

# Paper for the Special Theme on Social Media: One of the Big Five Trends in ICT

## The Impact of Social Media Sites on the Effectiveness of Consumer Buying Behaviour for Electronics Goods - A Study of Women consumers in the Indian Electronic Market

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**Abstract:** This study provides an understanding of the effectiveness of social media sites on various parameters of consumer buying behaviour. It estimated the relationship between several independent variables, including composite buying behaviour, usual buying behaviour, and variety-seeking buying behaviour, disagreement buying behaviour, impetuous buying behaviour, with that of consumer buying behaviour as the dependent variable in the electronic appliances market. The study sought to determine the factors affecting consumer preferences and behaviour in the Indian electronic market. This study primarily focused on young working women using electronics product across Maharashtra, India. Data was collected from 1,272 working women. The major findings of the study indicates there is the positive effect of social media on variety seeking buying behaviour, disagreement buying behaviour, usual buying behaviour, composite buying behaviour and impetuous buying behaviour. This findings of this study supports producers and retailers with an understanding of consumers' buying behaviour towards electronics appliances and consequently will help in improving customer satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Buying Behaviour, Composite Buying Behaviour, usual Buying behaviour, social media sites and variety- seeking buying behaviour.

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### 1. Introduction

Social media creates a relationship between industry people and buyers. Nowadays, this relationship has changed with the introduction of social media. Consumers' behaviour can be influenced through social media. Thus the industry should create marketing plans with the intention of generating good relationships with customers. Some studies state that the buying behaviour of social media consumers is highly influenced through the Face-book when compared to Twitter. Social media is an open platform to create a variety of novel methods and sources of online evidence. Further, it can be shared and used by buyers with the intention of providing insights about products, facilities, characters and subjects. The implementation of innovative technologies has also altered the way in which consumers buy products or select services. Buyers' behaviour of online consumers thus presents a challenge to managers to improve digital policies to maintain competitiveness in the marketplace. Consumers' attitudes, opinions and purchasing behaviour also changes due to various aspects through the influence of social media.

Social media differs with Web 2.0 and User Generated Content on technological and ideological grounds. There are different types of public networks tools like teamwork projects, blogs, you tube, social networking sites, and computer simulation. Therefore participation in platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter are important to anyone who is active in cyberspace. Any business person can directly contact the end customers through social media sites, within minimum cost and short time. It is suggested that people should create their own networking plans with the intention of being a part of this new movement (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). A study on the profiling of the consumers who buy the goods online inspected the reasons for which people buy products online found that a majority of customers who procure online are youngsters between the ages of 25-29 years (Loanăş, E.S., 2013).

The complete communication process has undergone a massive change with the help of networking sites. The general public may believe that networking sites may be a serious challenges to customary public relations(PR) and mainstream media, though networking media complements customary PR and customary PR will survive as a significant factor of any thriving industry. The PR and promotion organizations are all struggling to develop their plans, substantial arrangement and industry models to be in harmony of networking media (Yin, 2008).

Customers have their own views on the different aspects of social media sites. Social media holds the essence of true communization of information. The participating nature of social networking sites scratches through background and class barricades (Thapar and Ahrama, 2013). Networking media tools gives better market approachability and CRM have an important effect on the progress of SMEs. Research also suggests that policy makers should decide the satisfactory internet surfing rates and e-business rules to inspire the technical acceptance that would nurture the SME industry (Jagongo and Kinyua, 2013).

The gap identified from the existing literature suggests that earlier researchers had developed models to understand the effectiveness of social media sites by using one or two parameters or factors as explanatory variables. In contrast, the current study investigates five factors which influence the buying behaviour of customers by using social media sites.

The aim of this study is to understand the effect of marketing by social sites on consumer buying behaviour. This study is mainly focused on the discussion that social sites have a significant role in determining consumer perception and eventually consumers buying behaviour is influenced by it. Several extant studies were taken into consideration to obtain an underlying knowledge of the relevant theory and practice. Firstly, the paper presents an analysis of previous research on networking sites, networking sites and advertising, networking sites and consumer behaviour and networking media advertising of consumer electronics.

Further, we developed a model to understand the effectiveness of social media sites drawing on various parameters of consumer buying behaviour, namely composite buying behaviour, usual buying behaviour, variety seeking buying behaviour, disagreement buying behaviour, and impetuous buying behaviour. To that ends the study addresses the following research questions :

1. Does social media affect the composite buying behaviour with reference to young working women for electronics goods?
2. Does social media affect the usual buying behaviour with reference to young working women for electronics goods?
3. Does social media affect variety-seeking buying behaviour with reference to young working women for electronics goods?
4. Does social media affect disagreement buying behaviour with reference to young working women for electronics goods?
5. Does social media affect the impulsive buying behaviour with reference to young working women for electronics goods?

The major findings of the study indicates that there is the positive effect of social media on seeking buying behaviour, disagreement buying behaviour and impetuous buying behaviour and there is a negative effect on usual buying behaviour and composite buying behaviour. This study helps producers and retailers in understanding consumers buying behaviour towards electronics appliances and also helps in improving customer satisfaction.

The paper is organized as follows. First, a literature review is presented to understand the gaps in current knowledge. Section two proposes the conceptual model and hypothesis. The next section presents the research methodology and the section thereafter presents the findings and conclusions. Finally, the managerial implications of the study are presented along with the limitations and future scope of the study.

## **2. Literature Review**

Alsubagh (2015) analysed the impact of online social linking sites like Facebook on customers' behaviour. He identified a significant relationship between the degree of self-estimated communication of buyers and UGC

and consumers' self-evaluated attitudinal purchasing behaviour. Alsubagh (2015) argues that there is a strong, positive correlation occurs between the variables of UGC and buyers' attitudinal purchasing behaviour.

Pookulangara and Koesler (2011) conducted their study on consumers who buy online. They identified that these consumers are very vigorous users of the internet and use different social media to buy and sell. Generally the consumers are inclined by online brands and they can influence each other. Ramsunder (2011) also studied consumers' behaviour for online shopping and found that consumers are progressively turning to social media in order to get more information about the product to make decisions. They found that there is a positive relationship between usual buying behaviour and usual buying decisions. Pollach (2008) studied which websites present opportunities for consumers to share their views about a product or service, read others' views and also relate with other buyers. Their main interest was to discover methods by which the quality of the contents of these websites is improved so that it turns out to be an important source of information for the buyers as well as industries. They concluded that the consumers' view that websites are more powerful and offer extra priceless information when they divide the information search and distribution from the uncomplicated job of social communication, and sustain each job with suitable stages of richness.

Bhat (2012) examined the effect of some networking sites attractiveness on ROI. Social networking is a relatively better platform for brands to utilize as a successful channel for advertising manufactured goods and services. ROI is something that many sellers explore when one has to regulate the efficiency of any advertising network. Researchers studied ROI for blogs and examined the effect of the marketing of their product through Facebook and Twitter and in turn grow their revenue through advertisements. The findings of the study discovered a positive correlation between all blog categories. Bhatt and Bhatt (2012) studied the reasons which impact the views of buyers regarding online shopping. They found three important factors: i.e., attractiveness of the networking site, service excellence of networking sites and network security. This research suggests that these aspects are connected to particular kinds of users categorized as infrequent, frequent and regular buyers. The study explains that consistent purchasers are most prejudiced by the attractiveness of networking site, whereas irregular purchasers are prejudiced with website security to a greater extent. Venkatesh (2012) studied the potential of diverse segments of humanity following different drifts of communication. Their research indicates the benefits of product campaign on social networking sites by the FMCG sector.

Dorado (2011) studied the effectiveness of the target audience with respect to fashion retail companies by using social media sites and he created the relationship with the particular fashion brand by social media. Khan (2006) also conducted a similar study in the fashion industry. The reviews on social media sites are easily available for product and services which will create great values for both consumers and the companies (Nambisan and Nambisan, 2008). According to Bronner and De hoog (2010) consumers are actively encouraged by company to rate and review products and services online. The social media help consumers to make better purchase decisions (Pan and Chiou, 2011). Mishra and Tyagi (2015) investigated the mindset of consumers on social networking sites in India. They identified the impact of various variables that influence the level of acceptance of SNS by consumers. Their study reveals that there is a positive and significant effect of perceived usefulness whereas perceived risk has a negative effect.

Many studies concentrated on the few factors of consumer buying behaviour to identify the effectiveness of social media sites in the different segments i.e. fashion, manufacturing, medicines and FMCG products etc. (Venkatesh, 2012; Ertemel and Ammoura, 2016). In this study we have investigated the impact of social media sites on the five consumer buying behaviour factors with respect to electronic goods.

### **3. Research Model and Hypothesis**

The research model of the study is presented in Figure 1. The factors posited to affect consumer buying behaviour for electronics goods in India are presented in Table 1.

Figure 1: The various parameters of consumer buying behaviour are as follow:

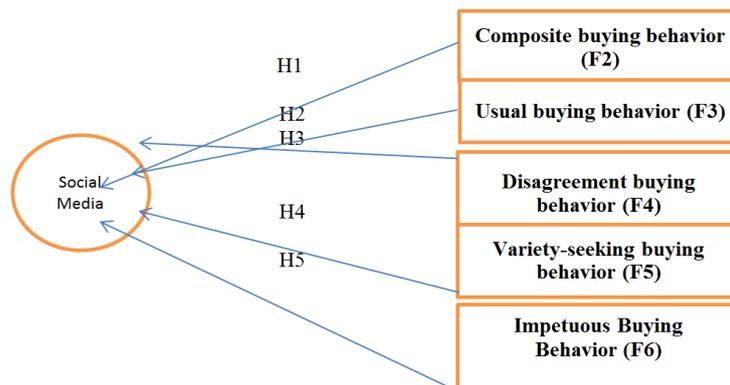


Table 1: Factors affecting Consumer behaviour

Major Factors	Descriptions
<b>Composite buying behaviour (F2)</b>	The Customer shows the Composite buying behaviour when he purchases the costly products with very high risk and doesn't buy very often e.g. buying a washing machine, house etc.  <i>H1a : there is the significant impact of social media on composite buying behaviour with reference to young working women's for electronics goods</i>
<b>Usual buying behaviour (F3)</b>	The Customer shows the Usual buying behaviour when he buys the regular product that he has been using earlier for an extensive time without switching to other brand e.g. milk, sugar, oil etc.  <i>H1b : there is the significant impact of social media on usual buying behaviour with reference to young working women's for electronics goods</i>
<b>Disagreement buying behaviour (F4)</b>	The Customer shows the Disagreement reducing buying behaviour when he buys the costly products which are available in the market with many brands. The consumers feel uneasiness after buying the product and fears if the product flops to execute when big amount of money is paid in purchasing that product e.g. buying a car, mobile etc.  <i>H1c: there is the significant impact of social media advertisement on disagreement buying behaviour with reference to young working women's for electronics goods.</i>
<b>Variety-seeking buying behaviour (F5)</b>	The Customer shows the Variety-seeking buying behaviour when he buys the product that is not costly but available with many brands. When a product with many brands, serve only one object the consumers may incline to try out a other brand e.g. products like cooking oil, detergent, etc.  <i>H1d: there is the significant impact of social media advertisement on variety-seeking buying behaviour with reference to young working women's for electronics goods.</i>
<b>Impetuous Buying Behaviour (F6)</b>	The Customer shows the Impetuous buying behaviour when he sees the product and cannot resist from buying it e.g. clothes, jewellery etc.  <i>H1d: there is the significant impact of social media advertisement on impetuous buying behaviour with reference to young working women's for electronics goods.</i>

## 4. Research Design

### 4.1 Instrument and Data Collection

To understand the items of the study, initially an exploratory study was conducted. Formal interaction was conducted with young working women who use social media sites for buying the electronics products. Based on the feedback the instrument of the study was prepared. A pilot study was conducted to check the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of the instruments was found to be 86%.

A questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. The questions are divided into three parts:

1. Questions on demographic information, including characteristics such as age, education, income and occupation.
2. Questions on usage of social media sites.
3. The third part of the questionnaire contains six sections, each section representing the independent and dependent variables investigated in the study. All responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 as strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree.

Respondents in the study were asked to complete the questionnaire on a voluntary basis. The survey was conducted by young working women from the selected cities of Maharashtra i.e. Mumbai, Pune and Nasik. A total of 1,272 responses were gathered.

Firstly, the demographics variable of respondents was investigated. Regarding education, 20% are non-graduates, 53% are graduates and 27% are postgraduates. Concerning annual income, 52% of the respondents have a monthly income up to 3 lakhs, 28% have monthly income between 3-5 lakhs, 17% are between 5-10 lakhs and 3% are above 10 lakhs. With respect to occupation, 71% of the respondents work in the services sector, 20% in business and 9% are self-employed.

On the basis of responses received, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis was conducted using AMOS software to confirm reliability and validity and to assess the effectiveness of social media sites on different parameters of consumer buying behaviour.

## **5. Findings and Discussions**

### **Composite Buying Behaviour through social networking sites**

We analysed the consumers regarding the composite buying behaviour on three parameters. 36% of respondents sometimes pay attention towards the advertisements of electronic products on social networking sites. 43% of young women spend more time and efforts researching the product information before actual online purchase. 52% of the women visit electronic stores on average one to three times before making buying decisions.

### **Usual Buying Behaviour through social networking sites**

Two parameters explain the usual buying behaviour of young women's consumers. 46% of respondents agreed that they buy the product because they buy it regularly. Similarly, 68% of the consumers agreed that they buy the product because the product is best from them.

### **Disagreement Buying Behaviour through social networking sites**

The disagreement buying behaviour of the women was analysed on three parameters. For the first parameter, 53% of the respondents believe that buying an expensive electronic product is difficult and needs lots of thinking before purchase. 52% of the respondents agreed that buying expensive electronic products is time-consuming and 59% of the respondents have a feeling of anxiety as to whether their purchasing decision is correct.

### **Variety Seeking Buying Behaviour through social networking sites**

This factor was defined by three parameters. 58% of the respondents wanted to try out different varieties of products belonging to different brands. 57% of the consumers are buying new varieties of products belonging to new brands and while making purchasing decisions, they viewed advertisements on social networking sites. In contrast, 59% of respondents feel that the different brands of the same product serve one and the same purpose.

### **Impetuous Seeking Buying Behaviour through social networking sites**

Impetuous behaviour consists of three parameters. 63% of the consumers had no plan to buy any consumer electronics product when they logged onto social networking sites. 72% of the respondents feel that the advertisements of the product on the social networking sites provoke their purchasing intentions and 78% buy a product because that product has a discount scheme which was displayed on the social networking sites which is not available in the retail stores.

Table 2, shows the factors underlying the consumers’ attitude about the buying behaviour of the electronics product through social networking sites with factor loading and Cronbach alpha of each construct. The reliability of all the constructs lies between 0.65 to 0.72, thus indicating high internal consistency of the constructs (Nullally and Bernstein, 1994)

**Table 2:** Construct and Factor Loading

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	Reliability (α)
Composite Buying Behaviour (F2)	CBB1(q8a)	0.778	0.660
	CBB2(q8b)	0.758	
	CBB3(q8c)	0.761	
Usual Buying Behaviour (F3)	UBB1(q10a)	0.768	0.692
	UBB2(q10b)	0.799	
Disagreement Buying Behaviour (F4)	DBB1(q11a)	0.764	0.658
	DBB2(q11b)	0.762	
	DBB3(q11c)	0.764	
Variety Seeking Buying Behaviour (F5)	VSB1(q12a)	0.772	0.671
	VSB2(q12b)	0.763	
	VSB3(q12c)	0.770	
Impetuous Buying Behaviour (F5)	IBB1(q13a)	0.762	0.725
	IBB2(q13b)	0.787	
	IBB3(q13c)	0.767	

**Validity Analysis of all Models**

In validity analysis the following are tested, namely convergent validity and discriminate validity.

**Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity of all Models**

This measures the extent to which indicators of a specific construct converge or share a high proportional of a variance in common. There are three measures of convergent validity, namely factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability (CR). The following criteria must be satisfied to ensure convergent validity: CR > 0.7, CR > AVE, and AVE > 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010).

For the model, the AVE for the entire five constructs is greater than 0.5. The CR (Alpha) statistics is also significantly greater that AVE is presented in Table 3. We can thus conclude that all the constructs or factors satisfy the requirement of convergent validity.

**Table 3:** Convergent & Discriminant Validity

	f3	f4	f5	f6	f7
CR	0.768	0.699	0.759	0.772	0.701
AVE	0.523	0.522	0.522	0.488	0.512
MSV	0.445	0.250	0.392	0.408	0.313
ASV	0.244	0.459	0.341	0.246	0.292

This measures the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from another construct. Discriminant validity is established on the basis of AVE, Maximum shared variance (MSV) and ASV. The criteria for fulfilling discriminate validity are: MSV < AVE and ASV < AVE (Hair et al., 2010). In our study for the entire five constructs, the respective MSV is lower than the AVE and ASV is also less than AVE for the model (Table 3).

**Model fit Estimates – Measurement Model**

After the reliability and validity of constructs is determined, the study proceeds to determine the fitness of overall measurement model (Figure 2) based on fit indices generated by AMOS output.

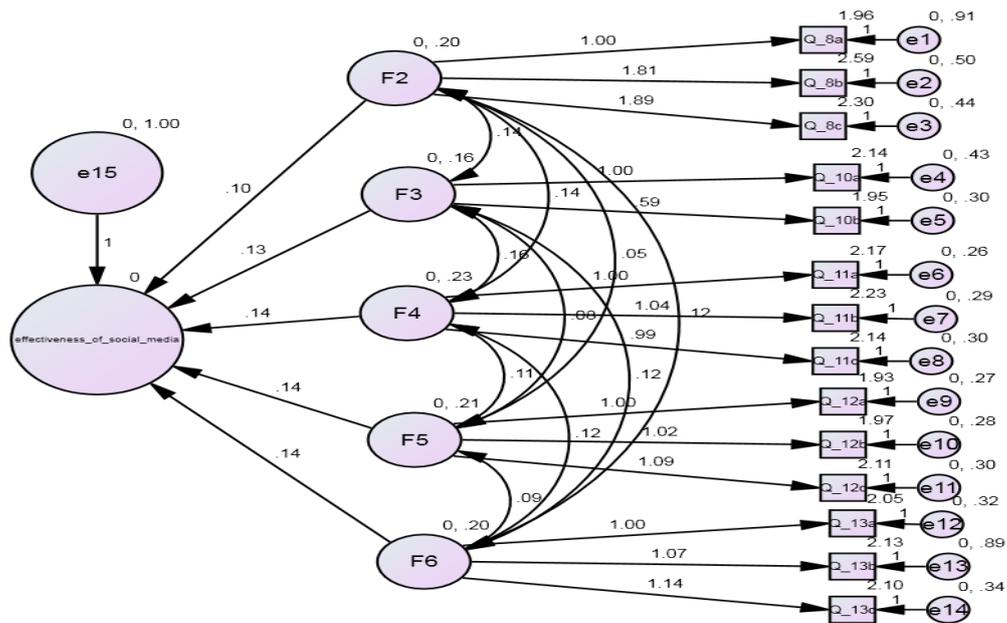


Figure 2: Measurement Model

Table 4 presents the overall fit indices of all the models.

Table 4: Fit Indices of the Model

Fit Measures	Proposed SEM Model I	Recommended values
RMR	0.031	RMR < 0.08; Model fit
RMSEA	0.070	RMSEA < 0.07; Model fit
GFI	0.955	GFI ≥ 0.95; Model fit
NFI	0.932	NFI ≥ 0.95; Model fit
CMIN/df	1.235	CMIN/df < 3, model fit
AGFI	0.915	AGFI ≥ 0.80, model fit

Hair et al. (2010) argued that there was not yet consensus among scholars regarding the standard of the goodness of fit test. Thus they suggested researchers can pick any one or two indices to evaluate the goodness of fit towards the model. In this research, the results showed significant values of goodness of fit, leading to acceptance of the proposed model.

**Structural Model Path Analysis**

Analysis of the structural equation model revealed that all five hypothesized effects were supported. The hypothesized effects i.e. Variety-seeking buying behaviour, disagreement buying behaviour, composite buying behaviour, usual buying behaviour and impetuous buying behaviour indicate the positive effect on social media advertisements and the respective p-values are also significant at 5% level of significance. Finally, we can conclude that the parameters outlined in Table 5 plays an important role on social media advertisement of electronics consumer goods among young women in Maharashtra.

Table 5: Structural Model Results

Parameters	Estimates	p-value
Social Media Advertisement → Composite Buying behaviour	0.095	0.002**
Social Media Advertisement → Variety- seeking Buying behaviour	0.130	0.000***
Social Media Advertisement → Usual Buying behaviour	0.143	0.000***
Social Media Advertisement → Impetuous Buying behaviour	0.144	0.030**
Social Media Advertisement → Disagreement Buying behaviour	0.139	0.001***

\*\* Significant at 0.05 level, \*\*\* significant at 0.001 level

## 6. Conclusions

The results indicate that composite buying behaviours have a positive and significant impact on attitude to consumer buying behaviours through social media sites. When consumers make electronic goods purchases that are very costly they incur higher risks associated with the purchase behaviour. Therefore they have to pay more attention to the advertisement of the electronic products before making the online purchase. Consequently they spend maximum time on social media sites for detailed information about the products and they also spend more time on online electronic store before making the buying decision. Marketers should provide more detailed and trustworthy information about the electronics goods on social media sites to increase the online buying behaviour of the consumers.

Usual buying behaviour also has a significant and positive impact on consumer buying behaviour through social media sites. The consumers already did lots of research for the electronic product on the social media sites for whatever the product they want to buy. So they can easily search for the same product of the same company in the minimum time before deciding if the product is best for them. Disagreement regarding buying behaviours has a significant impact on consumers buying behaviours through social networking sites. The electronic products are very expensive and requires lots of thinking before buying. Social media sites provide lots of comments and feedback about the product so the feeling of anxiety whenever the purchase decision will be correct.

Variety seeking buying also had a positive impact. Consumers wanted to try out different varieties belonging to different brands. Social networking sites shows different variety of electronic goods with new brands available in the market. They also provide information about the different brands of different products. In addition comparative analysis of products were also displayed on the social media sites. Impetuous buying behaviour represents a positive and significant impact. Due to social media sites, consumers had no plans to buy any consumer electronic products, but still they do the surfing on social media sites and many advertisements of the product on social media sites provoke them to buy the product. As a result they get the idea of different schemes available on the different products of the different brands. Finally, we can conclude that all the parameters of the study with respect to consumer buying behaviour play an important role on social media advertisement of electronics consumer goods among young women in Maharashtra.

## 7. Future Implication

This study helps producers and retailers in understanding consumer buying behaviour towards electronics appliances and also helps in improving customer satisfaction in Indian market. Retailers will get more inputs and it will also help to develop the marketing strategies associated with the product. In addition it will increase the online buying behaviour and the sale of the electronics products. It helps the retailers to attract the consumers from the social media sites who are regularly searching the same product. It will be helpful for the retailers and producers to showcase the different variety of products available on the different brands as well as they can also display there discount schemes available so that more customers will get attracted the products thereby increasing sales. Customers' satisfaction levels will also increase because the detailed information is available on social media sites. Further, more consumers can use the online or social media sites for purchasing expensive electronics products. The study analysis also helps to identify several directions for future research. Future studies should examine the effect of social media advertisements on buying behaviour for other products as well as other parts of the country. The research has a few limitations. First, the sample size is quite small and secondly, only one state within India was considered for this research.

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