

# Is Social Media able to Influence Educated Consumers— A Study on Association between Education and Social Media Déterminants

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## ABSTRACT

According to researchers in today's era, social media has become the most important part of life through which a person can share his or her life updates. The information shows that social media has really changed the behavior of people, it is seen that the online planet had allowed individuals to know everything about the environment. The social media sector is way to large and people has a direct mindset about each interactive media. This research investigates the association of whether social media inputs influence educated people. 467 Sample participated in survey which was conducted during Covid 19 period. Respondents were asked to rate their views on different questions based on platforms like Whatsapp, Youtube, Whatsapp, Instagram and LinkedIn.

**Keywords:** Education, E promotion, Purchase decision, Social Media.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the advancement of technology, the internet, and the emergence of Web 2.0 has overhauled the interconnectivity between individuals and people's participation on the web. This development has made a new system that enables the consumer to connect with people and businesses. It also pledges businesses' opportunity to collaborate on the internet directly, but this development only emerges through social media and online communities (Malik, Asif, and Wali, 2016).

Social media is considered an internet-based application built on the ideology and the technological foundation of web 2.0, where this application aims to allow the exchange of user-generation content and the creation of information. In simple words, social media is an online platform and tool that is used by the different individuals, groups, communities, and businesses to share the information, opinion, and the experience with each other, which are in the form of insights, videos, music, photos, and perceptions. The general availability of social media has allowed its use via. Facebook, Gmail, Twitter, Instagram LinkedIn WhatsApp, and many more big and small online apps and websites, which are present on the web. This social media offers different

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values to the consumer as well as to the business firms. For business firms, it facilitates word-of-mouth communication, enhanced by the popularity of brand. Moreover, it directly or indirectly increases the sales of product and services, not only for businesses but also for knowledge and information. As there are more than hundreds of social media apps and different online websites that an individual can use, the consumer only accepts and prefers to use those social media platforms that perceive usefulness.

This perceived usefulness is defined as a degree at which the person believes that using a particular product and service will enhance its knowledge and performance.

Moreover, the consumer also uses different social networks based on their preference. Consumer preference can be defined as a subjective taste or choice of the individual consumer, which is measured only by the satisfaction that a consumer gets after purchasing or using a product service. In simple words, a service or a product that consumers like or dislike is considered as a consumer preference, where the likes and dislikes depend on the various factors based on an individual's thoughts and experiences (Hajli, 2014).

The foremost thrust of this paperwork is to examine the role of different factors that influence the consumer preference to determine the specific social media. Understanding this issue can aid a catalogue of different factors that individuals perceive when they use a particular social media platform. This paper's main objective also attempts to understand what basis consumers prefer the social media platform and which platform is highly used by the consumer and compare the different social networking websites and how much time a consumer spends on the different websites.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study attempt to anchor on two models, namely the Fishbein model and the Technology Acceptance model; these models discuss the two variables of this study, one is consumer preference and another is how consumers perceive usefulness from social networking sites and also the perceived ease of use of social networking applications.

### Fishbein Model

In 1967, Psychologist Martin Fishbein proposed a model named Fishbein's model. This model is based on the expectancy-value model that is commonly used to understand consumer preferences.

Dickson and Miniard, (1978) in their paper, discussed this model. According to this model, consumers' preference towards a particular social app majorly depends on his/her cognitive beliefs about a particular social networking platform or an e-commerce platform. Ryan and Bonfield, (1975), in this paper observed that this model is based on a concise list of principles that are based on consumer preference. The first principle states that the consumer experience should be combined with the meaning of the uses of social media apps, which should be stored in the consumer's mind to develop their preferences. It is also suggested that good experiences of a consumer will promote better memory. Moreover, consumers also rely on

their own experience and consider their experience as a trusted source of information while judging the different social network alternatives, which is based on their user experience. The second principle establishes that emotional response is another major factor that a consumer takes in the mind while they prefer or choose a particular social service. As it is said that a consumer's emotion is one of the significant components in the consumer experience. Consumer experience emotionally engages a consumer towards a particular service or a brand and makes the consumer reuse the sites as frequently as possible. The third principle sheds some light on the consumer's preference, based on an individual's behavioral tendency. As it reflects the consumer's attribute toward a particular social brand or an e-commerce platform. Consumer perception towards a particular brand attribute positively or directly affects consumer preference, as this preference is entirely based on the consumer's cognitive beliefs. These beliefs define the constitute consumer expertise and the specific cognitive structure. In simple words, consumer perception about the brand's physical appearance in this paper is considered a design and color of social networking sites and applications. These attributes of appearance and the perception towards an appearance will positively affect the consumer's usage experience and their preference in the specific network. However, this model fails to explain the fact as to how frequently consumer uses the social media application and also fails to explain how the perceived usefulness and ease of use affect the user intention to use a particular social networking site or any other e-commerce platform.

This model only explains consumer's preferences towards different social media networks. Therefore, in this paper, another model is also discussed: the technological acceptance model, which explains the major phenomenon of this study: how frequently a consumer uses social media and the intension of the consumer while using a particular application.

### Technological Acceptance Model

The technological acceptance model style, TAM was proposed by Fred Davis (King and He, 2006). This model is used to study the rational behavior theory by using the user's acceptance of the information system. This model is a major theory of behavior science that attempts to study the perceived usefulness and also argues the impact of the perceived ease of use on the individual use of e-commerce or medial social sites. Ma and Liu, (2004) observed that, this theory



is based on two significant principles, the first or the foremost principle is perceived usefulness styled as (PU), reflecting the level at which the individual uses or considers the use of a particular social networking site or application to improve their knowledge and the efficiency. The perceived usefulness is defined by the degree at which the consumer thinks that a particular social application will improve their knowledge and enhance their job performance. Therefore if someone gets impressed by using this particular application and found that their job performance has improved by using the application, then their attitude will change towards that application and that application will also have a greater influence on the usefulness according to the Mawhinney and Lederer perceived usefulness strongly related to consumer satisfaction. Another significant factor is the perceived ease to use which is styled as

(PEOU), it reflects the extent to which the individual believes that it is simple or easy to use a particular social networking application or any other e-commerce site. As per many studies, it is believed that perceived usefulness has a significant impact on customer usage behavior. Most consumers prefer to use a social application that is easy to use and hassle-free (Saadé and Bahli, 2005).

### International Studies

Lauder and Traver (2010) observed that social media is growing tremendously in their research work, as it is a medium used by every other organization for engaging with customers and making market value. It is used in business for creating awareness regarding their product and services. As in this research paper, it is also predicted that in the future of social media will become a dominant force for businesses and the consumer; therefore, any business must participate in the dominant race of technology to stay in consumers' minds and create their identity.

Magesh *et al.* (2013) In their research study, found that consumer mostly chooses any social media network based on their attitude, it is also said that studying an individual's attitude is one of a major factor that helps to understand the perception and acceptance of a particular social networking site by an individual. To understand the individual attitude towards a particular social networking site, it is important to understand the factor that affects their attitude towards the particular e-commerce application. Advertisement is one of the factors that affect the consumer's preference toward a social particular e-commerce site. As the tool shows too many advertisements on its platform, consumers

do not prefer to use the application as a comparison to the other applications.

Malik *et al* (2016) observed that social media has become an integral part of an individual life, from considering the president of the country to any common man. As consumers spend there most of the time on social networking sites, the question arrives here: how a consumer chooses or prefers the particular social network for spending time for their entertainment. In this paper, the study finds that consumer chooses to prefer social media on two factors the useful. The first factor is ease to use and another is perceived usefulness since these two factors have a direct relation to the social networking application.

Gupta *et al* (2009) found that perceived risk is a major factor that consumers take in mind to use a particular social network site. Perceived risk can be defined as a possible threat or insecurity or damage that can be occurred to an individual by using a particular social application. This is the major significant factor that directly impacts on the consumer preference toward the e-commerce application. Consumer do not prefer to use social media which disclose their personal information. In simple words, consumer usage of social media's attitude is inversely affected by the more risk associated factor.

Puetz (2015) in his research paper found that consumer from the strata of society has increased their participation in the online interaction for the means of communication, searching information, booming their knowledge and also for conducting transaction, but the question arrives at which platform consumer choose to do all this task. As in this paper, one of the most consistent findings in social networking literature is that consumer has extended their social application preference based on consumer culture. This research has directly theorized that consumer taste and culture contribute to variation in usage of social networking applications. Where the consumer taste depends upon the individual factor based on their cultural and social.

Muñoz-Leiva *et al* (2012) In this their paper, suggested that social media usage also depends upon the degree to which the consumer is comfortable using a particular website or application which is commonly considered as perceived ease to use. In this paper, it is said that if the application is user-friendly, then it is more likely to engage the consumer because it creates an interaction between the service provider and the users. If the consumer finds the application less integrated, than they will lose interest in that particular social application.

Khraim, (2020) in his study concluded that consumer chooses or prefer the social networking application based on the application's usefulness. Perceived usefulness can be defined as the feature or capability of social media in capturing the information in a particular way that directly fulfills the requirement and boosts the consumer's confidence. A consumer is more likely to use that social network, which gives them more benefit and knowledge and enhanced their job performance. In another way, it is said that consumers are likely to use that network that boosts their confident knowledge and benefits them in any way.

Chena and Sharma (2013) noted in their research work that social networking sites have thrived with a great example such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and many more in recent years. Besides thriving in the social networking site, there is also a growing concern on the risk associated with that application. Risk in social networking sites has eroded member confidence in particular network services and ultimately makes users reduce the use of that particular network and even discontinue that social network. Nowadays, consumers are more concerned about their private information and do not use social media that is traded with their privacy.

Pourkhani *et al.* (2019) in their research, observed that in recent years, the concept of social networking application has been at the top of the agenda in many business executives' minds. Since the many consultants and the decision-maker have identified the way through Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat, many more applications enhance the organization's profitability. Since traditionally consumer only uses a social application for the entertainment purpose but know days this platform has become the source for a consumer to make a purchase decision which is why the social application directly relates to an organization's sales growth or profitability.

Grizane and Jurgelane (2017) concluded in their research that in a highly competitive and globalized drive business world, the role of social networking application has been increasing since the social networking application has been an important tool for marketing products and services of the business. This research shows that social media has a positive impact on the business's performance as it brings up a significant change in company performance and the sales growth no matter whether a business is small or large. In this study, there is a direct positive relationship between the ordination sale's growth, company reputation, and brand image.

## National studies

Mishra and Tyagi, (2020) In their paper, observed that consumer chooses to use specific social networking site based on there personal liking. This consumer tries to choose the social networking application based on the congruity of self-concept and the brand personality, where the brand personality depends upon the logo and color of that social media application. It was further noted that the more decent color of a social networking app the more number of a consumer is attracted toward that application. This study shows the direct relationship between consumer preference and the attractiveness of the social application.

Singh and Sinha (2020) concluded in their research that more and more retailer uses social networking application to target the teenagers and also young adults. Since nowadays, businesses can easily buy attention through advertisements on social media. The increasing exposure on social media had driven the traffic into the company, which results in the turn of the potential consumer into the actual consumer. This also increases sales directly or indirectly. The organization or business also gets a better understanding of their customer insights. Through social media sights, the consumer directly shares their though and reviews.

Balusamy *et al* (2019) found that social media becomes a helpful tool for the business. As the social networking application has become an excellent tool for businesses to directly communicate to their customer and help them know the consumer's insights and perception. As consumer also judges the company based on their online presence. So the company always should update itself to the technological factor. This research paper also shows the positive relationship between social networking application and the sales and profitability of the business. Further, the research finds the three major factor that affects consumer preference of social networking application. The foremost factor that affects consumer preference is perceived usefulness. The second factor is the technology acceptance that means the friendliness of the social application. The last and the third most factor that influences consumer preference while choosing social networking applications is the association of the risk. As in this study, this three-factor have a direct and positive impact on consumer preference.

Natarajan *et al* (2014) observed the importance of growing social media in the virtual world has become the extensively discussed topic in the past years. In this paper, the consumer preference for social media



is discussed. It is found that consumer preference towards a social networking application is based on the advertisement shown that social networking sites. Since there is much different application and the different application shows different advertisement. In this paper, it is found that the more the advertisement is shown on the application the less the consumer prefers to choose that application. Since the advertisement and consumer preference has an inverse relationship.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Objectives

- This research's main objective is to study the association of education of an individual with selected determinants of Social media.
- To study the association between education and Purchase decision, frequency of activity on social media and career plan

### Type of Research

In this study, descriptive cross-sectional design has been applied. This research work follows positivism philosophy as the researcher's emphasis is on quantifiable information using existing theory. A deductive approach is followed as it involves forming and then testing the hypothesis.

### Scope

The data was collected using the convenience sampling method; as there was no chosen target group, individuals were asked to participate in survey to get unbiased results. The survey was conducted in Western Central India cities, namely Indore, Bhopal, Ujjain, Dewas & Ratlam. The sampling unit includes everyone, whether male or female, married, unmarried professional, homemaker, self-employed, employee, and person with atleast SSC passed but must be above 18 years of age. In this survey total 467 respondents participated.

### Data Collection

A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. It consisted of close-ended questions. The respondents were asked to rate the factors that influence their decision making. Variables were rated on a four-point Likert Scale. High level of validity was ensured through pilot test of the questionnaire with 72 respondents. Their views were incorporated in the final questionnaire. The data was collected during October and December 2020. Total number of a questionnaire distributed was 730 through physical and electronic mode. However, the researcher received 467 fully answered questionnaires and all of them were included in the study. Thus, the response rate was 64%. Geographically, the study was restricted to tier 2 and 3 cities of Western Madhya Pradesh. Secondary data was collected through various sources like a past journal, books, newspapers etc.

### Data Analysis

Various statistical analysis techniques such as descriptive statistics, reliability test, Chi square analysis, Cramer V ANOVA, Welch t-Test, Brown and Forsythe test and Contingency Coefficient were used, which were processed by statistical software. The data analysis was carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0 for Windows.

### Hypothesis

15 Hypothesis observed to be tested. (Refer Table 1)

### Reliability Analysis

In this study reliability was examined on all items. As a test of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was adopted to represent internal consistency. The value of Alpha is .71 thus can be concluded that the items reliably measure the define constructs.

At 5% significance level Hypothesis H1.1, to H1.5 is rejected as value is less than .05; thus there is an association between the education of respondents

**Table 1:** Hypothesis Statement

Hypothesis	Statement
H 1.1 to H1.5	There is no significant association between Education and Various Social Media Platform activity
H 1.6 to H 1.11	There is no significant association between education and purpose Social Media Platform Selection
H 1.12	There is no significant difference between education and influence of social media in framing career plan
H 1.13	There is no significant difference between education and influence of social media in purchase decision
H 1.14	There is no significant difference between education and influence of social media in purchase decision
H 1.15	There is no significant Association between Education and Frequency of social media Activity

**Table 2:** Education & Frequently used Social Media Platform

<i>Frequently used Social Media Platform</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Chi Square</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Cramer V</i>
[Instagram]	High School	109	3.40	.734	.000	H1.1 rejected 0.305
	Graduate	246	3.36	.849		
	Post Graduate	108	2.19	1.139		
	Profession	4	4.00	0.000		
	Total	467	3.10	1.027		
[Facebook]	High School	109	1.95	.712	.000	H1.2 rejected 0.226
	Graduate	246	2.42	.935		
	Post Graduate	108	2.87	1.033		
	Profession	4	2.00	0.000		
	Total	467	2.41	.960		
[Youtube]	High School	109	3.15	.731	.000	H1.3 rejected 0.252
	Graduate	246	3.38	.633		
	Post Graduate	108	2.85	.965		
	Profession	4	2.00	0.000		
	Total	467	3.19	.779		
[WhatsApp]	High School	109	3.28	.837	.000	H1.4 rejected 0.282
	Graduate	246	3.57	.593		
	Post Graduate	108	3.43	.834		
	Profession	4	2.00	0.000		
	Total	467	3.46	.735		
[Linkedin]	High School	109	1.74	1.031	.023	H1.5 rejected 0.117
	Graduate	246	2.03	1.026		
	Post Graduate	108	2.14	1.080		
	Profession	4	1.00	0.000		
	Total	467	1.98	1.047		

with frequently used social media platforms. Strength of association was observed through Cramer's V. It was found LinkedIn association is weak, while Whatsapp Facebook & Youtube the association is moderate and Instagram enjoys strong association as per Cramer V reading. (Refer Table 2)

The main reason to be active in social media platform was analyzed and surprisingly purpose of making friends was found to have no association with respondents' education as H 1.6 accepted at 5% significance level. While H 1.7 to H 1.11 is rejected, there is an association between respondents' education with a respective purpose. To further establish the strength of association, Cremer V was applied and it was found that there is week association between the education of respondents and purposes like product promotion, event planning, or employment search. At the same time, respondents

like to use social media for finding friends, which has shown moderate strength. Casual Socialisation has a very strong association as per Cramer V. (Refer Table 3)

At 5% Significance level, there is no significant difference between person and social media education in influencing the career plan. Welch t-test and Brown – Forsythe also suggest similar view based on readings. (Refer Table 4)

At 5% Significance level, there is a significant difference between education of person and social media in influencing the purchase decision. Welch t-test and Brown – Forsythe also suggest a similar view based on readings. (Refer Table 5)

Based on Table 6 it can be observed that education is associated with the frequency of activity on various social media platforms. Although Cramer V and Contingency Coefficient suggest a week association. (Refer Table 6)



**Table 3:** Education & Purpose to be in Social Media

<i>Reason to be on Social Media</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Chi Square</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Cramer V</i>
To make friends	High School	109	2.52	.987	.080	H1.6 Accepted	Not Applicable
	Graduate	246	2.56	.940			
	Post Graduate	108	2.50	1.123			
	Profession	4	2.00	0.000			
	Total	467	2.53	.992			
[To socialise casually ]	High School	109	2.96	.706	.000	H1.7 Rejected	0.306
	Graduate	246	2.87	.784			
	Post Graduate	108	2.65	1.270			
	Profession	4	2.00	0.000			
	Total	467	2.83	.910			
[To find a suitable date ]	High School	109	1.70	1.041	.000	H1.8 Rejected	0.208
	Graduate	246	1.80	.794			
	Post Graduate	108	1.50	.730			
	Profession	4	2.00	0.000			
	Total	467	1.71	.849			
[To promote product and service ]	High School	109	1.86	.866	.000	H1.9 Rejected	0.181
	Graduate	246	2.36	1.096			
	Post Graduate	108	1.82	.915			
	Profession	4	1.00	0.000			
	Total	467	2.11	1.037			
[Event Planning ]	High School	109	2.01	.866	.001	H1.10 Rejected	0.141
	Graduate	246	2.24	.907			
	Post Graduate	108	2.10	.853			
	Profession	4	1.00	0.000			
	Total	467	2.15	.891			
[To find employment ]	High School	109	1.92	.873	.000	H1.11 Rejected	0.173
	Graduate	246	2.26	1.101			
	Post Graduate	108	1.93	.983			
	Profession	4	1.00	0.000			
	Total	467	2.09	1.036			

**Table 4:** Education and Influence of Social Media in framing Career Plan

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>ANOVA</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Welch T Test</i>	<i>Brown &amp; Forsythe</i>
Yes	278	2.06	.714	.115	H 1.12 Accepted	0.113	0.113
No	189	1.95	.694				
Total	467	2.01	.707				

**Table 5:** Education and Influence of Social Media in purchase Decision

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>ANOVA</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Welch T Test</i>	<i>Brown &amp; Forsythe</i>
Yes	341	1.94	.660	.000	H 1.13 Rejected	0.001	0.001
No	126	2.21	.793				
Total	467	2.01	.707				

**Table 6:** Education & Frequency of Social Media Activity

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Chi Square	Hypothesis	Cramer V	Contingency Coefficient
Once a week	25	2.32	.476				
Every 4 hour	182	2.09	.684				
Every 1 hour	106	2.02	.730	.000	H1.10 Rejected	0.149	0.25
Highly active	154	1.88	.726				
Total	467	2.01	.707				

## CONCLUSION

After conducting the research, it uncovered some very interesting inputs related to influence of social media on various factors.

### Key findings

- It is observed that young educated people (Graduate + High School) like Instagram, Whatsapp & Youtube more than Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Respondents like to use social media platform more for Socialising activity. Educated people don't prefer social media for product promotion and event planning.
- Educated Citizens feel social media platform is not that useful for career planning
- Social media inputs do not influence purchase decision of educated individuals.
- Social media activity among educated people was found to be emerging.
- LinkedIn response need to improve.

### Recommendation

- Some people do not make use of LinkedIn; they should be made aware of the fact in today era it is really a powerful social media platform and can help in chasing dreams and pursuing good career now a days companies like to look onto LinkedIn profile.
- LinkedIn profile will help in building career plan
- Companies need to focus more on product promotion through social media platform which should be more engaging.

### Limitations

- *Sample Size:* The research's sample size is constrained to 467.
- *Indore:* The research radius has been restricted to the Western Central part of India I.
- *Participants:* Very few professionals participated in the survey; major participation was from students.

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