#### A Study on the Impact of Social Networking Sites on Purchase Behaviour among Youth

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#### ABSTRACT

This era marketing practices are very much influenced by changes in consumer behavior and attitude, thanks to new wave technology. As consumers become more collaborative, cultural and spiritual; the character of marketing also transforms. This study aims to study that very change in consumer behavior, occurring on account of social media's advent; how the youth, the future customers are adopting and using the new wave technology to their advantage and how companies can embed such current trends into their business models.

Aim of research was to study the impact of social networking sites on purchase behavior among youth. The study was based on a sample of 300 college students aged between 21-24 years mostly, pursuing technical courses (mainly Engineering and Management) from Gujarat Technical University affiliated colleges in Ahemdabad and Gandhinagar.

Judgemental Sampling was done and Factor Analysis was done to draw results. It was found that social networking sites users are influenced by their contacts for using social networking sites. Strong ties were found to trigger increased Social Networking Sites usage thus generating further interactions as in case of close friends, colleagues and family. Also the SNS usage pattern was found to have positive correlation with number of online communities in one's networks.

In this study, it was observed that students used social networking sites mainly for socializing and connecting with others. They also used it as a medium for keeping up to date via networking because of which they prefer to join their friends' groups and hobbies communities where they can interact with likeminded people.

Key words - consumer behavior, Social Networking Sites, new wave technology, social media

#### Introduction

Since the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, consumer market has essentially become technology- driven. Consumers now have access to unlimited information about a variety of products and services, thanks to the advent of social media. Because of internet, offline networks have extended into online networks as well. Due to digitalization of social networks, people can express views or opinions about different topics including brands; freely and in a cost- effective manner. The word of mouth thus generated has become a point of interest for both academicians and marketers alike as it impacts purchase behavior of consumers. The paper aims to study the same, with respect to college students who are future potential customers.

#### Impact of Social Media on the Purchase Process

These days, marketers are trying to tap the potential of social media at every stage of purchase process. Here we highlight how social media aids the consumers in their purchase decision **(Cohen, 2013).** 



# Social Media impact On Purchase Process

#### Fig 1 Impact of Social Media on the Purchase Process

The study aims to analyze the level of influence of social networking sites users from word of mouth and to find out the different factors that play a crucial role in creating that influence. In this broader framework, the specific objectives of the study are:

- a) To check the level of involvement of the social networking sites users.
- b) To study the factors influencing the involvement of social networking sites users.

#### i. Research Design:

#### a) Sample Population Profile:

The factors that we intended to examine can be applied and investigated upon any population that uses Internet and has at least one social networking account. Since there are time and resource constraints, a specific population had to be identified in order to generalize and create relevant sample. Hence our sample for "the youth segment" was marked with students pursuing technical courses from colleges affiliated to Gujarat Technical University. The area of study was limited to Ahemdabad and Gandhinagar as sample area.

#### Sample Size: 300 respondents

The sample size was determined from <u>www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm</u> assuming it for a genuine random sample of the relevant population. Following values were taken into consideration for the same:

*Confidence level:* 95% *Confidence interval:* 5.6 *Percentage:* 50% *Population:* 20,000 (appx)

**Confidence level:** represents 'how often" the true percentage that would pick an answer, lies within the confidence interval.

**Confidence interval:** (also called margin of error) is the plus-or-minus figure usually reported in opinion poll results.

**Percentage:** has been taken as 50% as we want to determine a general level of accuracy for the sample.

In the context of this paper we are 95% sure that the true percentage of the population is between 44.4 % - 55.6% of the population would be clearly represented.

#### b) Sampling Method: Non probability Sampling-Judgmental Type

Non probability sampling technique was used as the population elements were not selected on a random basis. The sample was selected as per the convenience of the researcher, hence called Convenience or Judgmental Sampling. Such a method is chosen simply because of its accessibility (Bryman and Bell 2007).

With convenience sampling, target respondents were selected from the social circle, who could be easily reached and contacted to. This allowed the researcher to collect the required research data easily. The population for this research is represented by university students studying in various colleges in Ahemdabad and Gandhinagar that run technical courses under Gujarat Technical University.

Since the university was chosen on a convenience basis, it is hard to generalize the wanted population, as the sample selected is not the true representative of the whole population (Saunders et al. 2007). The attempt has been to collect as many respondents as possible, but since the researcher is studying students; it is assumed that there will be little variation in the population making it more approved to generalize the response rates.

#### c) Sampling Strategy:

Convenience sampling has been adopted by the researcher for data collection in which the author contacts sampling groups that are convenient (**Aaker et al , 2011**). The research strategy used here is Survey method which is to answer "who, what, where, how much, and how many" questions in business and management research (**Saunders et al. 2007**). It is popular because researcher is able to collect a large amount of data from a sizable population in a cost efficient standardized and easily comparable form.

Also, as **Saunders et al., 2007** suggests that the quantitative data obtained from the survey method, can be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The data hence gathered can be used to suggest possible reasons for certain relationship between variables and construct models from those relationships.

In this research, the quantitative data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire which is an efficient way to collect a large sample of responses as each respondent is asked and responds to the same set of questions (Saunders et al., 2007).

The survey was conducted from April 2014 to April 2015 and the link of the questionnaire was sent to students via social networking websites and email addresses so obtained.

#### ii. Hypotheses to be Tested:

The conceptual framework in this research is developed on the basis of existing theories. It has been so designed so as to define the relationship between variables defining the hypotheses. The concept is operational and tested in a quantitative manner. The results from the hypotheses testing will be examined for further development of the theory.

To achieve the objective of the study, the following hypotheses have been developed (to be tested at a significance level of 95%):

H0<sub>a</sub>: There is no significant <u>involvement of the users</u> with respect to using social networking sites
H1<sub>a</sub>: There is significant involvement of the users with respect to using social networking sites
H0<sub>b</sub>: There are no <u>significant factors influencing the involvement</u> of social networking sites users.
H1<sub>b</sub>: There are significant factors influencing the involvement of social networking sites users.

#### **1.2 Data Collection Measures**

Quantitative approach was used to collect and analyze data in this particular research due to the nature and aim of this research. This research is exploratory in nature as it focuses on finding the influence of social networking on purchase behavior of youth via WOM. Also the research covers a wide range of individuals from various backgrounds and not limited to a particular group of people in a specific area or country

This quantitative research is Experimental in nature; where the research tests the accuracy of a theory by determining if the independent variable(s) (controlled by the researcher) causes an effect on the dependent variable (the variable being measured for change) within a credible confidence range.

According to Bryman and Bell (2003) surveys and self-administered questionnaires are used in quantitative research methodology for data collection. Hence a structured questionnaire was administered among different respondents for a better representation of the population.

Also the questionnaire was sent online allowing the respondents to maintain their anonymity as there was no face to face interaction. Google Doc in Gmail was used to design and

form the survey questionnaire. The link for this questionnaire was mailed to those students whose email ids were collected from researcher's social circle. The link was also posted on the Facebook profile to gather maximum responses. With just one click on the link, the respondents could access the survey, and then fill the form within five minutes. And with just one click the responses were sent back to the researcher. The responses were collected in Google Doc in excel sheet where the data was analyzed from. In this way 300 responses were collected from April 2014to April 2015.

#### **Sources of Information:**

The research is *exploratory* in nature. The purpose of the study is to get an insight as to how Social Networking Sites have gradually become a part and parcel of our lives; serving as a tool for users to connect, share and even influence each other. As a part of research process, we intend to utilize the following data sources:

a) Primary Data: Structured Questionnaire was administered among students from Gandhinagar, Ahemdabad (Gujarat), via online mode through emails and social networking sites.

Reliability test was performed to assess the consistency of scale items so generated (Table 1). High Cronbach's Alpha values (.70 and above) for all the measures indicate good reliability of the items comprising the scale used to capture the constructs. Study mainly used five-point Likert scale ranging from highest priority (1) to lowest priority (5). Mean scores were computed and techniques such as correlation, chi square and factor analysis were applied to test the hypothesis and draw conclusions.

	SCALE ITEMS	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Score
SNS	Usage Pattern		
Log	in activity- avg. time spent, frequency of login	2	808
Fac	tors Influencing the Involvement of SNS Users		
1.	Reasons for using SNS :	16	.836
?	for information		
?	socializing		
?	convenience		
?	personal use		
2.	Types of groups/ communities (personal, fan	6	.730
pag	es, social)		

#### **Table 1 Scale Items and Reliability Test**

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#### **Data Analysis**

The questionnaire was designed to collect primary data in order to study how word of mouth influences social networking site users in their purchase decisions. First Demographic information and then the Social characteristics about the participants were determined. The questions were framed based on the findings from the literature and were so designed so as so to determine the correlation between various factors.

The questionnaire was administered online via emails and social networking profiles. Sample size was taken as 300. The collected data was analyzed by using the software program SPSS 15.0. The following will present and discuss the results from the questionnaire.

EDUCATION	Frequency	Percent
BBA	2	.7
BCA	2	.7
BE/ PDDC/ DE	200	66.7
MBA	88	29.3
MCA	2	.7
ME	6	2.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 1.1 Education- wise distribution of sample

Fable 1.2 Age group	· wise	distribution	of	sample
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AGE Group	Frequency	Percent
< 20	59	19.7
> 25	21	7.0
21-24	220	73.3
Total	300	100.0

GENDER	Frequency	Percent
Female	98	32.7
Male	202	67.3
Total	300	100.0

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Table 1.1- 1.3 represent the Sample Demographic Information. Our sample constituted maximum respondents from Engineering (66.7%) and Management field (29.3%). Most of the college students were aged between 21-24 years and almost 67% population was male.

#### Table 2 Social networking site(s) most used

SNS most used	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	58	19.33
FB, Google+	32	10.7
FB, Others	97	32.3
LinkedIn	1	0.3
Orkut, FB, Others	102	34
Orkut, Others	2	0.7
Google+	6	2
Google+, Others	1	0.3
Other SNS (e.g Fringe)	1	0.4
Total	300	100



#### FIG 1: Social networking site(s) most used

Table 2 represents as to which social networking site(s) is used the most by the respondents. It was further noted that maximum participants used only Facebook (19%) or, combining Facebook and other social networking sites like Google+, Orkut etc. (78% appx.).

#### Table 3 Frequency of Logging into one's social networking site

Frequency of Logging	Frequency	Percent
Always logged on	14	4.7
Many times in a month	12	4.0
Many times in a week	33	11.0
Once a day	96	32.0
Once a month/ occasionally	11	3.7
Once a week	19	6.3
Several Times a day	115	38.3

# **Frequency of Logging**



Table 3 represents Frequency of Logging into one's social networking site. It was further noted that Respondents gave maximum responses for Several times a day (38.7%), or at least Once a day (32%) and minimum as Once a month/ occasionally (2.8%).

Avg. time spent/ day	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 hour	126	42
1-2 hours	126	42
3-4 hours	30	10
4 hours+	18	06
Total	300	100

#### Table 4 Average time spent per day on one's social networking site

# Avg. time spent/ day



#### Fig 4 Average time spent per day on one's social networking site

Table 4 represents Average time spent per day on one's social networking site. It was further noted that Respondents gave maximum responses for Less than 1 hour (43%), 1-2 hours (32%), 3-4 hours (9.9%) and minimum as 4 hours+ (6%).

#### H<sub>o</sub>1: There is no significant involvement of the users with respect to using social networking sites

H<sub>0</sub>1 a: There is no significant relation between the types of contacts and influence on using social networking sites

H<sub>1</sub>1 a: There is significant relation between the types of contacts and influence on using social networking sites

Type of interaction with contacts		Never- 1	Rarely- 2	Fairly Often- 3	Nearly Always- 4	Mean	Rank	Chi Square	p value (p<.05)
how much with	Ν	13	40	104	143	1.96	R1	140.453	0.000
close friends	%	0.04	0.13	0.35	0.48				
how much with	Ν	11	70	140	79	2.04	R2	111.493	0.000
colleagues	%	0.04	0.23	0.47	0.26				
how much with	Ν	25	89	121	65	2.27	R3	65.493	0.000
family	%	0.08	0.30	0.40	0.22				
how much with	Ν	17	139	99	45	2.65	R4	119.147	0.000
people in general	%	0.06	0.46	0.33	0.15				
how much with	Ν	145	112	30	13	3.13	R5	161.840	0.000
strangers	%	0.48	0.37	0.10	0.04				

Table 5.1 Type of interaction with contacts

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Table 5.1 represents Type of interaction with different types of contacts while using a social networking site. It was further noted that:

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$ = 140.453, p<.05) on communicating with close friends at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Nearly Always (48%), Fairly Often (35%), Rarely (13%) and minimum as Never (4%).

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$ = 111.493, p<.05) on communicating with colleagues at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Fairly Often (47%), Nearly Always (26%), Rarely (23%) and minimum as Never (4%).

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$ = 65.493, p<.05) on communicating with family at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Fairly Often (40%), Rarely (30.3%), Nearly Always (22%), and minimum as Never (8%).Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$ = 119.147, p<.05) on communicating with people known in general at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Rarely (46%), Fairly Often (33%), Nearly Always (15%), and minimum as Never (6%).

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$ = 161.840, p<.05) on communicating with strangers at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Never (48%), Rarely (37%), Fairly Often (10%), and minimum as Nearly Always (4%).



#### Fig 5.1 Type of interaction with contacts

H<sub>o</sub>1 b: There is no significant relation between frequency of logging and number of online friends

H<sub>1</sub>1 b: There is significant relation between frequency of logging and number of online friends

	Frequency of Logging	Nui	mber Of	Online Fr	iends	Total	Pearson χ2	df	p value (p<.05)
		> 50	51- 200	200- 500	500+				
1	Always logged on	2	6	2	4	14			
2	Many times in a month	2	4	3	3	12			
3	Many times in a week	1	12	12	8	33			
4	Once a day	5	25	47	19	96	55.540	18	0.000
5	Once a month/ occasionaly	4	4	1	2	11			
6	Once a week	2	13	2	2	19			
7	Several Times a day	3	25	65	22	115			
	Grand Total	19	89	132	60	300			

#### Table 5.2 Relationship between Frequency of logging and number of online friends



#### Fig 5.2 Relationship between Frequency of logging and number of online friends

Table 5.2 represents the relationship between Frequency of logging and Number of online friend. Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$ = 55.540, p<.05) on Frequency of logging and number of online friends at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Several Times a day (22% appx), who had between 200-500 online friends.

Hol c: There is no significant relation between frequency of logging and number of online communities joined

H<sub>1</sub>1 c: There is significant relation between frequency of logging and number of online communities joined

	Frequency of logging	no. o	f online c	commu	nities j	Total	Pearson χ2	df	p value (p<.05)	
S.No.		1 10	11 20	21- 50	50+	None				
1	Always logged on	4	3	2	2	3	14			
2	Many times in a month	7	1	3	1	0	12			
3	Many times in a week	24	4	3	1	1	33	20.750	~	0.000
4	Once a day	59	19	9	7	2	96	28.756	24	0.229
5	Once a month/ occasionaly	7	1	0	1	2	11			
6	Once a week	11	3	1	1	3	19			
7	Several Times a day	70	23	9	4	9	115			
	Total	182	54	27	17	20	300			

#### Table 5.3 Relationship b/w Frequency of logging and no. of online communities joined



#### Fig 5.3 Relationship between Frequency of logging and no. of online communities joined

Table 5.3 represents the relationship between Frequency of logging and Number of online communities joined. Respondents showed no significant difference ( $\chi^2$  = 28.756, p>.05) on Frequency of logging and number of online communities joined at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Several Times a day (23% appx), who are members in between 1-10 communities.

H<sub>o</sub>1 d: There is no significant relation between average time spent and number of online friends

H<sub>1</sub>1 d: There is significant relation between average time spent and number of online friends

S.No.	Total Avg Time/ Day	Nun	nber Of	Online Fr	iends	Total	Pearson χ2	df	p value (p<.05)
		> 50	51- 200	200- 500	500+				
1	1-2 hours	5	35	67	19	126		9	0.007
2	3-4 hours	0	12	9	9	30	22.754		
3	4 hours+	1	2	7	8	18			
4	Less than 1 hour	13	40	49	24	126			

Table 5 4 Relationshi	n hetween Aver	age time spent	/ day and	number of	online friends
Table 5.4 Relationshi	p between Aver	age time spent/	uay anu	number of	omme menus



#### Fig 5.4 Relationship between Average time spent/ day and number of online friends

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$ = 22.754, p<.05) on Average time spent/ day and number of online friends at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as 1-2 hours (23%), who had between 200-500 online friends.

 $H_02$  a: There are no significant reasons for using social networking sites by SNS users.

H<sub>1</sub>2 a: There are significant reasons for using social networking sites by SNS users.

#### Table 6.1 Factor analysis of reasons for using Social Networking Sites

#### KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measu	.817	
Bartlett's Test of	1526.413	
Sphericity	df	120
	.000	

#### Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
	1 000	Extraction
find info	1.000	.724
get opinions	1.000	.621
socialising/ chat/ comment	1.000	.683
stay up to date	1.000	.629
share exp.	1.000	.451
communicate with friends and family	1.000	.618
more convenient then phone/ emails	1.000	.501
share videos/ pics	1.000	.424
make new friends	1.000	.626
relationship building	1.000	.580
keep up to date with any social event	1.000	.486
ur frnds use d site	1.000	.564
ease of access	1.000	.525
busi. process	1.000	.576
play games	1.000	.624
time pass	1.000	.768

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#### **Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues	Extractio	on Sums of Square	ed Loadings	Rotation Sums of Squared Lo		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	4.864	30.403	30.403	4.864	30.403	30.403	3.698
2	1.993	12.457	42.860	1.993	12.457	42.860	3.352
3	1.424	8.897	51.757	1.424	8.897	51.757	2.773
4	1.119	6.992	58.749	1.119	6.992	58.749	1.359
5	.954	5.963	64.712				
6	.794	4.965	69.677				
7	.765	4.783	74.460				
8	.649	4.054	78.515				
9	.597	3.729	82.244				
10	.552	3.447	85.692				
11	.502	3.138	88.830				
12	.410	2.563	91.393				
13	.383	2.392	93.785				
14	.361	2.255	96.040				
15	.330	2.061	98.101				
16	.304	1.899	100.000				

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#### Structure Matrix

	Component						
	1	2	3	4			
find info	.064	298	779	198			
get opinions	.301	129	781	.113			
socialising/ chat/ comment	.164	807	099	.132			
stay up to date	.305	768	262	.116			
share exp.	.396	543	444	.095			
communicate with friends and family	.208	778	222	112			
more convenient then phone/ emails	.534	412	348	286			
share videos/ pics	.604	327	256	.213			
make new friends	.785	134	227	.168			
relationship building	.753	168	269	.207			
keep up to date with any social event	.467	401	591	.050			
ur frnds use d site	.721	290	163	045			
ease of access	.414	641	296	172			
busi. process	.604	.066	565	.088			
play games	.401	.174	369	.611			
time pass	.121	303	.059	.800			

Component	1	2	3	4
1	1.000	242	354	.126
2	242	1.000	.191	.034
2	254	101	1 000	012
3	354	.191	1.000	012
4	.126	.034	012	1.000

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.



Four factors were found to influencing the involvement of SNS users:

- 1. For socializing (Making New Friends, Relationship Building, Your Friends Use The Site, Share Videos/ Pictures)
- 2. For connectivity (Business process, More convenient then phone/ emails, Keep up-todate with any social event, Ease of access to friends and family)
- **3.** For networking (Share your experience (updating profile), Play games, Get opinions, Stay up-to-date with friends' lives (what they are doing))
- **4.** For surfing (Communicate with friends and family, Socializing (chat/ comment etc.), Time pass, Find some information)

#### Factor 1 and 4 are positively correlated

#### Factor 2 is positively correlated with Factor 3 and 4

 $H_o 2$  b: There is no significant relation between types of online communities preferred and its influence on the involvement of SNS users.

H<sub>1</sub>2 b: There is significant relation between types of online communities preferred and its influence on the involvement of SNS users.

Type of community preference		highest priority -1	high priority- 2	neutral- 3	low priority- 4	lowest priority- 5	Mean	Rank	χ2	p value (p<.0 5)
Companies	N	103	67	44	35	51	2.55	R3	47.667	0.000
_	%	34.3	22.3	14.7	11.7	17.0				
Friends'	N	122	78	45	30	25	2.19	R1	108.63 3	0.000
groups	%	40.7	26.0	15.0	10.0	8.3				
Fan pages	N	70	72	76	37	45	2.72	R6	20.900	0.000
	%	23.3	24.0	25.3	12.3	15.0				
Hobbies/ Interest	N	107	75	57	33	28	2.33	R2	69.933	0.000
Areas	%	35.7	25.0	19.0	11.0	9.3				
Organizatio	N	70	71	73	50	36	2.7	R5	17.767	0.001
n	%	23.3	23.7	24.3	16.7	12.0				
Campaigns/ social	N	75	79	64	44	38	2.64	R4	22.367	0.000
events	%	25.0	26.3	21.3	14.7	12.7				

#### Table 6.2 Types of online communities preferred

Table 6.2 represents Types of online communities preferred while using a social networking site. It was further noted that:

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$  = 47.667, p<.05) on Types of online communities preferred (Companies) while using a social networking site at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Highest Priority-1 (34.3%)

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$  = 108.633, p<.05) on Types of online communities preferred (Friends' groups) while using a social networking site at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Highest Priority-1 (40.7%)

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$ = 20.900, p<.05) on Types of online communities preferred (Fan pages) while using a social networking site at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Neutral-3 (25.3%)

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$  = 69.933, p<.05) on Types of online communities preferred (Hobbies/ Interest Areas) while using a social networking site at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Highest Priority-1 (35.7%)

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$  = 17.767, p<.05) on Types of online communities preferred (Organizations) while using a social networking site at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as Neutral-3 (24.3%)

Respondents showed significant difference ( $\chi^2$  = 22.367, p<.05) on Types of online com



# Type of community preference

munities preferred (Campaigns/ social events) while using a social networking site at .05 level of significance. Respondents gave maximum responses as High Priority-2 (26.3%)

#### **Result Analysis**

1. Our sample of 300 was based on college students pursuing technical courses from Gujarat Technical University from Ahemdabad and Gandhinagar area. Maximum respondents were

from Engineering (66.7%) and Management field. (29.3%). Most of the college students were aged between 21-24 years and almost 67% population was male.

- 2. Our candidates are regular social networking site(s) users, with minimum one account in at least one social networking site as mentioned in Appendix III. Facebook was found to be the most common SNS along with Google+. They log into these sites almost daily, checking their accounts several times a day. On an average they dedicate 1 hour per day to the same.
- It was found that there is significant relation between the types of contacts and their influence on respondents for using social networking sites. Highest interaction was seen with close friends followed by colleagues and family.
- 4. In the same vein, the frequency of interaction and number of friends in one's social network were found to be positively related. Respondents, who logged into SNS several times a day spending 1-2 hours, had 200-500 online friends in their network.
- 5. But the same was not true, in case of online communities joined as it had no significant impact on the frequency of interaction and vice versa. On an average, respondents spent less than 1 hour daily on SNS and were found to be members of 1-10 communities at the max.
- Analysis of various reasons for using social networking sites by SNS users was undertaken.
   Four factors (in the order of priority) were found to influencing the involvement of SNS users:
- a) For socializing (Making New Friends, Relationship Building, Your Friends Use The Site, Share Videos/ Pictures)
- **b)** For connectivity (Business process, More convenient then phone/ emails, Keep up-to-date with any social event, Ease of access to friends and family)
- c) For networking (Share your experience (updating profile), Play games, Get opinions, Stay up-to-date with friends' lives (what they are doing))
- **d)** For surfing (Communicate with friends and family, Socializing (chat/ comment etc.), Time pass, Find some information)

Factor a) and d) were found to be positively correlated. Similarly, Factor b) is positively correlated with Factor c) and d).

7. It was observed that there is a significant relation between types of online communities preferred and its influence on the involvement of SNS users. Respondents preferred to join friends groups, followed by interest areas/ hobbies. Joining communities of organizations was found to be least favorable among the respondents.

#### Conclusion

Our research is targeted on "the youth segment". The study is based on college students aged between 21-24 years mostly, pursuing technical courses (mainly Engineering and Management) from colleges affiliated to Gujarat Technical University. The sample area of study was limited to Ahemdabad and Gandhinagar.

It was found that contacts' type does influence respondents for using social networking sites. Strong ties lead to strong bonding, hence more interaction seen (e.g. close friends, colleagues and family). Similarly weak ties will have weak bonding. Hence less interaction with strangers and people known in general was observed.

Also the SNS usage pattern was found to have positive correlation with number of online friends in one's networks. This suggests, more connected a person is, more would be the rate of interaction with other members; hence more Word of mouth is generated. Although number of online communities didn't have any significant influence on the same. This suggests that individual networking is more influential than group networking.

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