The Role and Impact of Social Media on Online Social Movements: An Analysis of 'ALS Ice Bucket Challenge' in India

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Abstract. *Online social movements have taken root and flourished in the last decade due to online communication networks attributed to Social media. In this paper, the mixed-method approach is utilized for qualitative and quantitative analysis to investigate the efficacy of social media in propounding the outcome of online social movements in India. Further, several factors which have a definite impact on the outcomes of such online social movements are highlighted. This study concludes that online social media campaigns can be viewed as an extension of 'social norms media campaigns'. Further, it establishes that the internet penetration in India coupled with 'online peer pressure' accompanying such movements has effectively aroused the consciousness of users towards such campaigns. It also highlights the alteration in the process of diffusion of ideas in society due to the advent of social media platforms.*

Keywords: Online campaigns; Diffusion theory; Mixed-method approach; Survey method; Social media.

1. Introduction

Social movements, often described as “groups of people who have a common ideology and try together to achieve certain general goals” (WordNet, 2003)¹ have been occurring since the advent of organized human society. In the digital era, on-line social media outlets such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, numerous blogging sites and messaging (texting) have brought the world together as a global community. The advent of such technological innovation has allowed individuals to possess the ability to obtain information from fellow mates instead of relying exclusively upon the current media industry (Selvik & Stenslie, 2011).

Social movement is a collective challenge by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities (Wasserstrom, 1995). Tilly (2004) defines social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others. Alternatively, a social movement is defined as “conscious, concerted, and sustained efforts by ordinary people to change some aspect of their society by using extra-institutional means” (Goodwin & Jasper, 2003). These movements serve as important vehicles for social and political change and have the potential to transform the systems of institutionalized politics in which they occur (Aminzade *et al.*, 2001). Social movements can give us an insight into human behavior and why people voluntarily come together, cooperate and mobilize (Cameron, 1974). They can also have implications in the spread of democracy, or regime change (Goodwin & Jasper, 2003).

Online social movements have not only been praised for its ability to raise awareness about the important causes but also criticized for its ability to perpetuate problems like slacktivism (Cabrera *et al.*, 2017). Despite receiving such criticisms, online activism has had crucial impacts on social movements. With the ever-growing medium of social media, internet activism has reached its peak and has come to the forefront of the web revolution (Obar *et al.*, 2011; Vegh, 2003). Social media boosts social movements as it is user-friendly, cost-effective as well as less time-consuming (Thompson, 1995). At the same time, real-time communication ensures collective behavior by the users (Obar, 2014; McCaughey *et al.*, 2003). The invention of Social Media has given ample opportunity to every individual on the internet to create a safe space to launch a protest and to drive a protest (Clark-Parsons, 2018; Coe, 2018). This ‘New Power’ endowed with characteristics of informal leadership and radical transparency attracts the masses towards social media participation (Heimans & Timms, 2014).

The study of online social movement has gained currency primarily due to three factors. Firstly, social media has proved to be an expanding medium of social in-

1 “WordNet | A Lexical Database for English.” <https://wordnet.princeton.edu/>. Accessed Dec. 26, 2020.

teraction which makes it one of the most relevant topics of discourse and research in the current scenario (Shirky, 2014). Secondly, if these online mediums are found to have a significant impact on social movements, it may represent a tectonic shift in the way the social media users formulate social agenda and thus achieve common goals (Feezell, 2018; Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). Finally, it also considers the implicit level of awareness and knowledge that social media users have on online social movements (Hara & Huang, 2011; Castells, 2016).

The efficacy of social media has been a subject of multidisciplinary study encompassing both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Hara and Huang (2011) discussed how Social Media campaigns can have a better impact through altered changes in our consumption of Social Media. Various studies have also focused on the impact of social media on third world societies which are still grappling with social tensions. De and Thakur (2016) advocate that the penetration of the internet has given new hope in societies that have seen oppression and inequality. Today, the young and educated of these societies are deciding the agenda. They are organizing themselves on the Social media platforms with Media Campaigns as a new weapon in their hand. These campaigns can not only seek help for the oppressed but also create a dialogue which was otherwise non-existent. Boulianne (2015) points out that it is deceptive to connect social media users to the social media campaigns. Further, the impacts and importance of social media on “Arab Spring” which is going on increasing its importance in the Middle East were analyzed (Şükrü & Abdulkadir, 2013). It concluded that social media is not the result of the “Arab Spring”, actually it has turned into a vehicle which made huge contributions to these social movements. According to a study conducted by Khamis and Vaughn (2012), Facebook played a huge and significant role in dispersing information, details and organizing participants during the Tahrir Square protests in Egypt. They also traced the importance of Facebook pages and groups in providing “safe spaces” for protesters to meet, as well as “a type of public commons for free speech” not available elsewhere.

Apart from the sociopolitical causes affecting such online social movements, the role played by other factors were analyzed in several studies, Odabaş and Reynolds-Stenson (2018) investigated the dimensions of Social Media that determine its role in the social movements. After taking into account several protests and mobilization movements, or the digital campaigns it was observed that age, gender, socio-political background strongly played its role in Social Media’s usage whenever participation is being talked about. However, it is critiqued that in times of excessive involvement these factors often play a secondary role. The concept of ‘safe spaces’ was advocated by Mundt *et al.* (2018) that are created in a “public sphere”. But the effectiveness of online social movements needed a creative space with which the netizens can relate to. Eren-Erdoğan and Ergun (2017) argued that Social Mediums help social movements by giving the whole movement an identity. The concept of “diagonally and diametrically opposite audience” effect by Sutkute

(2016) talks about social media campaigns and the multiple discourses it can lead to information asymmetry caused by two totally opposite discourses.

The success of a given social media campaign was studied by many researchers on a case-to-case basis. Schlaile *et al.* (2018) drew a stellar perspective on the “memetic” aspect of ALS challenge. It proposes that its success is due to some factors that are attached to memes. From a memetic perspective, ALS challenge utilized the self-replicating power of a meme. However, they cautioned that proselytizing of a meme may overdo a meme, and it’s overly nominating may just be seen as aggressive promotion and will likely get the tag of a “Spam”.

Several prominent online movements that were trending in social media and had wide repercussions globally include Black Lives Matter (Rogas, 2020) that was an international activist movement that originated in the African American Community that campaigns against violence and racism towards black people. The terrorist attacks of “Charlie Hebdo” publishing house on 7th January 2015 led to the creation of online social networking communities, titled “Je Suis Charlie” (“I am Charlie”) and “Je ne suis pas Charlie” (“I’m not Charlie”) (Sumiala, 2017). The Me Too or #MeToo (Lisak *et al.*, 2010) is an online social movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault of women. The term “Me Too” was first used in this context on social media in 2006, on Myspace, by sexual harassment survivor and activist Tarana Burke. Indian social activist Anna Hazare commenced an anti-corruption movement, India Against Corruption (IAC) in April 2011. The 5-day Hazare campaign mobilized around five million people mostly through various social networking sites on the Internet with the #IndiaAgainstcorruption (Guha, 2013). Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Grojec, 2017) was launched in India as a national movement. The campaign aimed to achieve the vision of a ‘Clean India’ by 2nd October 2019. The new wave of antagonism inspired by the Arab Spring (Brancati and Lucardi, 2019) that spread all over the globe, even to countries like Venezuela, has again stimulated the study of contentious politics and online social movements. Wolfsfeld *et al.* (2013) while analyzing the role of social media in Arab spring emphasized that one cannot understand the role of social media in collective action without first considering the political environment in which they operate.

In this study, online social movement ALS Ice Bucket Challenge (Schlaile *et al.*, 2018) is analyzed. The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge was an activity that required to film a video in which the nominated person has to the pour a bucket full of ice and water over their head, either by some other person or self-administered, in order to promote awareness and the severity of the disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) also called as motor neuron disease whereas in the United States as Lou Gehrig’s disease) (Wijesekera, 2009) and endorse and encourage donations to research. All the nominated participants had to adhere to the time duration of 24 hours to complete the challenge or forfeit by way of a charitable financial donation. It soon gained massive popularity and went viral across all social media platforms

during July–August 2014. In the United States, a huge number of people gave their participation and got involved with the ALS Association, and on the other hand in the United Kingdom, people in massive numbers participated for the Motor Neuron Disease Association. However, many individuals decided to donate their respective resources through the Ice Bucket Challenge to various other organizations.

Ubiquitous internet has amplified Peer and social media pressure which alter the mindset and influence the behavior of internet users. They can direct the goals and aspirations of the users and play a significant role in shaping their belief and unconsciously dictate their hopes. The transformative role of social media in adolescents' peer experiences have been subject of study by several researchers (Nesi *et al.*, 2018). Some of them have highlighted the positive attributes of peers on social media in the form of strengthening societal relationships and community participation (O'Keefe *et al.*, 2011; Patton *et al.*, 2016). However, users may feel pressure to gain their peers' acceptance of their self-presentation (Chua *et al.*, 2016). It has been proved that online acceptance of social identity can lead to problems with self-confidence and self-satisfaction (Anderson *et al.*, 2018; Chua *et al.*, 2015). In this study, we propose to investigate the impact of online peer groups on the internet users which affects the outcome of any online social movement.

Innovation refers to an idea perceived as new by an individual which encompasses adoption of a new concept, behavior, or product. It spreads from its source of creation to the users or adopters through the process of diffusion (Rogers, 1962). The process of adoption of an innovation does not happen simultaneously in a social system; rather it depends on factors that define the characteristics of the target population. Further, it is a five-stage gradual process that culminates in the adoption of the said innovation. These distinct stages identified are the awareness stage, interest stage, evaluation stage, trial stage and finally the adoption stage. The technological driven society has ensured that online social platforms are not only the dominant form of communication but also the prime medium of opinion formation in the society. The advent of these online platforms is bound to alter the diffusion process that results in adoption of innovations in a technological driven society.

In this paper, an attempt is made to study the role of Indian social media users on online social movements and analyze the effectiveness of social media on such online social movements. It attempts to measure the level of awareness of Indian social media users regarding the online social movements and identify the attributes that shape their outlook towards such movements. In particular, the role of virtual peers that affects the behavior of online users that has the potential to impact the outcome of online social movements is analyzed. A theoretical justification is put forth in the form of modification of the diffusion of ideas in technologically driven society to elucidate the role of these attributes impacting the effectiveness of such social media campaigns like the 'ALS Ice Bucket Challenge' in India.

RQ1: Do online media campaigns get influenced by peer pressure endured by the individual in his online and offline activities?

RQ2: Does the alteration in the process of diffusion of ideas in the society due to the advent of social media platforms and other attributes of net users have the potential to limit the effectiveness of such online movements?

2. Methodology

Mixed method research design is used in this study that advances the systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation. Such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data than quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

To carry out the mixed method approach Web-based Survey method (Kehoe & Pitkow, 1996) is utilized to assimilate the data. Web-based surveys incorporate automatic verification and storage of survey responses. For the appropriate execution of the intended cross-sectional study, Google forms were used to conduct the online survey which was disseminated on various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Google forms inherently have the ability to avoid multiple responses. No incentives are provided to the survey participants.

2.1 Sampling method

Probability-based survey sampling was employed in this study to enable choice of samples from a larger population to eliminate the biases in conducting the survey. Simple Random sampling was executed via use of Google forms that were floated in various social media platforms including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The layout of the questionnaire and all its questions were designed to keep it clear and precise. The time frame was chosen for 20 days from 11th March to 30th March 2020 to provide respondents adequate time to record their responses. The responses which answered all the questions were taken into consideration and a sample size of 120 responses was arrived at and analyzed.

2.2 Categories of Questions

Employing a non-disguised approach, both qualitative and quantitative questions are framed in this study which were carefully curated balance of open-ended and closed-ended, multiple choice questions and dichotomous questions. A total of nine different variables have been taken into consideration with each variable having two or more attributes. These selected variables were framed into the form of questionnaire to comprehend the broader mindset of the social media user and also aimed to bring out the intent and the level of awareness that the respondents have about the online social movements including the Ice Bucket Challenge.

The first variable of age is taken into consideration to gauge the age group of the population that are more active, interested and participate in such online social movements. The second variable is chosen to record the interests of participants towards other online social media movements and to inquire about their participation in these movements. The awareness of the respondents towards the social media campaigns that are taking place around the globe was calibrated using the third variable. The fourth variable was included to measure their level of awareness regarding the ALS disease which was in the core of the Ice Bucket Challenge. The fifth variable recorded the awareness behind the reasons of the Ice Bucket Challenge Campaign. The sixth variable was aimed to investigate the exact reason of the respondents to take up the said challenge. The discerning attitude of the respondents was qualitatively analyzed in the form of their actions to disseminate awareness about the ALS and Ice bucket challenge constituted the seventh variable. The conviction of the respondents about the efficacy of such online movements and the eagerness about their participation in such movements in the future was the aim of the eighth and ninth variable respectively.

3. Data analysis

To analyze the impact of the Social movement ‘ALS Ice bucket challenge’ a comprehensive analysis is carried out of the assimilated data which assisted in arriving at our conclusions. The above-mentioned variables were quantitatively analyzed and summarized below.

3.1 Age of the respondents

Figure 1. Age of the respondents

Figure 1 shows that 72 respondents belong to the age group 15–20 years. A number of 28 respondents belong to the age group 21–25. Only 4 respondents belong to the 25–30 age group and the remaining 16 of the respondents are above the age of 30. This demonstrates that the majority of the respondents were below the age of 25. It can well be concluded that youth who devote their qualitative time on social media are attracted towards the social cause expounded by it.

3.2 Participation in online social movements

Table 1. Participation in online social movements

How many social media campaigns have you participated in total?	Count
1–2	80
3–4	20
More than 4	20
Total	120

From the above table we can comprehend that 80 of the total respondents participated in only 1–2 online social movements. An equal number of 20 respondents participated in 3–4 and more than 4 online social movements. This shows that the efficacy of online social movement is still at a nascent stage in developing societies like India. This can be attributed to the fact that it is mostly used by teens who are not sufficiently exposed to social problems facing the society.

3.3 Name of various online social movements heard

Figure 2. Name of various online social movements heard

The data (Figure 2) indicate that 28.1% of the respondents have heard of the latest #Me Too campaign while 21.9% of them knew of #JusticeForNirbhaya but have not participated in these movements. On the other hand, 15.6% of them have heard of #SwachhBharatAbhiyan and 12.5% of them know the #Anti-CorruptionMovement. Further, merely 9.4% of them have heard of #HappytoBleed and an equal percent of 6.3 % respondents have heard of #BlackLivesMatter and #lovewins.

3.4 Awareness about ALS

Table 2. Awareness about ALS

Do you know about ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) disease?	Count
Fully	36
Only heard about it	40
Don't Know	44
Total	120

The above table illustrates that 44 respondents are not aware about ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) disease, 40 of them only heard about it and only 36 of the respondents know fully about the ALS disease. This can be a direct result of the fact that ALS disease has never made headlines in our country and there is little reporting in the mainstream media on this subject. It has never been treated as a major health issue in India. Consequently, the respondents showed little inclination to gather requisite information of the issue.

3.5 Awareness behind the challenge

Table 3. Awareness behind the challenge

Were you aware about the reason behind this challenge?	Count
Yes	92
No	28
Total	120

From the above table it is conspicuous that 92 respondents were aware about the reason behind the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge and only 28 of them were not aware about the reason behind the challenge. This suggests that the trending hashtags on various social media platforms do have an impact on their users. Hence, the youth which might not be sufficiently aware of such social movements does take keen interest in trending stories and the issues which auger well for the future of such online campaigns in India.

3.6 Reasons behind taking the challenge

Figure 3. Reasons behind taking the challenge

Figure 3 demonstrates that the majority 36.7% of the respondents participated in the said challenge just for fun, 33.3% participated due to their commitment towards the cause. 10% of the respondents participated due to peer pressure while 6.7% took the challenge to maintain their identity on social media. Only 6.7% of the respondents took the challenge to participate in trending hashtags. About 3.3% of the respondents took the challenge because they felt concerned about the cause and simultaneously felt it was a fun way to highlight the cause while the remaining 3.3% didn't really take it up. This again backs our observation that the youth which primarily uses the Social media platforms are essentially not adequately sensitized to the cause espoused by such campaigns.

3.7 Steps taken to spread awareness about ALS

The data show that, apart from taking the challenge themselves, 25% of the respondents nominated others for the challenge. It is also comprehended that 18.8% of the respondents shared articles related to ALS on social media like Facebook and Twitter while 18.8% of respondents discussed it with their family and friends. Around 15.6% of them educated themselves and read and researched articles about ALS to enhance their knowledge about the subject concerned as an academic pursuit. 12.5% of respondents also discussed ALS and the challenge at their workplace and merely 9.4% of the respondents did nothing despite taking the challenge. This suggests that apart from taking the challenge, around 90% of the social media users did take measured steps to disseminate information among other users in social and

Figure 4. Steps taken to spread awareness about ALS

professional circles or gathered requisite knowledge about the issue in hand. This establishes that youth are not only interested in taking the challenge but also in educating their near and dear ones about any social issue which might be trending on social media. Hence, the society was definitely enriched and benefited by their actions.

3.8 Impact of online social movements

Table 4. Impact of online social movements

Do you think that such social media campaigns are impactful?	Count
Yes	72
No	12
Maybe	36
Total	120

From the above table, it is derived that 72 respondents believe that such online movements are impactful, 36 of them believe that it may be impactful and 12 of the respondents feel that such online social movements are not impactful. Although the majority of the respondents thought the same as impactful, the numbers fall short of concluding that such social movements can affect public opinion or generate sufficient interest among the netizens on issues facing society. This again points towards Indian social media users being at the nascent state in online social mobilization.

3.9 Participation in future online social movements

Table 5. Participation in future online social movements

Will you participate in any future social media campaigns?	Count
Yes	76
No	4
Maybe	40
Total	120

The study (Table 5) emphasizes that 76 respondents showed full inclination to participate in future online social movements. But 40 of the respondents did not show strong resolve to participate in the future while 4 of the respondents didn't want to participate in the future. This points to the fact that the netizens, most of whom are youths are now maturing in activity on the internet and realizing their social responsibility of furthering the cause espoused by such online social movements. At present, their approach seems reluctant as only about one third of the respondents expressed their desire to take such a challenge in the future.

4. Conclusion

With social media campaigns trending across all online platforms, the factors affecting its effectiveness on the internet users is a subject of investigation by researchers across the world. The present study is focused primarily on identifying the attributes of the internet users on the outcome of such online social movements particularly in the developing nations. Social media platforms have democratized the public sphere as never before by providing efficient connectivity and safe spaces for its users. Consequently, the users have the freedom to express their viewpoint freely on the social media platforms. This has particularly affected the youth who are submerged into the social media space by devoting quality time on these online platforms.

Social norms theory (Perkins & Berkowitz, 1986) advocates interventions aimed at presenting correct information about peer group norms in an effort to rectify any existing misperceptions of norms. The most vital mode of such interventions encompasses 'Social norms media campaigns' aimed at addressing misperceptions through electronic and print media that promote accurate and robust norms about the various issues including health behavior.

It is advocated that the 'Online social media campaigns' can be viewed as an extension of such 'social norms media campaigns' but in an online mode and with the outreach of globalized communities. In such "Online Social Norm" Theory, peers are users of social media platforms who interact with an individual and potentially influence his behavior and ideas on any issue in hand. This creates a new class of

peers which can be termed as “Virtual peers” which potentially alter the behavior of online users. The build-up of interest in such online campaigns significantly magnifies the virtual peer pressure on the individual users which have an “Inductive effect” to accept it and ensure their participation.

Clearly, the ‘ALS Ice bucket challenge’ has all the attributes of an “Online Social norm campaign” on a health issue which became viral across all platforms and touched the chords of social media users across the globe. With over three-fourth of the respondents showed awareness of the ALS challenge as validated in Table 3 and the majority showing their inclination to participate in any future online campaigns as evident from Table 5, the present study unequivocally establishes that the social media users in developing societies like India are enticed by such Online social norm media campaigns and are induced to participate in such movements. This signifies that the internet penetration in India coupled with online virtual peer pressure accompanying such movements has effectively aroused the consciousness of users towards such campaigns that have global reverberations. Eventually, social media is successful in carrying out the social movements by building up an online chain of virtual peers that manifest in inducing the individual to accept the same. Hence, the RQ1 is satisfactorily answered.

Figure 3 demonstrates that barely 10% of the respondents participated in the ALS Ice bucket challenge specifically due to peer pressure. This can appear as an anti-thesis of what was established in the above conclusions. Nonetheless, it is predominantly due to the incompleteness of definition of peers that the respondents encountered. There is a marked distinction between the virtual peers and the peers physically interacting with the individual. The survey data indicate only the physical peers who have tangible interaction with individuals in common spaces. But it discounts the role of virtual peers on the social networking platforms who interact virtually with the user, impacting their thought processes and behavior. As expounded in Figure 3, those respondents who took the task chiefly to participate in trending hashtags, for fun or to maintain their social identity which constitute more than half of the total respondents, did take the same under virtual peer pressure. The actions committed by the users due to such an ‘intangible’ peer group highlights the role of a pseudo-class that operates on the individual in a virtual medium. These facts reinforce the answers arrived at of RQ1.

The technological driven society has ensured that online social platforms are not only the dominant form of communication but also the prime medium of opinion formation in the society. Technology has an indelible impact on all forms of communications, altering its characteristics and the way users perceive them. The advent of online social media platforms has affected the diffusion process of dissemination of innovative ideas into the social mainstream. The rate and volume of exposure of innovative ideas that individuals attain is too high on such networked platforms. The repetitive onslaught of online information in the form of images,

videos, posts, tweets, blogs and media reports hugely amplifies the virtual peer pressure which cannot be debunked. This forces an individual to acknowledge the same and act on them, primarily to maintain his/her social standing and/or identity. This is substantially true for the viral content of the online social media campaigns. Thus, the momentum of information generates impulsive online environs which constrains its users to adopt an innovation even if it remains untested and unverified. Consequently, this study proposes that the advent of online social media has resulted in the first four stages of the diffusion process being metamorphosed with the awareness stage to the trial stage fused into a single stage. Thus, it is reduced to a binary process of the input stage and the output adoption stage which alters the attributes of the adaptors of the said innovation.

The same is demonstrated in the present study. In Figure 3, it is conspicuous that the peer pressure exerted by the virtual peers pushed the majority of the users to undertake the 'ALS Ice bucket Challenge'. It implies that the innovative concept was lapped up by the net users with induced online peer effect making it viral and trending hashtag. Nonetheless, it is evident from Figure 4 that the vast majority of 70% respondents didn't manifest adequate concerns to delve into the intricacies and substance of the challenge. They made little efforts to research or educate themselves about the ALS disease. This is in line with our proposition that an innovation which permeates the public space does not necessarily transfer its embedded attributes to the users on online social media. This highlights the inherent limitations of Social media. People spend hours on different social media platforms, which may boost their social standing, but at the same time are compelled to do things only due to peer pressure without actually exploring the issue concerned. This answers RQ2 and establishes that the virtual peer pressure created in the technological driven society has affected the diffusion of ideas in it.

Further, the online identity has gradually taken prominence with the youth in the societies across the globe. In the present study, Figure 1 shows that the majority of respondents were youth below the age of twenty-five implying that the outcome of the survey is directly influenced by the age of the respondents. As evident from Table 3, about 76.7% of the respondents were aware of the reason behind this challenge which suggests that there is permeating awareness regarding the issues among internet users in India. Further, it points out that the youth is attracted to the social cause expounded by it. Hence, the present study identifies several attributes that are bound to influence the outcome of any online social movement.

5. Limitations

Due to constraints of resources and time, all the online social movements were not taken into consideration. ALS Ice Bucket challenge is picked for the said study as it had the distinction of being one of the most popular and viral online social

campaigns. It made headlines as celebrities across India took this challenge and made it a trending issue on all social platforms. Further, due to financial restrictions, the study could not accommodate the responses of other social media users. Only 120 responses were considered.

There are inherent disadvantages of online surveys. Questions have been raised about the data reliability in such surveys. Online surveys are conducted in the absence of a mediator or interviewer. Due to this limitation, the feedback received may be considered questionable. The limited access to certain sections of a population may be cited as a major drawback of the online survey method. There are sections of a target population which may not have access to the World Wide Web at a particular instance of time when their feedback may prove to be effective for research. Moreover, participation in web-based surveys often requires a vehicle, including emails and offline media, for inviting individuals to participate in the said survey. This non-public participatory mode can potentially skew the sample size and alter the outcome of the study undertaken.

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