



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Impact of Social Media Usage and Self-Image Congruity on Online Buying Behaviour: A quantitative Study**

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**ABSTRACT**

Social media has become a dominant force which is controlling human behaviour and attitude. Social media is changing the lives of people and allowing them to express their personalities through social network. The aim of this study is to examine how use of social media affect self-image and resultantly shape buying behaviour. Main objectives of the study were to explore the process of construction of self among youth, and to examine the impact of social media on self-image and self-esteem. A correlational study design was chosen to find out the association of above given variables. Data was collected through n=262 respondents from university of Sargodha by using simple random technique while structured questionnaire was data collection tool. After applying Chi-square test findings of the studies show that there is direct association between the active social media usage and the self-image congruity of the respondents, high intensity of social media usage by exploring different luxury brands are making people self-image congruence. It is admired that much the people use social media more they have self-conscious which leading them towards online buying. So, active use of social media making people more self-conscious, and self-image congruence leading them towards conspicuous buying behaviour.

**Keywords:** Social Media Usage, Self-Image Congruity, Self-Esteem, Buying Behavior

**Introduction**

There has been a sharp increase in the amount of time people spend on social media and there are evidences of its adoption into popular culture and widespread incorporation into people's daily lives. Social networking platforms give users new and interesting ways to communicate online, whether using a PC or a mobile device. They enable people to establish and show an online network of contacts, sometimes referred to as "friends," as well as to easily and quickly create their own web page or profile. Users of these websites have the option of communicating via their profile with both their "friends" and others who are not on their contact list. This can be done privately (similar to an email) or publicly, like in a remark that is posted for everyone to read. The main focus of this study is on social media platforms including Facebook, 2go, Twitter, Skype, Viber, Whatsapp, and MySpace. (Muzaffar, Chohdhry, & Afzal, 2019). Social media has recently developed into a platform for people to interact with one another and converse in public. With the development of technology, communicating online has become a way of life (Muzaffar, Yaseen, & Safdar, 2020).

The way they display themselves on social media platforms has always drawn a lot of interest from youth. The majority of youth appear to use networks and online content creation as a key tool for managing their identities, way of life, and social connections. They emphasize the chances for self-expression, sociability, community involvement, creativity,

and belonging to a group. internet permitted the emergence of online communication services such as email, bulletin board messaging, and real-time online chatting in the 1980s and 1990s. There are 4.74 billion social media users around the world in October 2022, equating to 59.3 percent of the total global population. Social media user numbers have continued to grow over the past 12 months too, with 190 million new users joining social media since this time last year. (Kepios, 2022). In January 2022, there were 82.90 million internet users in Pakistan, accounting for 36.5% of the entire population. An estimate claims that between 2021 and 2022, there was a 22 million rise in internet users in Pakistan. According to the Google's advertising resource indicates that 71.70 million users were in Pakistan in early 2022, where 43.55 million are Facebook users that is quite exceptional, which is equal to 31.5% of total Pakistan's population. According to Byte Dance's poll, there were 18.26 million active users in Pakistan aged 18 or up in early 2022. Online purchasing has been on trending right now in Pakistan, most of people prefer social media to get reviews about different brand through social media. There are lots of platforms for online purchasing in Pakistan where people can buy their desired brands and services.

Hence, since the last decade, social media has changed the life style of people of entire world, also providing them a platform to express their personalities through social media (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010). People are becoming more self-confidence, higher self-esteem (Logan, 2008), and consuming more conspicuously (Eastman and Lui, 2012) due to social media as compare to previous generations. Now social media has become a source of advertising different brands/products, also spreading new trends and value throughout the entire world. In particular, people who are active social media users display high intention to purchase luxury fashion goods and are more urged to consume conspicuously (Giovannini et al, 2015). People are purchasing brands and goods not only for gaining social status but also for self-expression and improving self-image through social media. Thus, the focus of this paper was how people perceive self-image and built self-esteem on buying behavior through social media, how social media is changing the lives of people and enabling people to express themselves through social networking sites.

Specifically, the goal of the study was to explore the frequency/Intensity of social media usage. Because according to previous studies people who are active users of social media and involve more in social media activities are more self-conscious and consume conspicuously. A second objective was to explore the process of construction of self among youth. Social media is now playing a vital role in building the self among the youth, so it was necessary to explore those factors which are enhancing or diminishing the self. The other goal of the study was to examine the impact of social media on self-image and self-esteem. Previous researchers have mostly examined that if people get positive response from people on social media their self-esteem will increased and if they get negative feedbacks their self will be diminished; while the last objective of this paper was to investigate the association of people usage of social media, self-image and buying behavior. Because with the increase use of social media among people they become more self-conscious and they prefer to consume conspicuously, it is necessary to investigate the underlying mechanisms relating to social media usage and conspicuous online consumption. There is insufficient work on how social media usage influences conspicuous online consumption, self- image congruity and self-esteem.

## **Literature Review**

Social media is defined as "a series of Internet-based applications that build on the theoretical and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0, and that enable the creation and sharing of user created content." Social media enables people to share their views, ideas, photographs, videos, and other content while also fostering relationships and assisting in meeting their social requirements. Due to advances in online buying, social media is having an impact on a variety of consumer behavior (Widjajanta. Et al, 2018). There has been a correlation between the amount of time spent on social media and a variety of consumer-

related behaviors, including engagement with brands and products, materialism, and self- and brand-consciousness among users. As a result, we can argue that enhanced self-esteem brought on by social media use can lead to Buying Behavior. Additionally, it is asserted that Buying Behavior also results from social comparison, and social media offers the finest environment for this comparison (Wai & Osman., 2019). On the other hand, social media encourages both user-to-user and user-to-brand interactions by sharing, enjoying, and commenting on brand content (Cheung et al., 2020). Additionally, the cognitive fit between the self-image that defines the ideal and the social self with regard to the brand image is identified by self-image congruity through presentation of self-image. Social media users display their self-congruity through sharing, publishing, like, and commenting on content created by other users (Burnasheva & Gu Suh., 2020).

According to research on customer behavior, one of the most crucial components is self-image congruity. It speaks about "a process whereby customers purchase goods or brands they believe to have symbolic qualities that are comparable to the ideas they have about themselves" (Jacob, Khana & Rai., 2019). Buying Behavior was positively impacted by self-image congruity, and the same author later found that congruity had a positive impact on both buying behavior and status and wealth display (Burnasheva and Gu Suh., 2020). Social media users who have a positive sense of themselves as a result of higher self-image congruity tend to purchase more ostentatiously. Theoretical support is provided by self-congruity and social comparison theories, which are based on consumer comparisons of products and images and which influence conspicuous behavior through purchasing (Burnasheva & Gu Suh., 2020).

Self-esteem is the term for a person's subjective assessment of his or her inherent value as a person (Widjajanta., 2018). According to earlier studies, social media is an effective tool for raising self-esteem. People who have higher self-esteem feel good about themselves, and when they feel good about themselves, they lose self-control and behave more conspicuously (Widjajanta., 2018). Results from the (Berry, Emsley, Lobban, & Bucci, 2018) study strongly corroborate the idea that reduced social networking use is a sign of low self-esteem. A study found a strong correlation between self-esteem and social media use, suggesting that using social media might lower one's feeling of self-worth and lead to ostentatious purchases (Burnasheva., & Gu Suh., 2020). As a result, social media use has been directly linked to self-esteem, which has been broadly defined as a personality trait. Veblen asserts that the psychological mechanism driving conspicuous consumerism may be characterized as self-esteem, which is correlated with one's assets and is based on how one is viewed by others. People seem to defend and boost their self-esteem by flaunting their financial prowess through extravagant expenditure (Burnasheva., & Gu Suh., 2020).

Buying behavior is characterized as a form of consumption with a conspicuous objective that emerged when consumers at higher social levels increased rather than decreased their demands for products and preferred more expensive goods over those that would have satisfied their needs at lower prices (EFENDOLU, 2019). According to Veblen, the psychological mechanism driving conspicuous consumerism may be characterized as self-esteem that is correlated with one's possession level and depends on how one is viewed by others. People seem to defend and boost their self-esteem by flaunting their financial prowess through conspicuous purchasing (Burnasheva., & Gu Suh., 2020). People have a tendency to spend in a prominent way, and as a result, they will pay for any offer that elevates their status. According to a research, spending more money on luxurious items, often known as conspicuous goods, might cause consumers to make illogical decisions as a result of how intensely they use social media. This assumption is justified by the idea that social media use can influence users' purchase choices up until buying behavior takes place out of a sense of self-worth (Widjajanta., 2019).

The study is aimed to find out the impact of active social media usage on self-image congruity and as a result an increased online buying behavior. The hypotheses are given below:

H1: There is an association between active social media usage and self-image congruity

H2: There will be direct effect of social media usage and self-esteem

H3: There exists a direct association between self-esteem and Buying behavior

### Material and Methods

Following a positivistic research methodology, Correlational research design was employed in this work, to investigate the relationship between social media, self-image congruity, and self-esteem, and buying behavior. A correlational study indicates the magnitude and axis of correlations between two or more variables that we are interested in learning more about it.

### Sample and Data Collection

In present research study data were collected through simple random sampling which creates equal opportunity for every individual to being selected which was based on demographic of Sargodha university population. The final usable sample size of the study for data collection was 262, in which 52.3% were male, and 47.7% were female respondents. A structured questionnaire was given to respondents developed as tool data collection which was given to respondents to fill this survey.

### Measures

The scales to measure the four main concepts for this study were drawn with the help of previous research literature. All the items were measured through four point Likert scale from a = "Strongly agree" to d = "Strongly disagree". The collected data was analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) by coding the collected data. Chi-square test was applied with the help of SPSS to test the hypothesis to check the reliability of the study.

### Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	137	52.3%
Female	125	47.7%
Age		
18-20	121	46.2%
21-25	113	43.1%
26-30	21	8.0%
Above 30 years	7	2.7%
Program		
BS	223	85.1%
M.Sc.	19	7.3%
MPhil	13	5.0%
Ph.D.	2	0.8%
Others	5	1.9%

Above table shows that male and female were almost equal participation in this study, where 52.3% male, and 47.7% were female respondents. Measure of central tendency

was, Mean=1.48, Median=1.00, Mode=1 while SD=.500. It also explains the age of the respondents, where 46.2% respondent's age was between 18-20 years, 43.1% respondents were between 21-25 years old, 8.0% of the respondents were between the age of 26-30, while 2.7% respondents age was above 30 years, which shows that much number of the respondents age was between 18-20 years. In the survey respondents were asked about their study programs. There were five different option given in this survey to choose relevant course such as, a) BS, b) M.Sc., g) MPhil, d) Ph.D. and e) others. The data in this table shows that participation of the respondents were from all courses mostly from BS. (Mean = 1,27, Median = 1, Mode = 1, SD =.757). There were 85.1% respondents whom course was BS, while 7.3% those who were doing master in from different departments. 5.0% respondents were belonged from MPhil and .8% respondents were from PhD course. Similarly, 1.9% respondents were doing other courses in the university. So respondents were selected from all department of university to make this research reliable.

**Table 2 showing the mean score and standard deviation of IV and DVs**

<b>Index Table</b>				
<b>Variables</b>	<b>No. Of items</b>	<b>Mean score</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Reliability score</b>
Social media usage	08	1.94	.65263	5.22
Self-image congruity	05	2.2	.81681	4.08
Self-esteem	05	2.04	.79109	3.955
Buying behavior	07	2.15	.82314	5.762

This is the index table of independent and dependent variables that show the number of items their mean score, standard deviation and reliability score of the variables. This table represents that independent social media usage variable has 08 items of matrix questions where its mean score was 1.94 with the standard deviation of .54263 and the validity score of the variable was 5.22 which show that most of the respondents was agree on active social media usage. This table elaborates that self-image congruity was another variable which was 05 items with the mean score of 2.2 with having the standard deviation of .81681 while its validity score was 4.08 show that there are much number of people agree that they are becoming self-image congruence due to active use of social media. Index table represents that dependent variable self-esteem was 05 items where its mean score was 2.04 with the standard deviation of .79109 and the validity score of the variable was 3.955 which show that most of the respondents was agree about active social media usage enhanced self-esteem. The variable buying behavior was measured on 07 items. The mean score of this variable was 2.15 with the SD=.82314 and the validity score was 5.772 show the willing of respondents that they are consuming more conspicuously while having high self-esteem by using social media.

### Hypotheses testing

**Table 3**  
**Association between active social media usage and self-image congruity**

<b>Social media usage</b>	<b>Self-image congruity</b>			<b>Total</b>
	To greater extent	To some extent	Not at all	
To greater extent	18 29.03%	33 53.22%	11 17.74%	62 23.66%
To some extent	15 10.27%	76 52.05%	55 37.67%	146 55.73%
Not at all	05 9.25%	17 31.48%	32 59.26%	54 20.61%
Total	42 16.03%	124 47.33%	96 36.64%	262 100%

**Chi-square test**

	Value	df	Significance
Pearson chi-square	37.996 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	38.141	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	35.189	1	.000
Gamma	.543		.000

Interpretation shows that link between respondents' active use of social media and self-image congruency. The Pearson chi-square value of 37.99 indicates a substantial correlation between self-image congruity and active social media use of the participants. Likelihood Ratio 38.141, Linear by Linear Association 35.189 and Gamma tests .543 demonstrate that the variables are in a positive relationship where ( $p < 0.05$ ) therefore both variables are correlated. Above table also presents that 17.74% had no self-image congruity, 53.22% had some extent to self-image congruity while 29.03% had greater extent to self-image congruity. Findings also presents that respondents that who had some extent level of active social media usage 37.67% had no self-image congruity, 52.05% had some self-image congruity while 10.27% had greater self-image congruity. Findings of hypothesis test shows that active social media usage 59.26% report had no self-image congruity, 31.48% had some extent while 9.25% had greater extent to self-image congruity.

**H2: There will be direct effect of social media usage and self-esteem**

Social media usage	Self-esteem			Total
	To greater extent	To some extent	Not at all	
To greater extent	21	28	14	63
	33.33%	44.44%	22.22%	24.05%
To some extent	19	76	52	147
	12.93%	51.70%	35.37%	56.11%
Not at all	05	16	31	52
	9.62%	30.77%	59.62%	19.85%
Total	45	120	97	262
	17.18%	45.80%	37.02%	100%

**Chi-square test**

	Value	Df	Significance
Pearson Chi-square	41.482 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	29.762	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	26.319	1	.000
Gamma	.464		.000

Interpretation of the above table shows the association between the active social media usage and the self-esteem of the respondents. The value of Pearson chi-square was 41.48 which demonstrates a substantial association between respondents' active social media usage and self-esteem. Likelihood Ratio was 29.76, Linear by Linear Association 26.31 and Gamma tests was .464 that show there is a positive relationship between both variables where  $p = .000$  which show that both variables are correlate. Table also shows that respondents who had greater extent to active user of social media 22.22% had no self-esteem, 44.44% had some extent to self-esteem while 33.33% had greater self-esteem by using social media actively. It also explains that respondents that who had some extent level of active social media usage 35.37% had no self-esteem, 51.70% had some self-esteem while 12.93% had greater self-image congruity. Findings of table shows that respondents who had not an active social media usage 59.62% report had no self-esteem, 30.77% had some extent while 9.62% had greater self-esteem while using social media actively.

**H3: There exists a direct association between self-esteem and buying behavior**

Self-esteem	Buying behavior			Total
	To greater extent	To some extent	Not at all	
To greater extent	19 31.15%	33 54.10%	09 14.75%	61 23.28%
To some extent	15 10.27%	93 63.70%	38 26.03%	146 55.73%
Not at all	07 12.73%	18 32.73%	30 54.55%	55 20.99%
Total	41 15.65%	144 54.96%	77 29.39%	262 100%

**Chi-square test**

	Value	Df	Significance
Chi-Square	47.143 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	43.406	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	37.558	1	.000
Gamma	.562		.000

Interpretation of above table represents the relationship between respondents' self-esteem and buying behavior. The individuals' self-esteem and buying behavior have a close collaboration, as indicated by the Pearson chi-square value of 47.14. Likelihood Ratio 43.406, Linear by Linear Association 37.558 and Gamma tests .562 prove that two variables are linked if there is a positive association between them ( $p < 0.05$ ). Table respondents who had greater self-esteem 14.75% had no buying behavior, 54.10% had some extent to buying behavior while 31.15% had greater buying behavior by having self-esteem. It also represents that who had some extent level of self-esteem 36.03% had no consume conspicuously, 63.70% had some extent to consume conspicuously while 10.27% had greater buying behavior, the respondents who had not self-esteem 54.55% report that they were not consuming conspicuously, 32.73% had some extent while 12.73% had greater extent to consume conspicuously while having greater self-esteem.

The primary objective of the study was to investigate how people's self-image and sense of self-esteem are shaped by their display of consumption on social media. Different social media platforms are controlling the behavior of people by their content. Results of the (Berry, Emsley, Lobban, & Bucci, 2018) highly support that less social networking use suggests a low sense of self-worth. Self-esteem is predicted by one's social media posts regarding their feelings. According to the study, persons who are frequent users of social media had higher self-image congruity (Burnasheva, & Gu Suh, 2020), demonstrating that social media use and self-image congruity have a strong positive relationship. Brand awareness, value awareness, and brand loyalty are all significantly impacted by social media activity. Therefore, H1 proves that active social media usage predicts that self-image congruity among the people. Brand awareness, value awareness, and brand loyalty are all significantly influenced by media activities (Ismail. Nguyen., & Melevar., 2018), greater use of social media usage has a greater impact towards brand conscious and materialism.

This study supports that less use of social media highlights low mood of self-esteem Findings of (Burnasheva., & Gu Suh., 2020) demonstrate the Self-esteem and social media use have a significant connection. There is potential impact of social media on people self-esteem without psychosis and almost negative psychological consequences if people get the negative reviews on social media. The outcomes of (Hadi, & Masharyono, 2018) research show that using social media boosts self-esteem and has a positive impact on conspicuous expenditure. It means that social media and self-esteem have a strong influence on ostentatious consumption. H2, therefore, proves that self-esteem as a personality trait has largely describe that there is direct association among social media usage.

According to research findings (Wai, Osman, 2019), social media use is strongly correlated with buying behavior and has a substantial impact on self-esteem and conspicuous spending. Similar to other research, this one demonstrates how social media has a significant influence on buying behavior and self-esteem. It also reveals a strong association between social media use and buying behavior. According to the results of this study, there is a connection between social media use, self-esteem, self-image congruity, and overt online consumption (Burnasheva & Gu Suh, 2020). H3, therefore proves that social media usage has a correlation with buying behavior. This study admires that fast growth in social media activities is leading people toward more self-esteem and self-image congruity that is becoming a cause of buying behavior.

### **Conclusion**

After getting findings the conclusion of this study is that social media in present era is the more powerful force to control human behavior. Social media advertising different brands and products on people timelines which increasing the self-image congruity and self-esteem that becoming as cause of buying behavior. People's self-esteem, self-image congruity, and conspicuous expenditure increase as their time on social media increases. There is a clear link between self-esteem and buying behavior, and research has shown that using social media more often increases self-esteem and encourages buying behavior. Social media and self-image congruity have moderate effect and also have high perception of self-image congruity that lead to higher degree to use of social media, while people will be more and more satisfied with social media networking sites. Therefore, the use of social media, self-image congruity, self-esteem, and buying behavior are all connected, so, active social media usage can lead people toward more self-conscious, self-image congruity which is a cause of buying behavior.

### **Recommendations for future research**

Future studies may consider other factor like pattern of purchasing over internet, to gain the insight of consumer in today's internet environment, and future quality brands/products reviews. Furthermore, this study can be taken a model to conduct study in broader level across different national context. In future generalizability of researcher can used for further theoretical development. Researcher can get rich literature from this study which will guide them in conducting research about social media, self-esteem, brand loyalty, self-image congruity and buying behavior. By reviewing this study someone can know about the relationship of social media, self-esteem, self-image congruity and buying behavior.



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