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Effect of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behavior in the Electronics Market

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the effect of social media on consumer buying behavior in the electronics market in Kathmandu, Nepal. A survey was conducted on 151 social media users to analyze the influence of psychographic factors, advertising strategies, social media engagement metrics, and influence of social media influencers and celebrities. Descriptive statistics, correlation, ANOVA, and linear regression were employed for data analysis. In line with prior studies, it has indicated that consumer buying behavior can be influenced by focusing on psychographic factors, advertising strategies, social media engagement metrics, and the influence of social media influencers and celebrities. In addition to these results suggest that social media plays a crucial role in shaping consumer electronics purchasing decisions, with user reviews, ratings, and influencer recommendations holding more weight than traditional marketing methods.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Media Engagement Metrics, Social Media Influencers and Celebrities

Introduction

Marketing plays a crucial role in the success of engineering firms and projects. By effectively communicating the value of their services and products, engineers can attract clients, secure projects, and maintain a competitive edge in the industry.

Mishra (2023) emphasizes the importance of marketing in unveiling new operations and understanding consumer behavior, which is equally applicable to the engineering sector. Effective marketing strategies help engineering firms differentiate themselves from competitors and position their unique capabilities in the market.

Moreover, marketing enables engineers to understand the needs and preferences of their target audience. Mishra and Shrestha (2019) highlight the significance of assessing consumer influencing factors in decision-making, which can be applied to engineering services as well. By understanding the factors that drive client decisions, engineers can tailor their offerings and marketing messages to better meet their clients' requirements.

Influential marketing strategies, such as those adopted by the cement industries (Mishra, 2019), can be adapted by engineering firms to effectively promote their services. These strategies may include digital marketing, social media presence, targeted advertising, and building strong brand recognition.

Furthermore, marketing helps engineering firms identify and reach potential clients. Mishra and Aithal (2021a&b) emphasize the importance of understanding the factors and features that influence consumer behavior, which can be applied to the engineering industry. By identifying the factors that drive client decisions, engineers can develop targeted marketing campaigns to attract the right clients and projects.

Social Media is essential for engineering firms to succeed in today's competitive landscape as marketing is highly influenced by social media. By effectively communicating their value, understanding client needs, adopting influential

marketing strategies, and identifying potential clients, engineers can secure projects, maintain a strong market presence, and contribute to the growth and success of their firms.

Social Media has been a very prominent and undeniable part of our existence. The increasing use and reach of social media have created a huge marketing scope for big and small business houses to promote their product among a large number of audiences. Additionally, it has provided a platform that allows direct communication between businesses and customers at any time and location. This changes the traditional concept of communication and brings a completely new vision about communicating. The communication process has undergone massive change with the help of networking sites (Arekar et al, 2018). Communication through social media has been found to have an effect in consumer's buying behavior and marketing strategies (Sema, 2017).

Businesses have been able to influence consumers' perceptions of their products and win their trust by using influencers and actors to promote electronic products like phones and laptops on various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the like. With the growing reach through social media recommendation of a person towards their friends and family also helps to increase the consumer reach (Sema, 2017). Since there is no middleman like a merchant, social media enables customers to provide evaluations, feedback, and suggestions to the business directly. Companies have produced extremely powerful electrical products in response to growing rivalry, but these advancements come at a hefty price. Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to win the public's confidence, and social media greatly contributes to the development of such confidence. In the modern era, social media platforms are highly significant for connecting businesses with their customers.

Social media significantly influences how consumers think and behave when it comes to products. Social media today reaches a big number of consumers and plays a significant role in attracting and keeping them. In order to survive in the cutthroat market of today, it is crucial for businesses to step up their social media and marketing strategies in order to attract and keep a sizable customer base.

Social media is a major component of the modern, expanding world and has a significant influence on the marketing and promotion of electronic goods, which influences consumer purchasing decisions. This research paper aims to find the effect of social media in shaping the consumer's buying behavior towards electronic products. However, despite the evident influence of social media on consumer behavior, there remains a gap in understanding the specific mechanisms through which social media elements such as usage, content, engagement, influencers, advertising strategies, demographics, and psychographic factors effect consumer buying behavior in the electronics market (Gümüş, 2017).

This study primarily focuses on the idea that social media significantly influences consumer perception, which in turn influences consumer purchasing behavior (Arekar et al, 2018). To gain an understanding of the relevant theory and practice, a number of previous studies were examined. This study, which stands out from other relevant studies, primarily focuses on how using social media assists in engaging and gaining the consumer through influencing their perception and behavior towards the electronic devices.

Objective

The main objective of the study is to analyze the effect of social media on consumer buying behavior in the electronics market.

Literature Review

The literature review reveals several studies which have examined the effect on consumer buying behavior in the electronic market. In the context of Nepal, consumers are highly influenced by marketing styles and they make significant changes based on the variations in the marketing strategies. Several studies have been reviewed in detail to find out the actual cause and driving factors in the consumer decision making process.

Social Media and Information Exchange

Social Media influences purchasing decisions across various platforms like Facebook, Youtube, Instagram. It serves as a rich platform for electronic marketing specifically targeting diverse age and income groups to maximize the effect on consumer's purchase decisions (Iblasi & Bader, 2016).

During Covid 19 pandemic, social interactions increased and information sharing became rapid .Social media had numerous rumors about likelihood of food scarcity in the coming days. This led to panic buying, stockpiling to avoid risk of running out of essential stocks (Ozuem, 2021)

Online buying and purchasing behavior is affected when the consumers are asked to disclose their personal details and information. This leads to low willingness to purchase goods. Consumers only feel comfortable to shop when their personal information is not mandatory to mention. (Skare, 2021).

Consumer's socialization through peer communication has become challenging for marketers since peer communication affects purchasing decisions directly. Peers may give bad review to some products, which directly influences the purchase decision (Wang & Wei, 2012)

Over the past 15 years, social media have transformed how big companies market their products ;helping businesses to understand customer's preferences (Lamberton, 2016)

Social Influence and Social Proof

Contents shared by different brands on social media platforms have a significant effect on consumers. Brands strive to create highly attractive, appealing and engaging content to captivate and retain their followers and consumers make purchases on how celebrities and influencers (Gümüs, 2017).

Companies are constantly exploring innovative methods to connect with their consumers. While traditional marketing techniques like television and magazines were once predominant, the evolving landscape has necessitated a shift in advertising strategies. Companies that have adopted a strategic approach and endorsed celebrities to their marketing have received significant advantages (Pütter, 2017).

Recommendation, rating ,reviews, likes, celebrity endorsements has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. High community recommendation, high follower acts as a key component in increasing sales (Talib, 2017).

Positive product review, pop-up messages about other buyer's purchases shows how adolescents' purchasing behavior are affected. Positive products and pop up both reviews have a significant effect on purchase decisions (Park, 2023).

Research has shown that brand loyalty, reputation has positive effects on the product, hence increasing the likelihood of purchase decisions (Habibi, 2013).

Video gamers, while selecting gaming tools, get influenced by what other players select. Their decision is entirely influenced by other gamers' choices (Sansare & Rovere, 2021).

Purchase Decision Behavior

In the research conducted in Kathmandu Nepal, a study was conducted to investigate the effect of various factors on consumer decision-making in the smartphone market. The study aimed to understand

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

how factors such as smartphone price, brand image, social circle, and advanced features influence consumers' decision-making process (Rai, 2013). In research conducted in South-East Asia, it was examined that social media usage influences the purchase decision of the consumers during information search. The findings revealed that consumer's satisfaction increases as they progress towards the final purchase and post purchase evaluation (Voramontri, 2019).

Reviews and comments on social media affect a lot of purchasing decisions. However, users hesitate to share their post purchase experience on social media sites (Yesha, 2014).

Marketers are facing obstacles in developing appropriate strategies for online shopping advertisements to the target consumers due to difficulty in understanding consumer purchasing patterns and preferences (Kumar & Varma, 2020).

In the research conducted on foreigners to find out their post purchase behavior, it was found that married customers had more positive post purchase behavior as compared to the unmarried customers (Nagamalar, 2019)

In the research conducted in India, it was found that personal factor in determining the purchase intention has weak influence while social factors and marketing strategies has high influence on purchase decision (Vijayalakshmi & Mahalakshmi, 2013)

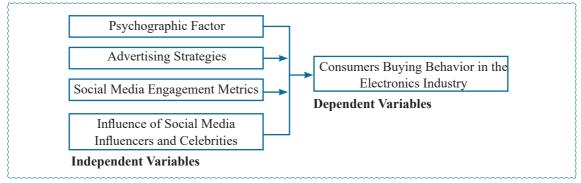


Figure 1 shows the independent variables that are taken into account in this research for analyzing

its effect on the dependent variable. The independent variable such as psychographic factors examines

the effect of psychological characteristics such as personality, values and lifestyle in the purchase behavior of the individuals (Vij & Sharma, 2012). The second independent variable is advertising strategies. The study by (Penpece, 2013) shows how the targeted ads and other video ads that the companies generate in order to target their consumer group drive the purchase decision of the individuals. This study also focuses on highlighting the importance of social media engagement metrics. The study by (Fotis, 2015) shows how important the metrics such as customer reviews and ratings are while making a purchase decision as a consumer. Another independent variable that this research has considered is the influence of social media influencers and celebrities. This highlights if the purchase decision of an individual is influenced by the endorsement done by their favorite influencer or celebrity (Belanche, 2021).

To carry out this research, several hypotheses were developed based on the independent variables to see if they hold true or not through analysis. The hypotheses are:

- H1: Psychographic Factors have a significant effect on the consumers buying behavior in the electronics market
- H2: Advertising Strategies have a significant effect on the consumers buying behavior in the electronics market
- H3: Social Media Engagement Metrics have a significant effect on the consumers buying behavior in the electronics market
- H4: Influence of social media influencers and celebrities has a significant effect on the consumers buying behavior in the electronics market

Several research studies have been conducted to examine the effect of social media on consumer behavior. However, this research aims on examining the effect of social media specifically in the electronics market of Kathmandu, Nepal.

Methodology

This research used the quantitative research method and collected the data through a convenience

sampling method. For the primary data collection, questionnaires were developed in Google Forms and sent out to the social media users of Kathmandu Valley. The sample size for this research was 151 respondents. The questionnaire consisted of 5 questions for each variable measured on a 5-point Likert Scale. Before sending the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted taking a few participants to identify any issues with the survey questions and make necessary revisions based on the feedback. This study used IBM SPSS Statistics 23 for the data analysis. This study primarily focused on correlation analysis, regression analysis and hypothesis testing which helped to analyze the relationship between the variables and gave a true picture on the effect of social media on the consumers buying behavior in the electronics market.

Previous researchers have also used quantitative research design. The study by (Mishra & Aithal, 2021) conducted the research on 120 people of Kathmandu Valley. The data was collected through questionnaires and hypothesis testing and One-Way ANOVA analysis was conducted. Another research was conducted in 2019 on 158 people in Thailand (Voramontri & Klieb, 2019). Similar to this research, that study also used regression analysis, correlation analysis and hypothesis testing to analyze the effect of social media on consumer behavior. Similar approaches used for the research gives validity for the methodology developed for this research.

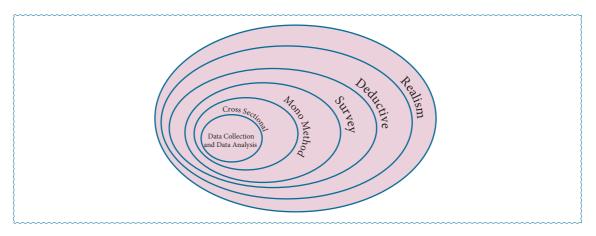
Research Onion

Out of many philosophies such as Positivism, Realism, Objectivism, Subjectivism, Pragmatism, this research falls under Realism Philosophy because it is the combination of epistemology and ontology. This research follows a deductive approach. In this approach, hypotheses are developed based on some existing theories and tested through surveys and experiments. As a strategy, this research has taken surveys to collect the data from the social media users. Since surveys are the only strategy this research is using, the choice of this research is the Mono Method. The time horizon for this research is

cross sectional since the data will be collected at a single point in time. This research does not consider

the change in effect of social media in the consumers buying behavior in the electronics market.

Figure 2
Research Onion



Analysis and Results

Table 1 *Age and Gender of the Respondents*

Particular		Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	91	60.3%	
	Female	60	39.7%	
	Others	0	0.0%	
Total	151			
Age	Below 18	6	4.0%	
	18 - 24	123	81.5%	
	25 - 34	12	7.9%	
	35 - 44	10	6.6%	
	45 and Above	0	0.0%	
Total	151			

In table 1, it can be observed that 91 out of 151 respondents are Male. It constitutes 60.3% of the total respondents. Rest of the 60 respondents are female which constitutes 39.7% of the total. Another demographic factor that highlights the characteristics of the respondents is the age group.

The majority of the respondents are in the 18 - 24 age group. There are 123 respondents of this age group which is 81.5% of the total respondents. 6 respondents fall in the age group of under 18, 12 respondents are in the age group of 25 - 34 and 10 respondents are in the age group of 35 - 44.

Table 2 *Reliability Test*

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychographics	0.752
Advertising Strategies	0.839
Social Media Engagement Metrics	0.765
Influence of Social Media Influencers and Celebrities	0.817
Overall Value	0.928

The reliability test was conducted to check the internal validity of the data. The Cronbach's Alpha values can range from 0 to 1. Higher values show greater reliability for the data. For the psychographic factors, the value resulted in 0.752. Similarly, for advertising strategies, the alpha value was 0.839.

The alpha value for Social media engagement metrics and influence of social media influencers and celebrities were 0.765 and 0.817 respectively. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the overall data was 0.928. This indicates the high level of internal consistency in the data.

Table 3 *Correlation*

R		R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate
	0.836	0.699	0.691	0.5442

In table 2, "R" is the correlation coefficient that measures the degree or intensity of the relationship between the variables. Here, the value of R is 0.836 which shows that the consumers buyi,. In behavior is highly positively correlated with psychographic factors, advertising strategies, social media engagement metrics and influence of social media influencers and celebrities.

The value of R-square shows the coefficient of determination. It measures the proportion through which the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. Adjusted R square is taken as a more precise measure because it adjusts the degree

of freedom. The value of 0.691 means that 69.1% of the time, consumer buying behavior is explained by psychographic factors, advertising strategies, social media engagement metrics and influence of social media influencers and celebrities.

Standard error of estimate, on the other hand, shows the gap between the actual and estimated value. Here, the standard error is 0.5442. Greater value indicates the greater gap between the actual and estimated value and the model used for forecasting is less representative. This might be because of low representativeness of the sample size which led to the biases in the analysis.

Table 4 *Regression Analysis - ANOVA*

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	100.516	4	25.129	84.851	0.000b
Residual	43.238	146	0.296		
Total	143.754	150			

Anova checks the fitness of the study. It shows whether the model is fit for the study or not. Here, the Sig. Value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05.

Hence, the null hypothesis will be rejected. This means that the overall regression model is fit for the study.

Table 5 *Regression Analysis - Coefficients*

Model	В	Unstandardized coefficients		Sig.
		Std. Error	t	
(Constant)	0.016	0.189	0.083	0.934
Avg_Psy	0.121	0.082	1.474	0.143
Avg_AS	0.138	0.085	1.615	0.109
Avg_SMEM	0.283	0.087	3.257	0.001
Avg_SMI	0.444	0.078	5.669	0.000

From the above table, the concluding framework can be drawn for each dependent variable.

Where,

Y = Consumers buying behavior

X1= Psychographic factors (Psy)

X2 = Advertising Strategies (AS)

X3= Social Media Engagement Metrics (SMEM)

X4 = Influence of social media influencers and celebrities (SMI)

This framework explains the relationship for the sample only. To draw conclusions for the entire population, Sig. Value of each variable should be taken into account. The Sig. Value of less than 0.05 means that the null hypothesis should be rejected. Hence, it implies that the independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable and vice versa.

In the above table, it can be seen that Social media engagement metrics (SMEM) have the Sig. Value of 0.001 and Influence of social media influencers and celebrities (SMI) has the Sig. Value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis for both the variables should be rejected. This means that Social media engagement metrics and Influence of social media influencers and celebrities have a significant effect on the consumers buying behavior.

On the other hand, psychographic factors and advertising strategies have the Sig. Value of

0.143 and 0.109 respectively. This means that these variables do not have a significant effect on the consumers buying behavior. Because of this reason, the framework can be further refined to draw precise conclusions.

$$Y = 0.016 + 0.283 * X3 + 0.444 * X4$$

Where,

Y = Consumers buying behavior

X3 = Social Media Engagement Metrics (SMEM)

X4 = Influence of social media influencers and celebrities (SMI)

This framework shows that if the average score for social media engagement metrics (SMEM) increases by 1 unit, the average score for consumers buying behavior increases by 0.283. Likewise, when the average score for influence of social media influencers and celebrities increases by 1 unit, the average score for consumers buying behavior increases by 0.444.

Discussion

Prior studies have shown that the psychographic factors and advertising strategies of the companies induce the purchasing decisions of consumers (Rai, 2013). However, in this study, psychographic factors and advertising strategies are seen to be less significant for the respondents. This possible reason for varying results can be explained by less representativeness of the sample size and difference in the market that the research is conducted in.

The significance of the social media engagement metrics has been shown by previous studies as well. Metrics such as likes, comments, shares, follows, reviews, etc. have been seen to influence the purchase intention of the consumers (Cao et al., 2021). This shows that when users interact or engage with social media posts, they are more likely to purchase the product (Rahman, 2017). Digital retailers should focus on increasing the engagement with their target market so that the likelihood of the conversion also increases. Likewise, the positive relationship between influence of social media influencers and celebrities and consumers buying behavior has been quite evident. Individuals are more likely to follow the recommendations of the people they follow and admire. Hence, influencer's ability to shape the consumer's perception on the product has driven the purchase intention (Bognar, 2019). Retailers should also focus on how they can use the influencers' endorsement to make their target market known about the product. The study highlights a new domain for engineering.

Conclusion

The study presents the dynamics of popular culture and consumer decision-making in the digital era by closely examining psychographic factors, advertising methodologies, key dimensions affecting social media engagement measurement, and the effect of social media personalities like influencers and celebrities.

These results demonstrate the importance of social media on consumer electronics' purchasing decisions. Notably, it was also revealed that traditional marketing such as billboards and TV adverts have taken a back seat to consumers word of mouth from user-generated content & reviews/rating on items they wish to purchase accompanied by influencer sponsorship. More and more, today's consumers are turning to social media as a direct line between the businesses they buy from. Popular

platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have all created new ways for customers to talk directly to brands and voice their opinion.

Although there are limitations to the study owing to absence of previous research data, this work fills a major lacuna in the literature by demonstrating how social media effects consumer buying in relation to electronics through empirical evidence. The study provides valuable guidance into those explicit elements, through the utilization of intensive quantitative research methodological approaches and analysis based on survey data used in this context.

The questionnaire surveys and statistical analysis, while utilizing IBM SPSS Statistics tools to ensure the reliability and validity of using the research methodology. Correlation, ANOVA and regression analysis back the study for outcomes of relation between social media with electronics consumers.

This study is very advantageous to academia and market, as it provides significant information on the change in consumer behavior that social media has caused and how companies need to utilize this resource for their marketing purpose resulting into new domain for engineering as interdisciplinary approach.

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