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# **“Factors Affecting Consumer Buying Behavior in E-Commerce Business during Outbreak of Covid-19: A Case Study on Top E-Commerce Websites”**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This research was conducted to investigate the factors that have affected the consumer buying behavior in ecommerce business, especially during COVID-19. This research was conducted via quantitative analysis, and 200 participants were recruited for analysis. The statistical tests that were conducted in this research included demographics via frequency analysis, Cronbach’s Alpha test for the questionnaire reliability, correlation analysis to test the strength of the relationship in between variables, and regression analysis for finding the impact of consumer behavior on the dependent variables of social media campaigns, television commercials, e-paper advertisements, and word of mouth marketing. In this context, the research found that social media campaigns and television commercials had no significant impact on the consumer buying behavior, whereas e-paper advertisements and word of mouth marketing had significant impact on the buying behavior of consumers during COVID-19. Based on the findings of this research, it was recommended that e-commerce businesses must upload the articles on social media regarding the product or services that are offered by the business so that the customer attains a complete understanding of the products or services, which will attract the customers and will influence the purchasing behavior of the customers positively.*

**Keywords:** *Ecommerce, COVID-19, Consumer Buying Behavior, Social Media Campaign, Television Commercials, E-paper Advertisement, and Word of Mouth.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The outbreak of deadly disease is not a novel occurrence especially in the modern world where the ancient history has been preserved and recorded. Every outbreak causes many significant changes in social behavior, regional and global policies, and people attitudes. The major changes whether they are long term or short term have been observed to be traditional. On the other hand, the changes that are less preserved relate to social and mental behavior as the traditional practice is modified by which it is not sufficient to combine public policies with psychosocial changes (Elrhim & Elsayed, 2020). The COVID-19 has triggered major changes at all levels in contemporary society just like other outbreak. Many countries, continents, regions including urban and rural have severely been impacted by the COVID-19 as well as bring changes in thought process and lifestyle of people. Thus, it is difficult for individual and entities to get back to the normal life before the outbreak. Because of COVID-19, the strict measures have been implemented by many countries across the world such as isolation, quarantine, and enforced lockdown on the population as well as economic and trade restrictions between the countries in various sectors. Thus, the lockdown has facilitated the e-commerce business around the world. E-commerce has transformed the strategies for marketing in response to the COVID-19.

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In recent years, consumers have been used to online shopping and receipt of their parcels at their doorstep from any corner of the world (Villa & Monzón, 2021). As the COVID-19 emerged around the world, the change in buyer behavior has largely enhanced and encouraging businesses to gain the loyal customers in the digital marketplace. These sudden challenges have forced organizations to create new digital solutions and adapt themselves as new normal.

E-commerce refers to the purchase and sale of raw material, services or any form of product and service by which the digital medium is used by the customers and businesses. Moreover, e-commerce retail is distinguished as the exchange of products and services among the business and consumers. There are various kinds of E-commerce businesses facilitated around the world. For instance, B2B model where transactions occur between the business to business such as Alibaba and Cisco, B2C model where transactions occur between business to consumer such as Walmart and Amazon, C2C model where transactions take place between consumer to consumer such as eBay. After the arrival of COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns and social distancing were supposed to persuade the consumers toward online buying (Tran, 2021). Conversely, the unexpected consumer demand and problems in supply chain problems great impact the e-commerce industry. It has been analyzed that the COVID-19 outbreak caused the significant effects on big e-commerce platform such as Walmart which experienced a slump in a usual online shopping, disruption in supply chain and increase in the sale of necessary products such as groceries and other household items. The e-commerce industry has globally been categorized based on various departments clothing, electronics, beauty and personal care and other products (Afridi et al., 2021). The COVID-19 outbreak had great impact on these categories because imbalance consumer online demand and supply chain around the world. The supply chain in e-commerce industry is typically disrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak and factories shut down in major supplier countries. The electronic products category was the most affected sector because of COVID-19 outbreak because globally the china is the biggest electronic and its accessories producer as the china shut down its industries.

For the past decade, the habits of consumers are altering the digital shopping as they experience new digital advancement in their lifestyle and daily practices. In developing countries, digital organization has encountered many hurdles to invest in the E-commerce industry in their economies because they have been unable to develop the digital industries that can support the novel changes. Moreover, consumers in developing countries are also reluctant to purchase product online. There are many factors that contribute to consumer buying behavior in e-commerce business such as lack of digital transparency, consumer confidence, political and economic uncertainty (Ratnasari et al., 2021). E-commerce businesses and consumers have to face many hurdles for instance digital payment, lack of integrity, fragile government regulations, limited access to technology, unreliable digital communications, cultural barriers etc. Despite these hurdles in developing countries, consumer buying behavior seems to be changing very fast. There has been a great alternation in e-commerce infrastructure especially after the arrival of COVID-19. In Pakistan, platforms such as Daraz, Aliexpress, Telemart, iShopping, Yayvo Home Shopping have witnessed a surge in orders and sales.

Therefore, the research questions are given as under:

**Research Questions:**

The main research questions were:

1. What is the impact of social media campaign on consumer buying behavior?
2. What is the impact of TV commercials on consumer buying behavior?
3. What is the impact of e-paper advertisement on consumer buying behavior?
4. What is the impact of word of mouth on consumer buying behavior?

**Objectives of the study:**

This study was carried out under the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate the impact of social media campaign on consumer buying behavior during COVID-19
2. To investigate the impact of TV commercials on consumer buying behavior during COVID-19
3. To investigate the impact of e-paper advertisements on consumer buying behavior during COVID-19
4. To investigate the impact of word of mouth on consumer buying behavior during COVID-19

**Hypotheses:**

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant impact of social media campaign on consumer buying behavior.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant impact of TV commercials on consumer buying behavior.
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant impact of e-paper advertisement on consumer buying behavior.
- H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant impact of word of mouth on consumer buying behavior.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A social media campaign is considered as the integrated marketing measure for strengthening or assisting with the goal of any business by utilizing more than two social media sites. According to Khan et al. (2020) campaigns often, change from everyday social media measures due to the upsurge concentrating, targeting, and evaluating. However, a social media campaign must concentrate throughout an individual business objective, whether it is on Instagram or Facebook. Attaining appropriate feedback from the clients, maximizing traffic of the website, creating lists for email marketing, directly driving sales, and enhancing entire brand

involvement are considered as the fundamental goals of social media campaigns. It can be identified that goals should be distinct and assessable (Shetty & Pai, 2021). It is important for any brand or company to acquire a baseline measure for the target audience before starting any campaign; however, it will lead to track the changes and overall performance during the campaign. Oven and Hicintuka (2020) analyzed those goals are outlined through the means, the target market, and the main message. Nonetheless, different demographics have changed preferences for the social media suites, which help them to select the platform suitable for their target market. Undoubtedly, it has been determined that social media has captured a significant place as the major tool of communication. In this regard, individuals throughout the world are using social media platform to stay connected with other people and firms. According to Baum et al. (2019) individuals often have various “connection” on social media sites, thus information is acquired through various people. The data or information usually becomes the major source of impact on customers and their purchasing power and behavior.

Pütter (2017) examined that more purchasers are using social media platforms than ever before. It has been identified that customers are seeking to get maximum feedbacks and suggestions. Thus, it is important to have a noticeable online existence on numerous social media sites. However, the current trend within marketing is regarded as the introduction of the social media. According to Zafar et al. (2019), social media possess the authority to impact potential clients from the initial point until the phase of purchasing and post-purchase behavior as well. To start this, customers require proper understanding regarding the brand and its services; while, at the later phase, when they initiate to narrow down their preferences, one require a social media influencer to pursue their choices. It can be examined that a continuous discussion or negotiation between the consumer and the brand is important for sustaining the association strong and stable. Besides, social media is recognized as the major aspect that might influence customers when they are endeavoring for creating insight regarding a specific product (Ceyhan, 2019). It can be analyzed that when individuals face any issue, they undoubtedly seek for the optimal solutions to resolve that problem as soon as possible. Moreover, there is a strong connection between social media and marketing, Alavi et al. (2019) demonstrates that social media marketing is regarded as leveraging the “social” with the “media” for marketing the businesses and executing them appropriately. It can be identified that social media marketing is the procedure of reinforcing people for promoting their products or services with various social media platforms. This will help to target large number of individuals that might not have been accessible through standard method of advertising. According to Duffett (2017), the advertisements through mass media are not proficient as they were before; however, in this context, social web is regarded as a place where individuals with same interests are working together for sharing their views, opinions, ideas, etc.

To analyze the point of difference, which enable the social media marketing to be special, small, and medium sized firms with minimum budgets could take complete advantage of social media marketing, while they have inadequate funds for using the standard method of marketing. Although social media marketing is considered as a progressing and developing notion, the fundamental concept of marketing endures the identical which is associated with targeting the domain of the populace, interacting with predictions, creating, and sustaining loyalty and so on. Gümüş (2017) examined that firms are involving with the aim of generating brand awareness, appealing their current customers, driving traffic for various other marketing elements, and evolving channel number. According to Afridi et al. (2021), each of the social media sites is playing a significant role in giving out, attaining, and substituting data without any restrictions. In addition,

as it is elaborated earlier that social media helps the “two-way flow of information.” It can be examined that as the flow and process of communication does not only influence how firms could access their target audience, yet also it impacts during the whole decision procedure, through understanding the message, seeking for accessible substitutes, along with the measures carried out in pro-purchase decision. Therefore, it is essential to signify that refusal, and miscalculations are the potential drawbacks within the flow of communication (Villa & Monzón, 2021).

According to Malthouse et al. (2018), advertising is regarded as a creative method of interaction, an approachable and pleasant conversation need proper feedback, though associated with timely feedback that engage the customers in the message. However, it can be identified that it is a message, commonly powerful, yet not envisioned to be powerful or instant. Besides, advertising is recognized as a constructive establishment, generating understanding and insight regarding specific products and services. Nonetheless, at the same time, it is regarded as the fundamental practice in motivating customers to invest on products, or else they usually do not buy, if they are not aware of the message transferred in the advertisement (Kim et al., 2018). Kaur and Hundal (2017) identified that advertising plays an important part in offering products and services, for instance, customers sit in front of the TV to attain or capture the favorable spots. In addition, television is usually known as “king” of the advertisement, as maximum number of people invests their time watching TV daily as compared to various other modes of ads.

It can be examined that advertising impact the customers in numerous methods. Nonetheless, they often impact international brands considering the influence on brand equity and brand image. Additionally, relying on an individual’s age, customers perceive brand inversely, and hence it has an impact on domestic and global brands. Together, these aspects impact the way in which any brand is professed, and subsequently, it affects preferences of the customers. According to Schultz (2020), the customers within this specific era are targeted through enormous media that are efficiently scheduled and progressive with attraction and focus on the feelings, wants, demands, and requirements. It has been determined that organizations and marketers are investing huge amounts on customer research and to have appropriate insight about the significant aspects entailed in customer decision making process. On the contrary, discussing about the marketing mix, so the marketers could emphasis is on planning influential ads to appeal the target audience. The advertisements significantly impact the selection of household goods amongst the population, in this regard, marketers are emphasizing and striving to fascinate and impact the customers through planning any ad, which are noticeably eye-catching and influential ads for their feelings and emotions associated with the product or service (Malthouse et al., 2018).

According to Alalwan (2018) the impacts on advertising asserts on stability and profitability, which are significant in making the external boundaries for advertising. It has been demonstrated that usually there is a time lag that takes place between sales result and advertising expenditure. Davtyan and Cunningham (2017) notify that the expenses of advertising for every product must be pushed where extra expenditures are equivalent to the revenue that is generated from extra sales. It can be identified by Kim et al. (2018) that three fundamental notions associated with good and attractive advertisement. In his view an advertisement should be based on believable facts, simple tools, and techniques, for instance, using images, or pictures might upsurge the credibility and authenticity of the advertisement. Besides, TV is recognized as the source of the most extensively collect set of messages and pictures; while it is considered as the primary common resource of networking and its mass-initiated messages and pictures “create the conventional if a common symbolic atmosphere”. Subsequently, the main role of television is enculturation, which

is, to be the mode of the networking or socialization of many individuals within their cultural values and unvarying attitudes (Alalwan, 2018).

In addition, Davtyan and Cunningham (2017) analyzed the impact of TV commercials on the buying behavior of the customers, to some extent the advertisements through TV commercials are helpful such as if any company is promoting their newly launched products, so if the brand is well-known then customers or target audience will purchase the products or services. On the contrary, Schultz (2020) demonstrated that there are various drawbacks of TV commercials, such as there is shortage of information of the promoted product or service. Sometimes the brand or company is unable to cover all the points and portray it effectively.

Khatri (2016) examined that advertising is regarded as a giant element within the market economy as it plays an important role in encouraging customer either to utilize a specific brand or to upsurge their consumption of that brand. However, newspapers create an efficient form of media in developing nations. It has been analyzed that the expectation of the customers of information through numerous media platforms, for instance, newspapers, TV, radio, magazines, and most importantly the internet are completely different (Sama, 2019). The elements of different media and its instant and long-term impacts on customers are also varied. For example, television permits “high-quality audio-visual content” which is comparatively more appropriate for the classifications of the product that eventually need physical explanation. Undoubtedly, newspaper advertisement is the traditional one and many people still search jobs through newspapers, they still seek to promote their business or usually purchasing something while referring to the newspaper.

However, currently the time has changed and evolved, which push people to adapt modern and advance methods for promotions, buying and selling products, studying about any new product or service; these all things are just one click away. Nonetheless, internet or modern methods of advertisements have made it easier for the individuals to invest their minimum time, money, and energy to get maximum information. According to Khachatryan et al. (2018), advertisement is regarded as the method of communicating with the customers so that they are motivated and can make effective buying decision for any product or service. Nonetheless, it is perceived as an important and significant characteristic for the economic development of the businesses and marketers. If any business is focusing on advertisement through newspaper, then they must be aware of the costing, place where the advertisement will be published, if there is enough space so the brand can also fit any picture to gain the attention of the readers and customers. In short, businesses or marketers are restricted to involve all the information; if they have pictures so, they cannot include it every time. Domazet et al. (2017) examined that newspaper has a very low impact on consumer buying behavior, for instance, if any individual is reading newspaper for purchasing anything, yet the company or brand has posted only information about the product or service, no location is given, if the contact number is given then no one is receiving the calls, the company forget to mention their email address. Thus, such errors can create a negative impact in customer’s mind, which might decrease the revenue and sales of the brand or company. Moreover, Lau and Lee (2018) identified that advertisement through newspaper is quite conventional, which is not that much utilized nowadays as people are more focused towards digital and advance media.

Groeger and Buttle (2014) identified that the general meaning of the term word of mouth is quite simple as this term refers to the spread of information via oral communication. It can be identified that this concept can be used for the simplest of daily life events for example, telling someday what time of the day it is or which month, it is (Chen & Yuan, 2020). On the other hand, there are quite a few substantial uses of this concept in the political, economic, and social world. Considering the modern-day definition of the term word of mouth in the context of marketing it is crucial to identify that the term refers to customers of a brand sharing their experiences and satisfaction with a specific brand to other people in their social, or family circle via oral communication (Zhang et al., 2019).

Marketing is a broad concept with several different activities involved. Groeger and Buttle (2014) identified that marketing can be quite an intensive process at times at it requires several resources, and human intelligence, and energy to ensure that that marketing purpose is met. However, the concept of word of mouth is also used for marketing purposes and is identified to be essential, and effective, yet a process that does not necessarily demand extra efforts from an organization. Chen and Yuan (2020) Highlighted that the purchasing behaviors of many customers are highly influenced by the recommendation and opinions of their close friends and family members as they trust these people and believe that their recommendations would be beneficial for them.

However, in the contemporary hyper-connected and highly globalized world, the influence of recommendation of word of mouth (WOM) is not restricted to close friends and family members as now a single recommendation from anywhere around the world have substantially great impact on the purchasing behaviors and attitudes of customers around the world (Zhang et al., 2019). Hence, it is evident that many marketers of MNCs to SMEs have focused on the aspect of word of mouth for their marketing activities and strategies. However, indicated that going 20 to 30 years back it would have been quite difficult for markets to shape to rely on word-of-mouth marketing however no in this globalized world with the help of social media technologies the marketers are quite focused and encouraged to work on the development of their WOM marketing as they believe that it has a significant impact on shaping customer behavior and attitudes (Groeger & Buttle, 2014). The statistic associated with the WOM is just staggering and indicates its substantial influence in the contemporary business environment. Firstly, it can be identified that around 90 per cent of people believe the recommendations and opinions of friends and families regarding a brand as valuable and true (Hernández-Méndez et al., 2015).

Moreover, recent studies highlighted that 88 per cent of people tend to shape their purchasing decision based on the reviews on social media and search engines. However, Hernández-Méndez et al., (2015) indicated that there is no substantial difference in their trust levels as they are keen to accept these reviews as much as they trust reviews of their closed ones. Relating the statistics to the topic of research it can be said that many people choose their e-commerce platforms for shopping based on the reviews of their loved ones or reviews of social media. Hence, it can be proposed that the big e-commerce giants like Amazon, E-bay, and AliExpress are also highly dependent on what their customer has to say about their services to ensure the enlargement of customer base and increment in sales and profits (Hidayanto et al., 2017).

Zhao et al. (2020) indicated that one of the major reasons why Amazon Is at the top of the online e-commerce business is because of its top-notch service. It would not be outrageous to



speculate that WOM has played a big role in the popularity of Amazon because when a customer is satisfied by the services to tend to act as brand ambassadors for the brand and attract more customers. Moreover, considering that e-commerce brands are highly associated with online technologies hence the role of WOM on social media, and search engines could be pivotal as the statistics also highly that 88 per cent of consumers believe in online reviews (Zhao et al., 2020). Moreover, another crucial thing to identify that there are two types of WOM which include organic and amplified.

The term organic WOM refers to consumers naturally showcasing their happiness and satisfaction with the brand by posting reviews online or suggesting brand to other people while the amplified WOM refers to marketers launching marketing campaigns that are shaped to take input and reviews from customers which are then used for marketing purposes to attract more people (Hidayanto et al., 2017). Hernández-Méndez et al. (2015) however, indicates that despite such great impact of WOM on consumer base only 33 per cent to organization work on taking feedback and reviews for marketing purposes from their customers which indicates a lack of awareness regarding the importance of WOM in the business environment.

The term consumer buying behavior in business terms refers to the online or offline activities of consumers who identify, interrogate, and deciding which product to buy before the actual buying of a service or product (Ramya & Ali, 2016). Hence, having deep insight regarding consumer purchasing behaviors and a good grip of influencing this behavior is quite essential in the modern-day business environment as there is ruthless competition in many industries including the e-commerce market (Sharma, 2014). This forces the brands and organizations to focus greatly on the aspect of consumer buying behavior. Sharma (2014) highlighted that to successfully understand the buying behavior and further on taking measure to influence it organizations need to interrogate and identify the activities of customers involved in their identification and decision-making process of doing business brands using offering specific product or service (Ramya & Ali, 2016).

It is evident that considering the contemporary business environment engaging in social media posts, and comments, and consulting the search engines are some of the top priorities of customers before buying the product however coming to offline activities commercials, and WOM plays a pivotal role in shaping their behavior hence these activities can be considered as essential in the context of consumer behavior. The recent event of the emergence of COVID-19, it can be identified that the pandemic created a wide shift in the social, economic, and political activities it disturbed the whole globalized system of the contemporary world (Eger et al., 2019). Reflecting on the economic effects of the COVID-19 it is evident that the pandemic has contributed greatly to the crashing economies and increasing unemployment in many developed and developing countries hence it also affected the contemporary business environment (Naeem, 2021). The activities like logistics, manufacturing, and physical shopping are some of the prominent and widely affected aspects for business due to COVID-19. Nonetheless, Naeem (2021) indicated that COVID-19 contributed widely to a drastic change in consumer behavior in several different regions may. This behavior includes means of shopping and the trends of shopping in the consumer base globally.

Firstly, it is crucial to identify that the COVID-19 pandemic has broadly increased online shopping traffic in the modern business environment (Sharma & Jhamb, 2020). The major reason behind this increment in the online shopping consumer base is the government lockdown policies

and restriction over social gatherings which forced the brands to shut down their physical stores and opt to go for the online stores. Considering the case of the Asia-Pacific region the numbers of online shopping increased after the emergence of COVID-19 to 1, 5, and 5 per cent for daily, 4 to 6 times a week, and 2 or 3 times a week purchasing respectively (Statista, 2021). The figures were quite similar in many other regions around the world as people were more focused on shopping easily without engaging in any sort of risk of being exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

Analyzing this situation more comprehensively it is evident that after the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic there was a decrease of around 50 per cent in physical shopping (Bhatti et al., 2020). Moreover, the reports indicated that a figure approximating 80 per cent of the consumers stopped outdoor consumption. On the other hand, there was a substantial increment in the frequency of online shopping as around 39% of consumers started to buy from online channels more frequently than pre-pandemic (Bhatti et al., 2020).

Peng and Chen (2021) however, highlighted that the change in consumer behavior is not limited to the shift to the online channels from the physical stores as there was a substantial increase in the nature and category of products and services being sold. Peng and Chen (2021) indicated that COVID-19 directly contributed to bad financial situations in many households around the world and this problematic situation was caused by unemployment and an increment in the prices of products. Therefore, the global consumer base became more focused on the primary and necessary products and service rather than luxurious products. Hence, there was a sustainable decrease in jewelry, and vehicle shopping on a global level as firstly these products are costly and they are mainly not a necessity for anybody (Salunke et al., n.d.).

On the other hand, there was an increment in the shopping of basic commodities like toilet paper, groceries, and sanitization products. The tourism industry also faced a decrement of 76 per cent of total customers because of governments lockdown policies, fear in the customer base, and high expenses of tourism which people were not ready to bear in the dreadful period of the pandemic (Salunke et al., n.d.). E-commerce platforms like Amazon increased observed increment in sales and profits to a substantial extent because of increased demands in the daily life product which the consumers used to buy from their local stores or supermarkets near them (Peng & Chen, 2021). However, this behavior change was also a bit problematic for e-commerce platforms as they faced issues in dealing with the drastically increased demands as the supply was configured to the pre-COVID-19 setting therefore there were problems in adapting to new settings as the numbers of suppliers were limited which mad the supply of products limited. This also forced Amazon to limit the sales of some products for some months (Salunke et al. n.d.).

## **METHODOLOGY**

For the geographical distribution of a sample, the researcher prefers to distribute the questionnaire to the people of Pakistan, particularly in Karachi, since it is considered the largest and major city of Pakistan.

For selecting the participants and respondents for the questionnaire, the researcher assured that just those participants are categorized who were active in shopping and particularly those who were interconnected with the E-commerce websites. Moreover, the researcher ensured that both males and females were considered for data collection and ensured that all the participants were taken from 20 to 30 years.

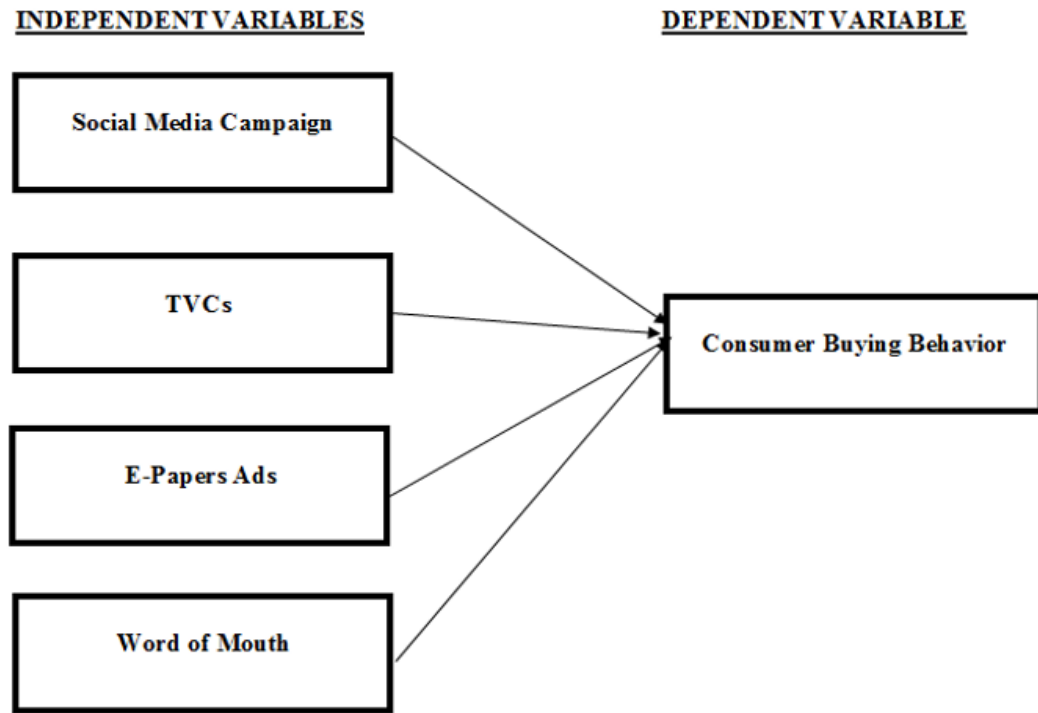
Probability and non-probability are the two highlighted techniques of sampling. According to Vehovar et al. (2016), in probability sampling, the researcher selects the research sample from a broader audience, but in non-probability sampling, not every member of the public has an equal chance of being included in the study since the researcher selects it from a specified community or population. The researcher chose non-probability sampling for the current research since covering a large audience is challenging and time-consuming. Therefore, the sample size for the questionnaire was kept, 200 participants.

According to Kennedy (2017), the research philosophy refers to a belief about how data and information regarding a certain phenomenon can be collected, analyzed, and integrated. In addressing the research questions, the nature and source of data can be easily dealt by the help of research philosophy. In this context, two major philosophies explored by the research onion model of Saunders include positivism and interpretivism. Considering the aim of the current research, the nature of research demands the determination of factors that affect the consumer's buying behaviors during the challenging time of Covid-19. Therefore, positivism philosophy can be the best fit for structuring the research background. The selection of positivism philosophy enables the researcher to collect factual data and information about e-commerce websites and factors affecting consumer behavior. Moreover, positivism philosophy facilitates the researcher to clearly understand the data and statistical numbers instead of theoretical knowledge.

The research design refers to a framework of methods and techniques used in the research to address the research objectives. Further, the study of Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) stated that research design is the main tool of the research, as it gives the structure and shape to the overall study. From the onion model of Saunders, it has been identified that researchers commonly use qualitative and quantitative methods. Based on quantitative calculations, quantitative research helps the researcher to find correlations between gathered data and observations (Zapotichna, 2021). Moreover, statistical approaches can be used to verify or reject theories relating to naturally occurring phenomena. Mostly, the researchers depend on qualitative research design to determine why a certain theory exists as well as what respondents think about that theory or phenomenon. In comparison, quantitative research is used when statistical findings are required to obtain actionable information. According to Akpan et al. (n.d), numbers and statistical data gives a more accurate view while making crucial decisions. Therefore, quantitative research design methodologies are required for every evaluation of the organization's progress.

Given the nature of this study, the researcher used a quantitative research strategy. The grounds for this option are straightforward, as the researcher determined that the data is necessary for the effective completion of this project requires measurable data to guarantee that the conclusions are feasible and justified. Furthermore, employing a quantitative design allows the researcher to justify their results using scientific, mathematical, and statistical methods; hence, it includes the credibility and dependability of the study findings.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Data collection is considered the most crucial and significant part of the research, as it defines the source and instrument from which data is collected and analyzed. For this purpose, primary and secondary are the two sources of data collection. As the name suggests, secondary data refers to the data collected by the previous researchers, whereas primary data refers to that data gathered by the researcher himself. Same as, both primary and secondary data are associated with numerous differences, but the most significant distinction is that primary data is fresh, original, and authentic. On the other hand, secondary data is just the analysis and interpretation of already conducted studies of different scholars. According to Whitehead and Whitehead (2020), primary data is acquired to solve the problem first-hand, while secondary data is obtained for other reasons. By considering the aim of the current study, the researcher has chosen a primary source of data collection, as the research demands fresh and reliable data regarding the factors that are affecting customers purchasing intentions and its impact on E-commerce business during the outbreak of Covid-19. The selection of primary source enables the researcher to structure the research questions to give reliable and statistical data interlinked with the topic of the study and does not include many extra factors. In addition to this, primary data also helps the researcher in the collection of the data according to the preferences regardless of social, religious, and political biases.

The selection of appropriate instrument for data collection plays a crucial role in the data collection process. For the current research, a questionnaire survey was selected to collect the data and information along with a deductive and quantitative approach. Ikart (2019) highlighted that a questionnaire survey associated with a set of questions that can be open-ended or close-ended. With the help of a questionnaire, the researcher was able to determine the relationship between independent and dependent variables regarding the study. Furthermore, the responses

from the questionnaire survey allow the researcher to collect diverse information from many people while maintaining high precision if the survey questions are well-designed and properly structured. In addition, it is worth mentioning that this questionnaire was based on 5-point Likert scale, where the frequencies used ranged in between strongly disagree and strongly agree.

The research mainly focused on the collection of primary data through a close-ended questionnaire. Therefore, it can be said that the collected data helps the researcher in the identification of the relationship between the factors influencing customer purchasing behavior in the E-commerce business during an outbreak of Covid-19.

The SPSS analysis tool has been used in the research to test the reliability and validity of the data collected from the questionnaire survey. In the current research, the reliability test was considered one and the major test in determining the reliability of questionnaire responses.

## **DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Reliability Analysis***

To ensure the credibility of the research results testing the survey data for reliability remains an important consideration. As discussed by De et al., (2017) the Cronbach Alpha test remains one of the most efficient and widely used statistical tools for checking the reliability of the data collected from the survey. The reliability of the data can be assessed based on the different ranges of alpha values as reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

<b>Variable</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math> Value</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>
Social Media Campaign	0.829	4
Television Commercial	0.936	4
E-Paper Advertisement	0.860	4
Word of Mouth	0.700	4
Consumer Buying Behavior	0.718	4
<b>Overall</b>	0.733	20

### ***Pearson's Correlation***

#### ***Regression Analysis: Model Summary***

The regression analysis remains an important approach to explain the linearity of the relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variable. As discussed by Daoud (2017) the credibility of the arguments in the regression analysis significantly relies over the value of standard error of estimates. The low value of the standard error of estimates indicates the high levels of credibility of the regression analysis. In the case of the current study, as reflected in model summary

Table 2, the value of standard error of estimate is low i.e., 0.654. Therefore, the results obtained through regression analysis can be justified as valid.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.362 <sup>a</sup>	.131	.113	.656

a. Predictors: (Constant), Word\_of\_Mouth, Social\_Media\_Campaigns, Television\_Commercials, Epaper\_Advertisement

With respect to the results in ANOVA, the study has showed significance value of 0.000, and this indicates that the regression model being used in this research will lead to meaningful results. This makes the findings of the research as justified and useful in reaching a decision about the key factors affecting the consumer buying behavior in COVID-19.

### ***Regression Analysis: ANOVA***

The analysis of coefficients in regression analysis remains significant in terms of defining the relationship between dependent variables and the independent variables. As reflected in the coefficient Table 4 a sig. value has been calculated for each dependent variable. If the value of sig. is lesser than 0.05 it indicates that there exists a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. For instance, as evident from Table 4, the sigh value for social media campaigns is (0.159>0.05), this indicates that there is no significant positive relationship between social media campaigns and consumer buying behavior. Similarly, in case of television commercials sig. value is 0.271 which indicates that the relationship between the television commercials and consumer buying behavior is not linear. Contrary to this, in case of e-paper advertisement and word of mouth the sigh values are (0.004 & 0.003 <0.05) receptively which indicates that there exists a linear relationship among these variables and consumer buying behavior.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.629	4	3.157	7.342	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	83.851	195	.430		
	Total	96.480	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Cosumer\_buying\_behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Word\_of\_Mouth, Social\_Media\_Campaigns, Television\_Commercials, Epaper\_Advertisement

The ANOVA table shows F-value of 33.492 and a p-value of 0.00. Therefore, the analysis can be said statistically significant as F-value is greater than 4 and p-value is less than 0.05.

### Regression Analysis: Coefficients

Table 4: Coefficients Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.844	.301		6.118	.000
	Social_Media_Campaigns	.096	.068	.109	1.412	.159
	Television_Commercials	-.085	.077	-.088	-1.104	.271
	Epaper_Advertisement	.209	.071	.238	2.931	.004
	Word_of_Mouth	.209	.068	.208	3.059	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Cosumer\_buying\_behaviour

### Hypotheses Testing Results

The hypothesis testing performed for the different research hypothesis indicate that Social Media Campaigns, E-paper advertisements, and word of mouth has a linear relationship with consumer buying behavior and the respective hypothesis can be accepted. On the other hand, television commercial depicts a non-linear relationship with consumer buying behavior and the corresponding hypothesis is rejected as shown in Table 6.

Table 5: Result of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	T-Value	Sig.	Result
Social Media Campaigns has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.	1.412	0.159	<b>Rejected</b>
Television commercials has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.	1.104	0.271	<b>Rejected</b>
E-paper advertisements has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.	2.931	0.004	<b>Accepted</b>
Word of Mouth has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.059	0.003	<b>Accepted</b>

## CONCLUSION

Conclusively, it is critical to understand the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and the problems that the consumers and e-commerce businesses faced. In this context, this research aimed to investigate the factors which throw an impact on consumer buying behavior in the e-commerce industry during COVID-19; in this way, the objective of this study was to determine the effect of consumer buying behavior in the e-commerce industry. In addition, another objective of the study was to analyse the factors that influence consumer buying behavior in the e-commerce business during COVID-19. The above-mentioned research is considered a significant aspect of the research. It has highlighted the factors affecting consumer buying behavior in the E-commerce industry during the outbreak of COVID-19 such as consumer demand, panic shopping, and supply chain disruption.

It is also concluded from the findings of the research that due to the Covid-19 Pandemic; the existing behaviors of customers and structures of E-commerce business are being questioned. During this specific time of the COVID-19 pandemic, this crisis is highly capable of triggering the necessary changes in the economy and society. However, the trends that have been developed during the pandemic could remain stable in future, which will impose consequences on the brick-and-mortar stores because of the rapid development in the E-commerce business. Moreover, it is also summarized that during the COVID-19 crisis, the customers prefer and are spending more time online; therefore, it is found that the intention regarding shopping online has been significantly increased within the customers. In addition, it is also concluded from the findings that the external normative pressures impact the purchasing intention of the customers. It is suggested by the researcher that the E-commerce businesses can highly induce the purchasing behavior by strategically binding the normative impact, and thus, the sophisticated online websites and transparent communication consist of great significance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, it is also concluded that the buying behavior of the customers is highly impacted by some of the factors, which include time effective shopping, quality of the product, ease of payments and administrative factors. The E-commerce business must ensure that they provide the products or services that they offer online must have good quality so that it might attract customers and thus, impacts their buying behavior of the customers. In addition to this, the E-commerce business must ensure that the payment option must be secure, convenient, and easier. Most online consumers face difficulties in using online payment systems such as debit and credit cards and are unacquainted with the usage of systems of electronic payment. Therefore, the organization must also provide them with the opportunity in terms of payment on delivery option since most of the researchers prefer cash on delivery rather than systems of electronic payments. It is also concluded that availability of the product, security, service delivery and variety of products are also some of the factors that have a huge impact on the online shopping behavior of the customers. The customer who prefers online shopping are highly attracted by the transportation, infrastructure, timesaving, delivery, and internet stability as well for shopping online more frequently. Online shopping assists the customers in reducing the shopping time of the customers and allows them to attain a lot of information regarding the products or services



and compare the prices with other E-commerce businesses that offer the same or similar products.

Additionally, E-commerce businesses are required to make sure that privacy and security, along with the data of the consumers, are protected from any violence and being cheated. In addition, it is also concluded from the finding chapter of this research that the buying behavior of the consumer is highly associated with the search engines, engaging with several posts on social media and many other actions. Henceforth, it is extremely significant for e-commerce businesses to comprehend the context of customer behavior in terms of their online purchasing intentions as it might allow them to structure their marketing efforts effectively that would lead them to success. Moreover, it is also concluded from the findings section that during the past year (Since the beginning of the COVID-19); the online shopping rate has been significantly increased. It is also concluded from the findings of this research that the main reason for the customers to move towards online shopping is due to restrictions on large gatherings and lockdown situations; due to this reason, the E-commerce business has been found to have decreased in their revenue. Notwithstanding, approximately 60 per cent of the third-party online marketplace have found to increase in their sales.

In addition to this, the 58 per cent of the E-commerce business that offers their products and services online have faced a decrease in their sales approximately 58 per cent. It is also concluded from the findings of this research that for completely comprehending the buying behavior of the customers and undertaking the necessary measures for impacting them positively, E-commerce businesses must investigate and identify the measures for identifying the factors and undertaking the decision-making process effectively. Since the main of this research was to determine the factors that have a huge impact on the buying behaviors of the customers, social media campaigns, television commercials, newspaper ads, and word of mouth are the main factors that have been discussed in the literature review section of this research. It is also summarized that due to the rapid development in the environment of the businesses, before making purchases of any product, engaging in social media posts and comments, and consulting search engines are identified to be some of the top priorities of the customers while with respect to the offline activities WOM and commercial play's significant role in structuring the behavior of the customers. In this regard, the WOM has been identified to have a robust effect on the online purchasing behavior of the customers, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak. Thus, word of mouth has become one of the most significant marketing strategies that are also used for the marketing of the product or services of the organization, as it does not require any additional cost or effort of the organization for marketing their products or services.

Additionally, to examine the role of top e-commerce websites during the COVID-19. To explore all the objectives, the researchers first focused on the available critical literature review; then, the researcher has analyzed gaps from the available data. Furthermore, to fulfill the research gaps, the researcher has selected the quantitative research design as the aim of this research is to analyses the impact of e-commerce website on the consumer buying behavior that is why the quantitative strategy has enabled the researcher to incorporate the empirical data which was the

beneficial as compared to the qualitative data. Another reason is that the quantitative research strategy enables the researcher to use the positivism research philosophy by which the factual data has been interpreted in the research to add more value. In this research, was required the hypothesis to measure the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In this way, the deductive research approach played an essential role to build the hypothesis. By which the researcher has easily analyzed the relationships among the social media campaigns, television commercials, newspaper ads, word of mouth, and consumer buying behaviors. The researcher has used the primary data to evaluate the research issue. The primary data has been gathered from the questionnaire. In that case, there were 200 participants in the survey. The sampling strategy has been used non-probability, which has been employed via convenience sampling strategy. The reliability of the data has been checking via the SPSS software. At the end of the thesis, the recommendations and the implications have been given to determine the strategies.

Moreover, from the above-mentioned research, it has been concluded from the findings that change in consumer buying behavior is not restricted to shift to the online channels from the physical stores as there was a substantial increase in the nature and category of products and services being sold. In addition, COVID-19 directly contributed to bad financial situations in many households around the world and this problematic situation was caused by unemployment and an increment in the prices of products. Therefore, the global consumer base became more focused on the primary and necessary products and service rather than luxurious products. Hence there was a sustainable decrease in jewelry and vehicle shopping on a global level as firstly, these products are costly and are mainly not a necessity for anybody. In addition, from this research, the main four factors have been concluded to find out their impact on the customers' buying behavior. These factors are social media campaigns, television commercial, newspaper ads, and word of mouth. From the perception of the consumer, the researcher has reached better outcomes. Through the regression analysis technique, the hypotheses have been tested. Additionally, the researcher has analyzed that some drawbacks have been analyzed in the period of online shopping, which has thrown the bad impact on the e-commerce industries such as delayed delivery, frauds, insufficient payment methods could not facilitate the consumers, which are required to be considered urgently. Conclusively, the above-mentioned components are examined in depth to determine their impact on consumer buying behavior and e-commerce businesses.

Based on the findings of the research, the following are some of the recommendations for the E-commerce business to affect the online purchasing behavior of the individual.

It is recommended to the E-commerce business that they must undertake both the activities, whether online or offline, in order to attract the customers for purchasing the products online such as, for online activities, the organization can communicate with their targeted audience by posting something relevant to their product or organization while for offline activities the organization can market their products or services through word of mouth by providing the customers with best possible services or quality goods to their consumers.

The E-commerce businesses are recommended to capitalize and leverage on their loyal customers and encourage them to further promote the brand. This is particularly important given the deception over social media platforms, and since customers are more likely to take recommendations from peers and colleagues seriously, it can help the brands to experience increase in their sales and performance, despite COVID-19.

The findings and the research do not only comprise the managerial implication but also the theoretical implication. In this research, it has been determined that online shopping has increased due to COVID-19, which had a bad impact on consumer buying behavior. On the other hand, most of the drawbacks have been found in the research, such as the rate of frauds increased through online shopping, which had a bad impact on the audience. That is why the e-commerce industries are required to provide the actual quality of work; online retailers are required to provide the products and the services as shown in the pictures. In addition, recent research has determined that people must face late delivery services, which is giving a bad impact on the e-commerce industry. That is why online retailers are required to provide the product on time to the customers. In addition, in an e-commerce business, the expenses of advertising for every product must be pushed where extra expenditures are equivalent to the revenue that is generated from extra sales. This research has been accomplished through the quantitative strategy, which has collected the empirical data to resolve the research issue in an appropriate manner; on the other hand, this research has ignored the theoretical findings, which can be beneficial to interpret the theories related to the consumer buying behavior for the better understandings of the research topic. Similarly, the research has not used the secondary data and accomplished their research; on the other hand, through the interpretation of the secondary data, the available research analysis could be identified.

Based on the findings of this research, it can be argued that utilitarian, hedonic, and normative factors are highly associated with the online purchasing behavior of the customers. These results are identified to be significant for three main reasons. First, no one is sure regarding how long this COVID-19 outbreak will last and how much further lockdown will be imposed in future. Consequently, the business must adopt such models that significantly adhere to the changes that might occur in the behavior of the consumers within short and medium terms. Secondly, it is pointed out by the institutes of market research and recent research that behaviors of the consumers might be changed for the long term with respect to reaction to the COVID-19 outbreak; therefore, the E-commerce business must get ahead of these trends to meet the future needs of the customers successfully. Thirdly, many E-commerce businesses have invested undeniable time, energy, and resources for the development and enhancement of their strategies with regards to E-commerce during the COVID-19 outbreak. To ensure that e-commerce can maintain the popularity attained by it during the shutdown in the crisis of the COVID-19 after the reopening of the stores, the E-commerce businesses are required to attain detailed knowledge of their customers regarding their customer's motivation. It is determined that the behavior of the individual is highly impacted through media reports and information that is provided through the social media networks with respect to the national and global economies of the state.

Subsequently, the corporate and political decision makers must be well-aware of the opportunities that are available to them for shaping the behavior of the consumers with the help of communication strategies.

Moreover, it is found that the information attained through social media with respect to the current economic situation impacts the buying behavior of the overall customers. Thus, it is recommended that policymakers must use their impact to upsurge their consumption during the COVID-19 outbreak, not only with the assistance of policy measures but also by implying some of the strategic communication through utilizing social media. For the E-commerce businesses, it is implied by our results that they must utilize their existence on social media for providing transparent information with respect to their current economic situations, as it may aid the businesses in encouraging the purchase intentions of the customers. The E-commerce business can convey their messages through social media platforms, for instance, Facebook or Instagram, to reach many audiences. It can also be practically implied by the e-commerce businesses that they must provide the customers with enjoyable shopping experiences that are adapted with respect to the demands of the crisis and the future. For instance, digital rooms could be an interesting possibility, where customers can upload their picture or generate an avatar to try the products virtually.

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