

The Impact of Social Media on the Consumers' Purchase Decision-Making Process

Cartoneros Marlon P.¹, Cajipe Jomarie R.², Canoza Johnsil G.³, and Nartea Mecmack A.⁴

College of Business Administration, Polytechnic University of the Philippines

Anonas St., Sta. Mesa, Manila

Email: mackharvester@gmail.com

Abstract: The prevalence of social media has played a vital role in the society. It has been the platform of reaching out to other people. It has been also impacting consumers' purchase decision-making process. In the present time, a lot of people/consumers use social media to communicate with brands, vice versa. Marketing professionals seemed to have found a way to take advantage of this new inclination. This study's purpose is to know how does the increasing influence of social media on consumers' purchasing decision-making process differs according to its different stages.

The questionnaire of Charles-Henri Gros in his Dissertation entitled, "The Influence Of Social Media On Consumers During Their Purchase Decision-Making Process And The Implications For Marketers" was used in this study. The survey was administered at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Sta. Mesa. The sample size was 337 respondents mainly from the College of Business Administration.

This study found out that the impact of social media depends on the different stages of the consumers' purchasing decision-making process. Social Media can increase need recognition possibilities for consumers- the survey showed that 58% of the respondents follow brands on Social Media. Social Media is a significant variable on the Information Search stage but this role should be regarded as more or less influent according to the Social Media channels or tools used by consumers. Social Media thus plays a vital role of influence on the Evaluation of Alternatives stage, especially when there is sense of hesitation and trust aspect provided by communities on social media. Social Media is really influential on the consumers' purchase decision-making process- though consumers were influenced by positive and negative reviews from their colleagues, and other stimuli appeared to play a role in the mind of the consumers, they seemed to be still the ones to make the decision in the end. The influence of Social Media seems to be lower at the Post-Purchase Behavior stage than to the previous stages of the consumers' purchasing decision-making process.

To conclude, these findings instruct future researchers to examine the influence of demographics, such as location, social status, and monthly income, on the impact of Social Media that could affect consumers' purchase decision-making process.

Keywords: Social Media, Purchase Decision-Making Process, Need Recognition, Information Search, Evaluation of Alternatives, Purchase Decision, Postpurchase Decision

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media's emergence has made an impact to the world and it has become a platform for reaching out to people. Sangurde (2019) states that, social media is becoming an integral part of life online as social websites and applications proliferate [1]. In the present time, a lot of people use social media; businesses also use social media to promote and advertise their products. With this, the researchers would like to know if social media has an impact on consumers' purchase decision-making process. Because according to Gros (2012), the raise of Social Media usage by both consumers and companies seem to affect consumer behavior [2]. The researchers would like to prove if there really is an impact.

To have an understanding with the research, the researchers seek for related studies to dig into it. The study "The Impact of Social Media Characteristics on Purchase Decision Empirical Study of Saudi Customers" conducted by Khatib (2016) concludes peers that have always been a source of influence on consumers are playing today an even greater role of influence through their recommendations on Social Media. The Need Recognition stage could be modified, as the influence from peers is now easier spread [3]. Meanwhile, a qualitative study of Bagwell (2012): The Influence of Social Media Advertising on Consumers during their Purchase Decision-Making Process and the Implication for Marketers, concludes that social media advertising plays a fundamental role in influencing consumer behavior during the purchase decision-making process [4].

This research was adapted from Charles-Henri Gros' Dissertation entitled, "The Influence Of Social Media On Consumers During Their Purchase Decision-Making Process And The Implications For Marketers" published by Dublin Business School in Dublin, Ireland and will be made into Philippine context. This study wants to know how does the increasing influence of social media on consumers' purchasing decision-making process differs according the different stages.

Existing studies related were not available to the extent of Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Also, there were no similar studies relating to this in the Philippine context. Therefore, the researchers took the initiative to conduct and research about the study on the impact of social media on the consumers' purchase decision-making process.

The respondents were students from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines under the College of Business Administration. The respondents' age ranges from 18 to 21 years old, both male and female, and are single, with different religions but mostly Roman Catholic and Christian.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Social Media

Paquette (2013) cited Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, 61) who define social media as "a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content." [5]. According to Akashraj D. P. and Pushpa C. O. (2014), social media comprise platforms to create and exchange user-generated content; sometimes social media are called consumer-generated media (CGM) [6].

Thus, social media is the environment in which social networking takes place and has altered the way in which consumers gather information and make buying decisions (Paquette, 2013) [5].

According to Solis (2011, p9) social media is not a one-way broadcast channel but is rather considered by Hoyer, and MacInnis (2010, p389) as a two-way communication where information from a personal source seems more vivid than information from the mass media [7]. This is due to the fact that a person speaking makes it more real and is more persuasive towards the audience. What retains our interest is that Social Media has a role to play in a business context. Parker (2011, pXVIII) defined Social Media as ‘ways to spread the word about your brand or product on the Web using tools and websites that allow a conversation to take place between you and your target market’ [8].

B. Purchase Decision

According to Duh, et al (2010) Pre-Purchase is defined as the stage when consumers are attracted to the product and consider buying it [9]. At this point, one or more products are evaluated according to their physical characteristics and are also tried or fitted if vendors permit. Pre-Purchase was differentiated from Post-Purchase because in the latter situation, consumer had more time to evaluate the product. The consumption experience is comprehensive and more negative emotion may be felt such as guilt and disappointment.

Hoyer, and MacInnis (2010, p12) explained that ‘the process of making consumption decisions involves four stages: problem (need) recognition, information search, decisions making, and Postpurchase evaluation (behaviour)’ [10].

C. Need Recognition

Need recognition occurs when consumers realize that they have an unfulfilled need (Hoyer, MacInnis, 2010, p12) [10]. Needs might be triggered by internal stimuli but also by external stimuli. What is of interest here is that Social Media might trigger needs through advertisements displayed on a Facebook page for example or through a discussion with a friend that could make consumers recognize that they have an unfulfilled need.

D. Information Search Stage

Hoyer and MacInnis (2010, p13) said that once the need recognition stage passed, consumers want to be exposed to information [10]. Social Media offer them this information exposition since consumers can get information from their ‘friends’ but also from brands about products and services through pages they can ‘like’ on Facebook and ‘follow’ on Twitter. Belch and Belch (2003, p112-114) stated that consumers in the information search stage undertake an internal and external search [11]. In the external search, the authors said that consumers often consult personal sources when they seek information.

E. Evaluation of Alternatives

According to Jaffe (2010, p8), the communication of experience from peers has a strong influence on evaluation of alternatives stage [12]. Arrived at this stage, consumers will make an evaluation of the different alternatives offered to them and will have to choose one in the next stage. To evaluate the different alternatives, consumers are seeking to compare products, services or brand together to make the choices that suit their needs the most. Forums appear as a good place to get valuable information and allow discussion with current or former customers. Brown and Hayes (2008, p139-146) said that messages delivered by trusted friends who tell about their own experience are highly influential [13]. Parker (2011, p273) talked about the notion of ‘unbiased advice’ that

consumers are more likely to trust. Social Media offer consumers a wide range of reviews and opinions of tools and platforms to help them to compare alternatives [8] .

F. Post Purchase Decision

Concerning the last stage consumers evaluate the outcome of their purchase decision (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2010, p13) [10]. For Foxall (2005, p19-20), this stage is really important for consumers, as it will influence their future purchase patterns [14]. In addition to influence their own future purchase patterns, they can also influence those of their peers. Indeed, consumers today use Social Media to talk about their own good or bad experiences and thus share feedback and opinions with peers (Jaffe, 2010, p 8) [12]. Social Media has increased the possibility offered to consumers to share their good or bad experiences with their peers like never before. A decade ago, consumers who wanted to talk about their own experience could only spread the word to a small circle of people around them. Nowadays with Social Media it has become easier for consumers to spread the word really quickly to hundreds of people and influence their purchase decision-making processes.

III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

A. Research Methodology

This study used descriptive analysis in quantitative inferential approach. Quantitative research usually focuses on the gathering of numeric data or data in numerical form. It is said to be objective and situated within a framework of positivism (Research Methods Structuring Inquiries and Empirical Investigations, 2016) [15]. This study used descriptive statistics to analyze collected information. Gros (2012); Saunders, et al, quoted Robson (2002, p59) to define a descriptive study as a mean to 'portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations' [2]. According to Kothari (2019), the major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at the present [16]. Kothari (2019) said that, inferential approach to research is to form a database from which to infer characteristics or relationships of population [16].

B. Research Locale

This study was administered at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Sta. Mesa, Manila. Respondents were college students under the College of Business Administration. The respondents' age range were 17-21 years old.

C. Population and Sample

This study obtained respondents from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. However, it is impossible to collect data from the entire population. The researchers have decided to use a sample of the population. The researchers used a probability sampling which is the simple random sampling technique. There were 337 respondents in this study, from the College of Business Administration. Specifically, respondents were from the Department of Marketing Management, followed by Human Resource Management, Office Administration and Entrepreneurship.

D. Data Collection

Primary data were used for this research. The answers from the survey questionnaire were considered as the primary source of information. Moreover, secondary data were also used to strengthen the background of the study. Researches related to this study, especially Charles-Henri Gros' Dissertation entitled "The Influence Of Social Media On Consumers During Their Purchase Decision-Making Process And The Implications For Marketers" serves as the researchers' main reference for this study.

E. Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaires have advantages over some other types of surveys in that they are cheap, do not require as much effort from the questioner as verbal or telephone surveys, and often have standardized answers that make it simple to compile data (Kabir, 2016) [17].

The questionnaire used in this study is from Charles-Henri Gros's Dissertation entitled: "The Influence Of Social Media On Consumers During Their Purchase Decision-Making Process And The Implications For Marketers". The questionnaire counts 41 questions, but the researchers cut it into 37 removing questions not to be discussed in the study, and takes respondent approximately between 5 and 10 minutes to answer. The survey questionnaire is composed of five sections: 'Need Recognition' stage, 'Information Search' stage, 'Evaluation of Alternatives' stage, 'Purchase Decision' stage, and 'Post Purchase Decision' stage.

F. Data Analysis

Microsoft Excel will be used to analyze the data. The analysis provided categorical responses but also ordinal (such as Likert scale), since the survey will have different measurement levels.

As a spreadsheet, Excel can be used for data entry, manipulation and presentation but it also offers a suite of statistical analysis functions and other tools that can be used to run descriptive statistics and to perform several different and useful inferential statistical tests that are widely used in business and management research (Rose, et al, 2015) [18].

IV. RESULTS

A. Sample Description

The sample used for this study is 337 respondents. They are students from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines under the College of Business of Administration. As stated in Figure 1, both Department of Marketing Management, and Human Resource Management Department have 30% of the respondents. While the Department of Office Administration and Department of Entrepreneurship has 23% and 17%, respectively.

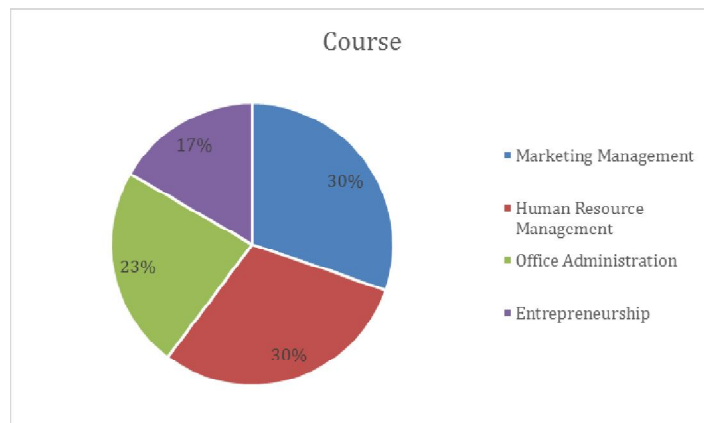


Fig. 1. Courses of the Respondents

Figure 2 shows that 59% of the respondents are 19 years old; 27% are 20 years old; 10% are 18 years old; and 4% are 21 years old. As also shown below (figure 3), 63% of the respondents are female, and 37% are male. And all of the respondents are single (figure 4).

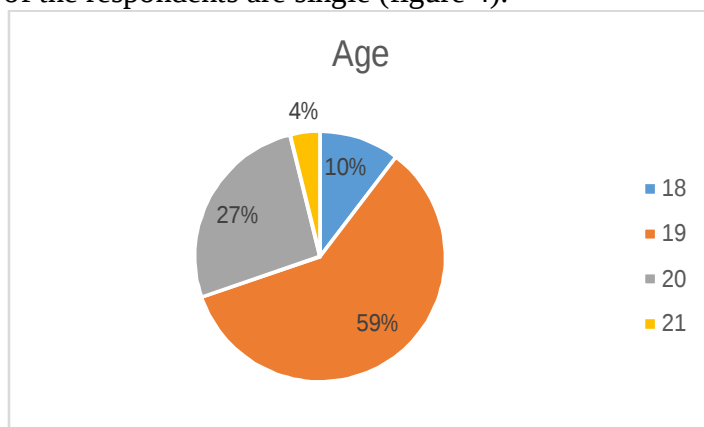


Fig. 2. Age of the Respondents

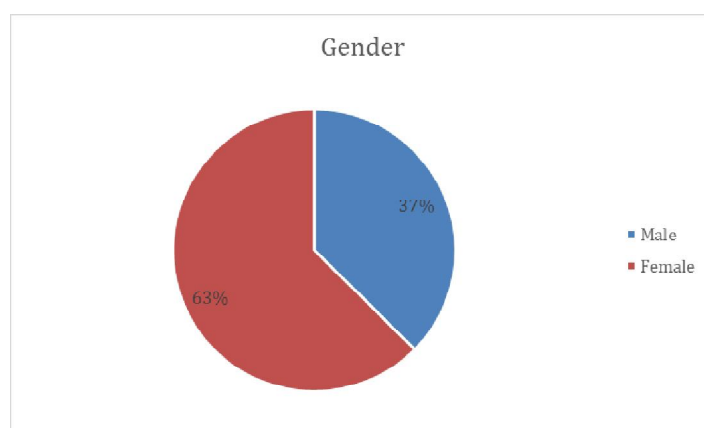


Fig. 3. Gender of the Respondents

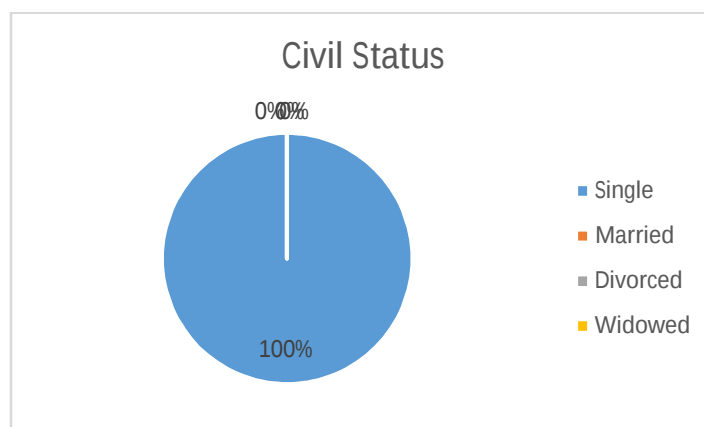


Fig. 4. Civil Status of the Respondents

The figure below (figure 5) shows that 70% of the respondents are Roman Catholic.

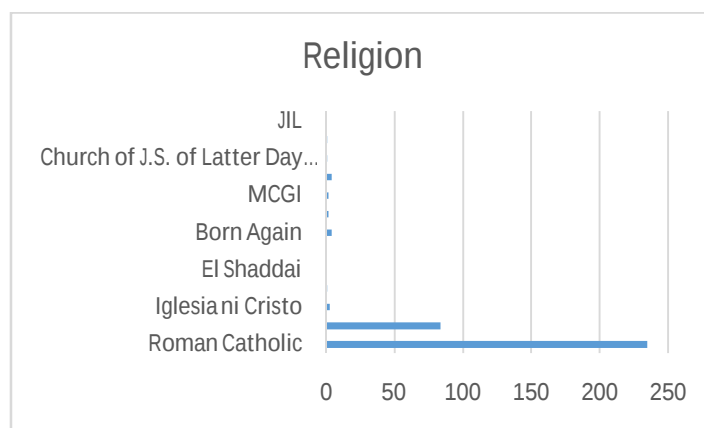


Fig. 5. Religion of the Respondents

B. Social Media Usage

Figure 6 below shows that 41% of the respondents have been using social media for 13 years and more, and 17% between 10 to 12 years. The rest, 42% between one to nine years. For the average time spent on social media per day (figure 7), 33% of the respondents spends more than 10 hours, 32% between five to ten hours. The rest, 35%, spends less than an hour to five hours on social media.

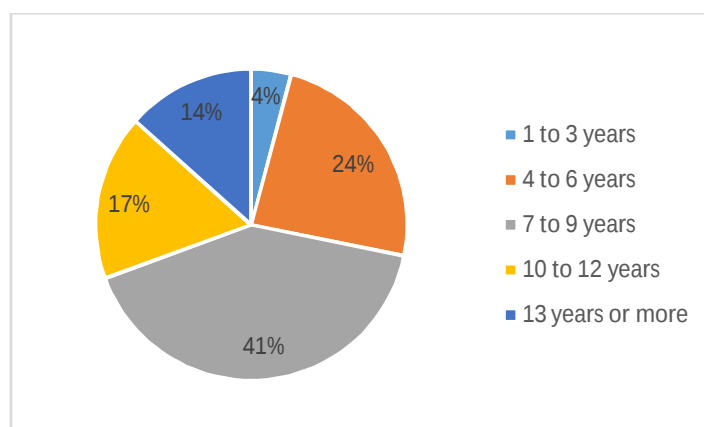


Fig. 6. How long consumers have been using Social media? (Q.2).

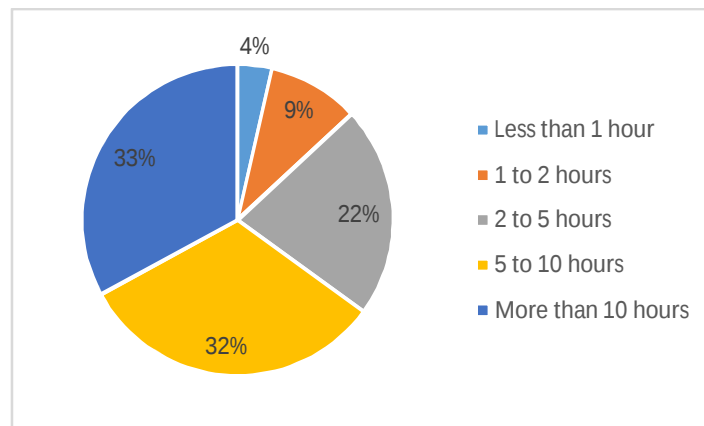


Fig. 7. Average time spent on Social Media per day (Q.3).

Consumers have different reasons to use social media based on figure 8. The most preferred reasons are to keep in touch with people (21%), to exchange documents/files (19%), and to listen music and watch videos (19%).

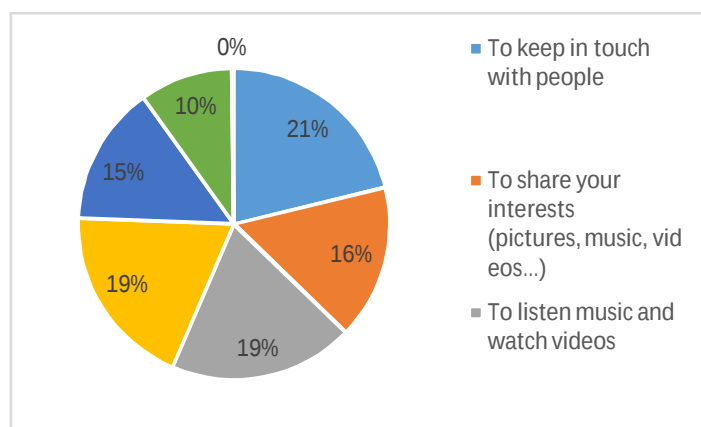


Fig. 8. Reasons to use Social Media (Q.4.).

As presented in figure 9 below, 55% of the respondents prefer using smartphone; 37% use computer, 6% use iPad, and 2% use other device.

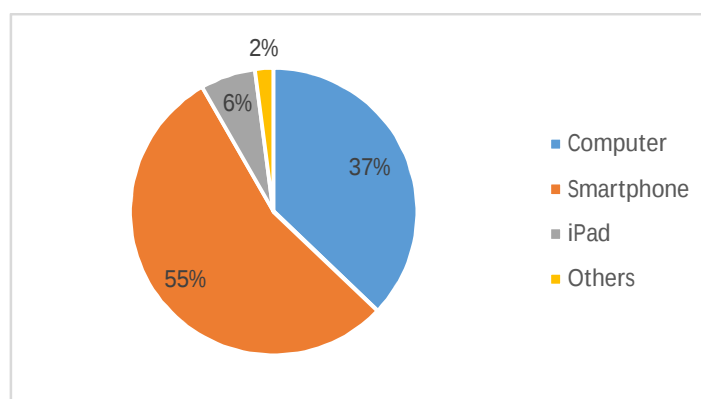


Fig. 9. Devices used by consumers to access Social Media (Q.5).

C. Brand Engagement

As stated in figure 10 below, 58 % of consumers said that they followed brands on Social Media, while 42% said that they didn't. Meanwhile, there are several reasons to follow brands on social media (figure 11). 26% of the respondents follow brands on social media to get updates about products/service and 24% to read comments and reviews about products/services. 16% because they are current customers, 15% to get discount or free products, and 13% to communicate with brands.

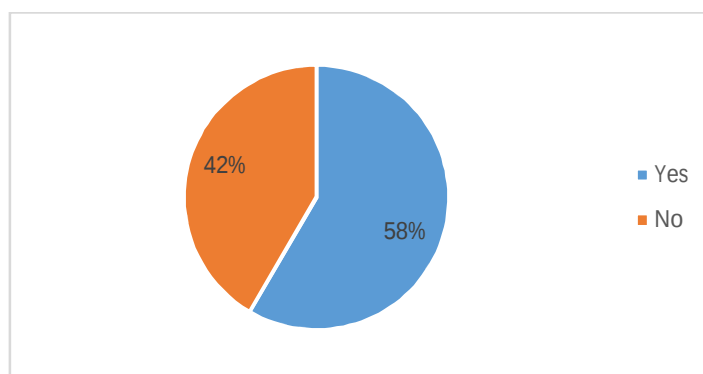


Fig. 10. Do consumers follow brands on Social Media? (Q.6).

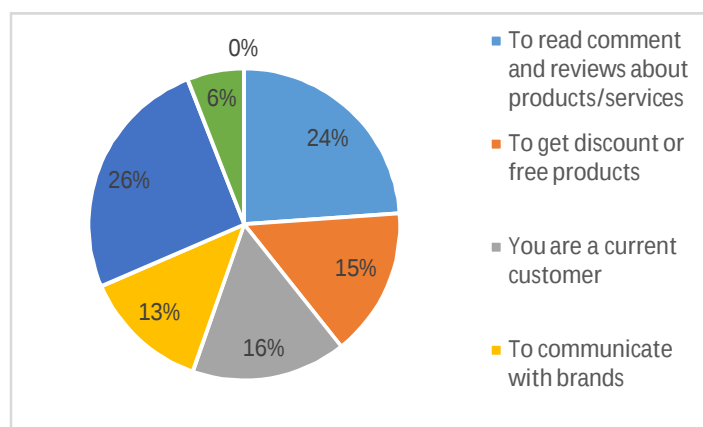


Fig. 11. Reasons to follow brands (Q.7.)

Figure 12 below shows that 76% of the respondents would likely to recommend a certain brand on social media to a friend. 6% said they would not recommend a brand to a friend on social media. Meanwhile, in figure 13 below, 66% of the respondents said that they were more likely to follow selected brands when their friends are already followers. However, 11% of consumers said that they wouldn't follow any brands because their friends are followers.

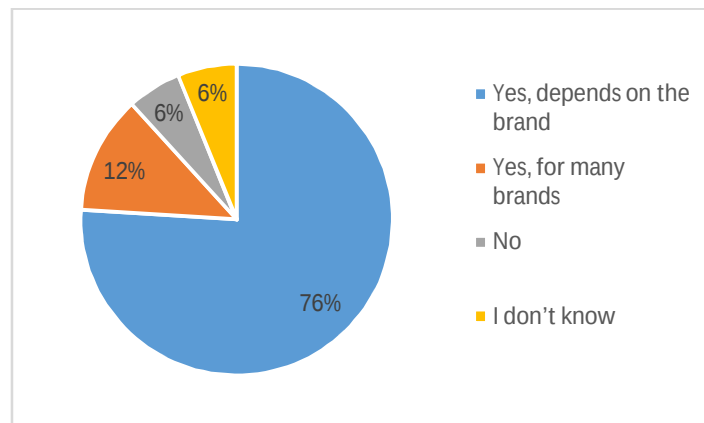


Fig. 12. Likelihood to recommend a brand to a friend after being a follower (Q.8).

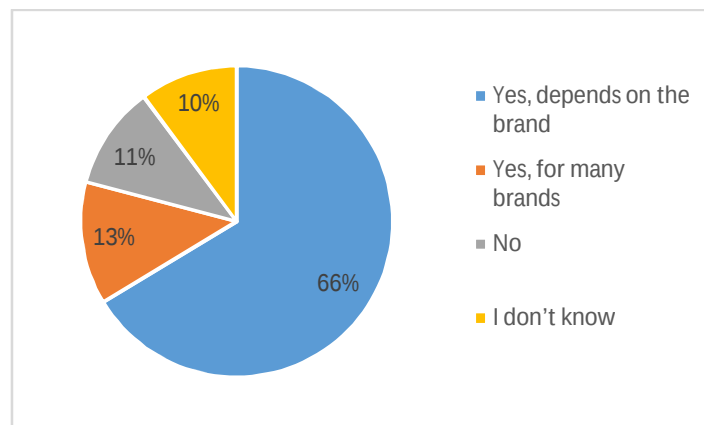


Fig. 13. Likelihood to follow a brand when friends are already followers (Q.9).

D. Need Recognition

As shown in figure 14 below, 33% of the respondents have ranked social media as the most influent information channel. Tv ads follow with 23%, then internet ads with 20%. Posters, and Magazine ads follow respectively with 6% and 5%. Radio ads count as the least influential information channels for consumers.

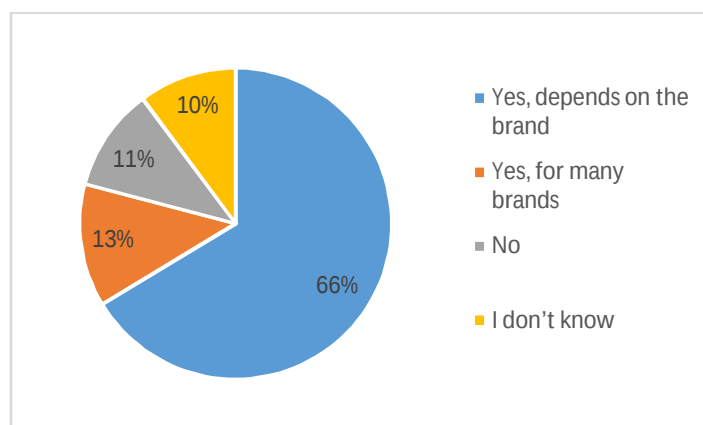


Fig. 14. Most influent information channels on consumers (Q.10).

Figure 15 below shows the degree to which respondents think that seeing their friends talking or displaying pictures about a products/services on social media can make them recognize a need. 44% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree with this statement, and 25% agree to this statement. However, 16% of respondents disagree with this statement.

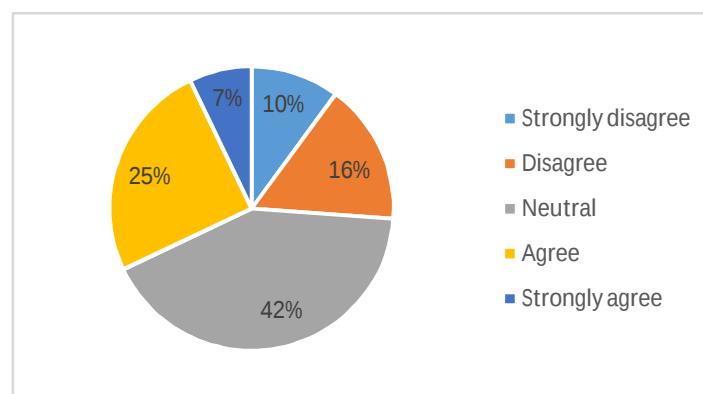


Fig. 15. Do respondents think that seeing friends talking or displaying pictures about product/service on Social Media can make them recognize a need? (Q.11)

As presented in figure 16 below, there are different categories for which respondents could recognize a need because of their friends' activities on Social Media. 27% of the respondents ranked Clothes as the first category and Entertainment as the second category with 19%. Meanwhile, Household Appliance (8%) and Cars (5%) count among the least mentioned categories by consumers.

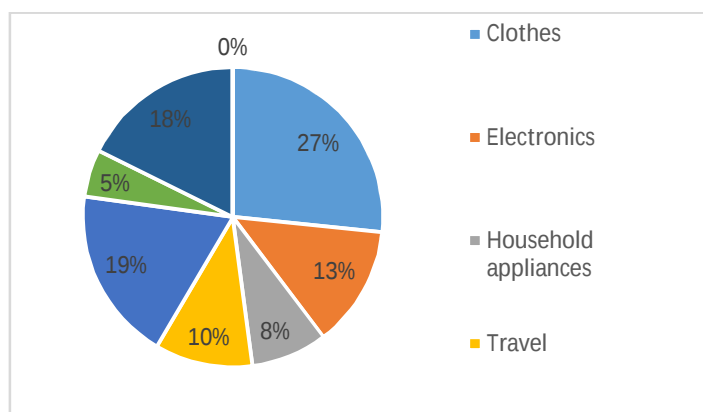


Fig. 16. Categories of products/services for which respondents could recognize a need because of their friends' activities on Social Media (Q.12).

Figure 17 shows that 73% of the respondents would likely to buy after following a brand on social media. On the other hand, 27% would not.

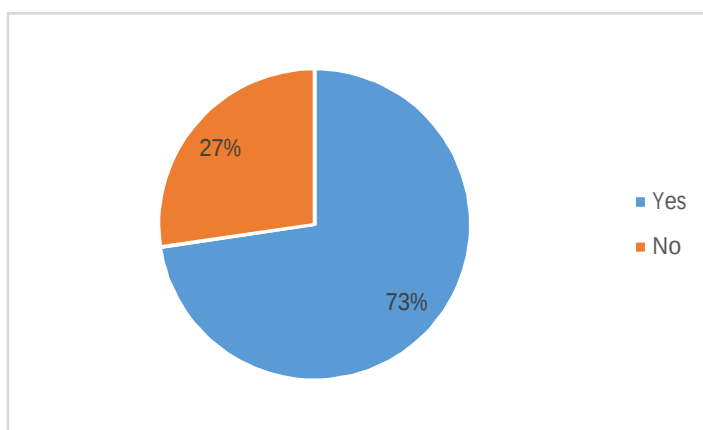


Fig. 17. Likelihood to buy after following a brand on Social Media (Q.13).

E. Information Search

As shown in figure 18 below, 79% of the respondents use social media to find information about a product/service/brand. This use of Social Media for information search differs according to categories as demonstrated in figure 19 below. Clothes is ranked first for information search by 26% of respondents. Entertainment, and Health and Beauty Products is in second position with 17% both. On the other hand, Household Appliance (8%) and Cars (6%) are the least mentioned categories by respondents.

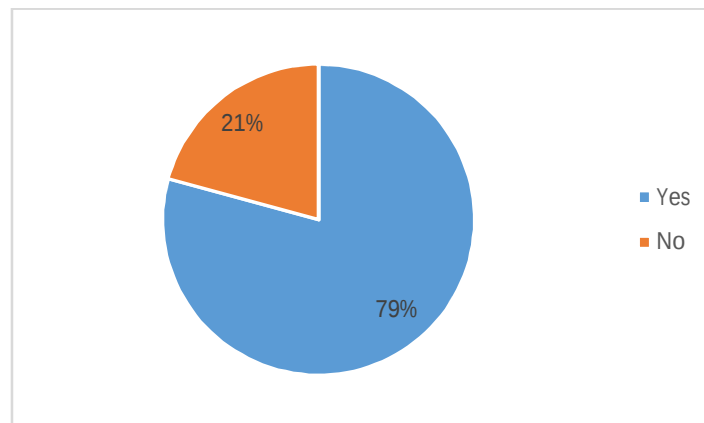


Fig. 18. Do respondents use Social Media to find information about products/services/brands? (Q.14).

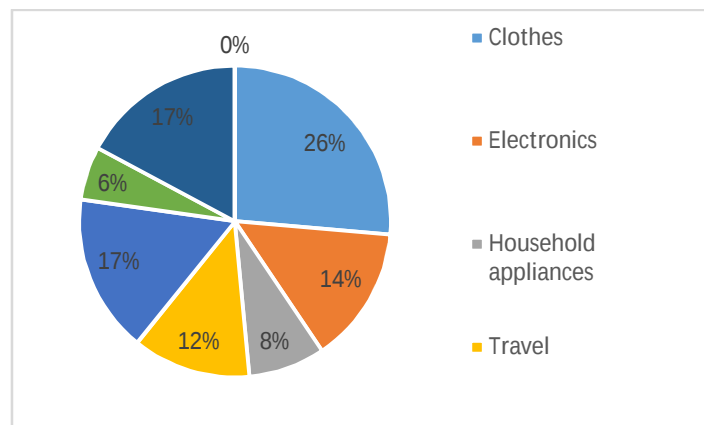


Fig. 19. Categories of purchase for which respondents use Social Media to search information (Q.15).

In the figure 20 shown below, 39% of the respondents used social network (39%) to obtain information about products/services/brands on social media. Next is multimedia sharing (25%). Followed by microblogging (19%), review site (10%), blogs (6%), forums (1%), and others.

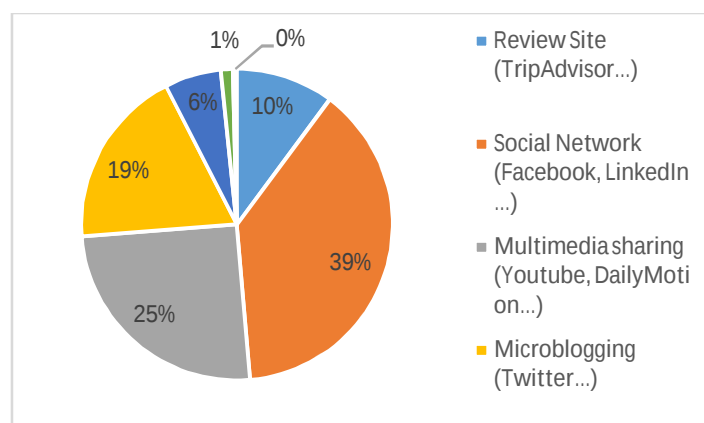


Fig. 20. Social Media used to obtain information about products/services/brands (Q.16).

F. Evaluation of Alternatives

As shown in figure 21, 76% of the respondents use social media to compare products/services/brands. As presented in figure 22 below, 21% never seek their friends' opinions while 20% of the respondents never seek the opinion of people they don't know before making a purchase. 10% of the respondents rarely seek for friends' opinion on social media before making decision, and 20% rarely seek for opinion from people they do not know. Respondents sometimes seek for friends' opinion (34%) and from people they do not know (29%). Respondents frequently seek for friends' opinion (16%) and from people they do not know (19%) before making a decision. Respondents always seek for friends' opinion (19%) and from people they do not know (12%) before making a decision.

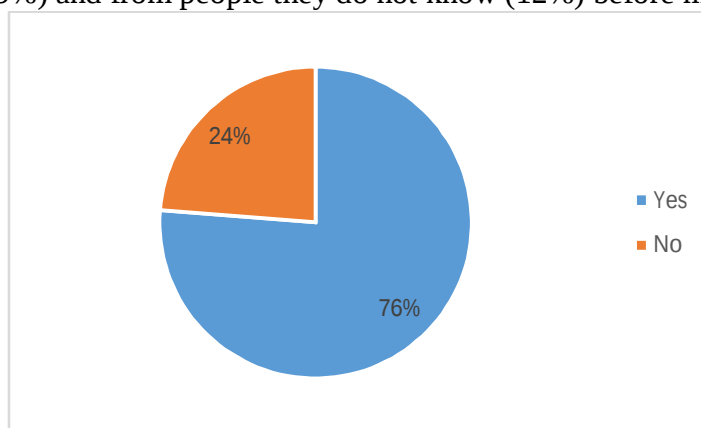


Fig. 21. Do respondents use Social Media to compare products/services/brand? (Q.17).

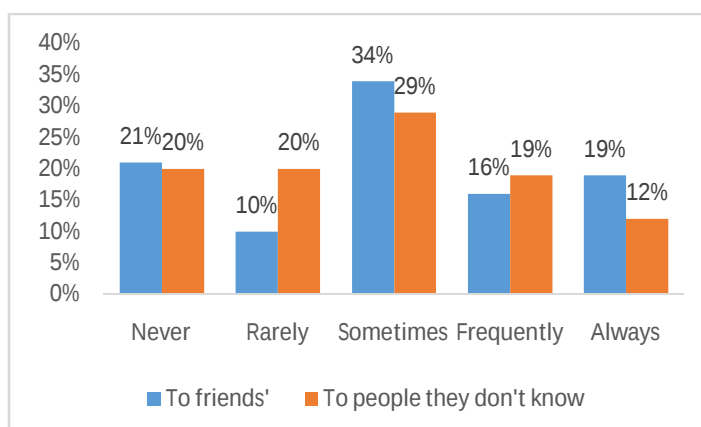


Fig. 22. Likelihood to seek opinions on Social media before making purchase decisions (Q.18-19).

As stated in figure 23 below, 11% never ask their friends' opinions while 21% of the respondents never ask the opinion of people they don't know before making a purchase. 19% of the respondents rarely ask for friends' opinion on social media before making decision, and 18% rarely ask an opinion from people they do not know. Respondents sometimes ask for friends' opinion (32%) and from people they do not know (23%). Respondents frequently ask for friends' opinion (16%) and from people they do not know (19%) before making a decision. Respondents always ask for friends' opinion (19%) and from people they do not know (12%) before making a decision.

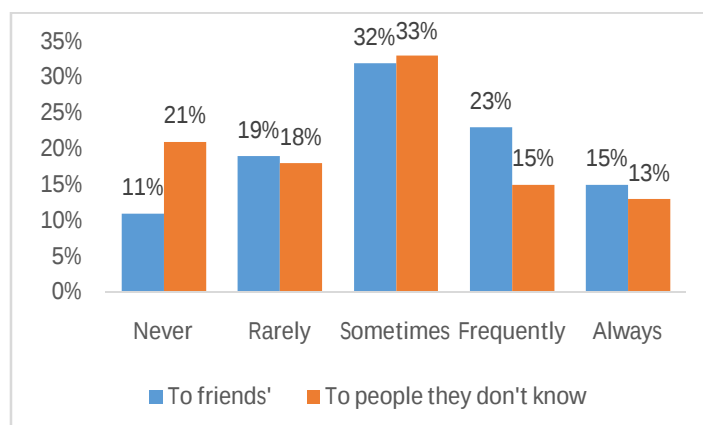


Fig. 23. Likelihood of respondents to ask people's opinion on Social Media when they hesitate between different product/services? (Q.20-21)

Figure 24 below shows that 40% of the respondents said that they neither agreed nor disagreed their friends' reviews and comments about products/services/brands on Social Media. Meanwhile, 27% said that they agreed. In contrast, as shown in figure 25 below, 41% of respondents said they neither agreed nor disagreed the reviews and comments of people they don't know on Social Media. However, 27% said that they agreed, and 13% disagreed.

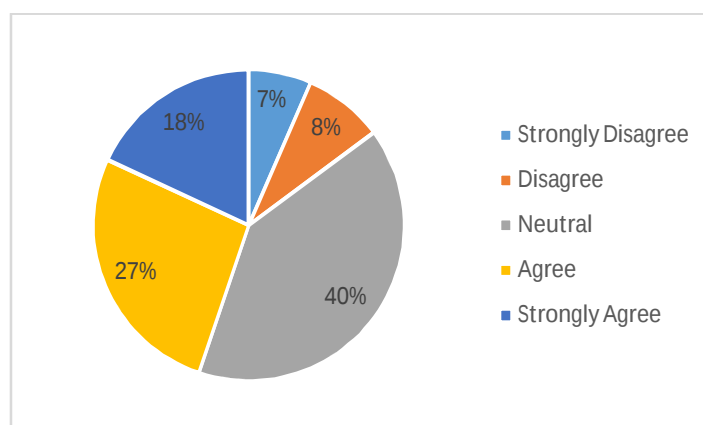


Fig. 24. Trust level in friends' reviews and comment about products/services/brands on Social Media (Q.22).

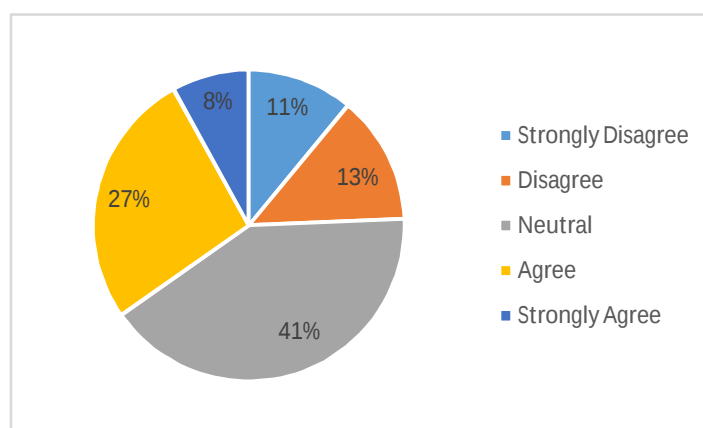


Fig. 25. Trust level in people they do not knows' reviews and comments about products/services/brands on Social Media (Q.23).

As stated in figures 26 and 27 below, 32% of the respondents said they neither agreed nor disagreed that positive reviews and comments from friends against 38% from people they do not know. 33% agreed that the impact of positive reviews and comments from friends about products/services/brands on social media could make them purchase against 31% from people they don't know. Also, 10% disagreed that the impact of positive reviews and comments from friend about products/services/brands on social media could make them purchase against 13% from people they do not know. In contrast, as shown in figures 28 and 29 below, 30% of the respondents said they neither agreed nor disagreed that negative reviews and comments from friends against 38% from people they do not know. 26% agreed that the impact of negative reviews and comments from friends about products/services/brands on social media could make them purchase against 24% from people they don't know. Also, 15% disagreed that the impact of negative reviews and comments from friend about products/services/brands on social media could make them purchase against 13% from people they do not know.

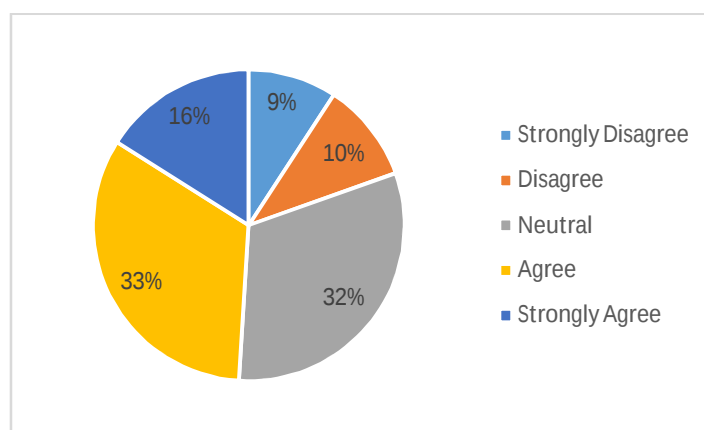


Fig. 26. Impact of positive reviews and comments from friends on Social Media on purchase decision (Q.24).

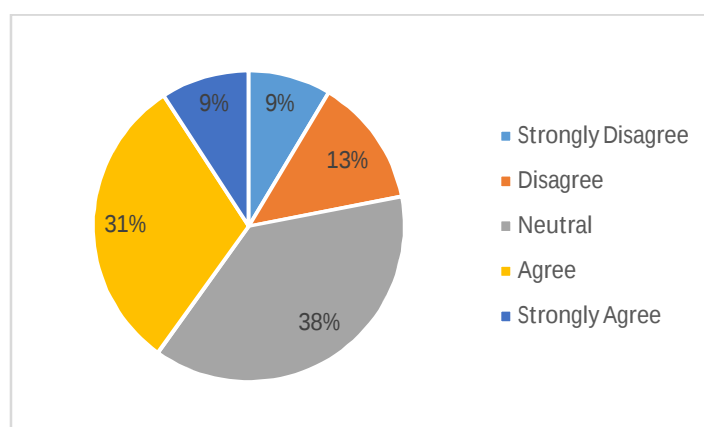


Fig. 27. Impact of positive reviews and comments from people they don't know on Social Media on purchase decision (Q.25).

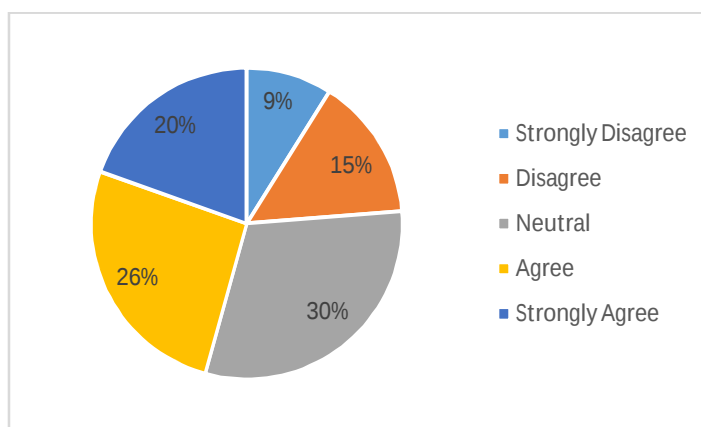


Fig. 28. Impact of negative reviews and comments from friends on Social Media on purchase decision (Q.26).

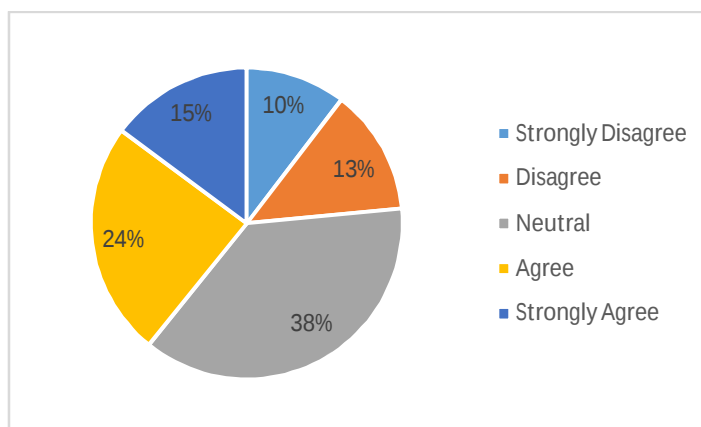


Fig. 29. Impact of negative reviews and comments from people they don't know on Social Media on purchase decision (Q.27).

G. Purchase Decision

Figures 30 and 31 below point out that 14% of the respondents said that they never purchased after reading positive reviews on Social Media against 30% after reading negative reviews. 15% said that they would rarely purchase after reading positive reviews against 16% after reading negative reviews on social media. Respondents sometimes purchase after reading positive reviews (38%) and after reading negative review (33%) on social media. Respondents frequently purchase after reading positive review (22%) and after reading negative review (14%) on social media. Respondents always purchase after reading positive review (11%) and after reading negative review (7%) on social media.

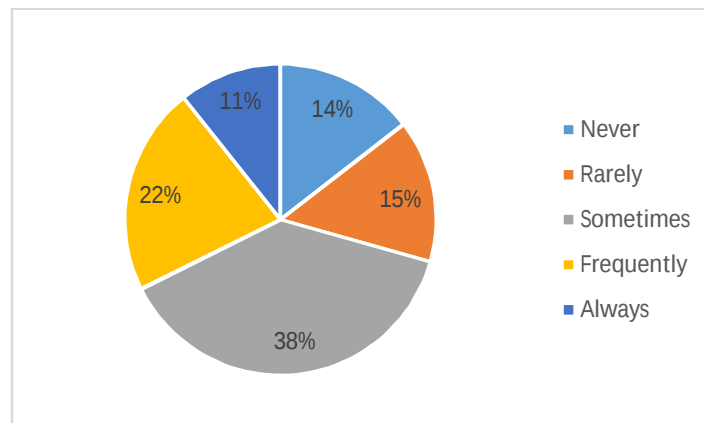


Fig. 30. Likelihood to purchase after reading positive reviews on Social Media (Q.28).

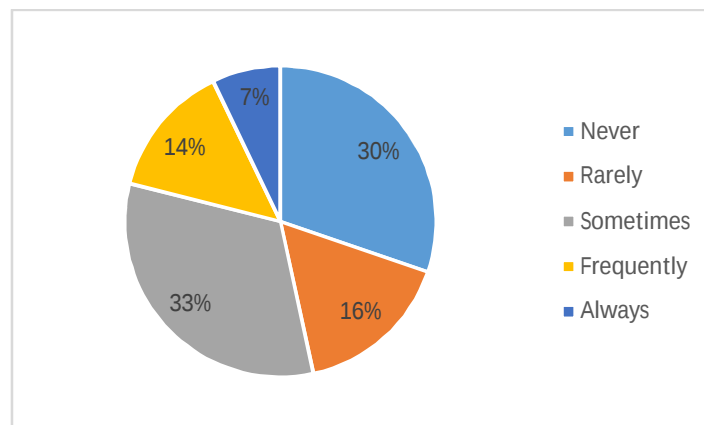


Fig. 31. Likelihood to purchase after reading negative reviews on Social Media (Q.29).

Figures 32 and 33 below shows that 29% of the respondents said that they neither agreed nor disagreed that social media is more influent than traditional media in their final purchase decision. 26% agreed that social media is more influent than traditional media in their final purchase. Also, 11% disagreed that social media is more influent than traditional media in their final decision. On the other hand, 50% of the respondents said that they neither agreed nor disagreed that social media plays a role in their final decision to purchase. 29% agreed, and 11% disagreed that social media plays a role in their final decision to purchase.

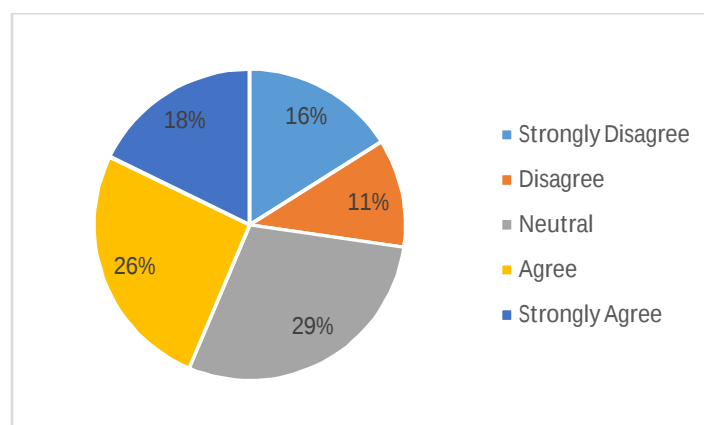


Fig. 32. Is Social Media more influent than traditional media in respondents' final purchase decision? (Q.30).

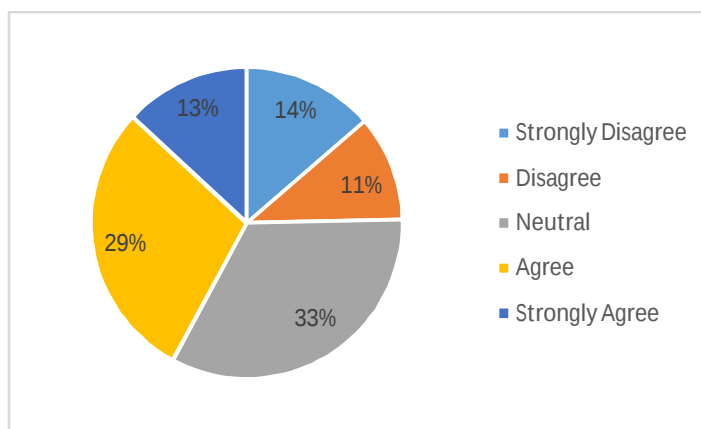


Fig. 33. Does Social Media play a role in respondents' final purchase decision? (Q.31).

H. Postpurchase Behavior

The figure 34 below points out that 9% of the respondents said that they never rate or write reviews on social media after they purchase. 60% said that they would rarely rate or write reviews on social media after they purchase. 16% of the respondents sometimes rate or write reviews on social media after they purchase. 9% of the respondents frequently rate or write reviews on social media after they purchase. 6% of the respondents rate or write reviews on social media after they purchase.

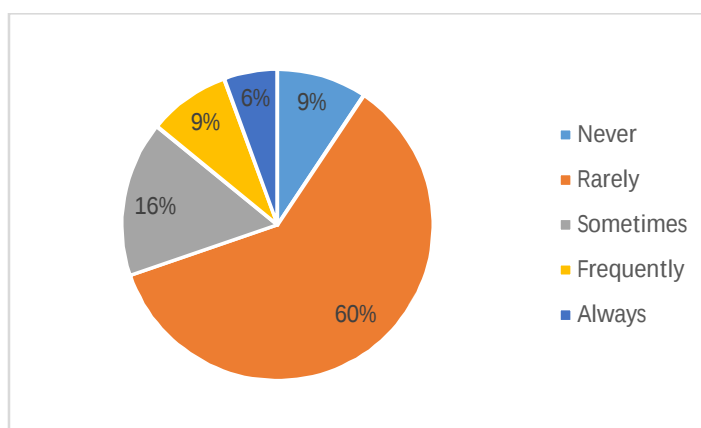


Fig. 34. Likelihood to rate or write reviews on Social Media after a purchase (Q.32).

As stated in figure 35 below, 17% of the respondents never share their opinions to friends when they are satisfied in their purchase while 13% never share their opinions to friends when they are not satisfied in their purchase. 15% of the respondents rarely share their opinions to friends when they are satisfied in their purchase, and 17% rarely share their opinions to friends when they are not satisfied in their purchase. 33% of the respondents sometimes share their opinions to friends when they are satisfied in their purchase, and 35% rarely share their opinions to friends when they are not satisfied in their purchase. 24% of the respondents frequently share their opinions to friends when they are satisfied in their purchase, and 22% frequently share their opinions to friends when they are not satisfied in their purchase. 11% of the respondents always share their opinions to friends when they are satisfied in their purchase, and 11% always share their opinions to friends when they are not satisfied in their purchase.

are satisfied in their purchase, and 13% always share their opinions to friends when they are not satisfied in their purchase.

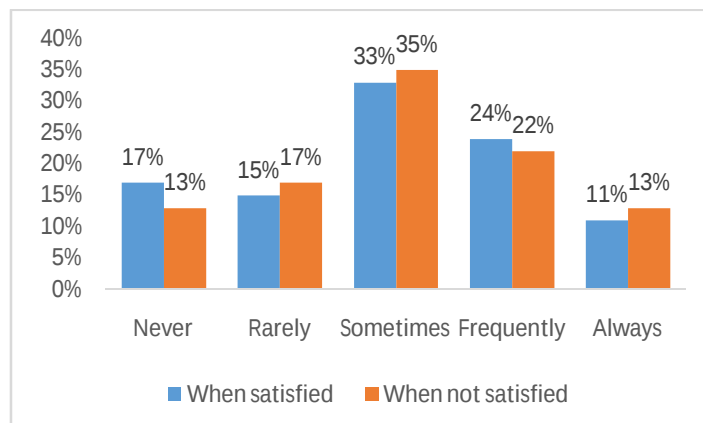


Fig. 35. Likelihood to share opinions to friends on Social Media after a purchase (Q.33- 34).

As stated in figure 36 below, 15% of the respondents never share their opinions to people they do not know when they are satisfied in their purchase while 19% never share their opinions to people they do not know when they are not satisfied in their purchase. 17% of the respondents rarely share their opinions to people they do not know when they are satisfied in their purchase, and 16% rarely share their opinions to people they do not know when they are not satisfied in their purchase. 37% of the respondents sometimes share their opinions to people they do not know when they are satisfied in their purchase, and 30% rarely share their opinions to people they do not know when they are not satisfied in their purchase. 21% of the respondents frequently share their opinions to people they do not know when they are satisfied in their purchase, and 20% frequently share their opinions to people they do not know when they are not satisfied in their purchase. 10% of the respondents always share their opinions to people they do not know when they are satisfied in their purchase, and 15% always share their opinions to people they do not know when they are not satisfied in their purchase.

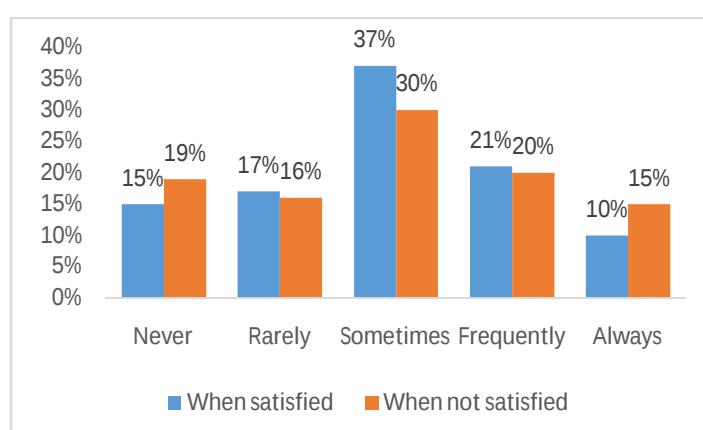


Fig. 36. Likelihood to share opinions to people they don't know on Social Media after a purchase (Q.35-36).

As presented in figure 37 below, consumers have more or less their opinions according to categories of products and services on social media. 27% of the respondents ranked Clothes as the first category

about which they share their opinions. Entertainment ranked second with 18%. Meanwhile, cars (6%) and others (1%) count among the least mentioned categories by consumers.

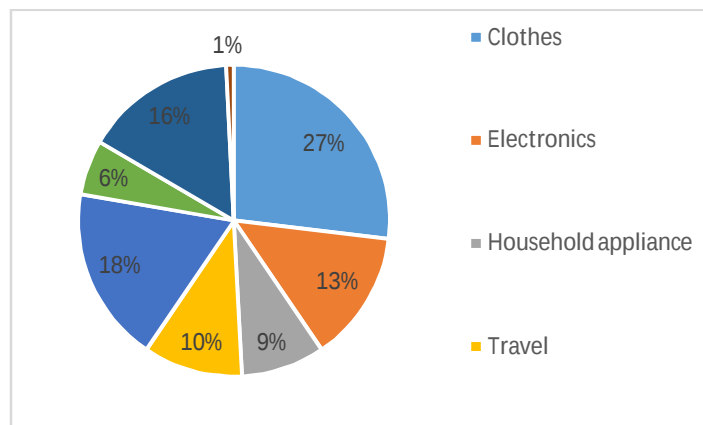


Fig. 37. Categories of products/services/brands for which consumers share opinions on Social Media (Q.37).

V. DISCUSSION

A. Introduction

This research is conducted to know if the prevalence of Social Media in today's world on the consumer's purchasing decision-making process changes or not in accordance to the processes along. In this chapter, the researchers will elaborate the influence of Social Media on the stages of purchase decision-making process.

B. Social Media influence in consumers' purchasing decision-making process

The results of the study showed that Social Media's influence varies depending on the stages the consumers go through during the purchasing process. The results varied depending on the stages, consumers showed to be more or less influenced by Social Media.

C. Influence of Social Media on Need Recognition

On the Need Recognition stage, the survey showed that Social Media is really significant in influencing consumers. Almost three-fourth of the surveyed individuals decided on buying a brand after following it on Social Media. Though, they are still undecided when they see their peers' talking or displaying pictures about products/services on Social Media. Being able to access contents shared by their friends proved to be a significant variable that could generate and acknowledge new needs.

It is also significant to take note that Social Media's influence varies on the categories of the products and services. Clothes, Health and Beauty products and Entertainment (movies, music, concerts and such) are the most recognized through Social Media by the consumers. Moreover, the survey showed that consumers will most likely recommend certain brands, depending on how they see it and not depending if their friends were already followers. The survey also showed that Social Media is on par or is over the major information channels (Tv, Radio, Newspaper and such). The study proved that consumers trust their own volition over peer pressure- majority of the consumers on the survey are more likely to recommend a certain brand to a friend after being a follower and when friends are already followers. This showed that Social Media can increase need recognition possibilities for consumers- the survey showed that 58% of the respondents follow brands on Social Media.

D. Influence of Social Media on Information Search

On the Information Search stage, the study showed that majority- 79% of the respondents use Social Media to find information about products, services, and brands. If different types of Social Media platforms are accessible for finding information, this study showed that consumers more likely tend to use certain Social Media platforms and tools more than other channels. Social Networking Sites (Facebook, LinkedIn...), Multimedia sharing (YouTube, Daily Motion...) and Microblogging (Twitter...) are the most used among other types such as Review Site (TripAdvisor...), Blogs and Forums that are less or almost not used when it comes to information search stage. The influence of Social Media on the Information Search stage seemed to vary depending on the Social Media channel/type used.

The study showed that Social Media is more or less influencing depending on the categories of products and services they are seeking information- the study proved that consumers tend to use Social Media mainly to find information about Clothes, Entertainment, Health and Beauty products and Electronics.

As deliberated on the Need Recognition stage above, consumers use Social Media to follow brands. Furthermore, the study showed that 26% of the respondents followed brands to get updates about products/services and 24% of them followed brands to read comments and reviews about products/services. This showed that Social Media delivers the possibility to search information directly from the brands' fan page.

The study shows consequently that Social Media is a significant variable on the Information Search stage but this role should be regarded as more or less influent according to the Social Media channels or tools used by consumers. The study also involves the categories of the products and services for which consumers search information.

E. Social Media on Evaluation of Alternatives

On the Evaluation of Alternatives stage, the study showed that majority (76%) of the consumers take advantage of Social Media channels to compare certain products, services and brands. Thus, consumers use Social Media not just for their Information Search but also mainly for comparing purposes or evaluating alternatives. Also, the study shows that 16% of consumers frequently seek their friends' opinions on Social Media when there are only 19% who seek opinion of strangers before making a purchase decision. On the other hand, it is reported that 23% of the respondents seek their peers' opinions and only 15% to strangers when they hesitate between different products and service. The study showed that consumers would rather wait for word-of-mouth rather than seek peers' opinion when making a buying decision but when there is sense of uncertainty about the product and/or services, they turn to their peers' opinion rather than some peoples' opinion or review.

To wrap up, Social Media thus plays a vital role of influence on the Evaluation of Alternatives stage, especially when there is sense of hesitation and trust aspect provided by communities on social media.

F. Social Media on Purchase Decision

On the Purchase Decision stage, the study showed 22% of the consumers would frequently purchase after reading positive reviews and 14% when it is a negative review. Consequently, it seems that Social Media is just way above standard when influencing consumers at the moment of making decisions in purchasing. Furthermore, the study showed that almost half (44%) of the respondents are

decided that Social Media is more influential than traditional media and really affects the respondents' final purchase decision. The fact that Social Media greatly affects the consumers' in the process of gathering information and evaluating alternatives makes it more influential than traditional media in the final stage of the purchase.

To conclude, Social Media is really influential on the consumers' purchase decision-making process- though consumers were influenced by positive and negative reviews from their colleagues, and other stimuli appeared to play a role in the mind of the consumers, they seemed to be still the ones to make the decision in the end.

G. Social Media on Post Purchase Decision

On the Post-Purchase Decision stage, the research presented that this stage was the weakest to be influenced by Social Media. The study showed that only 9% of the respondents said that they rate or write reviews on social media after purchase and 60% of them rarely rate or write reviews on social media after they purchase. 24% of the consumers tend to share their opinions to friends when satisfied and 22% when they are not satisfied. We can say that they share it to their peers whether they are satisfied or not. And when it comes on sharing to people they do not know, the result is still about the same- 21% says that they share opinions to people they do not know when they are satisfied and 20% says that they share when they are not satisfied. We could say that they share opinions not to leverage or dispute the brand's products/services but solely just to share that they purchased/experienced it.

Furthermore, the study pointed out that consumers shared more about categories such as Clothes, Health and Beauty products, Entertainment and Electronics. Except this four categories, it seem that consumers share about the same kind of categories of products and services.

To sum it all up, the research revealed thus that consumers liked to know others' opinions on Social Media about their information gathering, finding alternatives, and purchase decision. On the contrary, consumers' do not like sharing their experiences and opinions to their friends and other people on Social Media. The influence of Social Media seems to be lower at the Post-Purchase Behavior stage than to the previous stages of the consumers' purchasing decision-making process.

VI. CONCLUSION

The increasing influence of social media on consumers purchase decision making process differs according to different stages. This study shows that social media influence differs depending on the stages consumers go through the purchasing process.

During the need recognition stage more than half of the surveyed individuals decided to a product and services after it has been followed by their friends on social media. It clearly shows that social media plays a big role in influencing consumers during this level.

Although, other people like peers is also a variable to consider because they drive other people to acknowledge new needs.

It is also important to take note that Social media influence varies also to different categories of the products and services. Consumers are more likely to recognize Clothes, Health and beauty Products as well as Entertainment.

During the Information Search Stage, the Survey results show that majority of the Consumers use Social media to find more information for a product or service. This study showed that more

consumers are more likely to use social media platforms rather than Blogsites and Forums. The influence of social media also varies depending on which channel or type is used by the consumers. The study also proved that consumers tend to use social media to find more information about Clothing, Entertainment, Health, Beauty Products as well as Electronics. Consumers also use Social media to follow brands for them to receive updates about the products and services they want. This shows Social Media delivers Information directly from the brands to the consumers.

During the Evaluation of Alternatives stage, this study showed that majority of the respondents' use Social Media channels to compare certain products, services and brands. It mainly shows that the majority of consumers also use social media to find alternatives to the products and services they use. The study also shows that consumers also frequently seeks the opinion of other people about a certain product and service before they decide to purchase it. It shows that the consumers also play a huge role for other people to evaluate a product or service.

Social Media plays an important role during the evaluation of alternative stage especially when the consumers are hesitant to purchase a product. The consumers tend to trust the opinions provided by the community about a certain product or service. The Social Media becomes a platform for us consumers to find the best product and services that will cater our need.

During the Purchase Decision, Consumers study shows that majority of the consumers would purchase after reading a positive review about a product and services. The study also shows that majority of the respondents are decided that Social media is more influential than traditional media. Social Media is an effective tool on the consumers' purchase decision-making process. Though, consumers were influenced by positive and negative reviews from their colleagues, and other stimuli appeared to play a role in the mind of the consumers, they seemed to be still the ones to make the decision in the end.

While the other stages of decision making process wherein Social media Influence is the strongest, the last stage is the weakest to be influenced by Social Media. One of the reasons for this is that consumers do not like sharing their experiences and opinions to their friends and other people on Social Media.

REFERENCE

- [1]. Sangurde, R. (2019, January). Impact of Social Media on Buying Behaviour of Consumer. Retrieved from ResearchGate website:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330618244_impact_of_social_media_on_buying_behaviour_of_consumer
- [2]. Gros, C.-H. (2012). The influence of Social Media on consumers during their purchase decision-making process and the implications for marketers. Retrieved from
https://esource.dbs.ie/bitstream/handle/10788/525/ma_gros_ch_2012.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- [3]. Khatib, F. (2016a). The Impact of Social Media Characteristics on Purchase Decision Empirical Study of Saudi Customers in Aseer Region. International Journal of Business and Social Science, 7(4). Retrieved from
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5b6a/44003a9abea33497ba42b6b4b9234021d0d1.pdf>
- [4]. Dr. Theodore Bagwell. (2012). THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING ON CONSUMERS DURING THEIR PURCHASE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND THE IMPLICATION FOR MARKETERS. Retrieved October 25, 2019, from Academia.edu website:
https://www.academia.edu/39889432/THE_INFLUENCE_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ADVERTISING

NG_ON_CONSUMERS_DURING_THEIR_PURCHASE_DECISION- MAKING_PROCESS_AND_THE_IMPLICATION_FOR_MARKETERS

- [5]. Paquette, Holly, "Social Media as a Marketing Tool: A Literature Review" (2013). Major Papers by Master of Science Students. Paper 2. http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/tmd_major_papers/2
- [6]. Akashraj D. P., & Pushpa C. O. (2014, February). Role of social media on development. Retrieved October 26, 2019, from ResearchGate website: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Akash_dp/publication/261324153_Role_of_social_media_on_development/links/53d672c80cf2a7fbb2eaa559/Role-of-social-media-on-development.pdf?_sg%5B0%5D=Dc-yaalwguY3292kmeaJdHSFWu6vqyO74KQexpdkL81Wb1PcDpg6uo8i18HpovD2RExePuqvxAezEKYVLgBi8g.aIqQP2k7kA1TBf5J7MhxoRdCuudFwVdQ3WTyCNkkLWDiuSNHpevd758qrqUIRnRjWbyU7uglY3XiYrolWTKPqw&_sg%5B1%5D=EK0Q_mdH4hSHm2wsvhqjOT1KgJdABmcD29z3Z4vONnuNRHG6VJtc_Ew_W5bbzuTfOfPyMZZtooJS1y7wsLmRcD17ucnJV8EpjUZgwwKK.aIqQP2k7kA1TBf5J7MhxoRdCuudFwVdQ3WTyCNkkLWDiuSNHpevd758qrqUIRnRjWbyU7uglY3XiYrolWTKPqw&_iepl=
- [7]. Solis, B. and JESS3 (2012) 'The Conversation Prism'. Available at: <http://www.briansolis.com/tag/conversationprism/> (Accessed 2 November 2019)
- [8]. Parker, J. R., & Lehmann, D. R. (2011). When shelf-based scarcity impacts consumer preferences. *Journal of Retailing*, 87(2), 142-155.
- [9]. Seva, R. R., Duh, H. B. L., & Helander, M. G. (2010). Structural analysis of affect in the pre-purchase context. *DLSU Business & Economics Review*, 19(2).
- [10]. Hoyer, W.D. and MacInnis, D.J. (2010) *Consumer behavior*. 5th edition. London: South-Western Cengage Learning
- [11]. Belch, G., & Belch, M. (2008). *Advertising and Promotion: An IMC Perspective* (8th ed). McGraw-Hill.
- [12]. Jaffe, J. (2010) Flip the funnel: how to use existing customers to gain new ones.
- [13]. Brown, D. and Hayes, N. (2008) *Influencer marketing: who really influences your customers?* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- [14]. Foxall, G. (2005) *Understanding Consumer Choice*. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillian.
- [15]. *Research Methods Structuring Inquiries and Empirical Investigations*. (2016). #388 McArthur Highway, Dalandanan, Valenzuela, Philippines: JO-ES Publishing House, Inc.
- [16]. Kothari, C. R. (2019). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. Retrieved from Google Books website: https://books.google.com.ph/books?hl=en&lr=&id=hZ9wSHysQDYC&oi=fnd&pg=PA2&dq=related:ixmsUAZYR2UJ:scholar.google.com/&ots=1s_9pFb-E0&sig=v0xFfWn_02hRPLR1EKAgYrA1sv4&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Susan Rose , Nigel Spinks & Ana Isabel Canhoto 2 2 Why use Excel ? With so many specialist software packages available , why use Excel for statistical analysis ? Convenience and cost are two important reasons : many of us have access to Excel on our own computers and do not need to source and invest in other software. (2015). *An introduction to using Microsoft Excel for quantitative data analysis*. Retrieved from http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9780415628129/Chapter%2013%20-%20Using%20Excel%20for%20Quantitative%20Data%20Analysis%20final_edited.pdf
- [17]. Kabir, S. M. S. (2016). *Basic Guidelines for Research: An Introductory Approach for All Disciplines* (1st ed.). Chittagong-4203, Bangladesh: Book Zone Publication.

- [18]. Susan Rose, Nigel Spinks & Ana Isabel Canhoto 2 2 Why use Excel ? With so many specialist software packages available, why use Excel for statistical analysis ? Convenience and cost are two important reasons : many of us have access to Excel on our own computers and do not need to source and invest in other software. (2015). An introduction to using Microsoft Excel for quantitative data analysis. Retrieved from http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9780415628129/Chapter%2013%20-%20Using%20Excel%20for%20Quantitative%20Data%20Analysis%20final_edited.pdf