

THE IMPACT OF ONLINE CUSTOMER REVIEW (OCR) AND OFFLINE FACTORS IMPACT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A STUDY OF PREMIUM PRICE MOBILE PHONE PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

The customer experience has become a relevant point for companies, gaining focus. The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of online customer reviews (OCR) when combined with offline factors such as interpersonal and external influences). As a methodological procedure, this is descriptive and quantitative research, with data collected through a questionnaire that assessed the respondents' purchase intention on the factors mentioned. Data were collected from a sample of 405 Karachi-based cell phone users having cell phones costing Rs.25000 and above using structural equation modeling. The result showed that Interpersonal control has a substantial effect. Furthermore, online customer reviews have a significant impact on customer search intent. Another critical factor is the consumer's innovativeness, which positively affects their purchase intention. Besides, the findings also confirm that customer attitude mediates between online consumer reviews and interpersonal and external influence on purchase intention. The paper thus fills the gap by addressing the interconnected factors that marketers must identify when developing marketing communication strategies.

KEYWORDS: Online consumer reviews, premium-priced mobile phone industry, personal innovativeness, interpersonal influences, external influence

INTRODUCTION

As a result of developments in information and communication technology, especially the Internet, new opportunities for service providers and consumers to exchange information have emerged. Online consumer reviews (OCR), which are a form of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), are becoming increasingly popular (Park & Nicolau, 2015; Wang et al., 2018). Online customer reviews (OCRs) are a rising industry trend that immensely influences consumer purchasing decisions (Chen & Xie, 2008). Due to the introduction of OCR in marketing communication, customers are expected to make a more informed purchase decisions. Consumer input provided brand managers with the expertise to incorporate some very creative marketing approaches, and these unique methods could not have been conceived and introduced without these evaluations (Fay & Xie, 2008; Xie & Gestner, 2007).

Customers can leave reviews on websites run by online retail delivery firms like Amazon.com, and these reviews have grown to become one of Amazon's most common and profitable features. Academic and private-sector researchers have been drawn to investigate the various aspects of this new medium, which has been characterized as spontaneous. It can make or destroy a company's reputation; OCR research has focused on how this new development impacts product sales (New York Times, 2004). Reviewers' recognition, experience, product/service ranking, and website credibility directly affect the reliability of online reviews, which positively affects customer buying intentions (Waldrup, 1999). The demographics, personality traits, trustworthiness, popularity, and skill of the review writers were investigated by some researchers (Chan *et al.*, 2017; Hilbrink, 2017; Pelsmacker, Dens, & Kolomiiets, 2018; Suchada, Watanapa et al., 2018). On the other hand, others focused on aspects of the analysis, such as its timeliness, utility, precision, quantity, volume, and valence (Browning & Sparks, 2013; Fong *et al.*, 2018; Somohardjo, 2017).

Some academics have attempted to reconcile these disparities by contrasting elements of reviews and review authors (Hu, Liu, & Zhang, 2008; Ukpabi & Karjaluoto, 2018; Vrânceanu, 2017; Zhao, Wang, Guo, & Law, 2015; Zhong, Yang, & Zhang 2014), but there is controversy about which influence has the most significant effect on consumer behavior. Other consumer information outlets accessible and followed during purchasing decisions are supplemented by online user feedback (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). Given the rapid growth of online customer response, the introduction of computer-generated mediums, and the absence of consideration this receives in developing countries like Pakistan, this empirical research examines the influence of online reviews on consumer search and buying intention by having an impact on customer attitude. The effect of existing variables, such as offline internal and external influences, have also been investigated in this report. Mediating effects of consumer attitude on the OCR to facilitate their search intention have also been looked into (Gunawardena & McIsaac, 2013).

This study aims to determine how online customer feedback impacts consumer perceptions of high-cost cell phone plans. This research will also examine the impact of interpersonal and external factors on attitude, which influences purchase behavior. Finally, it will investigate the role of personal innovativeness as moderating variable.

Literature review & Hypothesis Development

Source Credibility Theory

Public interest in online consumer reviews is growing, becoming a common subject for

academic and practical study. The random nature of review feedback raises many questions for brand owners regarding behavior and reactions. The study uses source credibility theory and social influence theory to look at how online reviews affect brands and, in turn, how consumers' buying intentions are affected. There are many product reviews on social media, but not all of them can be reliable (Shi & Liao, 2017). As a result, the present study employs source reliability theory to describe the variables influencing source credibility. According to source reliability theory, a review's credibility is determined by the review sources' experience and trustworthiness (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Social Influence Theory

The theory of social influence is based on changes in behavior or thought that occur in a subject due to a series of mental processes derived from communication with other beings or media. In addition, it must be considered that regardless of the result, any influence process is bidirectional. That is, one person can change the behavior of another, but whether or not the second changes will also cause influence the first. The same applies at the group level and even at the society level. Some factors that affect the level of influence are group cohesion-which generates pressure for conformity, the type of social norms, the size of the groups or the positions, the expectations about one's behavior, and that of others or the value given to one's own opinion and that of others. The research model in this study depicts the relationship between social influence in terms of attitude and the impact of online customer reviews (OCR) on attitude. Variable of OCR has been adopted from source credibility theory and interpersonal and external influence from social influence theory.

Dimensions of OCR

Consumers now have a new way to share their level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction after making a purchase (Avery et al. 1999). Consumers are encouraged to visit a brand's website, and customers may also share their thoughts on social media. User reviews are available for various goods on the Internet, including hotels, online groceries, books, consumer electronics, video games, music, mobile phones, and other things. O'Neil and Eisenmann (2017) investigated the efficacy of different knowledge sources and how this affects the legitimacy of the information. Consumers also seek out the views and feedback of other consumers when evaluating a brand's results (Jacobsen, 2018).

According to recent studies, online reviews provide insight into the company (Liu et al., 2017b). Some researchers looked into the demographics, personality traits, trustworthiness, credibility, and skills of the review writers themselves (e.g., Chan, Lam, Chow, Fong, & Law, 2017; Hilbrink, 2017; Pelsmacker, Dens, & Kolomiiets, 2018; Suchada, Watanapa, Charoenkitkarn, & Chirapornchai, 2018). Others were more concerned with the analysis timeliness, utility, precision, volume, duration, and valence (e.g., Browning, So, & Sparks, 2013; Fong, Kian, Fern, & Quan, 2018; Somohardjo, 2017), but there is still controversy about which findings have the most effect on consumer behavior (Zhong, Yang, & Zhang 2014).

Several studies look at consumer-generated knowledge on the Internet, and some studies have looked into the veracity of the related data. The amount and content of reviews influence purchase aim. Brand trust mediates the relationship between online reviews and purchase intent (Cantalops & Salvi, 2014). The influence of Online Customer Reviews (OCR) on the buying process (Cantalops, Cardona, and Matarredonda, 2013; Emir et al., 2016), customer behavior (Bashar, 2014; Bhatnagar, 2018; Castro & Ferreira, 2018), market performance (Bashar, 2014;

Bhatnagar, 2018), and business performance (El-Said, 2020; Emir et al., 2016; Floh, Koller, & Zauner, 2013) have been the areas of focus by various researchers. Reviewer awareness and experience, product/service ranking, website credibility, product/service rating, and website reputation all significantly impact the reliability of online reviews, which affects consumer purchasing intentions (Thomas, Wirtz & Weyer, 2017).

According to some findings, OCRs pose new challenges for brand managers. Positive OCRs can help boost a brand's online profile, which brand managers should be worried about. When customers are emotionally attached to a company, they are more likely to ignore negative reviews. (Wollan, R., Smith, N., & Zhou, C, 2011).

Some studies aid practitioners in developing a user-oriented knowledge analysis format for handling customer reviews online efficiently and effectively (Huyen, T. T., & Costello, J. 2017). Information, consumer behavior, and technological factors positively influence consumer buying intentions (Yusuf, A. S., & Busalim, A. H. 2018). According to Wilson and Sherrell (1993), consumer-generated information is more trustworthy than seller-generated information because information's reliability is related to the trustworthiness of the source of information. Previous research looked into how the product type and the buyer's personality influenced impulsive buying in a simulated world (Bellini and Aiolfi, 2019; Davydenko and Peetz, 2020; Martinez-Lopez et al., 2020; Zhao, Chen, and Zhang, 2019; Zheng et al. 2019).

However, few studies have examined how the perceived satisfaction of online reviews influences consumers' impulsive buying intentions. Furthermore, other studies have discovered that a web site's efficiency influences buyers' impulsiveness (Molinillo, Anaya-Sanchez, and Liebana Cabanillas 2020; Suh, Kang, and Kemp 2020; Tang & Zhang 2020). Satisfying content in online reviews is a significant factor in shaping people's attitudes toward online shopping (Alalwan et al., 2018; Molinillo, Anaya-Sanchez, and Liebana-Cabanillas, 2020; Pino et al., 2020). Consumers also want to socialize in a virtual world to meet their emotional needs. Buyers can use sense-making techniques to overcome their fears of online feedback (Pantano & Giglio, 2019). Furthermore, by reading online reviews, consumers can form opinions on an assessor's reliability by evaluating the rank, informativeness (Li et al. 2020), and reviewers' experiences.

CREDIBLE ONLINE REVIEWS AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Researchers have exaggerated the effect of OCR on the rise or decrease in sales and market share of the commodity under consideration (e.g., Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Cui et al., 2012). The critical focus of OCR research studies has been predicting sales, growth, and revenue increase or decrease. Furthermore, most current studies overlook the possibility of interactional effects among the OCR dimensions. Sun (2012), on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of taking interactional effects into account in a recent report. OCRs reduce the impact of brand and price on consumer decisions, according to Kostyra et al. (2016). It seems that OC is becoming more pessimistic as OCRs reveal negative feedback. Low product interaction and online reviews' accuracy, quantity, and credibility are all influenced by customer expertise and the consumer's buying intent. The researchers developed a conceptual model based on the ELM model that considers experience, participation, perceived consistency, quantity, and credibility of online customer reviews and intent to purchase (Matute & Utrillas, 2016).

According to some studies, the influence of review form (quality) on purchase intention was more significant for experts and novices and high-low involvement pieces. The quantity of reviews on purchase intention increases as the level of involvement increases. However, there

was no difference between low involvement and high expertise in the number of reviews on purchase intention. People depend on source reputation when there is a lack of product involvement. However, in a low-involvement, low-expertise case, the review's credibility was unaffected by the intent purchase. Privacy, confidence, protection, and the brand's credibility all influence consumers' online purchasing decisions. It is recommended to consider these aspects to surge sales in the e-commerce industry (Varma et al., 2020). Due to the plenty of review outlets, the number of online product reviews has increased, making it difficult for consumers to select the most reliable reviews (Hlee et al., 2018). People assess the reliability of the information's source, and people can explore further if they ponder the basis of the evidence is trustworthy.

A reliable source is a method of communication that transmits trustworthy information (Visentin et al., 2019). Many online reviews can be found on social media sites, and it's difficult for customers to tell which reviews are genuine. Product reviews on the Internet are a common and reliable source of product knowledge (Shareef et al., 2019). The receiver's source credibility refers to how much the source is used.

Online user feedback based on product experience, according to Chen and Xie (2008), can result in an increase or decrease in company profitability, depending on product/market conditions. Consequently, while it may help, OCR isn't entirely dependent on it. They also agree that when the company believes the reviews are complete and include enough information, consumers should be able to access them on the company's website.

Inadequate and incomplete information coverage in OCR can damage a company's brand. Another finding from their research is that OCR is more beneficial to the seller when the customers are sufficiently inexperienced, which means it is more applicable in the case of technology-intensive goods rather than everyday products. Consumers' confidence in a source of information's ability to provide accurate information is measured by expertise, while trust is defined as the willingness to depend on another person (Ha, 2004). Even if the sources aren't considered convincing, they are regarded as reliable, leading to people believing the truth (Todd & Melancon, 2018). The willingness of a consumer to buy a particular item is referred to as purchase intention (Ariffin et al., 2018). Put another way, a customer's willingness to purchase is determined by their buying intention (Lee et al., 2017). Various types of online reviews can be found on multiple e-commerce websites. For example, several positive reviews promote products through electronic word of mouth, resulting in significant business revenue (Kang et al., 2020; Shahpasandi et al., 2020).

As a result, businesses should pay close attention to impulsive purchases. Consumer buying decisions are becoming increasingly complex. Positive feedback increases prospective consumers' desire to purchase (Changchit & Klaus, 2020; Iyer et al., 2020; Mumuni et al., 2020; Nazlan et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2020), reflecting the fact that review-based shopping sites contain input from a significant number of customers with the buying experience.

According to prior research, the personality characteristics of customers and the sales climate significantly impact impulsive purchasing (Ku and Chen 2020; Nagar 2016; Nikolinakou & Phua 2020). The mindset generated by the online shopping world and website design characteristics influences impulsive online shopping in the e-commerce age (Chen et al., 2019; Ku & Chen, 2020; Wright, 2019). The worth and presentation of online reviews, which include price, information, and credibility, influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Mumuni et al., 2020; Nazlan et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2020). Online reviewers with a good reputation encourage buyers

to suggest a particular online store to other buyers (Zhong et al., 2019), encouraging prospective buyers to visit and revisit online stores. Consumer-generated reviews are commonplace in all product categories; however, research indicates that restaurants and hotels are more likely than other sectors to have online reviews (Murphy, 2018). Restaurant and hotel positive online reviews appear 2.4 times more often than financial institution positive online reviews (Review Trackers, 2018b). According to a preceding study into the association between online reviews and decision-making, online reviews influence buying intent (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Luo & Ye, 2019). Previous research on online review trust, perceived risk, and perceived usefulness (Wang, He, & Barnes 2017) was primarily conducted in developed countries and may not be relevant to emerging markets. There are few reports on online purchasing intentions in emerging markets, most of which come from Asia-Pacific countries (Gibreelet al., 2018; Singh & Srivastava, 2018).

In Latin America, online buying intent research primarily focuses on Brazil, a BRIC nation (Diallo & Siqueira, 2017; Malaquias & Hwang, 2016; Wagner et al., 2019). There is a need to learn more about the core drivers of online buying intent in Latin American markets like Mexico, where there are few studies (Graca et al., 2016; Wagner et al., 2019). As a result of their findings, researchers discovered those certain variables (Positive and negative online reviews are affected by factors such as the power of sentiments expressed in reviews), the quality of objections, and the kind of product (Filiari et al., 2021).

The reasons for publishing highly negative and constructive reviews are separate, as is their use in the purchaser decision-making process (Yan & Wang, 2018). OCRs and scores have been discovered to significantly impact the success of travel and tourism businesses (Mariani et al., 2019; Phillips et al., 2017; Raguseo & Vitari, 2017; Tan et al., 2018; Viglia, Minazzi, & Buhalis, 2016). On the other hand, readers do not consider all OCRs equally useful, although some are thought to be more beneficial than others. Furthermore, the debate about which variables impact the usefulness of OCRs is heating (Filiari, 2015; Kwok & Xie, 2016; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Pan & Zhang, 2011; Park & Nicolau, 2015; Shin et al., 2019). Hasan, Subhani, and Osman (2012) discovered that OCR is a more reliable and accurate source of word of mouth in their study. Brand loyalty helps businesses achieve a competitive advantage, which leads to a higher bottom line. Their research discovered that word of mouth and informative and attractive ads are critical factors in establishing brand faith. Word of mouth can either be a big success or a colossal failure.

The product's background, consumer experience, affinity level, and expertise all provide a reliable review. Customers may use reviews based on their own experiences to assist them in selecting the right products for their needs and desired satisfaction (Moe & Trusoy, 2011).

Attitude change

When people's cognitive structure shifts, their attitudes also shift (Lutz, 1975). Active participation and persuasion are frequently proposed methods for influencing attitude change. The term "active participation" describes how a person can be put in a situation where they notice a specific feature in an object or action. "Persuasion" is when someone uses words to persuade another person (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). When a person receives a compelling message, they try to connect the message's information to prior knowledge of the item. Persuasion can occur when an individual develops reasonable beliefs that support the advocated role. Resistance is more likely if the emotions are overwhelmingly negative (Petty et al., 1981).

According to Anderson (2014) information integration theory, freshly developed recollections of an event can overshadow prior awareness, and the two pieces of information will

be consciously contrasted in judgment. As a result, information gathered during an interaction can change one's recollection of the event, potentially changing a negative experience into a positive one (LaTour et al., 2006).

Social influence can alter people's attitudes, and people choose to change their attitudes to fit the attitudes of others (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Duhachek et al., 2007). People collect data from others due to the aspiration to believe it is a signal of authenticity or to advance social endorsement by fitting suitably into the social atmosphere (Huh et al., 2014; Pennington & Schlenker, 1999; Quinn & Schlenker, 2002).

The notion of consumer attitude toward a specific brand is critical in understanding consumers' decision-making process and behavior (Ahn & Back, 2018; Augusto & Torres, 2018; Meng et al., 2020). It denotes "what is thought of as the overall like or disliking of customers" (Foroudi, 2019, p. 2). According to De Pelsmacker et al. (2007), brand attitude is the degree to which consumers have favorable/likable insights on a specific brand. While the mindset of a brand can often be altered (Foroudi, 2019), Customers' current attitudes about the company are indisputably necessary, as attitudes establish and retain positive intentions for the brand (Augusto & Torres, 2018; Beerli et al., 2004).

Customers with a positive brand attitude are more likely to pay a higher price for the brand's product/service, buy it over, and spread positive word-of-mouth (Keller, 1993; Oliver, 2010; De Pelsmacker et al., 2007). The growing positive attitude toward a specific brand strengthens the existing customer-brand relationship (Beerli et al., 2004; De Pelsmacker et al., 2007). Online customer reviews, perceived as a form of third-party information, are more expected to be trusted by customers (Lee et al., 2008; Tsao et al., 2015). Consumers' perceptions of goods change due to exposure to other people's viewpoints as they search for and read online reviews (Ayeh et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2008; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Attribution theory investigates how people think about why they do what they do, or what motivates them (Anderman, 2009). Simply put, attribution theory formalizes the human proclivity to ask "why?" (Crowley & Hoyer, 1994) Individuals' behaviors and purchasing patterns about a product can be influenced by how they assign importance to it.

Consumers sometimes look for an explanation based on the accuracy, focus, and ability to monitor the case (Hoyer & Macinnis 2008). Customers are more likely to be happy if they assume the trigger is temporary, focused on them, and under their control (Hoyer & Macinnis 2008). Attribution theory is essential in word-of-mouth communication (WOM) because it helps a receiver understand the meanings of a sender's reasons for transmitting specific information. It mediates the impact of an interpersonal message on a receiver's evaluation of the focal objective (Hilton, 1995).

According to the attribution principle, consumers determining whether or not to follow an online customer review would base their decision on their conclusions about the reviewer's reason for publishing the Review (Sen & Lerman 2007). Customers who equate a communicator's product analysis with the product's actual results are more likely to trust the communicator, have more faith in the review's accuracy, and have a stronger conviction that the product embodies the attributes listed in the review. As a result, telecommunications would significantly impact consumers who undervalue the product's performance and perceive the communicator as biased if the article centered on the communicator's benefits. As a result, the study is less likely to persuade those (Dubois et al., 2016)

We, therefore, propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Attitude mediates the relationship between online customer review and purchase intention

External influence

"Mass media coverage, expert opinions, and other non-personal information evaluated by adopters in making a rational acceptance decision are external offline impacts" (Bhattacharjee, 2000, p. 413). Customers can use social media to learn about other people's perspectives, submit their contributions, and develop social relationships (Adjei et al., 2010). Similarly, online consumer interactions include product and service information and recommendations (Gruen et al., 2005, Park et al., 2007).

They help customers make better judgments in less time by reducing purchase uncertainty, modifying customer emotions, and allowing them to make better judgments in less time (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Söderlund & Rosengren, 2007). On individual indicators, consumers agree that they want to get information and material in the form of photographs and videos about items from social media accounts, according to Asbari et al. (2020), Budi Hartono et al. (2020), and Tri (2020). Users that join a specific social media community may benefit from the knowledge available on social media, and the content might influence consumer views of a brand on web pages (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). According to Holzner (2008), social media platforms aid in the development of brand image and, as a result, sales. Despite this, the effect of mobile-based digital social media marketing on customers' purchase intent has not been thoroughly investigated.

To better understand customer perceptions, previous research has advised using interactive advertising (Rowley, 2004). Customers can see other customers' reviews and comments on marketed products on social media as an advertising channel (Cha, 2009).

Many businesses utilize social media advertising, such as Facebook, to connect with their customers in a virtual relationship. Businesses can see their likes, shares, and comments on various posts/advertisements, which can benefit their brand (Andriole, 2010).

We, therefore, propose the following hypothesis.

H2: Attitude mediates the relationship between external influence and purchase intention

INTERNAL INFLUENCE (SOCIAL INFLUENCE)

Interpersonal influence, often recognized as group pressure, is a substantial driver of consumer behavior that depicts fluctuating levels of SIPI in individuals. SIPI is a personality trait that defines a person's need to fit in with their significant people (Bearden et al., 1989). People with a high SIPI have poor self-esteem, and vice versa (McGuire, 1968). Individuals who identify with groups' purchasing decisions and consumption of products and brands rely on groups for product information and identify with their purchase decisions and consumption of products and brands. They want admiration from organizations to avoid refusing their consumer choices. Consumers with high attribution sensitivity are more inclined to SIPI (Netemeyer et al., 1992). Social media's social and collaborative aspects can influence consumers' decision-making by enabling interpersonal and social connections (Brown et al., 2007). Existing research has mainly overlooked the social significance of eWOM communication on customer behavior (Kim et al., 2018). As a result, it's essential to explore how social media users' interpersonal ties affect eWOM effectiveness (Kumar & Benbasat, 2006). We, therefore, propose the following hypothesis.

H3: Attitude mediates the relationship between Interpersonal influence and purchase intention

PERSONAL INNOVATIVENESS

Personal innovativeness is a person's natural creative personality regarding new technology, as determined by direct internet searches comparing product quality and other relevant user features (Machlis, 1997). In some cases, customers will be more open to technological advancements, and in others, they will be more reliant on traditional offline factors. As a result, a deeper understanding of OCR's impact from the perspective of a consumer's imagination is essential. Marketers will be able to assist consumers in segmenting their habits.

Personal innovativeness is a personality trait that inspires people to try new things first. Individuals' degree of unique inventiveness determines whether or not they use modern technology and how they respond to it (Jones et al., 2002). According to Agarwal and Prasad (1998), personal innovativeness is a stimulant for using the Internet and related technological advances. Researchers have given much thought to innovation regarding adopting new products (Hirschman, 1980; Midgley & Dowling, 1978; Robertson, 1971). This aspect of people's personalities designates their level of reception of new items and ideas in their lives. According to Rogers and Shoemaker (1971), innovation is the degree to which an individual grasps a new technology before other members of their social system. Midgley and Dowling (1978) defined innate innovativeness as the degree to which an individual is open to new ideas and makes innovative decisions irrespective of other people's experiences. They demanded that first adopters have the most inherent innovativeness.

Innovativeness endorses internet shopping behavior directly and indirectly through consumers' attitudes and intentions (Limayem et al., 2000). Goldsmith (2000) discovered proof that overall innovativeness, an innovative propensity toward buying online, and interaction with the Internet might foresee the frequency of online purchases and the intent to buy online in the future. Citrin et al. (2000) found that domain-specific innovativeness and internet usage directly impacted customers' internet shopping adoption behavior. As a result, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: *Personal innovativeness moderates the relationship between Attitude and purchase intention.*

PURCHASE INTENTION

In general, purchase intention denotes a customer's willingness to buy a definite product or service that appeals to them (Content, 2018). Customers' intent to buy typically happens when a product or brand is in their contemplation set (Content, 2018). Acquire intention, on the other hand, is the likelihood of buyers deciding to purchase a given product from a philosophical standpoint (Grewal et al., 1998). Customers require cues or stimuli to motivate them to buy. As a result, social media might serve as a platform for people to instigate their shopping activity (Harshini, 2015). In addition, the recommendation article helps as a helpful marketing communication tool and a point of reference for consumers making purchasing decisions (Chen & Xie, 2008). E-WOM has given customers a new way to communicate, learn more about a product or service before purchasing it (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Knoll, 2016), and allowed opinion leaders to endorse products or brands for business (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Knoll, 2016).

Customers must, however, filter and assess information before using it because the amount of data they are exposed to is immense (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Every social media user is aware that most social media platforms include sections for likes (signifying approval), comments, and

sharing (publicly sharing information) with others (Wallace et al., 2014). Marketing and influence have been the focus of previous studies on customer perceptions and decision-making, as well as online consumer reviews (Phillips et al., 2017). The trouble of matching review data with performance data may well justify the focus on the impact of internet reviews on sales and bookings. The positive (negative) valence of online customer evaluations is positively (negatively or neutrally) connected with hotel performance, according to research (Phillips et al., 2017; Ye et al., 2009).

Melián-González et al. (2013) found that positive WOM produces positive attitudes and increases the purchase likelihood. However, negative WOM had the opposite effect, and such a finding is in line with the well-established link between profit, growth, and customer retention (Kim et al., 2015).

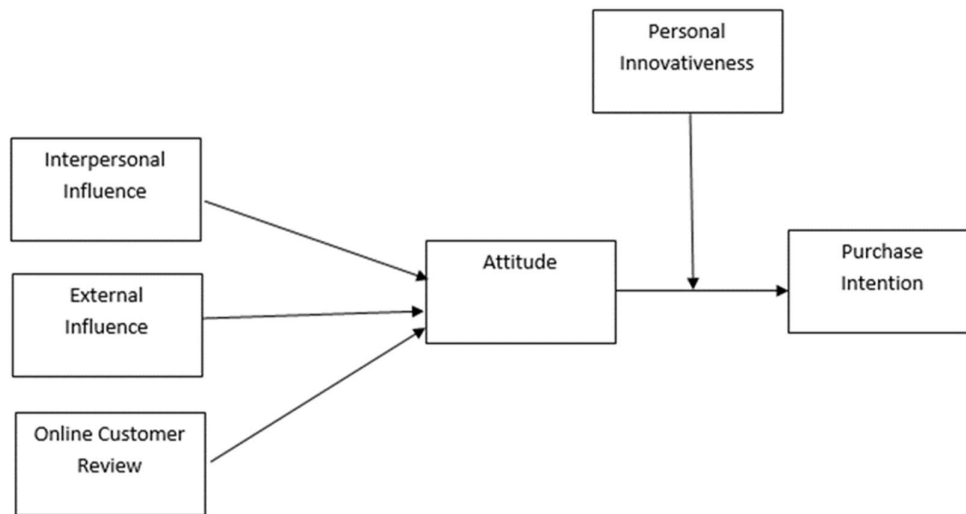


FIGURE 1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

METHODOLOGY

The effect of online customer reviews, as well as offline influences and personal innovativeness, on the consumer's 'Search and Purchase Intention' is investigated in this article. Since it is the appropriate method for this research, we chose the survey approach (Hair et al., 1999). A survey with closed-ended questions was used to collect data.

There were two parts to the survey. The first segment of the survey included demographic information such as the respondent's gender, age, level of education, and annual income. Data on the price spectrum of cell phones used and planned to be used by respondents was also collected. The second segment of the survey used a five-point scale to assess respondents' perceptions. The answers were scored as follows: -2=strongly disagree, -1=disagree, 0=neutral, 1=agree, 2=strongly agree.

MEASURES

Scales of measurement for the study are all adopted and adapted. Four items for interpersonal influence are adopted and then adapted from the studies of Roca et al. (2006), Bhattacharjee (2000), and Limayem et al. (2000). Three items for external influence are taken from (Limayem et al., 2000; Roca et al., 2006). Three items for attitude are borrowed from Yu et al. (2005) and Ahn et al. (2004). Four items for online customer review are adapted from Gruen et al. (2005). Two items of search intention are taken from Venkatesh and Davis (2000). Four items of personal innovativeness are taken from Venkatesh and Davis (2000). Agarwal and

Prasad (1998) helped adopt two items for the purchase intention.

Results and Analysis

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The demographic findings were the focus of the first part of the study. Three hundred and three responses were obtained from people of various backgrounds in Karachi, Pakistan. Male respondents accounted for 201 of the 303 total responses, while female respondents accounted for 102. Those between the ages of 26 and 45 comprise the largest group of respondents, with 115 men and 45 women. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics Hair et al. (2010) and Bryne (2010) argued that data is considered normal if skewness is between -2 to +2 and kurtosis is between -7 to +7. The descriptive statistics show that the data is normal.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

	Male	Female
26-35	41	35
36-45	115	45
46-55	44	22
56-65	1	0

Note: The table shows the distribution of respondents' gender and age-wise.

MEASUREMENT MODEL ASSESSMENT

The study's second section focused on influential people. The constructs' outer loadings, construct durability, construct validity, and discriminate validity were all examined as part of the measurement model evaluation.

TABLE 2: CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ATT	0.857	0.667
ATT*PI	1.000	1.000
EI	0.766	0.524
II	0.900	0.819
OCR	0.799	0.570
PI	0.789	0.652
PRI	0.789	0.555

The composite reliability (CR) is reached if the value is higher than 0.708 (Hair et al., 2014). The composite reliability of each construct is higher than the specified value, indicating that the target has been reached, as shown in Table 3. The lowest reliability composite is 0.774, which is higher than 0.708. When the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.5, convergent validity (CV) is achieved (Hair et al., 2014). Table 3 shows that the lowest average variance value is 0.534, greater than 0.5. As a consequence, convergent validity is established.

TABLE 3: DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY (HTMT RATIO)

	ATT	EI	II	OCR	PI
EI	0.434				
II	0.203	0.365			
OCR	0.484	0.626	0.186		

PI	0.135	0.198	0.088	0.427	
PRI	0.409	0.497	0.249	0.296	0.698

Discriminated validity is a mechanism for assessing how distinct a construct is from others (Abdullah et al., 2018). Henseler et al. (2015) proposed a more sophisticated Discriminant Validity criterion. Assume that the discriminated validity (HTMT ratio) is 0.85 or less. Discriminated validity is said to be reached when the HTMT ratio is equal to or less than 0.85 (Hair et al., 2014). Table 4 displays that the highest discriminated validity (HTMT ratio) value is 0.698, lower than 0.85. As a result, discriminatory legitimacy emerges.

STRUCTURAL MODEL ASSESSMENT (SEM)

After the measurement model had been evaluated, the structural model was evaluated. The structural model analysis determines the validity of the relationship between the constructs. The hypotheses in the model are explained by the relationships shown in the structural model. The Smart PLS software calculates the conceptual model and hypothesis relationships.

TABLE 4: DIRECT EFFECTS

S.No	Path	B	SE	T values	P Values	Decision
H₁	ATT -> PI	0.236	0.064	3.702	0.000	Supported
H₂	EI -> ATT	0.184	0.056	3.283	0.001	Supported
H₃	II -> ATT	0.084	0.052	1.624	0.052	Supported
H₄	OCR -> ATT	0.254	0.056	4.562	0.000	Supported

For hypotheses testing in Table 4, T statistics and P values are used. For theories to be supported using one-tail testing, the T statistic's threshold value must be 1.64 or higher (Fisher, 1992). The T statistics for all of the hypotheses in this study exceed 1.64. Similarly, for hypotheses to be approved, P values must be less than 0.005. The critical ratio ($t > 1.64$; $p < 0.05$) supports all hypotheses: H₁, H₂, H₃, and H₄. Online customer review on attitude is vital with a p-value of 0.000.

TABLE 5: INDIRECT EFFECT

	B	SE	T values	P Values	Decision
OCR -> ATT -> PI	0.060	0.021	2.834	0.002	Supported
II -> ATT -> PI	0.020	0.025	2.359	0.047	Supported
EI -> ATT -> PI	0.043	0.020	2.208	0.014	Supported

Table 5 depicts the relationship between attitude, the mediating variable with online customer review, interpersonal influence, and external influence, and the dependent variable, purchase intention. The results show a mediating effect of attitude between OCR, II, and EI and the dependent variable Purchase intention.

TABLE 6: MODERATION EFFECT

Path	B	SE	T values	P Values	Decision
ATT*PRI -> PI	0.054	0.016	3.392	0.001	0.025

Table 6 represents the moderation effect, where Personal Innovativeness (PRI) moderates the relationship between attitude and purchase intention. The result also supports the relationship as the p-value is less than 0.005.

STRUCTURAL MODEL

The structural model generated after measuring the reliability and validity of the constructs is presented in figure 2.

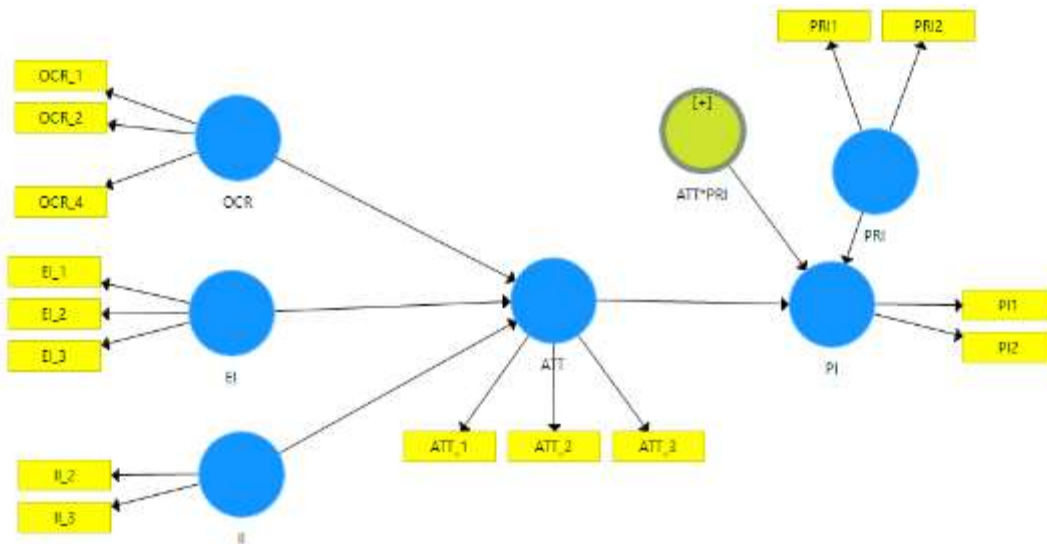


FIGURE 2: STRUCTURAL MODEL

DISCUSSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The research examined how online and offline consumer reviews (C2C exchanges on social media and other relevant websites) affected premium-priced mobile phone search and purchase intent. According to our results, attitude mediates the relationship between online customer reviews and purchase intention. Online reviews are considered external information provided by others, and research shows that consumers are inclined to make purchase intentions based on online customer reviews (Lee et al., 2008; Tsao et al., 2015). Interestingly, online reviews appear strongly related to purchasing intent on social media. This relation is consistent with the findings of Fang et al. (2014). They concluded in their research that luxury and budget hotel bookers use traditional word of mouth more than electronic. It was evident that luxury consumers find customer reviews more valuable and have more experience with online reviews, which may impact their decision-making when booking hotels online.

The findings show that C2C knowledge sharing influences customer behavior, contributing to searches and purchases. It is also affected by peer and family interactions and cell phone

companies' brand credibility. Customer attitudes are influenced by interpersonal and external influence, and it positively influences purchase intention (Cheah, 2015). In addition, according to our results, interpersonal influence has a positive impact on purchase intention. That knowledge gathered from family, colleagues, or referent groups significantly impacts search and purchase decisions. Consumer engagement is significantly associated with perceived value, trust, and interpersonal influence susceptibility (Sharma & Klein, 2020).

Similarly, external stimuli (media, commercials, etc.) affected search intent. In the high-value cell phone industry, user exchanges, besides interpersonal influence, media, and advertisements-related external factors, are all consumer touch points for search intention leading to purchase intent. The research results align with the extant literature (e.g., Kristina & Sugiarto, 2020), which states a relationship between external influence and purchasing decisions.

Siddiqui et al. (2021) suggested that social media activities are essential in building eWOM credibility and shaping attitudes and purchasing intentions. Similarly, Mao et al. (2020) revealed in their research that Brand identity, brand personality, and brand communication allow a positive, enjoyable, and absorbing user experience with the smartphone. Thus, via such a flow experience, they can indirectly influence smartphone purchase intention. Pi et al. (2011) observed a strong relationship between conformity to social influence and online group buying (OCB) intentions. Recently, Chen and Lu (2014) found that online, media and personal recommendations lead to informational and normative influence, which leads to consumer conformity to OGB intentions. The purchase intention is significantly affected by interpersonal and external influence, consistent with Lee et al. (2008).

Furthermore, personal innovativeness moderates the relationship between attitude and purchase intention. Regarding new products or services, personal innovation is considered a natural trait. This notion refers to an individual's attitude toward fresh ideas and inventive decisions, regardless of the experiences of others (Khazaei & Tareq, 2021). A multifaceted approach is on the way from the user's perspective, with no single component taking the lead. As a result, companies must develop more integrated multi-channel marketing strategies that prioritize all of these interconnected elements, especially the newly emerging social media customer feedback.

The following are the most significant contributions of this paper to the superior body of knowledge: First, it addresses an integrated model of customer behavior that incorporates both online and offline consumer input, emphasizing the importance of marketers incorporating both variables into their strategies. Various studies have looked into the significance of OCR in terms of its ability to attract mates.

Second, we haven't come across any studies specifically applicable to the rapidly growing cell phone industry, where the need for identifying critical factors is critical and timely. Most studies on this product are about the brand, quality, price, cost, and functionalities, among other things. As a result, our research adds a new dimension to the conversation by addressing a central driver of consumer behavior. Finally, using the cell phone as an example, the results of this study may be extended to other high-value consumer electronics or related items.

CONCLUSION

Consumers' purchase intentions for high-end cell phones are directly influenced by

interpersonal and external influence and online customer reviews. It means that referent views on high-priced cell phones can influence customer desire to look for recommended items and designs. Previous research in other industries, such as low-cost airlines, has backed up the value of interpersonal relationships. According to Kim et al., users' impressions of the usefulness of B2C e-commerce in the airline industry can be influenced by the opinions of others or word of mouth (WOM) (2009). (Relatives, mates, and coworkers) According to the survey, people are more accustomed to change in nonhierarchical settings, such as the online purge, which corroborates previous findings (Bhattacharjee, 2000; Liao et al., 2007).

According to the report, external control (media advertisements, product advertising) and interpersonal regulation majorly impact consumers' willingness to buy a high-end cell phone. Furthermore, online user feedback affects customer perceptions of search intent.

Another research, which supports this finding, found that online C2C exchanges boost customer perceptions of low-cost airline service transactions made online. Kim et al., 2009; Ruiz et al., 2013) found that empirical evidence is relevant in the airline industry. According to the results, the message-sidedness of online user reviews influences consumers' attitudes toward the review, the product, perceived source credibility, and buying intention. In other words, the customer's understanding of the evaluation is most influenced by the two-sided (unbiased) study.

The study discovers that consumer attitude mediates between OCR, II, and EI and consumer purchase intention in high-priced mobile phone situations, in addition to an affirmative influence of Online Customer Reviews on shaping consumer approach. Online feeds influence consumer tastes and purchasing decisions. Tsao et al. (2015), Vermeulen and Seegers (2009), and Zhang et al. (2009), Many pieces of research on the effect of online reviews on consumer attitudes assume that those reading them are potential customers who have never used the product or service before (Mauri & Minazzi, 2013; Zhang et al., 2010).

According to this study's findings regarding high-end cell phone transactions, personal innovation positively affects consumer buying intent. According to previous studies, personal creativity significantly impacts consumer purchasing intent, with perceived value and the learning process serving as mediators. The word "fresh product buying intent" mentions actualized innovation or adoption behavior or new products that customers have purchased or intend to purchase shortly (Lee et al., 2013; Morton et al., 2016; Vandecasteele & Geuens, 2010).

It refers to modernizers' or primary adopters' proclivity to introduce new technologies ahead of the late adopters or laggards (Jeong et al., 2017; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). It refers to innovators' or early adopters' proclivity to embrace new technologies before the majority of late adopters or laggards (Jeong et al., 2017; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Consumers can use technological advances and offers in mobile phones, especially high-priced phones, to shape a positive buying intention, according to the findings.

Our findings indicate that online consumer reviews affect individual customer buying behavior regarding high-end mobile phones. On the other hand, consumers depend on external (media, advertisements) and internal (peers, relatives) feedback when evaluating a product. Personal creativity for a favorable decision has a significant additional effect, especially in this environment, but it can also be applied to other similar situations. In the real world, consumers are more likely to disseminate information gathered online, relying heavily on their ingenuity when making decisions and checking internal and external sources and fact sheets.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In the high-value cell phone industry, the study provides managerial implications related to online market exchange factors and interpersonal and external influences on consumer behavior.

- 1- Cell phone providers should incorporate online and offline campaigns to increase positive WOM. As a result of the integrated communication strategies, they will be able to receive favorable referral opinions, as well as create a positive brand image and increase recommendations. In addition, studying referent behavior and how it changes in various moods and circumstances of social interactions and relationships will be helpful. Companies should collaborate to achieve the necessary adoption and implementation. Referents and their communication styles must be considered to inspire and convince them to spread positive information to others through WOM and e-WOM.
- 2- Mobile phone companies should use communication to improve consumer awareness of their product selection, technological requirements, and enhanced benefits so that customers and referents are well-informed and do not fall prey to confusion or incorrect perception. It would result in a more optimistic attitude toward goods and their advantages and increased creativity. A positive attitude will boost search and purchase intent and be used in peer-to-peer and friend-to-friend contact, keeping the brand out of the quagmire of uncertainty. This will help companies quickly recognize negative feedback and correct it as soon as possible. WOM and e-WOM will help strengthen this and boost brand franchise, creditability, and sales. The spread of WOM and e-WOM will help reinforce the same and enhance brand franchise, creditability, and sales as a proactive move is expected to result in customer belief and corrective measures by the company. The spread of WOM and e-WOM will help reinforce the same and enhance brand franchise, creditability, and sales. Both happy and unhappy customers should be allowed to express their opinions, and swift corrective measures and steps will help the brand's survival.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There are some drawbacks to this study. First, this study looked into online and offline customer information exchanges and personal innovativeness using the example of high-value cell phones in Karachi, Pakistan. The results must be replicated in various geographical contexts and with a more diverse population and user base to be generalized. This study can also be replicated using other consumer electronics and high-value goods from various industries to determine how online and offline exchanges affect consumers' attitudes and search/buying intentions. This will aid in generalization and, where applicable, exceptions. Qualitative research may also help with the intensity of studying different variables and their connections to logical reasoning. As a result, future studies on the topic should use a mixed-method approach (both quantitative and qualitative).

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