

## INVESTIGATING THE BEST CHOICE IN SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES: CONJOINT ANALYSIS

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*The aim of this article is to investigate the relationship between various attributes of social networking sites and the selection of a best choice among them by the students. For this purpose, five prominent social networking sites were examined only i.e Facebook, My Space, Orkut, LinkedIn and Twitter, which are profile based and different from media networking sites like YouTube and Flickr. The Conjoint model was adopted and tested by Regression Analysis with Dummy Variables for the formation of best choice in selected social networks. Data was collected from students of various Colleges located in the District of Ludhiana in Punjab. The main results of this empirical research suggest that Facebook is the most acceptable site as a brand by the students. In addition to this, connectivity with the friends and its usage along with freedom of expression on these social networks are prominent attributes which govern the decision making process of the students. The paper provides comprehensive empirical evidence about the selection of a particular social network by the students and thus fills an important gap in the marketing literature which can be used by organizations while managing these networks.*

**Key words:** Social Networking Sites, Conjoint Analysis, Vector Model, Regression with Dummy Variable.

### INTRODUCTION

Technology has changed the world rapidly from what it had been before. Out of various technological changes the most valuable and dynamic is evolution of internet. Internet has not only changed the professional life of humans, but has also changed the human personal and social life with the advent of internet (Ahmed and Qazi, 2011). One of the most benefits one can get from the use of internet, the most significant one is communication benefits. In recent decades, the "science of networks", (Watta 2007) has developed into a thriving field of social scientific enquiry. The growth of social network analysis as an academic field has coincided with an explosion in popular interest in social networks. This

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is due in part to the popularization of new social networking sites on 'web – based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi – public profile within a sounded system (2) articulate a list of other user with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by other within the system' (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). The idea of social networking originated in 1995 and gave birth to an early social network called 'Classmates.com'. This was created to keep students in connection even after leaving school or class. In 1997, another SNS 'SixDegree.com' was released and then this development carried on with the emergence of another SNSs like Friends United (2000), My Space (2003), Orkut (2004), Facebook (2004), Flickr (2004), Yahoo 360 (2005), Youtube (2005) and Twitter (2006). All these social networks are profile centric except Youtube and Flickr, which are media sharing sites. Since the media sharing sites revolve around media material and not on socialising, which can be accomplished by relation between weblogs or by use of social awareness services such as Twitter or Facebook, the main focus of this paper will be on social networking sites which includes the element of socialising and personalization (Dlasgaard 2009).

Several studies have examined the attraction and persuasive character of this online platform and similar networking sites (Fogg and Lizawa 2008) as well as the reasons that lead the people from all walks of life and age ranges to join this community or similar communities. Researchers (Vasalou et al., 2010; Young et al., 2009) have examined the profiles of these websites areas to determine as to what extent such individuals are keen on posting their entire identity, sharing their pictures and videos, starting their religious affiliation, marital status and political orientation on the internet. However few studies have examined the return on investments in these networks for the companies and individuals. Meanwhile, some exploratory studies have shown that the extended presence of students and employees has a harmful effect on their productivity and task performance. Also these networks have raised the issues related to social privacy concerns and misuse of data on these networks. Despite the fact that users enjoy using their social networking sites for free, SNS providers find it difficult to avoid critique from multiple stakeholders whenever they try to directly profit from their main asset – user information. Bringing both sides of the argument together, one can see that both parties find themselves as prisoners in a deadlock situation (Krasnova et al., 2009). This leads us to the following queries in terms of the usage, freedom of expression, connectivity with the friends, commercial viability and the presence of various games and applications in these social networking sites and their preferred networks among the students selected in our sample study.



To address these research queries, we employ conjoint methodology, which is an accepted approach to measure consumer preferences in the light of the existing trade-offs.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dwyer et al. (2007) compared the perception of trust and privacy concern along with willingness to share information and develop new relationships. They also show that in online site, the existence of trust and willingness to share information does not automatically translate into social interaction. The two social networking sites, Facebook and My Space, were selected because they have both similarities and differences. They concluded that online relationships can develop in sites where perceived trust is low and protection of privacy is minimal.

Lewis Kevin et al. (2008) observed that students differ tremendously in the extent to which they “act out their social lives” on Facebook: both the level of SNS participation and the meaning of this activity undoubtedly vary across individuals and settings. It is further evolved that SNSs represent remarkable new research opportunities. These sites provide users with templates that, while intended for recreational purposes and organized presentation, are ideally suited for data collection and analysis. Data generated from contemporary social network sites do open a number of possibilities for teaching, methodological development, and empirical research on a diverse array of topics; and while not without its limitations

Wind and Todi (2008) analyzed social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and media networking sites like Youtube to establish the importance of social networks as an advertising medium. The research paper made an attempt to determine the criteria for the successful advertising on this new medium. The paper established the fact as to why social networks are important to businesses as an advertising medium and attempt to review the current advertising methods that are in place which are relatively cheaper as compared to other efforts.

Dalsgaard (2009) focused on the area of transparency in online education with reference to SNS. These networks are a combination of personalization and socialization which has a potential to facilitate transparency amongst students in online system of education, where they can access into the accounts of each others' work. The paper lays special emphasis on the development of a specialized technology which will be helpful for

students to share each others' resources on social networking sites based upon the concept of transparency.

Firth Miriam (2009) concluded that many students have accepted and adapted their communication methods through the use of SNSs finding a flexible and convenient platform in which to engage. SNSs can also be viewed as an area for self exploration and identity with some users logging on to receive social and emotional support through the 'chat' function Facebook can be used to support peer interaction and group learning. It is a distinctively preferential platform for Higher Education to utilize alongside assessments as it lowers barriers and allows more self-disclosure to improve collaboration in preparation for graduate employment

Iyengar et al. (2009) evaluated the power of members in social networking site to influence each others behaviour. The paper is exclusively based upon the friends influence in purchase decision in a social network. The data in the study was used from online social networking sites i.e. Cyworld in Korea. The results in this study suggested that low status group, which are not well connected, are unaffected by social pressures. The medal status group which is moderately connected, have a strong and positive effect due to friends' purchases. However, the high status group which is well connected and very active on the sites shows a significant negative effect due to friends' purchases.

Krasnova et al. (2009) empirically investigates the value of privacy in online social networks. The study is primarily based on the importance of privacy for the users of these social networking sites by using conjoint analysis. The study was conducted by multiple in-depth semi- structured interviews with SNS users to finalize the conjoint model based upon various parameters like price, network popularity, customizability, privacy control and information use by SNS providers. The study discovered three group of users i.e. unconcerned socializers, controlled- conscious socializers and privacy – concerned socializers. The study suggested that network providers can capitalize on different user preferences by specifically addressing the needs of distinct groups in the form of various premium accounts.

Ahmed and Qazi (2011) studied the impact of social networking sites (SNSs) on the studying habits of students through multistage sampling technique on 1000 students by using cluster sampling analysis. The study explored that despite the use of social networking sites, students can balance their time between studies and their usage of these sites, and can sustain good studying habits to maintain their academic performance.



Jothi P. Sri et al. (2011) examined that the effectiveness of brand communication strategy in promoting and advertising their brand in social networking sites. Effectiveness of communication strategy in developing brand, communication through social networking sites was done with the survey method and content analysis to analyze the communication strategy of different social networking sites like Face book, Twitter and Orkut with certain parameters viz. number of profiles in social networking sites., ads communicated in these social networking sites., exposure of different kinds of ads. The study concluded that advertisers and brands uses social networking sites as the major resource for their promotion and developing brand identity among the focused market.

Jansen et al. (2011) conducted a study on a single social networking site myYearbook.com, where a sample of 34514 respondents were taken into the study and by using k- means clustering analysis it was observed that 40% of the sample were having profiles on three social networking sites and an additional 20% were having four social networking sites accounts. The paper also observed that companies and organizations interested in marketing to this demographic cannot cluster social networking users for more personalized targeting of advertisements and other information.

Rouis et al, (2011) conducted a preliminary analysis of the effects of Facebook usage by undergraduate students at Lulea University of Technology in Sweden. The model in this study tested the perceived effect of personality traits, self regulation, and trust on students' achievements. The results indicated an extensive use of Facebook by students with extraverted personalities leading to poor academic performance. Trust in people does not affect their presence and interaction on this platform. However, Facebook is only regulated by their self control and their personality traits, which determine the time spent by the students selected in the study.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

For studying the superiority of a particular social networking site, we have following objectives in the study:

1. To analyze the impact of various factors affecting the choice of a particular social networking site by the students over other networking sites.
2. To identify the best choice of a social networking site among Indian users (with reference to Facebook, Twitter, My Space, Orkut and LinkedIn).

## HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

**Ho1:** There is no association between factors affecting the choice of social networking site in terms of best choice exercised by the students.

**Ho2:** There is no absolute selection of a particular social networking site by the students over other networking sites.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of estimating the research models for hypotheses testing first, a sample of 200 students comprising 100 boys and 100 girls from all the Colleges present in the area of Ludhiana District of Punjab was selected. To analyse and find the best choice of a social networking site, Conjoint Analysis technique was used. Conjoint Analysis was first introduced into the marketing literature by Green and Rao (1971) and Johnson (1974). Green and Srinivasan (1978) indicated that conjoint analysis is an analytic method with decompositional approach for evaluating the preference structure of the known testees and overall assessment. Louviere and Islam (2008) described three methodologies of Conjoint Analysis:

- Traditional Conjoint Analysis, based on giving preference,
- Choice – based or Discrete Choice Conjoint Analysis, based on choice,
- Best/Worst (BW) Conjoint.

Out of these we have utilized the Traditional Conjoint Analysis, where respondents were asked to rate or rank the product scenarios and the analysis reveals the relative importance, called utilities of each of the different levels of each attribute. Further out of three utility function forms: Vector Model, Ideal – point model and Part – worth Model, we have utilized Vector Model since the actual preference in our study was linear, representing highest statistical reliability as compared to other models. Further we have estimated the preference functions in conjoint analysis by ordinary least squares (OLS) regression method with dummy variables, since researches has shown that the efficiency of this technique is often similar to more complex techniques like Logit, Monanova, Linmap etc, but the results are easier to interpret (Oppewal, Vriens, 2000). The orthogonal arrays (Orthoplan) were generated by SPSS – 18.0 software. A total of 25 design cards were generated for the respondents to give preferences using 10 – point Likert Scale (1 = Least Preferred, 10 = Most Preferred). In our study the number of stimuli was 25 which were higher than the minimum number of stimuli (Total number of



levels across all attribute – number of attributes + 1 = 20) that was evaluated by the respondents to ensure the reliability of the estimated parameters. Using multiple regression analysis, we can specify the preference score (column Y) as the dependent variable (Input Y range) and the nineteen dummy-coded attribute columns (columns T through X) as independent variables (Input X range). The mathematical expression of the model is as follows:

$$Y = b_0 + b_1(\text{Twitter}) + b_2(\text{LinkedIn}) + b_3(\text{Orkut}) + b_4(\text{My Space}) + b_5(\text{Quiet Often Used}) + b_6(\text{Often Used}) + b_7(\text{Rarely Used}) + b_8(\text{No Usage}) + b_9(\text{Moderate Connectivity}) + b_{10}(\text{Low Connectivity}) + b_{11}(\text{Good Freedom of Expression}) + b_{12}(\text{Moderate Freedom of Expression}) + b_{13}(\text{Restricted Freedom}) + b_{14}(\text{Average Choices}) + b_{15}(\text{Few Choices}) + b_{16}(\text{No Choices}) + b_{17}(\text{High Commercial Viability}) + b_{18}(\text{Moderate Commercial Viability}) + b_{19}(\text{Low Commercial Viability}) + e$$

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The research study adopted content analysis in order to find the impact of various attributes like useage and accessibility, connectivity with friends, freedom of expression, games and applications and commercial viability among the target audience through social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, LinkedIn and My Space. Table number 1 represents the orthogonal matrix in 25 cards as designed by SPSS 18.0 software. The non probability sampling technique is used to collect the opinions from the respondents falling in the age group of 17 years to 25 years. The sampling size is 200. The Conjoint Design framed on the above mentioned attributes are mentioned in Table number 2.

**Table 2. Explanation of Attributes and Levels (Conjoint Design)**

Attribute Name	No of Items	Explanation of the Attributes and Levels given to Study Participants
<b>Social Networking Sites</b>	<b>5</b>	In our study, we have finalized only five social networking sites which are profile based i.e <b>Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Orkut and My Space. (Code A1, A2, A3, A4 And A5)</b>
<b>Useage &amp; Accessibility</b>	<b>5</b>	SNS may differ in the extent to which they are used and easily accessible on the web: <b>Frequent, Quite Often, Often, Rarely or No useage. (Code B1, B2, B3, B4 And B5)</b>

<b>Connectivity with Friends</b>	<b>3</b>	Some networks are very good in terms of connectivity and some fetches good response due to its use among friends and acquaintances: <b>Very High, Moderate and Low Connectivity (Code C1, C2 And C3)</b>
<b>Freedom of Expression</b>	<b>4</b>	SNS may differ in the extent to which people can express their voice and deliver their opinions to public, selected friends or communities: <b>Excellent, Good, Moderate and Restricted. (Code D1, D2, D3 And D4)</b>
<b>Games and Applications</b>	<b>4</b>	The quantum of Games and availability of latest Apps also decide the selection of a particular network over others: <b>Multiple Choices, Average Choices, Few Choices and No Choices. (Code E1, E2, E3 And E4)</b>
<b>Commercial Viability</b>	<b>4</b>	For now, almost all SNS are free, but they are supported through online advertising (banners), which may be displayed on the Home page proving their commercial viabilities to its users also: <b>Very High, High, Moderate and Low Commercial Viability. (Code F1, F2, F3 And F4)</b>
<b>Total Number of Attributes = 6</b>	<b>Total Number of Levels across all attributes = 25</b>	

\*(Minimum Required Stimuli = 25 – 6 + 1 = 20)

Source: Self Prepared

## RESEARCH MODEL

Essentially in conjoint analysis the analyst tries to understand the “preference structure” of a respondent. It is actually a family of techniques and methods, all theoretically based on the models of information integration and functional measurement (Louviere 1988). In terms of the basic dependence model conjoint analysis can be expressed as:

$$U_h = \sum_{j=1}^J V_j = V_1 + V_2 + \dots + V_j \quad \dots (1)$$

Where  $U_h$  represents the overall effect of the  $h$ -th product and  $V_1 + V_2 + \dots + V_j$  represents the attribute effect value of 1,2,..., J in product  $h$ .



Green and Rao (1971) had applied conjoint analysis to the realm of marketing for determining the conjoint impact of two or more variables upon variable ranking. Thus, the conjoint analytical mode can be represented as:

$$Y_h = \sum_{j=1}^J V_{jK} + \sum_{j \rightarrow j'}^J T_{jk} T_{j'k} + \dots + T_{1j} T_{2j} \dots T_{jK} \quad \dots(2)$$

Where  $Y_h$  represents attributes of the product,  $j = 1, 2, \dots, J$ .

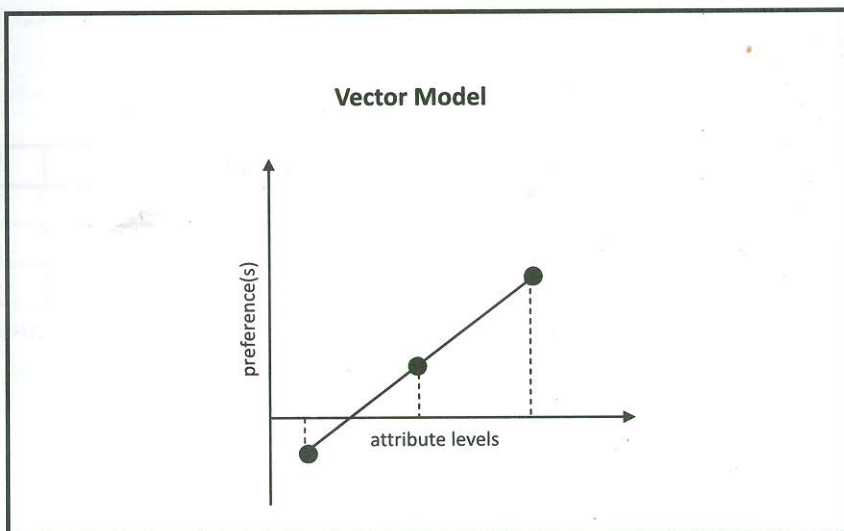
$K$  represents the attribute benchmark of the product,  $k = 1, 2, \dots, k$ .

$\sum_{j=1}^J V_{jK}$  represents the main effect of attribute benchmark of the product.

$\sum_{j \rightarrow j'}^J T_{jk} T_{j'k}$  represents the interaction effect of two attribute benchmark of the product.

$T_{1j} T_{2j} \dots T_{jK}$  represents the interaction effect of multiple attribute benchmarks.

In addition to this we have applied the Vector model of measuring preference function as expressed by the respondents.



## ANALYSIS OF CONJOINT RESULTS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table number 3 represents the results of regression analysis, where the R – Square value shows 93.9 percent variation in the model which is highly significant at 5 % level of significance. The value of Durbin – Watson statistic is 2.409, which lies in the range (1.25 – 2.75) showing that auto – correlation is not present. The correlation table shows that there is small correlation among different predictors. So, multicollinearity is not present in the data. At 5% level of significance, Ho1 Null Hypothesis is rejected and we can accept that there is association between factors affecting the choice of social networking site in terms of best choice exercised by the students.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.969 <sup>a</sup>	.939	.709	.46904	.939	4.081	19	5	.05 <sup>*</sup>	2.409

a. Predictors: (Constant), Low\_viability, No\_availability, Restricted, Low\_Connectivity, No\_Usage, My\_Space, Moderate\_viability, Few\_choices\_and\_availability, Moderate, Rarely, Orkut, Often, High\_viability, Average\_Choice\_and\_availability, Good, Moderate\_Connectivity, LinkedIn, Twitter, Quite\_Often

b. Dependent Variable: Overall Rating Mean Score

<sup>a</sup>Model significant at 5% Level of Significance.

**Table 4: ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.060	19	.898	4.081	.05
	Residual	1.100	5	.220		
	Total	18.160	24			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Low\_viability, No\_availability, Restricted, Low\_Connectivity, No\_Usage, My\_Space, Moderate\_viability, Few\_choices\_and\_availability, Moderate, Rarely, Orkut, Often, High\_viability, Average\_Choice\_and\_availability, Good, Moderate\_Connectivity, LinkedIn, Twitter, Quite\_Often

b. Dependent Variable: Overall Rating Mean Score

<sup>a</sup>Model significant at 5% Level of Significance.

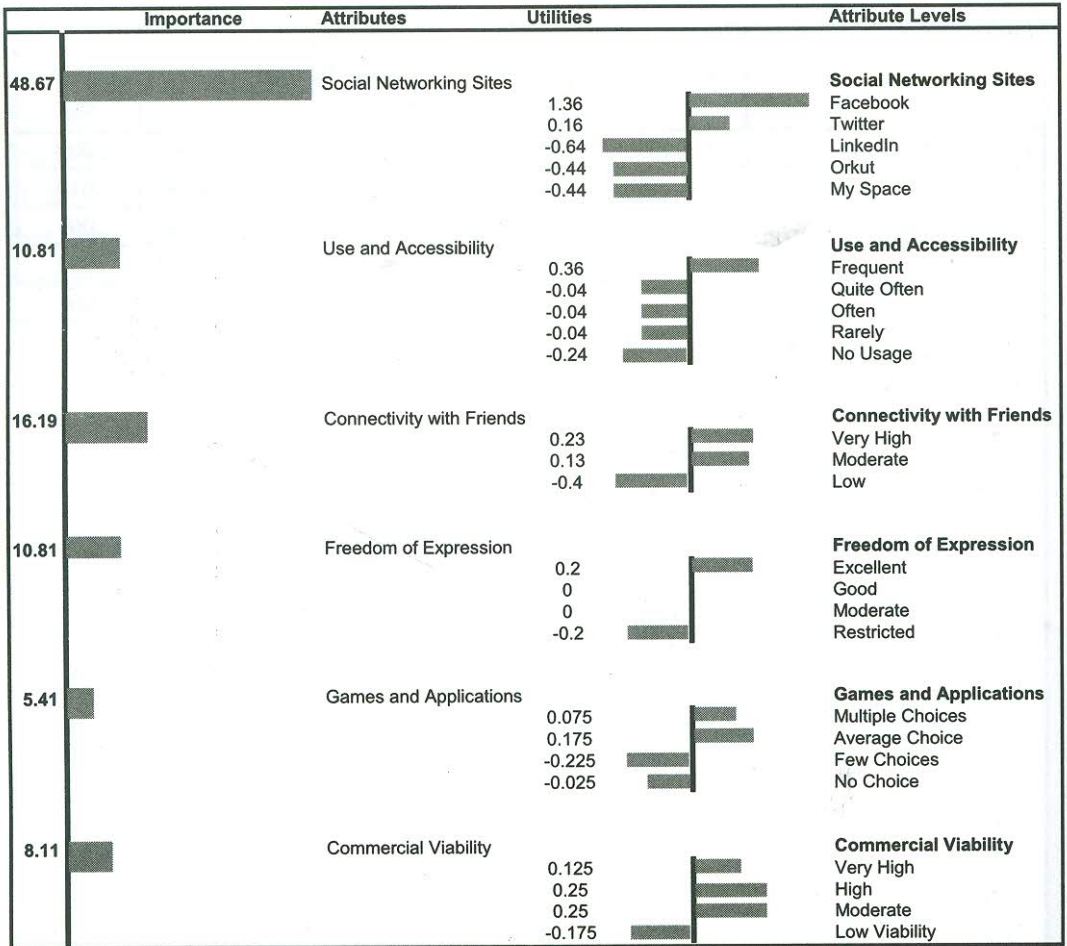


**Table 5: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	7.600	.363		20.918	.000
Twitter	-1.200	.297	-.563	-4.045	.010
LinkedIn	-2.000	.297	-.939	-6.742	.001
Orkut	-1.800	.297	-.845	-6.068	.002
My_Space	-1.800	.297	-.845	-6.068	.002
Quite_Often	-.400	.297	-.188	-1.348	.235
Often	-.400	.297	-.188	-1.348	.235
Rarely	-.400	.297	-.188	-1.348	.235
No_Usage	-.600	.297	-.282	-2.023	.099
Moderate_Connectivity	-.100	.210	-.057	-.477	.654
Low_Connectivity	-.600	.257	-.282	-2.335	.067
Good	-.200	.257	-.094	-.778	.471
Moderate	-.200	.257	-.094	-.778	.471
Restricted	-.400	.257	-.188	-1.557	.180
Average_Choice and availability	.100	.257	.047	.389	.713
Few_choices and availability	-.300	.257	-.141	-1.168	.296
No_availability	-.100	.257	-.047	-.389	.713
High_viability	-.100	.257	-.047	-.389	.713
Moderate_viability	.100	.257	.047	.389	.713
Low_viability	-.300	.257	-.141	-1.168	.296

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Rating Mean Score

**Figure 1: Mean Preference Structure Of Social Networking Sites**



Source: Self Prepared

Figure 1 represents the mean preference structure of social networking sites in terms of importance and utilities of various attribute levels. All these helps us to understand the rankings of attributes when it comes to the choice of a social networking site. In Figure 1, six salient attributes and their levels were identified for SNS choice process. Full Profile Conjoint Analysis was used for construction of preference structure. Analyzing the preference structure or the importance accorded by the students to the six salient attributes, the students accorded the maximum utility/importance to the attribute 'Brand of SNS' i.e Facebook with 48.67 percent importance. Here we can conclude that the brand name of Facebook has generated such a value that no other brand like Twitter (importance utility of 0.16) is able to match with it. Results further shows that LinkedIn,



Orkut and My Space have negative utilities in comparison to Facebook and Twitter. The second most important attribute in the desirable social networking site is '*Connectivity with Friends*' with an importance value of 16.19 percent, where the highest utility is given to very high connectivity with friends in social networking sites in comparison to other options like moderate and low connectivity among the respondents. Our results demonstrates how much value users attach to the connectivity with friends that negative utilities were marked by the respondents when this card was placed in front of them.

Thereafter at the third place in the worth hierarchy are two attributes of '*Use and Accessibility*' and '*Freedom of Expression*' with importance of 10.81 percent each. Here, it was observed that social networking sites are frequently used with Excellent Freedom of Expression on the social networking sites. The mandate of respondents were clear enough that in use and accessibility only frequent used option and in freedom of expression, excellent choice was given only positive utilities whereas all other options were given negative utilities.

Then at fourth place of the hierarchical framework, is the attribute '*Commercial Viability*' with 8.11 percent importance. This is an important finding, as it shows that, our respondents are keen to use these social networking site to promote their business since Ludhiana District is an industrial hub of some leading industries and small scale businesses of India. Here, almost all the attribute levels were given positive utilities except Low viability option with -.175 utility, which shows that most of our respondents are Tech – Savvy and appreciate the commercial use of social networking sites for advertisement purposes. The last attribute was the presence of '*Games and Applications*' in the Conjoint Design with an importance of 5.41 percent only. The respondents have very less interest in the use of various games and applications present in the social networking sites, since the variety of '*Apps*' are easily available in the market in addition to these social networks.

Table 6 represents the Utilities and Rank Transformations of the Conjoint Design alongwith the final rankings of preferences in all the attributes.

**Table 6: Computations of Utilities and Rank Transformations**

CODE	Rank	CODE	Rank	CODE	Rank	CODE	Rank	CODE	Rank	CODE	Rank
A1	<b>1.36</b>	B1	<b>0.36</b>	C1	<b>0.233</b>	D1	<b>0.2</b>	E1	0.075	F1	0.125
A2	0.16	B2	-0.04	C2	0.133	D2	0	E2	<b>0.175</b>	F2	<b>0.25</b>
A3	-0.64	B3	-0.04	C3	-0.366	D3	0	E3	-0.225	F3	<b>0.25</b>
A4	-0.44	B4	-0.04			D4	-0.2	E4	-0.025	F4	-0.175
A5	-0.44	B5	-0.24								
<b>Rank Transformation</b> <b>R1 - 1.8</b>		<b>Rank Transformation</b> <b>R2 - 0.4</b>		<b>Rank Transformation</b> <b>R3 - 0.599</b>		<b>Rank Transformation</b> <b>R4 - 0.40</b>		<b>Rank Transformation</b> <b>R5 - 0.20</b>		<b>Rank Transformation</b> <b>R6 - 0.30</b>	
<b>In percentage -</b> <b>48.67</b>		<b>In percentage -</b> <b>10.81</b>		<b>In percentage -</b> <b>16.19</b>		<b>In percentage -</b> <b>10.81</b>		<b>In percentage -</b> <b>5.41</b>		<b>In percentage -</b> <b>8.11</b>	
<b>Final Rankings of Preferences -</b> <b>First</b>		<b>Final Rankings of Preferences -</b> <b>Third</b>		<b>Final Rankings of Preferences -</b> <b>Second</b>		<b>Final Rankings of Preferences -</b> <b>Fourth</b>		<b>Final Rankings of Preferences -</b> <b>Sixth</b>		<b>Final Rankings of Preferences -</b> <b>Fifth</b>	

Source: Self Prepared

In Table 7, the Best Choice of Social Networking Sites (Final Result) is projected where the respondents have expressed their best choice using “Facebook – Frequently used – Very high connectivity with friends – Excellent freedom of expression – Average choice of games and applications – High/Moderate commercial viabilities”.

**Table 7: Best Choice of Social Networking Sites (Final Result)**

Best Choice	Facebook	Frequently Used	Very High Connectivity with Friends	Excellent Freedom of Expression	Average Choice of Games Availability	High/Moderate Commercial Viability
	<b>1.36</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>0.233</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.175</b>	<b>0.25</b>
<b>Code</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>D1</b>	<b>E2</b>	<b>F2</b>

Source: Self Prepared

This best choice selection by the respondents by Conjoint Analysis clearly rejects the second Null Hypothesis Ho2 and leads to acceptance to alternative Hypothesis that there is one absolute selection of a particular social networking site by the students over other



networking sites based on various attributes and attribute levels.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our study is the first attempt to empirically investigate the factors behind the choice of an OSN using a conjoint approach. We find that brand name Facebook and frequency of use plays the most important role in the user decision to join an SNS, with users showing interest in the connectivity with their friends. The result presented show that the students can benefit in variety of ways from SNS in terms of Freedom of Expression and Commercial Viabilities for launch of their products in case the students are entrepreneurs. The data derived from the questionnaire suggests that students were keen to see the SNS as a service provider of various games and applications in built in the sites. Subjects from Facebook and MySpace expressed similar levels of concern regarding brand name and connectivity with friends. Facebook members were more trusting of the site and its members, and more willing to include identifying information in their profile.

## LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Our study is subject to several limitations. First, a large part of our respondents were students and the sample size is 200 (Boys 100 and Girls 100). Taking into account the fact that the demographics of OSNs are constantly changing (insidefacebook.com 2009), further research should validate our findings with other population groups. In addition, most respondents in our sample have from a particular segment of Punjab i.e Ludhiana, which limits the scope of our study to students who is a entrepreneurial user base. Finally, the results of every conjoint analysis are highly dependent on the choice of the attributes and their respective levels. Therefore we are aware of possible disagreement on the choices we made. Addressing this argument we stress that all our decisions were based on the extensive literature review combined with pre-study interviews and careful pretesting of the conjoint design.

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**TABLE NO. 1: ORTHOGONAL CARD DESIGN (RATE 1 FOR LEAST PREFERENCE AND 10 MOST FOR MOST DESIRED)**

Card ID	Social Networking Sites	Usage & Accessibility	Connectivity with Friends	Freedom of Expression	Games And Applications	Commercial Viability	Male Rating	Female Rating	Overall Rating
1	LinkedIn	Quite Often	Low Connectivity	Excellent	Few choices and availability	Very High			
2	My Space	Rarely	Very high connectivity	Moderate	Multiple choice and Availability	Very High			
3	Twitter	Frequent	Moderate Connectivity	Excellent	No availability	Very High			
4	Twitter	Rarely	Moderate Connectivity	Excellent	Average Choice and availability	Moderate			
5	Twitter	Often	Low Connectivity	Restricted	Multiple choice and Availability	High			
6	LinkedIn	Rarely	Very high connectivity	Excellent	Multiple choice and Availability	High			
7	Facebook	Frequent	Very high connectivity	Excellent	Multiple choice and Availability	Very High			
8	My Space	Frequent	Moderate Connectivity	Good	Few choices and availability	High			
9	Twitter	Quite Often	Very high connectivity	Good	Multiple choice and Availability	Very High			
10	Facebook	Often	Very high connectivity	Excellent	Few choices and availability	Moderate			
11	LinkedIn	No Usage	Moderate Connectivity	Good	Multiple choice and Availability	Moderate			
12	My Space	Often	Moderate Connectivity	Excellent	Multiple choice and Availability	Low			
13	Orkut	Rarely	Moderate Connectivity	Restricted	Few choices and availability	Very High			
14	Facebook	No Usage	Moderate Connectivity	Restricted	Multiple choice and Availability	Very High			
15	My Space	Quite Often	Very high connectivity	Restricted	No availability	Moderate			
16	Facebook	Quite Often	Moderate Connectivity	Moderate	Average Choice and availability	High			
17	Orkut	Quite Often	Moderate Connectivity	Excellent	Multiple choice and Availability	Low			
18	Orkut	Frequent	Low Connectivity	Moderate	Multiple choice and Availability	Moderate			
19	Orkut	No Usage	Very high connectivity	Excellent	No availability	High			
20	Facebook	Rarely	Low Connectivity	Good	No availability	Low			
21	Twitter	No Usage	Very high connectivity	Moderate	Few choices and availability	Low			
22	My Space	No Usage	Low Connectivity	Excellent	Average Choice and availability	Very High			
23	Orkut	Often	Very high connectivity	Good	Average Choice and availability	Very High			
24	LinkedIn	Frequent	Very high connectivity	Restricted	Average Choice and availability	Low			