



## *The Influence of Social Media on Business Administration undergraduate students' Choice*

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### **Abstract:**

*Social media has become a significant communication instrument that everyone uses to connect to another person or a group of people or even organizations. People use social media to share their reviews, information, warnings, experiences, advice, and/or any kind of issues that are interesting to their friends or “connection”. That information is a helpful source, which may influence consumer’s decision-making.*

*Therefore, this study tries to investigate the advantages of social media on the consumers’ attitudes through descriptive analyses. Usually consumers tend to believe in what their friends recommend. Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram is the most common social media sites that people share their lifestyle, products, stories..., or even where they went for vacation.*

**Keywords:** *social media; consumers; attitudes; marketing.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Any service or product may be influenced by social media. Consumer decision-making may be influenced by factors such as quality, brand, promotion, or pricing. Western Kentucky University analyzed the kind of goods purchased and the cost of the item in a sample of 249 consumers' purchases in 2003. The findings of this study show that customers buy either affordable or costly things depending on social media recommendations from their connections or acquaintances (Forbes & Vespoli, 2013). Marketers may believe that social media has an impact on purchasing behaviour. When it came to product suggestions, 59 percent of all respondents said they used Facebook as their social media tool. 37% of all users were utilizing Twitter. Based on this finding, buying behaviour has been influenced by social media.

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Customer attitudes toward advertising, brand loyalty, and purchase intents are all influenced by social media, according to the relationship between social media and consumer decision-making. It is unlikely to have a direct influence on consumer decision-making, but it might operate as a mediating factor. Social media may alter brand perceptions, which can influence purchase decisions. A customer's purchasing choice may be influenced by a favourable impression of a brand or product. When a customer's social media friend publishes or recommends a service or product, it effects their brand perception and decision-making. Commercial advertising on social media, on the other hand, has an effect on customer brand feelings as well as buy intentions (Ioană & Stoica, 2020). As a result of this data, marketers may better plan their marketing tactics. Many marketers utilize social media to promote their products. It is a simple way to entertain consumers.

With widespread access to information, improved social networking, and improved communication abilities, the internet and virtual communities have revolutionised societies and consumers (Kucuk & Krishnamurthy, 2007). As a result, social networks are defined as websites that connect millions of individuals from all over the world who share common interests, viewpoints, and hobbies. YouTube, Facebook, Blogs, and MySpace are examples of social media platforms that are popular with customers of all ages. (Sin & colleagues, 2012) Users interact utilising a variety of online forms (e.g., blogs, podcasts, social networks, bulletin boards, and wikis) to express thoughts about a product, service, or brand and contact other customers who are perceived as more objective information sources (Kozinets, 2002).

Not only can social media affect consumer purchasing decisions, but it also helps in other sectors of study or work, such as politics and jury impartiality and fair trials. Jurors have been able to use an online social media source to better their decision-making and discussions in the setting of the court system due to the Internet's freely available nature (Simpler, 2012).

Because individuals can't try out travel-related items and services before buying them, dynamic methods involving various volumes and types of data were employed (Mushtaq & Benraghda, 2018). According to several studies, many tourists utilized social media as a planning tool for their trip. Traveler decisions may be influenced by reviews of destinations, hotels, transportation, cuisine, or restaurants. Travel companies and organizations

have utilized social media to communicate with their customers by publishing travel information, images, warnings, and advice, and sharing personal traveller evaluations.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The main aim of this study is to identify the consumers' attitudes towards social media in marketing and specify the factors affecting the consumers' attitudes of consumers toward marketing with social media. The participants of the current study were Business administration undergraduates from the Faculty of Economics, Commercial Sciences and Management at University of Pahang, Malaysia. A total of 130 Business administration undergraduates

### **2.2 Data Collection**

To answer the research question, the study was conducted at University of Pahang, Malaysia. The researcher employed quantitative method. Quantitative data was obtained through a set of questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies of literature. In collecting data, a five-point Likert scale was distributed to the participants to identify their perceptions towards social media marketing.

In the first part of the questionnaire are questions about demographic information and multiple choice questions about the use of Internet and social media; in the second part, a Likert scale containing five items is used (1 totally disagree, 2 disagree, 3 no idea, 4 agree, 5 totally agree).

### **2.3 Data Analyse**

Data Analysis Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 21 Version) was employed in order to analyse the data of the questionnaire. Concerning the data analysis, Mean and Std. Deviation were used to identify the participants' perceptions and preferences about social media (advantages and disadvantages).

### **2.4 Consumer's Questionnaire**

Descriptive statistics, including means, and standard deviations, were employed to measure perceptions of the consumers about the social media marketing from 4 factors namely: 1- Attitude towards marketing with social media, 2- Social media use, 3- Social media knowledge, 4- Fear about marketing with social media, as it is demonstrated in Table 1. For ease of statistical analysis, business management undergraduates' perceptions were grouped under 3 main headings: low, medium, and high: 1.00 – V 2.33 = low mean value 2.34 – V 3.66 = medium mean value 3.67 – 5.00 = high

mean value.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Result and Discussion As a preliminary step to get the reliability coefficient of the current study, reliability of the score is assessed for the complete sample to identify the consistency of the items. The consistency reliability of the 20 items is calculated to be acceptable by Cronbach’s alpha .806. Table 1 demonstrates the consistency reliability of the quantitative instrument.

**Table N<sup>0</sup> (01): The Consistency Reliability of the Instrument**

Instrument	Alpha Coefficient
Questionnaire	.806

Source: Outputs of SPSS V.22

The findings of the study of Business Administration undergraduates’ perceptions under 4 factors: (: 1- Attitude towards marketing with social media, 2- Social media use, 3- Social media knowledge, 4- Fear about marketing with social media.) using mean and Standard Deviation analyses are presented in Table 3.

As indicated above, the research question of the current study aimed to investigate Business Administration undergraduates’ overall perceptions of the social media marketing. Generally speaking, the results indicate a high level (M=3.95) as shown in Table (2) below:

**Table N<sup>0</sup> (02): Mean and Standard Deviation of Factors Regarding Marketing with Social Media**

Factors	N.	Mean	Std.
Attitude towards marketing with social media	130	4.01	0.79
Social media use	130	3.99	0.79
Social media knowledge	130	3.80	0.76
Fear about marketing with social media	130	2.55	0.74
Total	130	3.75	0.77

Source: Outputs of SPSS

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**Table N<sup>o</sup> (03): Consumers' Perceptions and Preferences on Social Media Marketing**

<b>N.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.</b>
<b>1</b>	It is necessary for companies to use social media sites such as Facebook for the purposes of marketing purposes.	<b>4.04</b>	<b>.76</b>
<b>2</b>	It is a good idea to market with applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media.	<b>3.92</b>	<b>.84</b>
<b>3</b>	Marketing with applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media, is very interesting.	<b>4.14</b>	<b>.69</b>
<b>4</b>	I think that companies should take part in social networking sites such as Facebook.	<b>3.91</b>	<b>.81</b>
<b>5</b>	I like marketing with applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media.	<b>3.88</b>	<b>.80</b>
<b>6</b>	I find it useful to market with applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media.	<b>3.96</b>	<b>.83</b>
<b>7</b>	I believe that marketing with applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media, will be amusing.	<b>3.81</b>	<b>.87</b>
<b>8</b>	It is necessary for companies to use video sharing sites like YouTube for the purposes of marketing.	<b>3.93</b>	<b>.79</b>
<b>9</b>	It is necessary for companies to use Wikis for the purposes of marketing.	<b>3.95</b>	<b>.76</b>
<b>10</b>	I think that marketing with social media is the future of marketing.	<b>3.88</b>	<b>.73</b>
<b>11</b>	I use social networking sites such as Facebook regularly.	<b>3.76</b>	<b>.83</b>
<b>12</b>	I like using applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media.	<b>3.83</b>	<b>.75</b>
<b>13</b>	I use video sharing sites such as YouTube regularly.	<b>4.14</b>	<b>.83</b>
<b>14</b>	Blogs are important in today's marketplace.	<b>4.09</b>	<b>.76</b>
<b>15</b>	Social networking sites are important in today's	<b>4.14</b>	<b>.83</b>

	marketplace.		
<b>16</b>	YouTube is important in today’s marketplace.	<b>4.09</b>	<b>.76</b>
<b>17</b>	It is necessary for companies to have a blog or blogs for marketing.	<b>4.16</b>	<b>.77</b>
<b>18</b>	I know that applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media, are being used for the purposes of marketing.	<b>3.92</b>	<b>.81</b>
<b>19</b>	I think that marketing with applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media, is a waste of time.	<b>2.8</b>	<b>.71</b>
<b>20</b>	I think that marketing with applications such as YouTube, Facebook, and blogs, generally known as social media, is worrisome.	<b>2.3</b>	<b>.77</b>

Source: Outputs of SPSS

### **3.1 Consumers’ Perceptions and Preferences on Social Media Marketing**

Participants for this questionnaire were active undergraduates in social media. Participants were asked to discuss about their attitudes pertaining social media platforms marketing such as Facebook, YouTube and Tweeter. It is revealed to have (M=0.04, SD=.76). Moreover, another factor, the use of social media, revealed (M= 3.99; SD= .79). Also, social media knowledge scored (M=3.80 SD=.76). However, the factor about marketing with social media revealed (M=2.55; SD=.74), It was expected to have lower scores in the fourth factor. It indicates the consumers have a strong trust towards the use of social media marketing in various social media platforms. It also shows that the undergraduates have the culture of using and implementing these platforms in marketing. This result paints an interesting picture of perhaps a shifting trend in social media, in which younger consumers like undergraduate students seem to be seeking a more instantaneous model of social media.

Development of the main technologies underlying the social media revolution continues. Social media can be established anywhere with an Internet connection, and it should be considered by marketers, advertisers, and content creators as a basic part of their communications because social media affects all aspects of the Internet and transforms the role of Internet in people’s lives (Universal McCann 2008).

Today, consumers gain a new role with social media. Consumers are becoming “content creators” and, thus, functional consumers=marketers

instead of just consuming, as in the past. Social media applications and/or tools that facilitate this are blogs, micro-blogging applications (such as Twitter), social networking sites (such as Facebook), podcasts, and video and photo sharing sites (such as YouTube). Given this reality, it is useful for companies, especially marketers, to integrate social media into marketing and their marketing strategies.

This study attempted to specify the factors that affect the attitudes of consumers toward marketing with social media. The research sample includes undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24—the age group that uses social media the most, as gleaned from the literature review performed. It would be beneficial for the samples of further studies to include people between the ages of 25 and 34.

In the research carried out, it was found that the undergraduates as seen as the consumers possessed positive attitudes toward marketing with social media. This indicates that they have a strong willing to use social media marketing. The finding of this study supports the existing literature, which states that the attitudes of undergraduates toward social media on social networking are more favourable (Cha 2009; Lewis 2010). On the contrary, Cha found in his study that a statistical significance was not noticed between women and attitude toward shopping for real items on social networking. Also, Lewis found in his study that the impact of gender on attitude toward social media is relatively weak. Social networking sites highlight social interaction. In this context, it can be reasoned that the attitudes of women toward marketing activities on social media sites will be more favourable in the future compared to those of men. As Levit (2010) stated, women ascribe importance to relationships when shopping online.

The use of social media affects the consumers' attitudes toward marketing with social media. Therefore, it would be useful for marketers to develop promotion strategies and to more effectively use social media to create consumer communities. However, one of the important results of the study is that consumers' use of social media, their knowledge of social media, their following of social media, and their fears about marketing with social media all affect their attitudes toward marketing with social media.

There are meaningful relationships between these elements, but consumers' foresight about marketing with social media does not affect them, and there is no meaningful relationship between them. If consumers' following/monitoring of social media significantly affecting their attitude

toward social media marketing is taken into account, it will be important for marketers to prepare applications and content that both help consumers continuously follow social media and help audiences become participants. Hence, content and applications that are entertaining, educative, informative, and encouraging of discussions can be created. For instance, company and brand fan pages can be opened as Facebook accounts. Special coupons for products or services can be offered on these pages; entertaining contests can be prepared for customers, and invitations for events can be sent to these customers. Also, by participating in online customer communities having too many members, it is possible to share educative and informative contents that enable promotion of the product. Members may be allowed to review, comment on, and rate the products, services, and brands.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Social media as a rising trend creates a marketplace that attracts a wide range of users. The ways in which marketers can effectively use this kind of a marketplace should be researched. However, it should be kept in mind that social media users like university students do not consider activities with marketing purposes in social media applications as positive. Social media seems to be modern tools for undergraduates in Malaysia. However, their negative effects (fear of using social media marketing) seemed to be very poor as compared to their positive attitudes and effects as they described in the questionnaires. It is suggested that the lecturers, educators and others social media users, especially Facebook, YouTube, and Tweeter page owners, disseminate advantageous issues which help undergraduates as consumers in terms of enhancing their knowledge and information.

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