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Understanding Online Consumer Purchase Behaviour for Varied Consumer Clusters for Electronics Brands in India

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ABSTRACT: *We are living in a digital age. The wave of digitalisation is in full swing to make its presence felt in every sphere of life. It has not just challenged the geographical limitations narrowing the gaps between the places that are situated faraway from each other and made the life easier with huge number of facilities but has also influenced our attitudes and values. In such a situation, online shopping has started emerging as a popular shopping option among urban and modernised consumers. Not all the consumers show similar trends while using ecommerce. People of different clusters have different comfort zones as far as online shopping behaviour is concerned. Product preferences vary with a change in demographics. Level of satisfaction is also different for different set of consumers. Though window shopping is no longer an alien concept even for the internet immigrants, purpose of use is certainly different for every age group. Literatures reveal that the attractive features of the medium have tempted many researchers from time to time to throw light on lesser known areas but there is still much to be explored. This paper is an endeavour to study about the potential of the medium to market consumer electronics analysing in details the electronic shopping behaviour of different age groups. A random survey has been conducted among the people of the age group of 19 – 35 (n – 100) and the samples have been divided into four groups 19 – 22, 23 -26, 27 – 30 and 30 – 35. Reactions have been studied through a questionnaire containing close ended questions. Analysis of data has been done through data graphs.*
Keywords: *Online purchase behaviour, Consumers, Clusters, Difference in attitudes, Consumer Electronics*

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media is "the internet and mobile technology based channels of communication in which people share content with each other". (Financial Times Lexicon, 2011) In the present world driven by innovation,social networking sites have turned into a channel through which marketing efforts communicated by the retailers can be extendedto broader choicegeneration for the shoppers. Chi(2011) defined social media marketing to be "connection between brands and consumers, [while] offering a personal channel and currency for user-centric networking and social interaction." Online networking can provide competitive advantage for both privately and publicly owned businesses. Corporate organizations can utilize this platform to connect with varied groups of audiences in a more efficient mannerwith little or no effort. They can advance brand awareness in various markets. They can likewise communicate with present and potential consumers. The tools and methodologies for advertising to clients have undergone considerable fluxowing to the emergence of social media. Hence organizationsshould upgrade themselves to adopt this new media in such a way so that it syncs with and fulfils the business plan. (Mangold&Faulds 2009)The strategy is particularly valid in organizations endeavouring for picking up an upper hand when compared to their competitors. Why Consumer Electronics? Consumer Electronics brands are generally popularized by utilizing mass TV advertising to drive retail sales, bolstered by special promotions. Yet, with the advent of the internet and smart phones, they have realized the increasing importance of connecting with their consumers on the platforms they prefer the most, like social media. It is almost impossible for Consumer Electronics brands to categorize and behaviourally/geographically/psychologically target their social media audience in order to identify their core consumers. There are a number of problems with Consumer Electronics brands advertising on social media, such as the struggle of defining ROI properly and the time and close monitoring that social media requires.

Additionally, many Consumer Electronics brands face the added hurdle of having relatively uncommitted consumers, who switch to competitor brands without a second thought. The actual dilemma is to isolate and invest in the right social media, the one that promises best ROI and better targeting. The effect of communicating through the right mix of social media on potential clients is an important idea to dissect when choosing how to advertise an item in the consumer electronics industry. Online networking is instant access point to a huge number of people, however when choosing how to advertise an item in such a dynamic space, many marketers may ponder "Which consumers ought to be targeted first and catered to?" and "By what means would it be advisable for me to draw in and engage these consumers?" Consumer Electronics are especially a more complex case, being a collection of high-involvement products that consumers usually follow a process of thorough research before purchasing. Brands put resources into distinguishing core customers, user engagement, characterizing and measuring "success" in social media, utilizing social media for market research, working with influencers, following the online discussion around a brand, what particular difficulties Consumer Electronics brand supervisors face in the social space, and also social media advertising's drawbacks for marketers. This study should be able to address these concerns. The greatest issue for Consumer Electronics brands is the means by which to track the connection between social media response and in-store deals. Talking to consumers on social media is word of mouth at its finest and it allows brands to perceive how dynamic their fans and loyalists are willing to be. As Consumer Electronics brands build up their personalities online and social sites enhance their features and benefits, it's anything but difficult to see that this study will be driving the path for Consumer Electronics brands to go social. This study will help answer the question of “which” platform helps meet the relevant needs of the marketer. This study will seek to understand 1) how to build successful Brand Communities online, 2) how to affect consumer attitudes and behaviours online, 3) how to employ user-generated content to build brand awareness, and 4) the criteria for selecting the right social media platform for a consumer electronics brand.

1.1 Aims & objectives:

The study endeavours to understand consumer purchase behaviour for electronics goods in online format.
The objectives of this study are as follows:

a. To point out higher gratification led content
b. Behaviour regarding online sponsored advertisements
c. Behaviour regarding brand owned pages
d. Behaviour regarding online brand comments

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

While the objectives of this research clearly indicate the requirement of in-depth search on purchase behaviour, it is necessary at the outset, to deliberate upon the various terminologies that new media marketers generally utilize.Sinclaire&Vogus (2011) defined social media as: “social media is a broad term that describes software tools that create user generated content that can be shared.” But some essential elements are vital for a site to meet the necessities as social networking site: user profiles need to be present in the site and user-generated content, which allows clients to virtually connect with one another posting remarks on one another's pages and joining virtual groups of similar interests in light of basic hobbies, for example,fashion or governmental issues. (Gross &Acquisti, 2005; Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007; Lenhart and Incense, 2007; Winder, 2007; Boyd and Ellison, 2007) The expression “social networking sites” is regularly utilized reciprocally with “social media”. Be that as it may, social media is diverse as it permits members to unite by producing individual data profiles and welcoming companions and partners for accessing those profiles (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Along these lines, social media has become the digitascape where social networking happens and has modified the route in which buyers assemble necessary datafor makinginformed purchase decisions.

2.1 Consumers’ Sentiment toward Marketing (CSM)

Consumers’ Sentiment toward Marketing (CSM) is a parameter, considered by analysts, to measure how diligently shoppers will react to the concept of “social media marketing”. CSM is characterized as a constructthat elude the general sentiments that buyers have for the market and the marketplace. (Lawson et al., 2001) A person's view of the overall marketplace assumes a noteworthy part in whether they are spurred to begin consumption of any sort (Mady 2011). In order to make an effective advertising effort by means of social media, a shopper must be interested in the nuances of technology. Consumer Technology Readiness (CTR) is “characterized as people’s propensity to embrace and use new technologies for accomplishing goals in home and work" (Parasuraman, 2000). Consumer Technology Readiness is critical for retailers to note when advertising on social media in light of the fact that if their expected target market does not indulge in online networking, is not acquainted with it, or sees it as a negative use of technology, then their social media marketing will be mostly going to waste. Examination of technology readiness can figure out whether promoting through interactive advertising online would become solid match for a retailer to target specific market.

2.2 Innovation Adoption Process (IAP)

The Innovation Adoption Process (IAP) is another model process that gives data on consumer’s acknowledgment of new innovation and technology. The IAP is the movement through which an individual experiences the innovation-decision process. (Rogers, 2011) The process is made up of five steps: information of the development, shaping a disposition toward the innovation, choosing to receive or reject the innovation, implementation of the innovation, and affirmation of the choice. (Mady 2011) Information of IAP can offer advertisers some assistance with creating a social media marketing strategy that is satisfying. Shopper marketing is another idea that has risen, making another touch point between organizations and purchasers. Shopper marketing is "the planning and execution of all marketing activities that influence a shopper along, and beyond, the entire path of purchase, from the point at which the motivation to shop first emerges through purchase, consumption, repurchase, and recommendation." (Shankar et al., 2011) Perceived fit is an imperative variable for retailers to be considered for shopper marketing.Perceived fit is the measure of likeness amongextended product category classification and existing products associated corresponding to the brand. (DelVecchio& Smith, 2009) The more individuals see shopping opportunities prevalent on social networking sites as valuable and simple to utilize, more is the probability that they are willing to search for products on social networks. (Cha, 2009) Giving services in terms of shopping on social networking sites can help in developing business for online retailers to a greater extent because of the diversity among consumers who use online networking sites. The extensive variety of buyers using social media implies that many of the target markets can be easily reached. (Cha, 2009) This gives a viable platform for retailers to advance their image and advertise their products to potential customers. As indicated by Shankar et al. (2011), shopper marketing can unite with customers to make improvements to products, make the messages clear, recognize promoters, and serve as an association with in-store exercises, in this way showing the significance of social media inside of a retailer's marketing mix. Progressions within the social media sites have created consumer communities that are characterizing new routes in which organizations and clients can connect with each other to share data on branded products. For instance, virtual brand communities are conceptualizing a virtual space for buyers and retailers to unite with each other by means of marketing.

2.3 Virtual Brand Communities (VBC)

According to Muniz and O‟Guinn (2012), "VBC can be described as aggregations of consumers that occur on the internet because of their interest in some brand or product". In particular, a brand community is a virtual gathering of individuals who share the same enthusiasm for a specific brand or product (Casaló, Favián&Guinalíu 2008)Casaló, Favián and Guinalíu (2008) discovered when a member of the VBC is trusting of the opinions of that group, they are prone to participate better, it builds the measure of their investment, and buyers who have a positive participation experience are more faithful to the brand. Trust is a focal angle to ensure the VBC's survival. Cha (2009) deduced that security is a main consideration when it comes to influencing a purchaser's conclusions toward social networking sites and can eventually affect trust. Since VBCs rely on individual users' involvement, both group unity and awareness can fortify clients' fulfilment with a VBC (Casaló, Favián&Guinalíu 2008)Casaló, Favián and Guinalíu (2008) through their study, furthermore exhibits the effective influence VBC and an online interaction between shoppers can have on their purchasing behaviour. Studies likewise found that inside of these VBCs numerous new types of social associations are occurring, for example, Electronic Consumer to Consumer Interaction (eCCI), which isinteraction between consumers of e-services (Georgi& Mink 2012) The opportunity to mingle with other individuals is a central part of the consumer experience and social networking sites have turned into a route in which consumers can interface with each other and retailers (Georgi& Mink 2012) On account of eCCIq, purchasers are assuming a more predominant part in affecting each other with their consumption choices. Georgi and Mink (2012) thought of the idea of electronic consumer to consumer interaction quality (eCCIq). They found that seven factors contribute to the accomplishment of eCCIq. These incorporate content, security, hedonic, (which means the emotional features of consumers' interactions to a brand's products)atmosphere, convenience,quality, and social. An illustration of eCCI (which is any association among customers and e-services) is, at the point when a buyer posts an inquiry regarding the fitment or shade of an item shown online, another shopper responds to the inquiry. This eCCIq occasion would probably be of great quality if the inquiry is replied by another buyer rapidly, effectively and in a polite way. This illustration of a connection between shoppers includes a portion of factors linked to eCCIq such as social and convenience making it an eCCIq event. Shoppers feel engaged with productsand brands a lot morewhen they have the alternative to submit feedback. (Mangold&Faulds 2009) Hence, it is imperative for retailers to know of the quality of their online networking vicinity notwithstanding when customers are the makers of their promoting in light of the fact that it is progressively affecting how customers shop. Organizations should know about the assortment of elements that influence their presence in social media, for example, the social identity of a shopperin a digital medium. Some VBC studies concentrated on the idea of social personality and group norms as a viewpoint that unequivocally impact online groups' buying behaviour processes. The very nature and society of social media gatherings influence the manner in which the members of such online groups decipher and append meaning to products and brands. (Muñiz& Jensen Schau, 2007) Group norms are representative of the arrangement of shared objectives, convictions, and all the norms and values that group members should adhere to. Social identity alludes to the qualities and convictions that impact the behaviour of the members of a group. (Zeng, Huang, and Dou 2009) Members of a community within a solid social group were shown to acknowledge advertising in online social groups better. (Zeng, Huang, and Dou 2009) For example, if a Facebook group is focused in luxury related brands, then advertisements relating high-end, expensive products are more applicable to individuals from the VBC. A few members react to ads all the more effectively by accepting the implications in which they contain, while others translate the ads by appending meaning to the brand name, keeping in mind their own encounters with the brand. (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2007) Also, VBC individuals value advertisements that are significant to the subject of their group. Muñiz and Jensen (2007) discovered advertising and branding produce debilitation of the actual meaning of the ad so as to serve the significance of the group, in this condition the brand group. A VBC can adjust or control the genuine importance of an advertisement by the way it shows or uses an advertisement for branding. Ordinarily VBC's change the significance of an advertisement by the way it is exhibited on the group discussion. A VBC can modify a promotion to fit in with the theme of its group, along these lines the advertisement’s genuine significance gets lost.

2.4 Consumer Attitudes

It is natural for retailers and advertisers to know about the variables that influence buyer states of mind and thought processes on the grounds that buyers are progressively making content about brands, something beforehand controlled singularly by organizations. (Heinonen 2011) Accordingly, current examination has analyzed what parts of online networking sites influence purchaser states of mind and intentions. Chu (2011) discovered that consumers who are individuals from groups on Facebook will probably uncover their own information than non-members are. Chu (2011) clarifies bunch interest and engagement with online promotions requires a more elevated amount of individual data on the grounds that consumer straightforwardly uncover their associations with Facebook bunches and advance brands or items when they go on promotions to their companions. "Facebook groups give channels that buyers esteem helpful when looking for self-status in an item class, as does going on viral content about brands to their social contacts". (Chu 2011)

Shopper exercises of utilization, interest, and creation are not identified with just one inspiration as indicated by Heinonen (2011), who presumed that buyer exercises are a blend of an assortment of inspirations. The fantastic thought of people as simple buyers is obsolete; shoppers can now be seen as dynamic makers of business worth in light of the fact that client created content is decreasing the impact of customary advertising strategies (Heinonen 2011). Consciousness of purchaser's thought processes is critical in light of the fact that it gives a more profound comprehension of what impacts consumer to make content around a brand or store.

2.5 User Generated Content

“While social media provides never ending avenues for communicating, it is the individuals who serve as the influencers not the technology”. (Gonzalez, 2010) User Generated Content (UGC) produces social media currency for advertisers on the grounds that it enables advertisers to characterize a brand. User generated content depicts “the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media, usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end users”. (Kaplan &Haenlein, 2010) Thus, social currency is when people share a brand or data about the brand. (Zinnbauer&Honer 2011)

2.6 Viral Advertising

Viral advertising has turned into a method by which retailers are trying to sell and provide more data on their brands or items. A viral process of dealing with social media promotions has a noteworthy advantage on the grounds that the messaging is more focused to a brand's intended customer. (Bampo et al., 2008) Viral advertising is “unpaid peer to peer communication of provocative content originating from an identified sponsor using the Internet to persuade or influence an audience to pass along the content to others”. (Porter and Golan, 2006)When it comes to consumer electronics, there is enough evidence to suggest that electronics brands need to embrace social media advertising to stay relevant. According to Unmetric, a social media analytics tools, several popular electronic brands in India have promptly embraced the most recent online networking practices and haven't shied far from executing out of the box campaigns. Looking at top Consumer Electronics brands in India based on an assortment of several factors, such as size of virtual community, the level of activity on social media, media mentions, prominence amongst consumers, etc., Unmetric has analysed various aspects of their social media presence.

2.7 Community Building (Source: Unmetric)

Facebook is probably one of the most favoured channels for consumer electronics brands.It has communities with more than a million fans. In terms of mobile handset community, Samsung is way ahead of its competitors with approximately 3.5 million likes, which is not too surprising, keeping in mind how it has turned into a powerful player after the achievement of its Galaxy range of cell phones. Following closely to Samsung are well known brands like Panasonic (2.3m), Sony (1.3m), LG (1.7m) and Dell (1.25m). Lenovo and HP are getting up to speed really quick with both brands enlisting twofold development at 19% and 12% respectively. A decent content strategy, combined with some paid promotions over Facebook's different advertising alternatives, should help these brands advance their efforts. On Twitter, be that as it may, Samsung is making up for lost time to Sony (8,000 followers), LG (7,200 followers) and Dell (12,500 followers). It has nearly 7,000 followers; however it has also witnessed an awesome development rate of 28%, implying itsupward mobility to second spot in a couple of months.

The situation on YouTube is not that empowering though. Till date, rarely any brand has actually figured out how to earn a decent supporter base. While some of them have lakhs of views, they have yet to figure how to construct a permanent endorser base for their online brands.

2.8 Content Strategy (Source: Unmetric)

On one hand, reputed electronic brands have figured out how to construct strong virtual communities around themselves, on the other hand, significantly more brands are still left to understand the trick of the tradein terms of their content bucketing strategy. Despite the fact that Samsung has the largest group on Facebook, it has an exceptionally low degree of engagement with its users. In Asia, the normal consumer gadgets brand Engagement Score is 49, which is considerably low in comparison to some of the reputed consumer electronic brands from other parts of the world.

2.9 Community Engagement (Source:Unmetric)

Panasonic has made a brilliant endeavour with generic content which has ensured steady and relevant engagement with the members of their community. The average engagement mostly revolving around posts getting 5,000 likes and 350+ shares. It holds the title of not just being the most engaging brand, but it reaches a wider audience through mutual sharing among members of the community. Every share ensures that the members magnify the brand messages to many more people, setting it as one of the most crucial engagement metrics.

2.10 Customer Service (Source: Unmetric)

Twitter currently holds the position as preferred customer service channel for most consumer electronics brands this day. Dell utilizes Twitter very aptly for its customer service activities. The picture of the executive handling the query is posted on the account. The tweets contain the initials of the servicing executive, thus making the experience more personal. Measuring the average response time those brands respond to their usersreveal: Panasonic (6 hours, 39 replies), Lenovo (11 hours, 20 replies) and HP (14 hours, 10 replies) are the fastest among the other electronic brands which respond to the customers. However, these brands are all beaten by the strongest contender LG (25 hours, 129 replies).

2.11 Sentiment (Source: Unmetric)

A tertiary research on the Twitter account suggests that sentiment can be assessedby sentiments of other tweets that the brand has answered to. With the figure of 56 tweets out of 80 tweets being positive, Dell is the undoubted priority in this category in terms of individuals' affection, or it could so happen that they are betterat managing positive tweets as opposed to the negative ones. HP and Godrej have additionally answered to more than half positive tweets on Twitter.

The various sources of literature indicate that while consumer electronics brands have embraced certain social media platforms, they haven’t been able to utilize this effectively. The correct mix of platforms has rarely been discussed, and no emphasis has been placed on correct allocation of financial resources for planning a social media campaign. These gaps make this study all the more necessary.

The knowledge gap generated therefore, is that, while a lot of studies are conducted in terms of online consumer purchase behaviour, there are hardly any studies which are specific to the electronics market in India. Hence the novelty of this study is to understand how for a category which is innovative and a medium which is dynamic, the consumer consumption and gratification factors are at play.

Hypothesis:

H1: There is a difference in gratification depending on the content

H2: There is a difference in behaviour regarding online sponsored advertisements

H3: There is a difference in behaviour regarding brand owned pages

H4: There is a difference in behaviour regarding online brand comments

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Type of Research
The type of methodology used in this research is quantitative because while a few studies qualitatively indicate certain consumer patterns, there is hardly any study to confirm the same.

3.2 Research Method
In terms of method, survey will be conducted with a well structured questionnaire with close ended questions to confirm the parameters for research.

3.3Respondent Planning
To understand the size of the population relevant to this study, we need to consider the total social media users in India as a whole. From this, a relevant sample that would provide a comprehensible and accurate representation of this population must be derived.

Population details
According to a report jointly published by the Internet and Mobile Association of India and IMRB International titled 'Social Media in India 2014', "social media users in the country reached 143 million by April with rapid uptake seen in rural India where user base grew by 100 per cent in last one year to 25 million".

The four largest metros cumulatively accounted for almost fifty percent of social media users in Urban India, as the report suggested. The segment mostly prevalent on social media is the college going students with 34 per cent followed by young men at 27 per cent. The report pointed out that 61 percent of the consumers' access social media through their mobile devices. That sets the age group most active on social media as individuals between the age group of 19-35, which narrows it down to around 43 million individuals across the country. When it comes to the purchase of consumer electronics online, International Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Management & Technology, in its Volume II, October 2013 by Dr. Abdul Baji and N. D Chandra Sekhar estimates that 78% of online purchases of consumer electronics are also done by individuals between the age group of 19-35.

Total Population Size: 43,615,000 individuals
Geographies: Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore
Confidence Level: 80%
Confidence Interval: 6.4%
Sample Size: 100 (this is as per online sample calculator)

As per sample cluster is concerned, there are four clusters as per age: 19-22; 23-26; 27-30; 31-35. These clusters are carefully chosen so that the differences in the stages of consumer's life can be taken into consideration. So the 4 stages roughly are: college students, university students, entry level corporate, senior level corporate.

The sampling frame taken for this research is consumers who buy electronic goods and the sampling unit are consumers who buy electronic goods online.

IV. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Data and reports will be analyzed through data graphs.

The aim of this study was to understand the best use of Social Media for Consumer Electronics brands, assessing if the consumers are more accessible through this medium and to isolate the shortlisting criteria for selecting the best social media platform for Consumer Electronics brands. A quantitative study was undertaken to test the hypothesis as to how social Media can give maximum returns on advertising for Consumer Electronics. The sample was taken from four different metros across the country – Bangalore, Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai. 100 respondents from the age group of 19-35 answered the questionnaire. For analyzing the data, the respondents' answers were grouped into 4 distinct groups of ages 19- 22, 23-26, 27-30 and 31-35.
The analysis has been completed based on their answers to 11 main questions:

Question 1. What Social Media sites do you use?

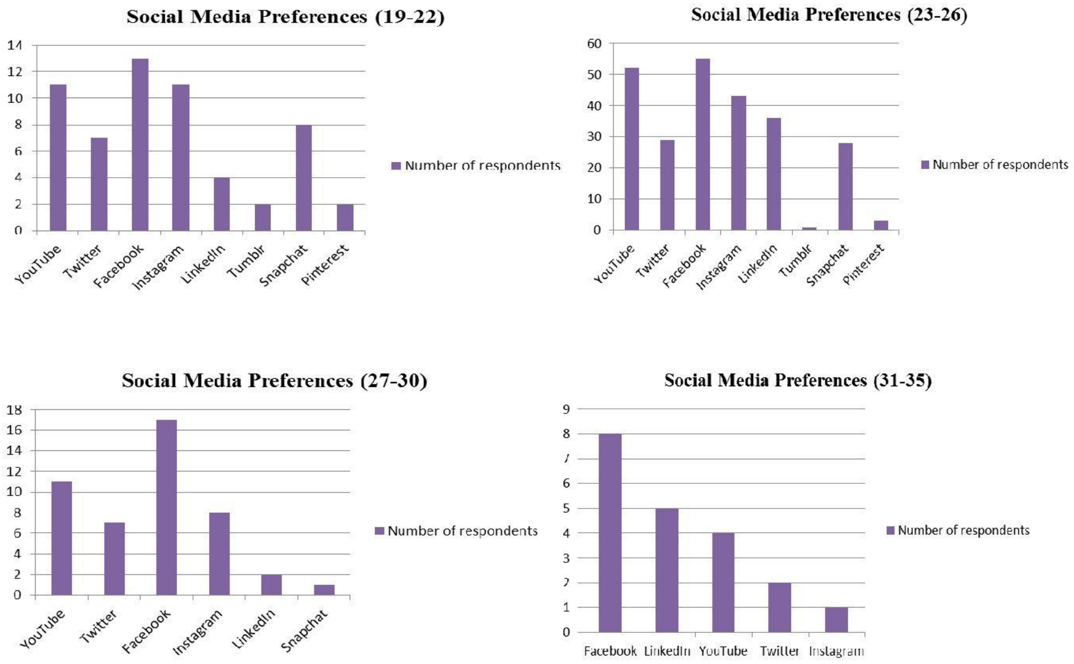


Figure 1.The combination of charts shows the most popular social media sites used across the four age groups. Facebook seems to be the most popular social media site among the people of all age groups. Video sharing sites like YouTube is highly popular in the younger age groups of 19-22 and 23-26, and the popularity decreases as the age of the respondents increase. Image sharing social media like Instagram and Snapchat are also mostly popular in the age groups of 19-22, 23-26 and 27-30, but seem to have lost out on capturing the attention of the older age group of 31-35. Professional networking seems to be very important to age groups of 23-26 and 31-35, as seen in the spiked interest in LinkedIn. Micro-blogging seems to be the turf of the younger crowd again, mainly 19-22 and 23-26 year olds. It hasn't yet caught on with the latter age groups. Sites like Tumblr and Pinterest fail to even find mention as the age of the respondents' increase.

Question 2. Which device do you use social media sites on the most?

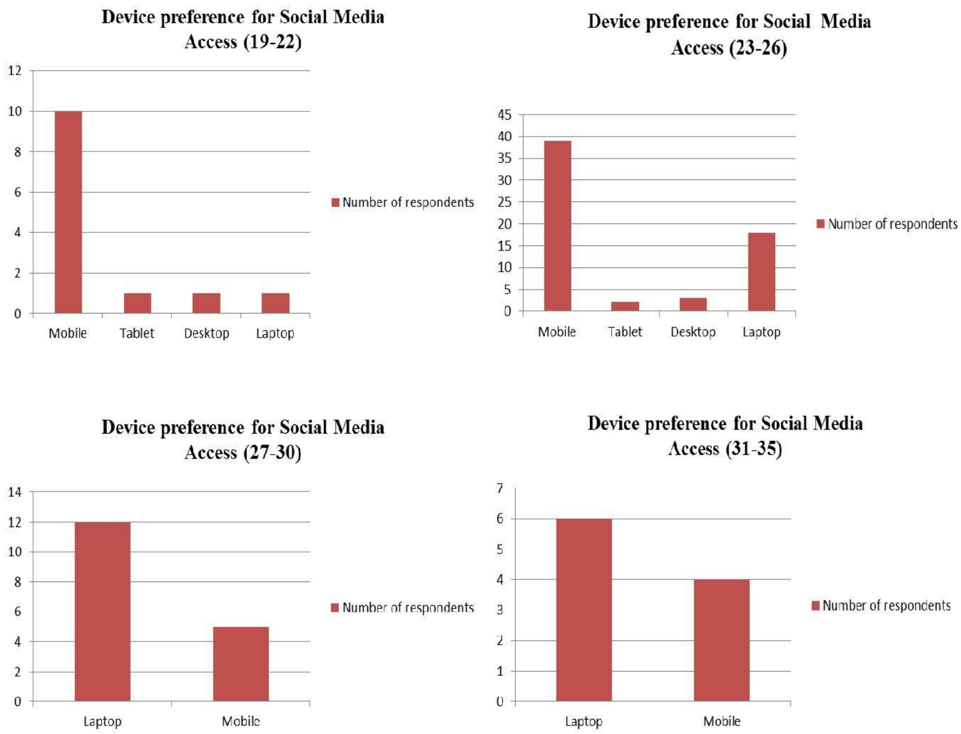


Figure 2. The combination of charts shows the device preference for accessing social media across all the four age groups. Mobile seems to be the most preferred medium for social media access for theage groups 19-22 and 23- 26. But, as we proceeded to the latter age groups, the preference for mobile reduced, with accessing social media via laptop becoming the easiest option for age groups 27-30 and 31-35. Tablet and desktop remained far away from popularity, and a very small percentage of voters said that they accessed social media on these two devices.

Question 3. What kind of content do you prefer the most on social media sites?

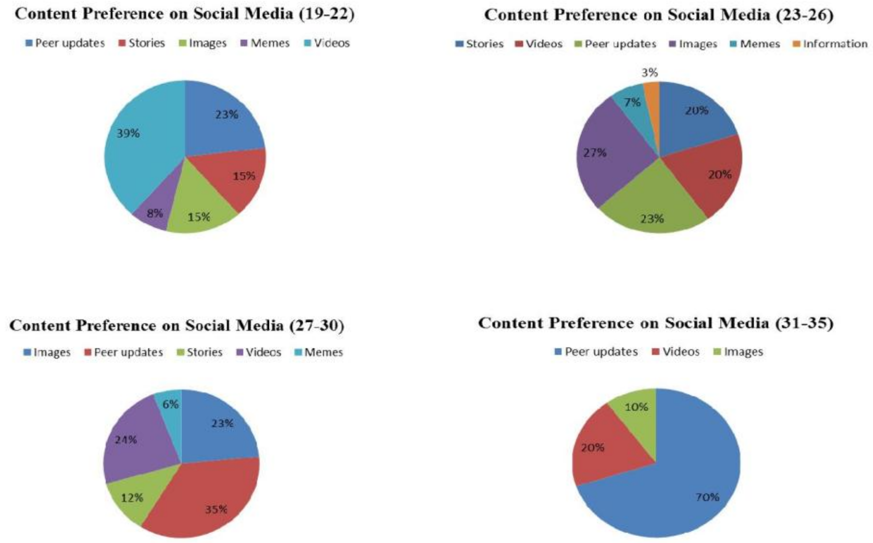


Figure 3. The combination of charts shows the content preference while browsing through social media across the four age groups. The youngest age group, 19-22, is especially attracted to video contents. This trend doesn't however magnify itself in the succeeding age groups, with preference for video content actually decreasing as the respondents' age increases. Only the age group of 23-26 showed interest in consuming news and gaining daily information from their social feeds, although this stood at 3 per cent within the age group sample. The interest in knowing how one's peers and colleagues are doing increased with age, with respondents stating that they browse their social feeds looking for how their friends are doing and what they're recently up to. The highest interest in peer updates was in the oldest age group 31-35. Stories, or articles, were shown to attract relatively few in all age groups, especially in the age group 31-35, where the interest in stories was none. Memes, defined as "an idea, behaviour, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture", were shared by only a very small portion of the first three groups.

Question 4. What do you do with the sponsored ads on your social feed?

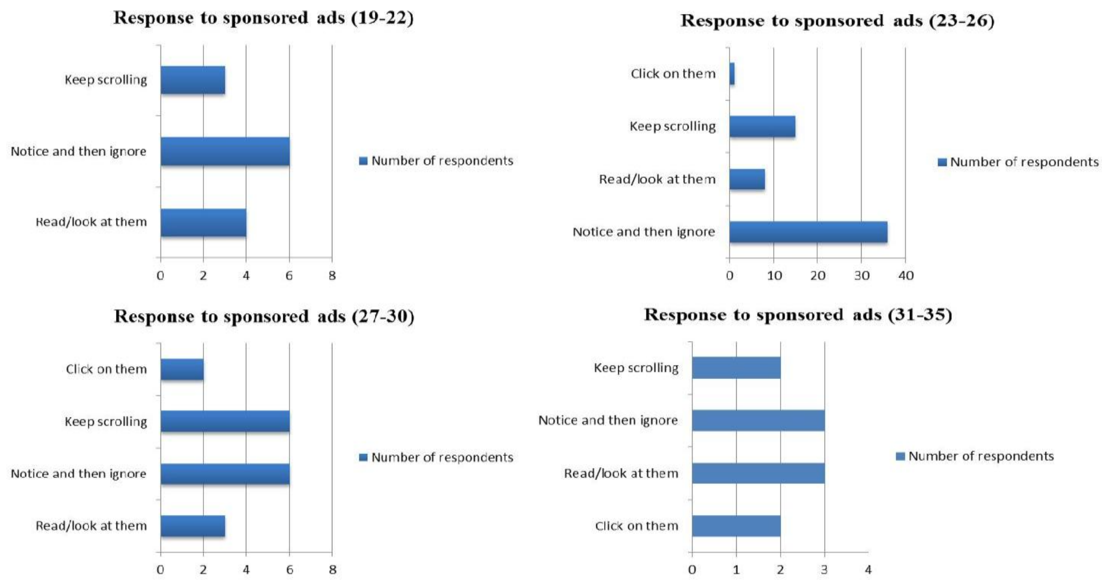
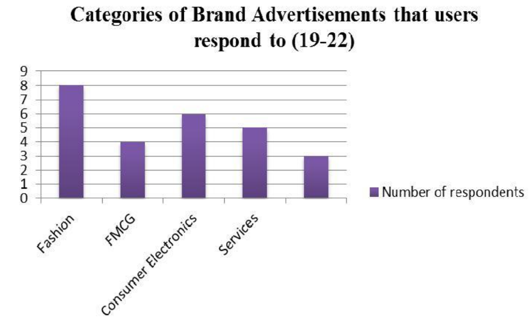
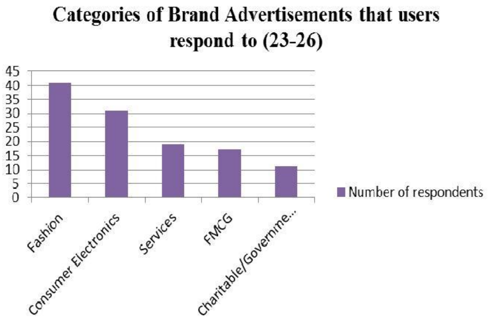
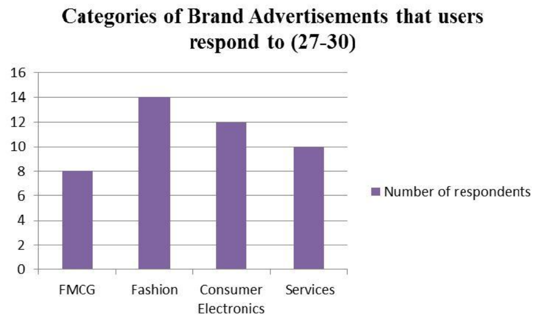


Figure 4. The combination of charts shows how respondents reacted to the online advertisements while browsing through social media across the four age groups. The purpose of advertising on social media is to attract as many eyes as possible, if not to generate more clicks. Surprisingly, the age group most likely to stop and read or look at an ad on social media is 31-35. The respondents of the age group of 19-22 said they did not click on these ads, even though some of them read or looked at them. The latter age groups did click on the ads, but only a few said they read the ads carefully.

Question 5 what categories of brand advertisements interest you while browsing through your feed?







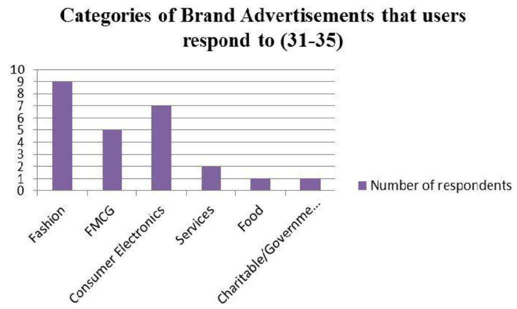
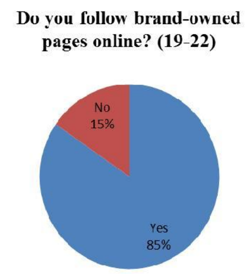
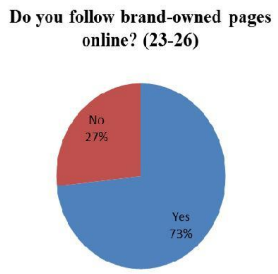
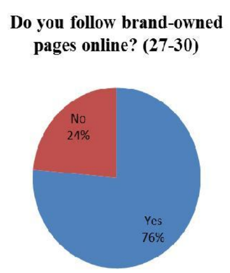


Figure 5. The combination of charts shows the various categories of advertising the respondents preferred while browsing through social media across the four age groups. Fashion was on the top of the categories of social media advertisements that grabbed the attention of users. Consumer Electronics stood the next in line and FMCG also managed to get good popularity. Services, as a category, performed well in age groups 19-22, 23-26 and 27-30.

Question 6. Do you follow brand-owned pages online?







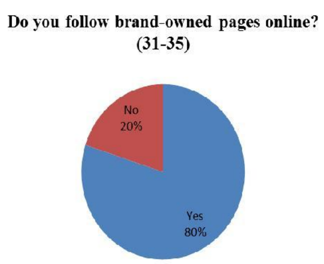


Figure 6. The combination of charts shows the percentage of respondents who follow brand owned pages on social media across the four age groups. Across all the age groups, most of the respondents said they followed brand owned pages in social media networks, which shows that they have access to the contents that these brands generally post.

Question 7. Do you purchase consumer electronics online?

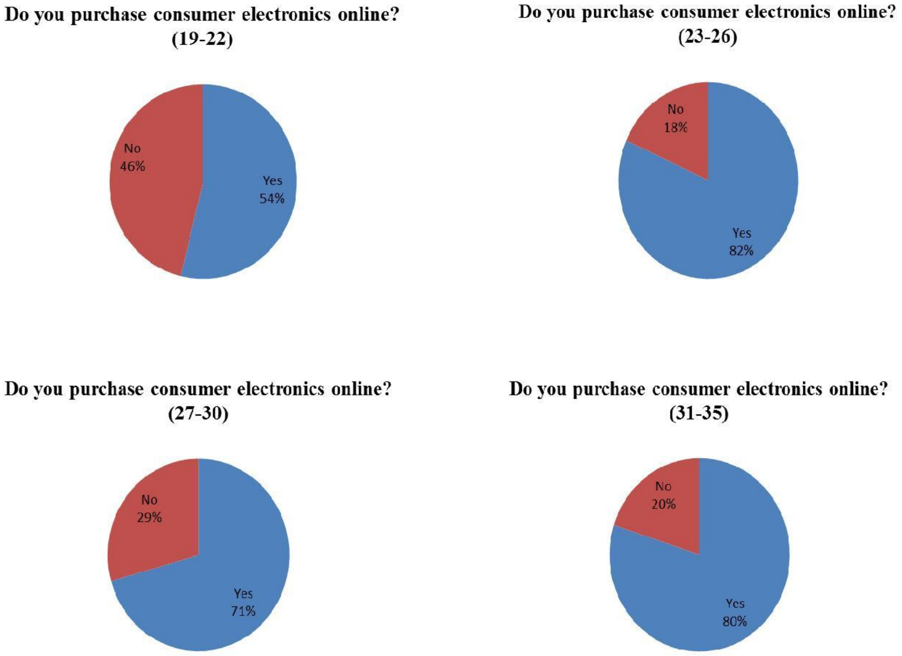


Figure 7. The combination of charts shows the percentage of respondents who purchase consumer electronics online across the four age groups. The willingness to purchase consumer electronics products online is based on several factors, including trust issues and promised quality. The youngest age group, 19-22 showed lesser interest in purchasing consumer electronics online as compared to the other age groups .

Question 8. If yes, which consumer electronics products do you generally purchase online?

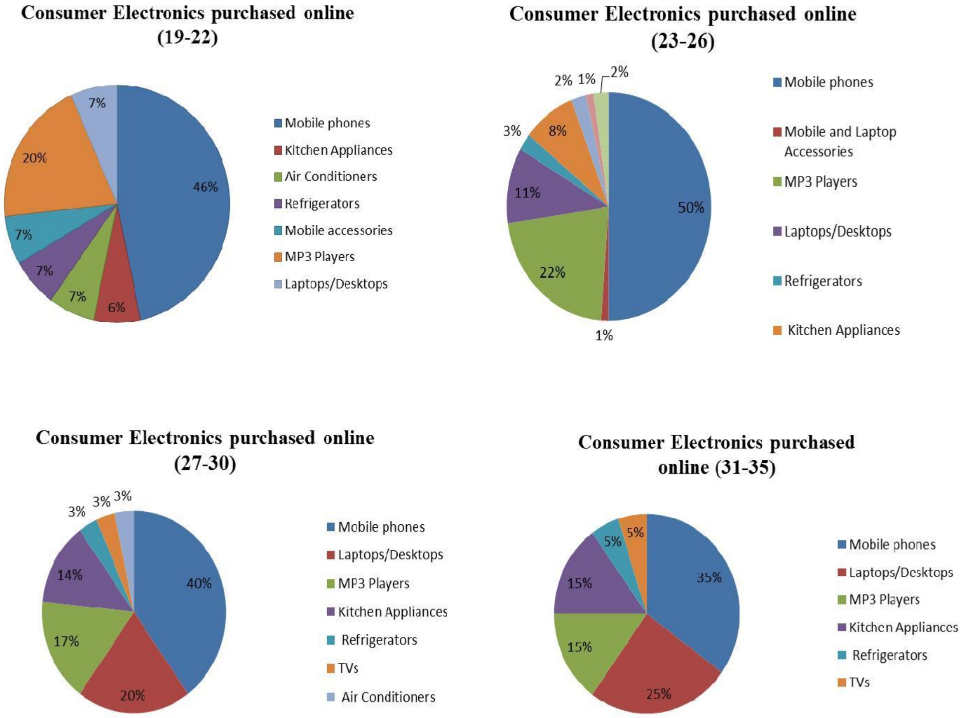
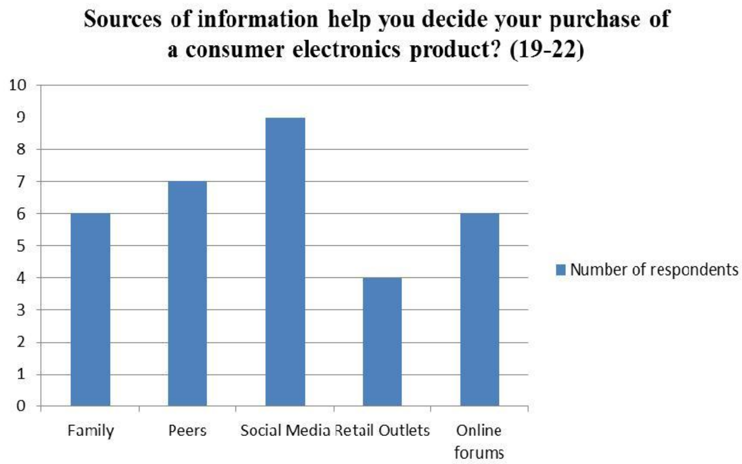
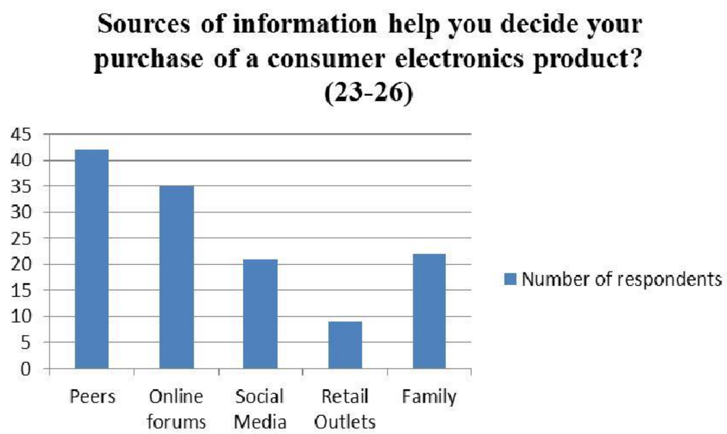
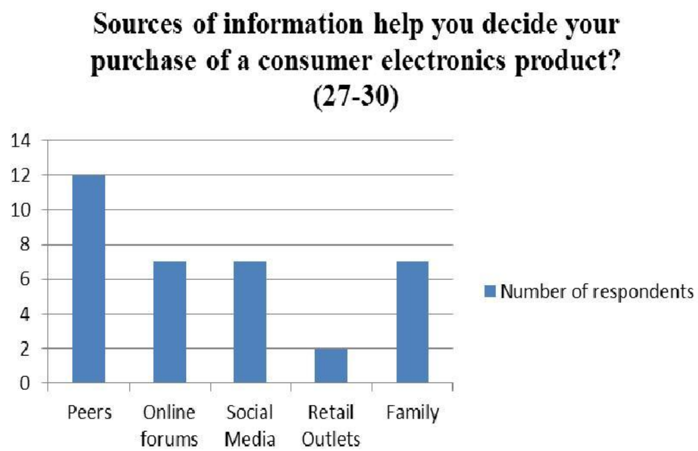


Figure 8. The combination of charts shows the most purchased consumer electronics items purchased online across the 4 age groups. Mobile phones are the purchased product, followed by Mp3 players and Laptops/Desktops. Mp3 players were mainly popular among the respondents of the first two age groups. Age group 31-35 preferred kitchen appliances more, the highest among the other age groups. Refrigerators, TVs and Air Conditioners were less popular choices for online purchase.

Question 9. Which sources of information help you decide your purchase of a consumer electronics product?







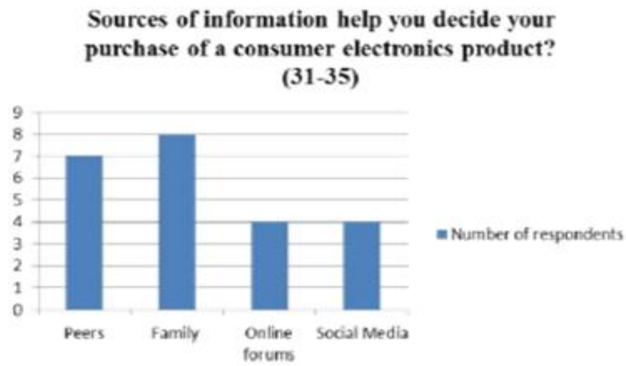
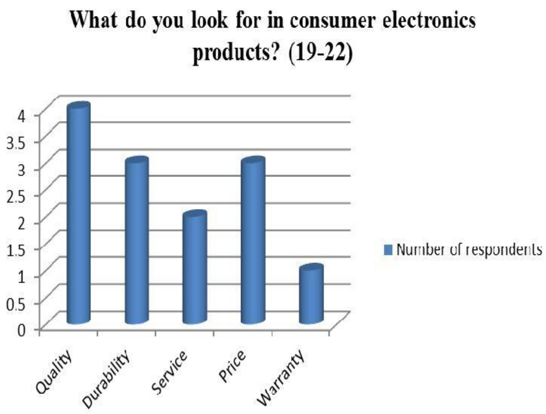
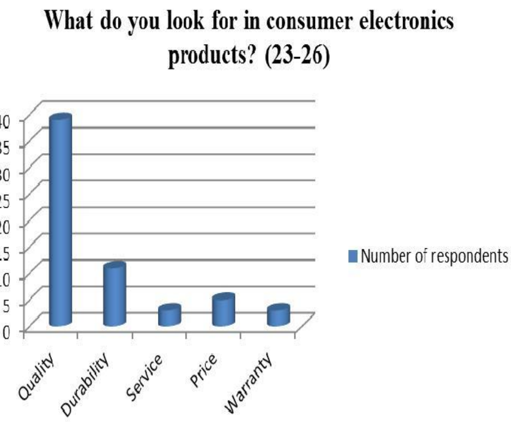
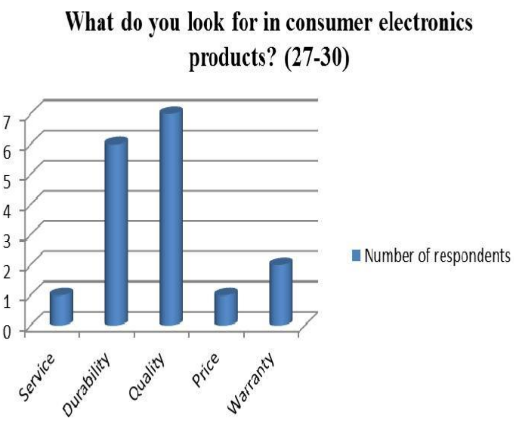


Figure 9. A combination of charts shows the most trusted sources consulted before purchasing a consumer electronics product across the 4 age groups. Social media was the best source of advice for purchasing consumer electronics in the age group of 19-22, while it wasn't as popular in the latter age groups. Peers were an extremely important and seemingly trustworthy source, especially in the age groups 19-22, 23-26 and 27-30, which signified the impact of peer relationships on purchase decisions. Family was the most important decision maker for the age group of 31-35. The reliance on online forums for good advice on purchasing consumer electronics actually decreased as the respondents' age increased. Surprisingly, retail outlets, which have salesmen equipped to answer customers' queries directly, also featured in priority for the youngest age group, 19-22.

Question 10. What do you look for in consumer electronics products?







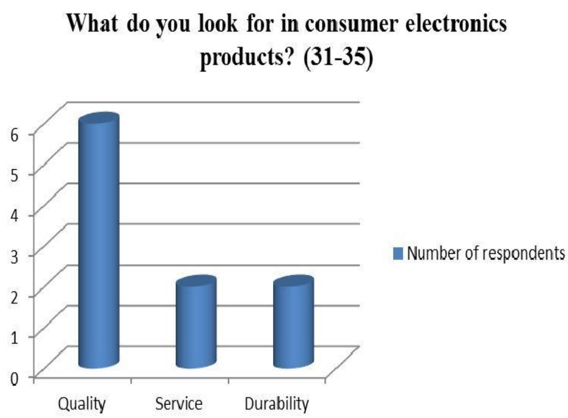


Figure 10. The combination of charts shows whatthe respondents look for in a consumer electronics product before purchase across the four age groups. Quality is of course the top priority for consumer electronics buyers, irrespective of age. With the 19-22 age group consisting mostly of students and first-job professionals, price was an important factor.

Question 11. I actively read fellow consumer's online comments before I purchase consumer electronics brands.

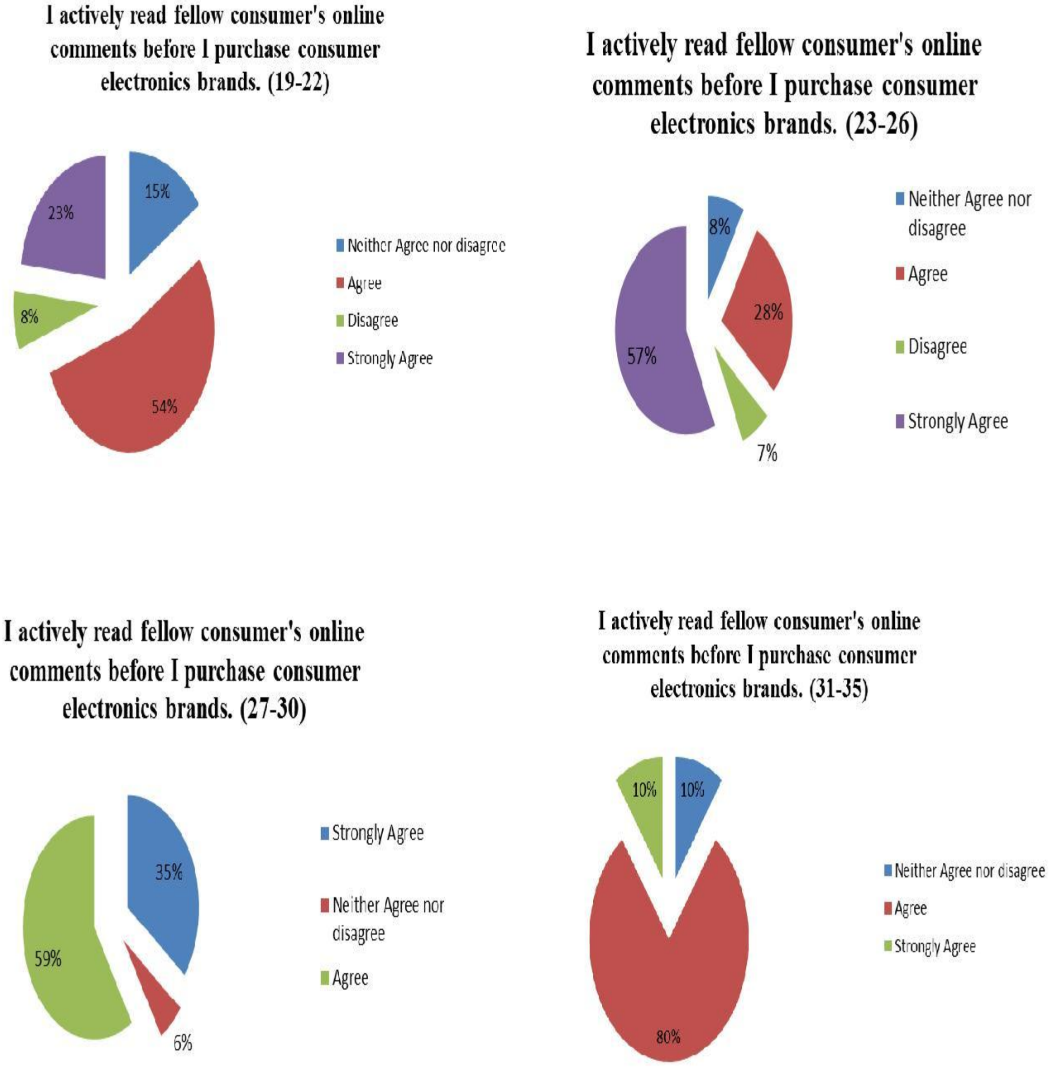


Figure 11. The combination of charts shows if respondents who purchase consumer electronics read reviews by other users posted online across the four age groups. Irrespective of age, the majority of respondents admitted to reading online reviews and comments before making consumer electronics.

V. DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Consumer Electronics brands have never fully utilized the potential of social media in its entirety, except for sponsored ads and brand page posts. The actual key to successfully using social media lies in understanding how, where and what the consumers use social media for. This study sought to understand these nuances of consumer electronics buyers and their online social media behaviour.

Study shows that there is a significant difference in content preferences. Figure 3.Indicatesthat theyoungest age group, 19-22, is especially attracted to video contents while age group 23-26 showed interest in informative contents. Rest two groups showed more interest in peer updates. The results support, H1, there is a difference in gratification depending on content.

Figure 4. Indicates behaviour of each group is different towards online sponsored advertisements thus satisfies H2. Age group 30 – 35 seemed to take interest in these advertisements. Age group 19 – 22 found these to be irritating, they hardly see them. The rest two groups notice them but most of the time ignore. Figure 5 indicates different groups prefer different categories of advertisements.

Figure 6. Indicates respondents of all the age groups follow brand owned pages on regular basis in order to know current updates posted by the brands. Not much difference is noticeable in the attitude of the people of all the age groups towards these pages. This rejects H3, which reads there is a difference in behaviour towards brand own pages.

Figure 11. Indicates that all the groups read online comments of other consumers carefully before making any purchase decision. Apart from this, Figure 9. also shows online forums play a crucial role in consumers' decision making process about online purchase irrespective of age. This rejects H4, which reads there is a difference inbehaviour regarding online brand comments.

The implications of this study are wide and can alter the way consumer electronics brands like LG, Philips and Sony use social media to interact with their customers. They can now alter their content based on the target segment their product caters to and engage them better. Brands can now understand the motivation behind the use of social media for various age groups. They can also use the appropriate social media platform, based on the service it provides and the content that is likely to be shared by their consumers. Using the right platform can help reach more audiences, thus helping brands use their advertising spends efficiently.

The study can also provide a base for future research works to be carried on related subjects and can further be explored from varied angles.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study revealed attitude of different set of consumers is different towards online purchase. Preferences regarding products and online contents and also the style of browsing vary across the age groups. It establishes age plays a very crucial role in shaping consumers' online purchase behaviour, though it completely rejects the hypotheses, there is a significant difference in behaviour regarding brand own pages and not all the age groups take interests in following online consumers' comments.

This study helped to understand that social media can be effectively used for marketing consumer electronics. It helps to understand both the buying behaviour and the social media usage of the variety of consumers, from young and college-going to established professionals in details. It also shows that effectively using social media can directly help cut costs of advertising and gives an idea about how the medium can be used innovatively to woo different clusters of consumers for different promotional objectives. It states that the new medium has immense potential to be used as a weapon for marketing electronic consumer goods.

VII. LIMITATIONS

The sample was relatively small, with unequal representation from the age group of 31-35. It has not accounted for occupations or income. The respondents were mostly from SEC A, and hence the results might not be generalized across other SECs. The study could be benefited by a social listening study that would help understand how consumer electronics brands are currently performing on social media. The lack of paid software was detrimental in this case.

VIII. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study can be used as groundwork to study further how social media can be utilized in other categories, such as FMCGs and Fashion as well. Educational, economic and occupational back grounds of consumers too can act as variables for further studies. A comparative study can also be carried about online purchase behaviour of urban and rural consumers. Gender specific traits also lay foundation for future research.

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