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Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior:
A Case in Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of social media on consumer behavior in Kathmandu Valley. The dependent variable is consumer behavior. The selected independent variables are price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement and technology. The primary sources of data is used to assess the opinions of respondents regarding price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement and technology. The study is based on primary data of 126 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of impact of social media on consumer behavior: A case in Kathmandu Valley.

The study showed that price is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It indicates that increasing in price leads to change in consumer behavior. Similarly, accuracy is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It indicates that better accuracy stimulates the consumer behavior. Likewise, time is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It indicates that better time can stimulates the consumer behavior. Further, income is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It indicates that higher level of income leads to change in consumer behavior. Likewise, advertisement is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It implies that increase in advertisement leads to change in consumer behavior. In addition, technology is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It means that use of advanced and modern technology leads to change in consumer behavior.

Keywords: price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement, technology, consumer behavior

1. Introduction

Social media refers to channel characteristics using specific tools like Facebook or twitter to exemplify modes of interaction (Howard and Parks, 2012). Russo *et al.* (2008) defined social media as those that facilities online communications, networking and collaboration. Similarly, Kaplan and Heinlein (2010) stated that social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.

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Likewise, Howard and Parks (2012) concluded that a social media consists, the content that takes the digital form of personal messages, news, ideas, and cultural products and the people, organizations, and industries that produce and consume digital content. In addition, Kent (2010) defined social media as any interactive communication channel that allows for two-way interaction and feedback, further specifying modern social media are characterized by their, potential for real-time interaction, reduced anonymity, a sense of propinquity, short response times, and the ability to time shift or engage the social network whenever suits each particular member.

Mathras *et al.* (2016) examined the effect of religion on consumer behavior. The study showed that a framework to study the effects of religion on consumer behavior and also showed that the framework defines religion as a multidimensional construct that affects consumer psychology and behavior through four dimensions: beliefs, rituals, values, and community. Similarly, Sheth (2020) examined the impact of Covid-19 on consumer behavior. The study found that the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions have significantly impacted consumer behavior, forcing consumers to adapt and change in the habits. In addition, Ali and Anwar (2021) found that penetration pricing, price skimming, marketing sharing sites, blog, and competitive pricing all have significant positive influence on consumer behavior. Further, Donnellan *et al*. (2020) analyzed the impact of social media on consumer buying patterns. The study found that ad repetition has a positive effect on consumer buying patterns. Similarly, Devine and Marion (1979) examined the influence of consumer price information on retail pricing and consumer behavior. The study found that consumers transferred patronage to the lower-priced stores, and are willing to pay an average of 34¢ per week for the price comparison information. Likewise, Victor *et al.* (2018) examined the factors influencing consumer behavior and prospective purchase decisions in a dynamic pricing environment. The study identified the seven factors, namely shopping experience, privacy concerns, awareness about dynamic pricing, buying strategy, fair price perceptions, reprisal intentions, and intentions for self-protection, can influence consumer behavior and prospective of consumers towards online purchase decisions in a dynamic pricing context.

Jibril *et al.* (2019) examined the impact of social media on consumer-brand loyalty. The study stated that online survey is used to gauge the views of online consumers so as to establish the relationship between social media usage and consumer-brand loyalty (CBL) via the online based-brand community. Similarly, Xiang *et al*. (2015) analyzed the information technology

and consumer behavior in travel and tourism. The study found that the adoption of the internet has reached a level of saturation and some traditional channels such as online travel agencies (OTAs) continue to dominate travel planning. Similarly, Wang *et al.* (2012) showed that brands can utilize social media platforms to engage with their target audience, build brand loyalty, and create a sense of community. By actively participating in social media conversations, brands can strengthen relationships with consumers, leading to positive consumer behavior. Likewise, Ertemel and Ammoura (2016) assessed the role of social media advertising in consumer buying behavior and found that there is no changes in the relationship between social media advertising and consumer behavior regarding age and education level. Further, Chow and Chen (2012) showed that consumer behavior is influenced by individual values, attitudes, and beliefs and also consumers are becoming more conscious of the social and environmental impacts of their purchasing decisions. Further, Raacke and Raacke (2008) stated that students use social networking sites for a variety of gratifications, including social connection, entertainment, and information-seeking.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) argued that social media has a potential to influence consumer behavior in a variety of ways, including increasing brand awareness, improving customer engagement and loyalty. Likewise, Muntinga *et al.* (2011) showed that consumers use social media for variety of brand-related activities including seeking information, building relationship, expressing identity and entertainment. In addition, Kim and Ko (2012) found that social media marketing activities have positive impact on customer equity in the luxury fashion industry. Further, Voramontri and Klieb (2019) stated that the social media usage influences consumer satisfaction, the stages of information search and alternative evaluation, with satisfaction getting amplified as the consumer moves along the process towards the final purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation. Similarly, Ziyadin *et al*. (2019) showed that social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer behavior, with social media advertising. Likewise, Varghese and Agrawal (2021) concluded that social media influencers make a positive impact on the buying decision process of the customers. Social media can make a direct interaction with customers and has an effective way to generate more leads and sales. In addition, Joshi *et al.* (2021) found that there is a significant association between mobile, computer, and TV duration with the quantity of food consumed. Moreover, Budhathoki and Pandey (2021) stated that consumers who consume more animal-based foods are less likely to be aware

of and knowledgeable about organic food, and are less likely to consume organic food products. Similarly, Rai and Campus (2020) examined the impact of social factors, product quality and perceived price on consumer's buying behavior. The study showed that social factors, product quality and perceived price are positively correlated to consumer buying behavior.

In the context of Nepal, Niroula and Upadhaya (2023) examined the impact of social media on the lifestyle of youths of Nepal. The study showed that worldwide networking platform that enables people to join and connect with each other. Similarly, Thakur (2017) found that social media is a valuable tool for sharing health information and is used for educational, promotional, and communication purposes in the health field. However, social media have both direct and indirect negative impacts on health, such as cyberbullying, depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, physical inactivity, and internet addiction. Likewise, Rawat (2015) examined the impact of age and income over green consumer behavior. The study found that people are not very optimistic about the impact of socio-demographic variables over the green buying behavior. Further, Baniya (2017) analyzed the components of celebrity endorsement affecting brand loyalty of Nepali customers. The study showed that physical attractiveness, source credibility, expertise and celebrity brand match up have positive impact on developing attitude towards the brand. However, only physical attractiveness and celebrity brand matchup are associated with purchase intention.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies on the impact of social media on consumer behavior. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the impact of social media on consumer behavior: A case in Kathmandu Valley. Specifically, it examines the relationship of price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement and technology with consumer behavior in Kathmandu Valley.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data which were collected from

126 respondents through questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement and technology within Kathmandu Valley. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model used in this study assumes that consumer behavior depends upon impact of social media. The dependent variable selected for the study is consumer behavior. Similarly, the selected independent variables are price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement, and technology. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

$$CB = \text{\ss}_0 + \text{\ss}_1 P + \text{\ss}_2 A + \text{\ss}_3 T + \text{\ss}_4 I + \text{\ss}_5 A + \text{\ss}_6 TC + e$$

Where,

CB = Consumer behavior

P = Price

A = Accuracy

T = Time

I = Income

A = Advertisement

T = Technology

Price was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "consumers buy more product when the price of the product is low", "price can also motivate consumers to make a purchase" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.712$).

Accuracy was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Consumers generally seek accurate information when making purchasing decisions", "Accurate information can lead to higher levels of consumer satisfaction" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.751$).

Time was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for

strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Consumers may be more likely to choose convenient or fast options, such as online shopping or fast food", "Limited time can also motivate consumers to make a purchase quickly before time runs out" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.792).

Income was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Income is a key factor while choosing an expensive product", "Income is responsible for me while making a purchasing decision" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.733).

Advertisement was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Advertisement influence me to buy a product", "I avoid advertisement because advertisement are just annoying and misleading" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.772).

Technology was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Technology is a new communication channel with customers, web, portal, or e-business model", "Customer behavior is changing under the impact of new technology (especially internet and e-commerce)" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.791).

Consumer behavior was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "While purchasing a product the behavior of seller is conducted", "I prefer products having low price with high quality" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.723).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Price

Price is a crucial factor influencing whether consumers decide to purchase a product or service. Devine and Marion (1979) assessed that price

is one of the most important factors that consumers consider when making purchasing decisions and also there is a significant relationship between price information and consumer behavior. Similarly, Nelson (1970) found that there is a positive relationship between price and consumer behavior. Further, Sigurdsson *et al.* (2010) stated that perceived quality of the product played a significant role to determine the price of the products. Likewise, Al-Salamin and Al-Hassan (2016) indicated that there is a direct relationship between price and consumer behavior. Similarly, Ali and Anwar (2021) showed that there is a positive relationship between price and consumer behavior. Based on it, this study develops this following hypothesis:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between price and consumer behavior.

Accuracy

Accurate information empowers consumers to make informed decisions and advocate for their rights. According to Woodside (2012), the importance of accurate data analysis in understanding consumer behavior, particularly for high-use consumers, and proposes a new approach to data analysis that can improve the accuracy of consumer profiling. Similarly, Nenycz-Thiel *et al.* (2013) showed that accurate data have positive impact on consumer behavior. Inaccurate perceptions of tax liability may have implications for consumer behavior, such as influencing spending and saving decisions (Fujii and Hawley, 1988). Further, Park and Han (2013) stated that recommendation diversity positively affects customer retention, but only when the accuracy of recommendations is also high. Similarly, Cronley *et al.* (2010) showed that there is a positive relationship between accuracy and consumer behavior. Based on it, this study develops this following hypothesis:

H_2: There is a positive relationship between accuracy and consumer behavior.

Time

The amount of time spent making decisions can impact consumer behavior. According to Hu *et al.* (2000), high-usage consumers tend to have more accurate and reliable recall of their product or service usage, compared to low-usage consumers and this study showed that indirect relationship between time and consumer behavior. Similarly, Wang and Kim (2017) showed that the consumers' perception of time plays a crucial role in shaping their behavior and the study showed a positive relationship between time perception and consumer behavior. Further, Gaur and Lu (2007) showed that time pressure has a significant impact on the consumer's decision-making process, leading to an increase in impulsive buying behavior. Similarly, Jacoby *et al.* (1976)

indicated that time plays a critical role in shaping consumer behavior, as it affects consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in a variety of ways and also showed that there is a significant relationship between time and consumer behavior. Based on it, this study develops this following hypothesis:

H_3: There is a positive relationship between time and consumer behavior.

Income

The sum of money which a business or an individual receives in exchange of sale of goods or services, or through capital investment is known as income. Khan (2016) examined the income, social class and consumer behavior. The study showed that income and social class have significant impact on consumer behavior Similarly, Khan and Chawla (2014) found that there is a positive relationship between income and frequency of visit. The study also showed that fall in income caused by retrenchment, loss of job, imposition of new taxes, financial loss etc. have positive impact on consumer's consumption decisions. Moreover, De Mooij (2000) stated that income has a positive impact on consumer behavior. Likewise, Rao *et al.* (2015) showed that income has a significant positive effect on consumption behavior. Similarly, Rehman and Jamil (2016) assessed the influence of income and occupation on consumers' susceptibility to reference group demands on brand choice decisions. The study revealed that income and occupation affect consumer behavior. Moreover, Saleh *et al.* (2013) indicated that the behavior of the consumer can be changed by the advertisement but expensive products and repetition of advertisement can't change the purchase decision. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_4: There is a positive relationship between income and consumer behavior.

Advertisement

Advertisement creates special affects in consumer's mind and generates long lasting brand impressions which keep brands to remain in customer's instant memory (Asghar *et al.,* 2015). Advertisement can affect any income group, but expensive product and repetition of advertisement did not affect the purchasing attitude (Bashir and Malik, 2010). Similarly, Stout and Burda (1989) showed that replication of verbal and visual cues in advertisement can increase likelihood of being boredom and hence reduced advertisement effectiveness. Further, Malik and Guptha (2014) found that there is a positive relationship between consumer behavior and advertisement. In addition, Haider and Shakib (2018) revealed that advertisement has a significant influence on consumer buying behavior. Further, Neupane (2019) indicated

that advertisement has a positive effect on consumer behavior. Similarly, Madni *et al.* (2016) analyzed the influence of controversial advertisement on consumer behavior. The study found that controversial advertisements can grab the attention of consumers and create more engagement with the brand. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_5: There is a positive relationship between advertisement and consumer behavior.

Technology

The advancement of technology make decision making more effective and informed, that greatly enhance customer confidence and encouraging customer to acquire new products via online mode (Narwal and Sachdeva, 2013). Bhatnagar and Ghose (2004) found that consumer that frequently perform searching online is more possible to be influenced by online information. In addition, Ahmad *et al.* (2020) examined the evolution of technology and consumer behavior. The study found that technology has a significant positive impact on consumer behavior. Similarly, Andersone and Gaile-Sarkane (2009) investigated the behavioral differences in consumer purchasing behavior between online and traditional shopping. The study found a significant relationship between consumer behavior and technology. Likewise, Jose and Jose (2017) examined the impact of technology on consumer behavior. The study indicated that technology has a significant impact on consumer behavior. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_6: There is a positive relation between technology and consumer behavior.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients between dependent and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 126 observations. The dependent variable is CB (Consumer behavior) and independent variables are P (Price), ACC (Accuracy), T (Time), I (Income), ADV (Advertisement) and TECH (Technology).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	CB	P	ACC	T	I	ADV	TECH
CB	3.80	0.592	1						
P	3.94	0.547	0.267*	1					
ACC	3.91	0.579	0.231*	0.469**	1				
T	3.80	0.517	0.408**	0.228*	0.278*	1			
I	3.88	0.597	0.316**	0.503**	0.402**	0.379**	1		
ADV	3.72	0.586	0.445**	0.307**	0.228*	0.463**	0.353**	1	
TECH	3.82	0.561	0.444**	0.378**	0.319**	0.291*	0.390**	0.416**	1

Note: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients of dependent and independent variables of consumer behavior. The study shows that price is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It indicates that increasing in price leads to change in consumer behavior. Similarly, accuracy is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It indicates that better accuracy stimulates the consumer behavior. Likewise, time is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It indicates that better time can stimulates the consumer behavior. Further, income is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It indicates that higher level of income leads to change in consumer behavior. Likewise, advertisement is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It implies that increase in advertisement leads to change in consumer behavior. In addition, technology is positively correlated to the consumer behavior. It means that use of advanced and modern technology leads to change in consumer behavior.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it shows the regression results of price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement and technology on consumer behavior in Kathmandu valley.

Table 2

Estimated regression result of price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement, and technology on consumer behavior

The results are based on 126 observations using linear regression model. The model is $CB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P + \beta_2 ACC + \beta_3 T + \beta_4 I + \beta_5 ADV + \beta_6 TECH + e$ where the dependent variable is CB (Consumer behavior). The independent variables are P (Price), ACC (Accuracy), T (Time), I (Income), ADV (Advertisement) and TECH (Technology).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of						Adj. R_bar²	SEE	F-value
		P	ACC	T	I	ADV	TECH			
1	2.112 (5.938)**	0.427 (4.781)**						0.149	0.546	22.860
2	2.461 (7.182)**		0.341 (3.938)**					0.104	0.561	15.510
3	1.512 (4.493)**			0.601 (6.852)**				0.269	0.506	46.952
4	2.081 (6.651)**				0.442 (5.548)**			0.192	0.532	30.783
5	1.615 (5.802)**					0.587 (7.936)**		0.331	0.484	62.984
6	1.453 (4.893)**						0.614 (7.978)**	0.334	0.483	63.642
7	1.906 (4.979)**	0.330 (2.934)**	0.151 (1.423)					0.156	0.544	12.536
8	0.949 (2.401)**	0.244 (2.354)**	0.006 (0.062)	0.502 (5.123)**				0.300	0.496	18.823
9	0.926 (2.348)**	0.181 (1.598)	0.029 (0.279)	0.450 (4.294)**	0.144 (1.378)			0.305	0.494	14.696
10	0.701 (1.888)	0.072 (0.650)	0.020 (0.204)	0.252 (2.276)*	0.100 (1.006)	0.372 (3.994)**		0.381	0.466	16.399
11	0.269 (0.731)	0.072 (0.696)	0.037 (0.402)	0.286 (2.752)**	0.030 (0.318)	0.209 (2.188)*	0.369 (4.182)**	0.456	0.437	18.460

Notes:
i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
iii. Dependent variable is consumer behavior.

Table 2 shows that the beta coefficients for price are positive with consumer behavior. It indicates that price has a positive impact on consumer behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Devine and Marion (1979). Likewise, the beta coefficients for accuracy are positive with consumer behavior. It indicates that accuracy has a positive impact on consumer behavior. This finding is similar to the findings of Woodside (2012). Similarly, the beta coefficients for time are positive with consumer behavior. It indicates that time has a positive impact on consumer behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Jacoby *et al.* (1976). Further, the beta coefficients for income are positive with consumer behavior. It indicates that income has a positive impact on consumer behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Khan (2016). In addition, the beta coefficients for advertisement are positive with consumer behavior. It indicates that advertisement has a positive impact on consumer behavior. This finding is similar to the findings of Neupane (2019). Further, the beta coefficients for technology are positive with consumer behavior. It indicates that technology has a positive impact on consumer behavior. This finding is similar to findings of Jose and Jose (2017).

4. Summary and conclusion

Social media platforms have on individuals' purchasing decisions, preferences, and attitudes towards brands and products. Social media has significantly influenced consumer behavior, revolutionizing the way people interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. With the widespread adoption of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, consumers now have easy access to product information, user reviews, and personalized recommendations. Social media provides a platform for users to share their opinions and experiences with products and services. Consumers rely on these reviews to inform their purchasing decisions, emphasizing the significance of online reputation management for businesses. Social media encourages users to create and share content related to their experiences with products, amplifying brand visibility and facilitating user engagement. This user-generated content acts as authentic and relatable advertising.

This study attempts to examine factors like price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement, and technology that affects the consumer behavior within Kathmandu Valley. The study is based on primary data of 126 respondents.

The study showed that price, accuracy, time, income, advertisement and technology have positive impact the consumer behavior within the Kathmandu Valley. The study also concluded that technology followed by time are the most influencing factors that affects the consumer behavior in Kathmandu Valley.

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