# THE FACTORS OF BUYING BEHAVIORS AS INFLUENCERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PURCHASE DECISIONS AMONG HOTEL INDUSTRY CUSTOMERS

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**ABSTRACT**

Social media is one of the influencers in people's buying behavior. This study aimed to determine the relationship between buying behavior as influencers of Social Media Purchase decisions among hotel industry customers. Using a quantitative research design, the study employed a descriptive correlational method with 200 respondents whom the researcher purposively chose. The study utilized statistical tools such as mean and Pearson-moment correlation. The findings revealed that all domains of buying behavior significantly influence and predictors of social media-based purchase decisions.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Buying behavior, Purchase decision, Hotel industry customer, Davao region

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourism stands as one of the most rapidly expanding economic sectors worldwide, contributing to 9% of the global GDP and yielding 6% (equivalent to 1.4 trillion dollars) of the world's exports (United Nations World Tourism Organization, UNWTO, 2014). Projections indicate a continuous rise in tourism demand, with an anticipated average annual growth rate of 3.3%, aiming to reach 1800 million international tourist arrivals by 2030. Among these arrivals, leisure, recreational activities, and holidays are expected to constitute 54% of the total (UNWTO, 2011). The intangible, experiential, and composite nature of tourism products renders them challenging, if not impossible, to physically evaluate prior to purchase (Huang, 2010). Given this intangibility, the products and services offered by hotels engender highly emotional buying decisions that are difficult to replicate (Kwon, 2011). Consequently, consumer purchases within the tourism sector are perceived as risky and entail a substantial amount of information gathering during the decision-making process (Huang, 2010).

This underscores the heightened importance of social media in travel planning as a primary source of information for prospective travelers (Gretzel, 2010). Essentially, it suggests that hotels within the industry are overlooking significant opportunities in digital marketing if they fail to participate in social media activities such as tweeting, linking, or maintaining an active blog. This is particularly significant given the vast number of individuals—exceeding 500 million—actively engaged with social media platforms (Ostrow, 2010). In fact, a significant portion—fifty-eight percent (58%)—of online travelers in the United States rely on ratings for

their travel-related information: 49% consult reviews and recommendations, 18% utilize photos and their friends' social network sites, 12% read blogs, and 5% watch videos (eMarketer, 2007). Additionally, the Philippines boasts a substantial online presence, with 67 million individuals currently browsing the web, equating to 63% of the total population (Campus, 2016). Moreover, data from the Philippines and 13 other countries in the Asia Pacific region indicate that approximately three out of every five individuals—or 59% of the online population in the Philippines—access the internet for shopping purposes, representing a significant increase from 2013, when this figure stood at 40% (Pedroso, 2015).

Recent findings from relevant studies have affirmed the significant role of user- generated content in the decision-making process. Social media, defined as a collection of Internet-based applications rooted in the principles and technology of Web 2.0, facilitates the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). While a previous study conducted at Western Kentucky University examined 249 consumer purchases to assess the types of products bought and their associated costs, the results revealed that consumers tend to purchase either low-cost or high-cost items based on recommendations from social media contacts or friends (Forbes & Vespoli, 2013). Nevertheless, the precise role of social media in the purchasing behavior and decision-making processes of travelers remains an area that is not thoroughly understood and warrants further research (Cox, 2009).
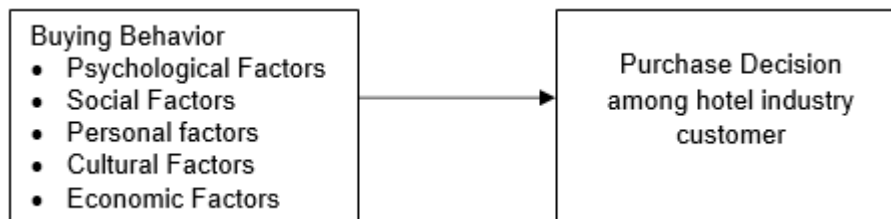


This study sought to determine the relationship between buying behavior as influencers of Social Media Purchase decision among hotel industry customers. After such, the researcher plans to disseminate the results of the study by coordinating with the Department of Tourism at Davao City to seek for organizations that will benefit the most, as well as with the different academic organization like Council of Hotel and Restaurants Management Progress (COHREP), Association of Administrators in Hospitality, Hotel and Restaurant Management Educational Institution (AHRMEI), Council of Deans of Tourism and Hospitality Educators (CoDTHE) and Union of Filipino Tourism Educators (UFTE) to wide spread the information sometime of 2025.

Despite the fact that purchase decisions have been studied by researchers from various perspectives, the commonality of these views on purchase decisions can be found, is that purchase decisions, is the reflection consumer's psychological process, it is a common predictor of consumer purchase behavior. Regardless of different views, recent studies stress the importance of consumer recognition and perception in determining the purchase intention. Whether it is the product related functions and features or technology based situation, purchase decisions will be greatly influenced by consumer's assessment and evaluation on these internal and external factors.

## 2.0 METHODS

To address the stated research questions above, the researcher used a quantitative research design employing the descriptive-correlation survey to facilitate an efficient and effective data gathering, collection and analysis, considering the time constraints. It is therefore the data will be collected concurrently, and given same priority and undergo data integration. The data can be collected and analyzed separately and independently using the techniques traditionally associated with each data type. The two methods in this design have an equal priority so that both play an equally important role in addressing the research problem. This will keep the data independently during the data collection and analysis and then mixes or merges the results after. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

This study was conducted in the Philippines, specifically at Davao Region. Davao Region is located in the Southeastern portion of the island of Mindanao surrounding the Davao Gulf. It is bounded on the north by the provinces of Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur and Bukidnon. In the east it is bounded by the Philippine Sea; and in the west by the Central Mindanao provinces. Within the broader geographic context, the Davao Region area faces Micronesia in the Southern Pacific Ocean to the east, and the Eastern Indonesia through the Celebes Sea to the south. It has a total land area of 19,671.83 sq. kms. Corresponding to 6.6% of the Philippines' total land area and 16.3% of the total land area of Mindanao. The total population in the area reached 3,933,018 or 21.2% of the Mindanao's total population.

The researcher focuses on a limited number of population or group of people who have been purposefully identified to achieve the research aims and objectives. It is therefore, the researcher has consciously selected these individuals whom he believed, have in-depth knowledge on the topic under study. Such as: an individual who are choosing a hotel services or product based on the suggestions or recommendation of social media friends. As recommended and suggested by the technical committee, it will have 150-200 total study participants, because the study participants are considered uncommon and challenging to find. Thus, it will use purposive sampling technique to justify the number of targeted participants. The researcher will use adapted survey questionnaire to get the necessary information to satisfy the aims and objective of this research.

For this research, different statistical analysis was applied to accurately predict which among the three variables has significantly affect purchase decisions of hotel industry customers. Thus, correlation analysis, comparative analysis and regression analysis will be used to analyze, validate and to find out the acceptance of the research questions or hypothesis. Frequencies and mean will also be utilize to show the participants responses, based on the data. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) will also be engage to process all the essential data.The purpose of comparative analysis is that, it allows the researcher to compare two groups of data sets at the same time, it will determine whether a relationship exists between them.

Correlation here means a Pearson correlation which measures the strength and direction of linear relationship between variables, it also allows the researcher to compare the effects of variables measured on different scales. These analysis will help the researcher to eliminate and evaluate the best set of variables to be used for building predictive models. Regression analysis involves identifying the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. A model of the relationship is hypothesized, and estimates of the parameter values are used to develop an estimated regression equation. Various tests are then

employed to determine if the model is satisfactory. The mean is equal to the sum of all the values in the data set divided by the number of values in the data set. Mean is the average of all numbers.

## 3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result as well the data analysis is the most important aspects of this research. There were 400 participants for the quantitative part, the data sets were obtained through a survey questionnaire. The data was analyzed through different statistical tools.

**Level of Buying Behavior**. Data on Table 1.1 shows the level of perceived buying behavior of hotel industry customers. There are five indicators to measure the participants buying behavior, namely: internal or Psychological Factors Social Factors, personal factors, cultural factors and economic factors.

**Table 1.1: Level of Buying Behavior**

| Indicators/Statements | Mean | SD | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Internal or Psychological Factors** | | | |
| 1. Conforming to a step by step process when buying a product | 4.07 | .92 | High |
| 2. Consulting friends and family members in my choice for products | 3.83 | .88 | High |
| 3. Conforming to a process when deciding on which product alternative to buy | 3.96 | .80 | High |
| 4. Significance of consumer reviews | 3.93 | .72 | High |
| 5. Considering several alternatives to ensure buying the best product | 4.10 | .78 | High |
| **Category Mean** | **3.98** | **.38** | **High** |
| **Social Factors** | | | |
| 6. Relevance of Consumerism issues | 4.13 | .77 | High |
| 7. Fitness with lifestyle of buying products or services posted in the Social Media | 4.06 | .76 | High |
| 8. Influence of Consumer reviews on shopping decision | 4.10 | .81 | High |
| 9. Preference of friends and family recommendations to ensure the best buy | 4.07 | .80 | High |
| **Category Mean** | **4.09** | **.44** | **High** |
| **Personal factors** | | | |
| 10. Being a smart shopper | 4.13 | .77 | High |
| 11. Scrutinizing the product for every purchase made to get the best value | 4.06 | .76 | High |
| 12. Not interested in bargain seeking | 4.06 | .76 | High |
| 13. Not interested in sales. | 4.10 | .81 | High |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14. Spending extra time to get the cheapest goods with good quality | 4.07 | .80 | High |
| **Category Mean** | **4.08** | **.44** | **High** |
| **Cultural factors** | | | |
| 15. Importance of the suitability to one's culture, traditions, customs, beliefs when buying | 3.88 | .89 | High |
| 16. Importance of the approval of family and friends when buying. | 3.82 | .84 | High |
| 17. Searching of products in social media as a form of bonding with family and friends | 3.98 | .94 | High |
| **Category Mean** | **3.89** | **.55** | **High** |
| **Economic Factors** | | | |
| 18. Practicality of searching for products or services from social media | 3.82 | .84 | High |
| 19. Thinking that shopping wisely is a petty issue as compared to how to make more money | 4.07 | .80 | High |
| 20. Being able to save a lot of money by careful shopping | 4.13 | .77 | High |
| **Category Mean** | **4.00** | **.52** | **High** |
| **Overall Mean** | **4.01** | **.31** | **High** |

Results revealed that the buying behavior of the participants has an overall mean of 4.01 which means that the factor is important. The Standard Deviation of .31 connotes that the responses of the participants are homogeneous and consistent.

Social Factors. Among the indicators, the social factors have the highest category mean of 4.09 which is described as high. Specifically, the statement about the relevance of consumerism issues yielded the highest mean of 4.13, described as high while the item about the fitness with lifestyle of buying products or services posted in the Social Media got the lowest mean of 4.06 which is still described as high.

Personal Factors. This domain got the second highest category mean of 4.09 which is described as high and interpreted as important. The item pertaining to being a smart shopper got the highest mean of 4.13 while the items on scrutinizing the product for every purchase made to get the best value and not interested in bargain seeking both got the lowest of mean of 4.06 still described as high.

Economic factors. This is the domain with the third highest category mean of 4.00 which still described as high. The highest mean among the statements is being able to save a lot of money by careful shopping (( = 4.13) described as high. But the lowest mean of 3.82 pertains to the

statement-- the practicality of searching products or services from social media which still described as high.

Psychological Factors. These factors got a category mean of 3.98 which is described as high and interpreted as important. The highest among the five statements is the considering several alternatives to ensure buying the best product with mean of 4.10 which is described as high. The lowest is the consulting friends and family members in my choice for products ((x =3.83) but still described as high description.

Cultural factors. These factors yielded a category mean of 3.89 which is described as high and interpreted as important. Among the three statements the highest pertains to the searching of products in social media as a form of bonding with family and friends with the mean of 3.98 (high).

**Level of Purchased Decision**. Data in Table 1.2 pertains to the purchasing decision of the participants with an overall mean of 3.96, which is described as high and interpreted as important. The overall standard deviation of .55 implies that the responses are homogeneous. These are the following four problem/need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and purchase decision.

Problem Need Recognition. This domain has the highest category mean of 4.08 which is described as high and interpreted as important. The statement on considering using social media when there is a need for a product or services posted the highest mean of 4.13, described as high. The other two items both posted mean of 4.06 (high)-- considering social media when there is need to buy a product or services and buying on social media as a shopping comfort zone.

**Table 1.2: Level of Purchase Decision of the participants**

| Indicators/Statements | Mean | SD | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Problem/Need Recognition** | | | |
| 1. Considering using social media when there is a need for a product or services. | 4.13 | .77 | High |
| 2. Considering social media when there is need to buy a product or services. | 4.06 | .76 | High |
| 3. Buying on social media as a shopping comfort zone | 4.06 | .76 | High |
| **Category Mean** | **4.08** | **.59** | **High** |
| **Information Search** | | | |
| 4. Thinking that friends and family on Social Media can provide the information one's need | 4.07 | .92 | High |
| 5. Influence of positive reviews and comments from friends on products or services on Social Media | 3.83 | .88 | High |
| 6. Trusting the reviews and comments on products from people they do not know on Social Media | 3.96 | .80 | High |
| 7. Seeking friends' opinions on Social Media before any purchase decision. | 3.93 | .72 | High |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8. Asking friends' opinion on social media if doubtful about services or products. | 4.10 | .78 | High |
| 9. Seeking opinions of people they don't know on Social Media before making my purchase decision. | 4.07 | .80 | High |
| **Category Mean** | **3.99** | **.34** | **High** |
| **Evaluation of Alternatives** | | | |
| 10. Using social media to look for alternatives if not satisfied with the products or services. | 3.88 | .90 | High |
| 11. Looking for alternatives on Social Media if confused of a product or a service | 3.82 | .84 | High |
| 12. Asking people they do not know on social media for alternative if not satisfied about the products or services they purchase | 3.98 | .93 | High |
| **Category Mean** | **3.89** | **.55** | **High** |
| **Purchase Decision** | | | |
| 13. Thinking that Social Media plays a role in the final decision to purchase. | 3.88 | .89 | High |
| 14. Influence of positive reviews and comments from friends on products or services on Social Media | 3.82 | .84 | High |
| 15. The ability of the friends' pictures about a product or service on Social Media to entice one to buy the product | 3.98 | .94 | High |
| **Category Mean** | **3.89** | **.55** | **High** |
| **Overall Mean** | **3.96** | **.28** | **High** |

Information Search. This is the domain with the second the second highest category mean of 3.99 equivalent to high description. The item about asking friends' opinion on social media if doubtful about services or products got the highest mean of 4.10 with a high description, which means that the use of social media in purchase decision is evident.

Purchase decision. This domain has a category mean of 3.89 which implies that the use of social media in purchase decision is evident. The statement with the highest mean is the ability of the friends' pictures about a product or service on Social Media to entice one to buy the product while the lowest is on the influence of positive reviews and comments, but both are still in the high described as high.

Evaluation of alternatives. This domain yielded a category mean of 3.89 which is described as high. The statement about the ability of the friends' pictures about a product or service on Social Media to entice one to buy the product got the highest mean of 3.98, which is described as high while the item on looking for alternatives on Social Media if confused got the lowest mean of 3.82 (high).

### 3.1 Domains of Buying Behaviors as Influencers of Social Media Purchase decision

The result of the regression analysis as shown in Table 1.3 revealed that all the domains of buying behavior such as internal, social, personal, cultural and economic factors are significant predictors of social media-based purchase decision on its individual capacity ($p<.05$). Moreover, among the five domains, the personal factor best influences

**Table 1.3 Buying Behaviors as Influencers of Social Media Purchase decision**

| Variables | Standardized Coefficient B | p-value | t | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Internal | .40 | .00 | 16.20 | Significant |
| Social | .53 | .00 | -6.15 | Significant |
| Personal | .87 | .00 | 11.72 | Significant |
| Cultural | .37 | .00 | 13.75 | Significant |
| Economic | .23 | .00 | 6.69 | Significant |

$r^2$ = .84
F = 414.25
p-value = .000

the social media-based purchase decision with the highest beta coefficient of .87. This result signifies that for every unit improvement in the personal factor results in a .87 increase in social media-based purchase decision.

As a model, the $r^2$ of .84 signifies that the five factors on its combined capacity can significantly influence the social media-based purchase decision by 84%. Hence, only 16% of other factors that may influence social media-based purchase decision is not covered in this.

The current researcher's findings support the study of Tintin (2013) that according to marketing theory, there are four primary factors affecting consumer behavior: cultural, social, personal, and psychological. Cultural factors comprised of a consumer's culture, subculture, and social class. These factors are often inherent in consumers' values and decision processes. Social factors include groups--reference groups, aspiration groups and member groups, family, roles, and status. This finding explains the outside influences of others on consumers' purchase decision either directly or indirectly. Psychological factors affecting the purchase decision include motivation (Maslow's hierarchy of needs), perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes. Personal factors include such variables as age and life cycle stage, occupation, economic circumstances, lifestyle, and personality. These factors include the demographic characteristics of consumers.

Also, this result jives with the observation of Philips and Noble (2007) that customers behave differently, some value price and some of them value the quality of the good or service, but there are numbers of people, especially those using Internet and social network, who cares about the way companies communicate and respect its audience whether physically or virtually.

Thus, engaging customers via Social Network Marketing where the emotional bonds exist between the company and the customer, there is a big opportunity for that business to fulfill the core goals of the relationship marketing by convincing the customer to purchase the good or service. At this stage, even occupying the consumer's mind in a way that there is a company

respecting its audience and gets aid for creating value can be a big forward step for the company since it can turn to the customers purchase decision later.

## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, Social factor domain of buying behavior has predicted to be the best influencers of Social Media based purchase decision of the participants. The findings show that consumers perceive social media as information source when they want to purchase in services or hotel accommodation, nowadays the consumer gradually replacing the search engines sites. Because when consumers searched on online social media networks they got involved in external information search that consists of word of mouth communication. It is therefore that social media has influential factors to consumers during their purchase decision-making process. It also show that different social media users through online occurrence can influence consumers to visit a hotel or place like resorts.

This observation made manifested in the results of this study. However, this study also found that genders have impacted the influence of Social Media at certain changes.

Also, Social Media may not only impacts consumers but also businesses who wants to utilize its free of charge, faster and accessible advantages.

Since social media has influential factors to consumers during their purchase decision-making process it is therefore recommended that hotel industry may consider to use social media as platform to communicate with their target customers. It also recommends that business organization in any size can utilize or take advantages of the unique characteristics of social media to boost their organizational performances including marketing and sales.

Furthermore, since sociability is specifically represented on the degree of commonality and contentedness. Companies may consider create public pages or groups on social media themselves and invite target users to join. This may be an effective strategy for the companies to have a full control of group discussions, reviews, and comments. However it will not end in just creating a public profile, because it may be the beginning of social media marketing. Thus, companies should continuously maintain a page for publishing topics and information that can attract more users especially those real contributors and engage them into discussion.

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