

# Does social media influence consumer decision-making in times of the COVID 19 pandemic

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## Abstract

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of social and traditional media on customer decision-making and to find out which of these two in times of pandemics affect more on customer decision-making. A survey was conducted using 250 respondents from Ampara District, Sri Lanka, aged between 20-30. The questionnaires were divided equally into three sets, the first part containing social media-related questions, the other part containing conventional media related questions, and the third aspect of customer decision-making. Results from a survey of 250 young people in Ampara, Sri Lanka show that in times of pandemic where both social and traditional media affect consumer decision-making but social media influence is much greater than the traditional media. The findings show that advertisers need to carefully pick the media to communicate with target customers in order to achieve their marketing communication goals. In this research, the author acknowledges limitations. However, these limitations provide additional guidelines for future studies in the same field. Directions for future studies are given for the discussion of these constraints. Most significantly, this research has important theoretical and managerial consequences. Concerned with the social media sense, traditional media and decision-making by customers. When customer decision-making is concerned, this research delivers important suggestions for better planning of promotional mix strategy using social and traditional media. Present study also provides better understanding and extending the current literature on impact of social and traditional media on customer decision-making.

*Keywords:* Social media, Traditional media, Customer decision-making

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## 1. Introduction

It is shown that company depends on a number of communication tools to reach potential customers and leads. Over time, the marketing techniques used by businesses have undoubtedly been advanced, altered or even discharged and replaced by new communication modes. (Jayasekera, 2020).

Pandemic causes significant changes, especially those referring to marketing that led to adoption of digital technologies in promotion and sale of goods and services, this also influence the digital transformation in terms of customer behavior and the way businesses might adapt to digital marketing (Mary et al., 2020). In times of pandemics, the transformation of communication channels may be a challenge for all industries, but especially for the communications, changes in technology and customer behavior have always been the most drivers of change in marketing strategies (Rahman El Junusi, 2020).

According to Michael et al., (2016), Marketers usually as a message's senders have their own forecasts of the finest communication channels. On the other hand, customers or intended audience of message also have their own distinct preferences of communication channels. It is not easy for marketers to assess the success and results of marketing communications when using traditional communication channels, making one of the challenges that marketing managers faces to distribute the marketing budget in the most efficient way (Yoonmo et al., 2018). it is hard to

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compete with new digital communication channels used nowadays, which makes it harder on marketers as well and they unaware of what traditional communication media is the most effective one to communicate with target audience, this is the main reason for them to pay large amount of money on media coverage without having actual market survey on type of channel that has the greatest impact on consumers purchase decision (Simon & Karon, 2013).

Most of the researchers have proved that customer decision making is influenced by traditional media and by reference groups, such as family, friends, and celebrities (Bronner and Hoog, 2011). These impacts the way people live and their lifestyle, customers are self-motivated to comply with the opinions of their noteworthy referents advises and adjust their purchase decisions according to their recommendations (Bigne et al., 2016).

Nowadays, the use of social media has grown rapidly, especially during the Covid 19 pandemic, almost all the businesses have transformed their communication customers through social media platforms. As this covid-19 pandemic has improved the use of social media which in turn has an influence on changing consumer attentions towards online marketing communications (Rahman El Junusi, 2020). In particular, this covid-19 outbreak demonstrated the need to advance a systematic and broad spectrum of social media engagement techniques to influence customer decision-making and actions (Mary et al., 2020)

Rising social media platforms are quite different from traditional media channels that companies use for many years to communicate with their target audience using TV, radio, magazine, newspaper and billboard etc. In order to influence customer decision making and positioning brand image, communications through social media requires special attention and various strategies.. Furthermore, young generations today are more demanding and commanding, requiring marketers to be accessible in every major Social media channels like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter , whatsapp, and popular blogs at any time (Bech & Belch, 2014).

The main difference between social and traditional media is the effective and easy delivery and collection of information through interaction, playing a crucial role for customers who are likely to purchase goods and services to fulfill their everyday needs, (George & Michael., 2014).

Both social and conventional media have gained considerable coverage in research in the past due to their existence of rapid growth and popularity, there are still few studies exploring the relationship between social media, traditional media and consumer decision-making. The relationships between social media, conventional media and customer decision-making in general are assessed in this research. The main aim of this study is to investigate the impact of social and traditional media on customer decision making and to find out which one of these two has the most influence on customer decision making in times of pandemics.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### *2.1. Marketing communication and customer decision-making*

Every individual customer in this world today is exposed to one or more of the traditional and social media channels such as television, radio, newspaper, outdoors, facebook, youtube, twitter, whatsapp, viber, tiktok, etc.. with advanced internet technology that enabled them to view even foreign mass media channels. Advertisement can have impact on customer decision-making in many aspects that normally focuses on influencing their perception about the brand and emotional appeals (Rahman., (2020). Advertisements intended to inform customers about their market offerings can influence customers' views about the brand advertised; meanwhile, advertising aimed at building image or status influence present users of the particular brand and potential customers. Advertising targeting ex-customers with past experience may have less influence on their purchase decision, behavior and attitude towards market offerings (Belch & Belch.,2014). Impact of marketing communication on customer decision making can be simply observed when the sales of new product increase, it witnesses that customers are aware about products benefits, and this point can be achieved by the execution of efficient marketing communication that pull the customers to try the product by convincing them (Yoonmo et al.,2015).

Bo Xu et al., (2010) key for marketers in understanding consumer purchase decision process is to understand the customer' perception about the value of product and their reaction to the marketing communication. Purchase action of customer is a forward moving process which begins before the actual purchase takes place, and continue after they purchased the product (Jabir et al.,2010). to create a significant influence on customer purchase decision is the main aim of any marketing communication strategy because customer process of examining the product quality not always performed in the same way whenever there is a communication influence on their purchase decisions (Peter & Aijun,2012). Normally marketers in this era use the five-stage model of customer buying decision making to recognize customers actions in a better way (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Which starts with need identification by the customer, followed by information research from multiple sources, then evaluation of alternatives based on some criterias developed by customers, brand or product purchase decision and finally post purchase decision based on their experience with the product purchased (Jabiret al., 2010).

Need identification arise when customer feel a gap between their actual and desired state this can be influenced by external such as marketing mix elements or by external environmental factors or internal stimulus (Kotler & Keller.,2012). Advertising is the main tool of marketers used to stimulate customers' needs and wants. Need or problem identification has been considered as an important stage in customer decision making because purchase process follows if there is a need that customers seek to fulfill (Peter & Aijun,2012).

Once the need is activated, customers look for information from various sources depending on the nature and value of the product or service required to fulfill; they go through internal and external sources of information, nowadays, the use of social media when searching for information is increased and became unavoidable. When it comes to internal serach, customers try to recall the brands they consider as possible solutions based on their own previous experience and perception. This is the point where marketers seek to conform that their brands are part of the alternative set in customers' minds, because higher the brand higher the purchase opportunities, and that is the main purpose of any marketing communication (Bo Xu & Shao, 2010). Brand and advertising cognition are the outcomes of advertising exposure in traditional hierarchy of effects model, which develop a customer attitude toward this brand till they aim to purchase the goods or services to satisfy the need felt (Jabir et al., 2010).

Customers past experience with the brand that left a favorable results and customer satisfaction is one of the major sources of internal information search, at the same time, when customers do not have positive experiences with the product in the past, then they go for external sources of information including people in their personnel and professional network, printed materials, expert opinons, advertisements and the web sources (Bo Xu & Shao, 2010).

When customers moving to the stage of evaluation of alternative, they choose the brand for buying by analysing the information they collected in the information search stage, the problem here is that customers never use a similar evaluation process in all their purchase decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Number of different brands that customers consider when they try to make a purchase decision. This is where the marketers work and develop a convincing marketing communication message to reinforce the association between the brand and the value it offers to customer to grab a key place in the mind of customers (Jabir et al., 2015). Purchase decision is the end result of the evaluation process, customers select particular brand between the many alternative products available for them in the market place or market space, so they prefer the most suitable brand that would delight them (Kotler & Keller.,,2012) Purchase action is also depend on certain factors affect the purchase decision even after the evaluation of alternatives (Simon & Karon, 2013), which can be categorized into two factors that come between the purchase decision and purchase action (Yoonmo et al., 2015). First is the members in reference groups that can affect the purchase action, such as family and friends, the other factor is unexpected events that would influence the preparedness of purchase the brand or product (Peter & Aijun, 2012).

Finally, the post-purchase is a very significant stage just like other stages discussed already. Yoonmo et al. (2015) stated that the customer buying action is a forward moving course and it lasts even after the purchase and use of product or service. In this stage, customers will associate the products benefits they enjoyed with their prior hopes they had before buying and using the same (Jabir et al, 2015). if the product do well in meeting the customer expectations then the customer become satisfied, if the benefits surpasses their hopes then they become delighted. But

if the experience during their trial with the product failed to meet their expectations, customer will become dissatisfied with what they consumed and all these situation will lead to word of mouth communication that may affect the business in either ways (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

## 2.2. Social media and consumer decision-making

According to Simon & Karen (2013), the field of marketing has been intensely affected by Social media in the recent years especially with the invention of Facebook and marketing communication is not going to be a one-way communication always. In addition to that advertisements do not work much in the real marketing environment because bombarded with too many of them by different marketers in the same industry, as well as these advertisements disturb customers unsuitably (Michael et al.,2016).

Social media has become universal communication media today. Most of the people spend long hours with their smartphones or computers using one or more of the social media platforms. Such platforms include facebook, Twitter (Nawas & Mubarak, 2015). It is therefore a very useful resource into which marketers can tap. According to Simon & Karen (2013) the concept of Social Media Marketing, is the use of certain application can be used in smart phones and computers to identify and analyze the dialogs and take part in online social interaction with potential customers. Marketing communication messages are tailored by marketers targeting a particular customer segment then it is easy to intermingle in a more specific way with customers as almost all the customers today uses a smartphone, particularly among the youth the use of smartphone and social media is very high, they are connected always and can check updates very frequently when every time they connect to their social media networks, this is a great achievement for marketers (Rahman, 2020).

Marketing and customer landscape were totally changed by social media nowadays. Unlike before, customers are keen on searching for information about new product those who were just passive recipients of marketing information in the past. which is a total shift in their behaviour during the purchase decision making process (Ramzan, 2019). Customers see images, statements or ideas posted by their friends on any social media platform about their experience with one particular product or brand, this is because of because of their emotional attachment to friends, and feel more drawn towards that product. This is a great shift from the past because virtual groups and communities become much larger than a physical groups joined for love and care (Hassan, 2018). According to Simon & Karen, (2013) customers in this era have wider access to diverse audience around the globe that they can used to consult before making their purchase decision. During the information search stage of customer decision making process they are now empowered digitally to a great extent, enable them to get the ideas with both friends and experts at the touch of a screen or button in a key board.

Previous researches on social media conform the upsurge in customer influence on social media, where they generate content as per their preferences, compare market offerings of different companies their prices, and communicate their findings with other customers in their network easily by posting in their walls or profiles (Hilal & Medis, 2017). This upsurge in customer influence has encouraged marketers to change their marketing communications strategies using social media and change the way they manage customer relationship (Naeem,2020). It is witnessed that growing micro blogging and word-of-mouth communication on social media increase more product adoption and increased customer expenditure (Hennig Thurau et al., 2015; Stephen and Galak, 2012).

According to (Sapna & Malik., 2019) customers are very strong, demanding and busy; therefore, it became unavoidable for marketers to be accessible in every social media communication channel such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Forums at any time. Based on these literatures, the following hypothesis is developed:

H1: Social media has significant positive impact on customer decision-making.

### 2.3. *Traditional media and consumer decision-making*

Marketers found it easier to communicate with large number of customers at a time with one single message that boost their growth and also increased their spending significantly on traditional media. Variety of promotional activities are undertaken by firms to increase their sales in short and long run which includes mainly advertising, sales promotion, personnel selling and etc, to increase their profitability (Mustafaa & Abdallah,2020). Firms increase their spending more on traditional media communication channels such as TV advertising, newspaper articles, banners and bill boards in order to increase brand awareness and boost product trial among target customer group (Ramzan, 2019; Saeed, 2017). Use of traditional media by small and medium size organizations to advertise their product and services is very high these mainly include fliers or handbills,, radio, signage, local trade shows and local news papers (Yoonmo et a.,2015). Today, marketers allocate significant amount of their marketing resources to tv advertisements as it became one of the most reliable and trustworthy sources of communication media with larger groups (Belch & Belch., 2014).

Communication is the process of transferring the information from one person to another (Kotler & Keller, 2013) which includes many elements in the process of transferring information hence any problem with any of these elements can easily affect communication and delivery of message as intended. Communication helps customers to become familiar with new and existing brands and products in the market with the aim of encouraging customers to try the product (Parker & Kim, 1997; Alabdallah & Aborumman). Among the marketing communication mix, advertisement is the mostly used by many in the market, Kotler & Keller (2013) defined advertisement as “a Any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor via print media (newspapers and magazines), broadcast media (radio and television), network media (telephone, cable, satellite, wireless), electronic media (audiotape, videotape, videodisk, CD-ROM, Web page), and display media (billboards, signs, posters). Attract customer attention, create or improve brand awareness and persuading customers to try the brand by influencing their decision-making process are the three main goals advertisers aims to achieve in the market: (Mustafa & Abdallah, 2019). Marketers are keen to identify the traditional communication channel which is more effective to deliver their message. Selecting the traditional media channel for product advertisement is becoming serious concern for firms when capitalizing on promotional advertising (Ramzan,2019). Businesses have been using these traditional media channels for many years and improved overtime very successfully as they produce better results for firms. These channels include print advertisement such as outdoors, newspapers and banners, broadcast advertising such as tv commercials and radio advertisements (Saeed,2017; Yoonmo,2015). Availability, wider coverage or reach of these traditional media channels and accessibility make traditional media channels so important (Mustafa & Abdallah, 2020). Thus, the following hypothesis is generated:

H2: Traditional media has significant positive impact on customer decision-making.

## 3. **Research methodology**

### 3.1. *Population and sample*

The population refers to the whole community of individuals that the researcher wants to study, incidents or items of interest. It is the group of persons, events or items of interest that the researcher needs to infer from (Sekeran & Bougie, 2013). The total population of young people aged 20-30 years in the district of Ampara was considered as a population in this report, but the actual population during the survey period is not known and population statistics were not available as it was not done. From the point of view of the researcher, all clients using or familiar with social media is the target audience in this analysis. Since the population of social media users in the district of Ampara is not known, convenience sampling was used because information is easy to collect. This method is practiced because every youth nowadays is a consumer of social media. The sample size in this case was 250 respondents, since they were deemed to provide adequate input to evaluate the results.

### 3.2. Research instrument, measurement and data analysis

The most popular method for gathering data is the questionnaire. As a method for data collection, the investigator used a self-administered questionnaire. In the form of closed-ended (or structured) questions, the questionnaire asked respondents to select from a list of possible answers. Close-ended questions are often easy to handle and typically elicit fast answers (Schmidt & Hollensen, 2006). The questionnaire consists of a closed-ended question and five point Likert scale questions to make the analysis more productive and accurate. To evaluate the data obtained using questionnaires, SPSS 20.0 was used. In order to draw conclusions, primarily descriptive analysis, normality tests for data obtained, reliability analysis, correlation and regression analysis were carried out.

## 4. Data Analysis

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

The study focused on some of the respondents' context variables such as gender, age, marital status, employment status, monthly income and social media usage to gain some insights from the sample in terms of this study. Nearly 52% of respondents were males and 48% of respondents were females, out of 250 respondents. The average age of the majority of respondents was between 25-30 years, with 60.2% of the total and others between 20-25 years. 25 percent of the total respondents were home producers, while the remaining 45 percent were government workers and 22 percent worked in the private sector. In addition, 27 percent of the sample has no revenue, 54 percent of the income of individuals falls between Rs. 25,000 - Rs. 35,000 and 19 percent receive more than Rs. 40,000. 93% of the 250 respondents use some kind of social media such as facebook, twitter, whatsapp, viber, Instagram, youtube and tiktok and the remainder of the 7% do not use any social media, most of the non-users are women. Facebook, YouTube, whatsapp, tiktok and viber are the most popular social media platforms among Sri Lankan youths to retrieve information during COVID-19 and Flicker, Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter are the least used social media platforms.

### 4.2. Normality test for data

There were eight items for each construct and each item is measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where a response of 1 indicates strong disagreement while a value of 5 indicates strong agreement to the statements.

Table 1. Results of normality test for data

	Traditional Media	Social Media	Decision making
Mean	3.5803	4.6445	3.7863
Std. Deviation	0.5624	0.6254	0.6345
Skewness	0.925	0.861	-0.931

In accordance with the above data normality test, all the mean values of the variables are very similar to the 4 or 5 scale. This means that answers are at an agreed level with respect to the variables. The highest standard deviation is 0.62 for decision-making variables, which means that there is a relatively higher variation in decision making. The minimum deviation is 0.56 for traditional media. This shows that there is small variation in relatively conventional media. All the coefficients of skewness are between -1 and +1, describes that data are normally distributed.

### 4.3. Reliability and validity

To assess the accuracy of items in each construct, the reliability test of Cronbach's Alpha was used. Before the variables were operationalized, researchers addressed internal consistency. The Alpha of the Cronbach is used to measure the degree of an instrument's internal consistency and how much it compares positively to each other. The lower the alpha of the Cronbach is to 1, the greater the reliability of internal consistency (Sekaran & Bougue, 2013).

Table 2. Results of reliability analysis

Variable	Alpha	No. of. items	Strength of Association
Traditional Media	0.927	8	Excellent (Sekeran & Bougue, 2013)
Social Media	0.935	8	Excellent (Sekeran & Bougue, 2013)
Customer Decision Making	0.904	8	Very Good (Sekeran & Bougue, 2013)

According to reliability analysis, coefficient for the 24 items of the questionnaire, in all the variables are having Cronbach’s alpha values more than 0.9. This indicates that there is an internal consistency between the items and the internal consistency reliability was higher and satisfactory.

#### 4.4. Principal Component Analysis

The principle component analysis is used as a data reduction tool, suitable for this technique when using a large sample size. Since the sample size was 250, which is good for performing principal component analysis, the principle component analysis was used here because 1. Whether the conduct of factor analysis is sufficient, 2. Communalities used for the extraction of items and 3. The Eigen values used by the combination of objects using the thumb rule to describe the variables.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett’s Test for IVs and DV

Variables	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Sig
Traditional Media	0.821	0.000
Social Media	0.835	0.000
Customer Decision Making	0.814	0.000

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was used to determine to sample. The results accounted that the KMO analysis is well above the recommended acceptable level of 0.5 as all values of construct obtained between 0.7 and 0.8. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is 0.882 (< 0.5: Hair et al., 2010). Hence, the results confirm that sample adequacy of this study is good and it is worth for conducting a further analysis.

#### 4.5. Correlations analysis

Relationship between the variables has been calculated by the correlation analysis. Pearson’s correlation is used. This is a bi-variate and parametric technique. Individually the association between the variables has been determined.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Analysis

		Customer Decision-making
Traditional Media	Pearson Correlation	.557**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	250
Social Media	Pearson Correlation	.664**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	250

The correlation analysis results indicated that all the independent variables such as traditional media and social media are positively correlated with customer decision-making ( $p < 0.05$ ) at 1% significant level. Correlations of all variables are displayed in Table 1.4. According to the correlation analysis, all the probabilities are highly significant between customer decision-making and independent variables and correlation between them are positive. The value of social media is close to 0.7. This means that social media is having strong positive association with customer decision-making when compared to traditional media it means when marketers increase the use of social media that would influence the decision-making in great extent than traditional media.

#### 4.6. Regression analysis and hypothesis testing

The regression analysis used to reveal how traditional media and social media affect the customer decision-making. Using multiple regression analysis, the impact of traditional media and social media on customer decision making is measured.

Table 1.5: Results of Regression Analysis

Predictors	Beta	Sig	T	VIF
Traditional Media	0.324	0.020	3.625	1.103
Social Media	0.713	0.000	4.112	0.825

Dependent Variable: Customer Decision-making

Notes:  $F=27.309$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ,  $R^2 = .769$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .691$ ,  $n = 250$  Constant = 1.325,  $X_1 = .548$ ,  $X_2 = .703$

The overall model explains the fit for the research.  $R^2$  in the table given above shows this aspect. This coefficient is a measure of how well the regression equation fits the data. According to the above table 1.5, the  $R^2$  is 0.769 (77 percent), hence, the regression equation apparently have a fit with the data. It can be predicted that 77% of the variance (R-square) in dependent variable has been significantly explained by the two independent variables (Traditional media and Social media). Here,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$  and ANOVA table shows that the F value of 27.309 is significant at the 0.000 level. So the model is significant and model exists. When the individual variables are focused, at first, considering the social media is considered;  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , hence, highly significant and explain a much about the dependent variable. Traditional media values;  $p = 0.020 < 0.05$ , highly significant to the model.

To illustrate the multicollinearity in this study, VIF value is used. If there is no multicollinearity between factors with a VIF = 1, but if there is a VIF > 1, the predictors may be moderately correlated. The above table shows that the VIF is between 0.8 and 1.1 for the independent variables, suggesting any correlation, but not enough to be particularly worried about. A VIF between 5-10 shows a high correlation that could be troublesome as per the rule of thumb. And if VIF > 10, it is presumed that, due to multicollinearity, the regression coefficients are poorly determined. According to table 1.5 above, the VIF < 0.05 Regression Analysis results indicate that there is no important multicollinearity problem, and therefore the regression coefficients are well estimated.

The values of the coefficients represent the most significant independent variables between the two that cause most of the influence in customer decision-making. The standardized coefficient shows that 0.713 for social media is the highest number in the beta, which is important at the level of 0.000. This means that social media is largely affected customer decision-making in times of pandemic. At the same time, another determinant factor for consumer decision-making is the conventional media coefficient is 0.324 (see table 1.5). All these were significant to the model at 0.05 level. Hence, the following Model fit regression equation is derived.

$$Y = 1.325 + 0.548 X_1 + 0.703 X_2$$

Y = Customer decision making,  $X_1$  = Traditional Media,  $X_2$  = Social media

The hypotheses were tested after the analysis of the data to ensure that the assertion was taken into account in the analysis of the data. In statistical hypothesis testing, the most common policy is to define a significance level, denoted by alpha, and to reject  $H_0$  when the p-value falls below it. The hypotheses are tested here at a confidence level of 5 percent ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Accordingly, both traditional media and social media influence customer decision-making with the p-values of 0.020 and 0.000 respectively which  $< 0.05$ , hence, both hypotheses are accepted

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

Marketing communications using social media has a significant impact on customer decision -making. This validates hypothesis H1 and this finding is in line with the findings of Mary et al.,(2020), Nayeem (2020), Sapna & Malik (2019), and Hasan (2018). Social media is the best among other communication medium if a marketer wanted to give regular notices to their target customers about market offerings, because, nowadays, www became a more engaging medium than print or broadcast media specially among youths in sri lanka and around the globe because of its various levelled structure. Compared to a reader of newspapers and magazines, the web provides more control to users for watching the content of their choice, mainly facebook, watts up and viber are most influential among youths in Sri Lanka. The greatest benefit of social media is that it enables advertisers to have one-on-one dialogs with potential buyers, including personalized ones. Marketers are able to respond easily and in a very personal way to questions, answer suggestions, and resolve complaints or potential problems. Although this can sound overwhelming at first, it has proven to be a major advantage for businesses who want to enhance their customer service.

At the same time, traditional media also have an impact in every stages of consumer decision-making. This result validates hypothesis H2. This result is sync with the findings of Mustafa & Abdallah (2020), in which the impact of traditional media on customer decision-making was assessed and confirmed traditional media has a significant impact on customer-decision making mainly in rural areas where customers face internet connection problems, where customers are exposed to posters, banners, television and radio advertisements. This results match with the results derived by Ramzan (2019) and Saeed (2017)

Belch & Belch (2014) suggested that an advertising on various media channels plays a critical role in shaping consumer preference in view of the varying impact of different media platforms. Wise selection of advertising media outlets is therefore important for the promotion of goods and services, accordingly marketers should concentrate on both social media and traditional media to influence their target audience with their communication strategies.

Accordingly, it is clear that with the right communication tools, marketers can meet market distraction effectively and reinvent the future for their market offerings. And for businesses that appeal to the end users, digital developments that have already changed their actions are accelerating. Businesses must consider how all contact points with the customer are influenced by this new environment if they are to actively shape their own future without relying on the whim of external events. Therefore, modern approaches, usually referred to as social media, have arisen as marketing continues to grow. Mostly, these strategies are said to have better outcomes than other tactics.

## **6. Direction for future research**

This research was conducted using an appropriate mix of youths in Ampara district of Sri Lanka who involves mainly in higher studies like higher diploma, bachelors and masters. This young population makes up significant per cent of the population and has a considerable stake in their purchase decision. Similar research can be conducted for different age categories mainly targeting parents when it comes to home need items, child care, clothing and etc...., the impact of advertisements on customer decision-making using traditional and social media was testd in this study. Similar research can also be conducted considering other each channel separately such as TV, Radio, News Papers as well as facebook, twitter, Instagram, wattsup, viber, tigtok and etc sepersately to suggest which one influence customer decision making in greater etent.

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