attitudes will significantly determine the purchase intention of consumers.

2.5.2 Purchase Intention and Perceived Value

Consumer's perceived value is explained as the difference between the benefits consumers can gain and the costs they will pay for the products or services, which is evaluated by consumers before making final purchase decisions. Based on the theory of consumer behavior, consumers will choose the products and services that maximize their perceived value (Mayfield, 2008).

Empirically, perceived value has a positive relation with purchase intention. Zeithaml (1998) recognizes that the more benefits consumers perceive from product or services, the more perceived value they will have and the higher willingness they will have in purchasing products or services.

Peng and Liang (2011) structures a four-dimensional (i.e. price, functional, emotional and social) model of the perceived value under the context of limited time price promotions offered by e-commerce business in China. The results indicated that under high levels of subjective time pressure perceived by consumers, the perceived value of products by consumers will also increase.

Among the four perceived value dimensions, only emotional value has significant positive influence on consumer's purchase intention meaning e-commerce businesses should focus more on capturing customer's sentimental aspects of perceived value. Chen(2003) applied the purchase decision model based on consumer perceived model and found out that consumer perceived value are influenced by internal factors related to physical and mental factors as well as external and environmental factors that are social, political and cultural background (Chen, 2003).

Shaharudin et.al (2010) studied Malaysian consumers purchase intention of organic products and it shows that perceived value of organic products has significant positive influence on purchase intention of organic products. It also further indicates that perceived value is not merely concerned with price but also associated with the benefits of having, using and consuming a product. Due to the development of information technology and internet, the more information consumer receive about organic products, the more the

consumer will perceive organic food products as something that has value and worth buying (Shaharudin, Pani, Mansor, & Elias, 2010).

Wu and Mi (2005) conducted an analysis on purchase intention of jewelries and proved the same relation that perceived value has a positive effect on purchase intention. Perceived value is the net value of the difference between perceived benefits and perceived sacrifice of consumers, i.e. consumer surplus.

Summarizing the literature of purchase intention based on perceived value, the study from this perspective is quite mature and widely explored across multidisciplinary field. By introducing psychological and behavioral theories combining with economic theories, researchers truly studies the perceived value from customer perspective instead of analyzing it from company's point of view.

2.5.3 Purchase Intention and Technology Acceptance Model

Technology acceptance model was developed by Davis et al (1989). The model helps to analyze from the perspective of consumer's acceptance of new technology. Two major variables perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the determinants of their behavioral intentions.

Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance and perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort (Davis, 1993). The model further explained that external variables and perceived ease of use co-determine perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use is solely determined by external factors. Sin et al (2012) applied the technology acceptance model as the basis of the theoretical framework and found out that the more Malaysian young consumers find online

social media to be useful, the more likely they will have the intention to purchase through social media websites. Meanwhile, young consumers have the intention to buy online through social media if the delivering and ordering process offered by social media is easy and simple to understand. Maditinos and Sarigiannidis (2007) adopted and extended the technology acceptance model by adding additional construct perceived risk in the study of the behavioral intention of Greek consumer's intentions of purchasing through an online B2C e-commerce system. Consistent with previous studies both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as well as perceived risks are positively related to attitude toward using hattB2C e-commerce system and intention to transact with system. Phatthana and Mat (2011) also employed technology acceptance model as their theoretical framework and added additional construct image in predicting purchase intention (choosing location) in health tourism industry. The result, as always, indicated that perceived ease of use and usefulness together with the overall image of healthcare providers are positively and significantly related to international patients' e-purchasing intention in health tourism. From the empirical literature reviewed as well as other literature which adopted TAM model, the results indicated the robustness of technology acceptance model and the advantage of its wide adaptability and extensibility.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter covers research design and methodology; including study area, study population, sampling procedure, sources of data, data collection technique and data processing and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is said to be the systematic approach of studying a research problem.

Research designs specify the methods and procedures for conducting a particular research.

Research design guides researchers in determining what issues to study, the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data.

The three main types of research designs are:

Exploratory research: its goal is to throw light on the real nature of the problem and suggest possible solutions or new ideas. It is a kind of research design that is meant to conduct research into issues that are not clear.

Descriptive research: this involves planning a research for the purpose of identifying and illustrating the characteristics of a research occurrence. It is suitable for answering research questions that concern what, who, how, why, when and where.

Conclusive research: this research design is also known as explanatory research design or casual research design. It is a kind of research that is for establishing relationships between specific variables. Its purpose is to test a cause-and- effect relationship.

An exploratory and convenience research was adopted for the study. Undertaking an exploratory research helped gaining more understanding into issues that are no clear. The effectiveness of using social media in buying decisions making to students cannot be over emphasized taking into consideration of how the world has become a global village.

Students of Ho Technical University are questioning why social media platforms are not used in product decision making. The research seeks to assess the influence of social media on buying decisions of students in Ho Technical University

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted at Ho Technical University in the Volta region of Ghana, Ho

3.3 Research Population and Sample Size

The population for this study comprised of students of Ho Technical University, in the Volta Region of Ghana, Ho. The sample size for the distribution of questionnaires was 200 students of Ho Technical University.

3.4 Sampling method

The sampling method that was used for the study is a purposive sampling method. A purposive sampling method is also known as judgmental sampling. In this situation, the researchers decide on the people in the research population that should be contacted for responses. This sampling method was adopted in order to gather their responses from the students and lecturers of Ho Technical University. The technique will be used concurrently with data collection instrument (questionnaires).

3.5 Sources of Data

The source of data will come from primary source. Thus the source of data comes directly from the field (students of Ho Technical University).

3.6 Data Collection Techniques

In gathering data, questionnaires were issued to students and lecturers of Ho Technical University. This method of data collection is selected in order to gather data from a wider population.

Questionnaire: This contains questions to which the respondents ; either by expressing his or her own view (open ended questions) or by ticking the right answer out of alternatives provided (close ended questions). Questionnaire were preferred as the method for eliciting information from respondents because questionnaires make replication of views expressed easier, provide answers to questionnaires enabling the researchers to make comparison of views on issues and also for measuring specific variables in a study. The questionnaires for our respondents were structured. It contained close ended and multiple choice questions. The close-ended questions are made up of a list of questions with possible answers for the respondents to tick. Close-ended questions were used purposely to allow easy coding. The multiple-choice questions allowed respondents to answer questions that were applicable to the study.

3.7 Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is a method of converting data collected about a phenomenon into information by data editing, data coding, data entry, and summarizing data into tables, charts and graphs. After the collection of data, the results were analyzed with the use of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Microsoft excel 2010 and the result shown in tables with corresponding frequencies and percentage. Tabulations of data helped to aid quick comparison of statistical data shown between rows and columns. Also the charts helped to clarify complex problems and reveal hidden facts, which were not apparent from the tabular for.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The chapter dwells on the analysis and interpretations of data gathered on the field. The purpose of data analysis and interpretation phase is to transform the data collected into credible evidence about the development of the intervention and its performance.

Questionnaires were issued out to 200 students of the Ho Technical University.

4.1 Demographic characteristics

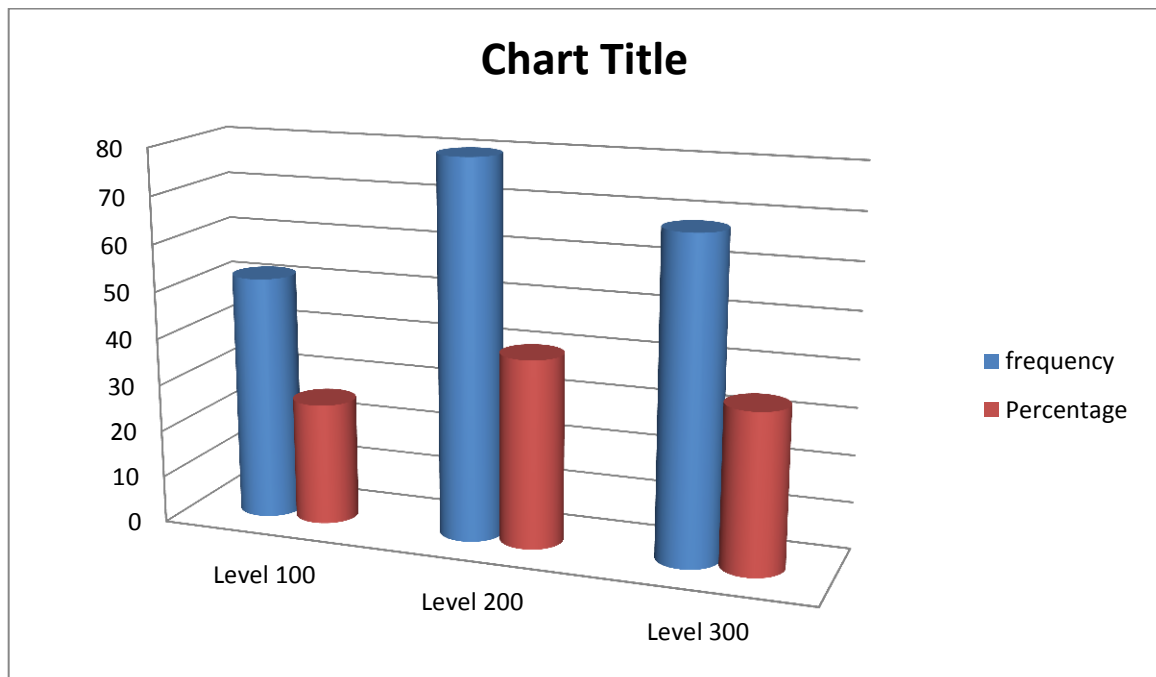
Table 4.1.1: Survey response on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	108	54%
Female	92	46%
Total	200	100

Source: Field Data July 2017

Table 4.1.1 above indicate that 108 respondents representing 54% are made up males and 92 respondents representing 46% are made up of females.

Figure 4.1.2 Survey response on Level of Students

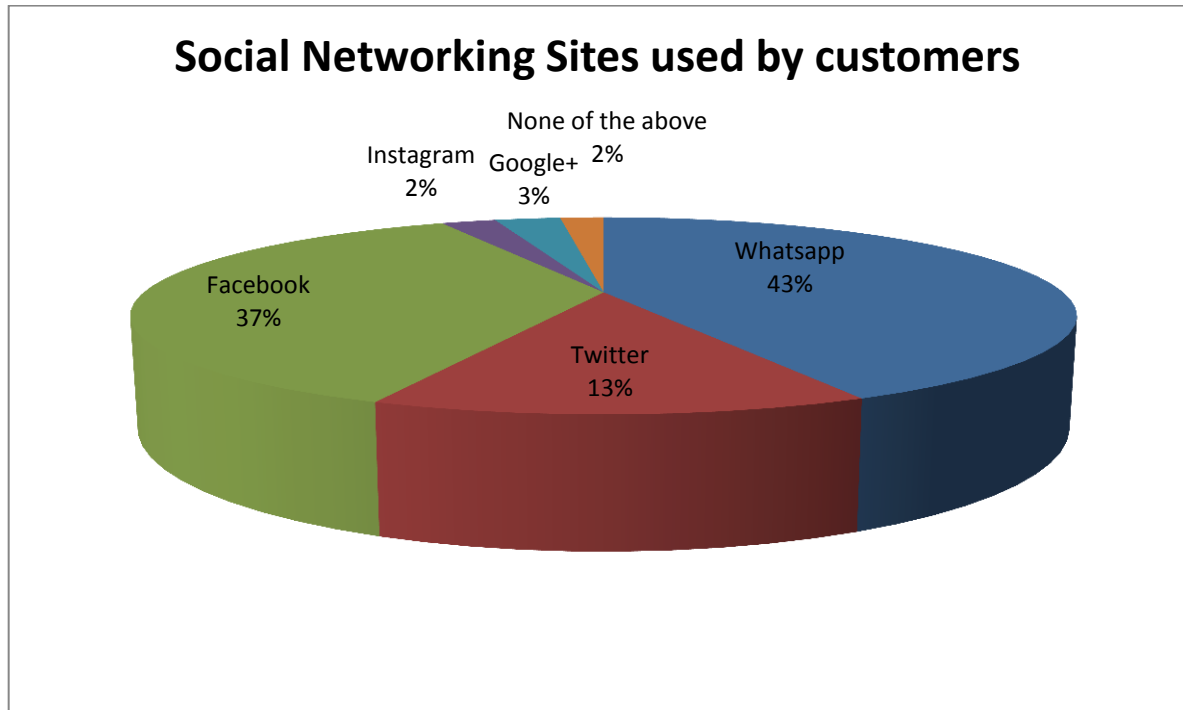


Source: Field Data July 2017

Figure 4.1.2: Field Data July 2017

Figure above depicts that, respondents from level 100 are made up 52 representing 26% whiles respondents from the level 200 are made up of 80 representing 40% respondents from the level 300 are made up of 68 representing 34%.

Figure 4.1.3: Survey response on Social Networking Sites used by customers ‘Students’



Source: Field Data July 2017

From the figure 4.1.3 above, respondents used the following social networking sites, Whatsapp 182 represents 42.7%, Twitter 58 represents 13.6%, Facebook 156 represents 36.7%, Instagram 10 represents 2.3%, Google + 12 represents 2.8%, none of the above 8 represents 1.9%. This analysis shows that Whatsapp is the most used social networking site used by students.

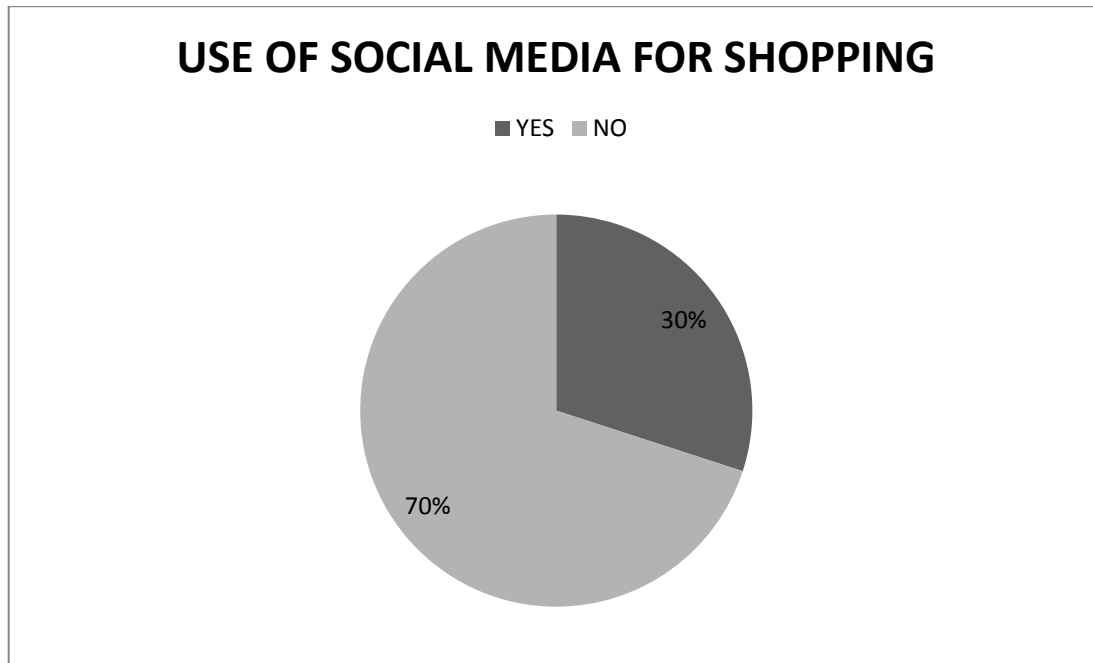
Table 4.1.4: Survey response on what Students use Social media for

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Finding new friends	168	47.7%
Searching for new product information	56	15.9%
Searching for new product	68	19.4%
Shopping online	60	17%
Total	352	100

Source: Field Data July 2017

When students were asked what they use social media for, 168 respondents representing 47.7% indicated that they used it for finding new friends, 56 respondents representing 15.9% indicated they used social media for searching for new product information, 68 respondents representing 19.4% used social media for searching for new product, 60 respondents representing 17% represents using the social media for shopping online. It could be deduced from the table that out of 100% use of social media, only 17% is for online shopping. This study confirms Liu (2010) study that students use social media sites for social engagement rather than for purchase decisions.

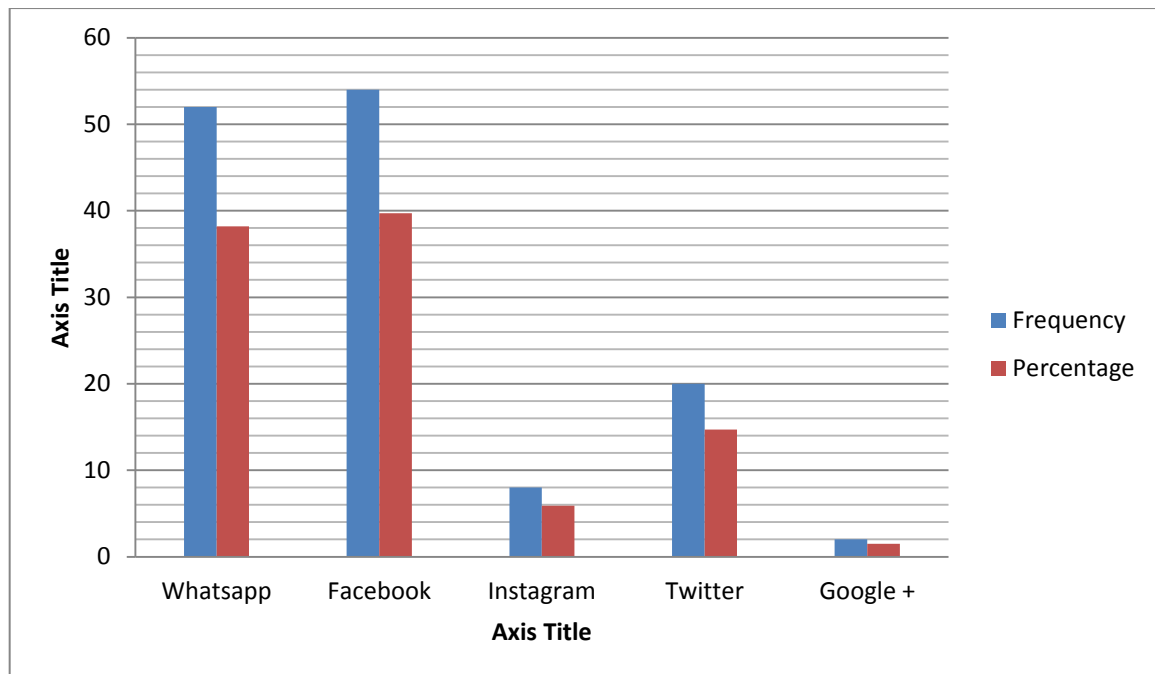
FIGURE 4.1.5: Survey response on respondents use of social media for shopping



Source: Field Data July 2017

When respondents were asked whether they used social media for shopping, 140 representing 70% do not use it for shopping and 60 representing 30% used it for shopping.

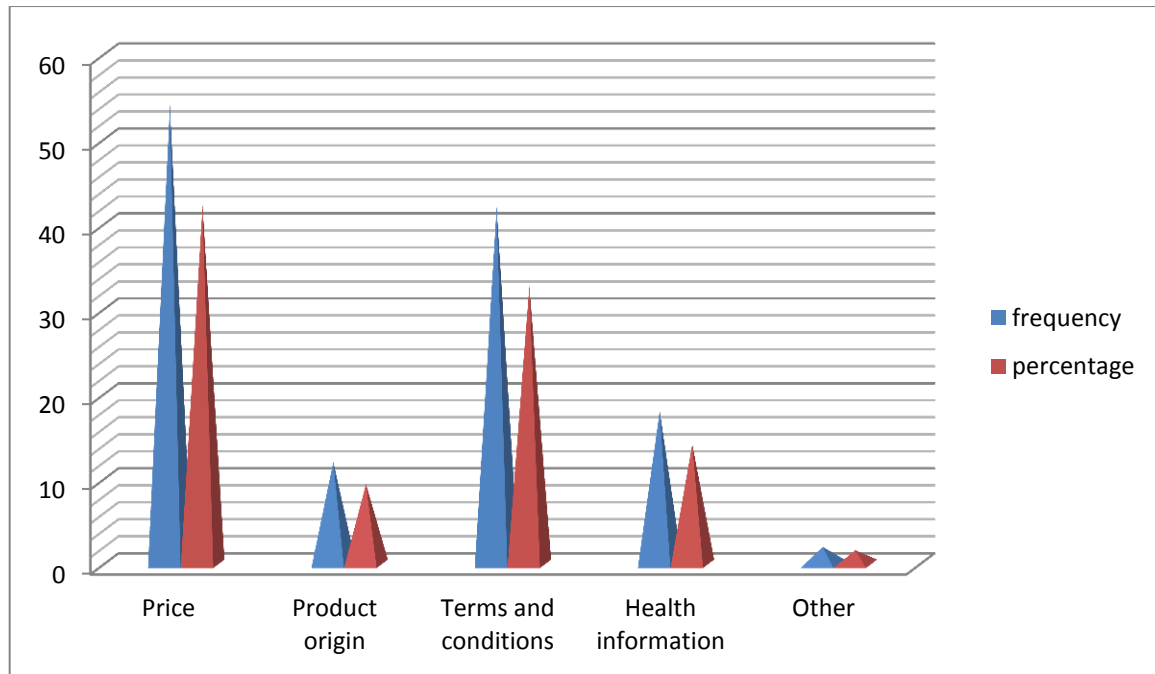
Figure 4.1.6 Survey response on social Media Networking Sites used in buying



Source: Field Data July 2017

Figure 4.1.6, when students were asked the social networking sites used in buying, Whatsapp 52 represented 38.2%, Facebook 54 represented 39%, and Instagram 8 represented 5.9%, Twitter 20 representing 14.7%, Google + 2 representing 1.5%. This indicates that Facebook is most used social networking site used students in buying.

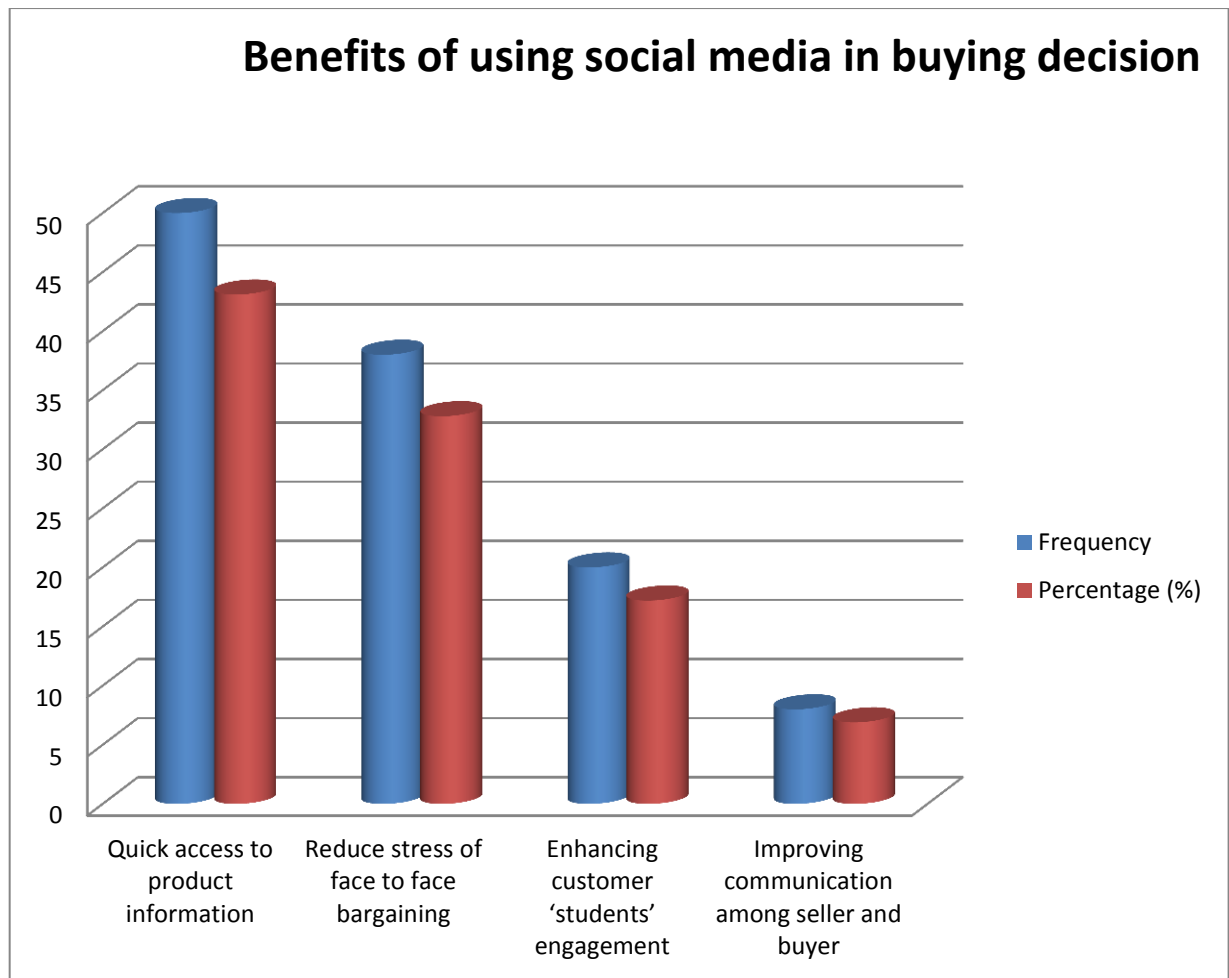
Figure 4.1.7: Survey respond on information search on Social networking Sites



Source: Field Data July 2017

Figure 4.1.7 shows the information search by customers ‘students’ via the social networking sites, Price 54 representing 42.2%, product origin 12 representing 9.4%, terms and conditions 42 representing 32.7%, Health information 18 representing 14.1% and any other information 2 representing 1.6%. This implies that customers are more interested in price information than any other product information.

Figure 4.1.8: survey respond on benefits of using social media in buying decision

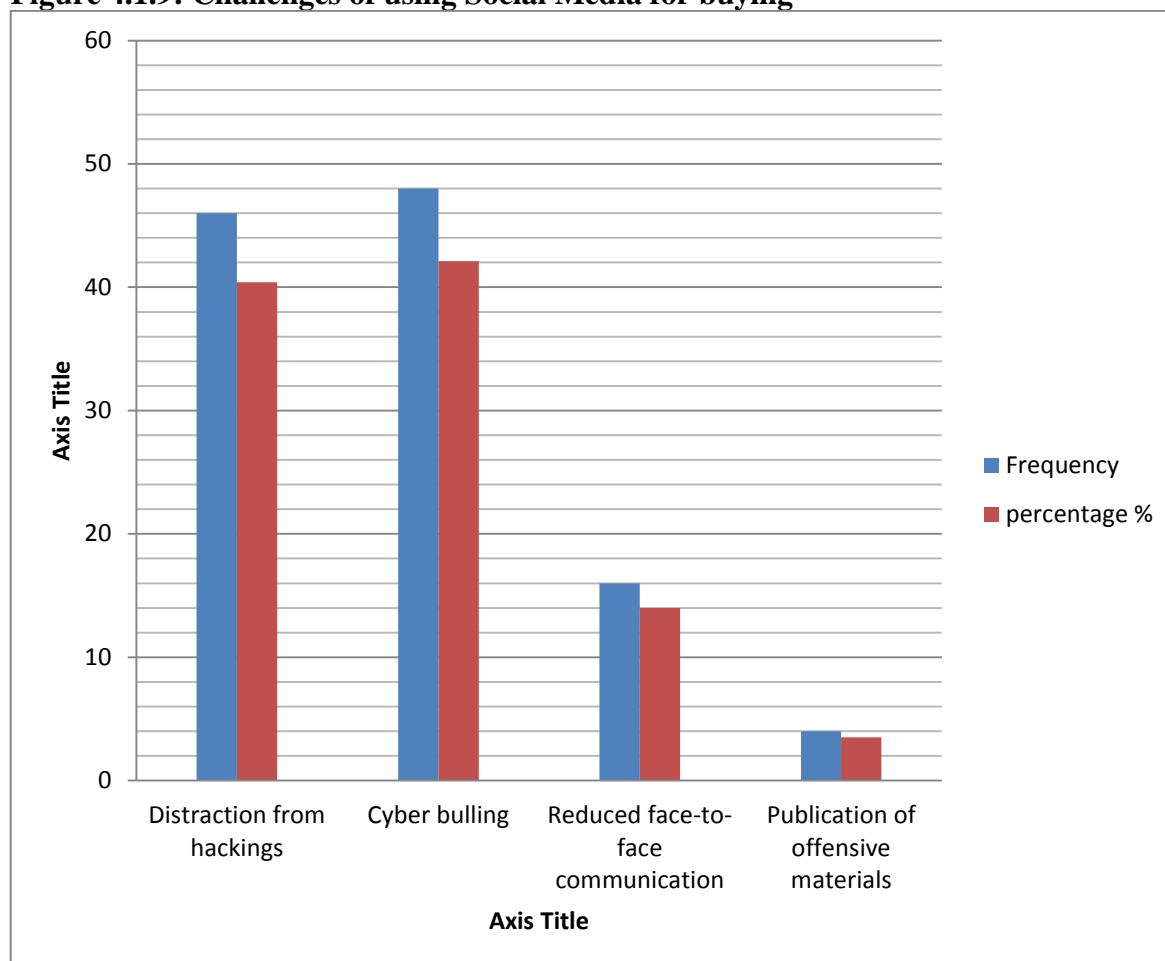


Source: Field Data July 2017

From figure 4.1.8, out of the total of 116 respondents, 50 respondents representing 43.1% indicated that social media is beneficial in quick access to product information, 38 representing 32.8% indicated that social media helps reduce stress of face to face bargaining, 20 representing 17.2% said social media enhances customer 'students' engagement and 8 representing 6.9% indicated that social media improves communication among seller and buyer. This study confirms Lederer (2012) Study that social media helps in exchanging ideas and boosting interaction, enhancing student's engagement, fostering

Source: Field Data July 2017

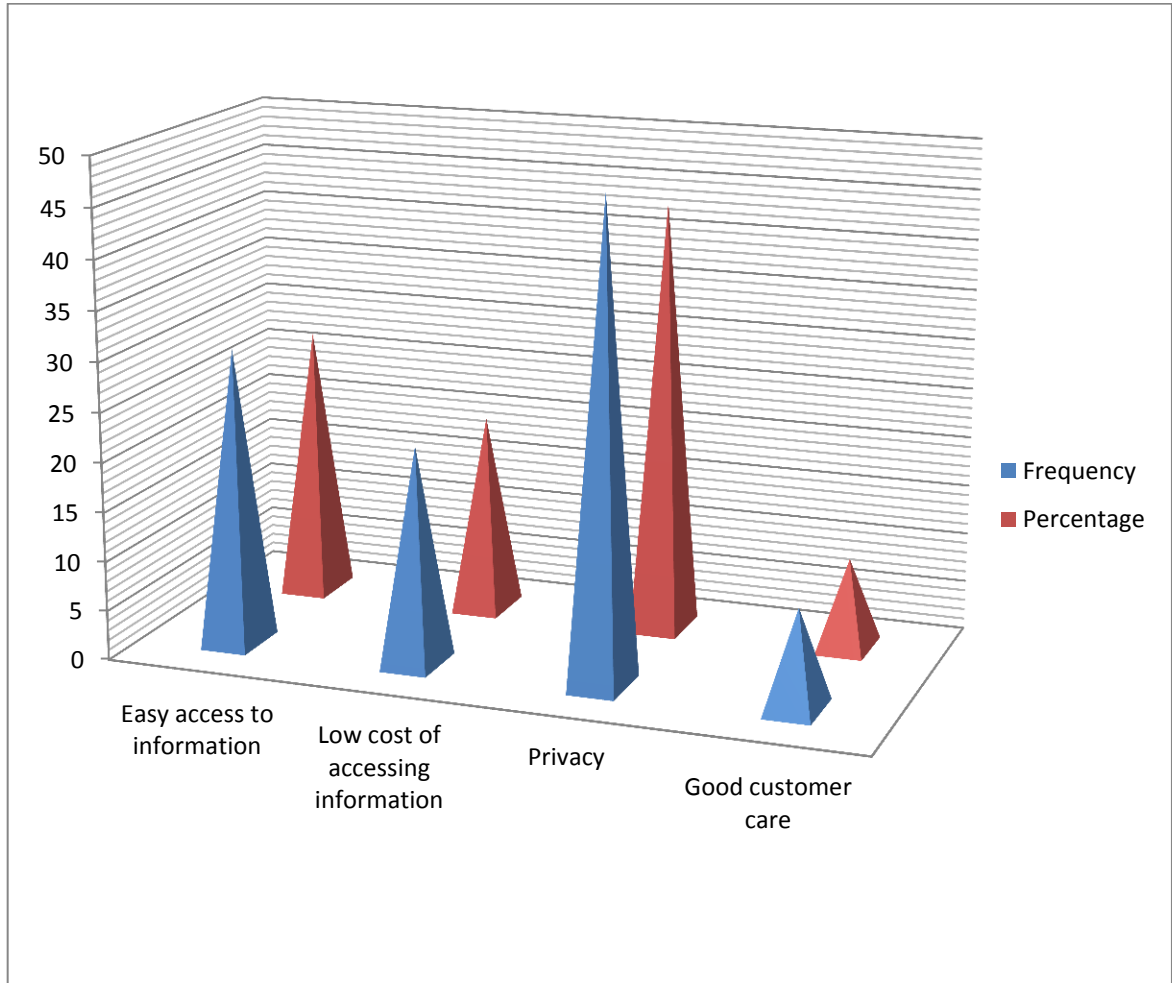
Figure 4.1.9: Challenges of using Social Media for buying



Source: Field Data July 2017

When respondents were asked from Table and figure4.1.9 about the challenges of using social media for communicating formal information, 46 representing 40.4% indicated that social media distracted from hacking, 48 representing 42.1% indicated that social media encouraged cyber bullying, 16 representing 14% emphasized on a reduced face-to-face communication, in publication of offensive material 4 represented 3.5% and no one said social media encouraged publication of private information with regard to using social media for buying.

Figure 4.1.10: survey respond on factors that influence buying behavior under social media



Source: Field Data July 2017

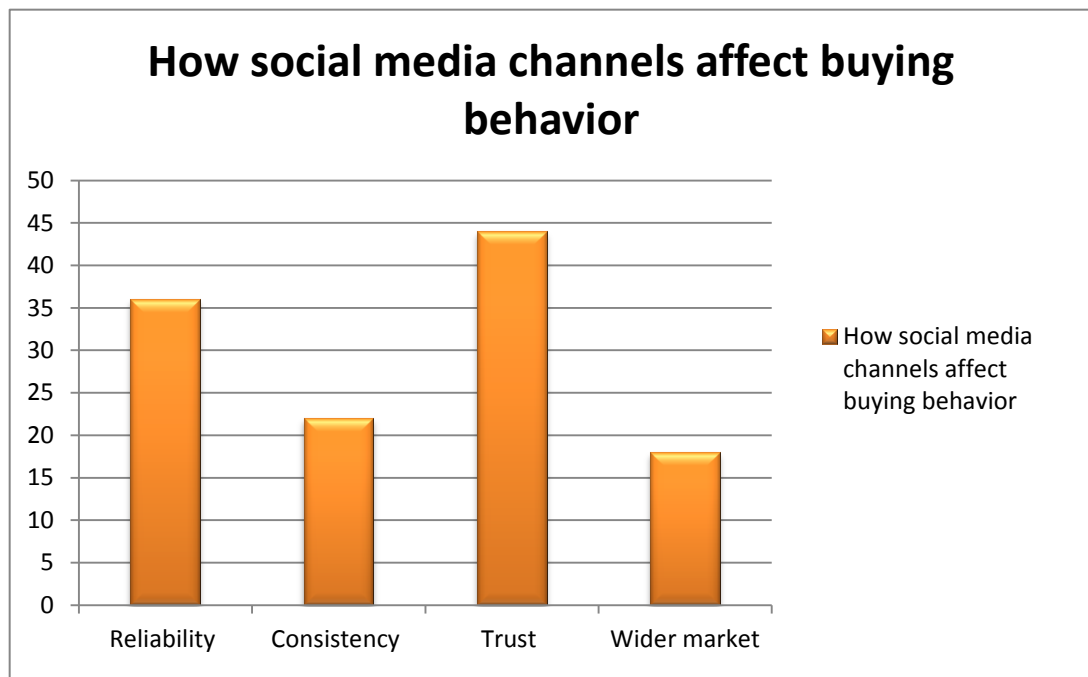
From table 4.1.10, out of a total of 110 respondents, 30 respondents representing 27.3% indicated that they are influence to buy due to easy access to product information, 22 representing 20% indicated that they are influenced by the low cost of accessing information, 48 representing 43.6% said they are influenced by the privacy of the social media buying and 10 representing 9.1% indicated that social media improves good customer care. This study confirms Lederer (2012) Study that social media helps in exchanging ideas and boosting interaction, enhancing student's engagement, fostering collaboration and discussion and improving communication among instructors.

Table 4.1.11: survey on how social media channels affect buying behavior

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Reliability	36	30%
Consistency	22	18.3%
Trust	44	36.7%
Wider market	18	15%
Total	120	100

Source: Field Data July 2017

Figure 4.1.11: How social media channels affect buying behavior



Source: Field Data July 2017

When respondents were asked about how social media channels affect their buying behavior, 36 representing 30% indicated that social media channels are reliable, 22 representing 18.3% indicated that social media channels are consistent, 44 representing 36.7% emphasized on a trust of social media channels and wider market proximity 18 represented 15%.

Findings

At the end of the analysis, the study revealed that 30% of students use social media for shopping, while 70% of students don't use social media for shopping online. Also the most preferred social networking site used by students, was Facebook with a percentage of 39.7%, followed by Whatsapp representing 38.2%, Twitter with a percentage of 14.7% , Instagram representing 5.9% and Google + also representing 1.5%. Students use social media mostly for social engagement thus chatting with friends more often than making buying decisions. In addition the respondents indicated that when social media is used in shopping, it fostered quick access to product information, reduce stress of face to face bargaining, enhancing customer 'students' engagement and improving communication among seller and buyer. On the part of challenges of using social media network in buying decision making, distraction from hackings, cyber bullying, reduced face-to-face communication, publication of offensive materials. In assessing the influence of social media in consumer buying behavior, it is observed that out 100% consumers using social media, 47.7% does not use it for buying decision whilst 53.3% used it to make product decisions. In curbing the challenges associated with the use of social media, management should develop policies and ensure that these policies are adhered to in their business operations. In assessing the influence of social media on consumer buying behavior, social media has not been effectively utilized in terms of communication business information to/among students of Ho Technical University. In summary, the following are the findings of the analysis;

- Privacy And Easy Access To Information Are The Main Factors That Motivated Shopping Through Social Media.

- Distraction From Hackers And Cyber Bulling Are The Greatest Challenges That Affect Used Of Social Media For Buying Decisions.
- Trust, Convenience And Consistency Are The Main Factors That Have Influenced The Choice Of Channels.
- Facebook And Whatsapp Are The Most Used Social Networks Sites For Buying Decisions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the conclusive chapter of the research reports. This chapter is structured into conclusions of the study and recommendations for students and businesses that may wish to transact business with University students in Ho municipal by social media.

5.1 Conclusions of the study

The study was conducted to assess the influence of social media in consumer buying behavior of students in Ho Technical University. At the end of the findings, the study revealed that respondents buying behavior under social media context are greatly influence by privacy and easy access to product information. The study also revealed that social media channels are more trusted, reliable and consistent in buying processes. Also the most preferred social networking site used by students, was Facebook, followed by Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram and Google +. In addition students indicated that when social media is used in shopping, it fostered quick access to product information, reduce stress of face to face bargaining, enhancing customer ‘students’ engagement and improving communication among seller and buyer. On the part of challenges of using social media network in buying decision making, distraction from hackings, cyber bulling, reduced face-to-face communication, publication of offensive materials. In assessing the influence of social media in consumer buying behavior, it is observed that out of 100% consumers using social media, 47.7% does not use it for buying decision whilst 53.3% used it to make product decisions.

5.2 Managerial Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher's made the following recommendations;

Since the world has become a global village, businesses and entrepreneurs are advised to increase the usage of social networking sites in all their business operations for the purpose of reaching out to customers with an ease and to improve customer feedback handling. This will help to foster communication, identifying emerging customer needs and boosting interaction as well enhancing customer engagement product/service decisions.

Customers should also be encouraged to visit the social networking sites to get new information's and to be abreast with the changes in the operations of the businesses.

In plummeting the challenges associated with the use of social media networks; business must develop and ensure that the social networking policies are adhered to. Researchers suggest that companies should consider the following recommendations when establishing a social networking policy:

1. Set Measurable Social Media Goals

Start by defining how you want social media to help your business. Establishing objectives will help set marks that can be tracked and measured. This allows you to focus on winning strategies, and quickly pivot as things change, your strategy should encompass more than just collecting likes, shares, re-tweets and pins. Focus on making sure that each of your social media posts support a strategic goal.

A few strategic social media goals and objectives include;

- To Build brand awareness; the business should get the public to know their name, with a positive perception of your business since most of the new social media users are influenced by families and friends who are already using the social media.

- To gain new customers; businesses should aim at driving traffic to their social media page or website.
- To strengthen customer service; they must also engage with potential customers by answering questions or help existing customers with products and services.
- To increase engagement; interact with your customers by giving them reasons to mention your brand and refer others to do business with you.

2. Choose the Right Social Media Networks

It's no lie: social media activity can be time-consuming. Trying to manage all of the networks will water down the business resources and take away from the channels that bring successful results. Use your target customer and their online behavior, to determine which network will work best for your product and services. Narrowing the field for your small business, social media strategy will give you more time to create the right content for the right followers.

3. Brand Your Social Media Profile Pages

The perception of your company's identity should be uniform across all channels. You're not only building a stronger brand, but also creating awareness and loyalty.

Make it easy for consumers to recognize your business by maintaining consistency across the following areas:

- Logo & Tagline; always use the same logotype for your brand. This is a huge visual which will stick with your audience. If you have a memorable tagline, maintain the same one everywhere.

- Imagery; Graphics and photos are other visuals which will resonate strongly with your customers. You can customize virtually any social media page with images; use same across networks to maintain a similar look and feel for your brand.
- Company Description; use a clear, easy-to-digest “about us” description that is consistent across all your pages.

4. Develop strategies for preventing, identifying, and responding to cyber bully. Hinduja and Patchin (2010) recommend that sellers and buyers should engage in the following practices to prevent cyber bullying;

Customers need to know that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and that those who engage in these behaviors will be subject to discipline.

- Establish and maintain a climate of respect and integrity, where violations result in sanctions. An environment should be created in which customers feel comfortable talking to businesses about cyber bullying and feel confident that meaningful steps will be taken to resolve the situation.
- Review existing bullying policies to see if they allow for the discipline of agents who engage in cyber bullying.
- Develop creative strategies for deterring cyber bullying.

Since the study confirmed that sellers and students use social media for chatting with colleagues and friends more often than for communicating business information, businessmen in all aspect of business operations are therefore advised to improve and increase the use of social media for communicating buyer/seller interaction and also ensuring that appropriate social media policies are developed and adhered to.

5.3 Research Recommendations

In relation to the research, some of the measurement items for constructs should be refined by either reviewing more literature or ask social media experts for evaluation in future study.

Secondly, as this study focuses on the factors that influence consumer 'students' buying behavior in general under the social media context, future study may explore the differences between samples from the population. Examples could be the gender difference or age difference of social media influence on consumer behavior. It could also be the difference in consumer behavior between users of various social media platforms. In addition, this study ignores the external variable such as product related factors. In future research, these factors could also be included as the influence of social media on consumer behavior can also be product-related.

Future researchers must avoid making rapid generalizations i.e. making generalizations that are based on either unreasonable evidence or no evidence at all in order to ensure external validity of researches.

APPENDIX A

BIBLIOGRAPHY

References

- Achille, S. J. (2008). World Statistics on the Number Of Internet Shoppers [Online]. U.S: Sante J. Achille Available: [Http://Blog.Webcertain.Com/World-Statistics-On-The-Number-Of-Internet-Shoppers/](http://Blog.Webcertain.Com/World-Statistics-On-The-Number-Of-Internet-Shoppers/) [Accessed].
- Andrew (2009, S. 49, S. 57) Defining Of Blogs & Social Media Analysis
- Drury, G. (2008). Opinion Piece: Social Media: Should Marketers Engage And How Can It Be Done Effectively? *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9, 274-277.
- Constantinides, E. 2004. Influencing the Online Consumer's Behavior: The Web Experience. *Internet Research*, 14, 111-126.
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C. & Lampe, C. 2007. The Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social Capital and College Students' Use Of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12, 1143-1168.
- Galal, A. 2011 Online Shopping In the Arab World [Online]. Bayanat. Available: [Http://Visual.Ly/Online-Shopping-Arab-World](http://Visual.Ly/Online-Shopping-Arab-World) [Accessed].
- Go-Gulf. 2013. Social Media Usage In Middle East [Online]. Available: [Http://Www.Go-Gulf.Com/Blog/Social-Media-Middle-East/](http://Www.Go-Gulf.Com/Blog/Social-Media-Middle-East/) [Accessed].
- Gonzalez, P. 2013. Interview to Phil Gonzalez, Founder of Instagrammers @Igers [Online]. Mobile World Capital Available: [Http://Mobileworldcapital.Com/En/Article/161](http://Mobileworldcapital.Com/En/Article/161) [Accessed].
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Malthouse, E. C., Frieger, C., Gensler, S., Lobschat, L., Rangaswamy, A. & Skiera, B. 2010. The Impact of New Media On Customer Relationships. *Journal of Service Research*, 13, 311-330.
- Hsiao, M.-H. 2009. Shopping Mode Choice: Physical Store Shopping Versus E-Shopping. *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review*, 45, 86-95.
- Kempe, D., Kleinberg, J. & Tardos, É. Year. Maximizing the Spread of Influence Through A Social Network. In: *Proceedings of the Ninth Acm Sigkdd International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining*, 2003. Acm, 137-146.
- Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P. & Silvestre, B. S. 2011. Social Media? Get Serious! Understanding the Functional Building Blocks of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 54, 241-251.
- Krieger, K. S. A. M. 2012. Instagram [Online]. Available: [Http://Instagram.Com/Press/](http://Instagram.Com/Press/) [Accessed].

- Kunkel, E. R. 2013. 15 Social Media Statistics That Every Business Needs To Know [Online]. Yahoo!Small Business. Available: [Http://Smallbusiness.Yahoo.Com/Advisor/15-Social-Media-Statistics-Every-Business-Needs-Know-001509118.Html](http://Smallbusiness.Yahoo.Com/Advisor/15-Social-Media-Statistics-Every-Business-Needs-Know-001509118.Html) [Accessed].
- Lee, E. 2013. Impacts of Social Media on Consumer Behavior: Decision Making Process.
- Levin, A. M., Levin, I. P. & Weller, J. A. 2005. A Multi-Attribute Analysis of Preferences For Online And Offline Shopping: Differences Across Products, Consumers, And Shopping Stages. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 6, 281-290.
- Li, N. & Zhang, P. Year. Consumer Online Shopping Attitudes and Behavior: An Assessment of Research. In: Eighth Americas Conference on Information Systems, 2002. 508-517.
- Limayem, M., Khalifa, M. & Frini, A. 2000. What Makes Consumers Buy From Internet? A Longitudinal Study of Online Shopping. *Systems, Man and Cybernetics, Part A: Systems and Humans*, Ieee Transactions On, 30, 421-432.
- Mayfield, A. (2008). What Is Social Media? Icrossing. Retrieved August 25, 2009, From [Www.Icrossing.Co.Uk/.../What_Is_Social_Media_Icrossing_Ebook.Pdf](http://www.Icrossing.Co.Uk/.../What_Is_Social_Media_Icrossing_Ebook.Pdf)
- Miller, R. & Lammas, N. 2010. Social Media and Its Implications for Viral Marketing. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 11, 1-9.
- Park, C. & Jun, J.-K. 2003. A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Internet Buying Behavior: Effects of Internet Usage, Perceived Risks, And Innovativeness. *International Marketing Review*, 20, 534-553.
- Parson, A. 2013. How Does Social Media Influence The Buying Behavior Of Consumers? [Online].Business & Entrepreneurship. Available: [Http://Yourbusiness.Azcentral.Com/Social-Media-Influence-Buying-Behavior-Consumers-17017.Html](http://Yourbusiness.Azcentral.Com/Social-Media-Influence-Buying-Behavior-Consumers-17017.Html) [Accessed].
- Pookulangara, S. & Koesler, K. 2011. Cultural Influence on Consumers' Usage Of Social Networks And Its' Impact On Online Purchase Intentions. *Journal Of Retailing And Consumer Services*, 18, 348-354.
- Ramsunder, M. November, 2011. The Impact of Social Media Marketing On Purchase Decisions inthe Tyre Industry [Online]. Available: [Http://Dspace.Nmmu.Ac.Za:8080/Jspui/Bitstream/10948/1637/1/Monica%20ramsunder.Pdf](http://Dspace.Nmmu.Ac.Za:8080/Jspui/Bitstream/10948/1637/1/Monica%20ramsunder.Pdf) [Accessed Nov 11,2013 Nov 11,2013].
- Riegner, C. 2007. Word of Mouth On The Web: The Impact Of Web 2.0 On Consumer Purchase Decisions. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 47, 436.
- Scott, M. 2013. 5 Surprising Social Media Statistics For 2013 [Online].Social Media Today Website. Available: [Http://Socialmediatoday.Com/Docmarketing/1818611/Five-Surprising-Social-Media-Statistics-2013](http://Socialmediatoday.Com/Docmarketing/1818611/Five-Surprising-Social-Media-Statistics-2013) [Accessed October 12, 2013].

Solorzano, R. 2011. Online Shopping Worldwide Ecommerce Statistics [Infographic] [Online]. U.S.A: Rafael Solorzano. Available: [Http://Swipezoom.Com/Index.Php/Latest-News/Item/7-Online-Shopping-Worldwide-Ecommerce-Statistics-Infographic.Html](http://swipezoom.com/index.php/latest-news/item/7-online-shopping-worldwide-ecommerce-statistics-infographic.html)

Toomey, A. C. & Wysocki, A. F. Distinguishing Between Traditional and Online Retailing: Evaluating E-Commerce With Respect To The Food System¹.

Vinerean, S., Cetina, I., Dumitrescu, L. & Tichindelean, M. 2013. The Effects of Social Media Marketing On Online Consumer Behavior. *International Journal of Business And Management*, 8, P66.

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRES FOR STUDENTS

HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR STUDENTS

You have been chosen to respond to this questionnaire for the study of “ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR”. (A CASE OF HO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY)

You are guaranteed that any information you provide is exclusively meant for the research and nothing else. Your answer to the questions will be kept confidential.

Please complete this section by ticking the applicable box

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age 17-30 [] 30-40 [] 40-50 []
3. Level 100 [] 200 [] 300 []
4. Which social media network site do you use?
 - a) Whatsapp []
 - b) Twitter []
 - c) Facebook []
 - d) Instagram []
 - e) Google + []
 - f) All the above []
 - g) If other specify
5. What do you use social media for?
 - a) Finding new friends []
 - b) Searching for new product information []

- c) Searching for new product []
- d) Shopping online []
- e) If other specify

6. Do you use social media for shopping?

Yes [] No []

7. If yes to the above question, which social networking sites do you use in buying?

- a) Whatsapp []
- b) Facebook []
- c) Instagram []
- d) Twitter []
- e) Google+ []

f) If other specify.....

8. Which type of information do you search on the social networking sites with regard to the product?

- a) Price []
- b) Product origin []
- c) Terms and conditions []
- d) Health information []
- e) If other specify.....

9. What are the benefits of using social media in buying decisions?

- a) Quick access to product information []
- b) Reduce stress of face to face bargaining []
- c) Enhancing customer engagement []
- d) Improving communication between seller and buyer []
- e) If other specify.....

10. What are the challenges of using social media for buying?

- a) Distraction from hackers []
- b) Cyber bullying []
- c) reduced face-to-face communication []
- d) publication of offensive materials []
- e) publication of private information []
- f) If other specify.....

11. What factors influence your buying behavior under social media

- a) Easy access to information []
- b) Low cost of assessing information []
- c) Privacy []
- d) Good customer service []
- e) Other specify.....

12. How does social media channels affected your buying behavior

- a) Reliability []
- b) Consistency []
- c) Trusted []
- d) Wider market []
- e) Other specify.....

13. What do you think of social media shopping

.....
.....
.....
.....