

Investigating The Effect of Social Media On Online Consumer Buying Behaviour: Mediating Role of Perception Development

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Abstract

This study is carried out at the university level to check the effect of social media on online consumer buying behavior. Source of social media i.e., e-word of mouth, channel useability and social media influence on online consumer buying. Further, the researcher evaluated the mediating role of perception development between e-word of mouth, channel Useability, social media and online consumer buying. The researchers used simple random sampling to select the respondents. The researchers used a survey mechanism is used to collect the data. The researcher selected a population sample of 500 students. People belonging to different departments from the entire university were chosen for conducting the research. The researchers used structural equational model to test the hypothesis of the current research. The findings indicate that social media has a significant and positive effect on the purchasing behaviour of online consumers. Specifically, the findings suggested that eWOM had a significant and positive influence on the purchasing behaviour of online consumers. In addition, the research revealed that channel usability has a significant and positive influence on the purchasing behaviour of online customers. In addition, the data demonstrated that social media impact has a considerable and favorable effect on the purchasing behaviour of online customers. Lastly, the results revealed that perception development has significant mediating role between e-word of mouth, channel useability, social media and online consumer buying behaviour. People develop perception about what they hear and that effects their

purchase behavior. A restricted area was chosen for the research and the age group was limited. If a wider area would have been chosen, then a better result would have been generated better research would have been conducted.

Key words : channel useability, e-word of mouth, online consumer buying behaviour, perception development, social media influence

Introduction

As the number of worldwide Internet presentations continues to rise, the number of customers providing online feedback has expanded dramatically (Lu & Bai, 2021). If correctly used, abundant data should provide valuable insights. The information about electronic word-of-mouth is one insight that may be gained from the data (e-WOM). The effect of e-WOM on customer behaviour is well-known (Leong et al., 2022). The e-WOM communication framework reveals the clear relationship between the adoption of e-WOM and customers' willingness to purchase. eWOM can deliver unbiased information to an increasing number of customers who rely on these interactions (Xiao et al., 2022). Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is described as an online sharing campaign that incorporates a wealth of consumer information from the views and suggestions of experienced customers about vendors (Nofal et al., 2022). E-WOM is increasingly integral to the online experience for both advertisers and consumers. E-WOM may significantly draw people's attention and generate conversation.

Nonetheless, social media websites are regarded as a relatively new platform for creating e-WOM, since they enable online users to engage with one another by sharing their thoughts, ideas, and experiences (Jasin, 2022). Through social media involvement, users may now share their opinions and experiences about a product or service with their network of friends and acquaintances (Leong et al., 2022). This practice of reciprocal information-sharing via social media makes e-WOM information more legitimate and reliable for customers. It was shown that social media dialogues had a substantial influence on internet purchasing behaviour (Alhidari et al., 2015). It has been discovered that online consumers base their purchasing choices on e-WOM information. Online users are often exposed to an infinite amount of e-WOM material on social media websites; hence, it is also important for them to sort and filter the essential information accessible online prior to utilizing it. Still, e-WOM and online purchase intent on social networking websites have not been well studied in the literature.

The problem we have worked upon in this research paper is that to find out whether social media i.e., word of mouth, channel useability and social media influence plays a vital role in consumer buying behavior or not. The major focus is upon the purchase decision with a

mediating role of perception development. With word of mouth being such a heavy source of information these days it needs to be noticed whether it affects the buying behavior of consumers and develops a certain perception in the minds of consumers or not. Word of mouth is considered to be one of the most vital and the least understood marketing strategy used by several people for their products and their promotions. It has become vital because there seems to be no more room for marketing when e-WOM is not a viable strategy being used (El-Baz et al., 2022).

The current study makes a number of remarkable and significant additions to the existing research on consumer behaviour. Initially, a number of research have investigated the influence of social media on online customer purchase intent. However, the effect of channel usefulness and social media on customer purchasing choices has only been recorded in the literature. This research is unusual because it attempts to address this gap by studying the relationship between channel usability, social media adoption behaviour, and purchase intent. Pakistan has been seen to be undergoing a digital revolution throughout the nation, in which e-WOM plays a crucial role in fostering corporate development, particularly on online platforms, and so was chosen as the country from which the research sample would be drawn. Several studies were conducted in Pakistan to demonstrate the relationship between social media and brand equity, customer behaviour, and purchase intent. In Pakistan, on the other hand, where social media-based enterprises are growing, the link between different social media characteristics and customer behaviour has been explored very seldom. In addition to providing theoretical information on the roles of e-WOM, channel usability, and social impact on consumer behaviour in social media, this paper's results seek to contribute to the body of literature by way of the study methodology. In terms of management consequences, it has been essential to evaluate the influence of e-WOM information on purchase intent in the social media setting. Since it would provide marketing managers with online consumer data to construct a more effective marketing plan by employing e-WOM.

Literature Review

E-word of mouth, also known as e-WOM, is a kind of verbal communication that takes place between two people, known as the receiver and the transmitter, and it focuses on a particular product, service, or brand. Since the communication does not seem to have a significant commercial purpose to the recipient (Kalejahi et al., 2022),

consumers place a greater level of confidence in the legitimacy of e-WOM as compared to ads from businesses. E-word-of-mouth, often known as E-WOM, is a kind of word-of-mouth marketing that does not involve financial gain and is generally acknowledged as having a substantial impact on the creation of consumer suggestions and purchasing choices (Kurdi, Alshurideh, Akour, Alzoubi, et al., 2022). The choices that marketers make are impacted by this kind of interpersonal communication. E-word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is a sort of word-of-mouth marketing that has developed as a direct consequence of the increased usage of the Internet among consumers in today's society for the purpose of gathering information about a particular product or business. As defined by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), "e-WOM" refers to "any good or negative comment made by prospective, existing, or past consumers about a product or a firm that is accessible to large groups of individuals and institutions over the Internet". According to a recent poll, the vast majority of customers see internet reviews as being on par with the credibility of a company's own website.

In addition, Rowley (2001) proposed that businesses should establish online communities as opposed to just advertising online. These studies demonstrate the possible influence of e-WOM on the customer decision-making process. Using experimental investigations, Senecal and Nantel (2004) explored how the selection of e-WOM influences product and advocated the usage of an online resource guide. Own various platforms that allow e-WOM, such as discussion boards and other online communication tools that are increasingly acknowledged for their ability to affect the adoption and usage of goods and services.

Previous researches as most of the researchers suggested that ease in channel useability has significantly and positively influence on online consumer buying behaviour (Al-Abadi et al., 2022; Alhaimer, 2022). Moreover, social media influence has significant influence on Online consumer buying behaviour. Previous researches suggested that positive use of social media has significantly and positively influence on online consumer buying behaviour (Irfan et al., 2017; Irfan et al., 2018; Jasin, 2022; Kurdi, Alshurideh, Akour, Tariq, et al., 2022). The present body of research on consumer choices to make purchases online has focused mostly on determining the factors that affect a customer's tendency to participate in online shopping. Research in the field of consumer behaviour has led to the

development of general models of purchasing behaviour. These models illustrate the process that customers go through while deciding whether or not to make a purchase.

Customer examination is characterized as tactile recognition in which they see and structure the assessment about the stock and the organizations in view of tangible boosts before choosing to purchase. It is recommended that perception can be of three categories that is self, price and perception of benefit (Rahmawaty et al., 2021). Perception development helps in making a purchase decision and this perception is developed by advertising, friends or family. Advertising today is by all relation all around and ever present applying a liberal impact on a daily basis lives of individuals. Promotions create self-ideas keeping in mind the end goal to influence buy selection. TV publicizing operate deliberation getting trap, for example, infectious and satisfying music, verses, and tinkles, ingenuity and repeat messages. The impact of the advertisements is more evident on television as opposed to print media or radio (Marbach et al., 2016). Broadcasting is an essential method for a company or organization to publicize a product or service and cultivate customer support, both of which often result in longer sales and more compensation.

Consumer Buying behavior is basically the process through which the individuals tend to purchase any particular product or service keeping in mind their resources and efforts (Ebrahimi et al., 2022). According to a survey, generally people tend to buy the products or services not due to the influence of the quality of the product or the advertisements but because they have heard good words about that product or service from their family or friends. Word of mouth has an important role in building up the intention of purchasing any product in the minds of customers. According to the results deduced from a study, it has been concluded that the impact of electronic word of mouth on the consumer buying behavior has a strong relationship with the brand image of that product (Gulfraz et al., 2022).

At this time, internet shopping is gaining popularity all around the globe, particularly among consumers and businesses. The growth of internet shopping has opened up new options not just for consumers but also for online businesses (Rahman & Hossain, 2022). According to findings from research conducted on customers, consumer feedback that is provided through internet channels and the dissemination of specific information or points of view have become very influential

modes of communication. Through the use of social media platforms (Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram), online evaluations have completely taken over commercial organizations (Nuseir, 2019). The performance of consumers who purchase online has been enhanced because to the many forms of reviews that can be found online. Online evaluations left by contented customers and shared through social media might influence the purchasing decisions of other consumers when they purchase online (Chiu et al., 2022; Bibi et al., 2018). In today's market, a number of buyers are interested in social media. A great number of commercial enterprises have made the decision to capitalize on the potential made available by social media networks in order to attract a greater number of customers. Consumers' cognitive states are motivated, which in turn influences their online purchase behaviour when live streaming content is shown (Wang et al., 2022). The commercial enterprise has put effort into promoting on social media platforms with the hope of attracting customers to make purchases of goods online.

Hypothesis of the Study

H1: There is a significant and positive effect of eWOM on online customers buying behaviour.

H2: There is a significant and positive effect of channel useability on online customers buying behaviour.

H3: There is a significant and positive effect of social media influence on online customers buying behaviour.

H4 (a): There is a significant and positive mediating effect of perception development between e-WOM on online customers buying behaviour.

H4 (b): There is a significant and positive mediating effect of perception development between channel useability on online customers buying behaviour.

H4 (c): There is a significant and positive mediating effect of perception development between social media influence on online customers buying behaviour.

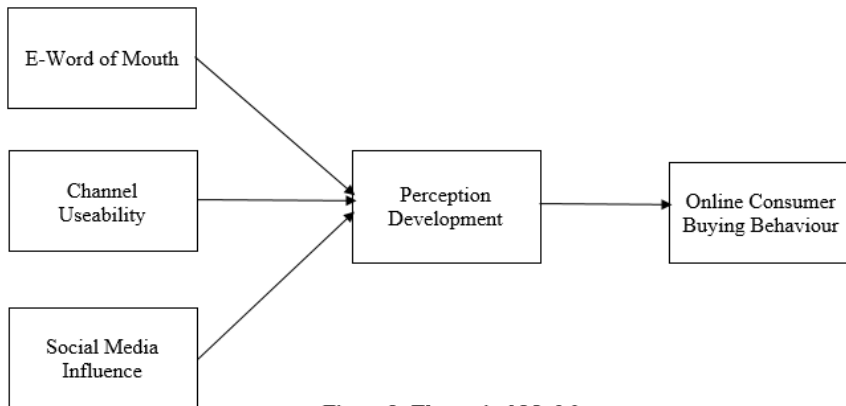


Figure 1: Theoretical Model

Methodology

The research design we chose for our research is quantitative in nature. The researchers used deductive approach to conduct this study. Further, positivism philosophy was used by researchers to conduct this research. The nature of the study is cross-sectional. The unit of the analysis for this research was students studying in different department of Punjab University. The target population of the current study was students studying in all departments of Punjab University. The researcher selects five departments randomly to receive the responses from target audience. The researcher used probability research technique to select the most appropriate sample for current research. The researchers used simple random sampling to select the respondents. The researchers used survey mechanism is used to collect the data. First of all, an appropriate questionnaire was being designed and checked for its reliability. Then the questionnaire was distributed to the sample respondents and the desired results were deduced. The results proved that our research design was appropriate and gave correct results. We selected a population sample of 530 students. People belonging to different departments from the entire university were chosen for conducting the research. The results were gathered from the population sample by giving them questionnaires and getting their answers. Major departments for our research were: Institute of Business Administration, Institution of Business and Information Technology, Institute of Administration Science, Hailey College of Commerce and Mass Communication. The sample questionnaire was designed at first to check its reliability for 50 respondents and whether the questionnaire is appropriate. After getting the reliability correct, the questionnaire was finalized and distributed to the 530 respondents. Researchers received 500 correct responses and used for data analysis. Researchers incorporated online Google form in our study to get the results from the respondents online. After getting the results, the data was entered into SPSS and the results were generated which proved out to be correct and suitable for the research study. The researchers used structural equation

model to test the hypothesis of current research. While conducting this research, we came across few difficulties regarding the understanding capability of people. Few people were unable to understand what was being asked in a particular question. So, they were answered and briefed about it. People also got problems in viewing our Google form that had questionnaire. That problem was resolved anyhow.

Results and Findings

Data Analysis

Demographic Profile

Table No 1: Frequency Analysis

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	285	57.0
Female	215	43.0
Age of Respondents		
22-30 Years	334	66.80
31-40 Years	166	33.20
Qualification of Respondents		
Bachelors	186	37.2
Master	175	35.00
M.Phil.	139	27.80

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 4.1 below. According to the statistics, it seems that the vast majority of responders are male (57.0%). In addition, the table illustrates that the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 22 and 30 years old (62.60%) and that the majority of respondents had a Bachelor's degree (37.2%).

Measurement Model

Since can be seen in Table 1, our data satisfied the requirements for convergent validity, as all of the variables included in this investigation had standardized factor loadings that were more than 0.4. (1999, Holland). When examining the multicollinearity problem present in the data, the researcher makes use of the variance inflation factor. According to Hair et al., multicollinearity may be tolerated as long as the number is not more than five (2011). Our model variables' VIFs could not be computed to be more than 2.14 in any way. The construct reliability of the reflecting structures exceeds 0.70. (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). In addition, the results of the analysis shown in table 1 demonstrated that the levels of both (Rho A) and C-A beyond the permissible threshold of .70. The AVEs that were obtained for each construct fell between the range of .501 and .566, indicating that the reliability of the constructs was excellent and that the measurement models convergent. In the end, the discriminant validity of the measurement model was evaluated, as can be shown in Table 2.

Table No 2: Reliability Analysis

Construct	F-items	FA	VIF	AVE	CR	Rho_A	C-A
E-Word				0.6	0.88	0.83	0.83
of Mouth							
	EWM1	0.73	1.47				
	EWM2	0.71	1.47				
	EWM3	0.81	2.14				
	EWM4	0.81	2.12				
	EWM5	0.8	1.89				
	EWM6	0.83	1.47				
Channel Useability	CU1	0.75	1.63	0.57	0.87	0.81	0.81
	CU2	0.79	1.97				
	CU3	0.79	1.86				

		CU4	0.74	1.6				
		CU5	0.69	1.26				
Social Influence	Media				0.59	0.82	0.75	0.73
		SMI1	0.68	1.33				
		SMI2	0.51	1.17				
		SMI3	0.79	1.69				
		SMI4	0.75	1.64				
		SMI5	0.72	1.47				
Perception Development					0.50	0.85	0.8	0.79
		PD1	0.58	1.16				
		PD2	0.74	1.62				
		PD3	0.77	1.82				
		PD4	0.76	1.77				
		PD5	0.71	1.48				
		PD6	0.63	1.39				
Online consumer buying behaviour					0.52	0.81	0.75	0.74
		OCBB1	0.64	1.43				
		OCBB2	0.63	1.52				
		OCBB3	0.61	1.34				
		OCBB4	0.52	1.32				
		OCBB5	0.55	1.34				
		OCBB6	0.51	1.5				
		OCBB7	0.49	1.44				
		OCBB8	0.52	1.34				

OCBB9 0.63 1.63

The HTMT was used to conduct an investigation of the discriminant validity. In general, the discriminant validity of this measurement model may be accepted, which supports the idea that there is discriminant validity between the constructs. The results of the HTMT, which served as a measure of discriminant validity, were shown in Table 3. The findings show that the values lie between 0.26 to 0.55, which indicates that the discriminant validity of the test was achieved (Farooq et al., 2018).

Table No 3: Discriminant Validity_ HTMT

	Channel Usability	E-Word of Mouth	Online consumer buying behaviour	Perception Development	Social Media Influence
Channel Usability					
E-Word of Mouth	0.28				
Online consumer buying behaviour	0.59	0.42			
Perception Development	0.32	0.43	0.38		
Social Media Influence	0.26	0.41	0.46	0.55	

4.3 Structural Model

The researchers assessed the predicted structural relationships among variables. E-Word of Mouth had a significant impact on online customer purchases (Beta= 0.19, T= 6.57, P=.000), supporting the first hypothesis

(H1). Our results validate H2's assertion that Channel Usability has a significant impact on online customer purchasing behaviour (Beta= 0.18, T= 6.35, P=.000). Further, social media influence has significant influence on Online consumer buying behaviour. Lastly, the results revealed that perception development has significant effect on online consumer buying behaviour. Researcher evaluated perception Development as a mediator between E-word of mouth and online consumer buying behaviour. Table 3 and Figure 1 exhibit the structural mediating models' conclusions. It has a significant and positive mediating link between observed variables. So H3 is supported and has a mediation effect. The researchers also examined perception development as a mediator between channel useability and online consumer buying behaviour. Lastly, perception development as a mediator between social media influence and online consumer buying behaviour. So, H4c was supported and has a mediation effect.

4.4 Hypothesis Development

Table No 4: Testing of Hypothesis

Relationship	Beta - Value	T-Value	Decision
Direct Effect			
E-Word of Mouth -> Online consumer buying behaviour	0.19	6.57***	H1 Supported
Channel Useability -> Online consumer buying behaviour	0.39	15.83***	H2 Supported
Social Media Influence -> Online consumer buying behaviour	0.18	6.35***	H3 Supported
Perception Development-> Online consumer buying behaviour	0.06	2.23**	-
Mediation Analysis			
E-Word of Mouth -> Perception Development-> Online consumer buying behaviour	0.21	10.25***	H4B Supported
Channel Useability -> Perception	0.31	13.71***	H4A

Development-> Online consumer buying behaviour

Supported

Social Media Influence -> Perception Development-> Online consumer buying behaviour

0.42 15.33***

H4C Supported

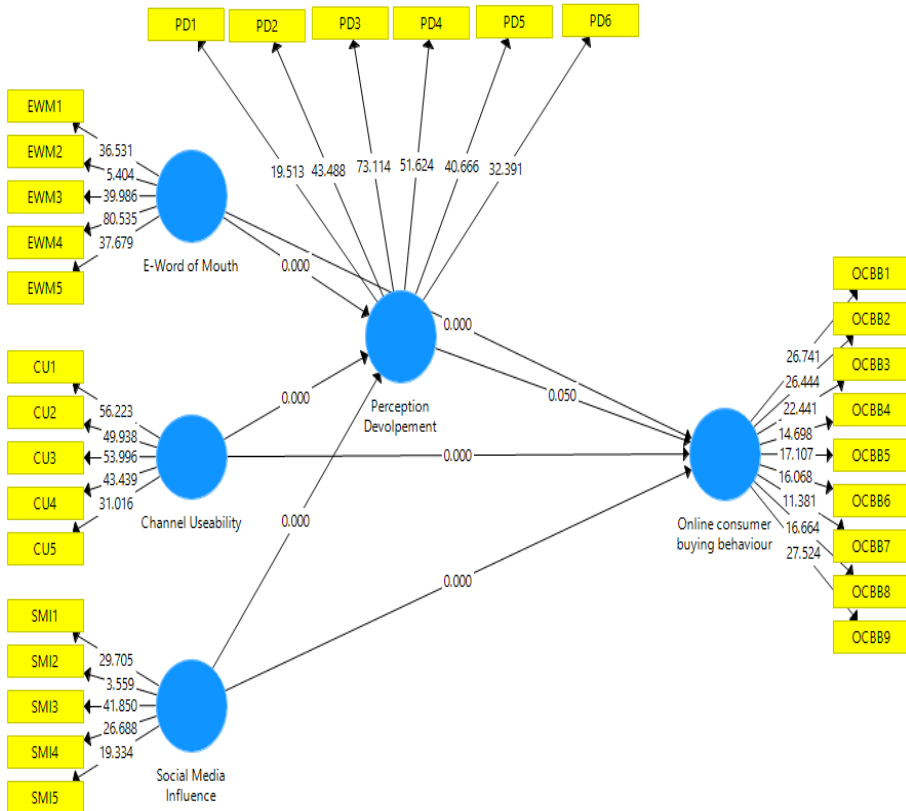


Figure2: Structural Equational Model Results

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The findings of current research indicated that E-Word of Mouth has significant influence on online consumer buying behaviour. The findings of current research are in line with previous researches as most of the authors suggested that positive E-word of mouth has significantly and positively influence on online consumer buying behaviour (Li et al., 2022; Zhai et al.,

2022). Further, the findings confirm H2's claim that Channel Useability has significant influence on online consumer buying behaviour. The findings of current research are in line with previous researches as most of the researchers suggested that ease in channel useability has significantly and positively influence on online consumer buying behaviour (Al-Abbadi et al., 2022; Alhaimer, 2022). Moreover, social media influence has significant influence on Online consumer buying behaviour. The findings of current research are in line with previous researches as most of the authors suggested that positive use of social media has significantly and positively influence on online consumer buying behaviour (Jasin, 2022; Kurdi, Alshurideh, Akour, Tariq, et al., 2022; Irfan et al., 2019). Lastly, the results revealed that perception development has significant mediating between independent variables and online consumer buying behaviour. The findings of current research are in line with previous researches as most of the authors suggested that positive perception of consumers regarding online brands has significantly and positively influence on online consumer buying behaviour (Lim et al., 2016; Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001).

Conclusion

This study is carried out at the university level to check the Effect of social media on online consumer buying behavior. Source of social media i.e., e-word of mouth, channel useability and social media influence on online consumer buying. Further, the researcher evaluated the mediating role of perception development between e-word of mouth, channel useability, social media and online consumer buying. A questionnaire is designed to extract the deductions and information by the researchers. The Questionnaire was rotated around the university and with a 500-sample population we got the result that social media has a significant and positive impact on online consumer's buying behavior. Further, the results revealed that perception development has significant mediating role between e-word of mouth, channel useability, social media and online consumer buying behaviour. People develop perception about what they hear and that effects their purchase behavior. With our research we found out that e-WOM plays a major role in the consumer buying behavior and makes people decide what they do.

Recommendations

Spreading positive word of mouth can be a better idea for companies and groups. People can use e-WOM marketing for spreading knowledge or information about their products and with the help of positive word of mouth, more people can be targeted. For e-WOM internet is a valid resource. People can find better information when they hear about it from others and most people rely on other resource as well. This is a better idea of how things can be marketed in the world of digital era.

Limitations and Future Directions

A restricted area was chosen for the research and the age group was limited. If a wider area would have been chosen, then a better result would have been generated better research would have been conducted. Interviews were not included in the research. Through interviews we could have found better answers from people and quick response could have been taken. We have been area based and took respondents from Punjab University. If we took respondents from other universities or other areas, a better result would have been generated and better research would be conducted. The current research has following future directions as well. Social media marketing and digital marketing can be possible mediators for the relationship between e wom, social media influencer, channel credibility and consumer online consumer buying behavior. Furthermore, deeper analysis could be performed by taking into account different sources for e WOM marketing strategies. This could be conducted in the evolution of websites. Other possible lines of development might be a qualitative analysis to deduce the sources of information flows in measuring online consumer behavior.

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