

ISSN 2278 8425

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research

Volume 5, Issue 2, August 2016

A Bi-Annual Journal Published by Rajalakshmi Institutions

[Embedded in Proquest, DRJI, Google Scholar, Research Bible & Journal seek]

Impact Factor Global – 0.781(2015)

Scientific Journal Impact Factor – 4.001(2015)

Index Copernicus – 6.22

Journal writing is a voyage to the interior.

Christina Baldwin

IJGBMR

Published by

Rajalakshmi Educational Trust

Thandalam, Chennai-602105. Tamilnadu, India.

www.rajalakshmi.org/ijgbmr

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August 2016

ISSN : 2278 8425

Published by

Rajalakshmi Educational Trust,
Rajalakshmi Nagar, Thandalam,
Chennai-602105.

Phone – 044 3718 1111

Fax – 044 3718 1113

Url – www.rajalakshmi.org/ijgbmr

Printed at

M/S. SAROJA ENTERPRISES,

New No.18, Old No.382,

Arcot Road (N.S.K. Salai)

Kodambakkam. Chennai – 600 024.

Phone - 2484 1129, 2484 4363

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research

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ISSN – 2278-8425

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Internationalization in the University Business Classroom: Key Issues in Facilitating Intercultural Learning and Academic Success

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp 01-07, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

Colleges and universities have seen a tremendous increase in international student enrollment in recent years. The most popular destination for international students is the United States, with 75% of prospective international students listing the United States as their top choice. Many international students arrive in the US with a fairly good command of the English language; however a working knowledge of English does not guarantee an understanding of the diversity of cultural values found within a US college classroom. This paper adapts Professor Geert Hofstede's six dimensions for cultural values in the workplace to the university class room and offers suggestions for how faculty, through an understanding of the cultural values international students bring to the classroom, can leverage cultural diversity to create a more dynamic learning environment. To illustrate how an understanding of Hofstede's six cultural dimensions can be helpful for faculty teaching in a multicultural classroom, the cultural values of China and India, two countries with large international student populations, are compared with those values in the United States.

Key Words: International Students, Diversity, Cultural Values, Intercultural learning

Introduction

The 21st century is considered the age of globalization, enabling individuals to move easily across borders to pursue their goals for higher education. United States' colleges and universities have seen a tremendous increase in international students studying business and engineering in recent years. Growth of the international student population in the U.S. reflects a broader global trend of increasing world integration. According to statistics from the Institute of International Education (IIE), about 40 percent of international students in the U.S. during the last school year were enrolled in either business or engineering courses. Business has topped the fields of study list in the IIE's *Open Doors* report for the past decade, with engineering a close second (Chow, 2015). Evidence suggests the overwhelming popularity of business and engineering courses is driven by students' views of which programs will offer them the best preparation for a successful career.

The most popular destination for international students is the United States, with 75% of prospective international students listing it as their top choice. Most international students worldwide perceive the United States as offering a higher-quality education system than other

hosting countries (Chow, 2015). Additionally, most international students believe U.S. universities welcome international students and consider the United States to be a safe place to study, compared to other hosting countries (Nyland, Forbest-Mewett, & Härtel, 2013).

Many international students arriving in the United States have a fairly good command of the English language, although a working knowledge of English does not necessarily guarantee an understanding of an American university's cultural framework. Local customs and value systems can conflict with practices in the U.S. culture. How can faculty effectively leverage cultural diversity in the classroom while addressing the academic needs of both the host and international students? Through effective teaching practices and an awareness of the cultural diversity present in the classroom, faculty members can provide learning opportunities—both academic and social—and create a dynamic learning environment.

Multiculturalism in the classroom

Multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of diverse groups. Culture defines how individuals express themselves, the way they think, how they move, and how they solve problems (Lustig & Koester, 2006). International students bring differing cultural experiences, expectations, and learning styles to the higher education classroom, allowing for new perspectives. An educational synergy in the classroom is achieved when cultural differences are managed effectively. In this way, synergy is not only the union of energies, but rather a product of a system that creates more energy (Polat, 2012). Hence, the synergy that can be generated by students from different cultures working together is larger than the sum of the individual parts of the system. Faculties who can elicit this synergy from the various multicultural components in their classrooms build a dynamic learning environment for all.

Likewise, organizations in which cultural differences have been successfully managed have business advantages that include attracting talented workers, greater loyalty, and less absenteeism. In cases where cultural differences have not been managed effectively, communication issues and conflicts emerge, and the process of making organizational decisions becomes more difficult for managers (DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000). As a result, a pro-cultural diversity orientation is becoming a standard in U.S. organizations for initiatives, programs, policies, and other processes designed to promote organizational cultural support.

Understanding Cultural Differences

An introduction to a pro-cultural diversity orientation begins in the university classroom and can then be effectively implemented in the global workplace. The important question for managers and professors is how to use culturally-diverse groups to their best advantage (Stryker, 2016). A culturally-diverse group is especially well-suited for tasks that require considering issues from various perspectives. However, the key element in managing this integration in the classroom and workplace is based on an acknowledgement of differences and the quality of communication. A cultural analytic such as Professor Geert Hofstede's six cultural dimensions (Nelson & Quick, 2015) can assist faculty in understanding international students' cultural differences. Working for IBM, Dutch researcher Geert Hofstede and his

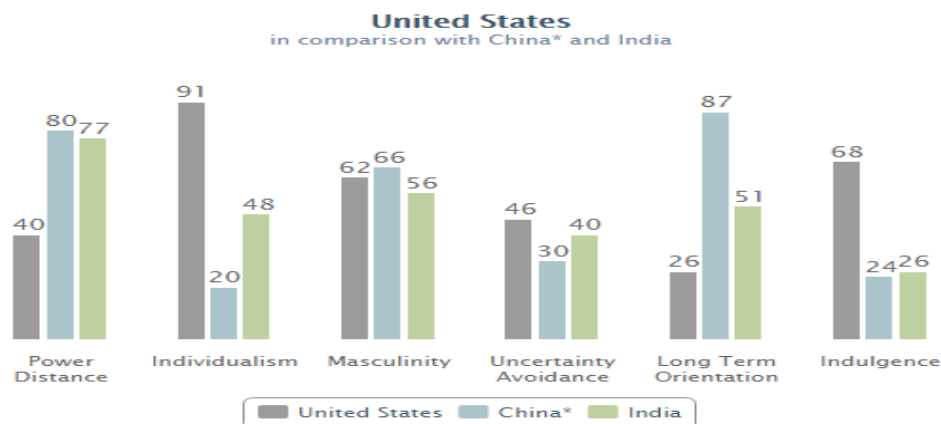
colleagues surveyed 160,000 IBM employees in sixty different countries. Their findings suggest that national culture was responsible for more work-related attitudes than any other variable, including profession, position in the organization, age, or gender (Nelson & Quick, 2015).

Hofstede's six cultural dimensions include:

- Individualism vs. collectivism
- Higher power distance vs. low power distance
- High uncertainty avoidance vs. low uncertainty avoidance
- Masculinity vs. femininity
- Long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation
- Indulgence vs. restraint

To illustrate how an understanding of these cultural dimensions can be useful for faculty teaching in a multicultural classroom, the cultural preferences of China and India will be compared with that of the United States. In 2013/14, the U.S. hosted a record high of 886,052 international students. Of these students, 274,493 international students (31%) came from China and 102,673 students (12%) from India (Chow, 2015). See Figure 1 below for a comparison of the six cultural dimensions.

Figure1- The U.S. in comparison to China and India in terms of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2016)



Individualism vs. Collectivism

Individualism, in comparison to *collectivism*, is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. In individualistic cultures, the ties between individuals are loose: people are expected to look after themselves and their immediate families. In collectivist cultures, people from birth onward feel integrated into strong, cohesive groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts, and grandparents), that protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Nelson & Quick, 2015). As illustrated in Table 1, China is a highly collectivist culture (low individualism), in which people act in the interests of the group. In-group considerations affect hiring and promotions, with closer in-groups (such as family) getting preferential treatment. Employee commitment to the organization (but not

necessarily to the people in the organization) is low. Relationships with in-group colleagues tend to be cooperative but cold or even hostile to individuals in out-groups. In contrast, the U.S. is very high in individualism, and India scored at roughly the midpoint. In terms of classroom behavior, students from cultures high in collectivism, like China, will prefer to work in groups and will tend to be hesitant to speak out as individuals during class discussions.

Masculinity vs. Femininity

Masculinity versus its opposite, femininity refers to the distribution of emotional roles in a culture. Hofstede referred to the assertive end of the emotional continuum as masculine and the modest, caring end of the continuum as feminine (Nelson & Quick, 2015). Both men and women in feminine cultures tend to share the same modest, caring values; in masculine cultures, both men and women value more assertive and competitive behaviors. All three of the countries in this example tend toward a “masculine” orientation and are success-oriented and driven. The need to ensure success can be exemplified by the fact that many Chinese will sacrifice family and leisure priorities for work. Service people, such as hairdressers, will work until very late at night. Leisure time is not as important. Farm workers will leave their families behind in faraway places to obtain better work and pay in the cities. In terms of classroom behavior, students from all three cultures tend towards the “masculine” end of the continuum and care very much about their exam scores and rank grades as important criteria in defining what it means to be successful.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance addresses a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. It indicates to what extent a culture teaches its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from the usual. Uncertainty-avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations through strict laws and rules. At the opposite end of the continuum, uncertainty-accepting cultures are more tolerant of opinions different from the conventional. They try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level, are relativist and tend to accept a wide range of belief systems (Nelson & Quick, 2015). All three countries in our example have relatively low scores on Uncertainty Avoidance, with the Chinese being most comfortable with ambiguity. Students from all three countries will tend to be adaptable and entrepreneurial.

Long-Term Orientation

Cultures with a long-term orientation focus on future rewards and tend to value individual savings, persistence, and adaptation to changing circumstances. Societies with a short-term orientation tend to value virtues related to the immediate past and present (Nelson & Quick, 2015). China scores very high in this dimension, which means that this very pragmatic culture takes a long-term view. In societies with such an orientation, people believe that truth depends very much on the situation, context and time. Americans, on the other hand, have a very short-term orientation with a focus on the importance of immediate

results. Students with a short-term orientation will tend to want immediate feedback and a constant update on their status in the class.

Indulgence vs. Restraint

Indulgence defines a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Societies that value restraint end to suppress gratification of needs and regulate behavior through strict social norms (Hofstede, 2016). Both India and China have been traditionally more restrained societies than the United States. Societies with a low score in this dimension have a tendency toward cynicism and pessimism. Also, in contrast to indulgent societies, restrained societies place little emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. Cultures with this orientation have the perception that their actions are restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somehow wrong. However, with improved economic conditions, this preference for restraint in China appears to be changing. As noted in Table 1, the U.S. scores high in terms of indulgence.

Power Distance

People from cultures that exhibit a high power distance accept the fact that power within the society is unequally distributed and that some people rightfully have more power than others. People from cultures with low power distance believe that power should be distributed equally and fairly to all people (Nelson & Quick, 2015). Both India and China are societies that tend to believe that inequalities amongst people are acceptable. The subordinate-superior relationship tends to be polarized. Individuals accept formal authority and sanctions and are accepting of hierarchical leadership. Cultures with high power distance tend to believe that people should not have aspirations beyond their current rank. In the classroom, students from China and India will tend to be more comfortable with a formal relationship with a faculty member. Students from the United States, which has a much lower power distance score, will tend to be more at ease with an informal relationship with the instructor. Hofstede's discussion of the six cultural dimensions can be a useful tool for understanding cultural preferences (Hofstede, 2016). Misunderstandings between faculty and international students can arise when the faculty member relies solely on U.S. cultural values to evaluate international students.

Faculty who are unaware of these cultural dimensions can become frustrated, for example, with some international students' lack of class participation. Additionally, faculty often have difficulty understanding why their Asian students don't volunteer to participate in class or why these students prefer group projects to individual work assignments. As Hofstede's research demonstrates, the Asian culture has a collective perspective in comparison to the individualistic U.S. culture. Consequently, Asian students prefer not to call attention to themselves. They also prefer to working groups. This does not imply that everyone in a given society is programmed to behave in the same way; there are considerable differences between individuals. However, faculty serving large populations of international students need to understand these general cultural considerations. Hofstede's cultural dimension analysis is one way educators can

learn about cultural preferences and begin to integrate cultural preferences into the classroom.

Engagement in the Classroom

The key question for faculty is how to engage culturally-diverse students in the classroom to their best advantage as well as for the overall learning environment in the classroom. Evidence has demonstrated that in the workplace a diverse team is especially well-suited for tasks that require considering an issue from many angles or a task that requires creative thinking. Similarly, deploying diverse student teams can help ensure consideration of a wide variety of issues in enough detail to produce innovative answers and also to avoid missing critical problems. A diverse team is especially well-suited for tasks that require out-of-the-box thinking (Distefano & Maznevski, 2000).

However, a vital element for managing this integration and avoiding personal conflict requires faculty to recognize and welcome the cultural differences among students. Faculty must encourage students to be open-minded, to listen to alternative views, and to realize that there isn't only one way of doing things. Equally important, faculty must focus on the quality of communication among students. When class members are able to communicate across the cultural boundaries that potentially divide them, personal conflicts can be avoided. Students can learn and appreciate the different perspectives of other students, and they can integrate these diverse viewpoints into their tasks and solutions. Therefore, to ensure communication quality, the professor must create an open, supportive, and psychologically-safe climate in which all team members and students are able to say what they think, vocal individuals do not dominate, and students use language that is considerate of others' feelings. Such an environment allows for various perspectives and opinions to become known and fosters creative problem solving, as group members work collectively to resolve the differences among themselves.

Conclusion

As the international student population in the United States continues to grow, faculty will need to continue to embrace and welcome cultural diversity and use it to their advantage. Although cultural differences can cause challenges, the diversity of cultural contributions can also be seen as opportunities to create positive and productive experiences. Whether students plan to work for a large company or a small startup, chances are the business will be global. The Internet has transformed markets around the world and made it easy for businesses to extend their reach into other countries and regions. It has been estimated that more than 95 percent of the world's potential consumers live outside of the United States (NFTC, 2007); therefore international expansion gives businesses a broader customer base and the opportunity to grow sales. Operating a global business can lower costs overall by embracing less-expensive suppliers and opening the business up to a diverse pool of skilled talent.

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Impact of E-Travel Insurance Platforms on Customization Ventures : An Explorative Reportage

**International Journal on Global Business Management and Research, 5(2),
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp 08-16, ISSN 2278 – 8425**

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Abstract

Travel Insurance as an ancillary service emerged few decades ago. In the present day it has been bolstered as a core function owing to the tremendous surge experienced in the business by the global travel and tourism industry coupled with the unforeseen mishaps and untoward incidents faced by travelers' world over. Many premier tourism operatives are partnering or entering into strategic alliances with insurance majors. The explosive technological developments have ushered in path breaking progressions in the various aspects of tourism businesses. The key services that complement travel activities such as banking, forex, insurance, cargo, etc., have switched over to the electronic modes as distribution channels of the offerings keeping in view the modern dynamics of customer satisfaction. E-travel portals are employed as a strategic proposition to ease the procedures and revamp the processes for the benefit of outbound tourists. The present study assesses the multi-dimensional impacts of the E-travel insurance portals and also other e-services which enables customer-centric operations. The paradigms of technology driven initiatives in the realm of travel insurance vis-à-vis the perspectives of customer satisfaction and flexible options are deliberated in this work. Furthermore, the operational outcomes and the value-additions dished out by the e-travel insurance platforms are examined in this paper. This study adopted an explorative approach to unveil the challenges and intricacies related to portals along with the beneficial impacts by conducting personal interviews with the practitioners, industry representatives, and various stakeholders of insurance industry, particularly specialists of travel insurance. The documents and e-files of travel insurance companies were reviewed. SWOT Analysis has also been conducted based on the insights on travel insurance provided by the experts of the trade and also the secondary data. This work has strived to bridge the prevailing gap between technology driven platforms of travel insurance and the service outcomes.

Key Words: Travel Insurance, E-Portal, Technological Developments, Customization, Online Services

I. Introduction

In present Scenario, travel insurance sector has evolved a versatile change involving an array of divergent products and services pertaining to travelers. The current travel insurance sector landscape is characteristically hybrid in nature, offering from genres of travel insurance products. The usage of new technologies in a novel form of e-portal in travel insurance serve customers with acquaint of adopting the goal of customer satisfaction, whereby the travel insurance industry is striving to grow at a rapid pace. As technology booms, it continue to be a critical component of customer interactions, query clarification , i.e. travel insurance industry edges enable customers to formulate a service autonomous of direct service from insurer (Meuter, Ostrom, Roundtree, & Bitner, 2000), it changed the way customers interact with companies to create service outcomes. These modes of interaction are expected to become key criteria for long term business success to understand the other side of technology. A wide range of technologies which cater customers such as kiosks, ATMs, internet and interactive voice systems, can be utilized to improve service and gain competitive advantage in travel policies. The significant role of e-portal technology drives initiative for customer satisfaction in travel insurance business is not to simply automate processes. Relatively, it is a strategic tool to simplify procedures and revamp processes. It helps create a very efficient customer service management system for customer preparedness. The World Tourism Organization envisages that tourist arrivals around the world will enhance over 200% by 2020 (C. Yeung, P.F. Tung, and J. Yen, 1998). Scheduling for a trip could be a dreary or even complex task, in which modern advanced tools would wholly help if properly established (D.K.W. Chiu and H.F. Leung, 2005). So, the paramount rise of foreign trips either for business or leisure purpose would serve the basket to procure the e-portal service to ensure easy and quick transactions.

1.1. Need for the Study

The travel insurance industry is in a staggering pace to unveil the potential utilization of novel advancement by transition as it grind towards adoption of e-portal undergoing a major as a technology determined initiative for customer satisfaction in travel insurance business. It is also necessary to find out the factors which influence the customers for purchasing e-travel portal which provides to consume less time and cost effective in issuing the policies.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

This study has been conducted with a broad objective of unraveling the significance of e-travel portal in travel insurance sector as a satisfaction measure preferred by the insured

The other objectives are:

- To elucidate the nature of customer preparedness and the acceptance of e-portal for easy accessibility.
- To examine the factors which influence the customer satisfaction by usage of e-portal?

- To encapsulate the operational outcomes and the meritorious services of e-travel insurance platforms.
- To evaluate e-travel portals including operational offerings in bringing forth flexibility for customers.

II. Research Methodology

Explorative method of study has been employed for presenting the challenges and intricacies relate to e-travel portals in travel insurance sector. The Panel was constituted with experts and practitioners in the travel insurance sector. Personal interviews were conducted and in addition responses were collected over phone and e-mail.

III. Data Collection

The data had been obtained through direct interviews with excerpt experts views, industry representatives, and various stakeholders of insurance industry in travel insurance in particular. Secondary data was collected from documents and records of tour and travel companies offering the travel insurance policies, journals, brochures, periodicals, and websites.

IV. Review of Literature

Relevant review on literature has been presented below:

Smith, A. D., (2004) states that accessibility of free information does not ensure that customers will use it; this will depend on consistency of and reliance in the provider. The role of online travel websites is to ease in increasing convenience of information and enhancing communication in a best optimum level. A resourceful technology would facilitate customer satisfaction and help in building customer interest towards usage of e-portal rather than offline.

Law, R., Leung, K. And Wong,J.(2004) identified product information, pricing information, online booking services and quick web page load time as determinants of customer contentment with online processes. The niche area of advent concepts of online procedures would navigate the customer work in a simplified manner by the novel idea of e-travel portal.

Fisher, SE (2003)There are also a number of technical issues that are impeding progress of e-portal. The complexity of underlying technology involved in implementing e-portal has been a challenge for insurance companies. This triggered many travel insurance corporate to influence the online networks to revamp for a standardized practice in travel insurance sector for easy accessibility of customers.

(Mieczkowska, S, Barnes, D and Hinton, M; 2002). Typically these online systems are the electrifying elements to scuffle improvements in the process of policy issuance by overcoming the hurdles of rapid access. Much of the information technology related to e-portal is being used to automate rather than to fundamentally change existing business progression.

The lack of international standards has been cited by several authors as one of the most significant challenges facing the travel insurance industry (Mc Carthy, RV and Aronson, JE; 2000) which has to be rectified by simplifying the course by each travel insurance industry for providing instance information at the door step of each individuals at their perusal to outsource the connectivity of e-travel portal.

Since the rise of the World Wide Web, ICTs transformed the structure of tourism (Wang & Qualls, 2007), with development of huge numbers of websites and applications, including reservation systems, online travel agencies and tour operators, and interactive product review sites and issuance of travel policies. This mammoth source of e-portal links would be handy and user friendly at its operational time by customers.

V. E- Travel Portal a Deterrent Tool of Technology Adoption by Tourists

Assimilating, new web-based technologies into current business activities, obtaining the necessary technical expertise and realizing a fit between new technology and the existing processes it becomes a hurdle to implement e- portal. Here the e- travel portal is a restraint tool of technological adoption for outbound tourists. Today, the business which connects all walks of life is travel insurance business. That's why travel insurance sector occupies a very distinct place among financial services operative in the world. With this e-travel insurance as a mechanism that ensures an individual to thrive on adverse consequences by compensating the individual loss financially by claim settlement. Every individual in this world is subject to unforeseen hazards or dangers in their travel, which may make their journey helpless. At this point in time, e- travel portal plays a key task to recover loss of time and other miscellaneous expenses borne by the customer. The use of the internet is growing throughout the world at a rapid pace in every nook and corner walks of business. Statistically, the US holds the mammoth share of the global market, it is anticipated it will reduce from 36% to 25% (Raisinghani.M. M, 2002). Not surprisingly, e- travel insurance is also being embraced globally. Asia also shows enormous potential to drive this trend globally. In India its leading the way in the rest of Asia, with swiftly escalating growth in the travel insurance industry in terms of e-portal by retaining customer satisfaction (Dasgupta, P and Sengupta, K; 2002).

VI. Tri - Dimensional Factors of Customer Satisfaction in Realm of E-Portal

a. Attitude

Malerba (2001), characterizes a set of attributes, which evolve over time, and specify the components of the system as well as their modes of interactions. These attributes of

e-portal are the knowledge bases and issuing processes, the security measures, and the software imbibe for usage, of accessibility. The importance of the knowledge bases and the uses of internet on dynamics of the system have been underlined. (Shim et al, 2001) suggest that customers' attitudes towards online purchasing of travel insurance by e-portals are dependent for transaction services, convenience, sensory experience and simplified mode to download and operate in each installed kiosk. These imply the attitude of customers toward the usage and access of e-portal in travel insurance industry.

b. Assurance

The importance of loyalty in e-platform is also increasing (de Ruyter, Moorman, and Lemmick, 2001; Griffin, 1996; Houston, 2001; Reichheld, Markey, and Hopton, 2000; Urban, Sultan, and Quails, 2000; Warrington, Abgrab, and Caldwell, 2000). E-portal is also emerging as an area of great interest for online marketers to tap the new vicinity of e-commerce business. Griffin (1996) argues that customer satisfaction is one of the most significant factors. Reichheld and Schefter (2000) that reliability and assurances are an even more important part for the end user. In fact, the authors present evidence that there is a high cost associated with a sound quality of product in e-travel portal proposal. However, they also caution that complete satisfaction of customer draws from assurance provided with the help of technology. Rather, it is the ability of technology to affect consistently superior customer experiences that makes e-portal so important. Morgan (2000) suggests that the term reliable can be interpreted in different forms, ranging from rendering complete assurance towards the end user to security aspects. The perspective of Reichheld and Schefter (2000) that at the global level of analysis, assurance is about earning the trust of the right kinds of customers.

c. Awareness

Travel Insurance, is a contract whereby the insurer undertakes to cover specified travel risks incurred by the insured and to pay out on agreed terms to compensate losses suffered under the risks. Despite, the long history of travel insurance, running back in past are more or less present in 21st century with its full fledged potential to equip awareness among the customers, and the consequent experience is connected with underwriting norms, dealing in claims, and adopting appropriate policy wordings, it is still difficult to apply an abstract schedule of terms and conditions to reality, the unexpected happens to a greater or lesser degree. For this reason, the relationship between insurer and insured is said to be characterized by the utmost good faith. This implies that both parties will abide by the spirit of the contract rather than exploit its terms. In practice it implies that the insured will disclose all matters relevant to the policy and the insured risks, whether or not specifically initiated, and that the insurer will not take refuge in the policy terms and conditions to resist a claim which in essence is obviously legitimate. It should not be forgotten that insurance arises out of the need for protection against catastrophe such as death, serious injury, major property loss, in the past and even today, it may stand between the insured and personal ruin. The good faith of the companies is hence vital to the confidence of the

insured. So the important part is awareness has to be wide spread to customers for the best possible utilization of resources in the form of technology advancements by e-portal.

VII. SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Millions of people travelling in and out of India will lead to purchase tickets along with the ‘overseas mediclaim and travel insurance policies’. ➤ Policy wordings and information’s of each company are ample in their websites regarding different genres of travel insurance products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In case of rapid growth of information technology, but still issuance of policies and claims settlement drag for a longer duration. ➤ Obstinacy of the products, i.e., they are not tailor-made to the requirements of the customer. According to various segments of customer purchase travel insurance through e-portal.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ With advancement in quick issuance of policies and information’s from kiosks in a user friendly manner would increase the number of policies with an alluring effect among end user, customers. ➤ Specially, generated software’s and e-instruments would assist to issue an individual policy at times of chaos e.g. physically challenged person, power backup etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In India, there is always a tendency to restrict any change whether its impact becomes favorable or not. Acceptance of new technology usage takes time to roll out. ➤ Unviable alliances will not be allowed to take place as there will be fierce competition resulting in lower price and tend to diminish the quality.

VIII. Implications and Discussions

- ❖ E-portal plays a vital role in augmenting the volume of business which take a steep rise of customer satisfaction and create more trust within customers in travel insurance industry.
- ❖ The efficacy of e-travel portal has made an immense impact with an optimistic attitude towards online travel issuance policies in each travel insurance counters obliged to encourage and establish small software pockets, to be vendors by implementing different roles to sort out the issues whenever required by the travel insurance corporate.
- ❖ Each and every department required to operate and generate travel policies should be connected with a special link so the accessibility will be at a rapid speed to issue policies without any interruption or any hurdles from IT (information technology) side.
- ❖ In terms of customer interactions, customer satisfaction, quality control, and cost concerns are important, explaining about the repetitions to use e-portal and a technology driven initiatives in travel insurance sector.
- ❖ The credibility of travel insurance companies is of paramount significance in terms of assurance provided to customer in the services and clarity provided at time of policy issuance in e-travel portal.
- ❖ More awareness generation campaigns are essential to equip the customers in terms of information and usage of novel technology concepts and advancements in travel insurance industry in the form of e-portal.

11. Conclusion

The impact of the internet usage in tourism industry has revolutionized the system of production and innovation by means of e-portal. The knowledge bases on which the changes have been made are essential as they impact on the evolutions of the boundaries of information technology. But the technologies such as e-portal are the dynamic integral part of the system are in fact basically driven by the evolution of the interactions and interdependence with customer to make the portals user friendly in travel insurance industry. The travel insurance industry opted for e-portal services for all its issuance and developed massive networking for own convention and internal governance. While the pros and cons of in-house networking remain concealed within the officials and hidden for the common customers, the customer portal somehow fails to satisfy the 21st century customer's needs. Apparently, low bandwidth, unwise web page hyper linking, illogical page set up, it contribute to the irritation of common net age customers. Still, there are lots of changes and fluctuations takes place to provide the best customer satisfaction by the ultra modern mode of e-travel portal. So, this research paper particularly strives to bring out the possibility of bridging the gap between technology and service by rolling out the optimal utilization of e-portal in travel insurance industry.

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Storytelling in Country Branding: A Semiotic Approach

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp17-30, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

Branding has become one of the most powerful tools in marketing. The role of storytelling in country branding is an important issue because of the rising competition among countries that forces to create a brand, promoting the country's visibility and attractiveness in the international market. This paper examines concepts of stories and storytelling from the narrative perspective and promotes a theoretical discussion on the applicability of storytelling techniques in branding in general. Further it offers theoretical insights on the country branding using storytelling. The case study reveals that the significant signs identified in the digital story can create not just attractive meanings and raise just positive connotations. The semiotic approach allows suggesting that creation of a country branding story requires good knowledge on storytelling techniques and well developed country branding strategy.

Keywords: *Stories, Storytelling, Archetypes, Country branding, Lithuania branding.*

I. Introduction

In the globalized and competitive world where the sense of sight is stimulated incredibly we are forced to live in the conditions of extreme visualization. Contemporary culture is often described as a “visual culture” and is associated with digital media that uses storytelling in a high degree. The importance of storytelling has become remarkably important especially to sensory marketing as well as numerous other areas in the discipline of management. While the interest for storytelling approach is still growing this interdisciplinary discourse attracts attention of many scholars.

Stories have been used as a communication tool for centuries in different settings for the transfer of knowledge, experience, understanding etc. According to Berry (2001), “stories are a fundamental way through which we understand the world...” (p. 59). In nowadays communication stories play a significant role becoming an attractive tool for creating meanings, sharing experiences, awakening emotions. Obviously, stories narrated consciously or unconsciously dominate in personal communication, unifying attitudes and beliefs as well as in business and mass communication. This narrative approach is increasingly becoming an important element in various discourses in history, media, education, leadership, marketing having a huge impact on society (Lundqvist et al. 2013).

Sharing experiences through stories cultivate norms, build trust, transfer tacit knowledge, generate emotional connections, and help people make sense of their past and understand

possible future (Sole, Wilson, 2002). Despite the cultural contexts people are immersed in stories and narratives become the main tool to express personal identity.

Thus, storytelling is widely used in contemporary popular culture and television was the main medium of storytelling for audiences (Berger, 1996) while in nowadays social media forms and globalizes stories spreading them to consumers all over the world. Also more and more advertisements are based on stories that promote our emotional involvement, and product or service is linking with emotional expressions.

Stories are an important tool in marketing as contributing to the creation of image of the certain company or product. Still it remains unclear what peculiarities are significant in application of storytelling in market oriented country branding. This study attempts to present a literature overview on this topic as well as apply the semiotic approach on a digital story used for country branding.

II. Concepts of stories and storytelling

“Once upon a time...” are magic words that fascinate and capture our attention. We grow up with stories, create our identities with the help of stories and tell stories in our everyday communication. We also hear stories from media that is the most productive creator and disseminator of public stories. Thus, different types of stories are widely used in various contexts for different purposes, like entertain, educate, teach, help to memorise etc. Thus, analogies, stories, fables, tales, myths, examples and research references add substance to presentations and reports, and reinforce learning of all types.

Storytelling is an important factor in human communication having in mind also neurological processes. According to Paul J. Zak (2015), if stories sustain one's attention, then the brain is producing more of oxytocin (Stephanie Pappas: oxytocin is a hormone secreted by the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland, a pea-sized structure at the base of the brain), especially if a listener associates with the characters in the story and becomes emotionally engaged. Thus, stories have ability to involve people emotionally by activating the production of oxytocin that enhances the sense of empathy and kindness, also stimulate cooperation with others. As a rhetorical form, stories are a powerful and persuasive tool for information delivery and meaning creation.

Analysing storytelling techniques W. C. Collins (2005) presents two types of stories, i.e. fiction and nonfiction stories. According to her, fiction is a fantasy story or a story that can be based on real life but is not a true story. This group of stories contains fairy tales, folk tales, tall tales, animal stories, fables, myths, and other non-true stories. On the other hand nonfiction stories are true and actually happened. Stories that fall under this category are historical, biographical, autobiographical, Biblical, missionary stories and stories from real life.

Defining the story Berger (2006) describes the distinction between the narrative and non-narrative arguing that stories or narratives take place in time, there is a plot and sequence while

non-narratives, as drawings, pictures, photographs, paintings miss these elements. However, according to Brewer and Lichtenstein (1982), stories are just one type of narratives that have entertainment as the primary task. The authors state that there are three major discourse structures that are typical for stories. First, it is *surprise*, while the critical information from the beginning of the event structure is hidden from the reader and only later is inserted in the narrative. Secondly, the typical structural element is *suspense* because the structure of a story must contain an initiating event, which lead to significant good or bad consequences for one of the characters and finish with an outcome event. Thirdly, it is important to keep the reader *curious* because in this discourse organization the significant event is omitted from the discourse, however, the reader is given enough information to know that the event is missing.

Astonishing universality of stories and their basic plots is explained stating that the cause for the similarities lies in the human mind itself, i.e. there exist some certain basic images and plots that are discovered in the myths and folk tales (Booker 2004). It allows making a conclusion that these patterns are rooted deep inside of the human psyche. Also a complementing theory of archetypes introduced by Carl Gustav Jung explains that certain shapes, symbols and stories appear in the collective unconscious all over the world. According to him, the content of the collective unconscious consists essentially of archetypes that are essential components of the collective unconscious and serve to organize, direct and inform human thought and behaviour, having a power to evoke deep emotions (Jung, 1968).

In stories archetypal images and plots dominate and make them to a powerful tool for influence. Thus, it is stated that all the stories, such as tales, legends, myths, use archetypes in their plots (Snowden, 2001). In a shorter timescale archetypes naturally emerge in various modern as well as digital stories and are widely reproduced within an organizational environment. Archetypes are one of the most powerful of narrative techniques because they create a tool for people to tell their own stories to themselves and others in a fascinating way.

Considering about narrative's persuasive capacity Francesca Polletta (2009) states that scholars since Aristotle have recognized the rhetorical power of stories, however, they make any effect if the message is too explicit. Thus, the plot is the basic factor for the effective influence of a story. Still scholars disagree on how many plotlines there can be. For instance, Christopher Booker (2004) states that there are seven basic plots: 1) overcoming the monster; 2) rags to riches; 3) quest; 4) voyage and return; 5) comedy; 6) tragedy; and 7) rebirth. According to him, all stories correspond with one of these plotlines.

However, a little bit different plotlines are distinguished on basics of Jung's situational archetype conception. There are from 8 to 12 situational archetypes widely used in practical narrative analysis:

- 1) *The Quest*, when the hero must search for someone or something and bring that back for to save the kingdom, company or team. Typically it is a search for a talisman, which will restore peace, order, or bring life for the wasteland.
- 2) *The Task* usually is connected to the quest and refers to a possibly superhuman challenge or feat that must be accomplished in order to fulfil the goal.

- 3) *The Initiation* is a ritual that helps the adolescent come into his maturity with new awareness.
- 4) *The Journey* is usually combined with any or all of the first three archetypes. Typically the hero travels far to search for some object, person, or truth for to restore fertility, justice, and harmony. The journey usually includes the trials and tribulations that force him to discover the hell in all possible meanings. After the hero accepts his responsibility then he can return back home with the new acquired qualities, skills or wisdom.
- 5) *The Fall* means descent from a higher to a lower state and is usually connected with a punishment for transgression. It may also involve the loss of innocence.
- 6) *Death and Rebirth* is the most common plot of all situational archetypes, expressing a parallel between the cycle of nature and the cycle of life. According to this plot morning or springtime represent youth, birth, or rebirth; while evening or winter symbolize old age or death.
- 7) *Good vs. Evil* is also very common plot in stories, especially tales and myths, describing a battle between two primal forces. It contains faith in the victory of good over evil and shows eternal optimism of mankind.
- 8) *The Inhabitable Wound* can be a physical or psychological and symbolizes a loss of innocence. The basic idea is that almost every hero has a weakness or wound inflicted or taken advantage of by his greatest enemy.

The use of the basic plots or situational archetypes in stories raises their effectiveness for reaching the intended influence. Thus, archetypes contain the common heritage of mankind and have the power not just to determine human behavior, but also to transform the human personality (Adamski, 2011). That is why they commonly appear in literature, movies, and stories.

In every plot there is a so called ‘the plot point’ or the main incident or event, that change a situation and moves the action into another direction (Field, 2005). In the situation when the main character faces a conflict-loaded problem and takes the challenge to solve it, his/ her abilities, attitudes or features became transformed. It is the most important element of story, because it allows the transmission of specific meanings. Consequently, every story reveals a message that is followed by a moral evaluation. Thus, according to König and von Borcke (2016), stories instantly provide us with a simple explanation of the world we are forced to believe in.

Traditionally stories belong to the oral tradition fast today they appear and are spread in different forms, performing the function of visualization. Thus, the action of narrating a story is defined as storytelling that belongs to verbal communication (König, von Borcke, 2016). According to Parkinson et al (2011), storytelling is more than a simple representation of an event because it must be told with a purpose, demonstrating accepted human behaviors. Also every told story is more or less transformed by a storyteller, so usually a story is an interpretation of an event or already existing narrative with which an audience is able to engage. According to Annette Simmons “storytelling is as much a function of story finding as of storytelling” (2006) stressing the importance of choosing a right and suitable story for a certain event or situation.

Two other important aspects of storytelling are stressed as well (Parkinson et al, 2011). Firstly; storytelling is widely used for transformative learning because it has an ability to act as a driver for building understanding, reflection and personal growth. In that case storytelling has been basically used in the form of proverbs, parables, fables, anecdotes and other types of short stories. Secondly, storytelling is a productive tool for the visualization of ideas. In a form of a short narrative allegorically or metaphorically presented ideas or wisdom stimulate the imagination and inspire for actions or changes.

From the narrative perspective it can be stated that every story contains a certain problem that has to be solved of the main character, and solving the problem is connected to a conflict which influences the final solution. According to Konig and von Borcke (2016), the very basic elements of storytelling are those: plot, character, and style. While the term ‘story’ can be divided into the two components, i.e. plot(having in mind content and structure) and character(meaning person or persons whose experiences are narrated), the term ‘telling’ refers to the style of narration and can be broken into various structural elements, such as the perspective, time, setting, etc.

A typology of business narrative patterns is presented by Denning (2006). According to him eight patterns can be distinguished depending on the objective of the event or situation:

1. Springboard (sparkling) stories that are aimed to describe an implementation of a successful change and consequences;
2. The self-presenting stories that are meant to present the storyteller revealing his/ her strengths and weaknesses;
3. Value-transmission stories that are promoting certain values and eligible behavior patterns;
4. Branding stories, which are aimed to maintain the chosen concept for the branding strategy;
5. Collaboration stories that are aimed to promote collaboration and the team-work spirit;
6. “Timing the grapevine” stories that are focused on refute a certain rumor, often through the use of gentle humor;
7. Knowledge-sharing stories that help to spread the experience about correction of mistakes or solution of problems;
8. Strategic stories that lead employees to the desirable future of the organization and helps to implement, strategically, the actions.

Annette Simmons (2006) also has distinguished six types of stories that can be applied in different situations leading to influence, imagination and innovation in organizations: Who-I-Am, Why-I-Am-Here, Educational, Vision, Value-in-Action and I-Know-What-You-Are-Thinking stories.

After presenting various typologies of stories it can be stated that performing so many functions stories are a powerful tool and used effectively can help to reach a target effect. The

types of stories can be explored further in the connection with branding images of places, companies or products.

III. Storytelling in country branding

Originally stories belong to a literary genre but today they are an effective practice of marketing and management by all means. Jesper Højberg Christensen (2001) highlights that the concept of 'storytelling' is as wide as the concept of branding, and belongs to the hot management words in nowadays research. Thus, a storytelling is explained as a meaning creating and developing management tool, however, used in management settings it does not necessarily demand round off stories. In other words, all linguistic and rhetorical elements that a story contains are important in this context.

König and von Borcke (2016) note that storytelling in the field of branding comes with the possibility of quite different format options from written narratives to digital messages with a commercial spot. Yet it is important to have in mind that the term 'story' does not follow the traditional narrative definition of a story when applied in the field of organizational storytelling (Norlyk et al, 2013). Storytelling has been used in various marketing contexts to communicate embedded knowledge, resolve conflicts, and simulate problem solving. In particular, storytelling has been identified as performing such functions: 1) sharing norms and values; 2) developing trust and commitment; 3) sharing tacit knowledge; 4) facilitating unlearning; and 5) generating emotional connection (Sole, Wilson, 2002).

It is proved now that every influence process involving people is connected with a story. Denning (2007) suggests that stories serve a range of business related purposes and other facets of life or man's desire to understand the complexity of human communication. Boje (2008) articulates how a story defines people, places, products, etc., pointing out that every entity is known by its story in a given context. In view of the pervasive nature of the story it would be appropriate to argue that the story reminds of the past, shapes the present and inspire for the future; hence the story is the life that was, is and will be.

Going deeper into the storytelling's role in branding it can be stated that brand is first of all an expression of an identity of a place, company or product that contains features of sameness and difference comparing with other similar objects in the market. 'Good' stories are developed on a marketing plan and also a good marketing plan is the one with a memorable story (Twitchell, 2004). Therefore, brands have a story to tell, and enduring brands have been successful in telling that story by using archetypes. Brands can create deep and sustained differentiation and relevance by embodying archetypal meanings whether through conscious intent or random accident (Mark & Pearson, 2001).

In marketing, a brand archetype is a genre that is assigned to a certain brand, based upon symbolism. The idea behind using brand archetypes is to consolidate the brand with something iconic that is already embedded within both the consciousness and subconscious of the humanity (Schoenherr, 2012). According to Mark and Pearson, archetype's timelessness gives brands

symbolic meanings of which people are more engaged and interested. As stated before, symbolic brands that have stood the test of time have done so because of their expression of archetypes in their storytelling that helps brands become a consistent and enduring expression of meaning (Mark & Pearson, 2001).

Introducing the brand model Paulo de Lencastre and Ana Côrte-Real (2010) emphasized its triadic concept as covering the different areas of branding in practice. The three basic pillars are distinguished: identity, marketing and response. The first pillar of the *identity* includes the sign or group of signs that identify the brand. Three levels of identity mix are distinguished: 1) the *core identity*, which is the sign that the brand uses to represent itself first; 2) the *actual identity* that is the graphic expression, namely the names, orthography(-ies) and its logotype(s); lastly 3) the *augmented identity* that includes all other identifying signs of the brand, together with the way in which the use of a brand is regulated (Lencastre, Côrte-Real, 2010).

In regards to the *actual identity*, the logotype is understood as the visual identity associated with the name, or a slogan, a label, a packaging, a character, and a sound. It is visuals containing the lettering, the drawing and the coloring. It is clear that every brand's identity is expressed not only through visuals, but also words and language. Thus, stories appear in the field of the augmented identity, maintaining the connection between the brand and certain values and may be useful practical instruments in a branding strategy.

Another view on brands and storytelling is presented by Tony Allen and John Simmons (2003) making a distinction between visual and verbal identities of brands. Visual identity and verbal identity are an integral part of brands and exist and continue to cause effect even if brand owners choose to ignore them. When not controlled they can do damage, so it is better to lock them firmly into the brand management of a business. It is stated that verbal identity's "basic elements" of a brand are the following: the name, a naming system for products, sub-brands and groups, a strap line, tone of voice principles, and, finally, the use of stories (Allen, Simmons, 2003).

That stories are very important in the brand maintaining demonstrates a study where an existing brand that had not been launched in the focal country was exposed for two different groups of informants (Lundqvist et al, 2013). In-depth interviews showed that consumers who were exposed to the story described the brand in much more positive terms and were willing to pay more for the product. Thus, the study demonstrated how brand stories can be used to create and reinforce positive brand associations as well as revealed the power of storytelling on consumer experiences.

According to Jesper Højberg Christensen (2001), there are essential differences in the branding towards a market, towards stakeholders and towards employees. Thus, he suggests the following typology of approaches to branding stories:

1) *The organization oriented approach* contains identity creating informal stories, which are focused on observation, interpretation and awareness of the company's problems and links to the

products as a mirror of the company. There are some linguistic rhetorical forms distinguished that organizational stories can have: counter stories, rumors, metaphors, anecdotes, myths and fables etc. These kind of stories are especially important during processes of change as providing essential information about the employees' situation, they also contribute to the teambuilding and help to create a self-knowledge of a company. They make input to management communication and strategic development.

2) *The marketing dominated approach* is oriented towards image creating stories that should be reflecting company's values and correspond with the branding strategy. Comparing with organizational approach, these stories are more formal as their purpose is to communicate the management's visions about the place or the company and the main products or services. These stories are regarded to be less trustworthy, therefore there it is best to choose just one basic core story about the company, which then can be told creatively for different purposes.

3) *The stakeholder oriented approach* is focused on building of relationship and trustworthiness with the help of stories toward different targeted audiences. They are important for the reputation of the company and link to the company's financial and other results. These stories reflect attitudes of various groups in the society, e.g. opponents, NGOs, suppliers and authorities, towards the company from these observations. That is why it is important to implement monitoring as a part of public relations, especially e-monitoring of the stories on Internet.

The studies show that there are significant differences between branding of countries when compared with regions and cities (Caldwell, Freire, 2004). Countries are functionally diverse and cover a big scale of emotive or representational parts in their brand identity making the process of managing the brand more complex, while regions and cities, being smaller in scale, should leverage their more functional facets.

Country names appear in brands adding the perceived value of a product and helping consumers to evaluate products and make purchasing decisions. Even when a country's name does not consciously is managed as a brand; people still have images and associations of countries that can be activated by hearing the name. Country images are influencing consumers' and stakeholders' decisions related to purchasing, investing, changing residence or travelling (Kotler, Gertner, 2007).

Country branding is based on its history, geography, culture, famous citizens and other features. It is common that stereotypes as extreme simplifications of countries and nations are widespread as mental representations that are shared by members of a given society. It is stressed that some most significant industries, personalities, natural landmarks and historical events would provide a basis for strong country branding, also using storytelling.

According to Florina Pinzaru (2012), the *brand story* is an effective tool that can ensure the continuity of promise and values that support a brand. She states that strong place brands should be supported by long-lasting stories and powered by heroes, values, and visuals. Thus, stories are related to human expectations, experiences and feelings, representing a chain of

emotionally interlinked facts. It is stressed that 'brand building is the choice of metaphors' because a metaphor that makes a basis for a story have to fit with the relevant emotions of the targeted audiences and contain positive connotations.

Summarizing, it is obvious that storytelling's roll in country branding is significant; still the deeper theoretical basis is missing about the application peculiarities of this marketing tool. A 'good' story about a country should promote positive connotations and be related to such concepts as pleasure, quality, honesty, security and progress.

IV. A Case Study

Semiotic analysis approaches signs as existing in various forms: words, letters, sounds, pictures, objects, gestures, odors, flavors, actions etc. Semiotics explores the content of signs, their use and the formation of meanings of signs at both the level of a single sign and the broader systems formed by signs. This qualitative approach for studying the content of different kind of visual or/and verbal stories helps to identify, understand and interpret the main signs, interaction of them and their systems as a meaning creation process.

For the performance of semiotic analysis the methodology of the six perspectives is applied (Lester, 2011): 1) *personal perspective*, presenting the emotional and cognitive reaction to the narrative in its broadest meaning; 2) *historical perspective*, analyzing the place of the narrative in its historical context; 3) *technical perspective*, approaching construction and visualization tools used in the text; 4) *ethical perspective*, considering about values promoted by the narrative; 5) *cultural perspective* highlighting the ideological representations; and 6) *critical perspective*, summarizing the analysis as a system of meanings and making concluding remarks.

For the case study a digital story presenting Lithuania in an international context was chosen (<http://www.dansu.lt/naujas-lietuvos-video-pristatymas-uzsienieciams-the-extraordinary-show/>). It was created by an advertising company 'Dansu' in 2015.

Starting with the historical perspective some moments of this video creation have to be presented. The problem of a suitable story for the country branding for international audiences was widely discussed in Lithuania during last ten years, searching for an attractive and unique identity concept and presentation format. Lithuania since 2009 has created the slogan "Lithuania as a brave country", which was containing two themes: 1) Lithuania is 'lively' and 'romantic' and 2) Lithuania is 'thoughtful' and 'trustworthy'. It was stated that epithets 'lively' and 'romantic' describe a dynamic and deep historical glory of a country and its people, who have high ambitions and motivation. Another theme, i.e. Lithuania as 'thoughtful' and 'reliable', declares the country belonging to Nordic countries and highlights its modesty and peacefulness, also confidence, revealing human diligence, prudence and contemplation. However, this strategy of country branding was being widely criticized (Hopeniene, Bagdoniene, 2013). Attempts to visualize the described country image were many but any of them was evaluated as successful and recommended for international market.

One of the attempts to create a digital story for country branding purpose was made in 2015 presenting Lithuania in ACI EUROPE's REGIONAL Airports' Conference & Exhibition in May 18-20, 2015 in Iceland (Eur Active Agenda, 2015). It was ACI EUROPE's 8th conference and exhibition dedicated to regional airports, hosted by Isavia and Keflavik Airport. The Regional Airports' Forum group's prime objective was to represent the interests of ACI EUROPE's regional airport members to the European institutions and national authorities at the same time providing them with a more visible platform on which to exchange knowledge, share best practices and discuss issues of common interest. Beside that it was an opportunity to present an attractive identity of Lithuania in an original form of a digital story.

Analyzing this 8 minutes and 26 seconds long digital story from the technical perspective the composition of it should be discussed. However, this story misses a traditional plot and has a popular format of an 'extraordinary show'. There are three parts, i.e. introduction, body and closing. In the introduction part the main male figure presents the aim of the game, i.e. presenting seven myths about Lithuania and inviting viewers to vote if this 'fact' is false or true. A presented purpose of this digital game using smart phones was to prove that Lithuania was a mysterious and marvelous country. These two key-words were chosen as a basis for other sign systems presented in this video visually and verbally and a deep forest with a bear and three male figures managing a digital game about a country.

Humoristic character of this story highlights entertainment as the main purpose combined with some educational elements. The verbal narrative constitutes the main body of the story that is complemented by visual and acoustic signs. Thus, seven myths about Lithuania are presented in an intriguing form of questions. First and second myths are related to the uniqueness of Lithuanian cuisine – 'pink soup' and 'hearing in bed sheets'. The third myth is questioning about basketball, so called 'second religion' or the most popular sport in the country, if it was invented in Lithuania. The fourth myth tells about the use of cannabis for food making and returns viewers once again to the peculiarities of the cultural heritage of Lithuanian cuisine. The fifth myth is related to Lithuanian culture and folk songs asking the viewers about women singing different lyrics in different tones. The sixth myth is about the World's strongest man that lives in Lithuania having in mind Zydrunas Savickas. Lastly, the seventh myth is about capital of Lithuania that is called Riga. Then the correction is made by the main character stating that Vilnius is a beautiful capital of Lithuania. Just two of the myths are confuted as false.

The closing of this digital story is made by summarizing the show and inviting to Lithuania: "See You Next Year!" with an enthusiastic voice tone. The last words about Lithuania are the following: "country where reality exceeds your imagination".

In the composition of this digital story with an entertaining character at least two structural elements can be recognized (Brewer, Lichtenstein, 1982): *surprise*, hiding the right information from the viewers and only later inserting it in the narrative as right answers; and *curiosity* stimulated with unexpected questions about the country as well as funny stereotypical characters. Both elements contribute to the expression of traditional semiotic opposition of known-unknown or open-closed, performed as a game of asking questions and creating an intrigue.

Some signs can be distinguished as most significant in the composition of this story: the place (forest, with some furniture and some interior elements), the characters (the main male figure and three male sub-figures) and the game (format of the story) while in the structure of this story an archetypical plot can be recognized, i.e. a journey. This plot is one of the most common and attention attracting plots leading to a new and valuable knowing, like travelling to nowhere and meeting a mystical wise man and getting seven questions as a test. The number seven is also strongly loaded with cultural meanings as the number of perfection, safety, security and rest.

Looking from the cultural perspective the performed game is based on the stereotypes about Lithuania and Lithuanians. The presented key-words 'mysterious' and 'marvelous' are building a system of meanings that connects all the representational elements, presented in the form of myths. The signifiers 'pink soup', 'hearing in bed sheets' and cannabis represent uniqueness of Lithuanian cuisine and stand for strangeness. That corresponds with the connotation of a mysterious country. There are two signifiers for Lithuania as marvelous country, i.e. unique Lithuanian folk songs 'sutartines' and a beautiful capital Vilnius. However, this special way of singing can be considered as strange or mysterious as well. Two myths are related to sport and cannot contribute to any of the presented semantic categories, i.e. mystery or beauty of the country. Obviously, the environment in the video as a wild and deep forest with bears that don't exist in Lithuanian forests in reality contributes strongly to a connotation of Lithuania as mysterious country.

From the gender role point of view Lithuania is presented as extremely male dominating society: three male characters and a male bear, the World's strongest man as well as basketball, which is also mostly considered as a 'male' sport. The singing multiplied older ladies in this story perform just an additional role having a passive function of decoration.

Insights from the ethical perspective would be the following. Most of the already analyzed visual signs are maintaining the ideology of male domination and traditional society. Even more, the sign of a male bear that is commonly used for representation of the big neighbor of Lithuania, i.e. Russia, also contains the meaning of dangerousness and unsafe. All together these signifiers create the meaning of control and limited creativity.

Finally, summarizing the analysis some points have to be stressed. This digital story as presenting Lithuania for an international audience fulfill a function of a branding story as contributes to a creation of identity of the country and has a purpose to raise knowledge about its cultural uniqueness, beauty and achievements in sport. However, the balance between connotations of mysterious and marvelous is lost as more signifiers are related to the meaning of 'mystery' then to 'marvelous'. Of course, being a mysterious country can awake interest and curiosity for to visit it and possibly start business, still this digital story cannot be named as an attractive branding story.

V. Conclusions

The issue of storytelling's role in country branding remains just analyzed “*by the way*” and requires more and deeper studies. Nonetheless, the general findings on stories and their application in place branding can be also applied in the management process of country branding. A successful country branding necessitates good stories, preferably with an archetypical plot, that evoke positive emotions and create attractive associations. However, different target audiences require different stories, yet the strategy of representing a country with stories should have a common strategy of branding.

The research has shown that from the first look a funny and original story about a country can have a hidden message that raises negative and unattractive connotations about a country. Despite the unique format of the digital story about Lithuania, the balance between chosen two categories, i.e. mysterious and beautiful, is lost because of too much reviled meaning of a strange and mysterious country. Beside that new unexpected connotations of unsafe and wilderness appear. Thus, this story not just presents Lithuania as a beautiful and mysterious country with good achievements in sports and unique traditional dishes but also stimulates tacit attitudes about conservative norms and hegemonic masculinity.

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A Preliminary Exploratory Research On The Turning Point Of Place Branding Management

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp31-44, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

Recent investigations have enriched the place branding concept, presenting positive and negative factors that influence place promotion. Some researchers argue that the lack of clear political priorities for place marketing is one of the main obstacles for tourism development. At the same time, ICT is transforming tourism globally, and the idea of using the new technologies for manipulating place brands is becoming attainable. This paper presents the first outcomes of a preliminary exploratory research into online tourist communities and free web-based travel guides.

Keywords: *place branding management, tourism changes, tourist social media, participatory branding, Online tourism.*

I. Introduction

Some years ago, Keith Dinnie carried out an overview of the literature concerning place branding, highlighting its multifaceted nature (Dinnie, 2004). The author identified three principal landmark texts that have made a major contribution to the place branding literature:

- Firstly, *Destination Branding: Creating the unique destination proposition* (Eds. Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride, 2002). The key argument of this book was that places are currently offering the greatest untapped brand opportunities. Written by an international group of marketing professionals, branding consultants, and leading academics, the book argues that “marketers must be in the business of delivering impactful experiences, not merely coordinating media relations and constructing media brand identities” (Morgan *et al.*, 2002, p. 6).
- Secondly, the special issue on nation branding that appeared in the April 2002 edition of the *Journal of Brand Management*, comprising groundbreaking articles on nation branding written by some of the world’s most eminent academics and practitioners.
- Thirdly, Simon Anholt’s (2003) seminal text, *Brand New Justice: The Upside of Global Branding*, in which the author addresses the issue of how emerging market economies can brand both their exports and their countries in order to compete more effectively in the global economy.

Dinnie's analysis of the literature finds that the nature of place branding appears complex, transcending the narrow confines of any individual industry sector, including that of tourism.

In recent years, the interest in place branding has been growing, in both the academic and marketing fields; but is Dinnie's analysis still valid in the light of the global changes resulting from the new technologies?

We are persuaded that, at present, the rapid advancements in technology are affecting the relationship that people have with places, and there are those who have claimed the potential for place attachment in virtual worlds (Plunkett, 2011); social networking has completely transformed people's social lives, and social networks are becoming a primary source for both direct and indirect marketing actions. The new wave of web-based communities known as Web 2.0 (Hepburn, 2007), such as Tripadvisor and Travelistic,¹ is increasingly influencing tourist destination choices (María Munar, 2011; Lange-Faria & Elliot, 2012). Furthermore, the huge amount of tourism data available on the Web presents an extraordinary opportunity to exploit for driving new operative investigations.

Nevertheless, the influence of new media in place branding management could have been exaggerated by some researchers, and may not correspond to the current state of reality. This paper reports on an exploratory research designed to investigate how the tourist communities could affect place branding management.

II. Background of the research

2.1 Managing place branding

Place branding management is a topical issue, and its importance is demonstrated by the proliferation of place branding studies (Lucarelli & Berg, 2011). Recent investigations have enriched the place branding concept, presenting positive and negative factors which influence place promotion (Braun, 2008; Kavaratzis, 2008). Some researchers, for example, argue that the lack of clear political priorities for place marketing is one of the main obstacles for tourism development (Popescu & Corboş, 2010; Lennon, 2014). The literature on place marketing also debates political issues, such as the conflicts between the particular nature of places and their users. In fact, it can often happen that the interests of non-residents conflict with those of residents. The interest in local communities and their role in economic development are largely shared by researchers studying rural area development and social business. Many authors who are engaged in the field of sustainable development, and recently social researchers and educators who are following the *critical tourism* ideas (Ateljevic *et al.*, 2013), argue that the application of market rules to improve the attractiveness of a place can produce disastrous results, especially if one doesn't take into account the environment and social sustainability. On the contrary, tourism marketers generally seem to ignore the residents' needs and the environmental limits, so that they strive to attract tourists to a place without worrying about the

¹TripAdvisor is a travel website which provides reviews of travel-related content and includes interactive travel forums, while Travelistic is an online video sharing portal for travellers, by travellers.

ecological effects and the deterioration of local communities - see the leakage effects of tourism in developing countries (Hampton, 2014; Lacher & Nepal, 2010).²

In the last few years, the majority of marketers have come to share the opinion that, in a globalised world, place branding strategies are indispensable for increasing the competitiveness of nations, regions, provinces, and cities, and for attracting business. Place branding is often presented as a new general catch-all for any strategy aimed at promoting a place in the global market, as an umbrella term which encompasses place marketing and place promotions (Bennett & Savani, 2003; Braun 2008; Hospers 2006). Place branding may include both a positive image of a place (e.g. historic heritage, arts, spectacles, and so on), and the commodities and services which respond to the demand (real or anticipated) of desired target groups (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Kavaratzis, 2004; Greenberg, 2008). The phenomenon of place branding is generally considered as an organic process of image communication, combining marketing strategies and governance objectives that are aimed at enticing investors and tourists. It also presents a business opportunity for many marketing companies who claim they are specialised in helping the economic development of small urban, rural and coastal cities, resorts, and regions, and which promise to transform and grow their tourism and economic performance.

2.2 The role of media in place branding

Media, both traditional and new, play a remarkable role in place branding, although academic researchers, surprisingly, ignore the contribution that cultural products such as films, books, and music have in determining a place's reputation and image. Nowadays, however, something is changing in place branding: social media and traveller's Internet communities offer the opportunity to present places in a way that transcends mere advertising (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010). It is widely evident that we are more and more conditioned by, and dependent on, new technologies and Internet related technologies (Genco & Sorce, 2010): they are heavily entered in our everyday life, connecting us to worldwide networks and allowing peer communication. In this new dimension, what is the influence of the Internet and social media in determining a place reputation?

Our opinion is that new media may have an extraordinary capability to create and maintain a favourable/not-favourable reputation, and the competitive positioning of a place within the international marketplace. One can easily see how new media are globally transforming tourist habits. Web-based communities, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Trip Advisor, and the globally diffused online booking services for flights and hotels (e.g. Expedia, Booking.com, etc.) have changed the market dynamics, influencing the strategies of tourism agencies and destination marketing organisations. Accordingly, these changes are expected to affect the destination branding process itself (Buhalis *et al.*, 2011; Leung *et al.*, 2013).

² Leakages are payments made outside the destination economy.

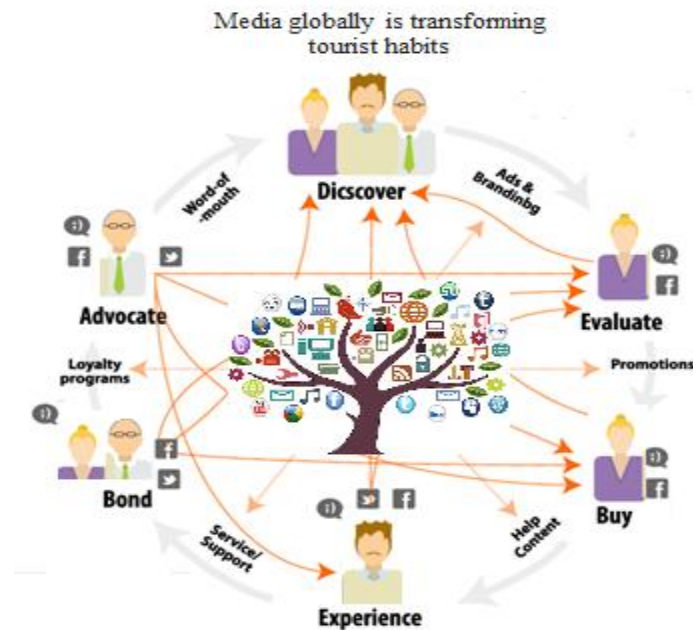


Figure 1- Competitive position of place in the international marketplace

3.3 Place branding dynamics

In general, a great deal of effort is made to reinforce place brands, building warm and charming place images and promoting place identities that strive to match consumer expectations. However, behind the official identity of a place, less virtuous, dark and prurient aspects may be hidden, and sometimes these represent the real tourist attractions; compared to them, cultural and historic heritage may be a secondary attraction. Might the Internet capture aspects that are not part of the official image of a place? We well know that, on the Internet, the attempt to manage, or at least influence, every detail can escape one's control.

Accordingly, the aim of manipulating a holistic brand for a place is quite unrealistic, if not completely impossible. Furthermore, if we accept the idea that place branding results from a dynamic process, then the traditional approach to place marketing could be inefficacious. In their identity-based approach to place branding, Kavaratzis and Hatch claim that a place brand is the result of a process involving groups of stakeholders. They argue that brands are built out of the 'raw material' of identity, and assert that identity emerges in the conversation between stakeholders, and is what brings them together. Although practitioners and policymakers continue to invest time, money, and effort in traditional place marketing, recent studies have demonstrated the relative insignificance of the traditional marketing approach when applied to place branding. The irrelevance of logos and slogans in place branding has recently been asserted in literature (Mayo, 2013), whilst the role of stakeholders and their participation in co-creating the place brand have instead recently come to be shared by many researchers (Aitken & Campelo, 2011; Zenker, 2014).

Technologies can change the nature of the dynamics of stakeholder interactions and lead towards new forms of participative branding. Many online organisations, such as Amazon and e-Bay, and social networking sites, encourage users to express their opinions about products, while travel websites Trip Advisor and Bookinkg.com publish peer reviews of travel-related content and host interactive travel forums. It is possible that, with the advent of social media, new online brand builders will eschew traditional forms of marketing communication and will increase their power through a seemingly transparent approach. We partially agree with the co-creating place brand idea: place identity as a “negotiation process” is both suggestive and reductionist at the same time.

We are persuaded that it is necessary to better define what the “raw materials” are (Marzano, 2015). In the following paragraphs we will present a research carried out to analyse some of the best known tourist communities. Our research explored the *participatory branding* idea, focusing on the most well known traveller and tourist networking sites.

III. Research objectives

Statistics show that a lot of money is spent on building warm and charming cultural images and trying to promote place identities in an effort to capture the consumers’ presumed expectations. Accordingly, marketers struggle to construct place brands that exalt place identities, and sometimes make competitive comparisons of places based on their identities. Currently, many researchers share the opinion that, thanks to social media, new online and automatic brand builders might quickly replace the traditional forms of marketing communication (note also the increasing use of “viral marketing”). Online brand builders claim to base their presumed success on a seemingly transparent approach, opinion sharing, and word of mouth.

Are we actually sure that social media (e.g. Facebook; Twitter; Instagram; YouTube) can capture the consumer opinions escaping from the official control? Do social media really satisfy the multifarious expectations and habits of tourists? Our research aims to contribute to providing answers to questions such as these.

IV. Research method

The research method was designed to support a preliminary exploratory analysis based on the Internet scanning of four places: Riga (Latvia), Czestochowa (Poland), Udine (Italy), and Castillon de la Plana (Spain). It has been based on a twofold approach:

- Conceptual content analysis (post contents of some tourist social networks were coded for themes and then analyzed);
- Literature review.

In this way we attempted a sort of triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The analysis of content has been carried out on four very well-known traveller sites: Wikivoyage, TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Lonely Planet. We focussed on these sites since

they contain information that can prompt people to visit a place. The analysis of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube would require a more complex approach, due to the nature of these social networks. For example, Facebook posts are the means by which friends communicate on the website via profile Walls: one can only see the posts if they belong to the circle of friends; whilst the analysis of Instagram and YouTube would require too much time in selecting and collecting content useful for our research.

Our content analysis can be summarized in the following steps:

- 1) Posts were selected;
- 3) Categories were defined for coding;
- 4) Posts were coded;
- 5) The data collected during the coding process were analyzed and interpreted.

We considered for coding both categories in the websites and categories emergent from the data (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright, 2005). In terms of the number of posts relating to each of the selected cities, the most important city was Riga. In fact, the distribution of posts in TripAdvisor was (Table 1):³

Destination	No. of posts
Riga	2,633
Udine	62
Czestochowa	13
Castillon de la Plana	31

Table 1– Post distribution on TripAdvisor

First research findings and discussion

Posts were extracted from TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Lonely Planet, and from searches on Google for the selected places. They have been divided in three classes:

- Questions
- Advices, and
- Comments

Questions represent the most part of posts.

The subject of the question posts present the following distribution (Tables 2 and 3):

³ Data refer to 31.12.2015.

Aspects	No	%
Safety	504	3.18
Mobility	2,792	17.62
Accommodation	4,908	30.98
Attractions	3,387	21.38
Weather	2,551	16.12
Other	1,698	10.72
Total	15,840	100

Table 2 - A raw classification of the collected posts

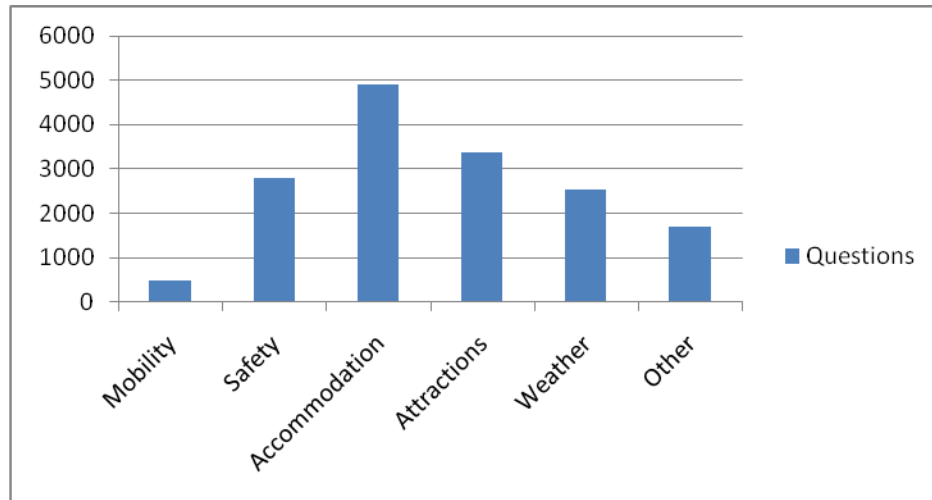


Table 3 – Graphic representation of the post class distribution

The literature review was undertaken on the SAGE Journals database (Figure 2). We found 539 articles (from 2000 to 2016) concerning *tourism* and *social media* that respected the inclusion criteria. We independently analyzed them to ensure that they met the relevancy criteria focusing on *place branding* (48 articles). The final sample included 29 articles, 11 really relevant for place branding and 37 only complementary to it.

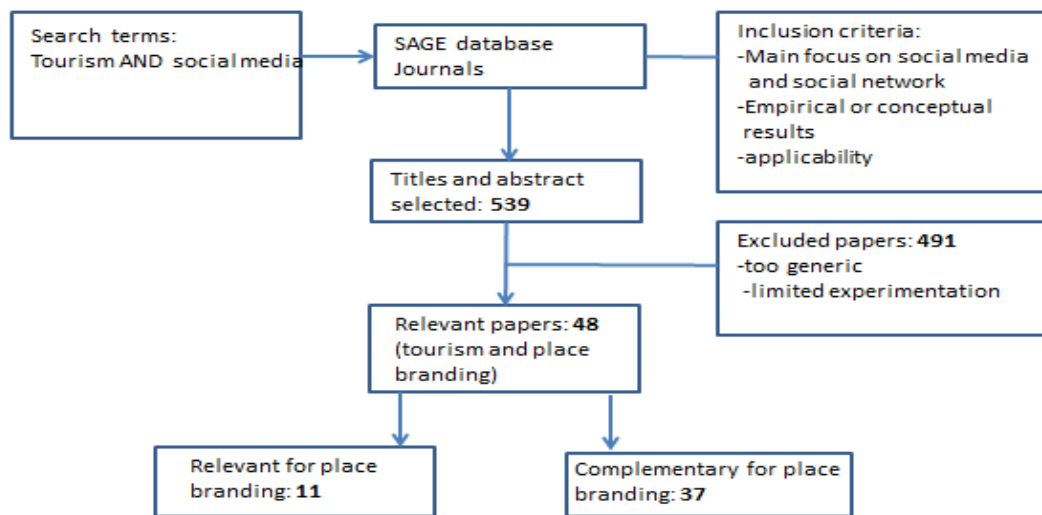


Figure 2 – The process of literature review

All relevant articles underlined the importance of social media in tourist branding, and 7 of them presented hypotheses and data about their use. Indeed, a very little quantity. For this reason, we used the relevant articles only to contextualize and comment the data extracted from the selected tourist social media. Finally, we used free plagiarism software to check the originality of place descriptions contained in the selected tourist social media. Figure 3 shows an example of the plagiarism analysis.

Plagiarism Checker X Originality Report

This report is generated by the Unregistered PlagiarismCheckerX Demo version!



Plagiarism Quantity: 56% Duplicate

Date	domenica, luglio 24, 2016
Words	48 Plagiarized Words / Total 86 Words
Sources	More than 4 Sources Identified.
Remarks	High Plagiarism Detected - Your Document needs Critical Improvement.

Sources found:

Click on the highlighted sentence to see sources.

Internet Pages

<1%	Empty
24%	http://www.iol.co.za/travel/travel-tips/
25%	https://www.facebook.com/Wita-Tour-26960
7%	https://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Eu

The Latvian capital, the largest city in the Baltics, is a fascinating mixture of proud Latvian tradition and influences of the various countries that have occupied it. Independent once again since 1991, Riga's Art Nouveau center has won it UNESCO World Heritage Site designation. Opened up to mass tourism with the advent of budget air travel, Riga's Old City and its abundance of bars and restaurants can be explored on foot. The New Town is easily reached by an efficient and modern bus and tram network.

Figure 3 – An example of the plagiarism analysis

The principal first research results can be synthesised as follows:

- Content may differ depending on the language;
- Content plagiarism is widespread;
- Better answers to most of the questions posted can be found on official websites;
- There are habitual users who like to offer their advice.

Content and Language

Content may differ depending on the language. English content is generally more detailed and accurate. This is especially notable in Wiki voyage, a portal which is part of the Wikimedia Foundation family (Figure 4) and is a free web-based travel guide for travel destinations and travel topics written by volunteer authors.

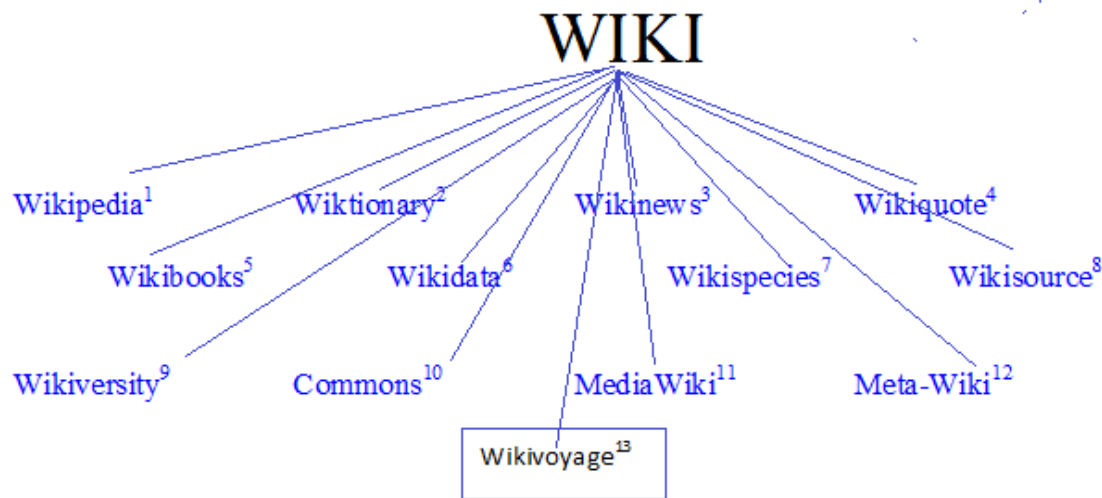


Figure 4–The Wikimedia project

Note, for example, the content related to Udine from Wiki voyage:

English: Udine is a quiet and stately provincial capital – and also the unofficial capital of Friuli (Forum Iulii-Cividale del Friuli), which comprises the largest part of the Region of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia. While the once-great seaport of Trieste is the regional capital and reigns over the coast, Udine presides over the region’s inland plains and its Alpine peaks. For centuries, Udine was a Venetian city – in contrast to Trieste, which was part of the Austrian Empire. Today, Friuli is known as a region of wines, San Daniele ham and Montasio cheese. Udine is an excellent location to taste these products and to start a visit to this less travelled part of Italy.

Italian: È considerata la capitale della regione storico-geografica del Friuli, assieme ad Aquileia e Cividale del Friuli, l’antica Forum Iulii.

Polish: Udine –miasto i gminawe Włoszech, w regionieautonomicznym Friuli-Wenecja Julijska, napółnocno-wschodnioskrajNizinyWeneckiej.

Spanish : No hay resultados que cumplanloscriterios de búsqueda.

It is notable that the identity of Udine as a “quiet and stately provincial capital” corresponds to the town image that emerges from an empirical study recently carried out:

Udine appears like a city without specific traits, really conservative and conformist, and rather defiant to changes. It is presented by respondents as a city where one lives well, but to which one doesn’t feel any particular affection, except its natives, obviously. (Marzano & Vicedomine, 2013)

Content plagiarism

One finds the same content in many different Internet sites. For example, a sentence about Riga that reads “Each century has left its mark in the city’s features” is present in 17 different Web sites, while the sentence “The Latvian capital, the largest city in the Baltic’s, is a fascinating mixture of proud Latvian tradition and influences of the various countries that have occupied it” appears in no less than 271 Web pages.

Questions

Questions asked in tourist social networks largely concern matters that could be more easily resolved by accessing institutional portals, such as those about transport or weather. All tourist portals contain sections with information on destinations, maps, transportation, accommodation, what to see, things to do, and so on. Some questions about safety are astonishing, like the following one about Riga:

I will be travelling to Riga and residing in an apartment for 3 months and was wondering what people do for their drinking water. Is it ok to drink water straight from the tap?⁴We found that users prefer to post their questions in forums and wait for answers, rather than search for the information themselves by consulting the various portal sections. This behaviour is in part related to the usability, sometimes low, of portals, and in part related to the users’ inexperience and their laziness.

Habitual users

The analysis of messages posted on the Internet in the selected traveller portals showed that some people spend a lot of time answering questions. In Trip Advisor, for example, there are 7,525 posts corresponding to the username *Chrisj* dating from 2001 alone. This is frequently the case in social networking sites: some people will participate in any kind of discussion, posting many messages about the most disparate of topics.

⁴http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowTopic-g274967-i1134-k5821319-Riga_drinking_water-Riga_Riga_Region.html, last accessed on 26.12.2015.

Some preliminary considerations

Our principal research considerations are synthesised in Figure 5.

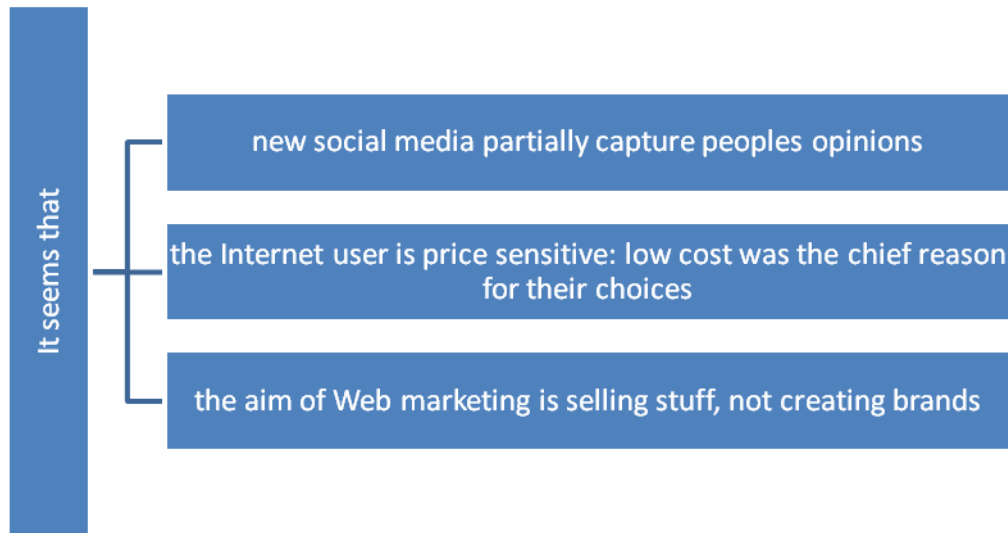


Figure 5– Principal research findings

Research results suggest that traveller social media only partially capture people's opinions. In fact, traveller portals present an image of places that often exploit stereotypes and use the same text content. User posts are contained in forums; they are messages which answer questions generally posed by people who are going to visit a place, and are related to very practical topics, such as "airport bus stop", "hop-on hop-off tourist bus", "car rental", "card and public transport", and so on. To better know people's opinions, one should analyse the messages exchanged on Face book and other similar portals, where people give advice and suggestions to their friends and report on their own experiences. The traveller forums we have scanned also contain interesting information and opinions, but it is not so easy to access them, and the question/answer format is very limiting. We also found that Internet users are price sensitive: they are really interested in low prices. This could be related to the age of users of Internet travel portals, who are often young people, as one can surmise from reading their posts. Finally, hotel advertising is often mixed with posts (see Trip Advisor), confirming that the aim of Web marketing is to sell stuff, not to create brands.

V. Conclusion

Although our exploratory research is limited, it confirms that the Internet basically leads to new forms of participative place branding. Many online organisations, such as Amazon, e-Bay, Bookinkg.com, etcetera, encourage people to post their reviews about products. Similarly, almost all tourist sites publish peer evaluations, providing reviews of travel-related content and hosting interactive travel forums.

There are an increasing number of researchers who are persuaded that social media can drastically alter consumers' behaviour and their brand preferences. They argue that social media sites will extend their influence beyond the narrow confines of a message platform, and that marketers will soon start to manage social media for their place branding activity. Accordingly, there are those who claim the relative insignificance of the mainstream marketing approach when applied to place branding (Mayo, 2013).

We partially subscribe to their ideas, in that place branding as a people negotiation process is both suggestive and reductionist at the same time. At least for now, our research has showed that, at the moment, the most well-known traveller social portals have been designed with the traditional marketing exigencies in mind. We need new functions and facilities in order to use them to create place brands that are built out of the *raw material* of identity. To exploit the huge amount of data available on the Web, in fact, it will be necessary to invest in representations and models that are able to manage that data.

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Perceived Self Competence as a Predictor of Job Satisfaction among the Employees of Information Technology Industry

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp45-53, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

Competence refers to sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. Competence reflects the idea that the individual feels capable of successfully performing a particular task or activity. In the present study an attempt was made to assess the impact of perceived self competence on job satisfaction among the employees of Information Technology industry. A convenience sample consisting of 124 employees working in Information Technology industry participated in the study. Questionnaire method was used for data collection. The collected data was analyzed with mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA, correlation and regression tests. Results showed that there was a significant correlation between competence and job satisfaction. Approximately eighteen per cent of the variance of job satisfaction was explained by perceived sense of competence.

Key Words: Competence, Job satisfaction, Psychological empowerment, and Self efficacy.

I. Introduction

Competence refers to a cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person (or an organization) to act effectively in a job or situation. Competence indicates sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. Because each level of responsibility has its own requirements, competence can occur in any period of a person's life or at any stage of his or her career.

Competence is "the degree to which a person can perform task activities skillfully when he or she tries" (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). The concept is similar to Bandura's (1986) notion of self-efficacy or personal mastery. Competence refers to the individual's belief in his or her capability to perform work activities with skill (Gist, 1987). Competence reflects the idea that the individual feels capable of successfully performing a particular task or activity (Bandura, 1986). Conger and Kanungo's (1988) conceptualisation of psychological empowerment in organizations explores the nuances of self-efficacy and competence in the individual.

Experts differentiate between specific and general self-efficacy. Specific self-efficacy follows Bandura's conceptualization and is widely recognized by almost all efficacy scholars. In recent years, general self-efficacy has been used as another dimension of self-efficacy by few efficacy researchers. They suggest that in addition to specific self-efficacy, there is a generalized self-efficacy that reflects people's belief in successfully accomplishing tasks across a wide variety of achievement situations. Specific self-efficacy is state like, highly variable depending on the specific task and is cognitively processed by the individual before any effort is expended.

On the other hand, general self-efficacy is conceptually the opposite. It is trait like, stable over time and across situations and in this regard it is like a personality trait.

Self-efficacy can directly affect choice behaviours (e.g., decisions will be based on how efficacious the person feels toward the options in work assignments), motivational effort (e.g., people will try harder and give more effort on tasks where they have high self-efficacy than those where the efficacy judgment is low), perseverance (e.g., those with high self-efficacy will bounce back, be resilient when meeting problems or even failure, whereas those with low self-efficacy tend to give up when obstacles appear), facilitative thought patterns, and vulnerability to stress (e.g., those with low self-efficacy tend to experience stress and burnout because they expect failure, whereas those with high self-efficacy enter into potential stressful situations with confidence and assurance and thus are able to resist stressful situations) (Luthans, 2008).

II. Review Of Literature

Ming-Cheng Lai and Yen-Chun Chen (2012) conducted a study to assess the impact of self-efficacy on performance and job satisfaction among the automobile sales persons of Taipei, Taiwan. A convenience sample consisting of 616 sales personnel participated in the study. They used the structural equation modeling (SEM) with LISREL to analyze and test the data. The results revealed that (1) Self-efficacy has a positive effect on job performance and job satisfaction; (2) effort has a positive effect on job performance and job satisfaction; (3) job satisfaction has a negative effect on turnover intention. These results help in understanding of the effect of personal characteristics on organization performance.

Bhagat, Rabi S., Allie, Stephen M. (1989) examined self-competence and coping among two hundred and seventy six teachers. They concluded that subjective feelings of competence concerning one's ability to interact effectively with one's work environment moderated satisfaction with work, satisfaction with coworkers, satisfaction with supervision, emotional exhaustion, and feelings of depersonalization.

Judge, Timothy A., Bono, Joyce E. (2001) examined meta-analytic results of the relationship of four traits namely self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability (low neuroticism) with job satisfaction and job performance. With respect to job satisfaction, the estimated true score correlations were .26 for self-esteem, .45 for generalized self-efficacy, .32 for internal locus of control, and .24 for emotional stability. With respect to job performance, the correlations were .26 for self-esteem, .23 for generalized self-efficacy, .22 for internal locus of control, and .19 for emotional stability. Overall, the results based on two hundred and seventy four correlations indicated that these traits are among the best dispositional predictors of job satisfaction and job performance.

Wang, Guangping and. Lee, Peggy D (2009) investigated the interactive effects of the psychological empowerment dimensions on job satisfaction. Data was collected from employees of multiple organizations. The authors found intriguing three-way interactions among the dimensions. Choice has a weak but negative effect on job satisfaction when both competence and impact are high or low but has a strong positive effect when one of the two dimensions is low

and the other is high. Impact has no effect on job satisfaction when choice and competence are both high or both low. The effect of impact is positive only when one of the two dimensions is high and the other is low. In addition, high levels of choice and competence reinforce the positive effect of meaning on job satisfaction.

Objective of the Study

The present study was aimed at studying the perception of self competence and its impact on job satisfaction among the employees of Information Technology industry.

III. Research Methodology

A sample consisting of 124 employees working in Information Technology industry participated in the study. Questionnaire method was used for data collection. Perception of competence was assessed with the competence part of the Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire (PEQ) (Spreitzer, 1995). Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), Short Form was used to assess the level of job satisfaction among the employees. Responses were scored as follows: Very Dissatisfied = 1; Dissatisfied = 2; Neither Dissatisfied Nor Satisfied = 3; Satisfied = 4; Very Satisfied = 5. The collected data was analyzed with mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, correlation and regression tests.

IV. Results And Discussion

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from the respondents.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the Sample

S.No	Demographic factors	Classification	Number of Respondents	Percent
1.	Age (in years)	30 & Below	66	53.2
		Above 30	58	46.8
2.	Gender	Male	70	56.5
		Female	54	43.5
3.	Education	Graduates	54	43.5
		Post Graduates	70	56.5
4.	Experience	Below 5 years	42	33.9
		5-10 years	70	56.5
		Above 10 years	12	9.7
5	Income (in rupees)	Less than 20000	12	9.7
		20000-30000	68	54.8
		Above 30000	44	35.5

Among the 124 respondents, 66 (53.2%) belong to below 30 years age group; 70 (56.5%) are male; 70 (56.5%) are post graduates; 70 (56.5%) belong to 5-10 years experience group; and 68 (54.8 %) belong to below 20000-30000 income group.

Table: 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different age groups

Age		Competence	Job satisfaction
30 & Below	Mean	11.49	64.58
	N	67	67
	Std. Deviation	2.003	7.268
Above 30	Mean	12.98	68.65
	N	57	57
	Std. Deviation	1.395	7.823
Total	Mean	12.18	66.45
	N	124	124
	Std. Deviation	1.896	7.768
t – value		4.724 (.000)	2.998 (.003)

The above table shows that the overall mean score for competence ranges from 11.49 to 12.98, and for job satisfaction from 64.58 to 68.65. A higher level of competence (Mean=12.98) and job satisfaction (Mean=68.65) was observed among the above 30 age group. Results of the independent sample t-test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in competence ($t=4.724$ & $p<.01$), and job satisfaction ($t=2.998$ & $p<.01$) among the respondents of different age groups.

Table: 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different gender

Gender		Competence	Job satisfaction
Male	Mean	12.60	66.09
	N	70	70
	Std. Deviation	1.853	6.542
Female	Mean	11.63	66.93
	N	54	54
	Std. Deviation	1.825	9.161
Total	Mean	12.18	66.45
	N	124	124
	Std. Deviation	1.896	7.768
t – value		2.911 (.004)	0.596 (.553)

The above table shows that the overall mean score for competence ranges from 11.63 to 12.60, and for job satisfaction from 66.09 to 66.93. A higher level of competence (Mean=12.60)

was observed among the male respondents and a higher level of job satisfaction (Mean =66.93) was seen among the female respondents. Results of the independent sample t-test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in competence ($t=2.911$ & $p<.01$) among the male and female respondents.

Table: 4 Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different education groups

Education		Competence	Job satisfaction
Graduates	Mean	12.11	64.11
	N	54	54
	Std. Deviation	2.134	5.652
Post Graduates	Mean	12.23	68.26
	N	70	70
	Std. Deviation	1.704	8.686
Total	Mean	12.18	66.45
	N	124	124
	Std. Deviation	1.896	7.768
t- value		.341 (.734)	3.044 (.003)

The above table shows that the overall mean score for competence ranges from 12.11 to 12.23, and for job satisfaction from 64.11 to 68.26. A higher level of competence (Mean=12.23) and job satisfaction (Mean=68.26) was observed among the post graduates. Results of the independent sample t-test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction ($t=3.044$ & $p<.01$) among the respondents of different education groups.

Table: 5 Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different experience groups

Experience		Competence	Job Satisfaction
Below 5	Mean	11.67	65.29
	N	42	42
	Std. Deviation	2.216	6.686
5-10	Mean	12.06	64.71
	N	70	70
	Std. Deviation	1.483	5.273
Above 10	Mean	14.67	80.67
	N	12	12
	Std. Deviation	.492	9.432
Total	Mean	12.18	66.45
	N	124	124
	Std. Deviation	1.896	7.768
F - value		14.680 (.000)	34.451 (.000)

The above table shows that the overall mean score for competence ranges from 11.67 to 14.67, and for job satisfaction from 64.71 to 80.67. A higher level of competence (Mean=14.67) and job satisfaction (Mean=80.67) was observed among the above 10 years experience group. Results of the ANOVA test revealed that there was a significant difference in competence ($F=14.680$; $p<.01$) and job satisfaction ($F=34.451$; $p<.01$) among the respondents of different experience groups.

Table: 6 Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different income groups

The above table shows that the overall mean score for competence ranges from 11.73 to

Income		Competence	Job Satisfaction
Below 15000	Mean	14.50	69.00
	N	12	12
	Std. Deviation	.522	.000
15000-20000	Mean	12.06	66.35
	N	68	68
	Std. Deviation	2.143	8.492
Above 20000	Mean	11.73	65.91
	N	44	44
	Std. Deviation	1.149	7.624
Total	Mean	12.18	66.45
	N	124	124
	Std. Deviation	1.896	7.768
F-value		12.282 (.000)	.755 (.472)

14.50, and for job satisfaction from 65.91 to 69.00. A higher level of competence (Mean=14.50) and job satisfaction (Mean=69.00) was observed among the below 15000 income group. Results of the ANOVA test revealed that there was a significant difference in competence ($F=12.282$; $p<.01$) among the respondents of different income groups.

Table: 7 Correlation among research variables

		Competence	Job satisfaction
Competence	Pearson Correlation	1	.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	124	124
Job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		124
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Correlation test revealed that there was a significant correlation ($r=.371$ & $p<.01$) between competence and job satisfaction.

Table: 8 Regression analysis with Job satisfaction as the dependent variable**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.371 ^a	.178	.131	7.243

a. Predictors: (Constant), Competence

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1021.656	1	1021.656	19.472	.000 ^a
Residual	6401.054	122	52.468		
Total	7422.710	123			

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	47.940	4.245		11.293	.000
	Competence	1.520	.344	.371	4.413	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction

Regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between competence and job satisfaction. F-Test was statistically significant, which means that the model was statistically significant. The R-Squared is 0.178 which means that approximately 18% of the variance of job satisfaction was explained by the predictor variable, that is, perceived sense of competence. This finding is consistent with the findings of the earlier studies like Bhagat, Rabi S., Allie, Stephen M. (1989), Judge, Timothy A., Bono, Joyce E. (2001), and Ming-Cheng Lai and Yen-Chun Chen (2012).

V. Conclusion

Competence refers to the individual's belief in his or her capability to perform work activities with skill. The present study was aimed at studying the perception of self competence and its impact on job satisfaction among the employees of Information Technology industry. A sample consisting of 124 employees working in Information Technology industry participated in the study. Questionnaire method was used for data collection. The collected data was analyzed with mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, correlation and regression tests. A higher level of competence and job satisfaction was observed among the above 30 age group. A higher level of competence was observed among the male respondents and a higher level of job satisfaction was seen among the female respondents. A higher level of competence and job satisfaction was observed among the post graduates. A higher level of competence and job satisfaction was observed among the below 15000 income group. There was a statistically significant difference in competence, and job satisfaction among the respondents of different age groups. There was a statistically significant difference in job satisfaction among the respondents of different education groups. There was a significant difference in competence among the respondents of

different income groups. There was a significant correlation between competence and job satisfaction. Approximately eighteen per cent of the variance of job satisfaction was explained by perceived sense of competence.

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Macroeconomic Variables Uncertainty and Stock Market Volatility

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp54-72, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between stock market returns and key macroeconomic variables such as inflation, interest rate, money supply, industrial production and the MSCI world index.. In this study, the method of Ordinary Least Square has been applied to find out the nexus between stock market returns and macroeconomic variables in the India. The study reveals that the application of ordinary least square has not been BLUE due to the existence of conditional heteroskedasticity. The ARCH- LM test of heteroskedasticity confirms the presence of heteroskedasticity on the residuals extracted from the ordinary least square method. Therefore, symmetric and asymmetric GARCH models have been employed to investigate the linkage between stock market returns and macroeconomic variables in the presence of conditional heteroskedasticity. Apart from examining the nexus between stock market returns and macroeconomic variables, the performance of symmetric and asymmetric models are compared to find out the best forecasting model using model selection criterion. The model selection criterion namely Akaike information criterion suggests that the GARCH model is the best model that can forecast the stock market returns more precisely.

Key words: *Macroeconomic variables, Stock Returns, GARCH models, Heteroskedasticity*

I. Introduction

Over the last two decades, a large number of researchers have turned their attention to figure out the sensitivity of asset returns to the volatility of macroeconomic fundamentals. The stock market is highly volatile and complex in nature. The volatility of stock market returns has gained significance among the researchers and become a fertile area in which application of various econometric tools on the financial time series facilitates to examine the disperse of returns over certain period. Hence, volatility measurement is the signal to know the performance of a stock market.

The ordinary least square method is the superior model in predicting the stock market prices under the Gauss Markov assumptions. In the presence of heteroskedasticity, the application of Ordinary Least Square method on the financial time series yields spurious regression. Consequently, a model namely ARCH (Autoregressive Conditional Heteroskedasticity) was developed by Engle (1982) to capture the volatility under the condition of heteroskedasticity. Following the model of ARCH, an extended model of ARCH was

proposed by Bollerslev (1986) to capture the symmetric volatility of any financial time series data under the assumption of heteroskedasticity.

After the introduction of GARCH model, many researchers have focused their attention to extend the GARCH models under various specifications. The GARCH models such as T-GARCH proposed by Nelson (1991) E-GARCH developed by Glosten, Jagannathan, and Runkle (1993) capture the asymmetric volatility of any financial time series. Along with the T-GARCH and E-GARCH models, many researchers have developed other GARCH family models such as IGARCH, AGARCH, GARCH-M, FIGARCH under various specifications. There is no conclusion on the GARCH model that is superior to capture the volatility of a financial time series. But the performance of a model differs across markets due to distinguished characteristics of each stock market and time period.

II. Literature Review

A large number of studies documented the relationship between macroeconomic variables and stock market returns, but, very few studies evaluated the superior model in explaining the stock market returns. The empirical identification of the macroeconomic variables affecting the stock market returns by employing ARCH/GARCH models has focused mainly on developed and emerging stock markets. El-Nader and Alraimony (2012) investigated the relationship between stock market returns and macroeconomic variables and documented that the ARCH (1) model performs well and therefore, the extension of GARCH (1, 1) model is not necessary. Alberg, Shalit, and Yosef (2008) compared the forecasting performance of several GARCH models with different distributions and found that EGARCH under student-t distribution is the most promising model explaining the dynamic behavior of stock market returns. Ahmed and Suliman (2011) has employed both symmetric and asymmetric GARCH models and found that asymmetric GARCH models are fit than the symmetric GARCH model. Subsequently it reveals that the stock market behavior is asymmetric and it implies that negative news have more impact than the positive news.

Kirui, Wawire, and Onono (2014) evaluated the relationship using TGARCH model and observed that the impact of news is asymmetric and confirmed the presence of leverage effects in Nairobi stock market. Wei-Chong, See-Nie, and Ung (2011) compared the GARCH models with Adhoc models on Japanese stock market and documented that GJR GARCH model is superior to the simple GARCH (1, 1) model. Lim and Sek (2013) have used symmetric and asymmetric models to capture the volatility of stock returns in Malaysia and found that symmetric GARCH models outperform well in the pre and post crisis period, whereas, in the crisis period, asymmetric GARCH models outperform well. Atoi (2014) employed first order symmetric and asymmetric GARCH models under normal and student 't' distribution and found that the power GARCH (1, 1, 1) in student-t distribution is the best predictive model based on the error measurement approaches of Root Mean Square Error (RMSE). Al Freedi, Shamiri, and Isa (2011) examined the volatility of Saudi stock market prices using Symmetric and Asymmetric GARCH models and found that the GJRGARCH model outperforms in the pre-crisis period, whereas the Simple GARCH model performs better in the post crisis period. Miron and Tudor (2010) examined the presence of leverage effects in Romanian and US daily stock market returns

by employing EGARCH, PGARCH and TGARCH models and documented that the EGARCH model exhibit lower forecast error comparing with the other asymmetric GARCH models.

Marcucci (2005) compared different GARCH models in forecasting ability of US stock market returns and found that Markov Regime Switching GARCH models outperform well in forecasting ability at shorter horizon, whereas, in the longer horizon Standard asymmetric GARCH models performed well. Hansen and Lunde (2005) reported that GARCH (1, 1) model is not inferior to other model in terms of their ability to forecast the conditional variance. The review of comparison of GARCH family models gives a notion that the performance of GARCH models differs across markets. This study is isolated from the previous literature by comparing the performance of GARCH models using Akaike information criterion values.

III. Data and Methodology

The aim of the study is to evaluate the forecasting performance of the symmetric and asymmetric GARCH models in examining the linkage between macroeconomic variables and stock market returns. Thus, BSE SENSEX closing prices are selected as the dependent variable and Inflation, Interest rate, Money supply, Industrial Production Index, and exchange rate considered as the independent variables. The data used in the study consist of monthly time series observations covering the period of January 1991 to December 2014. Monthly closing price index are collected from Yahoo finance, whereas the other macroeconomic variables influencing the stock market returns are mainly collected from the Organization for Economic Co-operation Development (<http://stats.oecd.org/>) and ACWI (All country World Index) of MSCI has been collected from <https://www.msci.com> websites

3.1 Macroeconomic Variables and Transformations

3.1.1 Stock Market Returns

Stock market returns depicts the pulse of an economic condition and the ups and downs of the stock price movements reveals the volatility of the market. Monthly average closing price of BSE SENSEX are taken and converted into logarithmic returns using the following formula.

$$DLNSMR = \ln SMR_t - \ln SMR_{t-1}$$

3.1.2 Industrial Production

Index of industrial production is a proxy used for real economic output of the economy. An increase in economic activity increases the profit of companies and in turn it raises the stock prices to go up. Many previous literatures have used industrial production index as a proxy for representing the economic conditions of a country. Moreover, the industrial production reveals the true picture of an industrial economic growth of a country. Chen, Roll, and Ross (1986) produced evidence that current stock prices are positively influencing the future level of economic activity. Therefore, increases in industrial production positively impact the stock prices and decreases in industrial production make an opposite effect on stock prices. It is

expected from the study that there is a positive relationship exists between industrial production and Stock returns. Industrial production is transformed as,

$$DLNIP = \ln IP_t - \ln IP_{t-1}$$

3.1.3 Interest Rate

Investors use interest rate as the barometer for earning profit or facing loss from investment in an efficient capital market. A rise or fall in interest rate influence the investment decision of the investors as they consider the interest is the minimum rate of return or the risk free rate of return expected from investment. An increase or decrease in interest rate obviously has a negative or positive impact on stock returns as investors motivated to change the portfolio structure in favor of or against the bonds. Therefore, Inverse relationship is expected between interest rate and stock market returns .(El-Nader & Alraimony, 2012); Fifiield, Power, and Sinclair (2002) found that there is a significant relationship exists between stock market prices and interest rate, whereas , Quadir (2012) found that there is insignificant relationship between stock market prices and interest rate. The transformation of interest rate is given as,

$$DLNIR = \ln IR_t - \ln IR_{t-1}$$

3.1.4 Inflation

A high inflation reduces the purchasing power of each unit of currency that spent to purchase goods and services and raises the disposable income and reduces the savings. Therefore, investment in stock market may considerably be reduced when inflation influences the stock market returns negatively. However, there is an ongoing debate on the impact of inflation on stock returns; the influence depends on various factors and time period. Hence the inflation is an unpredictable factor. It has given contradictory results in the previous literature. Fama (1981) concluded that there is a positive relationship between inflation and stock returns but, Mukherjee and Naka (1995) reported negative relationship between stock returns and inflation. Consumer price index is considered as a proxy to represent inflation rate. The inflation is transformed using the following formula.

$$DLNIF = \ln LIF_t - \ln LIF_{t-1}$$

3.1.5 Money Supply (M3)

Money supply represented by M3 is the broad money supply index including money with public, demand deposit of banks and demand deposit of Apex bank. The downturn of stock market price is substantially influenced by the liquidity of money supply. A high liquidity of money supply strengthens the stock market price of an economy. On the other hand, decrease in money supply tends to decreases the stock market returns. Fama (1981) documented that there is a negative relationship between inflation and stock market prices because of increasing money supply tends to increase the discount rate and lowers the stock market prices. On contrary to the result of Fama, Mukherjee and Naka (1995) found that there is a positive relationship between money supply and stock market returns as a result of increasing cash flows increases the

investment in stock market. The money supply has been transformed using the following formula.

$$DLNMS = \ln M3_t - \ln M3_{t-1}$$

3.1.6 Exchange Rate

Depreciation of domestic currency against foreign currencies creates a favorable pitch for the growth of an economy by attracting more portfolio investment from foreign investors and augmenting exports to foreign countries. Hence the capital flows from foreign countries would increase the stock returns and it creates a positive impact on stock market prices. On the other hand, Appreciation of domestic currency takes away the foreign capital flows and makes imports cheaper and it creates negative impact on stock market prices. Therefore the stock market prices are highly sensitive to the foreign exchange rate of a country and the impact of exchange rate and stock prices has conceived more importance in the literature. Nnenna (2012) found that there is a significant and positive impact on Nigeria stock market volatility. On contrary to Nnenna, El-Nader and Alraimony (2012) found negative relationship between real exchange rate and Amman Stock market returns. The relationship between exchange rate and stock market prices produced conflicting results and the magnitude of relationship differs from country to country. The exchange rate used is Indian exchange rate against per US dollar is collected and it has been transformed as

$$DLNER = \ln ER_t - \ln ER_{t-1}$$

3.1.7 MSCI World

The integration among the countries in the decade of 1990s became a major challenge for investors to understand the domestic stock market to the external shocks arising out of global equity markets volatility. The MSCI world index is used as a proxy to represent the global equity prices. This variable is included in the study to assess the impact of world stock market returns on domestic stock market returns. The following equation is applied to calculate world stock market returns.

$$DLNWSR = \ln WSR_t - \ln WSR_{t-1}$$

IV. Analysis and Discussion

a. Ordinary Least Square Estimation

The OLS estimation is the conventional and superior model in explaining the cause and effect relationship between variables. The application of OLS is superior where the data is free from the problem of autocorrelation, non-stationary and heteroskedasticity. Therefore, as the initial attempt, OLS method is selected to examine the relationship between stock market returns and macroeconomic variables.

The basic mean equation model of Regression is given as

$$DLNSMR_t = \theta_0 + \theta_1 DLNIP_t + \theta_2 DLNIR_t + \theta_3 DLNIF_t + \theta_4 DLNMS_t + \theta_5 DLNER_t + \theta_6 DLNWSR_t + \mu_t$$

D denotes the first differences of the stock returns and key macroeconomic variables. Where LN denotes natural logarithm, θ_0 denotes constant or intercept of the regression model $\theta_1 \theta_2 \theta_3 \theta_4 \theta_5 \theta_6$ are the coefficients of the independent variables, μ_t is the white noise error term. Here, IP, IR, IF, MS, ER, and WSR are the independent variables and SMR is the dependent variable.

b. ARCH- LM Test of Heteroskedasticity

The Autoregressive conditional heteroskedasticity Lagrange multiplier test is used to model observed time series data. In the conventional econometrics, the variance of the error terms is assumed as constant over time. Otherwise it is considered as the series is homoskedastic. If the error variance is not constant, it is called heteroskedastic. The ARCH model assume the variance of the current error term or innovation is the function of the previous time periods error terms. Such models are often called ARCH model and it was developed by Engle. 1982. It is found out by applying the following equation.

$$\hat{\varepsilon}_t^2 = \hat{\alpha}_0 + \sum_{i=1}^q \hat{\alpha}_i \varepsilon_{t-i}^2$$

$\hat{\varepsilon}_t^2$ Denotes the squared error at lag t. $\hat{\alpha}_0$ is the constant. $\hat{\alpha}_i$ indicates the coefficient of lagged squared residuals.

c. GARCH (1.1) Generalized Autoregressive Conditional Heteroskedasticity

The application of ordinary least square method on the time series data where the conditional variance of the error terms is not constant will produce spurious regression results. To overcome the problem of heteroskedasticity, ARCH model has come into solve the problem arising out of error terms. In particular ARCH models assume the variance of the current error term or innovation to be a function of the previous time periods error terms or innovation. In simple, the current error term is related with the square of the previous innovations. The Generalized Auto Regressive Conditional Heteroskedasticity proposed by Bollerserv in 1986 captures the volatility clustering and unconditional return distribution. This study adopts the standard ARCH/GARCH (1.1) model using the following equations.

Mean Equation

$$DLNSMR_t = \theta_0 + \theta_1 DLNIP_t + \theta_2 DLNIR_t + \theta_3 DLNIF_t + \theta_4 DLNMS_t + \theta_5 DLNER_t + \theta_6 DLNWSR_t + \mu_t$$

Variance Equation

$$h_t^2 = \theta_0 + \lambda_1 \mu_{t-1}^2 + \phi_1 h_{t-1}^2$$

where θ_0 is the intercept, λ_1 and ϕ_1 are the ARCH and GARCH coefficients and h_t^2 is the conditional stock return volatility

d. TGARCH (Threshold Generalized Autoregressive Conditional Heteroskedasticity)

One of the major weaknesses of the GARCH model is that the GARCH model assumes that error terms irrespective of the sign have similar magnitude of change on the volatility of stock market returns. To overcome the problem of symmetric effect, the TGARCH model was proposed by Zakoian and Runkle. In particular, the bad news creates more impact on the stock market returns than the degree of variations created by Good news. The TGARCH model divides the distribution of the innovations into two disjoint intervals and approximate a piecewise linear function for the conditional standard deviation. The Threshold GARCH(1,1) model is applied with the following equations.

Mean Equation

$$DLNSMR_t = \theta_0 + \theta_1 DLNIP_t + \theta_2 DLNIR_t + \theta_3 DLNIF_t + \theta_4 DLNMS_t + \theta_5 DLNER_t + \theta_6 DLNWSR_t + \mu_t$$

Variance Equation

$$h_t^2 = \theta_0 + \lambda_1 \mu_{t-1}^2 + \phi_1 h_{t-1}^2 + \gamma_1 \mu_{t-1}^2 d_{t-1}$$

λ_1 , ϕ_1 and γ_1 are the ARCH, GARCH and TGARCH co-efficients, h_t^2 is the conditional stock return volatility

Ω_{t-1} is the set of all information available at time t-1, $d_{t-1} = \begin{cases} \mu_{t-1} < 0 \\ \mu_{t-1} \geq 0 \end{cases} < 0$ indicates that bad news ≥ 0 shows positive news

e. EGARCH (Exponential Generalized Autoregressive Conditional Heteroskedasticity)

The EGARCH model was put forward by Nelson in 1991 to examine the asymmetry effect of stock market volatility to the positive and negative error variance. Neither ARCH nor the GARCH capture the asymmetry effect on the volatility of stock market returns. The equation of E-GARCH (1,1) is given below.

Mean Equation

$$DLNSMR_t = \theta_0 + \theta_1 DLNIP_t + \theta_2 DLNIR_t + \theta_3 DLNIF_t + \theta_4 DLNMS_t + \theta_5 DLNER_t + \theta_6 DLNWSR_t + \mu_t$$

Variance Equation

$$\log(h_t^2) = \alpha + \delta \left| \frac{\mu_{t-1}}{h_{t-1}} \right| \gamma \frac{\mu_{t-1}}{h_{t-1}} + \beta \log(h_t^2)$$

f. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON INDIA'S MACROECONOMIC VARIABLES

The descriptive statistics such as mean, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness and the Jarque –Bera test gives a vivid picture on the movement of India's macroeconomic variables including stock market returns over the the period. The probability values associated with the jarque bera test of normality examines the distribution of the data.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on Macroeconomic Variables –India

	SMR	LIF	LIR	LMS	LER	LIP	WSR
Mean	8.778	4.113	1.991	3.404	3.731	4.509	6.912
Median	8.446	4.094	1.988	3.395	3.793	4.425	6.985
Maximum	10.264	4.968	3.564	5.185	4.155	5.269	7.467
Minimum	7.119	3.215	-0.315	1.548	2.993	3.729	6.184
Std. Dev.	0.797	0.462	0.476	1.074	0.228	0.462	0.348
Skewness	0.278	0.063	0.084	0.003	-0.736	0.036	-0.539
Kurtosis	1.662	2.169	6.135	1.797	3.340	1.679	2.303
J-B	24.942	8.392	117.016	17.191	27.134	20.799	19.576
Prob.	0.000	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Obs	285	285	285	285	285	285	285

The mean and standard deviation of BSE SENSEX (Sensitive Index) are 8.77 and 0.797 respectively. The world index proxy by MSCI index shows the average value of 6.912 with the deviation of 0.386. The negative values of skewness on macroeconomic variables such as; Exchange rate and world index have long left tails while the positive values of all other macroeconomic variables a long right tails. Subsequently, the kurtosis value of all variables is less than 3 it indicates that the distribution is platykurtic except the exchange rate. A distribution is said to be normal if the value of the skewness and kurtosis are 0 and 3 respectively. From table 1, it is observed that the distributions of the variables are far from being normal. The Jarque-

Bera results indicates that the null hypothesis of normally distributed is strongly rejected at one percent significance level. The descriptive statistics indicates that data are not normally distributed and therefore there is no randomness in the data. Before applying any model in the data, it is necessary to examine the existence of unit root in the data. Hence, Augmented dicky fuller test, a test for stationary, clears out if the data are suffering from the problem of unit root.

g. Unit Root Test Results

Augmented Dicky Fuller test is applied on India's stock market returns and macroeconomic variables to examine if there is a unit root in the time series of the variables. The Augmented dicky fuller test applied on each macroeconomic variables of India including stock market returns is presented in the table 2.

Table 2 Adf Unit Root Test Results – India

Variables	I(level)	I&T(level)	I(Ist Difference)	I&T(Ist Difference)
Log SMR	-1.171772	-2.412320	-15.03726***	-15.01270***
Log IF	0.276037	-1.475437	-3.474995***	-3.483947**
Log IR	-4.503227***	-4.611478***	-16.51356***	-16.51556***
LogMS	-1.223639	-1.282659	-5.590836***	-5.717818***
LogER	-2.676071	-3.416161*	-13.84319***	-13.89447***
LogIP	-0.770647	-1.918848	-3.461041***	-3.493462***
LogWSR	-1.415857	-1.965773	-15.20045***	-15.17863***
Critical Values				
1%	-3.453234	-3.990701	-3.453317	-3.990817
5%	-2.871510	-3.425728	-2.871546	-3.425784
10%	-2.572154	-3.136027	-2.572174	-3.136061

I stands for Intercept, I&T stands for Intercept and Trend

The table 2 indicates the results of the augmented dicky fuller test applied on India's macroeconomic variables and stock market returns. Based on the augmented dicky fuller test results, it is observed that all the macroeconomic variables are non-stationary at level excluding interest rate and exchange rate. All the series become stationary in first difference at 1% level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis of time series of non-stationary are highly accepted at level but rejected at first difference. The Asterisk symbol (***) shows the rejection of the null hypothesis of non-stationary at the 1% level of significance, the symbol (**) indicates rejection

of null hypothesis at 5% percent level of significance. The computed ADF test-statistic at first difference data is smaller than the critical values - "tau" statistics or critical values, the Null hypothesis of non- stationary is rejected. It is concluded from the table 4.11 that all the variables are stationary after first differencing and the macroeconomic variables are treated as integrated of order one I (1).

h. IMPACT OF MACROECONOMIC VARIABLES ON INDIA'S STOCK MARKET RETURNS

Linear regression analysis has been carried out to find out the association between stock market returns and selected macroeconomic variables. The India's stock market return is considered as the dependent variable whereas, inflation, interest rate, money supply, exchange rate, industrial production index, world stock market returns are considered as the independent variables. The result of the regression analysis is presented in the table 3.

Table 3 Results of the Regression Analysis - India

Variables	Coefficient	Std.Error	Z-Statistics	Probability
Intercept	0.001641	0.011844	0.138569	0.8899
Inflation	-0.988957	0.529352	-1.868241	0.0628
Interest Rate	-0.031845	0.014461	-2.202146	0.0285
Money Supply	0.983752	0.812332	1.211023	0.2269
Exchange Rate	-0.288364	0.211513	-1.363341	0.1739
Production index	0.089214	0.076835	1.161116	0.2466
World Index	0.673261	0.105887	6.358267	0.0000
R-Squared	0.718234	Akaike Information Criterion		-2.336584
Adj R-Squared	0.704910	Schwarz Criterion		-2.220948
F-Statistic	8.499117	Hannan-Quinn Criterion		-2.290223
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000	Durbin Watson Statistic		1.884338

The table 3 shows the regression analysis applied on India's stock market returns and selected macroeconomic variables. The result of the analysis indicates that the interest rate and world stock index are the significant variables explaining the stock market variations in India. The Durbin Watson statistic denotes that the time series are not facing any serial or auto

correlation. In order to find out the best model that fits the data of India, post estimation diagnostics tests have been carried out.

i. POST ESTIMATION DIAGNOSTICS TEST - INDIA

There are various methods of calculating serial correlation such as Durbin Watson statistics, Ljung- Box Q statistics, and ARCH LM test. Ljung-Box Q statistics is selected to find out whether time series are suffering from serial or auto correlation or not.

ARCH- LM TEST OF HETEROSKEDASTICITY

The Autoregressive conditional heteroskedasticity Lagrange multiplier test is used to model observed time series data. In the conventional econometrics, the variance of the error terms is assumed as constant over time. Otherwise it is considered as the series is homoskedastic. If the error variance is not constant, it is called that the error terms are heteroskedastic. For computing ARCH LM test, the ordinary least square method is used to compute the residuals and Resid^2 is used as dependent variable and $\text{Resid}^2(-1)$ is used as an independent variable. The result is presented in the table 4

Table 4 Arch Lm Test of Heteroskedasticity on Regression Residuals

F-statistic	16.00586	Prob. F statistic		0.0000
Obs.R-Squared	15.25108	Prob.Chi-Square(1)		0.0001
Variable	Co-efficient	Std.Error	t-Statistic	Prob
Intercept	0.004071	0.000789	5.157823	0.0000
RESID^2(-1)	0.232185	0.058036	4.000733	0.0001
R-Squared	0.053891	Akaike info criterion		-5.965132
Adjusted R-Squared	0.050524	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-5.939369
F-Statistics	16.00586	Schwarz criterion		-5.954802
Prob(F-Statistics)	0.000081	Durbin-Watson stat		2.127891

The Arch test highly rejects the null hypothesis of no arch effect in the time series data. The result shows the residuals generated from the regression analysis applied on India's stock market returns and macroeconomic variables are suffering from the problem of heteroskedasticity. The p value of Chi-Square is 0.01 which is lower than the critical value of 0.05. The table 4 shows that the error variance is not constant over the time period taken for the study. Hence, it is concluded from the results that ARCH effect is present in the data which proves the presence of heteroskedasticity. This means there is volatility clustering in the data. The following graph projects the heteroskedasticity.

j. ARCH/GARCH/TARCH/E-GARCH (1, 1, 1)

It is evident from the regression analysis that the errors are heteroskedastic and the residuals are not normally distributed and it violates the assumptions of good regression line. Therefore, other econometric models such as ARCH/GARCH/ TARCH/ EGARCH were carried out to find out the relationship between the India's stock market return and respective macroeconomic variables. The macroeconomic variables such as inflation, interest rate, money supply, exchange rate, industrial production index, world stock return, commodity price index and global prices were considered as the independent variables explaining the stock market returns. The results of the ARCH/ GARCH (1,1) are given in the table 5.

Table 5. Estimates Of Arch/Garch (1,1) Model

Mean Equation (Panel-A)				
Variable	Coefficient	Std.Error	Z-Statistics	Probability
Intercept	-0.003995	0.010742	-0.371865	0.7100
Inflation	-0.787124	0.398771	-1.973873	0.0484
Interest Rate	-0.023277	0.019897	-1.169853	0.2421
Money Supply	1.405878	0.750498	1.873260	0.0610
Exchange Rate	-0.455109	0.001680	-270.9166	0.0000
Production index	0.025698	0.062018	0.414369	0.6786
World Index	0.853873	0.085977	9.931404	0.0000
Variance Equation (Panel –B)				
C	1.75E-05	1.61E-05	1.085395	0.2777
RESID(-1)^2	-0.030503	0.010855	-2.810047	0.0050
GARCH(-1)	1.016007	0.012740	79.74622	0.0000
R-Squared	0.810281	Akaike Information Criterion		-2.624803
Adj R-Squared	0.786434	Durbin Watson Statistic		1.878416

In panel A of mean equation, it is evidently seen that inflation influenced the stock market returns negatively with the co-efficient of -0.787124. It denotes that as the inflation increases; the stock market returns will also be decreased. It indicates that hike in inflation shifts

resources from investment to disposable income. On the other hand increasing inflation influence the performance of companies and it affects the dividend decision. As a result of this, investors would reluctant to invest in stock market and it will reduce the stock returns in the market. The second main factor that influences the stock market return is interest rate. The interest rate has a negative co-efficient of -0.023277. It denotes that when interest rate increases, the stock market returns will be decreased. The hidden fact is that when interest rate is high, rational investors tend to invest their money into less risky investment with the expectation of high returns. Hence, money market becomes an alternative investment opportunity to stock market investment in the long run. The third factor influencing the India's stock market returns is money supply which has a positive coefficient of 1.405878. It indicates that 1% hike in money supply will lead to 14% rise in the India's stock market returns. Increasing the money supply increases the flow of money and investors tend to invest more in stock market returns by creating demand for the shares. It will be resulted as hike in stock market returns. The next factor exchange rate has significant negative co-efficient on stock returns and its co-efficient is -0.455109. Changes in exchange rate influence the stock returns negatively. Devaluation of the domestic currency against foreign currency has a negative relationship with stock returns. Depreciating domestic currency against foreign currency attracts more foreign capital through foreign institutional investors and increases the stock market prices.

The fifth main factor influences the stock market returns is industrial production index. It is the measurement of real output of the industrial sector of the economy. Higher industrial production results in higher earnings for companies. With the expectation of higher earnings, investors tend to invest more in the stock market and it pushes up the stock returns. Therefore, a positive relationship prevails between India's stock market returns and industrial production with the elasticity of 0.025698.

The Morgan Stanley Composite Index is used as a proxy for world index and it helps to find out the integration of domestic market with the world market. The results are consistent with the US stock market that world index is influencing the India's stock market significantly. It shows that when the world return increases, the domestic stock market return will also be increased. Therefore the domestic market is not an isolated market and it goes along with the world stock market. This leads to the conclusion that India's stock market returns are driven by global factors than domestic macroeconomic factors. The reason for positive relationship is due to people's expectations on future economic growth that leads to increasing demand for shares in the market. Moreover, increasing oil prices increases the value of shares in companies like energy, industrial and material sectors. Hence, increasing money supply increases the stock market returns of a country. Among all the variables considered for analysis, Interest rate, exchange rate and MSCI world index influenced the stock returns significantly at 5% level of significance.

The variance equation in panel B reveals the ARCH (λ_1) and GARCH (ϕ_1) coefficients and they are found to be significant at 5% level of significance. The positive sign of ARCH observed is go along with the result produced by Engle (1982) and Bollerslev (1986) and they emphasized on non-negative estimate of the ARCH. It is an additional evidence support of the

presence of ARCH and GARCH effect on volatility of US stock market returns. The combined effect of ARCH and GARCH is 0.979567 which is averagely closed to one and it indicates the time varying volatility is persistent in India's stock market returns. It follows a mean reverting variance process. The ARCH(λ_1) is lower than GARCH (ϕ_1), which shows that the volatility of the stock market is affected by past volatility more than the economic news from the previous period (ϕ_1). The large coefficient of GARCH (1.01) explains that shocks to the conditional variance takes a long time to go out of the error terms. Therefore, it implies that volatility is persistent. There are other models such as TARCH and E-GARCH that helps to find out the leverage effect of stock market returns in India. The result of the TARCH model applied on India's stock market returns are presented in the table 6.

Table 6 Estimates Of Tarch (1,1,1) Model - India

Mean Equation (Panel-A)				
Variables	Coefficient	Std.Error	Z-Statistics	Probability
Intercept	-0.011608	0.010473	-1.108422	0.2677
Inflation	-1.012769	0.396022	-2.557353	0.0105
Interest Rate	-0.022495	0.017595	-1.278484	0.2011
Money Supply	2.018823	0.698062	2.892039	0.0038
Exchange Rate	-0.684164	0.102684	-6.662818	0.0000
Production index	0.024582	0.065550	0.375018	0.7076
World Index	0.850720	0.083060	10.24227	0.0000
Variance Equation (Panel –B)				
C	3.73E-05	1.81E-05	2.062584	0.0392
RESID(-1)^2	-0.044943	0.010287	-4.369111	0.0000
TARCH	0.038753	0.017762	2.181795	0.0691
GARCH(-1)	1.006435	0.011305	89.02911	0.0000
R-Squared	0.808477	Akaike Information Criterion		-2.610160
Adj R-Squared	0.774287	Durbin Watson Statistic		1.891163

The table 6 (panel- A) gives the mean equation that explains the association between india's stock market returns and macroeconomic variables. The variance equation shows the ARCH, GARCH and TARCH effects on the residuals generated by the mean equation. It is observed from the table that interest rate, exchange rate, world stock index are the most significant variable explaining the stock market returns at 5% level of significance. The variance equation explains that the ARCH and GARCH co-efficients are significant. The insignificant TARCH shows that the leverage effect in India is insignificant. At five percent level of significance, the stock market behavior in India is symmetric. It indicates that the negative news and positive news impact the stock market returns in a similar magnitude.

Therefore, it implies that volatility is persistent. Moreover, it is necessary to determine the appropriate model that helps to forecast the future stock returns by using model selection criteria.

Table 7 Estimates of E-Garch Model

Mean Equation (Panel-A)				
Variable	Coefficient	Std.Error	Z-Statistics	Probability
Intercept	-0.012830	0.009515	-1.348432	0.1775
Inflation	-1.239190	0.370659	-3.343212	0.0008
Interest Rate	-0.020386	0.015781	-1.291820	0.1964
Money Supply	2.253822	0.650732	3.463520	0.0005
Exchange Rate	-0.883129	0.125062	-7.061517	0.0000
Production index	0.033405	0.063205	0.528519	0.5971
World Index	0.773654	0.078880	9.807995	0.0000
Variance Equation (Panel –B)				
ω	-0.044911	0.027245	-1.648431	0.0993
β	-0.085941	0.036549	-2.351418	0.0187
γ	-0.038556	0.021464	-1.796268	0.0725
α	0.981015	0.004479	219.0269	0.0000
R-Squared	0.806961	Akaike Information Criterion		-2.615986
Adj R-Squared	0.782437	Durbin Watson Statistic		1.891478

From the table 7, the mean equation panel-A explains the association between NYSE stock market returns and selected macroeconomic variables. The E-GARCH result is consistent with the results produced by TARCH model and also states that the interest rate, exchange rate, World stock market returns have significant impact on India's Stock market returns. The variance equation in panel B, the symbol of beta β is the ARCH effect and it shows the magnitude of volatility and its co-efficient is high and significant at 1% level of significance. The leverage effect represented by the symbol of γ is negative and insignificant. The EGARCH variance equation indicates that the stock market behaviour of India stock market returns is symmetric and insignificant leverage effects.

k. SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE MODEL - INDIA

There are several criteria to find out the appropriate model such as adjusted R square, Schwarz Information Criterion, and Akaike Information Criterion to explain the dependent variable. But the most widely used model is Akaike information criterion that considers both in sample and out of sample of forecasting. The AIC values of ARCH/GARCH, ARCH/GARCH/TARCH, ARCH/GARCH/ E-GARCH are presented in the table.

Table 8 Selection of Appropriate Model - India

NO	MODEL	LAGs	AIC
1	ARCH/GARCH	(1,1)	-2.624803
2	T-GARCH (OR) GJR GARCH	(1,1,1)	-2.610160
3	E-GARCH	(1,1,1)	-2.615986

The AIC criterion is useful in comparing two or more models. The model with the lowest AIC is usually chosen. The AIC criterion is also used for both in-sample and out-of- sample forecasting performance of a model. The lowest of value of AIC is -2.624803 which is lower than the TARCH and E-GARCH AIC values. Therefore, the analysis from the table, it is understood that the appropriate model that fits the Indian stock market returns forecasting is ARCH/GARCH (1,1) model.

Table 9 Arch Lm Test of Heteroskedasticity on Garch Residuals

F-statistic	0.357977	Prob. F statistic		0.5501
Obs.R-Squared	0.360066	Prob.Chi-Square(1)		0.5485
Variable	Co-efficient	Std.Error	t-Statistic	Prob

Intercept	0.958162	0.105121	9.114833	0.0000
RESID^2(-1)	0.035658	0.059597	0.598312	0.5501
R-Squared	0.001272	Akaike info criterion		3.604590
AdjustedR-Squared	-0.002282	Hannan-Quinn criter.		3.630353
F-Statistics	0.357977	Schwarz criterion		3.614920
Prob(F-Statistics)	0.550114	Durbin-Watson stat		2.008770

From the table 9, the ARCH LM test results confirm that GARCH model mitigated the effect of Heteroskedasticity. The post estimation diagnostics test is an evidence to support that there is no point of heteroskedasticity because the P value is 0.5485 which is greater than the critical value of chi-square of 0.05. Hence it is clearly evidenced that heteroskedasticity in the data has been modeled by the application of EGARCH test. The result of ARCH LM test has produced a clear evidence to support the fact of no heteroskedasticity. Based on the post estimation diagnostic test results, it is observed that ARCH/GARCH is the appropriate model in explaining the relationship between India's stock market returns and macroeconomic variables.

V. Conclusion

The Augmented Dickey Fuller test applied on macroeconomic variables shows that the all the variables are stationary at first difference. Therefore the first difference logarithmic data are considered for application ordinary least square method. But the application of regression is not the appropriate method due to the existence of conditional heteroskedasticity. The presence of conditional heteroskedasticity is confirmed with the help of ARCH LM test. Therefore, Symmetric and Asymmetric GARCH models are applied and their performance are compared using the akaike information criterion. The results indicate that the symmetric GARCH model outperforms well than the other models such as Asymmetric T-GARCH and asymmetric E-GARCH models.

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Impact of Social Media on Purchase Decision Making of Customers

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp73-85, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

Social Media has revolutionized the ways of communication in sharing information and interests. The rapid growth of social media and social networking sites, especially, in developing countries like India is providing marketers a new avenue to contact customers. Though organizations are increasing their in social media, it is difficult to measure the real return on purchase decision process. This research paper analyzes the behavior of the people how their purchase decision is affected by social media. As it is known that social media is trending so much these days for variety of reasons for which one of it is purchase decision. So there was an urge to know how knowledge sharing on various products on social media affects the purchase decision as so much of data is generated by people all over the world on social media. Also to know how reviews, opinions, like and dislikes have an impact on the purchase decision. As social media generates both positive and negative comments so again how it affects the decision making.

Key words: *Social media, Purchase Decision, Consumer, Behavior, Decision making.*

I. Introduction

Social media has changed the way marketers and consumers communicate. It has provided a new platform to acquire product information through peer communication. Earlier social media was used to catch up with people and engage in chitchats with friends, family and colleagues; basically it helped in connecting the people. But over the years social media had graduated from a place where people only used to socialize. Today it has changed the way people, organizations and government interact with each other. Today social media is playing notable roles in different aspects of our lives. It supports users in different sectors such as education, advertising, marketing and business.

Rapid growth of social media especially in developing countries like India is providing marketers a new platform to contact the consumers. Today social media opinions and reviews have started affecting the purchase decision process of the consumers. Social media allows consumers to make recommendations and evaluate the product through status updates. This helps the satisfied consumer to recommend the product to other potential users. Companies are trying to take the advantage of increasing trend of consumers depending on social media for their purchases.

Social media is basically peer influence when it comes to making buying decisions, it helps companies to create visibility of their brands, product and services and also helps in creating brand

awareness. The toughest job is to learn how to use social media platforms, the way consumers want to use it and not the way companies want to use them. These days consumers have become very cautious with their spending. Social media is not only about marketing and sales of the product and services. It is a platform where companies can create emotional connection via providing exceptional customer service, conversations and also by creating rich customer experience.

Consumers are utilizing social media as an effective tool in their shopping process. Social media marketing plays an important role in persuading consumers to buy online. Via social media consumers have the power to influence the other potential buyers through product reviews. Consumers get useful information via social media. Social media help the consumers to interact with each other easily. Interaction with users can affect their purchase decision. Social media has become a necessity these days which affects the consumers in many ways. These ways can be classified into different factors such as – cultural factors, psychological factors, product factors, informational factors and design factors.

Various social media platforms need to structure their information so that consumers are able to understand what the marketer is trying to say and accept the message or product information. Word of mouth plays a crucial role in case of social media marketing. Social media opens up a virtual space where consumers can share knowledge with each other. There has been a growth in social media marketing which as a result has a great impact on the buying behavior of the consumers.

1.1 Consumer Purchase Decision

When it comes to purchasing decision process the consumer goes through 5 stages that are as follows-

- 1) Problem or need recognition
- 2) Information search
- 3) Evaluation the alternatives
- 4) Making Purchase decision
- 5) Last one is post purchase evaluation

Social media plays a crucial role in each of the stage of the consumer purchasing decision. It has been observed that product and services recommended by friends and family are more reliable than direct mails and celebrity endorsement. Social media offers transparency and accessibility. Groups that may never meet in the real world have started influencing the behavior of the people.

Now a day's people follow brands on social media because of following reasons

1. To learn more about product and services of a brand
2. To keep up with the trends
3. To give feedbacks
4. To avail customer service via social media
5. To make purchases
6. To know more about the promotional campaigns and discounts
7. To join the fan community

The way people buy products and services has changed over a period of time. Many businesses use the social media platform to influence the consumer purchase decisions and acquire more customers. It's been observed that the posts from friends and family directly influence the purchase decisions of the consumers. Almost all the brands have their social media presence. They have realized how social media can amplify the customers voice and how essential is for them to listen and pay attention to what they say.

The brands are benefited from social media:

- **Brand Recognition**-with social media, you get to decide how you want to place your organization and what you want to tell people what you do.
- **Community**- When the followers become element of your community, you gain prompt entry to them. You get to know about their likes, dislikes and also about the challenges. You can engage them in ongoing conversations that can be more inestimable than any kind of paid market research.
- **Website traffic**-Social Media is major traffic generator. When you share videos, blog posts and other content from the website, you give your audience a reason to click and visit your website etc.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Objectives of the study

1. To understand the impact of social media on purchase decision.
2. To study if negative review affects the brand perception.
3. To study the importance of social media to make a purchase decision.

2.2. Research Design

Quantitative research methodology is in this report because it provides us with quantifiable information which can be analyzed to get definite results. The research design is descriptive research. The above said objectives were fulfilled with the help of questionnaire that was designed to conduct primary survey. Certain variables were analyzed after data collection. The variables tested were Knowledge, Decision, Opinion, Share experience, Recommendation, Information, Info Pages, Reviews, Negative Post, Confidence, Queries, Reliable, Likes, Subscription, Advertisements and Influence.

Sources of Data

Primary Data - For collecting primary data a survey was done through questionnaire, which was personally given to the customers and was filled through interacting with different people

Secondary Data - For theoretical overview, secondary data was collected from various websites and research papers.

Sample Size-200 respondents from Delhi/NCR area.

Sampling technique- The sampling technique used was judgmental sampling. Responses of only those people were accepted who were active on social media

Tools for Analysis

- Correlation Analysis
- Frequency Analysis

III. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1. Frequency Analysis on Knowledge sharing of the people

Knowledge	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	19	9.5	9.5	9.5
Disagree	33	16.5	16.5	26.0
Neutral	30	15.0	15.0	41.0
Agree	69	34.5	34.5	75.5
Strongly Agree	49	24.5	24.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source : Primary Data

From Table 1 it can be interpreted that 69 people agree that knowledge sharing is useful in social media on different products and services which affects the decision.

Table 2. Frequency Analysis on Impact of Social Media on purchase Decision

Decision	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	20	10.0	10.1	10.1
Disagree	28	14.0	14.1	24.1
Neutral	34	17.0	17.1	41.2
Agree	74	37.0	37.2	78.4
Strongly Agree	43	21.5	21.6	100.0
Total	199	99.5	100.0	
System	1	.5		
Total	200	100.0		

Source : Primary Data

From Table 2 it can be interpreted that 74 people agree that social media has an impact on buyer purchase decision this contributes almost 78% of the total respondents.

Table 3. Frequency Analysis on Impact of reviews and opinions on purchase Decision

Opinions	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	22	11.0	11.0	11.0
Disagree	29	14.5	14.5	25.5
Neutral	32	16.0	16.0	41.5
Agree	60	30.0	30.0	71.5
Strongly Agree	57	28.5	28.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source : Primary Data

From Table 3 it can be interpreted that 60 people agree that social media reviews and opinions affect purchase decision.

Table 4. Frequency Analysis on sharing of post purchase experience on social media

Share experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	22	11.0	11.0	11.0
Disagree	44	22.0	22.0	33.0
Neutral	22	11.0	11.0	44.0
Agree	69	34.5	34.5	78.5
Strongly Agree	43	21.5	21.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source : Primary Data

From Table 4 it can be interpreted that 69 people share their post purchase experience on social media.

Table 5. Frequency Analysis on impact of recommendations on purchase decision

Recommendation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	23	11.5	11.6	11.6
Disagree	22	11.0	11.1	22.6
Neutral	34	17.0	17.1	39.7
Agree	68	34.0	34.2	73.9
Strongly Agree	52	26.0	26.1	100.0
Total	199	99.5	100.0	
System	1	.5		
Total	200	100.0		

Source : Primary Data

From table 5 it can be interpreted that 68 people feel that the recommendations made on social media affect their purchase decision

Table 6. Frequency Analysis on impact of information on purchase decision

Information	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	24	12.0	12.0	12.0
Disagree	30	15.0	15.0	27.0
Neutral	32	16.0	16.0	43.0
Agree	64	32.0	32.0	75.0
strongly agree	50	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source : Primary Data

From Table 6 it can be interpreted that 64 people frequently use social media information for making purchase decision.

Table 7 Frequency Analysis on availability of product information

Information pages	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	17	8.5	8.5	8.5
Disagree	32	16.0	16.1	24.6
Neutral	34	17.0	17.1	41.7
Agree	66	33.0	33.2	74.9
Strongly Agree	50	25.0	25.1	100.0
Total	199	99.5	100.0	
System	1	.5		
Total	200	100.0		

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 7 that 66 people feel that the pages of the companies on Social Media provide ample information about products

Table 8 Frequency Analysis on consumer generated online reviews

Reviews	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	18	9.0	9.0	9.0
Disagree	31	15.5	15.5	24.5
Neutral	39	19.5	19.5	44.0
Agree	68	34.0	34.0	78.0
strongly agree	44	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 8 that 68 people generally read consumer generated online reviews on social media before making purchase decision

Table 9 Frequency Analysis on negative posts on social media about the product

Negative post	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	22	11.0	11.1	11.1
Disagree	26	13.0	13.1	24.1
Neutral	36	18.0	18.1	42.2
Agree	60	30.0	30.2	72.4
Strongly Agree	55	27.5	27.6	100.0
Total	199	99.5	100.0	
System	1	.5		
Total	200	100.0		

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 9 that 60 people think that negative posts on social media about the product affects their purchase decision

Table 10 Frequency Analysis on social media increasing confidence to buy the product

Confidence	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	19	9.5	9.5	9.5
Disagree	30	15.0	15.0	24.5
Neutral	29	14.5	14.5	39.0
Agree	72	36.0	36.0	75.0
Strongly Agree	50	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 10 that 72 people feel that reading posts on social media increases confidence to buy the product

Table 11 Frequency Analysis on impact of queries in social media

Queries	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	20	10.0	10.1	10.1
Disagree	36	18.0	18.2	28.3
Neutral	28	14.0	14.1	42.4
Agree	62	31.0	31.3	73.7
Strongly Agree	52	26.0	26.3	100.0
Total	198	99.0	100.0	
System	2	1.0		
Total	200	100.0		

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 11, that 62 people generally make queries on social media before making any purchase.

Table 12 Frequency Analysis on Reliability of social media than traditional media

Reliable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	18	9.0	9.0	9.0
	disagree	31	15.5	15.5	24.5
	neutral	35	17.5	17.5	42.0
	agree	63	31.5	31.5	73.5
	strongly agree	53	26.5	26.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 12, that 63 people feel social media is more reliable as compared to traditional media like newspaper, TV, radio etc

Table 13 Frequency Analysis on Expression of Likes and Dislikes on social media

Likes	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	strongly disagree	23	11.5	11.5	11.5
	disagree	27	13.5	13.5	25.0
	neutral	36	18.0	18.0	43.0
	agree	58	29.0	29.0	72.0
	strongly agree	56	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 13 that 58 people refer to number of likes and dislikes while considering any product or service.

Table 14 Frequency Analysis of Product updates and alerts on social media

Subscription		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	24	12.0	12.1	12.1
	disagree	28	14.0	14.1	26.1
	neutral	34	17.0	17.1	43.2
	agree	64	32.0	32.2	75.4
	strongly agree	49	24.5	24.6	100.0
	Total	199	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.5		
Total		200	100.0		

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 14, **64 people** generally subscribe themselves to updates and alerts regarding a brand or a product through social media networking sites

Table 15 Frequency Analysis of advertisements on social media

Advertisements		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	21	10.5	10.6	10.6
	disagree	34	17.0	17.1	27.6
	neutral	30	15.0	15.1	42.7
	agree	63	31.5	31.7	74.4
	strongly agree	51	25.5	25.6	100.0
	Total	199	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.5		
Total		200	100.0		

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 15, that 63 people generally notice advertisements on social media

Table 16 Frequency Analysis of advertisement influence on purchase decision

Influence		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	17	8.5	8.5	8.5
	disagree	36	18.0	18.1	26.6
	neutral	32	16.0	16.1	42.7
	agree	68	34.0	34.2	76.9
	strongly disagree	46	23.0	23.1	100.0
	Total	199	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.5		
Total		200	100.0		

Source : Primary Data

It can be interpreted from Table 16, that 68 people feel that the advertisements influence them to make purchase.

Table 17. Correlation analysis to study the relationship between the tested variables

		knowledge	decision	opinions	share experience	recommendation	information	information pages	reviews	negative posts	confidence	queries	reliable	likes	subscription	advertisements	influence
knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	.854**	.806**	.707**	.791**	.816*	.828**	.798*	.801**	.813**	.751*	.774**	.800**	.798**	.777**	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	199	200	200	199	200	199	200	199	200	198	200	200	199	199	199
decision	Pearson Correlation	.854**	1	.858**	.735**	.816**	.822*	.818**	.835*	.857**	.842**	.766*	.836**	.824**	.849**	.800**	.779**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	199	199	199	199	198	199	198	199	198	199	197	199	199	198	198	198
Opinions	Pearson Correlation	.806**	.858**	1	.767**	.808**	.808*	.846**	.822*	.810**	.831**	.819*	.817**	.814**	.822**	.802**	.766**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	199	200	200	199	200	199	200	199	200	198	200	200	199	199	199
Share Experience	Pearson Correlation	.707**	.735**	.767**	1	.787**	.825*	.780**	.747*	.644**	.745**	.873*	.707**	.813**	.770**	.822**	.826**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

	N	200	199	200	200	199	200	199	200	199	200	198	200	200	199	199	199
Recommendation	Pearson Correlation	.791**	.816**	.808**	.787**	1	.823*	.809**	.768*	.802**	.813**	.814*	.783**	.864**	.814**	.798**	.789**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	199	198	199	199	199	199	198	199	198	199	197	199	199	198	198	198
Information	Pearson Correlation	.816**	.822**	.808**	.825**	.823**	1	.851**	.801*	.778**	.805**	.831*	.799**	.858**	.844**	.828**	.836**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	199	200	200	199	200	199	200	199	200	198	200	200	199	199	199
Info Pages	Pearson Correlation	.828**	.818**	.846**	.780**	.809**	.851*	1	.847*	.819**	.859**	.839*	.806**	.837**	.826**	.836**	.804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	199	198	199	199	198	199	199	199	198	199	197	199	199	198	198	198
Reviews	Pearson Correlation	.798**	.835**	.822**	.747**	.768**	.801*	.847**	1	.808**	.867**	.754*	.852**	.797**	.821**	.782**	.812**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	199	200	200	199	200	199	200	199	200	198	200	200	199	199	199
Negative Post	Pearson Correlation	.801**	.857**	.810**	.644**	.802**	.778*	.819**	.808*	1	.852**	.719*	.816**	.790**	.795**	.756**	.755**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	199	198	199	199	198	199	198	199	199	199	197	199	199	198	198	198
Confidence	Pearson Correlation	.813**	.842**	.831**	.745**	.813**	.805*	.859**	.867*	.852**	1	.753*	.852**	.805**	.816**	.761**	.791**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	199	200	200	199	200	199	200	199	200	198	200	200	199	199	199
Queries	Pearson Correlation	.751**	.766**	.819**	.873**	.814**	.831*	.839**	.754*	.719**	.753**	1	.751**	.817**	.803**	.863**	.838**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	198	197	198	198	197	198	197	198	197	198	198	198	198	197	197	197

Reliable	Pearson Correlation	.774**	.836**	.817**	.707**	.783**	.799**	.806**	.852**	.816**	.852**	.751**	1	.823**	.849**	.760**	.784**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	199	200	200	199	200	199	200	199	200	198	200	200	199	199	199
Likes	Pearson Correlation	.800**	.824**	.814**	.813**	.864**	.858**	.837**	.797**	.790**	.805**	.817**	.823**	1	.855**	.843**	.826**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	200	199	200	200	199	200	199	200	199	200	198	200	200	199	199	199
Subscription	Pearson Correlation	.798**	.849**	.822**	.770**	.814**	.844**	.826**	.821**	.795**	.816**	.803**	.849**	.855**	1	.854**	.812**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	199	198	199	199	198	199	198	199	198	199	197	199	199	199	198	198
Advertisements	Pearson Correlation	.777**	.800**	.802**	.822**	.798**	.828**	.836**	.782**	.756**	.761**	.863**	.760**	.843**	.854**	1	.855**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	199	198	199	199	198	199	198	199	198	199	197	199	199	198	199	198
Influence	Pearson Correlation	.778**	.779**	.766**	.826**	.789**	.836**	.804**	.812**	.755**	.791**	.838**	.784**	.826**	.812**	.855**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	199	198	199	199	198	199	198	199	198	199	197	199	199	198	198	199
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).																	
Source : Primary Data																	

From Table 17 it can be interpreted that there is a positive correlation between all variables. The correlation between the selected variables as follows was tested with the impact of social media on purchase decision of consumers. The variables are decision($r=.854^{**}$), opinion($r=.806^{**}$), share experience($r=.707^{**}$), recommendation($r=.891^{**}$), information($r=.816^{**}$), information pages($r=.828^{**}$), reviews($r=.798^{**}$), negative post($r=.801^{**}$), confidence($r=.813^{**}$),

queries($r=.751^{**}$), reliable($r=.774^{**}$), likes($r=.800^{**}$), subscription($r=.798^{**}$), advertisements($r=.777^{**}$), and influence($r=.778^{**}$). A significant positive correlation was found that is evident from the derived scores. Since the value of $r = (0 \text{ to } 1)$, the variables tend to increase or decrease together which means there is a positive relationship between the variables. The analysis of data is done on the basis of maximum number of frequency for a given response. The options which got maximum frequency, only those responses are considered and on the basis of that, the data is interpreted.

IV. Conclusion

From the analysis it can be concluded that social media has a great impact on the buyers purchase decision. There is a significant relationship between the categorical variables chosen.. High percentage of SNS users agree with the impact of various variables chosen on their purchase decision. SNS users feel that the knowledge sharing on social media affects their purchase decision. This helps in creating unequalled amount of data. This data can be used to carry out future research. SNS users feel that a social media impact on their purchase decision which means social media has a significant role to play in buying decision. SNS users trust online reviews and opinions and it seems reviews from friend and strangers are trusted equally. These days people have started sharing their post purchase experience on SNS. This means social media has become a platform which helps in spreading word of mouth. Recommendations made on SNS affects the purchase decision. This means reading positive/negative posts may affect the purchase decision of the people. People these days use SNS information for making purchase decision. Which means the data generated on social networking sites is valuable and people use it for making their purchase decisions? SNS users feel that the pages of the companies on SNS's supplement ample information about the products. Which means these pages helps the customer to do their preliminary research and it also helps them in speeding up their buying decision process and avoids questions at the store. Reading negative and positive opinions may make people to change their decisions. Therefore markets need to guard them against the dissatisfied customers as this may lead to negative word of mouth. SNS is a good place to find answers to your queries. It is a useful place to get most of the information about the goods and services. People find social media to be more reliable because it can't be scripted as we can see in the case of TV, newspaper. Advertisements play a great role on SNS. They help in influencing people to make decision.

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Implementation of Bell Curve in Performance Appraisal – A Critical Review

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp86-93, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

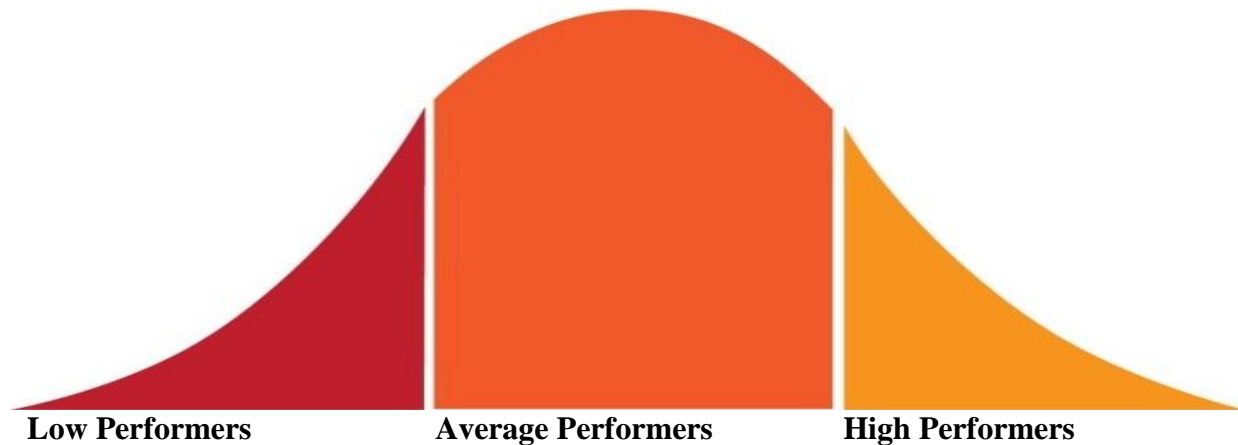
Bell Curve is the tool embedded in the HR processes like Performance Appraisals and Compensation Model. At the outcome of the Performance Appraisal, once the performance ratings have been assigned by various department managers for their employees, the challenge for the HR professional is to distribute and distinguish the excellent, good, average, poor and very poor performers. To carry out this exercise, Bell Curve is being used as a tool to distribute the population on each of this segment. Though this approach appreciated and adopted by most of the organizations in the years, a different school of thought has started emerging in the recent times against the concept of bell curve. While the organizations like KPMG, GE, Google, Microsoft, Accenture, and Adobe have discarded the Bell Curve System in the recent years, the big Indian Organizations including Wipro, ICICI Bank and Aditya Birla Group still distinguish the performance of their employees on the basis of Bell Curve only. This paper attempts to discuss about the merit, demerits and understanding about Bell Curve and to suggest for effective implementation of the same. Also, a serious thought has given to determine whether the Bell Curve is itself too bad and an undesirable system to discard in the contemporary business scenario.

Key Words: *Bell Curve, Performance Appraisal, Performance Rating, normal distribution, feedback*

I. Introduction

The performance of an organization depends on the contribution and performance the employees associated with. Every employee and his contribution is part of the core ethos of a successful organization. This has lead to various appraisal techniques used to analyze the individual's share to the company's objective and one such popular model used is the Bell Curve. Bell curve is nothing but a graphical representation of the fact that everybody's performance is not the same. Some employees will be outstanding, some average, and others at the bottom. Irrespective of whether or not the bell curve is the most appropriate representation of performance or human behaviour, some believe that it is the most viable option, especially in services-driven sectors, which have large workforces. Most of the big organizations started implementing this tool in the late '90s.

The term "bell curve" comes from the fact that the graph used to depict a normal distribution consists of a bell-shaped line. The bell curve is also known as a normal distribution. The bell curve is less commonly referred to as a Gaussian distribution, after German mathematician and physicist Karl Gauss, who popularized the model in the scientific community by using it to analyze astronomical data. This model is based on law of averages or standard deviation. When we draw a bell shape on a graph paper, the picture will depict a peak of a curve with two tails on two extremes. The peak of the curve is the performance of majority of the employees within an organization will be "average performers" gravitating towards the 'center', whereas the tail accounts for the "underperformers" and "high performers", as shown in the figure hereunder:



Performance Rating and Normalization

At the end of performance year, every organization will carry out the performance appraisal for its employees. The performance of the employees will be assessed by their immediate supervisors or managers and the performance rating will be assigned based on appraisal guidelines. Some organizations will indicate the performance rating in the numerical form on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high. Some organizations will describe and distinguish the performance ratings as "Excellent, Very Good, Good, Poor and Very Poor" and others will state as "Far Exceed Expectation, Exceed Expectation, Meets Expectation, Below Expectation and Far Below Expectation". Normally, Excellent and Very Good will fall under "High Performers" category, while "Good Performer" falls in "Average Performer" and "Poor and Very Poor Performers" fall in "Under Performer" category. Based on these descriptions, the performance ratings will be assigned by the immediate supervisors or managers of the employees concerned.

The performance ratings so assigned will be populated on each group as, for example, Excellent, Very Good, Good, Poor and Very Poor and ranking will be assigned under each group. To illustrate, if 10 employees have been rated as Excellent, ranking will be assigned from 1 to 10 for those employees. Such exercise will also be done for the employees who have been assigned with Very Good, Good, Poor and Very Poor performance ratings. This exercise will be

ideally carried out by the HR Head along with the Business Head for the entire population of the business unit. After ranking the entire population on each performance rating category, the percentage of bell curve will be implemented and thus the forced ranking method will be adopted. To elaborate based on the business performance in a financial year, the organization will determine that how many percentage of the population will fall in under performer, average performer and high performer. In ideal situation, most of the organizations will determine 20 % of the population as high performer, 60 % of the population as average performer and 20 % as low performer. With this distribution in an organization, if there is a population of 100 employees have been assessed and 25 employees have been rated as high performer, based on the ranking method the top 20 employees will be considered as high performers and the balance 5 employees will be considered as average performers though their individual rating fall under the category of high performer. Similarly, the employees who have got low ranking in the average performer category will be moved or pulled down, to poor performer category. Based on this rating, the employees will be rewarded with annual increment. Thus, the bell curve is being used in the Performance Appraisal process to determine and distinguish performers as Under, Average and High Performers which has become a debate in the present corporate world. The views of the corporates for and against the concept of bell curve are discussed hereunder.

Discussion

The storm started when the organizations like KPMG, GE, Google, Microsoft, Accenture, and Adobe have decided to discard the bell curve based performance appraisal system, as it is no more employee friendly system. KPMG in India discarded the bell-curve and introduced a real-time feedback approach. Employees are now given an instant feedback when they complete an engagement; they can thus work on their areas of development on an ongoing basis, and it avoids the year-end appraisal related disappointments, if any. Shalini Pillay, Head-People, Performance and Culture at KPMG-India stated that they have introduced the change for the performance year ending March 2016 and hence providing the requisite training and preparing the managers who are responsible for giving the feedback to handle the new process.

Accenture-India has discarded the bell-curve or similar mechanisms for conducting annual performance appraisals of their employees. Confirming in response to Time Of India's queries that they were shifting from an annual 'performance management' process to a new 'performance achievement' approach that includes real-time, forward-looking conversations about setting priorities, growing strengths and creating rewarding career opportunities for their people. The 'performance achievement' approach would focus on the achievements and talents of each employee. It would result in a holistic view of performance and potential and guide in appropriate decision making relating to rewards and career progression. According to them, they were on a journey and were committed to moving at the right pace to roll out the new process across the organization. In this new process, the employees are not compared against each other and there is no cap on the number of people who can fall within a particular segment. "The two basic pillars for successfully transitioning are rating absolute performance, rather than relative performance which the bell-curve measured, and having constant conversations," says Sriram, Partner at Aventus Partners, a HR Consultancy and Talent Acquisition Firm. Recommending the

move of discarding bell-curve, he added, the employees should be explained that a regular feedback will enable a continuous learning culture; it will encourage them to be risk-taking, innovative and more collaborative. From the team-leaders' perspective, as the ownership of the process lies with them, it empowers them, helps them make effective compensation decisions and above all results in honest conversation with individual team members.

On the other hand the big Indian Organizations including Wipro, ICICI Bank and Aditya Birla Group still evaluate their employees on the basis of Bell Curve only. Dr. Santrupt Misra, CEO, Carbon Black Business and Director, Group Human Resources, Aditya Birla expressed that one had to understand the principle on which the normal distribution curve is based. A normal distribution curve in a large organization talks about the distribution of a large population under various performance parameters, which leads to some being placed on the extreme left, some on the extreme right and some in the middle and categorized as outstanding, meeting expectation or below expectation. According to him that there is nothing wrong in the principle per se. Also, he added that the usefulness of a bell curve depends on how well the process being applied and how fair the system is. The problem lies in inadequate explanation, bad process management and lack of understanding among the managers.

Concreting to the views of Dr. Santrupt Misra, Mr. Prabir Jha, President & Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Reliance Industries responded that a well understood bell curve principle is about building meritocracy and practicing a differentiated rewards strategy. A bell curve, he added, enables appropriate reward, focused intervention and development for various people. Not to be understood as branding for life, a bell curve keeps the bar high. Like every approach, it has its limitation. But discarding it may be throwing the baby out with bath water.

Having gone through the views of both sides, it is pertinent to understand the objectives, advantages and disadvantages of the bell curve in performance appraisal.

Objectives of Bell Curve

- **Limited budgets and unlimited aspirations:** Businesses have limited budgets for employees and at the same time employees have unlimited aspirations resulting from peer pressure or consumerism rather than from performance. To balance these diverse compulsive needs, a mechanism in the form of a bell curve is required.
- **The need for a high performance work culture:** To build a culture of success or high performance, it is imperative that organizations identify the right role models and protect them. Absolute ranking does not distinguish between the different classes of performance and encourages building a culture of mediocrity. The inability to identify high performers and create role models does not encourage fence sitters to strive for more.
- **High Performers don't appreciate depreciation:** It is the reality that the contributions of the top 20 percent drive the organizations to the next orbit, while the other 80 percent can sustain the organization. The high performers need the recognition for their

contribution in some form, if not monetary always. Non recognition of high performers results in greater disappointments.

Advantages of Bell Curve

- **Identifying top performers:** Every organization has the requirement of identifying its top performers, rewarding them suitably and retain them in the organization. Bell Curve is the tool to differentiate the performances of different employees. By identifying the top performers, it will be helpful for the organizations to make the career and development plans for them and build succession plans through talent management process.
- **Managing the different ratings of managers:** Some of the managers will be very lenient in rating their employees resulting in larger cluster of employees in a high rating group and some managers will give strict rating for their employees which will lead to have large number of employees in a low rating group. These unbalanced rating will demotivate the high performers and hence bell curve will be used to manage above anomalies.
- **Identifying suitable positions for the employees:** An underperforming employee may be more suited for another position in the organization. Based on the forced ranking with adequate analysis about the present job description vis-à-vis the profile of the employee concerned, HR may identify and propose an alternative position wherein the employee may perform better in future.
- **Identifying training needs:** The bell curve will help in identifying the training needs that is more appropriate for the employees of different levels.

Disadvantages of Bell Curve

- **Rigidity in nature:** Using the bell curve model for performance appraisal may be considered as a rigid approach for rating the employees. Sometimes managers will be compelled to put their employees in specific gradients for the sake of adhering to bell curve requirements. This will happen to a manager who has very less number of employees in his team.
- **Loss of morale:** The performance appraisal based on the forced ratings creates doubts in the minds of the manager and his employee. This will lead to a loss of morale and deterioration of job performance.
- **Not suitable for small companies:** The bell curve will not be suitable for small companies where the number of employees is less than 30. With fewer numbers, the categorization cannot be done in right way and results will be more erroneous.

Approach to successfully implement Bell Curve

1. At the outset, everyone will appreciate that the concept of bell curve is not as bad as the way it is being projected in the contemporary corporate world. The critics also should clearly understand to distinguish between the appraisal system and the bell curve or forced ranking method as both the system are not same. To elaborate, bell curve is the tool applied post the appraisal done by the managers for their employees. It is a tool used by the organizations to justify their comparison of employees within a group and their budgetary constraints. The rationale behind the reward system is purely based on the business performance of the organization.
2. It is not correct to comment that the bell curve is a static method. The performance ratio need not be always with less percentage on extreme left and right side of the bell curve. Depending on the business performance, the bell curve norms may be redefined and accordingly when there is an excellent business performance, the ratio of high performer may be increased and vice versa. In other words, the organization may choose to have a liberal or non-liberal bell curve to appreciate or not appreciate the contributions of its employees. In the same fashion within the organization, each of the functions, geographies, and domains have a flexible bell curve based on their contributions, without jeopardizing the organizational level bell curve.
3. The critics also have misunderstood that the bell curve is used to fire the people very hastily. The objective of bell curve is to identify and distinguish the employees based on the performance and there its purpose ends. The bell curve nowhere recommends to fire the bad performers. It all depends upon the approaches of the organizations which will decide about the poor performers. At this juncture, the intervention of human resources is very importantly required to create an opportunity for the poor performers to correct and overcome from their short comings. The big business house like Aditya Birla Group is having a very strong root of bell curve, as a part of its Performance Management System and Annual Compensation Review. The bell curve system in the said group is implemented in a very robust manner to identify the poor performers and develop them for better performers in the subsequent years. The group never uses the bell curve to fire the people in a very hasty manner. Rather it gives rope to even bad performers for three appraisal cycle and it is very '*rarest of the rare*' cases who will get into such trap.
4. The critics also misconceived that the bell curve model lacks a continual and informal feedback system. Again it is pertinent to reiterate that the performance appraisal and bell curve are two different and distinguished approaches, as the former determines about the individual performance rating while the latter deals about relative rating. In the entire Performance Management System, bell curve is neither a stumble block nor impediment for implementing the continual feedback to the employees about their performance. SABMiller India is one of the major organizations in India using bell curve to calibrate the performance rating of the employees. At the same it has got robust performance management system providing continual feedback to the employees. At the beginning of

the financial year once the goal setting exercise is completed, the manager and the employee will have one-on-one session to review the performance of the employee every month from May to September. In October, the employee will undergo mid-year review process post which again the one-on-one session is being administered from November to March and in April the annual performance review will be done. Thus, SABMiller India through its performance management system ensures that the employee gets continual feedback of his performance throughout the year. From the above, it is quite evident that it is not correct to say that bell curve model lacks continual and informal feedback system.

5. To implement the bell curve system very successfully, it would be ideal that the managers are explained the concept in advance and the reason behind implementing the same through a workshop. By doing so, they will be mentally prepared to deal the performance of their employees in a very meticulous way without any bias and they will take utmost care to evaluate the performance their employees objectively and rank them based on merits fitting into bell curve norms. This will help to empower the managers with relevant information and help them to set the right expectations. Aditya Birla Group had tried this method by having a detailed workshop for the line managers on the concept of bell curve, explaining rationale behind in having the bell curve model in determining performance rating of the employees and successfully implemented the same.
6. Post normalization of the ratings and before the annual compensation review is implemented, HR should convene a meeting to all the employees and explain that how the whole process of annual performance review was done, rating normalization carried out through bell curve system, rationale behind having the bell curve model, overall business performance, ratio of bell curve decided based on the business performance and the reward linked to each level of performance rating.

Conclusion

Bell Curve also known as ‘normal distribution curve’, as discussed above, is a tool to arrive the relative rating of the employees and it is absolutely a scientific method conceived by Karl Gauss. This is a very popular model being adopted by most of the major Indian organizations to distinguish the performers and reward them suitably. Every system or approach has got merits and demerits and bell curve is not an exception. But at the same time, the bell curve model is more reliable because of its scientific based approach and hence the said model is not too bad to discard as viewed by some of the companies, as it is more appropriate tool for the manufacturing organizations. It also to be noted that the organizations which are against the bell curve model have also adopted new approach on pilot basis only. As stated by Shalini Pillay, Head-People, Performance and Culture at KPMG-India that the change in the system requires a serious realignment in mind-set, culture and way of working and the benefits of the new mechanism will not be immediately quantified. In this context, it is inferred that how for the new feedback system will be more effective and better than bell curve system. Hence, it is concluded that rather discarding the bell curve, model itself very blindly, it is high time for the

organizations to revisit their approach in implementing the bell curve in a very fair and transparent manner to utilize the full benefit of the system in the interest of the employees and the organization.

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A Study on Work-Family Conflict among Women Nurses in Hospitals – An Indian Perspective

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp94-104, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

The present study makes an attempt to examine those individual factors which account for work-family conflict and Family -work conflict among women nurse in Chennai hospitals, a metropolitan city in India. To achieve the above mention objective a sample of 200 nurses in hospitals was surveyed the underline factors impacting work-family conflict and Family-work conflict. The data collected was subjected to analysis through mean, median, standard deviation, ANOVAs chi-square test for work family conflict among women. The data was compared in the basis of self -efficacy for work family conflict management, work support, family support, family enrichment, work enrichment, work satisfaction, family satisfaction.

KeyWords: *Work-family conflict, Family work-conflict, Self-efficacy, Work Satisfaction, Family satisfaction, Work family enrichment, Family satisfaction.*

I. Introduction

In recent times employers have started realizing the importance of overall development of human resource. In spite of the tremendous development in the area of technology, marketing and finance overall organizational situation cannot improved unless good human resource development practices are introduced. Maintaining a traditional personnel department and providing minimum on-the-job training to the employees is no more sufficient.

Though monetary benefits still occupy the first place in the list of element of work-family conflict, other elements like physical working conditions, job restructuring and job redesign, career development, promotional opportunities etc. are gaining importance rapidly. As such the worker expects the management to improve all these facilities which thereby improve work-family conflict. By providing good work-family conflict, one can eliminate the exploitation injustice, inequality oppression and restriction which temper the continuous growth of human resource which in turn leads to its overall development.

Work –family conflict has its root in scientific management advocated by Greehausa parasuraman way back in 1985s. The mechanical approach or quantitative approach that scientific management assumed, gave way to the frustration of worker, which led to human relation movement and later socio-technical movement which is the basis for today's work –family management. Thus the evolution of the concept work-family conflict was mainly in three phases-

scientific management, human relations movement and finally socio-technical movement. The socio-technical systems advocate such an organizational design which ensures high work-family conflict. Improving work-family conflict was impending factors like resource deficiency, Environmental threats and serious family problem, Lack of consciousness among employees in this regard can also be considered as one of the reason for delayed improvement of work-family conflict. Large scale industries and multi-national have started realizing the need for the improvement of work –family conflict.

II. Conceptual Framework

PREDICTIVE MODELS OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

Reactance Model refers to set of arguments used to describe different strategies and individuals could use in response to a stimuli's which could result in different outcomes Frone (2003) in his theoretical overview of work-family stated that there are six models that can be used to explain the effects of work-family conflict models.

Segmentation model purports that life and family represent two separated unrelated domain that have no influence on each other.

Congruence model suggested that since work and family share a common cause, they can have either a positive or negative correlation and that any relationship found between two is spurious.

Identity model suggests that work and family are so closely entwined that any attempt to differentiate between the two would be futile. Frone provides the example of the work priests and rabbis, whose personal and family lives are expected to, reflect the values they must apical by in their work roles, when describing the integrative model.

The spillover model postulates that one domain affect, another by way of a positive relationship in essence, as the name suggests, spilling over from one domain to the next.

Finally, the resource drain model posits that the negative relationship that exists between work and family occurs as a result of one domain using up time and energy that are needed for the other domain. (For example an employee who is in a negative mood state at work will experience a negative mood state at home, as the negative affect carried over from the workday would spill over into his or her home life. Likewise, a positive mood state at work would lead to a positive mood state a home. The compensatory model suggests that there is a negative relationship between work and family, and that, for example reduced satisfaction in one domain would lead a person to try to make up (compensate) for this by increasing energy exerted towards some aspect in the other domain domain).

Casual Models of Work- Family Conflict

Over the past twenty years, researchers have made valiant attempts to understand work – family conflict by examining the consequences of the construct. Past research examining these antecedents and consequences has purported that work –family conflict has deleterious

consequences such as lowered job and life satisfaction, increased job life stress, lowered organizational commitment and increased intention to turnover (Allen et, al., 2000, Marjor et. al., 2002) using the establishment of these relationship as a foundation research attempt to further explain the nature of work- family conflict by suggesting several potential model.

Objective of the Study

- To study the relationship between demographic variable and factors of work-family conflict.
- To study the relationship between the factors of work-family conflict.
- To understand the work –family conflict of employees at hospitals.

Scope of the Study

Work family conflict is the major concerning issues in many hospitals today. Women employee in various hospital experience work family conflict which involves more problems faced by employees in their work and family life's. There is more inter-role conflict among family and at work place. If a woman is facing a conflict she will be put into stress both physically as well as mentally. In today's environment it is becomes very important to balance work and life for all women nurses.

Hypothesis of the study

- There is a significant difference between age and the factors of work-family conflict.
- There is a significant difference among marital status of employee with factors of work-family conflict.
- There is a significant difference among shifts of employee with factors of work-family conflict.

III. Methodology

The study is an attempt to understand the work-family conflict in women nurse in Chennai hospitals in the light of the self-efficacy foe work-family conflict, self-efficacy for family work conflict, work support, family support, work-to- family conflict, family-to-work conflict, work -to- family enrichment, family-to-work enrichment, work satisfaction, family satisfaction. A self – developed questionnaire was administered among 375 nurses from various hospitals in Chennai using quota sampling technique. The tool was tested for its reliability and its cronbachs' alpha value was 0.786. 212 Responses were received of which 200 questionnaires were complete and usable for the present study.

Measurement Scale

`The questionnaire consisted of a series of statement, where the employees were requested to tick the appropriate column in true and honest way toward work-family conflict. A Likert scale was used for that the respondent can select a numerical score ranging from 1to 5 for

each statements where 5-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, and finally 1- strongly disagree respectively.

IV. Data Collection

Data collection and its subsequent analysis are considered to be important step and heart of the research in research work. After collection of data with the help of relevant tools and techniques, the next logical step, is to analyses and interpret data with a view to arriving at empirical solution to the problem. The data analysis for the present research was done quantitatively with the help of both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation and for the inferential statistics analysis of co-variance were used during data analysis. To complete this study properly, it is necessary to analyze the data collected in order to test the hypothesis and answer the research question.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

The Kasier-Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of adequacy is an index used to examine the appropriateness of factors analysis. High values between (0.5 and 1.0) indicate factor analysis is appropriate, Value below 0.5 imply that factors may not be appropriate.

Table 1 Shows Kmo and Bartlett's

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.622
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6912.966
	Df	1275
	Sig.	0.000

Source : Primary Data

Results

The questionnaire contains of ten section of factors of self-efficacy for work-family conflict management, self –efficacy for family work conflict management, work support on family / friends, and co-workers, family support on family/friends and co-workers, work-family

Anova

ANOVA was used to compare the mean for these parameters and to establish whether there exists a significant difference among the mean for the group. To get results from the ANOVA, the following condition are to be fulfilled:

- Normally: the distribution of the residuals is normal
- Equal variance or (homogeneity) of variance the variance of data in group should be same.

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant difference between age and the factors of work-family conflict.

Table 2. Significance Difference between the Age Group and the Factors of Work- Family Conflict

Factors Of Work-Family Conflict	Age Groups	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	P Value
Self- Efficacy WFC	Between Groups Within Groups Total	18.714 142.841 161.555	6.238 0.729	8.560	0.000**
Self –Efficacy FWC	Between Groups Within Groups Total	8.854 119.233 128.087	2.951 0.608	4.852	0.003**
Work Support Family/Friends	Between Groups Within Groups Total	12.087 234.538 246.625	4.029 1.197	3.367	0.020*
Work Support Co-Workers	Between Groups Within Groups Total	10.099 111.638 121.737	3.366 0.570	5.910	0.001**
Family Support Family/Friends	Between Groups Within Groups Total	2.964 187.276 190.240	0.988 0.955	1.034	0.379
Family Support Co-Workers	Between Groups Within Groups Total	6.298 178.270 184.569	2.099 0.910	2.308	0.078
Work-To-Family Conflict	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.223 54.214 55.437	0.408 0.277	1.474	0.223
Family –To –Work Conflict	Between Groups Within Groups Total	5.839 143.674 149.514	1.946 0.733	2.655	0.050
Work Family Enrichment	Between Groups Within Groups Total	20.293 179.851 200.143	6.764 0.918	7.372	0.000**

Family-To-Work Enrichment	Between Groups Within Groups Total	12.008 104.984 116.992	4.003 0.536	7.473	0.000**
Work Satisfaction	Between Groups Within Groups Total	0.830 61.009 61.839	0.277 0.311	0.889	0.448
Family Satisfaction	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.268 53.586 54.854	0.423 0.273	1.546	0.204

** Statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ *Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

Source : Primary Data

Results

From the above table 2 it can be interpreted that the P value is greater than 0.05. That there is no significant difference between age and factors of work-family conflict family support, family support with co-workers, work-family conflict, family –worker conflict,, work satisfaction ,family satisfaction. As the P value is lesser than 0.05 there is a significant difference between the age and the factors of work –family conflict self-efficacy for work-family conflict, self-efficacy for family work conflict, work support. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted when the value is lesser than 0.05, when null hypothesis is rejected the value is greater than 0.05.

Correlation

Correlation analysis is conducted to examine the relationship among the variable. Correlation is a statistical technique that can show whether and how pairs of variable are strongly related. Correlation studies are there possible results of a correlation study, a positive correlation a negative correlation, and no correlation.

The main result of a correlation is called the correlation coefficient (or “r”). It ranges from -1.0 to +1.0. The closer r is to +r or -1, the more closely the two variables are related. If r is close to 0, it means there is no relationship between the variables. If r is positive, it means that as one variable gets larger the other gets larger. If r is negative it means that as one variable gets larger, the other gets smaller (often called an “inverse” correlation).

Hypothesis 2 - There is a positive relationship between factors of work-family conflict.

Table3 Correlation between Factors of Work- Family Conflict

Fact ors	SF WC	SF WC	WSF /F	WS CO	FSF /F	FCO	WF C	FW C	WF E	FW E	WS	FS
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SF WC	1	0.23 7**	0.23 9**	0.08 5	0.30 0**	0.09 7	- 0.26 8**	- 0.33 4**	0.26 5**	0.14 0*	0.08 5	0.07 0
Sig.		0.00 1	0.00 1	0.23 3	0.00 0	0.17 0	0.00 0	0.00 0	0.00 0	0.04 8	0.22 9	0.32 4
SFW C		1	0.19 1**	- 0.02 3	0.20 7**	0.23 2**	- 0.21 1**	- 0.11 5	0.11 5	0.13 6	0.08 0	0.12 9
Sig.			0.00 7	0.74 4	0.00 3	0.00 1	0.00 3	0.10 5	0.10 5	0.05 4	0.25 7	0.06 8
WSF /F			1	- 0.14 7*	0.33 3**	0.25 5**	- 0.05 3	- 0.02 1	0.08 9	0.16 6*	0.20 1**	0.12 9
Sig				0.03 7	0.00 0	0.00 0	0.45 2	0.77 0	0.20 8	0.01 9	0.00 4	0.06 8
WS CO				1	- 0.01 9	- 0.00 8	- 0.03 8	- 0.05 8	0.33 3**	0.01 9	- 0.02 1	0.04 8
Sig.					0.78 9	0.91 3	0.58 9	0.41 4	0.00 0	0.79 1	0.76 7	0.50 3
FSF /F					1	0.03 4	- 0.05 1	- 0.09 0	0.19 1**	0.25 7**	0.14 8*	0.14 5*
Sig						0.63 4	0.47 1	0.20 3	0.00 7	0.00 0	0.03 7	0.04 1
FS CO						1	- 0.05 6	0.04 5	0.14 4*	0.16 7*	0.15 5*	0.04 8
Sig							0.43 2	0.52 3	0.04 2	0.01 8	0.02 9	0.49 7
WF C							1	0.35 2**	- 0.15 4*	- 0.02 9	- .288 **	0.06 6
Sig								0.00 0	0.03 0	0.68 6	0.00 0	0.35 6
FW C								1	0.422* *	- 0.07 8	- 0.11 1	- 0.03 4
Sig									0.00 0	0.27 2	0.11 7	0.63 5
WF E									1	0.20 7**	0.16 9*	0.25 0**
Sig										0.00	0.01	0.00

										3	7	0
FW										1	0.00	0.40
E											3	9**
Sig											0.96	0.00
											5	0
WS											1	-
												0.04
Sig												0.51
												1
FS												1
Sig												200

****Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

Source : Primary Data

SWFC-(Self-Efficacy for Work Family Conflict Management),
SWFC-(Self-Efficacy for Family Work Conflict Management), **WSF/F**(Work Support Family/Friends), **WS/CO**(Work Support/Coworkers), **FSF/F**(Family Support Family/Friends),
FS/CO-(FamilySupportCo-workers), **WFC**-(Work-To-FamilyConflict),
FWC-(Family-To-Work Conflict), **WFE**-(Work-Family-Enrichment),
FEW-(Family-Work-Enrichment), **WS**-(WorkSatisfaction), **FS**-(Family Satisfaction).

Table 3 presented the correlation between the level factors, chosen for the study. The correlation between all the factors are positive and are statistically significant, indicating that individuals who are satisfied with all other factors of work family conflict are satisfied with all other factors also. It is worth noting that that correlation between family work enrichment and work satisfaction (0.965) are strong and the correlation between work satisfaction and high level employee work-family conflict are also found to be large.

To conclude, each work-family conflict factor has a positive and significant correlation with every other factor. As expected family work enrichment has strong positive correlation with work satisfaction. The Anova analysis states that there is a significant difference between the age of employees and factors of work-family conflict. The study also reveals that the highest correlation exists between the factors Family-to-work enrichment and work satisfaction. Hence, the study clearly shows that there is statistically significant correlation between all the factors as the 2 tailed value is more so there is a strong relationship between two variables.

Discussion

In our country, recently many changes have introduced in the government policies. In both private and government hospitals can support their employees in way of offering various facilities to their employees to avoid interference with work and family life. Management can take initiative to address work-family conflict and family-work conflict. The focus was on individual employees and their families and on the organizational context. At the individual and family level, possible action include offering a short training course to employees on how best to cope with work –family conflict and family work conflict. At organizational level, initiative may

include training supervisor to provide higher levels of family supportive behaviors, offering on-site child care, permitting some flexibility in work hours and work scheduling. Hospitals can improve shift work efficiency. Working night, prolonged and irregular shift is obviously more stressful for working mothers. Since shift rotation and night work are almost inevitable in health institution, and organizations could at least minimize irregular shift work. The working time schedule should be determined and well known in advance.

V. Conclusion

This research examined and correlated the two work family measures work –family conflict and family –work conflict with the sample of 200 women nurses in Chennai hospitals. In this study findings were generally consistent reported by others in the same nursing sectors. The sample reported generally high level of work-family conflict. This may have resulted from the fact that a majority of the sample were married and have two children. Most of the women nurse are working in night shifts so that the women employees were contributed the absence of relationship with family life. The themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis highlighted the pervasive factors that impact the work-family conflict balance.

The societal role expectation, women career ambition, and the nature of the nursing profession challenges the way manage their profession and personal life. While their self-identities is lie in their work, they are strongly influenced to perform the role of home maker and dependent care provider given the societal expectation, this does require negotiation both at home and at work in terms of how and when work can be done.

Furthermore, women who had taken a slow track in their career growth, mentioned that this was a conscious choice as they felt their families needed them more at that point of time. An implication is that hospitals may not be effectively utilizing the employees talent, however implementing the HR policies and practices would facilitate women in pursuing their career goals and dependent care responsibilities with an increasing number of women entering into the workforce and in Indian nursing profession facing a talent shortage, it appears that understanding role of work and family in the life women nurse will become an important for HR concern. Time management skills, social support and other related skills for decreasing work-family conflict and training the source of self-efficacy for increasing the level of self-efficacy should be accentuated. Indian women in nursing profession can achieve the work –family conflict balance by setting priorities in their work and personal life and having support systems from both at work, formally through HR policies and programmes informally through supervisor and co-workers and support and at home.

Limitation and Future Research

There is a growing body of literature addressing the conflict that individuals experiences as a result of work responsibilities interfering with family responsibilities and vice versa. Work-family conflict among women is one way to think about the positive side of managing work and family responsibilities. Furthermore it would be valuable for future research to consider

additional way to conceptualize and measure the positive aspects of managing multiple roles of women. Most of the research looking at work-family conflict and multiple role management has focused on women and by doing so, continues to perpetuate the view that work-family conflict is only a women's problem. Research indicates the women play multiple roles than men. In this study the work-family conflict research suggests that the men may also experience conflict that arises from balancing work-family conflict responsibilities, roles and tasks. Additional research is also needed in context of difference between men and women in perceiving work-family conflict.

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Understanding Societal Perception towards Financial Inclusion with Special Reference to Kudumbasree Workers in Kerala

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp105-115, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

Financial Inclusions, aiming in providing the banking services to the deprived at an affordable cost, gained preference in India during 2005. A developing country, having majority in the lower and deprived group, considers this policy to be unavoidable and the present central government has succeeded in creating more impact for the same. The current analysis reveals that the southernmost state of our country, Kerala tops the index of Financial Inclusion and this creates a necessity to analyze the societal perception of Keralites with special reference to the women folk engaged with the Kudumbasree units towards this service and to analyze the influence of demographic factors on the perception towards financial inclusion schemes. Amidst the various factors influencing perception towards inclusive financing, demographic factors like age, education, income and marital status has been analyzed. The study reveals that selected demographic factors were influential in creating positive as well as negative attitude towards financial inclusions

Keywords: Financial Inclusion, Kudumbasree workers, Societal Perception, Kerala

I. Introduction

The term ‘financial inclusion’ or ‘inclusive financing’ was first used in the Indian context during April 2005 as it was discussed in the Annual Policy Statement presented by Venugopal Reddy, the then Governor of RBI. It broadly represents the availability of banking services like savings, deposits, borrowings, remittance facilities etc, at an affordable cost to the disadvantaged and also the low income groups. Its focus was entirely on the poor and downtrodden and to assist them in getting out of the clutches of local money lenders. The service is inevitable in a developing country like India because the recent study by the Pew Research Center reveals that 95% of the society falls in lower income group and highly require assistance from authorities. Since 2005, the government authorities- at central, state and local level along with the assistance of RBI have formulated wide policies to create more impact regarding inclusive financing and as of now Kerala tops the index of Financial Inclusion prepared by RBI. The program gained acceptance because of the ‘financial literacy’ campaigns’ initiated in the state. The tables depicted below shows the acceptance of financial inclusions in recent time periods.

Table 1. Bank Accounts opened in Kerala under PMJDY

S.No	Bank Name	Rural	Urban	Total Accounts	Aadhar seeded	Rupay-card issued
1	Allahabad Bank	2994	2542	5536	3723	5187
2	Andhra Bank	3665	3784	7449	3842	6532
3	Axis Bank Ltd	762	2530	3292	388	3260
4	Bank of Baroda	2231	48904	51135	28054	49822
5	Bank of India	1680	25656	27336	14782	26506
6	Bank of Maharashtra	240	526	766	599	755
8	Canara Bank	285679	44011	329690	239953	323840
9	Central Bank of India	40130	11429	51559	31249	45254
10	City Union Bank Ltd	0	458	458	373	0
11	Corporation Bank	35857	12002	47859	38151	41667
12	Dena Bank	2303	3036	5339	2531	5134
13	Federal Bank Ltd	109538	8537	118075	14397	110963
14	HDFC Bank Ltd	2068	16411	18479	2663	18473
15	ICICI Bank Ltd	81	8659	8740	2256	8740
16	IDBI Bank Ltd.	6943	4686	11629	373	11438
17	Indian Bank	58654	16691	75345	33399	72974
18	Indian Overseas Bank	2951	74930	77881	33377	72705
19	IndusInd Bank Ltd	27	447	474	237	449
20	Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd	0	42	42	9	13
21	KarurVysya Bank Ltd	0	289	289	208	276
22	Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd	54	217	271	116	270
23	Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd	49	61	110	1492	91
24	Oriental Bank of Commerce	1818	4900	6718	1882	6374
25	Punjab & Sind Bank	1	1378	1379	628	1155
26	Punjab National Bank	33516	6977	40493	32419	35706
27	South Indian Bank Ltd	7170	43336	50506	41982	25763
28	State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur	0	407	407	55	347
29	State Bank of Hyderabad	0	2453	2453	1557	2390
30	State Bank of India	4762	59553	64315	49441	57899
31	State Bank of Mysore	712	1908	2620	1521	2493
32	State Bank of Patiala	0	333	333	63	329
33	State Bank of Travancore	22345	215737	238082	58038	193102
34	Syndicate Bank	87691	18558	106249	85358	101246
35	UCO Bank	799	22345	23144	15102	20050
36	Union Bank of India	67953	14128	82081	46270	76990

37	United Bank of India	0	5693	5693	5558	23082
38	Vijaya Bank	16798	4278	21076	11456	20878
39	Yes Bank Ltd	10	4	14	5	0
		941677	775430	1717107	980697	1601939

Source: Ministry of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

<http://www.pmjdy.gov.in/account-statistics-country.aspx>

Kudumbashree, Launched by the Government of Kerala in 1998 for wiping out absolute poverty from the State through concerted community action under the leadership of Local Self Governments, Kudumbashree is today one of the largest women-empowering projects in the country. The program has 42 lakh members and covers more than 50% of the households in Kerala and the state government has been successful in encouraging the Kudumbashree workers to be a part of financial inclusion programs and the financial transaction of the projects are encouraged through banking and other financial institutions. The Kudumbashree has representation of women group belonging to different educational background, place of habitation, income group and age and it will be worthwhile to examine whether the women are satisfied with the new experience and also to check whether the demographic factors have proved to be influencers of their perception.

II. Review Of Literature

Ravi Inder Singh (2015) , in his empirical study regarding Ludhiana district, an effort has been made to examine the views of the people from economically backward section regarding the important aspects of financial inclusion .Based on the views of the respondents it was found that bank employees are encouraging people from economically weaker sections to open their accounts and people also found these accounts useful. Respondents are also of the view that education level, income level, age and period of association of the account holder with the bank directly affects the quality of services rendered.

Oya Pinar Ardıcet. al. (2011) analyzed financial database of CGAP and the World Bank group to examine the number of unbanked adults around the world, they also analyzed the state of access to deposit and loan services as well as the extent of retail networks, and discusses the state of financial inclusion mandates around the world. The findings indicate that there is yet much to be done in the financial inclusion arena. Fifty-six percent of the adults in the world do not have access to formal financial services.

Alfred Hannig and Stefan Jansen (2010) suggest that greater financial inclusion presents opportunities to enhance financial stability . Financial inclusion poses risks at the institutional level, but these are hardly systemic in nature. Evidence suggests that low-income savers and borrowers tend to maintain solid financial behavior throughout financial crises, keeping deposits in a safe place and paying back their loans. According to the authors Institutional risk profiles at the bottom end of the financial market are characterized by large numbers of vulnerable clients who own limited balances and transact small volumes. Although this profile may raise some

concerns regarding reputational risks for the central bank and consumer protection, in terms of financial instability, the risk posed by inclusive policies is negligible.

III. Objective & Methodology

The success and failure of any endeavor depends on the perception of the society towards the same. Like all other political parties, the present government- both at center and state have came with many measures and they haven't left the field of inclusive financing as it requires unavoidable importance in a country which habitats about 23.8 million lower income group according to the Credit Suisse Report. The southern state of India, though famous for the 'Kerala Model Development', exhibits an hunger index rate (17.66) which is not too less than that of the nation (23.31). The paper focus on analyzing the satisfaction and perception of Kudumbashree workers in Kerala towards the of Financial Inclusion Schemes. The study is conducted among 4 districts in Kerala and the sample selected includes the 280 Kudumbashree employees. The objectives includes analyzing the perception of Kudumbashree employees towards financial inclusion schemes and also to examine whether demographic factors like age, education, income and marital status act as influencers towards their perception.

The study is an empirical research based on both primary and secondary data. The study is conducted among 280 Kudumbashree employees from four districts in Kerala located at south, north, east and west of the state and the districts includes Kasargode, Trivandrum, Malappuram and Idukki.. Survey and interview techniques were used to collect information and the spss is used to analyze whether the independent factors selected have the significant influence on the dependent variable, perception of Kudumbashree workers towards financial inclusion schemes.

The questionnaire framed, considered four independent demographic factors including age, income, education and marital status. The perception of women employees of Kudumbashree in Kerala were analyzed by using eight attributes.

Table 2. Attributes for analyzing perception of Kudumbashree employees towards financial inclusion

Reliability of financial Inclusion	Continuing to use the same FI scheme
Dependability on financial inclusion schemes	Recommend it to friends or family members
Convenience to use	Receive timely benefit
Safety	How do they rate the financial inclusion scheme

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3. Percentage representation of Kudumbashree workers with respect to their are satisfaction and dissatisfaction towards financial inclusion schemes

Kudumbashree Workers	Percentage Representation	Number
Satisfied women employees of Kudumbashree unit	43%	121
Dissatisfied Kudumbashree workers	57%	159
Total	100%	280

To begin with the analysis, data was subjected to ANOVA test, owing to the simple query as to whether demographic factors influenced in creating a positive perception towards financial inclusions among women folk in Kerala, especially the Kudumbashree workers settled in different parts of Kerala. The following tables represents ANOVA output generated for checking Whether the demographic factors like age, education, income and marital status helped in creating a positive perception towards financial inclusion practices in Kerala. The perception of consumers were evaluated by designing various attributes which believe to be influencing positive perception towards the financial inclusion schemes

Table 4. Perception and Education

Attributes		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Reliability	Between Groups	6.000	2	3.000	3.667	.042
	Within Groups	18.000	22	.818		
	Total	24.000	24			
Dependability	Between Groups	2.962	2	1.481	3.889	.039
	Within Groups	11.278	22	.513		
	Total	14.240	24			
Convenience	Between Groups	2.240	2	1.120	3.053	.048
	Within Groups	12.000	22	.545		
	Total	14.240	24			
Safety	Between Groups	1.527	2	.763	4.061	.033
	Within Groups	15.833	22	.720		
	Total	17.360	24			
	Between Groups	.249	2	.124	4.880	.029

Continue Using FI Scheme	Within Groups	3.111	22	.141		
	Total	3.360	24			
	Between Groups	.109	2	.054	4.435	.030
Recommend to family	Within Groups	2.500	20	.125		
	Total	2.609	22			
	Between Groups	.106	2	.053	3.889	.039
Receive timely benefits	Within Groups	17.167	19	.904		
	Total	17.273	21			
How do you rate the scheme	Between Groups	1.697	2	.848	5.012	.024
	Within Groups	20.667	19	1.088		
	Total	22.364	21			

Table 5) Consumer perception and Marital Status

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Reliability	Between Groups	2.089	3	.696	.667	.581
	Within Groups	21.911	21	1.043		
	Total	24.000	24			
Dependability	Between Groups	.596	3	.199	.306	.821
	Within Groups	13.644	21	.650		
	Total	14.240	24			
Convenience	Between Groups	.596	3	.199	.306	.821
	Within Groups	13.644	21	.650		
	Total	14.240	24			
Safety	Between Groups	.860	3	.287	.365	.779
	Within Groups	16.500	21	.786		
	Total	17.360	24			

Continue Using FI Scheme	Between Groups	.249	3	.083	.560	.647
	Within Groups	3.111	21	.148		
	Total	3.360	24			
Recommend to others	Between Groups	.109	2	.054	.435	.653
	Within Groups	2.500	20	.125		
	Total	2.609	22			
Receive timely Benefit	Between Groups	.802	2	.401	.463	.637
	Within Groups	16.471	19	.867		
	Total	17.273	21			
How do you rate the Scheme	Between Groups	1.496	2	.748	.681	.518
	Within Groups	20.868	19	1.098		
	Total	22.364	21			

Table 6) Consumer Perception and Age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Reliability	Between Groups	5.930	1	5.930	7.548	.011
	Within Groups	18.070	23	.786		
	Total	24.000	24			
Dependability	Between Groups	.775	1	.775	1.324	.262
	Within Groups	13.465	23	.585		
	Total	14.240	24			
Convenience	Between Groups	1.819	1	1.819	3.368	.079
	Within Groups	12.421	23	.540		
	Total	14.240	24			
Safety	Between Groups	.202	1	.202	.271	.608
	Within Groups	17.158	23	.746		

	Total	17.360	24			
Continue Using FI Scheme	Between Groups	.202	1	.202	1.472	.237
	Within Groups	3.158	23	.137		
	Total	3.360	24			
Recommend to others	Between Groups	.138	1	.138	1.174	.291
	Within Groups	2.471	21	.118		
	Total	2.609	22			
Receive timely Benefit	Between Groups	.835	1	.835	1.016	.325
	Within Groups	16.438	20	.822		
	Total	17.273	21			
How do you rate the Scheme	Between Groups	.614	1	.614	.564	.461
	Within Groups	21.750	20	1.088		
	Total	22.364	21			

Table 7) Consumer Perception and Income

Attributes		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Reliability	Between Groups	6.063	2	3.032	3.718	.041
	Within Groups	17.937	22	.815		
	Total	24.000	24			
Dependability	Between Groups	3.019	2	1.509	3.959	.038
	Within Groups	11.221	22	.510		
	Total	14.240	24			
Convenience	Between Groups	.303	2	.152	4.239	.028
	Within Groups	13.937	22	.633		
	Total	14.240	24			
Safety	Between Groups	2.160	2	1.080	4.563	.022
	Within Groups	15.200	22	.691		

	Total	17.360	24			
Continue the same FI Scheme	Between Groups	.202	2	.101	3.704	.044
	Within Groups	3.158	22	.144		
	Total	3.360	24			
Recommend the scheme to others	Between Groups	.138	2	.069	4.559	.023
	Within Groups	2.471	20	.124		
	Total	2.609	22			
Receive timely Benefit	Between Groups	.273	2	.136	3.152	.046
	Within Groups	17.000	19	.895		
	Total	17.273	21			
Rating the FI Scheme	Between Groups	4.364	2	2.182	4.303	.024
	Within Groups	18.000	19	.947		
	Total	22.364	21			

The dependent variable consumer perception towards financial inclusion schemes is considered as a function influencing various attributes like reliability on financial inclusion, dependability, convenience, reception of timely benefits and safety of the schemes along with consumers perception on continuing to use the same, recommending it to family and peer group and also consumer's rating towards financial inclusion that they are currently registered. Table 1, 2, 3 and 4 shows perception of respondent categorized on the basis of their education, age, marital status and income. The ANOVA output shows education and income is highly significant in influencing consumer's perception as their level of significance value is less than 0.05 for all the selected attributes. The ANOVA table depicting relationship between dependent variable, consumer perception and independent factors like age and marital status hasn't given a level of significance value less than 0.05. Hence the perception of selected Kudumbasree workers was not influenced by their age or marital status.

Kerala, popular as a literate state has been able to provide 100% literate programs but those women having passed 10 or higher were more positive towards the financial inclusion scheme. Their ability to understand and communicate to banking professionals has helped them in utilizing the financial inclusion scheme to maximum extent. Similarly the family income also acted as an influence on their perception. Regarding some Kudumbashree worker's , whose family income was meager amount (say monthly income less than 10,000 Rs) preferred to obtain the income on hand rather than obtaining through financial institutions. The small delay in reception and delay in receiving money from financial institutions has resulted in dissatisfaction among the women folk.

V. Conclusion

The financial literacy programs propagated in Kerala has gained high importance and acceptances and it has assisted the deprived society to an extent. The current study reveals that perception towards financial inclusion has been influenced by education and income than age or marital status. The Kudumbasree workers in Kerala were familiar with financial inclusion schemes and are a part of this and the 100 % inclusion is due to programs initiated at centre as well as state level to increase the inclusive financing but the study reveals that dissatisfied and rest 43% of women folk were satisfied and rest were dissatisfied and their perception was highly influenced by demographic variables like income and education.

Implication for research and practice

The whole research was carried in the Kerala, one among 28 states in India and hence there is wide scope for the same research in other parts of the country. The study was limited with demographic factors like age, educational qualification, marital status and income and these factors act as partial influencing factors as human perception is influenced by socio-cultural variables, geographic factors, economic factors and other external environmental variables. Similarly the perception towards financial inclusion will also be influenced bank employees reaction and behavior, rules and policies of government at central, state and district level and also availability of schemes and benefits. Thus the area paves a wide scope for future research

As the study reveals that the Kudumbasree workers have dissatisfaction towards financial inclusion schemes, government should prepare strategic plans and policies for its effective functioning so that the negative perception can be swept away at the initial stage itself. As education and income act as influencing factors variety of schemes should be developed for inclusive financing targeting on people from varied educational and income group. Kudumbasree represents Kerala women folk who belong to the largest women empowering group, and belonging to varied demographic, geographic and socio cultural environment, their perception represents that of the Keralites and the study will be hence effective in analyzing the influence of a much popularized program, the inclusive financing.

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Transformation of the New Communication Media within the Frame of Interpersonal Interaction

International Journal on Global Business Management and Research
Vol 5. No. 2 (August 2016) pp116-134, ISSN 2278 – 8425

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Abstract

For almost two decades, the Web has changed the world and revolutionized the way information is stored, published, claimed and consume. Ripple effect is so broad that it not only affects the operations and development of the industry but also already is transferred to politics, medicine, the media and breaks through and over of the geographical location, cultural borders and ultimately, affects the daily lives of people. Social media and social networking have some overlap but they are not really the same thing. Knowing that they are two different marketing, social and media concepts, it can make a difference in the understanding of how my personal and as well business position is going forward. But what makes social media is of particular interest for journalism is hot that has become as influential as a form of communication and a bulletin of the special and extraordinary news. Since from 2010, Google as well as Microsoft are starting integration of the messages from Twitter towards their own search engines, and use a new form of search called as a Real-Time Search. We need to look for answers to the questions: How does social media influence the news? Is Twitter the new media "drain hole" of the future? What is the Twitter effect? What is Twitter Journalism? How the social media and other Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs affect the operations in creating of the news when it comes to reporting on certain events? How does social media have influence on how journalists receive, collect and distribute the news? What this means for the future of the news? Social media and Web 2.0 changing the way news is gathered and reported with the help of such news and about what it means for the future of news. Finally, this paper will try to answer: Does the journalism still mean something and/or anything? Who is the reporter of the future? How will looks like the space for the creation of the news in future? So, what is, in fact, journalism in the age of social media?

Keywords: *new media, social networks, social media, journalism, transformation, communication, interpersonal interaction*

I. Introduction

It is important to define the difference between social media and social networks, and it is, only and exclusively, exactly within the way of the use. In fact, both are intertwined, but there are at least five differences between them.

By definition:

- a) Social media is a way to communicate & transfer and share information with the wider community. Everyone has the ability to create and distribute above mentioned.
- b) On the other hand, social networking is the act of engagement, where a group of people with common interests join on online networking sites building a relationship within that community.

By communication style:

- a) Social media are more akin to communication channel. This is in principle, the format that is delivering a message. Social media is simply a system that directs, in other words make information widely spread to others.
- b) In the case of social networking communication is two-way. Depending on the topic, people gather to join those who have similar experiences and interests. The conversation is the core of social networking and over mentioned people are establishing and developing mutual relations.

By media return investment - ROI:

- a) It is difficult to determine *Media return investment* (Eckerling, 2014) from social media. In which way can put the value on the noise and excitement that is generated during the online conversation about your brand, product and/or service? This does not mean that the ROI is on zero, or non-existent, but that means that the tactics which is used for the measurement is different.
- b) Social Networking - when it comes to *ROI* - is more obvious. When the overall traffic, or visits, to your web page is on the rise and if you are diligently increase the base of social networking, most likely you help magnify online visitors inside your basis of social networking.

By timely responses:

- a) We, of course, cannot automate individual conversations and, if we are not recognized and previously established brand, building of following does not happen overnight. Social media is definitely a marathon and not a fast and short race.
- b) Social networking is direct communication between me and the people I am choosing to connect with me, because through that my conversation enriches more, has more meaningfulness and becomes more personal. My network grows exponentially as I meet and being introduced to others online.

Lastly, by asking or expressing:

a) Big No-No with social media is a distortion or manipulation of the comments like "likes" or other information, for your own good (personal or business). If you ask from friends, family, associates at work just to vote and cast their vote online just as it would be seen, they are not doing any good to anyone and it can quickly become a PR nightmare if news leaked about this unfair practice, isn't it?

b) In the case of social networking, you can tell and inform your associates and friends online about your new business or site & blog and talk to them on how to make that business successful. Conversation which you create can transform many people, with whom you are in contact, into the loyal fans, so it is worth investing the time in mentioned.

Mediamorphosis: Old vs. new media

Consuming of the news today is not the same as in the pre-satellite and / or pre-cable era when people are waiting for their morning paper or gathered at the exact given time in front of the television to watch the evening news. Consuming of the news today is not like in the time of the news before entering the Internet in our lives when people were tuning into the events happening around the world via 24-hour news channels. Recently, a large number of readers, viewers and listeners are going online to get the news. Television, newspapers and radio are still there, but there is also growing competition from online interactive media (Zgrabljić, 2005), continue the story of how not a single new medium did not destroy the old one, but it upgrades, getting the best out from the previous one. We see from the latest information from the company, "We are social," which is registered in England and Wales that we have, almost extremely, rapid development of social networking online.

Brian Solis, author of the book of the new Web, called "Engage" (2010) says that the world of social media matures and, along with it, our knowledge, expertise, achievements, and *"personal and represented brands are also flourishing..."*. It will last as long as we do not realize that a new social tools and networks are looking for a brand new commitment and embodiment of what we personified and how we can, in fact, be an authentic resource for people who define communities that are of importance to us. This means that someone can suggest or explore new models of communication and coordination without having to ask permission from anyone. Anyone with a camera or a keyboard is a non-profit and self-publication is the norm (Shirky, 2008).

To clarify even closer and more specifically from my own experience: DIOGEN pro culture magazine is a magazine for art, culture, science and education and successfully exists since 2009 with virtual newsroom and coordination where it has been published 75 different publications online, but also "print on demand", as in the United States, and as well as in Europe (<http://www.diogenpro.com>). It is registered in the Library of Congress, USA (with the organization of even one Symposium back in 2014) since 27.1.2015 and completely editing of the textual, video, audio and all other forms of media presentation, as well as processing of the materials (pictures, texts, video recordings) with the installation online from a computer of Editor in chief from its offices within his own home. The technology of new media has big effect due to its impact on the existing journalism. The way in which an endless number of public and

commercial media change is more important than the emergence of citizen journalism or independent blogosphere. Together, they offer the opportunity of transformation media for news - towards more open, trustworthy and useful forums for information and debate. As news becomes non-linear and with open sources, it changed journalism and still changing of it. This is more than posting comments on the blog or send photos to a Web page. The claim that the traditional media are exclusive champions of the authority, objectivity and quality will be resetting without stopping.

Social media, Web 2.0 and Information / News

It comes to tectonic disturbances in the media industry, not only in the inside of the news, and mostly because of extending of the access to social media networks. Mass media are the past. Today is all in and around the personal media. In the old days a reporter had the lead and he was given the task to search for the story. Today many stories are coming from *third-hand* through the posts on Facebook, Twitter and / or LinkedIn, so that already by the time the story to be assigned reporters, the story within a specific shape or something different exists within the universe of social media. Reporter at the time has to take into the consideration mentioned and find the angle of the story that has not yet been the subject of stories and / or presentations. The notion of exclusive or breaking news, lots of hints or announcement which lead us to a story today are from the Web or what's *trending* in social networks such as Twitter, Facebook or accompanied by his popularity on Digg (<http://digg.com/>) or what is the volume-based model search in search engines such as Google and / or Bing. This, of course, is radically changing the industrial concept of what exclusive or breaking news are. Journalists have been asked to speed up the traditional press process because people today are looking for information in real time - at the time of the event. People want to have information immediately upon receipt by the media and journalists. So it's a big risk *to sit* on the story until it is completed because we are losing exclusivity which will be taken by the side of media competitors or even worse, be duplicate and slowed by the public. Today it is necessary to give the audience pieces of information at the time, immediately after receiving the information. No even one media can no longer afford to wait. Out of what reason? Traditionally, the media have competed in exclusive against each other, but today, if media wait too long to publish story, it runs the risk of loss of exclusivity because of amateurs such as bloggers, journalists-citizens and tweeters. Social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter as well as Web 2.0 applications such as blogs and Google have been turned upside down and changed the industry of the news and journalistic practice. They presents are phenomenal opportunities, but also great risk tiled with errors. Challenges of social media and Web 2.0., which were thrown on the management of the media and journalists are something that has not been seen before. The boundaries of entering into the world of information are lesser for everyone with a computer, iPhone or iPod, because everyone can be his/her own publisher. All with the above arrangement can write a blog, tweets and/or post on Facebook anytime and anywhere.

Forecaster of future technologies, futurist Paul Saffo (2005) wrote "...Blogging, chat groups and adding comments to online articles are obvious examples, but just the beginning. In the TV era, it was hard, if not impossible to participate, but now in the new world of personal media, the exact reverse it the case: it is hard to merely be a bystander..." Let's take an example

the show OPEN (orig. OTVORENO) on HRT1 (<http://www.hrt.hr/enz/otvoreno/>) which is broadcast every day during the week, except Friday, Saturday and Sunday in the late evening hours. Besides the participation distinguish guests with merits who analyze the current political and social issues, equally important reflection in participation has the comments, with the written name and surname, from Facebook and Twitter, which are TV presenter represent on the big screen during the show.

Double benefit: the satisfaction of human vanity to participate in the show, but often very good comments on social events. Just look at the example of Google and Facebook from 2015 and compare visitors towards them from April 2011 to October 2015 (in millions) where statistics show that the most visited sites in the USA are just mentioned. The figure below shows comparing relationship between Google and Facebook, as measured by the number of monthly unique visitors in the millions. Until October 2015 Google remained the most visited web page with more than 186 million visitors (Nuttall, Gelles, 2010). During the same month, the social network Facebook has accumulated nearly 163 million unique visitors.

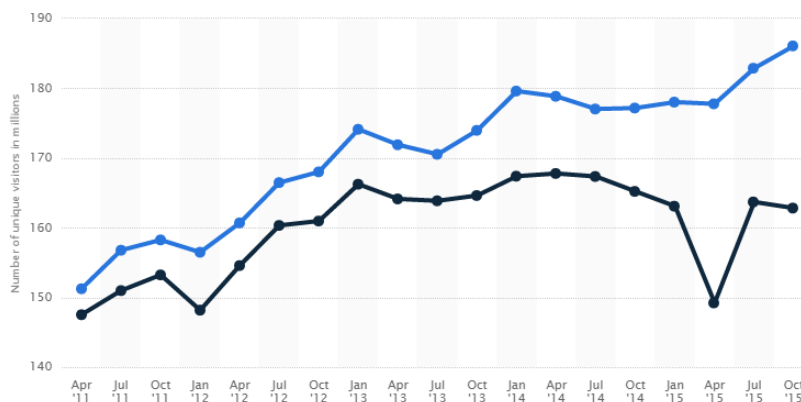


Figure 1. Comparison of unique U.S. visitors to Facebook and Google from April 2011 to October 2015 (in millions), Statista. The Statistics Portal(www.statista.com)

And, what the mentioned one tells us? Maybe that the Web is becoming more sociable than searched, and vica verse, or most likely both fulfilling the promise of the Internet oriented towards connection of the world. One is really sure, the balance of power is changing. Media organizations no longer have a monopoly on journalism. The face of competition is changing. In less than a decade, Google, Facebook and Twitter to compete with The New York Times, Guardian, CNN and the BBC as a new drain valve for news. Not to mention the web site in this region of Former Yugoslavia such as: Klix, Blic, Index (Klix.ba for Bosnia and Herzegovina; Blic.rs. for Serbia and Index.hr for Croatia), etc. that really try, and often succeed, to be faster in the race for information. Therefore, the traditional media have to adapt, from creating of their own Web pages up to the information related exactly to WWW and the mode of transmission of the news.

Social media are disseminating information verbally, but on steroids

For example, the news of the death of Michael Jackson in 2009, was placed across Facebook and Twitter users long before it has been made by the main news agencies and networks, or when the UCLA Medical Center officially announced the news of the death. Social networking sites, search engines and web site news informed on a huge number of visits to their sites during the first hour when the news was announced so that even individual pages are "turned off/fallen" or it was impossible to approach them online. This one news showed how news are consumed and how the news are spread within social media, how far can reach and how fast. *In the sphere of social media, news is information transmitted orally, but on steroids*(Alajeandro, 2010).The news does not know borders. The death of Michael Jackson is now used by media guru as an example from the book on how social media can skip gap between traditional media and consumers. The above mentioned proved that the role of the so-called gatekeepers does not belong exclusively to journalists but to participatory culture of social media where is more about the participation of the audience/public. Then comes the demolition of the wall of journalism that separates readers from journalists. Now there are well-known sources where people are precisely the ones who shape the news as opposed to the old way of shaping the news by conventional media. News (information / knowledge) that were previously far-flung from top to bottom now can be far-flung from the bottom to the top. The audience can now say which news are important to them and to what level of participation they want to be included whether they are watching or listening to the TV, the radio or to go online or answers over mobile devices or to tweets, posts on Facebook or to placed online video on YouTube channel and on any device they want and where they want. On the day and hour while you are reading this paper (and it is non-stop changing) it is growing continuously in Real time on the Web page of *Internet live stats* (<http://www.internetlivestats.com/>)... What? Just click on that link and you will be told.

The Fifth power and Journalists - citizens

If the press (newspapers, journalism) is the Fourth power, William Dutton from Internet Institute at Oxford appoints social media as the emergence of the Fifth Force. Quoted in the Working paper of Nic Newman (2009), former Regulator of BBC media future, Dutton... "...argues that we are witnessing the emergence of powerful new voices and networks which can act independently of the traditional media. He has termed these developments the emergence of the 'Fifth Estate': *Highly 'Networked individuals' (helped by new platforms like social networking and messaging) can move across, undermine and go beyond the boundaries of existing institutions. This provides the basis for the pro-social networks that compose what I am calling the Fifth Estate....* ". That is what exactly the title of this paper is related towards: The transformation of the new communication media within the frame of interpersonal interactions "aiming exactly what has been told by William Dutton. A good example is the case of "citizen journalists". According to Dr. Alex Burns, an experienced lecturer from the Faculty of Creative Industries of Queensland University of Technology in Australia, journalist-citizen primarily acts as a "watchdog" and corrective to the main stream of journalism. He said *that participants act as gatekeepers, observing and analyzing everything that passes through the gate of publishing within the media industry and other official sources, and emphasize the interesting and relevant news for their industry* (Bruns, 2016).

On 7.7.2005 within six hours of so-called London Bombings, the BBC received over 1,000 photos, 20 copies of amateur videos, 4,000 text messages and 20,000 e-mail messages. The former head of the BBC World news, Richard Sambrook wrote (2005): "*...people were participants in our coverage of events in a way never before seen. By the next day, our main evening news on television began with the package fully submitted by viewers ...*" Today, 30 journalists are working on UGC (user generated content) to process information, photos and texts that come from the public. CNN also has UGC page, but branding is allocated. I Report is the section of CNN where stories, texts and videos are put online and they came from the audience/public (<http://edition.cnn.com/search/?text=ireport>). Another event that made the next breakthrough over the social networks was the earthquake that destroyed the city, with a magnitude of 7.9 in Sichuan, China, in May 2009. The BBC and other media in the world has received the news of the earthquake in China via Twitter. Tweets arrived a few minutes earlier before the American (US) Geological Institute put the information about it. In addition to citizen journalism, there is another trend within the development called *networked journalism*. It is a process where public knowledge is being "excavated" in a way that adds value to the community.

Charlie Beckett, author of *Super Media*, describes it as "*... journalists continue to report, edit, and pack the news. But the process has a continuous part. Networked journalist is changing from gatekeeper who delivers to the leader/presenter who connects...*" (Gamela 2008). Let's take just an example of how the Guardian newspaper asked of the public in the UK to help them to cross link over a thousand documents and assist them in presenting the public the Members of Parliament in the scandal of costs in 2009. A little bit later the Huffington Post's "Of the bus" in 2012 in coverage of the first presidential debate has cooperated with citizens-reporters to adequately media cover of the mentioned. The pioneering effort has shown a new way of collecting election news through combining information from professional journalists, as well as from amateur-journalists which has shown the way towards editorial diversity. While some of the independent web pages that have experimented with PRO_AM (Professional_Amateur) model as it was the Assignment Zero, cooperation between Wired.com about NewAssignment.net failed, there are several networking of citizen journalists who still survive as it is online newspapers Broowaha.com in the United States. Or initiative as of 08.11.2015.g. "Be a citizen-journalist" - so called: Ladder initiative that brings together about 50 citizen journalists from 35 European countries (<http://www.jef.eu/activities/projects/ladder-project/>). But no one is more successful in exploiting the potential of an open source model of CIT_J(Citizen_Journalist) as it is Ohmy News in South Korea and has been very influential in determining the outcome of the South Korean presidential election in December 2002 with an election of Roh Moo Hyun for the President. Today Ohmy News has an international version with collaborators from around the world.

Social media and the practicing of journalism

Industry of the news is continually changing and trying to keep up with Web 2.0 technologies that have appeared over the past decade as well as keeping up with new ones that are warming up. While the network of social media and Web 2.0 applications opens new

opportunities for industry news, they also raise the possibility of a professional crisis among journalists and media organizations (Journalists remain critical gatekeepers during crisis, 2016). For journalists, the new equation has to do "a lot more with a lot less." From reporter today is asked today to put the stories on many different platforms - television, radio, print media and online. For journalists in today's media landscape, it is necessary to have a multitude of different skills. When we speak about the editors, a multitude of new developments are present. New items like "Social media editor" (What Exactly Is a Social Media Editor/Manager? 2010) or "Community editor" were and still are created in the newsrooms. In May 2009 The New York Times has hired the first editor for social media to develop the use of social media networks and publishing on the platforms also to improve journalism in the New York Times and in appropriate way deliver to the readers. Also, seven years ago Sky News in the UK also appointed assistant for Twitter, whose main responsibility was to cover the breaking news. BBC also has also appointed the first editor for social media at the end of 2009. His job is to help the team BBC reporters and producers to engage more proactively within the social networks. Twitter is one of them, as the collection of news being in the same time a distribution channel for journalism (Bunz, 2009). This giving of the birth of editors of social media in the newsroom has asked a question about the future role of the editors: whether they will soon do less journalism and more check the facts? Will they be in fact degraded down to the authentication and monitoring of trends within social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and similar? For media organizations, harmonization (convergence) is a common strategy. There is a growing realization that simply "you" cannot do everything alone. One media outlet opening *cannot service all rivers of information* within the sphere of social media. Therefore, it is in front of us the plenty of partnerships. For example, Facebook and CNN team were united for "The debate of candidates for the presidential candidates on behalf of the Democratic Party in the USA" in 12.12.2015.

News aggregators

But other real competitions for traditional media are news aggregators (Price, 2015). There are many different news aggregators – the one led by such giants such as Google and Yahoo are based on the interaction of readers such as Digg (<http://digg.com/>). Google News also collects short pieces-dashes from the news from their official pages, and make them available via the search function. Others such as huffingtonpost.com and thedailybeast.com provide aggregation in addition to original reporting and comments. The Huffington Post, today already in circulation online within a decade, is a viable threat to the old and long-established Washington Post as a Web page with an attitude and the news. But not everyone accepted these tectonic disturbances. Rupert Murdoch accused the news aggregators, including search engines online that they are exploiting the Internet (Harris, 2010). He wanted to introduce a "paywall" for its news web site and rejected critical fears about consumers who are used to download free content from the Web page – which they are not willing to pay for it. Murdoch then, back in 2010, believed that Internet cannot retrieve news and stories without compensation and those consumers can change their consumption habits. He was quoted "*When they (consumers) have nowhere to go to pick up mentioned, they will start paying.*" And so, from 2010 content of the online page of Wall Street Journal and the Times is no longer free of charge. Industry of the news is in the period of transformation where the old system of media disappears and the new

buds. The time is in front of us when the culture of passing viewing is behind us and a participatory culture is building up and where the society previously conditioned and stuck to traditional media is going away and we get a much more complicated media landscape. This is a time where citizens have the power to control the media technologies and tell own stories as a strong, innovative and creative. This is the time when our social, technological and cultural ways of life are intersecting.

TWITTER: The new "drain hole" for news media of the future?

Four researchers from South Korea from Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology's Department of Computer science have conducted interdisciplinary analysis of Twitter and how it works (Kwak et al, 2010). A group of researchers wanted to find out whether Twitter is just a social network or drain opening to the media *per se*? Haewon Kwak and his associates Changhyun Lee, Hosung Park and Sue Moon were built by a group of twenty personal computers in order to apprehend the content network of Twitter during one month, in July 2009. Haewon Kwak gave an interview to Jennifer Alejandro in 2010 and on the basis of his empirical research, Twitter redefines and to some extent increases definition of media news. According to his team, as written by Jennifer Alejandro, the role of the traditional news media play in the traditional manner within the Twitter status. Moreover, on the basis of their findings, these new statuses are more powerful, and the reasons are twofold.

One is the Motivation:

Some research suggests that the different motives lead from different levels of attention and show that the motivation to get to the information for a personal or social usage leads to the greater cognitive involvement. Twitter users actively follow others and subscribe freely on their tweets. Also, they can unsubscribe whenever they want. In other words, users of Twitter active and with self-initiative are choosing a subscription and choice to their favorite sources of news / information and motivation to read tweets such as obtaining information or entertainment is stronger only than the time that passes, which we use as a time for relaxation while relaxing with computer online.

Second one is the Format of the news:

Research has indicated within discussions that for the political careless citizens, short, so-called short-term news are more effective than traditional news. Both, however short messages (Tweet) and social interaction (re-tweeting) among users put customers in front of a lot of other news sources. In this way, Twitter can be an effective medium for the dissemination of political messages. From the both of the above mentioned observations, Kwak as a whole reflects how accounts / profiles with news on Twitter have more power than traditional media news / information (How to Find Twitter Twits to Retweet Your Tweet!, 2009). Re-tweeting, when it has been done by ordinary people, according to Kwak, just their voice can be louder on Twitter, and it can also be "heard" by a side of few hundred thousand people. Twitter effect (Harner, 2011) is

defined as the rapid spread of information (Matthew Arnold described journalism as “literature in a hurry”) through the Twitter micro-blogging service.

Twit can spread like tree branches endlessly and reach a large number of Twitter users. Pingdom, a company that monitors the availability of Web page has proposed this formula (Dawn of the Twitter Effect, 2009): The Twitter Effect formula = (Original tweet * followers) + (retweets * followers of retweeters) + (retweets of retweets * followers of those), and so on. In ten years since the start of Twitter has become a very important tool for journalists. When breaking news appears anywhere in the world, *Twitter people* quickly agree on putting labels (tagging) which organizes the label content (hash mark) of the material and brief word about it. Once you have a "tag", then you can use the browser on Twitter to filter all except these twits who have intention to comment about or report about the event which is transmitted through the news. One such event was when the plane crashed into the Hudson River in New York in 2009 (US Airways Flight 1549, 2009). During that a dozen *Twitter people* began sending twits about a possible plane crash on the city, and the news spread like wildfire across Twitter sphere. Indeed, users of Twitter are placed news of the incident fifteen minutes before the *mainstream media* inform viewers and readers about the crash. The first recorded Twit of the plane crash came from Jim Hanrahan, or Manolantarn, four minutes after the crash, he wrote. "I just watched a plane crash into the Hudson river in Manhattan (Beaumont, 2009). Twitter, as I underlined, is micro-blogging service. Text messages known as "twitx" are limited to 140 characters. Since its launch in 2006 gaining popularity around the world and media companies have been quick to study its options. The numbers presented by Com Shore show 73.5 million unique individual users registered on Twitter in a month - January of 2010. Today, 2016, in the first quarter of 2016, as the latest analyses, we have 310 million active individual Twitter users (Statista, 2016).

Back in 2009 co-founder of Twitter, Biz Stone commented that he was also surprised how fast and professional media organizations such as the New York Times, CNN and others, started with using of Twitter: *"They jump on it immediately and we were impressed with the way they have been engaged within it, as well as their hybrid approach. Reuters, for example, has started monitoring Twitter because of trends, and it turned out that it was worth it. We help, gave support, and even the API (Application programming interface) for people from Reuters laboratory. Then CNN started using us for the access to information, and to find and create news, reports. Rick Sanchez from CNN, for example, uses Facebook and Twitter to receive feedback in real time while the Los Angeles Times took the information from Twitter and posted on its official web page"*(O'Connor, 2011).

Traditional media exist for "authoritative" source of news, for those who provide more detailed and "deeper" look towards the information. According to Kwak, those who are on a good social status still read newspapers and watch TV news, and because of that framework of traditional media remains important. However, for many people, traditional media are considered as "additional" means to obtain information. They prefer Facebook and Twitter in relation to traditional media. To solve this problem, the Korean group, which I have previously stated, recommended that traditional media strongly connect with social media such as Facebook and/or Twitter, which, of course, in the meantime, has happened. There are no more media on the planet

which does not have a Twitter and / or Facebook account online. Today is very difficult to find Web 2.0 technology (social media networks, blogs, micro blogging and podcast (POD or Playable On Demand), and that it is not covered by the media companies. If the essence of Web 2.0 technology is sharing and organizing, the essence of journalism is to be the voice of the community and therefore is the journalist role to adapt and adopt the journalistic value to the environment of social media in order to better serve the public interest? Geneva Overholser, director of the Annenberg school of Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California thought that it was so: "Those of us who put ourselves into what we know that sounds ethically and it is essentially a civil model of information gathering and dissemination of information is to find a way to stay within these discussions - whatever we call conversations between us. Our job is to take care about the public interest" (Overholser, 2009).

The future of the news

Who are the journalists of the future? And is there still journalism exist? Journalism is not dead but evolves and journalists of the future again have to re-shape and re-invent themselves. What does that mean? Geneva Overholser of the Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism stresses the need that journalists should adapt themselves: *"Too often, it seems, for those of us who build community through our journalism seems to assume as 'how dare they' behavior towards those who build community through social media. We have to overcome that. People today are much more powerful today as consumers and shapers/creators of the news. Less noisy journalists applaud to this development, but if we do not do that we will be left behind until we fade into insignificance"* (Overholser, 2009).

Like it or not, the journalist of the future must be more focused towards technological common sense because news agencies / media companies will be a digital-centric. Just look at the "Arena ideas - Future of News" on the Web page of the Economist on the day 15.07.2016... and we will see the titles: "The Foxification of news"; "Our guest panel debate on the objectivity of news"; "Should news organizations always remain impartial?"; "Julian Assange and new wave"; "The last of the moguls"; "People formerly known as the audience" (<http://www.economist.com/ideasarena/news>).

The titles speak for themselves. But the technology has not changed the need for shaping of the story. The story / news / report must be well-written, factually confirmed with confirmation from credible sources such as journalism is within its essence. But digital tools offer new ways to tell a story and Web 2.0 provides distribution platforms with which nothing can compare. Digital contents which can be deliver anytime, anywhere, to anyone on the network of social media, television, radio, mobile phones or even tablets are intended to become the future of the news (a little bit of that future we already lives today). What does this mean for journalists? Juan Senior, partner of the company Innovation Media Consulting and visiting professor on Journalism studies of Reuters Institute says (Alajeandro, 2010:36) *"that journalists have to master new skills in the following:*

- *Multimedia (photos, graphics, video)*
- *Adobe Flash (graphics software)*

- *Editing of the video (Adobe Premiere, Apple Pro)*
- *Digital storytelling (shaping story with info-graphics)*
- *Journalists will have to learn to work with a team of info-graphics or with a team of visual design news / information in order to once again re-invent themselves in the storytelling on digital platforms."*

New workflow - the new work habits

Javier Zarrachina, graphic editor of Boston Globe newspaper said, "*We need a multimedia newsroom to create content for new formats*" such as tablets (Alajeandro, 2010:36). He also suggested the need for new working-sequence - work habits in the newsroom where the so-called *Macro editor* will monitor the Team of "developer of the codes", editor of social media and reporters.

The latest information on day 14.7.2016 from laboratory of Boston Globe newspaper provide evidence of further development of the transformation of the new communication media in the context of interpersonal interaction (<http://lab.bostonglobe.com/>):

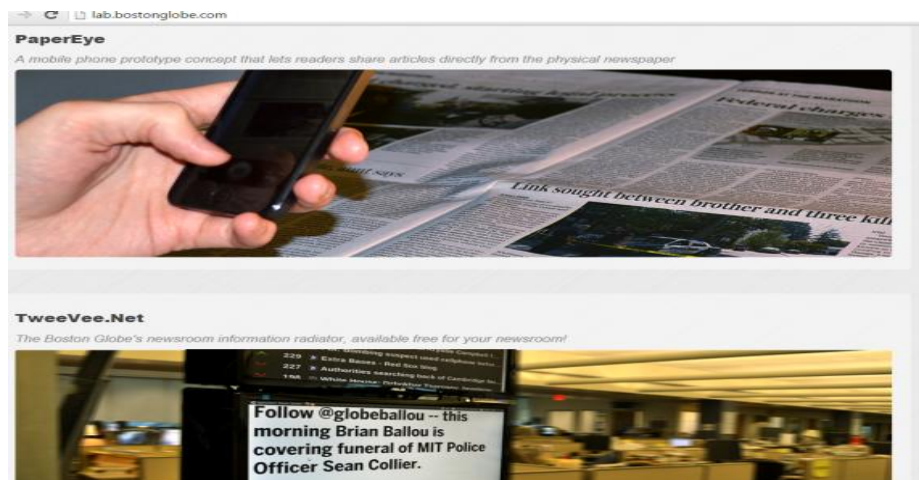


Figure 2. Examples of transformation of the new communication media from GlobeLab.
<http://lab.bostonglobe.com/>

On the photography above is a mobile phone - a prototype of concept which allows readers to share texts directly from the print media - the video shows: <https://vimeo.com/31859076> as well as the Boston Globe Information radiator via Twitter: <http://lab.bostonglobe.com/2013/04/tweeveenet.html> .

Newsroom of the Future: Completely integrated with multi platforms

Having in mind that is required transformation of the new communication media, journalists, and because of the newsroom where journalists work as well, might look like it is on

the photo above, and given that there are many different interpretations of this concept of fully integrated newsroom that can be found on the internet - of course, I am just presenting the one of the latest - for large media companies, it is a reorganization of the editorial board, while in the same time the realization of the transformation process is going on (The Newsroom of the Future, 2010).



Figure 3. A Modern Newsroom (Samaniego, 2009)

Media strategists suggest that the newsroom of the future should include the following elements (Samaniego, 2009):

- Departments currently involved in the newsroom such as the unit for collecting of information, the production of news and graphics units, etc.;
- Hub or Super Desk with the administration, which is “visible, accessible and responsible”;
- Graphic Desk, located next to the super desk, producing visual information – graphics, photos etc.;
- Radar Desk that is monitoring the information flow via technology;
- Community Desk intended for monitoring, moderating and integrating various kind of information from audience, like comments, opinions, pictures, videos, tips;
- Assignment Desk that is responsible for planning and assigning resources, managing and coordinating functions of correspondents, reporters and photographers;
- Mini TV/Radio Studios intended for news updates;
- Hot Desks that is liable for the contributors and freelancers who need occasional desks as the modern newsroom maintain a less permanent staff;
- Other Possible Elements, like a Meeting Rooms, a Public Gallery &a Conference Rooms, an Innovation Desk, Digital Walls etc.

The future of newsroom referred to as David Arkin writes that 2015 has been filled with learning of different areas in newsrooms. Greater use of video, changes in the collection of information and the continuous evolution of mobile devices. He distinguishes five key areas and the lessons learned for the future of each of these: video, enterprise, social media tone, analytics and mobile (Arkin, 2015).

- In VIDEO - it has been given a video technology called Tout which allows newspapers possibility to create a video on the scene and upload it right there and by doing that put more tools in the hands of reporters that they can use as part of reporting process.
- In ENTERPRISE – creation and production of journalism that matters and by doing that do the big stuff.
- In SOCIAL MEDIA TONE – interaction between producers and customers of the news and vice versa – by doing that adjusting their tone (tonality) for the benefit of all – through two-way conversation approach.
- In ANALYTICS – should be used to guide planning of the newsroom to be very digitally focused and/or coverage focused (Parse.ly – real-time analytics tool) and by doing that, through the interaction of digital editors and reporters through filtering and choosing proper data for the story.
- In MOBILE – it is overtaking desktop and mobile feeds are the future and by doing that, through picking of the right format reporter has to have the mobile reads at the forefront having in the following critical point – both on the content approach and the tools that are in use.

Does journalism still means anything and/or something?

"The media revolution is the" industrial revolution" (Swartz, 2015). Within the center of this revolution is the growth of social media (Richter, 2012) and the explosion Tablet PC which leads us to the transformation of the new communication media in the context of interpersonal interaction and brings us new customer requirements with new waves of information gathering as well as distribution of information. Naturally, the newsroom/editorial boards are transforming itself and journalists moves from one mode of work into another, because it happens a cultural, social and technological changes.

Journalism is not dead but merely adapting, transforming itself along with the transformation of society as a whole. Journalists of the future must "restart" themselves into a new, innovative way adapted to the present time and have more to worry about "where their audience is and how to reach their audience" (Benkoll, 2015), regardless of whether they are online, in print, in the public broadcasting program of radio and television, or on mobile devices or on social media platforms. It is hoped by the practitioners themselves directly involved in the media sector that values will be preserved and proved *"accurate, proportionate and fair, within the value of investment of time by journalists, and that is extremely valid of acceptance by those who speak through social networks. It would be useful, too, that journalists should emphasize the involvement of a wide range of voices"* (Overholser, 2009).

An exciting time lies ahead of us (Conclusion?)

Quality journalism has always been focused towards networking because the best journalists/reporters always listened, discussed and explored (Beckett, 2008). It is still a lot to learn in front of us to learn and we are still in the early days, though ten years have passed, for the experimentation. The changes are happening with a speed of light from 2000 when it comes to technology, but it inevitably leads to cultural and social change within each society, because every 12 hours world knowledge will double (Egelhoff, 2014). The rapid development of technology must not be seen as a threat to traditional mass media and we, as media professionals, must transform, thrive and develop in accordance with the above. We must, instead follow-up - aimed towards the audience in the world of personal media - offer digital narratives and flexible experiences of the news itself to allow users to share between them at the same time while participating. For a long time the conversation between the mainstream media and the audience was one-way, during the early days of the Internet. It was the Web 1.0. Nevertheless, due to Google, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube suddenly the audience becomes a direct participant communicating and by doing that giving feedback. We were just at that stage now, the phase of Web 2.0 and the next five years (who knows, maybe earlier), we will testify next change within the time of Web 3.0 which is announced on this chart by the side of Nova Spivack (2016):

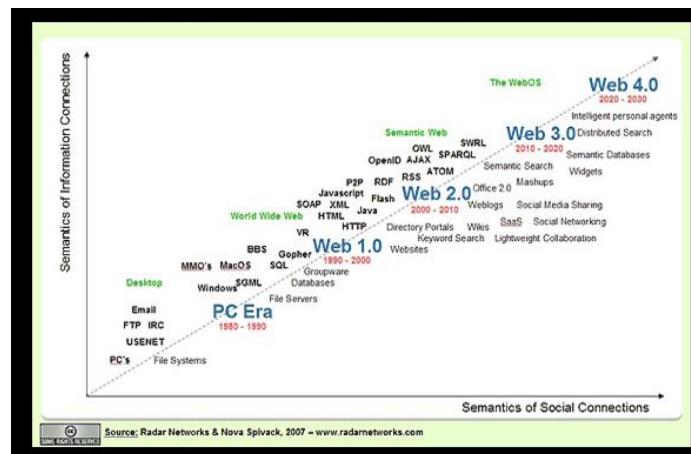


Figure 4. Semantics of Social Connections (Spivack, 2016)

Web 3.0 is what technologists call the Semantic Web: *"The Semantic Web is a technology that may play a key role in the development of information technology in the coming years. In a similar way it is done the classic web made documents and multimedia content available to humans, the semantic web is supposed to various data makes available for the various software components, in order to eliminate some gaps and expanded scope of the web..."* (Milivojević, 2009). On that new Web – it would be able to capitalize on the discussions because this new technology will allow participants conversations to better understand the customer audience within the multi-platform environment. Using the "digging" within the data, so-called *Mining*, common algorithms, software with predictive analysis and intuitive applications or so -called "Apps" knowing the audience and their behavior in a certain form online and on social networks - this will be the basis for future business models for media organizations and their advertisers.

The more time people spend online, the more likely it is that time can be cashed. Web 2.0 prepares the way and it paves it for the Web 3.0 world. At the end of December 2015 webOS 3.0 is announced for the beginning of January 2016 by LG for TV receivers (Grbić, 2015) which confirm the sentence from Neal Mohan's from 2010: *"The world of online will be increasingly adapt to us and what we are and what we care about and will be interactive in a way never before"* (Fallows, 2010). These are challenging but exciting times in which we live, work, or will be transformed along with the media that are we using within our own appearances. Both, social media and journalistic practice as well are going through a revolutionary phase.

For how long? Nobody knows and we can only guess. Technological innovations and changes are happening so fast, and the media industry is in a race to withstand the unprecedented pace with time. If today certain Web innovations might interfere (for now) all (as, after all, all innovation always do), this turnabout is essential - cathartic change from which will come to the surface better media industry, but the new (why not hybrid kind even) form of journalism.

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