

**“A CRITICAL EVALUATION EXAMINES THE IMPACT  
OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER PURCHASING  
BEHAVIOR WITH REFERENCE TO SAMSUNG  
SMARTPHONE”**

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**Abstract**

Social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram becomes an important part of our life. The number of users at social media is increasing day by day. With the help of social media, it is possible to communicate with the customers in an effective manner. It provides a platform to interact with consumers. With the help of such interaction, it is possible to identify the needs and wants of consumers. By various studies, it is found that by interacting through social media, it is possible for consumers to take decision related to purchase and also helpful in formulating marketing strategies. Due to importance of social media, no of marketers advertise their products through social networking sites. Social media is also having positive impact on the buying behavior of consumer. Due to its importance in present scenario, it is important to study its effects on buying behavior of consumers with reference to Samsung Smartphone's.

**Keywords**

Social Networking Sites, Trustworthiness, Blog posts

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## 1.0 Introduction

Samsung is a leading name in the electronics durable across the world. Discussing specifically about the Smartphones marketed by Samsung, the Company's handsets were ranked as no 1 in the year 2013 in terms of revenue and market share by achieving a milestone of 100million units of Galaxy series by notching a market share of 32.3% share of the global smartphones market (Samsung Annual report, 2013). The majority of the customers of Samsung are the youth across the world. It is increasingly being observed that the youngsters spend a lot of time on the Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Orkut etc. The sharing of comments, liking of pages, posts etc. on the open walls many a times influence the potential consumers of any given product or Brand. As per the recent study of Hubspot (2013), potential consumers are 71% more likely to make a purchase which is based on the referrals from the social media. As far as the electronics purchasing decision is concerned, the Twitter is the most influential in the preference of the Brand name. As per the study, 74% consumers rely on the referrals provided on the social networking sites for various purchase decisions. Based on such studies, Samsung, too, is no exception, to use social media sites and various other Micro blogging sites for the promotion of its product portfolio to reach to the desired set of consumers. Taking these things into consideration, the study is carried out in order to evaluate the impact of social networking sites on purchasing behavior of youngsters in context of Samsung Smartphone's.

### 1.1 Rationale

If the examples of social media or social networking sites are considered, then they are the most effective means in order to advertise your brand and also to influence the behavior of consumers while taking purchase decision. In this context, the present study is conducted in order to check whether social media affect purchase decision of your consumers in context of Samsung Smartphone's.

### 1.2 Research Questions

Various research questions related to study are-

- A. Explain the factors that affect young customers to get information related to purchase from Social Media?
- B. How social media affect the buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

### 1.3 Research Objectives

After knowing about the research questions that are asked from young customers, next thing is to discuss about research objectives. Research objectives of the present study are-

- a. To examine the factors that affect the buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's
- b. To examine whether Consumer trust on social media s affect buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's
- c. To examine whether Blog posts and user review on Social Medias influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's
- d. To examine whether Information provided on social media influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's
- e. To analyze the opportunities that an organization can get through social media

### 1.4 Research Hypothesis

The present study is carried out in order to study about the behavior of consumers which itself is a very difficult thing to study. After formulation of research objectives, next thing is to set hypothesis for the study. Hypothesis for the present study is-

H<sub>01</sub>- There is no effect of social media on buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

H<sub>02</sub>-Consumer trust on social media does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

H<sub>03</sub>- Blog posts and user review on Social Medias does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

H<sub>04</sub>-Information provided on social media does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

H<sub>05</sub>-Attractiveness of advertisements on social media does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

## 2.0 Review of existing literature

There are no of studies which are conducted in context of social networking sites and its effects on youngsters. By the study of Baird & Parasnis, (2011), it is analyzed that usage of social networking sites among people across the world have increased with a higher speed. Due to its popularity, marketers also prefer social media for the purpose of promoting their products as compare to mass media.

According to the study by Heinonen, (2011), through these social networking sites, it is possible to develop strong relationship or bond with your existing and potential clients. If the example of banner advertisement is considered, it is not as popular but still the material used by Facebook at the time of banner advertisement is so effective that it captures the attention of no of customers and also no of customers who are accessing these sites also increased with a great speed.

Social Networking sites provide customers an effective means to organizations or marketers to design such strategy where customer is the central point. It is also helpful in interacting with customers and to create better understanding among customers and organization (Khemakhem, 2012). By creating better understanding, it is possible to make your customers happy and satisfied. In addition to this, through this it is also possible to create strong long lasting bond between customers and organization. So in this way, Social media helps organizations to build and retain strong bond with their existing customers. But there are various positive and negative impacts of using social media for promotion purpose.

With the help of social media, it is possible to advertise your products at least cost and in attractive way also. But if any existing customers shared their negative opinion about your brand in social networking sites, then it affects behavior of customers in negative way. But in addition to this, it is very helpful for internal customers i.e. for employees of the organization to stay connected with each other. For this purpose, LinkedIn can be used as an important social networking site used by professionals. It is used to connect almost around 100 million professionals across the world (Taining, 2012). So organization can use LinkedIn as an effective medium for promoting their brands among professionals and to influence their behavior as well. These social networking sites provide the organization an opportunity to design such marketer

strategies which is helpful in satisfying their needs and wants in the best possible manner. With the help of this, it is possible to increase the sales of the company.

Another study of Erik, (2012) explained relationship between social networking sites and consumer behavior while purchasing products. Results of study concluded that social media is very helpful in affecting the purchasing intentions of consumers. With the help of social media, it is possible to build brand attitude that in turn affect the behavior of consumers. If the product or brand is having good image in the market, then it positively affects consumer decision making process. If the friend of consumers recommends any product or service through social media, it affects brand attitude and also influence consumer decision making process. With the help of social media, it is possible to aware consumers about your product or service by providing them necessary information required by them

Social media is used by marketers for the purpose of their marketing campaigns. It is considered to be the most effective and easy way for communicating important information to customers. To say this, it is used only for advertising purpose is wrong (Taining, 2012). It is also very helpful in connecting with customers for longer period in order to make cordial relationship with customers. From all social networking sites, Twitter is considered to be the good way of sharing news, information and other important things. It is found that information given through social media is more effective as compare to mass media (Erik, 2012). Chances of influencing customer's behavior through social media are more effective than mass media.

In case, if there is any problem with the product or service then they communicate with marketers through social media as it provides an easy way to connect and contact with marketers. If consumer wants to purchase any product, then small information about the product is considered to be useful in influencing their decision. But here it is important to study about consumer motives (Akrimi & Khemakhem, 2012). There are three motives due to which customers used social media are- for entertainment motive, for social & information motive, first motive due to which social media used by customers is to search necessary information required for taking purchase decision. Another motive is for entertaining yourself by playing games. Third motive is social in nature (Erik, 2012). It means that social networking sites provide a platform to stay connected with your friends/peers. So in this way, social media is very helpful



for customers and for marketers as well. As by analyzing all things discussed above, it is found that social media affects consumer decision making process. But there are various other fields like education, entertainment, information. Social media is helpful in all these fields (Chua & Banerjee, 2013).

Research by Chua & Banerjee, (2013) concluded that it should be essential for parents to check which type of social networking sites are used by their children's, also look which type of content and videos they have seen on these sites. Sometimes, it may possible that they are not seen videos and read contents according to their age which in turn affects their behavior. It should be suggested to parents that they should look at the activities of their children's.

Social media affects the buying behavior of customers in context of products and services as well. There are no of things that affect the consumer decision related to purchase are- quality provided, medium used for promoting products, price etc. Through Forbes & Vespoli (2013), it is concluded that there is positive impact of social media on consumer buying behavior. The results of study found that Facebook is considered to be an effective way used by marketers to promote their products and services. In this study, it is also found that recommendations of friends on social networking sites are helpful in influencing your buying behavior

By analyzing the study of Vinerean & Cetina, (2013), it is concluded that with the help of social media it is possible for consumers to communicate directly with representative or marketer. As most of the consumers are using social networking sites for the purpose of searching necessary information related to products and also helpful in purchasing products or services of your choice. Social Media is very helpful in creating strong relationship with customers and company

Social media is used by professionals related to every field. Let us consider an example, it is used by traveling companies in order to share important information related to their offers, services to their customers (Forbes & Vespoli, 2013).

Consumers preferred to discuss about those brands which they like or they also interested in knowing about those brands which are recommended by their friends. But the most important

issue related with social networking site is issue of privacy and security. But to deal with such issues, effective privacy policies are designed by social networking sites to provide safety to their users (Williams, 2013)

From all social networking sites, Facebook is ranked number 1 and Twitter is the second most popular social networking site used by more than 250 million users across the world. It is used by various political parties for the purpose of promoting their campaigns at the time of elections. Social Media is considered to be an important medium used for private communication. It becomes an important part of consumer's day to day life (Vinerean & Cetina, 2013). Due to this reason, it becomes first choice for marketers to advertise their products/services on social media. Using social networking sites for the purpose of collecting information is fundamental to the purchase behavior of consumers. This becomes a common practice in consumer life and before taking any purchase decision, they usually search those products on social media. If they found positive recommendations/reviews about the product, it affects their purchase decision in positive way (Vinerean & Cetina, 2013). If you purchase any product from a retail store then you collect necessary information about that product from retailer. While buying unfamiliar products, then you can take suggestions from your friends and family members.

Study by Chua & Banerjee, (2013) found that Blog posts and user review on Social Medias affects buying behavior of young customers. It means that when some customers shared their positive experience related to products on social media and after reading these posts & reviews, potential customers then motivated to purchase those products. As these are very important for the organization, due to this reason several online communities are created by various companies doing business online. These communities are created in order to encourage customers to write their reviews and communicate with brand loyal customers in order to know about their opinion about product. With the help of this, it becomes possible to create positive image of company's product in customer's mind. In these online communities, customers shared their experiences towards brand. The importance of social media for consumers is noticed by various customers and now they concentrated on social media marketing.

Study by other researchers analyzed that recommendations & Suggestions by your friends/relatives are helpful in influencing the consumer behavior. With the help of these recommendations, it is possible to create positive attitude towards brand, advertising and your

purchasing behavior as well (Vinerean & Cetina, 2013). If the responses of products or services are positive, then it creates positive impact on consumer decision making process.

So in this way, reviews and sharing of positive experiences by existing consumers is itself becomes a promotional source for the product.

### **Trustworthiness**

First important factor that affect consumer decision related to purchase is trustworthiness of information given on social media (Al Kailani & Kumar, 2011). Customers decision of purchase is affected only when the information provided through these social networking sites are true. But here it is very difficult to know about the trustworthiness of the information provided through social networking sites

### **Security/Privacy Issues**

Another factor that affects consumer purchase decision is security and privacy issues. Generally consumers are having fear in mind while sharing their information on social networking sites as it may possible that this information can be misused by others which creates problems for them. To understand this issue in context of social networking sites, let us take an example. There are no of advertisements that you have shown on these sites (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Sometimes when you clicked on these advertisements, then they demand your personal information. But in case if customers shared their personal information, then it may possible that they misuse this information. So if the security and privacy is provided to you, then you can share your information without any kind of fear and it also affects their purchase decision in positive manner (Chua & Banerjee, 2013)

## **3.0 Research Methodology and design**

Research methodology means a systematic process followed in order to find solutions for research problem and in order to take decision related to acceptance and rejection of hypothesis formulated for the study. If the present study is considered, then descriptive design is used as researcher identified the problem by his own and he wants to check whether social media affects consumer buying behavior in actual way or not.

### **3.1 Sampling methods**

For the purpose of carrying out research, it is essential to collect data from the respondents. Sample of 55 respondents is chosen by simple random sampling. But in this study, only those



customers are taken who are having knowledge of social media and they also used it for getting information.

**3.2 Methods used for collecting data**

In present study, Primary data is collected through questionnaire method in order to know about the opinion of consumers towards importance of social media. Secondary data is collected through various journals like Emerald, Journal of marketing, various others national and international journals are studied. After studying this, it is possible to collect relevant data which are according to the purpose of your study.

**3.3 Analysis of data**

In order to analyze data, it is entered in SPSS (Software Package for Social Sciences). Then by using descriptive statistics analysis, it is represented in form of tables and then diagrams. After this independent t test is applied in order to check whether the hypothesis formulated for the present study is accepted or rejected.

**3.4 Limitations of the Study**

Sample size chosen for the study is small in number due to shortage of time – in context of present study, sample of 55 respondents have been taken. To reach to a conclusion after analyzing the data collected by 55 respondents are not considered to be fair and reliable. Here the main issue associated is whether the sample chosen represent the entire population or not. If it is not representing the population, then it may possible that data collected shows biased results.

**4.0 Analysis and Interpretation**

**Independent Samples t-Test**

**Table 4.1**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper

<b>Social Networking sites provides information</b>	Equal variances assumed	.019	.891	.261	53	.795	.091	.349	-.609	.790
	Equal variances not assumed			.261	45.363	.795	.091	.348	-.610	.792
<b>Social media affects your decision related to purchase</b>	Equal variances assumed	2.081	.155	.694	53	.491	.091	.131	-.172	.354
	Equal variances not assumed			.704	47.279	.485	.091	.129	-.169	.351
<b>Advertisement on Social media are attractive</b>	Equal variances assumed	.179	.674	.217	53	.829	.030	.140	-.250	.311
	Equal variances not assumed			.216	45.029	.830	.030	.140	-.252	.312
<b>Searching information on social media is easier</b>	Equal variances assumed	7.100	.010	1.358	53	.180	.182	.134	-.087	.450
	Equal variances not assumed			1.387	48.269	.172	.182	.131	-.082	.445
<b>Blog posts and user review on Social medias influence you to try new brands</b>	Equal variances assumed	3.517	.066	-.694	53	.490	-.197	.284	-.766	.372
	Equal variances not assumed			-.645	34.052	.523	-.197	.305	-.817	.423
<b>Social media provides an effective platform to promote your products</b>	Equal variances assumed	.154	.696	-.400	53	.690	-.136	.341	-.819	.547
	Equal variances not assumed			-.406	47.282	.686	-.136	.336	-.812	.539
<b>Advertisements on Social media have higher</b>	Equal variances assumed	.354	.554	.369	53	.714	.121	.329	-.538	.780

<b>credibility</b>	Equal variances not assumed			.379	48.918	.707	.121	.320	-.522	.765
<b>Trustworthines s on information provided through social media</b>	Equal variances assumed	.595	.444	1.321	53	.192	.273	.206	-.141	.687
	Equal variances not assumed			1.376	50.691	.175	.273	.198	-.125	.671
<b>Which step of consumer decision making affected by Social Media</b>	Equal variances assumed	1.069	.306	-.458	53	.649	-.152	.331	-.814	.511
	Equal variances not assumed			-.441	39.147	.662	-.152	.343	-.846	.543

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>1) - There is no effect of social media on buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's**

In context of first hypothesis, p value is 0.155. Level of significance taken for the study is 5% i.e. 0.05. Here, p value is more than level of significance. It means that null hypothesis formulated in this context is accepted i.e. there is no effect of social media on buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

**(H<sub>0</sub>2).Consumer trust on social media does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's**

In context of second hypothesis formulated for the present study, p value is 0.444. Level of significance taken for the study is 5% i.e. 0.05. Here, p value is more than level of significance. It means that null hypothesis formulated in this context is accepted i.e. consumer trust on social media does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

**(H<sub>0</sub>3) - Blog posts and user review on Social Medias does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's**

In context of third hypothesis formulated for the present study, p value is .066. Level of significance taken for the study is 5% i.e. 0.05. Here, p value is more than level of significance. It means that null hypothesis formulated in this context is accepted i.e. blog posts and user

review on Social Medias does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

**(H<sub>04</sub>) –Information provided on social media does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's**

In context of fourth hypothesis formulated for the present study, p value is .891. Level of significance taken for the study is 5% i.e. 0.05. Here, p value is more than level of significance. It means that null hypothesis formulated in this context is accepted i.e. information provided on social media does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Smartphone's

**(H<sub>05</sub>) –Attractiveness of advertisements on social media does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's**

In context of fourth hypothesis formulated for the present study, p value is 0.674. Level of significance taken for the study is 5% i.e. 0.05. Here, p value is more than level of significance. It means that null hypothesis formulated in this context is accepted i.e. attractiveness of advertisements on social media does not influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's

## 5.0 Conclusion

First objective related to present study is examining the factors that affect the buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's. After taking opinions of customers with regard to factors, it includes factors such as- availability of resources, information and their personal factors. Before taking purchase decision of Smartphone's, first of all information related to features of the phone are collected by customers and also read the review available on social media in this context. By knowing whether posts and reviews by their friends affect their behavior or not, it is found that it affects your behavior and purchase decision also. Second objective is to examine whether Consumer trust on social media affect buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's. By taking the opinion of 55 young customers, it is concluded that consumer

purchase decision to a greater extent depends upon trustworthiness of information given on social media. So it is required by marketer to provide trustworthy and reliable information through social media in order to build confidence among existing and potential customers

Now comes to third important objective of the present study is examined whether information provided on social media influence buying behavior of young customers while taking decision related to purchase of Samsung Smartphone's. It is found by analyzing the opinions of respondents that it is actually through the information provided by marketers on social media, it is possible for them to take purchase decision. Social Media is considered to be the most effective and easy way for communicating important information related to your product to customers.

Another important objective is to find out the opportunities that an organization can get from social media. Through this study, it is found that Social media is used by marketers for the purpose of their marketing campaigns. It is also very helpful in connecting with customers for longer period in order to make cordial relationship with customers. Social networking sites provide the organization an opportunity to design such marketer strategies which is helpful in satisfying their needs and wants in the best possible manner. With the help of this, it is possible to increase the sales of the company. It is also helpful in interacting with customers and to create better understanding among customers and organization. By creating better understanding, it is possible to make your customers happy and satisfied. In addition to this, through this it is also possible to create strong long lasting bond between customers and organization. So in this way, Social media helps organizations to build and retain strong bond with their existing customers. In this way, in the end it can be concluded that social media is having strong influence in the mind of customers in context of brand and also affect their purchase decision to the greater extent.

### 5.1 Future Research

Due to time constraint, it is not possible to take large sample to conduct the study. In future, In-depth survey will be conducted in order to achieve the research objectives. In the present study, social media as whole is taken. In future, study will be carried out between two social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter.

In this study, opinions of customers have taken to know the impact of social media on their purchase decision. Future study will be carried out to know the effectiveness of social media for different organization and what kind of opportunities that social media provided to them.



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