

Impact of Social Media Usage and Brand Attitude on Purchase Intention in the Context of the Pakistani Mobile Market

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Article History:	ABSTRACT
Received: 22 July, 2022	Purpose: The purpose of the study is to gauge the impact of brand attitude and social media usage on the purchase intention of mobile phones in the context of the Pakistani market. (The study population was Rawalpindi/Islamabad and Wah cantt whereas the sample size was 450)
Revised: 26 Oct, 2022	Design/ Methodology: The research collected data about mobile phone user and their purchase intention during the COVID-19 period.
Accepted: 29 Nov, 2022	Findings: The findings indicate that the constructs of brand attitude (BA) and social media usage (SM) both show a positively significant relationship with purchase intention (PI). Implications: The current research will facilitate mobile manufacturers to keep track of their sales indicators as well as to have a watchful eye on their competitors. Mobile phone users are increasing exponentially globally since the business norms are running on mobile phone, not to mention offices and education is now part of social media group. Limitations: The study can be extended to other cities of Pakistan while including semi-urban areas to widen the scope of research in the future. Keywords: Brand Attitude; Social Media Usage; Purchase Intention; Mobile Phones

1. Introduction:

The buying concept in recent times has dramatically shifted towards online buying behavior. The global access through the internet and social media the and availability of brands at quick social access has shifted the concept of purchases from the mortar and brick model (Seitz & Aldebasi, 2016). Consumers and buyers are now more familiar with international brands while sitting thousands of miles away by accessing the webpage/social media through their mobile phones. The massive shift towards an online buying attitude has been observed since the start of COVID-19, a global pandemic that has shaken the roots of retro business models towards online buying business models. A study was conducted in the Pakistani environment during the COVID-19 season. The research will investigate the relationship among independent variables (social media, brand attitude) over purchase intention during COVID-19 (Mazodier & Merunka, 2014).

In a study done in Japan online consumption (Watanabe & Omori, 2020), had revealed provided evidence that online buying which does not involve face-to-face interaction had increased, whereas tourist and travel services had decreased sharply. People around the globe during COVID-19, are more comfortable with the online transaction which is called e-commerce. In addition to it, another study was done in Taiwan on online food purchases (Bhandari & Rodgers, 2018).

The study had shown that there is a perpetual increase in online buying statistics PI by 5.7% whereby the online buying customer base had also increased by 4.9%. A similar study was done in Canada (Goddard, 2021), in which it was determined that the demand for online food had been increased drastically. The average household budget had been gone up by 20-30% average. The change in buying behavior is strongly attributed by social participation and gathering restriction, businesses around the globe stand halt and closed due to very limited or no human exposure/interaction. This has instigated online buying purchases and that are strongly linked with social media and social pressure and brand attitude to name the few important factors. It is also getting very common that mostly online business and e-commerce activities are done through mobile phones which are now being termed as M-commerce (Goddard, 2021).

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Purchase Intention

The purchase intention can be described as future plan to buy. Mobile phone companies like I-Phone, Samsung, Huawei, Oppo, NOVA, Nokia, HTC, Xiaomi, Sony, LG are among well-known brands whose demand is more as compared to other brands in the market by (Sumera Saeed Day Times, 2021). The buying of the mobile phone is strongly instigated by price, social pressure, social status, social media, compatibility, new technical properties and purchase intention of the customer. Moreover, generally speaking expensive mobile phones have always been a status symbol to public and mobile phone companies have successfully managed to maintain their brand image. The enhanced features, race with 4G and 5G enabled phones, edged features are mostly in demand. It is known that purchase of mobile phone is significantly drifted because of brand name and size of the mobile phone. The product perceived value, perceived quality has a direct linkage between consumer mind and purchase intention (Warshaw & Davis, 1985).

There were many studies over consumer perceived value and quality expectation over actual product which is the deal breaker in buying intention of mobile phone. Price is another component which determines the purchase intention of customer. The more researches proof that level of brand image of mobile phone value is linked to the price and quality (Liu & Liu, 2002). The previous studies show that the attribute of price plays a vital role in the purchase of expensive objects for instance jewellery, house, mobile etc (Ukpabi & Karjaluoto, 2017).

3. Methodology

The entire process of finding rightful solution is call research (Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R., 2016). In another book it was stated by (Williamson, 2002) about the importance of research. Research skills are an essential set of tools which enable researcher to be a good informed professional. (Alshare et al., 2020) had done research in Egypt over brand buying intention of mobile phone. The perceived brand recognition and brand image in the society and behavior of user and society was studied in detail. The research had proven customer perception and brand attitude that had an impact on purchase intention of mobile phone and that too has an impact on societal image. The data collection method was primary through survey questionnaire. In which most of the respondent responded positively and completed the form.

The data collection instrument was Likert scales of five points, the scale started 1-5 i.e from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The study of variable reflects the extents of brand in which different measurables were measured by using various parameters. In the measurement parameter, brand image price was assessed by applying (5) items which were taken from (Grewal et al., 2004; Fratto et al., 2006), and brand image value was assessed by applying (6) variables which was taken from (Forney et al., 2005; Grewal et al., 2004) and buyer faith in brand assessment by using (5) items which were taken from (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Aydin et al., 2005; Laforet, 2007) and brand supposed value was assessed by using (6) items adapted from (Rajagopal, 2007; Rajh et al., 2003) whereby personality of the brand is being assessed by using (5) items which were taken from (Alden et al., 1999). The researcher has developed some changes in order to construction necessary adjustments keeping in view the study conditions, whereas the purchase intention was measured with the brand by measureing (8) items taken from (Keiningham et al., 2005; Gilbert et al., 2004; Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2004)

Measurement of variables

Survey Items of Brand Attitude

Code	Survey Item	Source
BA 1	Smartphone are more convenient, reliable, and useful than normal mobile phones	(Ullah et al., 2020)
BA 2	The price/quality relationship is acceptable in smartphone, as I can enjoy other free services (e.g. e-mail, voice-mail, MSN & Skype, word processor) anywhere I want	
BA 3	Smartphone has good integration of wide range of functions and services	
BA 4	I compare prices of other Smartphone's brands and store brands before I choose one	

- BA 5 I am uncertain which Smartphone's brands provide real value for money in terms of product quality
- BA 6 Smartphone can fulfil my want and needs in current life.

Survey Items of Social Media Usage

- 1 Friends and family are very helpful to me in making decision of buying smartphone
- 2 I will ask the opinions from my friends and family when buying a smartphone. (Ullah, et al., 2020)
- 3 Expensive cell phones are status symbols in our society
- 4 My social environment has an impact on my choice of mobile phone (Suruce, et al., 2020)
- 5 I find that due to the extent of travel for pleasure it is important to use technology (Ameen, et al., 2020)
- 6 People who influence my behavior think I should purchase/use mobile phones

Survey of Items of Customer Purchase Intention

- 1 Do you agree with brand loyalty is related to purchase intention (Muneeb Mehta, et al., 2021).
- 2 I trust the brand of my phone
- 3 I believe this brand will give me the best service
- 4 I believe this brand will not disappoint me (Suruce, et al., 2020)
- 5 If I buy a new mobile phone, I would prefer this brand again
- 6 I will continue to use this brand mobile phone
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3.1 Brand Attitude

Moreover, the buying aptitude to purchase a brand smartphone is mostly based on a social pressure. The buying attitude towards a specific brand as well as the influence of social media and other people's expectations are also related to social pressure (Lim, Radzol, Cheah, & Wong, 2017). It is also known that, many brands are in cut throat competition, mobile phone offered features (mostly selling on processing speed and camera) are supported with the offered prices. According to the literature (Sata, 2013), every mobile phone should be priced as a certain level of acceptance from consumers. It is generally known that the lower priced mobile phones are usually not well demanded due to perceived value of money and quality.

It is also generally believed that the promised quality of mobile phone may not be delivered by cheap price, there is always a fear of compromised quality with services. Since mostly buyer assess the mobile phones based on their prices and brand. However, many companies priced their mobile phones lower to their competition as to gain advantage and on other hand consumers also will look for such type of mobile phones. There is another type of customer who thinks although

the price is lower, they still strongly believe that they will find the best value of the product they purchased (Suki, 2013).

H₁: The customer perception and social pressure, put them in tight slot of brand association. It is hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention of mobile phone during COVID-19.

3.2 Social Media Usage

The article suggests in the theory of planned behavior (TPB), that an increase in intention of buying a brand will raise the chances of executing the buying behavior. In the context of influencer marketing, prior literature suggests that consumers' attitudes toward a specific brand directly impact their purchasing intention (Erkan & Evans, 2018; Pradhan, Duraipandian, & Sethi, 2016). (Erkan & Evans, 2018) in a study also found that, word of mouth, i.e. use of social media and social chat words are more effective in defining the purchase intention. Especially when these e-words of mouth are coming from some known personality, it will have strong impulse on consumer buying behavior.

(Tri, 2022) confirm that, though attractiveness might lead to immediate effectiveness, a celebrity's perceived credibility in people mind would have a much lasting impact on consumer's behavior toward a specific brand. Recommendations and social media word of mouth build upon trust worthiness and credibility. It is also known that the influencers must be in a credible position to make their fan and followers towards certain buying intention (Kim & Baek, 2018). Perceived credibility of social influencers determines about a person whether his or her claims over certain brands are true, honest and unbiased (Hass, 1981).

H₂: The e-word of mouth and recommendation build a trust and credibility which influence the buyer purchase intention. It is therefore hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between social media and purchase intention of mobile phone during COVID-19.

3.3 Research Model

This model reflects the probable relationship among the under research variables depicted in the dimensions of purchase intention where as social media, brand attitude and social pressure as an independent variable, and purchase intention as a dependent variable.

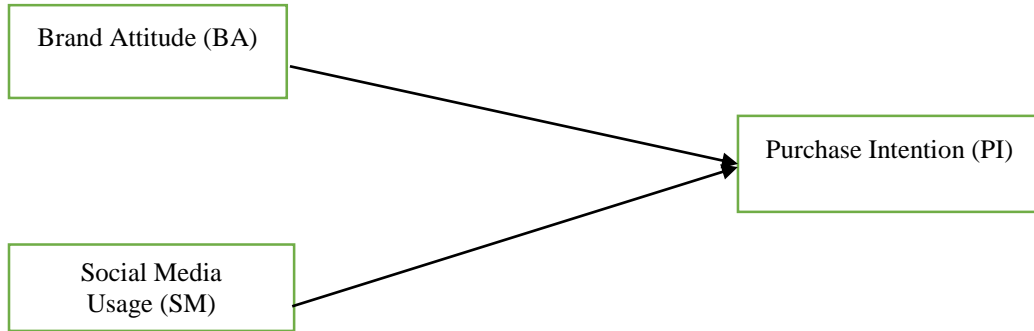


Figure3.1: Research Framework

3.4 Research Design

Study research, in some form or another, helps managers in any organization to make essential decisions at the job place. It is also known that not all the decisions are correct, sometime they make poor decisions and issues do not solved and some time the problems solved amicably. The ability of making right or wrong decision is more towards how we go about any solution over an issue. The spirit of research and to be a successful manager, it is essential to know how to approach a problem and to make a right decision. The entire process of finding rightful solution is call research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The research collected the data about mobile phone user and their purchase intention during COVID-19 period.

3.5 Sample Size

After determining the population, the next step is to select the sample size. According to (Forza, 2016), the selection of sample size is complex matter since it is linked with significance level and accuracy of statistical power during the test run of results. As a guide from the suggestion given by (Denscombe, 2006) it was suggested that the sample size should be in the range of 30 to 250 is a small sample size and increasing 500 will be measured to be too large.

3.6 Partial Least Square (PLS) Structural Equation Modeling Approach

The study was conducted while using structural equation modelling (SEM) for hypothesis testing. There are two most common approaches in SEM which are covariance-based approach and variance-based approach. Moreover, the covariance based structural equation modelling (CBSEM) is confirmatory as to its output, whereby variance based structural equation modelling

(VBSEM) is based on estimate. The techniques are useful for models which are complex in nature having numerous latent can be projected easily.

3.7 Evaluation of Outer Model (Measurement Model)

According to (Jr et al., 2013) the basic measurement standard is met through reliability and validity (outer) model. The type of models are either reflective or formative measures, the assessment of the outer model is likely depends on the type of model.

3.8 Convergent Validity

According to (Ramayah, Rouibah, Gopi, & Rangel, 2009), the Convergent validity is termed as the degree of convergence among the items. The table 1 clearly indicates all items are above the benchmark of acceptable range. The acceptable value for composite reliability as suggested by (Fornell, 1981) and (Hair, Ortinau, & Harrison, 2010) is 0.70.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Results
BA	0.860	0.895	0.590	Accepted
SM	0.895	0.920	0.656	Accepted

3.9 Discriminant Validity

According to (Hair et al., 2021), discriminant validity is known for what is to be measured. The discriminant validity is used to access the relationship among the items as well and the overlapping. (Hair et al., 2021) suggested two methods for assessing the discriminant validity.

	Brand Attitude (BA)	Social Media (SM)
Brand Attitude (BA)	0.768	
Social Media (SM)	0.693	0.810

3.10 Evaluation of Inner Model (Structural Model)

The structural model is to test the inner model of theoretical framework. (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013) had suggested the criteria; coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients and effect size (f^2).

3.11 Determination of R²

The R² is the first step for examining measurement model. The discipline decides the value of R², as it varies according (Sarstedt, Ringle, Smith, Reams, & Hair Jr, 2014). The acceptable limits as mentioned by (Chin, 2010) of measurement models varies as general rule of thumb it can be 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 which are considered as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively.

Table 3: Determination of R²

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
PI	0.663	0.661

3.12 Effect Size

The structural model evaluation can be assessed by another method which is can effective size (f²) of each relationship in the structure model. It permits researchers to gauge the exogenous latent variable's incremental explanation of an endogenous latent variable.

Table 4: Effect Size (f²)

Variable	f ²
BA	0.063
SM	0.663

3.13 Structural Model Hypotheses Testing

The path coefficient is to find out the hypothesized relationships. The predictable t-tests are not assessed in PLS. In order to have significance of test, non-parametric measures such as bootstrapping are used. This research uses bootstrapping technique from smart PLS as to ascertain, the numerical implication of the path coefficients.

Table 5: Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Relationship	β-values	τ-values	ρ-values	Decision
H ₁	BA-->PI	0.052	5.127	0.000	Accepted
H ₂	SM-->PI	0.048	5.618	0.000	Accepted

H₁: It is hypothesized that the results reflect a significant relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention in buying intention (β= 0.052, t= 5.127, p= 0.000).

H₂: It has been hypothesized in the study that social media has a significant impact on purchase intention in buying intention. The bootstrapping results depicts that social media played a positive role in customer decision making of buying intention (β= 0.048, t=5.618, p= 0.000).

4.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The research was conducted to find out purchase intention of purchase intention of mobile phone in wake of COVID-19. The study is based on finding relationship among independent variables which are social media usage and brand attitude. It is learnt that social media usage has a vast effect on consumer buying intentions, the effect of buying usually accelerated by social media, as to (Rosa & Widad, 2020), and the buying intention for consumer is influenced by three factors which are consumer attitudes, subjective norms and control perception of behavior in purchase intention. The second factor of study was brand attitude; its effect on purchase intention was studied. The software of Smart PLS was used to determine the results. The brand attitude has significant role in buying behavior. The brand conscious customer usually does repeat purchases of the brand of their choice. It is the trust that brand has built on its customer over the repeated purchases, which is supported with the psychological perception of the user. There are myriad marketing companies which are projecting brand image in the mid of its user and projected customers. As to (Nayeem, 2020), stated that the brand influencing has a positive impact of mobile phone purchase on its customer in Bangladesh. “The outcomes uncovered that dominant part of the respondents trusted that mark affiliation, mark mindfulness, mark responsibility and brand trust guided and affected their buy choice at whatever point purchasing cell phones”.

4.1 Implications of the Study

The current research will facilitate the mobile manufactures to keep track of their sale indicators as well as to have a watchful eye on their competitors. The mobile phone users are increasing exponentially globally since the business norms are running on mobile phone, not to mention offices and education is now part of social media group. The particular study will also facilitate the marketing companies to understand the widespread usage of mobile phone and social media which in-turn benefit them to launch promotions and marketing campaigns for soliciting immediate results over convention sales. The previous studies were focused on sale of mobile phones in normal times, whereby the study factors used in earlier studies were not based on COVID-19 pandemic. This specific study is very interesting in nature which comprises the latest statistics of mobile phones sales with respect to COVID-19. This study also covers the buying pattern of general consumers, which has changed dramatically and moved towards M-commerce or mobile commerce.

4.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The study is very interesting as it was done during COVID-19 which is not a normal market condition. It is actually, a buying behavior study that leads to ultimate purchase intention. The study can be extended to other cities of Pakistan while including semi-urban areas to widen the

scope of research in future. It is, therefore, expected that it may generate more interesting results which will be beneficial for marketers, brand and many other industries, especially which are using mobile phone as their selling platform.

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