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# **A Study On Differences In Purchase Frequency For Social Commerce With Special Reference To Education Background**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The popularity of social networking sites, greater accessibility to internet and technological advancements has evolved a subset of e-commerce – social commerce. Social media has empowered users to be content writers in sharing their viewpoints, experiences, and information. This provides an opportunity for business to capitalize the social media in understanding, communicating and facilitating commercial transactions with customers. The key values businesses derive from social media are popularising the brand (de Vries et.al., 20212), eWOM (Chen et.al.,), improve sales (Lu & Hsiao, 2010 & Agnihotri et.al., 2012), developing support for consumers in social context (Ali, 2011; Ballantine & Stephenson,2011).Companies develop strategies accordingly in social media for influencing consumers (Adjei et.al., 2010)

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Social networks are referred as web-based services. Social networking sites provide means for individuals to develop their profiles, share & interact with interrelated users and view relationships of themselves and shared with other users (Ellison, 2007). Social networking sites have become the hub in e-commerce (Fue et al. 2009), and it facilitates users to build social connections and involve in communications. Lai & Turban (2008) states social networks develop trust and build stronger relationships. Enjoyment is the highly influential factor for individuals using social networking sites. The other reasons cited for using social networking sites are the number of peers and usefulness. Also, influence on social networking sites varies with gender differences.(Lin & Lu 2011). Bae & Lee (2010)

investigated and found significant gender differences in consumer's perception of online consumer reviews.

E-commerce activities & commercial transactions assisted by social media are referred as social commerce. This is enabled through applications in social networking sites and/or providing access to social networking connectivity in e-commerce sites (Liang & Turban, 2011). Marsden (2011) refers social commerce as gaining monetary benefits from e-commerce through social media. Any exchange-related activities occurring/influencing in online and offline environment facilitated by computer-mediated social environments and correspond to the various stages of consumer decision-making process – Need recognition, pre-purchase and post-purchase is termed as social commerce from the marketing perspective (Yadav et al. 2013). Social commerce emerged first on Yahoo in 2005 (Rubel, 2005) when it added a feature "Pick Lists" for users to review products and suggest comments (Rothberg, 2005). Purchase circles by Amazon and internal social networks built by Epinions analogous to recommendations and online communities today were the pioneers before Yahoo introduced Social commerce (Curty & Zhang, 2011).

The web-based technology enables social platforms such as Ratings & Reviews, Recommendations & referrals, Forums & communities for building user-generated content. These social platforms are known as social commerce constructs with same functions and different technical capabilities (Hajli, 2015). Adoption of social commerce tools such as ratings & reviews, recommendations provides a simple means for sharing users views and experiences about a product/service (Amblee & Bui, 2011). Ratings & Reviews aids people to share the product feedback with independent views and experiences. These ratings & reviews can be viewed by everyone whereas Recommendations and Referrals are usually personalized. Using social media to get and make recommendations on the activities such as what to purchase or do or visit is referred as a recommendation. Referral programs are the rewards offered by retailer due to consumer promotion. Forums & communities are the tools used for social interactions in a moderating environment (Shadkam & O'Hara, 2013). Social commerce adoption model was developed with social commerce constructs (Ratings & Reviews, Recommendations & referrals, Forums & communities) and trust which results in intention to buy.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To find relationship between education background and purchase frequency for fashion products in social networking sites.

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant relationship with education background and purchase frequency for fashion products in social networking sites.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was carried among social networking sites users who purchased fashion products in the recent past (Within six months). Pilot study was carried out questionnaire refinement. Final Data was collected through structured questionnaire using convenience sampling method both online and offline. Chi-square test is used to identify the significant difference in gender and purchase frequency of fashion product(s) in social networking site(s).

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Chi-square test is used to understand whether there is significant relationship between purchase frequency of fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) and education. The table below reveals the row wise and column wise percentage of purchase frequency of fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) based on education with chi-square value and pvalue.

**Table 1. Chi-square test for respondents educational qualification and purchase frequency of fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months)**

Purchase frequency of fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months)	Educational Qualification				Total	Chi-square value	pvalue
	Up to HSC	UG	PG	Professional			
Only once	19 (13.6%) [19.8%]	38 (27.1%) [23.5%]	83 (59.3%) [42.3%]	0 (0.0%) [0.0%]	140 (100.0%) [24.1%]	255.585	0.001**
Twice	21 (11.2%) [21.9%]	71 (38.0%) [43.8%]	48 (25.7%) [24.5%]	47 (25.1%) [37.0%]	187 (100.0%) [32.2%]		
Three	20 (28.6%) [20.8%]	15 (21.4%) [9.3%]	12 (17.1%) [6.1%]	23 (32.9%) [18.1%]	70 (100.0%) {12.0%]		

Four	29 (31.5%) [30.2%]	24 (26.1%) [14.8%]	28 (30.4%) [14.3%]	11 (12.0%) [8.7%]	92 (100.0%) [15.8%]		
Five	7 (15.2%) [7.3%]	14 (30.4%) [8.6%]	2 (4.3%) [1.0%]	23 (50.0%) [18.1%]	46 (100.0%) [7.9%]		
Six	0 (0.0%) [0.0%]	0 (0.0%) [0.0%]	1 (4.2%) [0.5%]	23 (95.8%) [18.1%]	24 (100.0%) [4.1%]		
Six and Above	0 (0.0%) [0.0%]	0 (0.0%) [0.0%]	22 (100.0%) [11.2%]	0 (0.0%) [0.0%]	22 (100.0%) [3.8%]		
Total	96 (16.5%) [100.0%]	162 (27.9%) [100.0%]	196 (33.7%) [100.0%]	127 (21.9%) [100.0%]	581 (100.0%) [100.0%]		

Source : Computed from primary data

\*\* denotes significance at 1% level

Note : Figures in ( ) represents row%,

Figures in [ ] represents column %

It is inferred from the above table among the overall purchase frequency levels for fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) across education levels, 33.7% of the respondents are post graduate which is comparatively higher among other education levels. It is followed by 27.9% of the respondents in the under graduate category, 21.9% of the respondents are professionals and 16.5% of the respondents has school level education.

By comparing the purchase frequency level for shopping fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) for school level education, it is inferred that 30.2% of the respondents has purchase frequency four which is comparatively higher than other purchase frequency levels. It is followed by 21.9% of the respondents with purchase frequency twice, 20.8% of the respondents with purchase frequency three, 19.8% of the respondents with purchase frequency four and 7.3% of the respondents with purchase frequency five. There are no respondents for purchase frequency level six , six and above.

By comparing the purchase frequency level for shopping fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) for undergraduate education, it is inferred that 43.8% of the respondents has purchase frequency twice which is comparatively higher than other purchase frequency levels. It is followed by 23.5% of the respondents with purchase frequency only once, 14.8% of the respondents with purchase frequency four, 9.3% of the respondents with purchase frequency three and 8.6% of the respondents with purchase frequency five. There are no respondents exhibited for purchase frequency six, six and above.

By comparing the purchase frequency level for shopping fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) for undergraduate education, it is inferred from the above table 42.3% of the respondents has purchase frequency only once which is high compared with other purchase frequency levels. It is followed by 24.5% of the respondents with purchase frequency twice, 14.3% of the respondents with purchase frequency four, 11.2% with purchase frequency six and above, 6.1% of the respondents with purchase frequency three, 1.0% of the respondent with purchase frequency five and 0.5% of the respondents with purchase frequency six.

By comparing the purchase frequency level for shopping fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) for undergraduate education, it is inferred from the above table 37.0% of the respondents ha purchase frequency twice which is high compared with other purchase frequency levels. It is followed by 18.1% of respondents for purchase frequency level three, five and six respectively. 8.7% of the respondents has purchase frequency four and there are no respondents exhibited for purchase frequency only once, six and above.

By comparing the purchase frequency only once for fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) across education levels, it is inferred from the above table that 59.3% of the respondents has post graduate education which is very high compared with other education levels. It is followed by 27.1% of the respondents with undergraduate education and 13.6% of the respondents with school education and there are no respondents exhibited for professional education with purchase frequency only once.

By comparing the purchase frequency twice for fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) across education levels, it is inferred from the above table that 38.0% of the respondents has undergraduate education which is compared with other education levels followed by almost equal number of respondents – 25.7% and 25.1% of respondents

with education level post graduate and professional respectively, 11.2% of the respondents with school education.

By comparing the purchase frequency three for fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) across education levels, it is inferred from the above table that 32.9% of the respondents has professional education which is high compared with other education levels. It is followed by 28.6% of the respondents with school education, 21.4% of respondents with undergraduate education, 17.1% of the respondents with post graduate education.

By comparing the purchase frequency four for fashion products online across education levels, it is inferred from the above table that almost equal number of respondents -31.5% and 30.4% respondents has post graduate and school education respectively and is high compared with other education levels. It is followed by 26.1% of respondents with undergraduate education and 12.0% of the respondents with professional education.

By comparing the purchase frequency five for fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) across education levels it is inferred from the above table that 50.0% of the respondents has professional education which is high compared with other education levels. It is followed by 30.4% of the respondents with undergraduate education, 15.2% of the respondents with school education and 4.3% of the respondents with post graduate education.

By comparing the purchase frequency six for fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) across education levels it is inferred from the above table that 95.8% of the respondents has professional education which is very high compared with 4.2% of the respondents with post graduate education. There are no respondents exhibited for school and undergraduate education.

By comparing the purchase frequency six and above for fashion products online across education levels it is inferred from the above table that all the respondents has post graduate education and there are no respondents exhibited with other education levels.

It is also inferred from the above table, chi-square( $\chi^2$ ) =255.585 and pvalue is less than 0.01 and hence statistically significant at 1% level for relationship between education level and purchase frequency of fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months). i.e, There is significant relationship between purchase frequency of fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) and education level.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The above study reveals that purchase frequency level for shopping fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) varies with education level of customers.

Based on the above comparisons, the following conclusions are made regarding purchase of fashion products online in the recent past (Less than 6 months) : the purchase frequency is high among customers with education level of post graduate and low among respondents with school level education.

Also, more than one –fourth of the customers constitute the majority for customers with school and professional education has a purchase frequency four and twice respectively. Nearly half of the customers constitute the majority for customers with undergraduate and post graduate education with purchase frequency twice and once respectively. Also, more than half of the customers constitute the majority with purchase frequency only once has post graduate education, more than one fourth of the customers constitute the majority with purchase frequency twice has undergraduate education,

More than one fourth of the customers, one half of the customers and almost all the customers constitute the Majority with purchase frequency three, five and six respectively has professional education. All the customers with purchase frequency six and above have post graduate education.

There are no customers with purchase frequency six, six and above for school level and undergraduate education. Also, there are no customers with purchase frequency only once, six and above with professional education.

## **IMPLICATIONS & LIMITATIONS**

The study revealed the significant relationship and differences between education and purchase frequency in social networking site. The study servers as a basis for marketers to devise tactics in accordance with their education background and purchase frequency in social networking sites. The research is limited to top 4 social networking sites namely Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus & Instagram and active online shoppers in those sites. The study also provides further scope to carry out across each specific social networking sites for a thorough understanding.

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