

## **Social Media Factors and Purchase Intention of Beauty Products in Mauritius**

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### **Abstract**

Social media marketing has shown its impact when it comes to boosting e-commerce. However, there are very limited academic research focuses on the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius. The objectives of this research is to investigate Electronic Word of Mouth, Social Networking Sites and Mobile Applications and purchase intention. The study population involves 267 questionnaires filled by the female population via convenience sampling method. Multiple regression analysis is conducted using SPSS. The research finds significant positive relationship between Electronic Word of Mouth and Social Networking Sites with Purchase Intention. In this respect, beauty product seller could benefit from this research by obtaining better understanding on social media marketing strategies.

### **Keywords**

Purchase Intention, Electronic word-of-mouth, Social Networking Sites, Mobile Applications

### **Introduction**

Social media is an online tool that facilitates connections, collaborations, competitions and provide another platform whereby consumers can easily access information from other users across the globe (Kaplan, Andreas and Haenlein, 2010). Social media platforms is also becoming a new market place as more than 14.8 billion USD was spent on social media advertisements in 2016 in The United States (Baptista et al, 2017). Digital marketers attract social media users by sending targeted ads related to the products or services in order to obtain likes, followers and eventually purchases. Nevertheless, there are limited research conducted in terms of the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius. Therefore, this study aims at reducing the gap by studying the causable social media marketing factors that influence the purchase intention of consumers with regards to beauty products in Mauritius. Since there are mixed findings as well, as explained later on in gaps of this research, the study also aims at verifying which findings are more accurate.

This present study provides an overview on social media marketing influence on purchase intention in the beauty industry in Mauritius. The research objectives are 1) To examine the relationship between electronic word of mouth and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius; 2) To assess the relationship between Social Networking Sites and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius; 3) To investigate the relationship between Mobile Application and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius.

Purchase intention is the process of decision-making whereby one can study the factors influencing the purchase decision of the consumer (Shah et al, 2012). Constructs like considering something before purchasing a brand and anticipating purchasing a brand helps to scope the intentions of purchasing (Chu et al., 2013). Consumer purchase decision is known to be a complex process. Purchase intention centralizes around behavior, perceptions and attitudes of consumers.. Purchase intention may vary depending on the price, perceived quality and value (Shah et al, 2012).

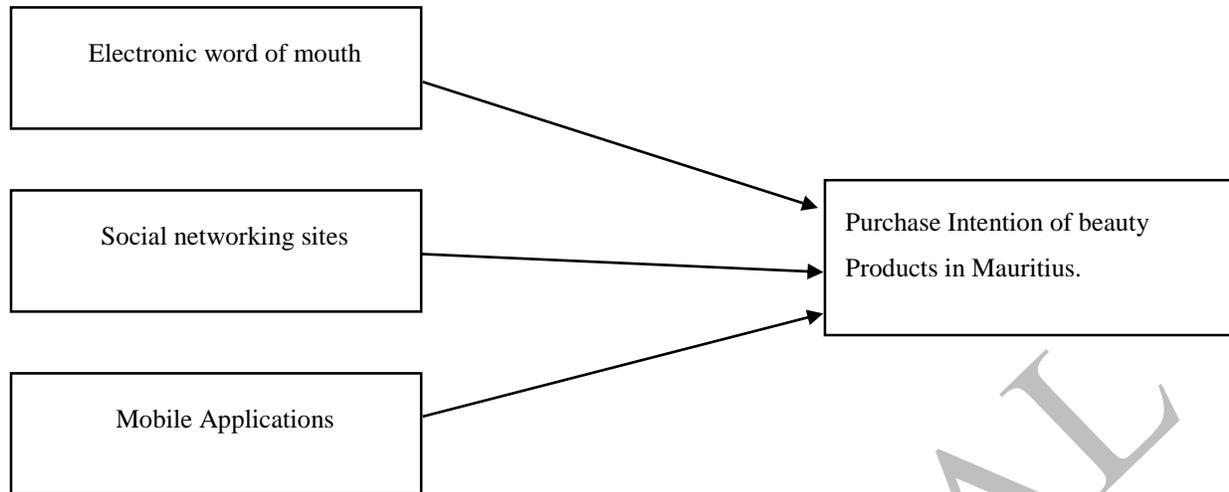
Word of mouth (WOM) is defined as a form of social influence in consumer behavior and is considered to be the most reliable approach in regard to providing product information in terms of feedback or recommendation (Lis and Neßler, 2014). In the lexicon of product information, recommendations are considered as feedback given from customers to customers. eWOM forms part of the same context but on a digital platform.

Social media has brought forward new platforms for businesses to engage with the consumers. Businesses are using social media to generate content as well as networking with other users (Hajli, 2014). Culture has been known to influence usage of social media sites. A study shows evidence that familiarity in Latin America was one of the strong determinant in purchase intention via social media sites (Ng, 2013).

Mobile Application, also abbreviated as “app”, is a rising phenomenon where the mobility platform draws attention of companies to promote products and services for users (Xu et al, 2015). For this research, WhatsApp and Snapchat will be used to study the purchase behavior of Mauritians. Snapchat is a both messaging platform and a social network app. Users often communicate by sending other users photos or short videos that can be viewed for 10 seconds only and while the app does provide text chats and video calls, Snapchat’s ephemeral components still remain the short span of viewing which make users post less perfect photos (Bayer et al, 2016).

The antecedents of social media marketing can be divided into three major categories which are electronic word of mouth, social networking sites and mobile applications. The factors can be placed under Independent Variable (IV). The three factors will be tested on their relationship with customer purchase intention towards beauty products. On the other hand, the Dependent Variable (DV) is purchase intention which is also the phenomenon under study. Lastly, the study will be based in Mauritius.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



This research study was conducted to find out the relationship of independent variables, which are electronic word of mouth, social networking sites and mobile application with the dependent variable, which is purchase intension of beauty products in Mauritius (Figure 1). In this research, the hypotheses were defined as below:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between Social Network Sites (SNS) and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius.
- H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between mobile applications and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius.

## Methodology

Simple multiple regression is applied to test the relationship between social media marketing and the purchase intention on beauty products. The reliability of a measure is defined as an extend it is without bias and therefore required consistent measurement across time (Sekaran and Bougie, 2012). Bryman and Bell (2011) on the other hand define reliability as a measure of consistency in measuring a concept based on data collected. Reliability is an essential pre-requisite for validity, even though it is possible to have a reliable measure that is not valid. Cronbach's Alpha is calculated and checked against the data where, according to Tabachick & Fidelli (2013), recommended range is between 0.70 to 0.95, where the higher the value, the more reliable the data.

This research is interested in the factors of social media marketing that influence the purchase intension of beauty products which motivated the research to focus on the target

population mainly on female adults in Mauritius. Non-probability sampling, convenience sampling technique is adopted in this study. Adopting Krejcie and Morgan (1970) rule of thumb, a sample size of 384 questionnaires is suggested, assuming with 75% response rate.. The following table provides the information with regards to response rate and the number of surveys or questionnaires distributed and the returned surveys. The total number of questionnaires distributed were 450, but, only 267 were received and it was challenging to encourage more online purchasers of beauty products to complete the survey. Consequently, the response rate was only 59.3% which is relatively low, but acceptable. According to Baruch and Holtom (2008), an average level of response rate is 52.7%. All figures and tables should be labeled according to the sequence of 1, 2,

## Results and Discussion

In this section, the researcher used the multiple-regression analysis to check the relationships between independent variables and dependent variable for this model.

According to the Table 1, the model summary gives the information of how much of the variance in the dependent variable (purchase intention) is explained by the model (which includes the variables of electronic word of mouth, social networking sites and mobile applications). In this case the value is 0.367. Expressed as a percentage, this means that this model (which includes the independent variables) explains 36.7% of the variance in purchase intention. This is quite a respectable result of R<sup>2</sup> as Cohen (1998) shows that a value greater than 0.25 is considered medium. The Durbin Watson value is at 2.286 which is between 1.5 and 2.5, therefore there are very minimal autocorrelation among the variables (Field, 2009). Table 1 indicates the main results of the structural relationships among the dependent and the independent variables. T-value can be used to evaluate the relationship (Hair et al., 2015). Based on the Table 1, it shows that two hypotheses (H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>) are supported, but H<sub>3</sub> is not supported.

Table 1: Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis Number	Hypothesis	Result
H <sub>1</sub>	There is a significant relationship between electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	There is a significant relationship between Social Network Sites (SNS) and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius.	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	There is a significant relationship between mobile application (WhatsApp) and purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius.	Not supported

The findings of this study show that there is a strong relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention and therefore this address a greater for beauty product sellers to engage in digital marketing tools. In order to stay afloat in a competitive industry and to match the requirement of Generation Z beauty products sellers will have to invest in encouraging reviews from customers as well as improving their brand visibility and reach on all social media platforms. Given that Facebook has been the most preferred application, small medium enterprises can begin focusing more on Facebook to limit their expenses.

Findings of the study attempted to provide the theoretical and practical implication in understanding the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention. Model adopted in this study shows a strong approach ( $R^2 = 36.7\%$ ) for researcher to conduct further testing and analysis using the model. This study contributes to future research by empirically testing further dimension of each social media platform individually. The model can also be used to investigate the factors affecting purchase intention in more industries such as the gaming industry and fashion industry. Given the geographical location of this research, the findings can be used for further study in Mauritius in the same context or for any purchase intention phenomenon.

This study provides a better analysis of the impact of social media marketing on the purchase intention of beauty products in Mauritius. Based on the findings, electronic word of mouth and social network sites show a positive significant relationship on purchase intention. Therefore, marketers should make heavy use of online reviews and social networking sites to attain more reach and awareness. The result will help beauty products sellers choose the marketing platforms more effectively to reach out to the target audience at a greater impact as discussed in recommendations.

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