SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE DRIVERS: ANALYSING THE IMPACT ON ONLINE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES IN PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

Many businesses are using social networking sites to try to change how people behave, but not many studies have looked into how these tactics influence the online purchasing habits of university workers throughout India. Therefore, this study examines the impact of social media marketing on the online shopping habits of university staff in Punjab. It focuses on how different demographics factors affect how often and how much people buy. Despite extensive research on the general impact of social media on buyer behaviour, the effects on Indian university workers have received less attention. This gap highlights the need for more focused research to enhance the effectiveness of marketing plans and understand the impact of social media on this specific group of individuals. The research employed quantitative methods, polling 673 workers from several universities in Punjab and analysing the data through multiple regression and other statistical techniques. We looked at major factors such as age, gender, ease of shopping, competitive price, number of choices, response to ads, and yearly income. The results show that gender, how simple it is to buy something, and income have a big effect on how people buy things online. Average age, price competition, number of options, and ad engagement have less impact. These results indicate that marketing strategies that prioritize ease of purchase and cater to specific gender and class groups are likely to yield better results.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Online Buying Behaviour, University Employees, Consumer Engagement, Demographic Influences.*

Introduction

Social media has become an important way for businesses to connect with each other, which has changed the way marketing works in the digital age. Social networking site marketing (Agnihotri, 2020; Tuten, 2023) is now an important tool for companies that want to reach more people more precisely and for less money. Many people are interested in both academic and practical aspects of how social media affects buyer behaviour, especially certain groups of people like university workers (Martí et al., 2019). This project looks at how social media advertising affects the online shopping habits of university employees in Punjab. This aims to show how demographic factors and ad features affect people's purchases.

Punjab, which is known for its rich cultural history and good school facilities, is quickly adopting digital technology in all areas of life, including schooling (Gill, 2003). The buying habits of university workers (Ewing et al., 2019), who have jobs ranging from office support to academic teachers, make them a special group whose online shopping habits are a fascinating topic for research. According to

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(Zhang et al., 2023), the widespread use of social networking sites in Punjab has made it an important channel for marketers to connect with this group of people. As a result, it is important to know how well social media marketing can influence their purchasing decisions.

It is no longer just people interacting with each other on social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter; these sites have become lively markets where people see and react to different kinds of ads (Dixon, 2023; Sun et al., 2019). The ways that these ads change the buying habits, tastes, and commitment of university workers in Punjab can teach us a lot about how well different marketing tactics work with this group (Burgess et al., 2017). A lot of businesses use social media marketing, but not many studies have looked at how it changes the buying habits of university workers in Punjab (Weller, 2016). It is essential to know how demographics like age, gender, and financial level, as well as ad attributes like timeliness, competitive price, and product choices, affect people's decisions to buy things online. Insufficient research on this topic necessitates a comprehensive study to understand the impact of social media marketing on this demographic region.

One of the main goals of the study is to find out how social media marketing affects Punjabi university workers' online shopping habits. More specifically, the focus of this research is:

- To identify the social factors that have a big effect on how university staff buy things online.
- To identify what effects certain types of social media ads, have on how often people in this group buy things.
- To Examine how gender influences the relationship between social media promotion and more or less frequent purchases.

Researchers are interested in this study because it helps them figure out how well social media techniques work when they are trying to reach university workers in Punjab. Findings from the study could help create marketing strategies that better fit the specific needs of this group of people, eventually making social media marketing efforts in the area more efficient and accurate. To aid in the analysis, the study provides answers to the following questions:

- How do social factors affect the way university workers in Punjab buy things online?
- What part do certain features of social media ads play in determining how often people in this group buy things?
- Does gender influence how university workers use social media marketing to change their buying habits?

Focussing on how university workers in Punjab connect with social media ads and how that changes their online shopping habits, this study only looks at that group of people. People who do population studies in other areas or industries.

Literature Review

This part explores the current research on social media marketing, how people purchase things online, and how demographics affect buying choices. Numerous studies demonstrate that social media marketing effectively enhances brand recognition and customer involvement, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchases (Johnson, 2021; Smith-Frigerio, 2020). This paper applies this idea to university workers, hypothesizing that social media promotion affects how they shop online.

Literature shows that ease of use, variety, and low prices are important factors that affect people's choices to buy things online (Maia et al., 2020). There is a study looking into how these factors affect the buying habits of university staff members in Punjab when shown in social media ads. Several studies have looked at how demographics affect the way people buy things online. For example, financial status and age have a big effect on how likely and how often people buy things online (Hernández et al., 2011). This study delves more deeply into these social factors among university employees.

Promotions on social media can be more or less successful depending on things like their usefulness, how much information they contain, and how appealing they look (Schreiner et al., 2021). This study looks at the qualities that matter most to the target audience. According to research, the kind and amount of online sales may be different for men and women when it comes to how they react to social media advertisements (Halloran & Lutz, 2021). This particular aspect holds significant importance in the theory underpinning this work. The conceptual structure of this study draws its foundation from the ideas and books examined. It says that social media advertising affects people's online shopping habits in a number of ways, with demographic variables and ad traits playing a role.

This section proposes specific theories for experimentation, drawing from both theoretical and practical texts. These include the direct links between demographics and buying habits, as well as the moderating effects of ad features such as competitive price, a wide range of choices, and interaction with consumer feedback.

Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative methodology and an observational research strategy. Researchers picked this strategy to look at the statistical links between factors in social media marketing and how university employees buy things online. By using polls to gather numbers, the study is trying to figure out how much social media affects buying choices and find links between demographics and how often people buy things. For this study, university workers from a number of different schools in Punjab make up the group. We use a method known as "stratified random sampling" to ensure the representation of various groups, including management staff, academic teachers, and support staff. The number of workers participating at the universities determines the sample size. The objective is to establish a statistically significant group capable of providing insights applicable to various situations.

The data is gathered from 673 universities by distributing a structured questionnaire online. The survey had both open-ended and Likert scale questions to find out how people felt, what they thought, and what they did about social media marketing and shopping online. A small portion of the population will fill out the form to ensure clarity and accuracy. We can figure out what social media ads are like by looking at things like their usefulness, how competitive their prices are, how many choices they offer, and how many people interact with their reviews. The dependent variable is the number of times someone buys something online. Age, gender, and yearly income are all demographics that can affect the outcome. This project employs the "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (SPSS) to analyse the information (Morgan et al., 2019). Using inferential statistics, like multiple regression modelling, to test theories is different from using descriptive statistics that give an overview of the data. This research additionally utilised ANOVA (St»hle & Wold, 1989; Stoker et al., 2020) to look at how the groups were different and association analysis to see how strong the links were between the factors. Some of the proposed hypotheses for the work are as follows:

- **Hypothesis 1**: There is a significant relationship between university employee's Age and their online buying behaviour.

- **Hypothesis 2**: There is a significant relationship between gender of the university employees and their online buying behaviour.

- **Hypothesis 3**: There is a significant relationship between in buying convenience and buying behaviour of university employees

- **Hypothesis 4:** There is a significant relationship between in relevant competitive prices on social media advertisements and buying behaviour of university employees.

- **Hypothesis 5**: There is a significant relationship between in availability of options posted on social media advertisements buying behaviour of university employees.

- **Hypothesis 6**: There is a significant relationship between in Engage with product review posted on social media advertisements and buying behaviour of university employees.

- **Hypothesis 7**: There is a significant relationship between annual income and buying behaviour of university employees

In the Figure 1, the factors affecting online buying behaviour are visually organized, leading to hypotheses about how each factor impacts buying frequency and annual spending among university employees.

Hypothesis 1 explores how various demographic factors such as age, gender, and educational level influence the buying frequency and annual spending of university employees. It postulates that different demographic groups may exhibit distinct buying behaviours influenced by their unique needs and media consumption habits. Hypothesis 2 examines the relationship between university workers' pay levels and their purchasing habits. There may be a link between higher incomes and more purchases and more spending each year, probably because people with higher incomes have more money to spend. Hypothesis 3 says that how much people interact with social media ads (by liking, sharing, or commenting) affects how much they buy.
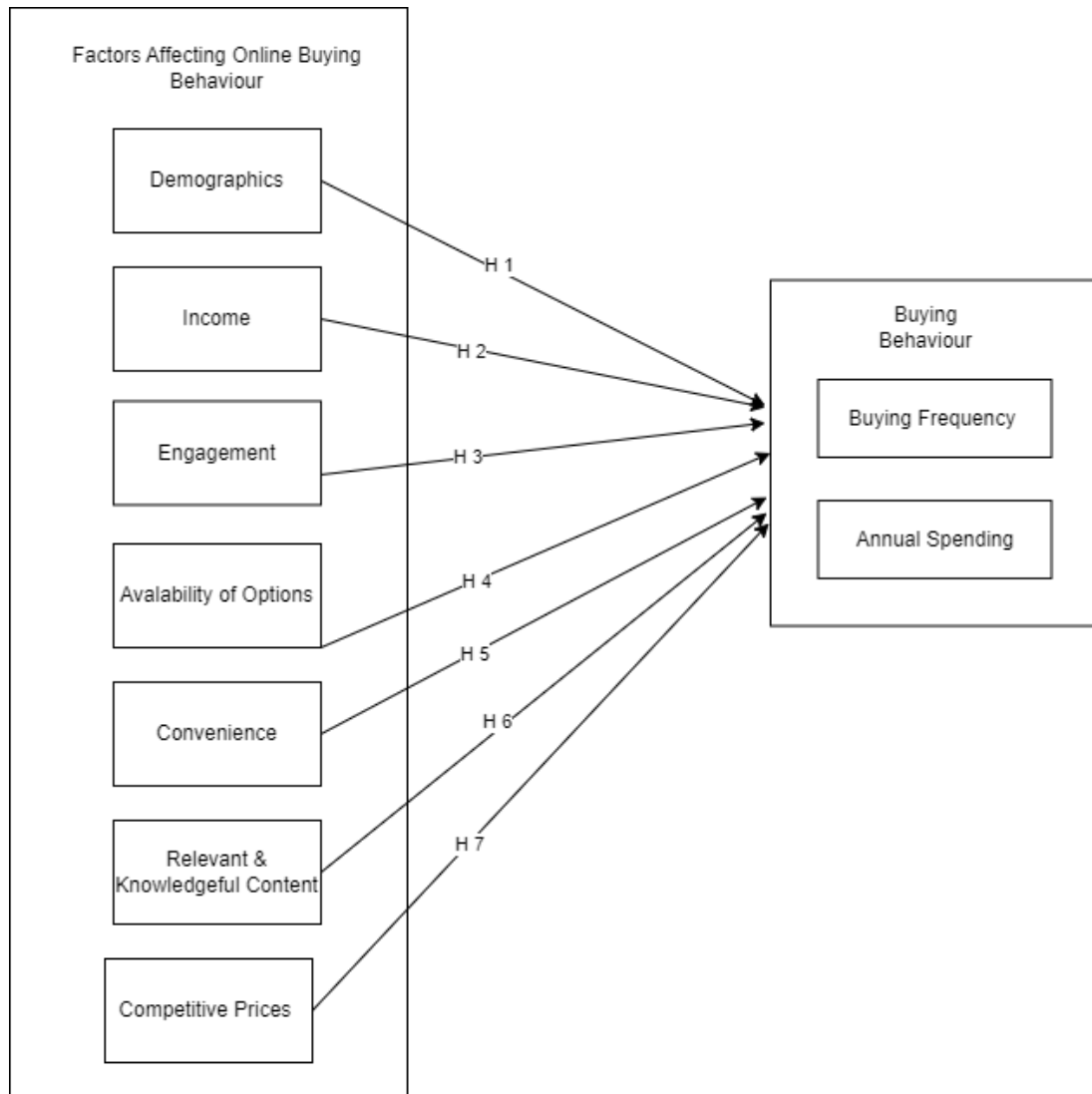
Figure 1: Proposed Hypotheses of the Factors Affecting Online Buying Behaviour

Higher engagement could mean more interest or persuasion, leading to more sales and maybe even more money spent. Hypothesis 4 says that having more product choices through social media promotions makes people buy more often and spend more each year. This may be because they are more appealing, and it is easier for people to find items that are a suitable fit for their tastes. Hypothesis 5 looks at whether the ease of the buying process (e.g., user-friendly interface, quick transactions) affects how people buy things. It assumes that more ease makes people buy more often and spend more overall. Hypothesis 6 looks into how the quality and usefulness of the information in social media ads affects how often people buy things and how much they spend each year. Related, useful ads are more likely to attract and convert users. Lastly, Hypothesis 7 looks at how competitive prices shown in social media ads affect people's decisions to buy. If prices are competitive, people may buy more often and spend more each year because they think they are saving money and getting more for their money.

There was a lot of statistical analysis done to see how strong and important the links were between the different factors (like demographics, earnings, participation, etc.) and the variables that were being tested (like buying regularity and yearly spending). Multiple regression modelling and other methods are used to find out how each factor affects differences in buying habits while taking into account any possible influencing variables.

Results of the Survey

A statistical method called multinomial regression (Das, 2023) is employed to simulate results where there are more than two possible outcomes. In our study about how university employees' use of social media affects their online shopping habits, multinomial regression allows us to look at the connection between a number of different factors, including demographics, perceived convenience, and quantity of options, as well as two main factors, frequency of purchases and money spent on online shopping. For our study, this method works especially well because it helps us figure out how different things affect different amounts of spending and buying. This test employs multinomial regression (El-Habil, 2012), to assess the model's fit to the data. It can also find out which parts of social media marketing and other factors have the biggest effect on university employees' buying decisions. This gives us useful information for making targeted marketing plans that will increase online engagement and sales.

Predictor		N	Marginal Percentage
Buying Frequency	Never	54	8.0%
	Rare	84	12.5%
	Sometimes	219	32.5%
	Often	165	24.5%
	Always	151	22.4%
Income	Below 2.5 Lacs	148	22.0%
	2.5 - 5 Lacs	85	12.6%
	5 - 7.5 Lacs	191	28.4%
	7.5 - 10 Lacs	100	14.9%
	Above 10 Lacs	149	22.1%
Gender	Female	248	36.8%
	Male	425	63.2%
Age	20 - 30	27	4.0%
	30 - 40	239	35.5%
	40- 50	256	38.0%
	above 50	151	22.4%
Relevance	1.00	26	3.9%
	2.00	63	9.4%
	3.00	306	45.5%
	4.00	207	30.8%
	5.00	71	10.5%
Engaging Product Reviews	1.00	48	7.1%
	2.00	73	10.8%
	3.00	329	48.9%
	4.00	186	27.6%
	5.00	37	5.5%
Convenience	1.00	75	11.1%
	2.00	68	10.1%
	3.00	236	35.1%
	4.00	174	25.9%
	5.00	120	17.8%
Options Availability	1.00	46	6.8%
	2.00	37	5.5%
	3.00	281	41.8%
	4.00	214	31.8%
	5.00	95	14.1%
Prices Competitive	1.00	46	6.8%
	2.00	36	5.3%
	3.00	295	43.8%
	4.00	222	33.0%
	5.00	74	11.0%
Valid		673	100.0%
Missing		0	
Total		673	
Subpopulation		552[a]	

Model Fitting Information

         This table shows the model fitting details for the multinomial regression evaluation that was done to find out how university workers' online shopping habits are affected by social media marketing. There are no variables in the "Intercept Only" framework, so its -2 Log Likelihood score is 1848.247. Adding the variables (like demographics, perceived ease of use, number of choices, etc.) makes the "Final" model's -2 Log Likelihood score go down to 1622.118 that means it fits better. The Chi-Square number for the Likelihood Ratio Test is 226.129, there are 112 degrees of independence, and the importance score (Sig.) is.000. This important result ($p < .05$) shows that the predictors added to the final model make it fit better than the intercept-only framework. This proves that such variables are very important in explaining why university employees buy things online at different times and spend different amounts of money on them.

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	**Chi-Square**	**df**	**Sig.**
Intercept Only	1848.247			
Final	1622.118	226.129	112	.000

Goodness-of-Fit

         As part of this research on how social media advertisement affects the online shopping habits of university workers, the Goodness-of-Fit table shows how effectively the multinomial regression framework fits the data we saw. The Pearson Chi-Square figure is 2016.685, it has 2092 degrees of independence, and the significance score (Sig.) is.879; the Deviance Chi-Square figure is 1500.650, it also has 2092 degrees of independence, and the significance score is 1.000.

         These high significance values (greater than .05) indicate that the model fits the data well. Specifically, the Pearson and Deviance tests suggest that there is no significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies, implying that the model adequately captures the relationships between the independent variables (such as demographics, perceived convenience, and availability of options) and the dependent variables (buying frequency and money spent on online shopping). This supports the robustness of our multinomial regression model and validates the influence of social media marketing and other factors on the online buying behaviour of university employees.

	Chi-Square	**df**	**Sig.**
Pearson	2016.685	2092	.879
Deviance	1500.650	2092	1.000

Likelihood Ratio Tests

         This table shows how each predictor variable affects the model when excluded. The "Intercept" row, with a -2 Log Likelihood of 1622.118 and a Chi-Square of .000, serves as a baseline for comparison. Key findings include: Income with a Chi-Square value of 25.922 and a significance level of .055, income is marginally significant, suggesting a borderline effect on buying behaviour. The gender variable is significant (Chi-Square = 17.144, Sig. = .002), indicating that gender differences play a crucial role in buying frequency and spending. Age does not significantly affect buying behaviour (Chi-Square = 11.747, Sig. = .466). Relevance and Engaging Product Reviews these variables show no significant effect, with relevance having a Chi-Square of 17.061 and significance of .382, and product review engagement having a Chi-Square of 19.143 and significance of .261. Convenience is highly significant (Chi-Square = 74.529, Sig. = .000), underscoring its critical impact on buying behaviour. Availability of Options variable is not significant (Chi-Square = 19.018, Sig. = .268). Competitive pricing do have a Chi-Square of 23.008 and a significance level of .114, indicating a non-significant effect. In summary, gender and convenience are significant predictors, highlighting their importance in understanding how social media marketing influences the online buying behaviour of university employees. Income shows a borderline significance, suggesting a potential but not definitive impact. The other variables do not significantly affect buying behaviour in this context.

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	1622.118ª	.000	0	.
income	1648.040	25.922	16	.055
gender	1639.262	17.144	4	.002
Age	1633.865	11.747	12	.466
Relevance	1639.180	17.061	16	.382
Engaging Product Reviews	1641.262	19.143	16	.261
Convenience	1696.647	74.529	16	.000
Availability of Options	1641.136	19.018	16	.268
Competitive Prices	1645.126	23.008	16	.114

Grid Summary for Hypothesis

The table 2 provides the outlines of the results of the hypothesis testing for the study on the influence of social media marketing on the online buying behaviour of university employees in Punjab. Each hypothesis is assessed based on its p-value and beta coefficient, determining whether there is a statistically significant relationship between various factors and the buying frequency of university employees.

Table 1: Grid Summary for Hypothesis There is a significant relationship between university employee's demographics and their online buying behaviour

Hypothesis	Beta	P-Value	Decision	Justification
H1: There is a significant relationship between university employee's age and their online buying behaviour.	0.158	0.631	**Rejected**	The p-value is more than .05 => No Significant impact of age on buying frequency of university employees
H 2: There is a significant relation between gender and buying frequency among university employees.	0.368	0.041	**Accepted**	The p-value is less than .05 and Beta coefficient >0 => Negative impact of gender on buying frequency of university employees
H 3: There is a significant relation between in buying convenience and buying frequency among university employees	1.532	0	**Accepted**	The p-value is less than .05 and Beta coefficient <0 => Positive impact of Convenience on buying frequency of university employees
H 4: There is a significant relation between relevant competitive prices on social media advertisements and buying frequency among university employees.	-0.234	0.615	**Rejected**	The p-value is more than .05 and Beta coefficient >0 => No Significant impact of Competitive Prices on university employees
H 5: There is a significant relation between availability of options posted on social media advertisements and buying frequency among university employees.	0.611	0.163	**Rejected**	The p-value is more than .05 => No significant impact of availability of options on buying frequency of university employees.
H 6: There is a significant relation between Engage with product review posted on social media advertisements and buying frequency among university employees.	0.996	0.119	**Rejected**	The p-value is more than .05 => No significant impact of Engagement on buying frequency of university employees.
H 7: There is a significant relation between annual income and buying frequency among university employees.	0.752	0.05	**Accepted**	The p-value is less than .05 and Beta coefficient >0 => Positive impact of Income on Buying Frequency of university employee
H 8: There is a significant relation between relevant Content posted on social media advertisements and buying frequency among university employees.	-0.423	0.358	**Rejected**	The p-value is less than .05 => No significant impact of advertisement Content on university employees.

The results revealed that gender and buying convenience significantly influence buying frequency, indicating that these factors are crucial in shaping online purchasing habits among university employees. In particular, differences between men and women and how easy it is to buy things were found to have a big effect on how often people buy items, with speed having the most positive effect. Also, there was a strong positive link between annual income and buying frequency. This means that people with higher incomes tend to buy things online more often.

Alternatively, the study discovered that age, cost-effectiveness, the number of choices, how engaged people were with feedback on products, and the usefulness of advertising material did not have a big effect on how often people bought something. This means that these factors may not play as big of a role in this group's decision-making process when they buy something online. The results show that marketers who are trying to reach this group might be more successful if they focus on making things easier for them and making sure that their messages are appropriate for people of different genders and financial backgrounds, rather than changing prices or adding more choices.

Conclusion and Future Scope

This study looked at how social media advertising affects the online shopping habits of university workers in Punjab. Several theories were tried to see and understand how different factors affected the number of times people bought a particular item. Findings show that some things, like gender, income, and how convenient something is, have big impacts on purchasing behaviour. Other things, like competitive prices, the number of options, reading reviews, and how relevant the material is, do not seem to have a big impact on how often university employees' purchase. The study of university employees' purchasing frequency and expenditures on internet-based shopping reveals complex correlations with eight critical variables: gender, age, earnings, simplicity, affordable prices, availability of options, participation in product reviews, and significance. There are three factors that have significant effect on buying behaviour i.e. Income, gender and convenience. Gender analysis indicates that males have a higher buying frequency and spending compared to females.

Income positively correlates with both buying frequency and spending, with higher-income groups (above 10 lacs) shows more frequent purchases and higher spending. Convenience is a crucial factor, with those finding online shopping convenient shows higher buying frequency and spending. Others factors have slight and selective impact on employee buying behaviour like age, competitive prices, options available, engage in writing reviews and relevant advertisement content. Factor Age shows that the 40-50 age group spends the most and buys most frequently. Competitive prices also influence behaviour; individuals who perceive online prices as competitive tend to spend more and buy more frequently. Options availability impacts online shopping, with higher buying frequency and spending observed among those who agree or strongly agree that there are ample options available.

Engagement in product reviews similarly affects behaviour, with those who frequently engage in reviews showing higher spending and buying frequency. Lastly, the viewing relevant advertisement of online shopping slightly buying impacts behaviour; individuals advertisement relevant tend to spend more and buy more frequently. This comprehensive analysis highlights that a combination of demographic factors (age, gender, income) and perceptual factors (convenience, competitive prices, options availability, engagement in product reviews, and relevance) collectively shape the online buying behaviour of university employees. Future research could expand the demographic scope to include other regions or compare urban versus rural buying behaviours to understand geographical differences. Also, analysing different sectors, such as private versus public university employees, could provide insights into how employment context influences buying behaviour. Investigating why certain factors such as competitive prices and availability of options did not significantly impact buying behaviour could be insightful. It might involve exploring deeper psychological or cultural factors that influence perception and decision-making.

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