

How social media influence the customers buying behavior during Covid-19? Evidence from Pakistan.

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Abstract. The research examined the impact of social media; social networking theory, word of mouth feedback loop, and credibility content on the consumer buying behavior in Pakistan. The structured questionnaire shared using the convenience sampling between 650-700 participants. However, received 392 complete responses. The estimations revealed that there is a significant and positive impact of social media, social networking theory, word of mouth, feedback loop, and credibility content on the buying behavior in Pakistan. Social media plays an important role in consumer buying behavior, which means that people are more likely to search, buy and share products using social media channels. Due to Covid-19, the number of responses received was less than expected. Furthermore, the salary of the respondents was not included in the questionnaire, which could have given information that is more detailed. The study examined the in-depth impact of social media on the people of Pakistan considering their detailed demographic and socioeconomic factors as it lacked the evidence with in historical literature. The owners/managers to attract or retain the customers must build their online presence using the most used social channels like Instagram and Facebook. Future researchers need to create a precise yet comprehensive survey. The salary of the respondent can be used to determine the behavior of respondents having different salary levels.

Key words: Social Media, Consumer Buying Behavior Covid-19, Structural Equation Modeling

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Consumer buying behavior includes the studies of the processes that people or groups go through while making purchase decisions to meet their requirements (Di Pietro and Pantano, 2012). Additionally, Chu et al. (2013) argued that buying behavior often takes various forms, with consumer decisions varying depending on a wide range of criteria such as income, demography, social, and cultural aspects (Afthanorhan et al., 2021). The phrase “buying engagement” refers to a consumer’s level of interest in purchasing a product or service (Balakrishnan et al., 2014) Furthermore, Bai et al. (2015) described that consumer behavior is the examination of people’s desires, motives, and thought processes used in deciding a commodity more than another,

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including the tendencies of shopping for different products and services. According to [Erkan and Evans \(2016\)](#) complex buying behavior refers to a borrower's good purchasing involvement and ability to perceive significant differences between products. Likewise, [Arli \(2017\)](#) stated that dissonance-reducing shopping behavior is defined as buyers' high buying involvement and incapacity to discern significant differences between brands ([Bigne et al., 2018](#)). However, [Alalwan \(2018\)](#) stated that habitual buying behavior refers to a borrower's restricted buying involvement and inability to discern significant differences between companies. Consumers who have limited purchasing strength and ability to perceive significant differences between companies engaged in diverse array shopping ([Jibril et al., 2019](#)). Understanding the various type of customers who have different buy choice behaviors regarding the level of involvement and ability to distinguish major distinctions between companies is beneficial ([Bronner and de Hoog, 2014](#); [McClure and Seock, 2020](#)). Marketers need to research client buying behavior since this serves as a guide to what customers want ([Oumayma, 2019](#)). Before launching a product to the marketplace, it is vital to research the types of items that customers demand ([Naeem, 2021](#)). Marketers can use this information to customize their marketing campaigns to their client's preferences ([Palalic et al., 2020](#)). Brand awareness is essential for the success of a company's existing products along with the introduction of new products ([Pop et al., 2021](#)). Whenever it concerns buying a product, each customer has their thought pattern and mentality ([baker Qureshi et al., 2019](#); [Tsai and Bui, 2021](#)). If a company fails to understand a customer's response to a market, there is indeed a significant danger of the defective product.

1.2 Importance of Study

Social media plays an important role in determining consumer-buying behavior during Covid-19. It means that people are more likely to search, buy and share products using social media channels during the pandemic season. According to a study, consumer behavior, expectations, and shopping habits changed substantially because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This worldwide catastrophe was extremely meaningful because of the digitalization connectivity of markets worldwide its unparalleled exposure by print and electronic media. Similarly, the pandemic has accelerated the consumer's purchase regarding their local brands using online means which has enhanced their GDP and has helped them for the sustainable survival of their economy in the long run. The pandemic situation has caused complete isolation for the affected people that have hindered them from making their regular purchases ([Gu et al., 2021](#)). It has arisen the need for online purchases using social media during pandemics. The Isolation and social distancing concept during Covid-19 has accelerated the usage of social media to stay connected with each other. It has provided a platform for the local and international brands to attract more and more customers at the digital social network to buy their product and take the delivery at home while keeping the social distancing ([Kaya, 2020](#)).

1.3 Theories of the Study

Theory of planned behavior and social networking theory are the two important considerations related to customers' buying behavior ([Akar and Dalgic, 2018](#)). The detail of these two is as follows.

1.3.1 Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of Planned behavior was introduced and developed by [Ajzen \(1991\)](#). It is a psychological theory, which creates the relationship between the behavior and beliefs of a person. According to this theory, a person's perception towards any decision related to his belief, attitude, and norms for making that decision. For example, if a person believes that purchasing with an online home delivery option is better rather than being infected in the physical environment [Akar and Dalgic \(2018\)](#), he will surely do so to save his life. The theory also considered social media to influence the belief and behavior of a person for making any type of decision.

1.3.2 Social Network Theory

This theory was developed and promoted by ([Burt et al., 1994](#)). The theory strictly followed the social media norms for the supply of information on social media related to anything based on the behavior and attitude of different customers. This theory states that social media provided a platform for different people to highlight their interests/habits and discuss what they believe to be true related to their daily decision related to every aspect of life including the purchase decision.

The present study followed the theory of planned behavior in general and the theory of social networking in particular to achieve the research objectives.

1.4 Research Problem

The environmental knowledge might influence purchasing habits, allowing the planet to maintain more sustainably ([Gautam and Sharma, 2017](#)). Similarly, [Aragoncillo and Orus \(2018\)](#) discussed that social media has a strong influence on consumer purchasing behavior. Furthermore, [Saeed et al. \(2019\)](#) argued that customers can obtain a lot of product details via social media in such a small space of time. Although advertisements and certain other semi-messages can help raise customer awareness of branding, commodities, and offerings, word-of-mouth (WOM) has indeed been found to have a greater impact on modifying consumer behavior and attitudes about different types of products ([Tsai and Bui, 2021](#)). A customer using social media can review the feedback of others about that product, but when the customer does not have social media he can never know about the quality of the product that may cause loss to him ([Xu et al., 2021](#)). Businesses that do not post product content on social media may struggle to attract new clients.

1.5 Research Objectives

The primary goal of this study was to analyze the influence of media on Pakistani consumers' purchasing habits. It investigates whether social media now has a substantial effect on consumer purchasing decisions. It also looked into the impact of social media on online shopping. This investigation also looks at the impact of "Social Network Theory (SNT), Word - Of - Mouth (WOM), Feedback Loop (FL), and credibility material" on consumer purchasing decisions.

1.6 Research Questions

The study aims to examine the following research questions.

1. What effect does social media have on consumer purchasing habits in Pakistan during Covid-19?
2. Is there a link between social network theory and consumer purchasing behavior during Covid-19 in Pakistan?
3. Do word-of-mouth influence consumer-purchasing decisions during Covid-19 in Pakistan?
4. What impact does the feedback loop have on consumer purchasing behavior in Pakistan during Covid-19?
5. Does credibility content affect consumer-buying behavior during Covid-19 in Pakistan?

1.7 Contextual Significance

The outcome of the study is helpful for the e-marketers and policymakers of local and international brands to use the social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, etc., for enhancing their customer purchase experience with the comfort of home delivery. The Covid-19 has given rise to the importance of social distancing and isolation while staying connected at the social networking sites with their friends, family, and relatives, which have given impportunity to local/international brands to use this platform for enhancing their sales.

People before buying anything online or offline, gather information from different means like social media, friends, family, and news. Furthermore, (Hudson and Hudson, 2013).stated that people like to share reviews with others on social media about the product they use or hear about. Furthermore, Bronner and de Hoog (2014) stated that there are two sources to collect the information: interpersonal, and media searches. Consumers can share a personal opinion on the web, which can impact the behavior of many other purchasers (Bolat et al., 2016). Likewise, Godey et al. (2016), highlighted that social media is a relational link that encourages customers to engage, making it a valuable digital tool for purchasing decision-making and word-of-mouth marketing. Nowadays, there is a positive trend of usage of social media (Gautam and Sharma, 2017). People tend to spend 3-4 hours daily on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter(Aragoncillo and Orus, 2018). They gather information about the products online (Jibril et al., 2019). Marketers can utilize the research outcome to better understand consumer behavior and tailor their marketing efforts accordingly (Naeem, 2021; Oumayma, 2019).

2 Literature Review

The role of social media for consumer purchase intention in Pakistan is explored using “social networking theory, feedback loop, word of mouth, and creditability” for the present research. For this purpose, the researchers have discussed the previous studies related to the current domain. In addition, this chapter presents the hypothesis, research gap, and critical literature review.

2.1 Social Media and Consumer’s Buying Behavior

Balakrishnan et al. (2014) begin by sketching a portrait of the new consumer, emphasizing its key characteristics, which stem largely from a need for authenticity and separate it from the

so-called conventional customer (Bruno and Dariusz, 2013; Song and Yoo, 2016). Further research examined influencer marketing strategy for coping with marketplace shrinkage throughout the design and luxurious lifestyle sectors (Bronner and de Hoog, 2014). Additionally, Cao et al. (2014) reported that social media enhance the social connection between consumers and leads to improved confidence and intention to buy. The data also suggest that trust affects the propensity to purchase significantly (Cheung et al., 2014). Mostly in the virtual environment, social networks can potentially influence consumer behavior, particularly if the number of perceptions and the linkage between the range of information supplied and indeed the purchaser who would purchase this is developed (Ghosh et al., 2014). According to Hajli (2014), social media is still the most popular channel for perceived comfort, efficiency, as well as validity. Social media evaluations and perspectives also influence the buying process, although the trend is shockingly low to share their post-commercial experience.

The current state of social media has a significant influence on society and persuades them to purchase a particular product (McClure and Seock, 2020). To study this, certain credible research is used. Following the examination, social media was discovered to have a significant impact on students' shopping habits Oumayma (2019). Students use social media to spread their buying decisions and opinions (Kwahk and Kim, 2017; Naeem, 2021). Moreover, there's also a strong link connecting user satisfaction, value perception, as well as risk perception, and then all three factors affected the consumer's desire to buy when using social media (Palalic et al., 2020). Throughout the Hyderabad region, social media has a big influence on customers' aggressive purchase behavior. Showed that impulsive purchasing behavior influences them (Pop et al., 2021; Zhang and Breugelmans, 2012). Seven social media traits that influence consumer behavior and inspire them to shop online were explained (Tsai and Bui, 2021). There were favorable results for the usefulness of social media in the area of e-commerce. Furthermore, other drivers such as engagement, entertainment, and customization have also altered the consumer components. As per the majority of outcomes in the historical evidence from literature, the following of hypothesis formed.

H₁: Social media significantly influence consumer-buying behavior during Covid-19 in Pakistan.

2.2 Social Network Theory and Consumer Buying Behavior

This theory was developed and promoted by (Burt et al., 1994). The theory strictly followed the social media norms for the supply of information on social media related to anything based on the behavior and attitude of different customers (Di Pietro and Pantano, 2012). This theory states that social media provided a platform for different people to highlight their interests/habits and discuss what they believe to be true related to their daily decision related to every aspect of life including the purchase decision. According to Di Pietro and Pantano (2012) strongly influences the buying behavior of consumers using Facebook. Furthermore, Kamal et al. (2013) also found the strong role of social network theory in determining the consumer buying behavior of Arab and American consumers. A similar, strong influence of social network theory was also confirmed on Y-generations buying behavior (Aragoncillo and Orus, 2018; Balakrishnan et al., 2014). Several studies provide strong evidence in support for the relationship between social network theory and consumer buying behavior (Alalwan, 2018; Arli, 2017; Bolat et al., 2016; Liu and Lopez, 2016; Naeem, 2021; Oumayma, 2019; Saeed et al., 2019).

However, the impact of social network theory on consumer buying behavior during Covid-19 is not clear for the Pakistani Population. Therefore, this study desires the following hypothe-

sis to achieve the research objective.

H_{1a}: Social Network Theory (SNT) has an impact on consumer buying behavior during Covid-19.

2.3 Word of Mouth and Consumer Buying Behavior

The previous study has proven that the feedback and word of mouth of friends and family play an important part in building brand awareness and buying decisions (Di Pietro and Pantano, 2012). Similarly, it is found that both WOM and e-WOM influence the brand perception of the consumer. Although, a comparison of opinions from friends/family websites and social networks shows that women are still reluctant to comment on garments online. Similarly, Chu et al. (2013) stated that the company's perceptions were changed as a consequence of social media pairings' conversation, which raised purchasing intentions. As the historical literature provides a limited number of evidence in support for the relationship between word of mouth and customer is buying behavior, especially, during Covid-19 pandemics, therefore, the following hypothesis the following hypothesis established.

H_{1b}: Word of Mouth strongly influences the buying behavior of consumers during Covid-19.

2.4 Feedback Loop and Consumer Buying Behavior

It has also been observed that peer communication has a large indirect effect on buying intent (Hudson and Hudson, 2013). However, Hudson and Hudson (2013), found that customer feedback on social media has such a substantial impact on purchase intention and influences consumer decisions. Likewise, Hutter et al. (2013) confirmed that engagement as a tool to help the buying decision is a major factor of the use of social networks and shows that social media like Facebook influence the purchase decision. Furthermore, Kamal et al. (2013) shed light on the nature of customer behavior in social media, described three basic titles of consumption-related conduct in social media. Accordingly, (Leung and Law, 2013) revealed that young people actively seek out social media sites daily and spend several hours on them, exposing themselves to higher marketing influence and persuasion. Furthermore, Sharma and Sonwalkar (2013), focused on the shifting tendencies in consumer purchasing behavior throughout the current global economic downturn. The feedback loop as a factor determining the customer buying behavior used in a limited number of studies. Additionally, the historical literature lacks fresh evidence regarding the relationship between feedback loop and consumer's behavior of buying during Covid-19 season in Pakistan, therefore the present study tries to address this issue in the following hypothesis.

H_{1c}: The feedback loop (FP) has an impact on consumer buying behavior during Covid-19.

2.5 Credibility Credit and Consumer Buying Behavior

Furthermore, Bai et al. (2015) argued that Social media are far more relevant during the phases of recognition of need ("inspiration"), information searcher ("product information"), and alternative evaluation ("consulting opinions") than for commenting on other people's clothing. The findings demonstrate the usefulness of social media for initiatives during the requirement

level. However, “special promotions on social media sites attract much more focus than advertisements” (Bolat et al., 2016). Furthermore, the use of various online media had a significant impact on users’ purchasing choices (Kim et al., 2015). This makes it possible for consumers to use social networks and websites online as the source of information on various businesses, brands, products, and services (Lim et al., 2015). The present trend of becoming ready to buy much from the convenience of someone’s home is referred to as online shopping.

Erkan and Evans (2016) looked at how small businesses in Georgia use social media marketing. According to Godey et al. (2016), customers utilize social media the most, yet it has minimal influence on their purchasing decisions. Consumer WOM exposure can be a significant motivator for consumer buying behavior on a variety of social media platforms (Liu and Lopez, 2016). It also suggested that companies wanting to employ WOM social media to actively monitor or even encourage more conversations on their brands on different social media sites (Saboo et al., 2016). Although, a study showed a weak relationship between advertising in social media and consumer need to be recognized, a clear relation with information research, a strong connection with alternative assessments, and a moderate relationship with both buying decision and after-buying behavior. It revealed that digital advertisement and WOM influence consumers buying behavior. Websites are rich and fruitful places for e-marketing and for influencing buying decisions (Song and Yoo, 2016). Furthermore, (Stephen, 2016) found that using social media websites as more than just a marketing strategy does have the potential to encourage people to utilize social media in e-marketing at the stage of buying choice (identification of needs, searching for information, alternative evaluations, procurement decisions, and post-buying behavior).

Arli (2017) found that brand equity including two major brand equity aspects: brand recognition and corporate identity, significantly boosted by social media marketing operations. Additionally, effectively utilizing social media has now become an important factor in attaining and maintaining a competitive advantage (Gautam and Sharma, 2017; Vázquez-Martínez et al., 2021). As a consequence, firms are increasingly placing a premium on social media’s potential to shape customer brand perceptions and influence purchasing intentions (Kim et al., 2015; Zafar et al., 2021). While students occasionally employed social networking sites to obtain energy drink brands. The outcomes revealed that human agency (namely, personal desire, socialization, accessibility, as well as product supply) encouraged brand individual preferences far beyond social networking sites for each itself.

Additionally, Alalwan (2018) found how social media affects people’s lives. The research looks at the impact of this approach on the environment (Aragoncillo and Orus, 2018; Wang et al., 2012). They argued that clients believe in brand recognition, awareness of the brand, and purchasing intent. Further, Bigne et al. (2018) examined the crucial role of social media in daily life, as well as its influence on customer purchase intent. The variables encompass a range of tiered effects, with social media being defined as providing various exogenous variables that influence purchase intention as the endogenous variable (Kizgin et al., 2018; Verma and Naveen, 2021; Xie and Lee, 2015). The outcomes of Sharma and Bhatt (2018) showed that the offline channels encourage purchases of impulses to a somewhat higher extent than the internet channel; elements that promote purchases of online stimuli explain this behavior to a much larger extent than disincentive factors. There is indeed a positively significant relationship between social media brand awareness and customer purchasing decisions (Jibril et al., 2019). However, Saeed et al. (2019) suggested that decision-making for consumer purchases can be predicted through social media marketing. Other research results indicated that customer buying behavior is positively associated with social media advertising, and social media can be used as a successful marketing strategy (Saeed et al., 2019). The historical studies lack the fresh evidence

regarding the creditability credit relationship with consumers buying behavior during Covid-19 in Pakistan. Therefore, the following hypothesis desired to test for the present research study.

H_{1d}: Credibility credit significantly influences consumer-buying behavior during Covid-19.

2.6 Research Gap

The focus of this research was to look at the impact of social media as well as its aspects on Pakistani consumers' buying habits during Covid-19 (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014). The historical studies lack fresh evidence in support of social media and consumer buying behavior during Covid-19, especially in Pakistan. For example, Bigne et al. (2018) conducted their research on air-line industry consumers buying behavior by considering social media. Similarly, Saeed et al. (2019) conducted a study for examining the role of social media in buying behavior of Sindhs consumers. Additionally, Oumayma (2019) examined the role of social media in smart-city consumers buying behavior. Finally, Pop et al. (2021) considered the study related to the influence of social media in determining the travelers buying behavior. Therefore, the present study adds the literature with fresh theoretical as well empirical evidence in support of social media and consumer buying behavior during Covid-19 in Pakistan.

2.7 Research Contributions

The present study examines the impact of social media on consumers' buying behavior during Covid-19 in Pakistan. The outcomes of the study provide the following research contributions

1. The outcomes of the study add the theoretical evidence in support of social network theory and consumer buying behavior in Pakistan during Covid-19.
2. The outcomes of the study add the empirical evidence in support of word of mouth, feedback loop, creditability contents, and social network theory for buying behavior of consumer during Covid-19 in Pakistan.
3. The outcomes of the study provide fresh evidence in support of social media influence for driving the buying behavior of consumer during covid-19 in Pakistan.

2.8 Research Framework

The study examines the influence of social media during Covid-19 for determining consumer-buying behavior in Pakistan. The study tested social network theory in particular to achieve the research objectives. Social network theory, word of mouth, feedback loop, and credibility contents measure social media as an exogenous variable. Similarly, complex-buying behavior, variety seeking buying, dissonance-reducing, and habitual buying measure the consumer buying behavior during the Covid-19 season. Figure one provides the research framework of the study based on social network theory, critical literature, and the objectives of the study.

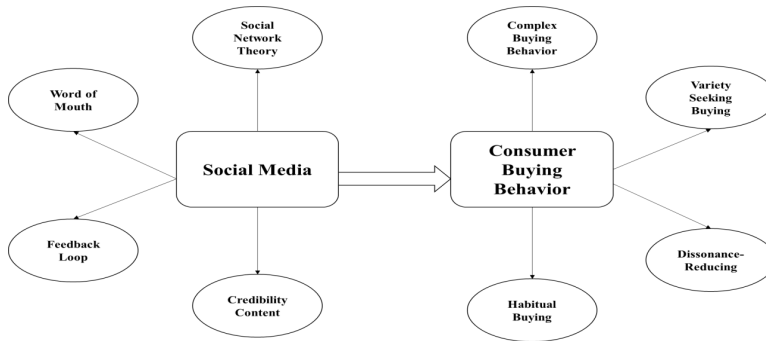


Figure 1: Research Framework

3 Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to look into social media and its impact on Pakistani consumers' purchasing habits. As explanatory variables, this study incorporates "social networking theory, word of mouth, feedback loop, and credibility content". However, the study uses the dependent variable: Consumer buying behavior along with its dimensions like "complex buying behavior, variety-seeking buying, dissonance-reducing, and habitual buying".

3.1 Population and Sampling

The study's key demographic was Pakistan's overall community, which includes the people from Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, KPK, and Federal. The unit of analysis comprised online shoppers. The study uses convenience sampling with the help of online platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The population included different groups of age, mostly youngsters. People from the 15-40 age category are the Internet user mostly, and that is why our majority of respondents were of this age category.

3.2 Data Collection

For the collection of data, the researchers have used a structured questionnaire. It consists of two sections. Section 1 was about the demographic features like age, gender, education, social media usage, time spent, etc. However, the second section consists of question-statements related to consumer buying behavior dimensions like "complex buying behavior, habitual buying behavior, dissonance reducing buying behavior, and variety-seeking buying behavior". Furthermore, it also includes the statements related to social media factors like a feedback loop, credibility content, social networking theory, and word of mouth. The researchers used both online and offline ways to collect the responses. The researchers shared a total number of 650-700 questionnaires using social media platforms: WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and booklets. Additionally, the researcher also shared 200-questionnaire physically. The researcher allowed the participants for giving their previous responses within 3 days to control biasedness. Finally, the researcher received 392 complete responses.

3.3 Variable Measurements

The current study looked at social media and its impact on Pakistani consumers' purchasing habits. The study uses a Likert-type of scale with five points: strongly disagree-strongly agree, for quantifying the variables of this research. Only two statements were multiple choice.

There was a total of 22 items of outcome variable; "consumer buying behavior" adopted from the study Palalic et al. (2020), and 32 items of Independent variables; Social Networking theory, word of mouth, feedback loop, creditability loop adopted from the study of (Tsai and Bui, 2021). The items included "the participants age, gender, marital status, education, social media usage", etc. Questions like "One can find a lot of useful information on social network websites" and "I get information about the product from the SN websites" were included in social networking theory. In word of mouth, questions like "I tell product experience to my friends on social media sites" were included in the study (Tsai and Bui, 2021). The study asks the questions like "Feedback contains written confirmation and guidance" in the Feedback loop section adopted in the study, Oumayma (2019). The study also asks questions like "Social media websites are easy to use" and "the information on the websites is credible" in the creditability content section as per (Palalic et al., 2020). The study also asks in the dependent variable "consumers buying behavior" section, questions like "Ill think before purchasing the expensive or branded product", "I fear that I will regret your decision later", "I go to the same shopping mall and I get easily bored with the product" as per (Sharma and Bhatt, 2018).

3.4 Method of Estimations

This study was analyzed using structural equation modeling techniques. To conclude the estimations accurately and in advance, the researchers used Smart PLS and SPSS to analyze the data and estimate the results. SPSS was used to analyze the estimations like demographic and socioeconomic summary, regression, coefficient, missing values analysis, ANOVA, etc., and SMART PLS was used to estimate the factor analysis, measurement model, SEM, construct validity, and reliability, etc. The previous study conducted by has used SPSS and estimated the results like demographic and socioeconomic summary, regression, coefficient, etc.

4 Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to identify the effects of media on Pakistani consumer purchasing behavior. The study looked into the effects of "social networking theory, feedback loops, word of mouth, and creditability content" on consumer behavior in particular. The study employed a questionnaire based on the survey methodologies used to assess these aims. For data collecting from Pakistani people on social media, the research survey used both online and in-person techniques. The study uses a convenience-based/convenience sampling approach due to easy access of respondents through online platforms during Co-vid season. The total number of or more than 650-700 questionnaires was distributed in which 250 were offline and 400 were online, in which 392 complete responses were collected. The investigators used several social media platforms such as "Facebook, WhatsApp, Linked In, and Instagram" to deliver the online survey. For analyzing the research, missing values analysis, demographic and socio-economic summary, regression, and reliability estimation, the researchers have used SPSS. To examine the SEM model, regression table, etc., the researchers have used SMART PLS.

4.1 Demographics Summary

Table 2 demonstrates the summary of demographic and socioeconomic data in the form of age, gender, education, marital status, network usage, etc. The researchers have used SPSS for this analysis. The researchers were able to collect 392 responses through physical and online means. The initial analysis revealed that the age of majority of participants: 291 (74.2%) of were between 15-25 category. It concluded that most of the respondents were youngsters. However, from 150 respondents, males were 38.3%; while females were 61%, which confirmed that females dominate social media platforms mostly. There were four categories for education: Secondary school, graduation degree, technical training, and master or above. 264 out of 392 respondents have a graduate degree which is 67.3%, the second most chosen educational level was masters or above which is 59 (13.1%) which means that 59 of the respondents have masters or above degrees. It was seen that most of the respondents 266 (67.9%) were single. Additionally, 68 (17.3%) were engaged, 51 (13%) were married and seven (1.8%) were divorced.

Similarly, the table also shows the summary of the most used networking site. It concluded that Instagram was the most used social media network among the four others; Twitter, Facebook, Linked In, and Pinterest. A total number of 251 participants of the study were using Instagram most of the time, which is 64%. However, Facebook was mostly used by 110 (28%) of the respondents, 15 (3.8%) respondents were using LinkedIn, 9 (2.3%) and seven (1.8%) respondents were using Twitter and Pinterest, respectively. It also concluded that most of the respondents (149) were having 4-5 social media accounts, which is 38%, leading the 34.9% (137) respondents with 2-3 social media accounts. Furthermore, most of the respondents (151) spend 3-4 hours daily on social media sites, which are 38.5%. A total number of 106 respondents spend 1-2 hours daily, which is 27.8%. A total number of 100 respondents spend more than 5 hours daily on social media sites, which is 25.5%, and the rest of the respondents spend less than 30 minutes or 30-60 minutes, respectively.

4.2 Measurement Model

Figure 2 depicts the latent constructs measurement model. The measurement model represents the concept that describes how to study variables join together to express the theory. This outer model throughout PLS-SEM is an aspect of a network model that incorporates the indications and their interactions with the components. The rule of thumb says that the reliability of the measurement is 0.708 or greater, as per the reliable model. A value between 0.600-0.708 considers acceptable. According to this rule of thumb, it concluded that more than 70% of the latent variables of this study are valid and reliable; somehow, some are between 0.600-0.700, which means that all of the variables significantly measure their contracts. Additionally, the coefficient value between the two variables suggests that there is a positive relationship between them. Similarly, the dependent variable namely Consumer Buying Behavior of the study shows a 0.983 R-square value. This means that the estimation explains almost 98% of the variance in Consumer Buying Behavior.

4.3 Outer Loadings and Convergent Validity

Table 3 shows the outer loading and convergent validity of the contracts. The table includes convergent reliabilities to indicate both the external and external validity of constructs on the study. As per the rule of thumb, the reliability of the measurement is 0.708 or greater is positive

Table 4.1: Demographic and Socioeconomic Analysis

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Freq.	%
Age	392	1	4	1.33	0.61		
15-25						291	74.2
26-35						77	19.6
36-45						21	5.4
46-55						3	0.8
Gender	392	0	1	0.62	0.49		
Male						150	38.3
Female						242	61.7
Education	392	2	5	3.21	0.86		
Secondary School						53	13.5
Graduate degree						264	67.3
Technical training/ Associate degree						16	4.1
Masters or above						59	15.1
Marital status	392	1	4	1.49	0.79		
Single						266	67.9
Engaged						68	17.3
Married						51	13
Divorced						7	1.8
Most used network site	392	1	5	2.51	1.04		
Facebook						110	28.1
Twitter						9	2.3
Instagram						251	64
Pinterest						7	1.8
LinkedIn						15	3.8
Accounts on social media	392	1	5	2.03	0.99		
2-3						137	34.9
4-5						149	38
6-7						71	18.1
8-9						28	7.1
More than 9						7	1.8
Time spent	392	1	5	3.76	1.02		
Less than 30 minutes						17	4.3
30-60 minute						18	4.6
1-2 Hours						106	27
3-4 Hours						151	38.5
More than 5 Hours						100	25.5

Source: SPSS Descriptive Analysis for Demographic Summary

and the value between 0.60-0.70 is considered to be acceptable, for Cronbach’s Alpha the value greater than 0.70, and greater than 0.50 for average variance extracted is valid and reliable. According to the role of thumb. It concluded that the factor loading, Cronbach’s Alpha, and CR values of the contracts are positive, valid, and reliable, the AVE values of constructs are positive except CBB, SM, and WOM.

Table 4.2: Outer Loading and Convergent Validity

Constructs and their items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Consumer Buying Behavior (CBB)		0.89	0.9	0.3
Complex Buying Behavior (BB)		0.81	0.87	0.57
BB1	0.54			
BB2	0.8			
BB3	0.75			
BB4	0.79			
BB5	0.73			
BB6	0.74			
Dissonance Reducing Buying Behavior (DRBB)		0.77	0.85	0.59
DRBB1	0.82			
DRBB2	0.54			
DRBB3	0.84			
DRBB4	0.69			
DRBB5	0.72			
Habitual Buying Behavior (HBB)		0.82	0.87	0.57
HBB1	0.74			
HBB2	0.75			
HBB3	0.76			
HBB4	0.79			
HBB5	0.75			
Variety Seeking Buying Behavior (VSBB)		0.68	0.81	0.51
VSBB1	0.55			
VSBB2	0.47			
VSBB3	0.68			
VSBB4	0.77			
VSBB5	0.71			
VSBB6	0.7			
Social Media (SM)		0.93	0.94	0.36
Creditability Content (CC)		0.86	0.89	0.54
CC1	0.49			
CC2	0.72			
CC3	0.71			
CC4	0.7			
CC5	0.76			
CC6	0.74			
CC7	0.71			
CC8	0.78			
Feedback Loop (FL)		0.79	0.86	0.55
FL1	0.78			
FL2	0.77			
FL3	0.7			
FL4	0.7			

FL5	0.74			
FL6	0.11			
Social Networking Theory (SNT)		0.86	0.89	0.51
SNT-1	0.68			
SNT-2	0.78			
SNT-3	0.72			
SNT-4	0.77			
SNT-5	0.69			
SNT-6	0.66			
SNT-7	0.68			
SNT-8	0.02			
SNT-9	0.76			
Word Of Mouth (WOM)		0.84	0.88	0.5
WOM-1	0.71			
WOM-2	0.62			
WOM-3	0.73			
WOM-4	0.75			
WOM-5	0.66			
WOM-6	0.65			
WOM-7	0.74			
WOM-8	0.65			

Source: PLS Algorithm (SMART PLS)

4.4 Discriminant Validity

Table 4 shows the discriminant validity of the contracts using the criterion by (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The discriminant value of the constructs shows the uniqueness of a construct from all other ones (Afthanorhan et al., 2021). Discriminant validity is created when ones variance is greater than the other ones in the column (Ahmad et al., 2016). The researchers have used the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion method to estimate the discriminant validity. According to the role of thumb, the square root of the AVE of each contract must be greater than the other constructs in a column (Hair Jr et al., 2020).According to the table, it concluded that most of the DRBB, HBB, VSBB, and WOM are discriminately valid.

Table 4.3: Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

	BB	CC	CBB	DRBB	FL	HBB	SNT	SM	VSBB	WOM
BB	0.755									
CC	0.488	0.734								
CBB	0.788	0.707	0.547							
DRBB	0.539	0.568	0.826	0.770						
FL	0.702	0.633	0.757	0.567	0.740					
HBB	0.124	0.455	0.534	0.317	0.316	0.758				
SNT	0.489	0.572	0.567	0.452	0.641	0.214	0.717			
SM	0.659	0.818	0.797	0.632	0.870	0.376	0.856	0.597		
VSBB	0.602	0.548	0.795	0.575	0.599	0.283	0.451	0.629	0.716	
WOM	0.597	0.637	0.730	0.596	0.785	0.346	0.735	0.917	0.578	0.691

Source: PLS Algorithm (SMART PLS)

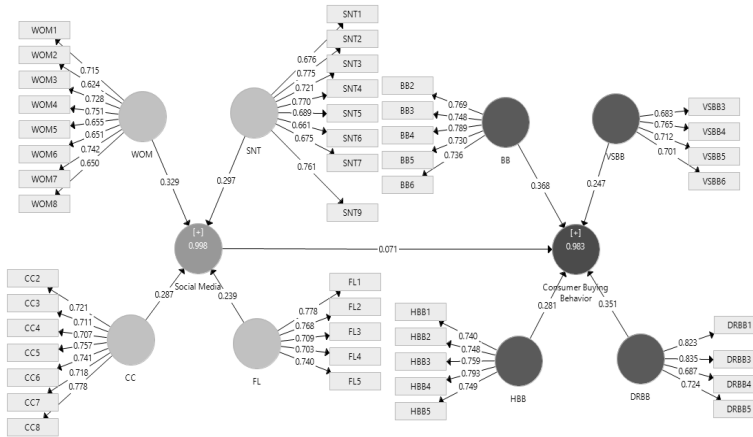


Figure 2: Measurement Model

4.5 SEM Model

Figure 3 shows the structural estimation model of the constructs, which is a relationship between latent variables. The rule of thumb for this is that the t-values of the constructs must be equal to or greater than 1.96 (Hair Jr et al., 2020). The constructs' t-value lower than 1.96 shows the insignificance relationship between the constructs. The relationship between Social media, its factors, and Consumer Buying Behavior is significant with a t-value of 6.387. Similarly, the t-values of all the constructs namely BB, VSBB, HBB, and DRBB show a significant relationship with Consumer Buying Behavior. The value of R-square also shows the positive and significant variance.

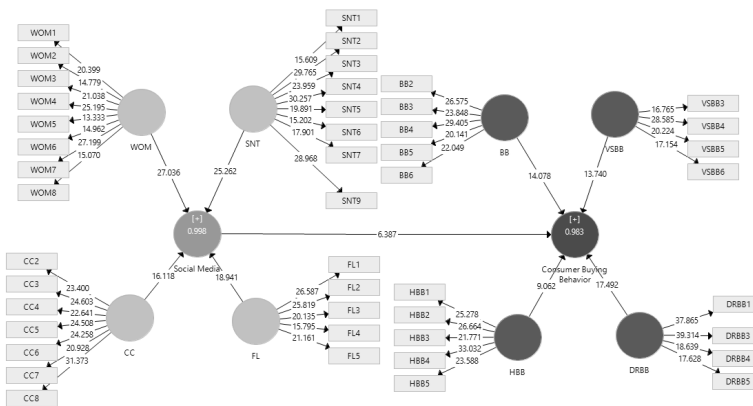


Figure 3: Inner Model/SEM Model

4.6 SEM Model Estimation

Table 4 shows the SEM model estimation using SMART PLS. According to the SEM model, the influence of social media on Pakistani consumers' purchasing habits is both positive and significant. The path coefficient for the structural link between SM and CBB is also positive; also, the p-value is significant which confirms that there is a significant link between the variables. The positive and highly significant link between SM and CBB accepted the first hypothesis (H_1). Social media positively influence consumer buying behavior was also accepted by the previous studies Oumayma (2019); Sharma and Bhatt (2018); ?. The possible interpretation is, social media do impact the consumer buying behavior positively which means that if the consumers are exposed to the social media of any brand or company, they will more probably going to act according to the information they see on social media (Palalic et al., 2020; Sharma and Bhatt, 2018; Varkaris and Neuhofer, 2017).

Social networking theory has a positive as well as highly substantial impression on the consumer purchasing behavior in Pakistan. The path coefficient for the structural link between SNT and CBB is also positive, also the p-value is significant ($p < 0.01$) which confirms that there is a significant link between these two variables. In addition, the positive and highly significant link between SNT and CBB accepted the second hypothesis (H_{1a}). The possible interpretation is social networking theory does influence consumer buying behavior positively, which means that buyers' dependency on people on social media has an impact on their purchasing decisions (Alalwan, 2018).

Similarly, "word of mouth" has a positive as well as a highly noteworthy effect on consumer purchasing conduct in Pakistan. The structural link between WOM and CBB is also positive having the positive coefficient value, the significant p-value ($p < 0.01$) which confirms that there is a significant link between these two variables. In addition, the positive and highly significant link between WOM and CBB accepted the third hypothesis (H_{1b}). Previous research has found that "word-of-mouth" has a favorable impact on customer purchasing behavior (McClure and Seock, 2020). The possible interpretation is, word of mouth do impact the consumer buying behavior positively which means that consumer does buy products after hearing them from other people.

Additionally, there was a positive relationship was seen between the feedback loop and consumer buying behavior. The path coefficient for the structural link between FL and CBB was also positive having a significant p-value ($p < 0.01$) which confirms that there is a significant link between these two variables. In addition, the positive and highly significant link between FL and CBB accepted the fourth hypothesis (H_{1c}). The "feedback loop" has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior, which indicates that user experience on social media has an impact on purchasing behavior since feedback conveys firsthand experience (Jibril et al., 2019; Oumayma, 2019; Sharma and Bhatt, 2018).

Finally, a favorable correlation involving credibility content as well as consumer purchasing behavior estimated. With a positive significant value, credibility content, as well as consumer buying behavior, linked and a highly significant p-value shows that there is a significant link between these two variables. The positive and highly significant link between CC and CBB accepted the last hypothesis (H_{1d}). Credibility content has a favorable effect on consumer purchasing behavior, which also accepted by the previous study (McClure and Seock, 2020; Pop et al., 2021). Credibility content does impact the consumer buying behavior positively which means that if there is enough and reliable information about the content is shared by the brand or business then it will more likely going to encourage the buyers to buy.

5 Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to look into the impact of social media, such as "social networking theory (SNT), word of mouth (WOM), a feedback loop (FL), and credibility content (CC)", on consumer buying behavior. Additionally, the study considered its various dimensions, such as "complex buying behavior (BB), variety-seeking buying behavior (VSBB), habitual buying behavior (HBB), and dissonance reducing buying behavior (DRBB)" by Pakistanis. The quantitative data collection approach uses with the

Table 4.4: Structural Equation Model Estimation

	O	S.M	SD	T Statistics	P
SM -> CBB	0.071	0.071	0.011	6.387	0.000
SNT -> CBB	0.021	0.021	0.003	6.163	0.000
WOM -> CBB	0.023	0.023	0.004	6.406	0.000
FL -> CBB	0.017	0.017	0.003	6.228	0.000
CC -> CBB	0.020	0.020	0.003	6.195	0.000

Source: Bootstrapping (SMART PLS)

help of a structured questionnaire in this study. The study used online consumers of Pakistan as the target population. Almost 650-700 questionnaires were distributed both online and offline among the people of different states. A total number of 392 complete responses were collected. The study used convenience-based sampling along with a stratified random sampling approach. The estimation includes a demographic and socio-economic summary, measurement model, structural model, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and outer loading using Smart PLS.

At most about 61% of the whole population were women. Most respondents were between 15-25 ages, most of the population was graduated, and most of them were single. The most popular social media network was Instagram. The usage of social media was 3-4 hours a day. The coefficient value showed a positive relationship. Similarly, consumer-buying behavior had a 0.983 R-square value. The factor loading analysis showed positive results having the constructs value higher than 0.60 except for two constructs which remove after the analysis. According to the discriminant validity, it was concluded that most of the latent variables; DRBB, HBB, VSBB, and WOM, were discriminately valid. There is a considerable link between social media, its components, as well as consumer purchasing behavior with a t-value of 6.387. Similarly, the t-values of all the constructs namely BB, VSBB, HBB, and DRBB showed a significant relationship with Consumer Buying Behavior. The value of R-square also showed a positive and significant variance. Today's era is an era of social media and e-commerce. Social media plays a positive and important role in consumer buying behavior, which means that people are more likely to search, buy and share products using social media channels. The study suggested that the marketers to attract and retain the customers must build and maintain their social media presence. For this purpose, they may hire a digital marketer. A Digital marketer is an employee who builds and maintains the online presence of the company or brand. Instagram and Facebook are by far the most popular social media platforms. The study looked into the effect of social media on Pakistani consumers' purchasing habits considering their detailed demographic and socioeconomic factors. It adds the historical literature the findings with the present domain of the study. Due to the limited time, the number of respondents was less. The number of responses could have increased if the size of the survey was concise, not detailed. Furthermore, the salary of the respondents was not included in the questionnaire, which could have given more information. The findings of the study suggest that future researchers create a precise yet comprehensive survey. Similarly, the salary of the respondent can be included in the survey to determine the behavior of the respondents having different salary levels. The occupation of the respondents can also be included in future researches.

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