

Role of Homophily in Purchase Intention and Customer Satisfaction Behavior among Online Buyers

Hafsa Ibrar¹, Anam Khan², Umm Eman Syed³, Neelam Bibi⁴

¹Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Rawalpindi Women University, Pakistan.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Rawalpindi Women University, Pakistan.

³Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Rawalpindi Women University, Pakistan.

⁴Clinical Psychologist, Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (RIC), Pakistan.

Correspondence: anam.khan8@yahoo.com²

ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: The present study was aimed to investigate the relationship between homophily, purchase intention and customer satisfaction behavior among online buyers.

Methodology: The current study was consisted of online buyers ($N=300$) of age range 20-50 years from Punjab through purposive sampling technique. Homophily Questionnaire, (McCroskey, 1973), Purchase Intention Questionnaires, (Pavlov, 2003), Customer Satisfaction Behavior (Hill, 2003) were used respectively in the study.

Findings: The results revealed that homophily has significant positive relationship with purchase intention and customer satisfaction behavior. Moreover, homophily is the significant positive predictor of purchase intention and customer satisfaction behavior among online buyers.

Conclusion: The study revealed the impact of homophily on purchase intention among Pakistani online buyers. In our culture trend to buy online increases in which homophily plays important role in satisfaction behavior and purchase intention.

Keywords: Homophily, Purchase Intention, Customer Satisfaction Behavior, Online Buyers.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years there is no concept of homophily and online buying. People are not aware of online buying sites and homophily but nowadays as we now social media is on trending that's why individuals are more aware of online buying. Homophily is the sociological word for people's propensity to associate and interact with people who share their interests. Homophily is the idea that relationships between like-minded individuals develop more frequently than those between individuals with disparate backgrounds. The amount of homophily in today's society is rising daily, and as a result, so is the level of purchase intention, which raises customer satisfaction among online and regular consumers. Due to homophily, information on culture, behavior, genetics, education, or material possessions will typically travel through social networks in a localized manner. As an illustration of homophily, consider the following the

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propensity of school-age youngsters to make acquaintances in their own class rather than with students from other classes. For all, homophily views groups of people who share values and interests as social networks, and it seems to reason that the interests of one member of a group can reflect the overall qualities of the network (Sohn, & Tadisina, 2008).

Homophily is a social phenomenon that refers to the tendency of individuals to form connections and bonds with others who share similar characteristics, interests, or beliefs. This concept is rooted in the idea that birds of a feather flock together, as people are naturally drawn to those who mirror aspects of themselves. Homophily can occur in several dimensions, such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, and hobbies, among others (Alam & Yasin, 2010). Homophily may lead to a sense of belonging and understanding among those who have something in common with each other but also lead to social fragmentation and restricted exposure to different ideas, hence a subject of study in sociology, psychology, and network theory (Ajzen, 2002).

The phenomenon is best described as "birds of a feather flock together" and accounts for an important role in social networks, relationships, and communicative behavior. There are two principal forms: status homophily, where bonds are created around aspects such as age, gender, ethnicity, or education level, and value homophily, where individuals bond due to shared beliefs and attitudes independent of demographic similarities. Homophily enhances social relationships, facilitates communication, and promotes influence but may also form echo chambers that limit exposure to varied opinions. It affects many sectors, ranging from social media algorithms that reinforce people's current interests to recruitment procedures where employers may unwittingly favor applicants with comparable backgrounds. Homophily assists companies in targeting specific groups in marketing and consumer behavior by developing messages that resonate with similar-minded people. While it promotes trust and unity, understanding its effects can assist in reducing biases and promoting more diversified interactions (Abdulaziz et al., 2024).

Homophily has emerged as the critical factor shaping consumers' proclivity to buy social networks. The axiomatic basis of homophily is that one is more likely to affiliate or socialize with someone similar rather than with strangers. Heterophile behavior is directly related to Purchase intention and Customer satisfaction. Purchase intention is a consumer behavioral variable defined as the propensity of an individual to purchase a product or service in the near or distant future. That is the next important stage in the decision-making process when a potential customer has moved from an awareness to interest and a more specific intention to purchase the product. Various determinants influence purchase intention such as product characteristics, price, brand image, personal taste, and external influence including marketing and word of mouth (Devaraj et al., 2002). Purchase intention and understanding it through analysis is crucial to businesses and marketers because it allows them to prepare for and address customer demand, refine marketing tactics, and drive sales eventually. Additionally, it is an excellent measure to evaluate the efficacy of marketing efforts and the products or services general attractiveness in the marketplace. Purchase intention is the deliberate intent or willingness of a consumer to purchase a product or service in the immediate future. It's a significant factor in consumer behavior and used mostly by companies to predict demand and create marketing strategies (Prasad et al., 2009).

Consumers will buy more products. A established and reputable brand name can affect purchase intention in a positive manner. Successful promotions, advertisements, and endorsements by famous people can promote consumer interest and buying intent. Word-of-mouth, personal testimonies, and online opinions heavily influence purchase decisions. The tastes, lifestyle, and personal needs of consumers dictate their buying decision. Peer recommendations, social norms, and cultural values play a role in shaping buying intentions. Emotional connections with a brand, trust, and past experiences influence consumer intent. Businesses leverage purchase intention data through surveys, customer feedback, and online analytics to refine their marketing efforts and improve conversion rates (Guo et al., 2012).

Customer satisfaction behavior is a complex and multifaceted aspect of consumer psychology that encompasses a range of actions and attitudes exhibited by individuals after they have made a purchase. It

extends beyond the initial transaction and reflects how satisfied customers are with their overall experience with a product or service (Cai & Jun, 2003). Conversely, dissatisfied customers may exhibit behaviors like product returns, complaints, and negative reviews, which can have a detrimental impact on a company's reputation and profitability (Ladhari, 2010).

According to customer satisfaction behavior, consumers should consider a variety of factors when deciding how satisfied they are with a product and how they plan to behave after making a purchase. However, earlier empirical studies tended to concentrate on whether a particular standard better predicts satisfaction (Wang et al., 2005). Customer satisfaction behavior refers to how customers react and respond after using a product or service. It reflects their level of contentment, influencing their future purchasing decisions, loyalty, and brand advocacy. Satisfied customers are more likely to return, recommend the brand, and engage positively, while dissatisfied customers may switch brands or share negative feedback. Satisfied customers are more likely to develop brand loyalty, repeatedly choosing the same company over competitors (Atta, & Rasool, 2020). Loyalty programs and personalized experiences enhance this behavior. Customers often share their experiences through positive feedback, recommending the brand to friends, family, or online platforms and negative feedback, complaining on social media, leaving poor reviews, or discouraging others. How a company handles complaints (e.g., quick resolution, refunds, or apologies) affects future satisfaction and loyalty. Consistency in quality builds trust and satisfaction. Quick responses and effective problem-solving improve customer experience. Listening to customers and making improvements fosters brand loyalty. Offering incentives, discounts, or exclusive deals retains satisfied customers. Keeping customers informed about policies, delays, or product changes builds credibility. Understanding customer satisfaction behavior helps businesses improve retention, enhance brand reputation, and drive long-term success (Bu, & Thaichon, 2022).

Purchase intention and customer satisfaction are closely linked concepts in consumer behavior, playing a crucial role in a company's success. Purchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness and likelihood to buy a product or service, influenced by factors such as brand reputation, product quality, pricing, and marketing efforts. It is a key predictor of sales and business growth, as a strong purchase intention often leads to actual purchases and long-term customer loyalty. Conversely, customer satisfaction refers to the extent to which a product or service satisfies or surpasses a consumer's expectations. High customer satisfaction not only amplifies repeat purchase but also fuels brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth advertising. Satisfied consumers are likely to recommend a product, post good reviews, and make subsequent purchases, which, in turn, reinforces purchase intention among other buyers. On the other hand, unhappy customers can desert a brand, move to competitors, or post negative reviews, directly affecting purchase intention, ultimately influencing revenue and long-term customer relationships (Smith et al., 2017).

Absolutely, satisfaction matters a lot in purchases and loyalty. Where customers find satisfaction in enjoying a product or service, they would be more willing to buy that product or even recommend it to their friends, hence, increasing its purchase intention in their own homophilous network. High satisfaction also results in positive word-of-mouth promotion, which is a strong influence over buying decisions on the part of prospective purchasers. Negative word-of-mouth, on the other hand, has the opposite effect as disappointing experiences have a tendency to spread quickly throughout homophilous groups, deterring others from a purchase and degrading the brand. Homophily has been made more powerful by social media and online reviews since consumers can access feedback and recommendations from others with similar tastes immediately (Bredahl, 2001).

Lim and Dubinsky, (2004), showed that companies which recognize these associations are able to exploit homophily by utilizing targeted marketing campaigns, like influencer collaborations, referral schemes, and targeted advertising, to boost purchasing intention. Also, through a focus on customer satisfaction by providing better product quality, exceptional customer service, and personalized interactions, companies can establish long-term customer relationships, which translate into greater retention and continuous business expansion. The combination of these three components—homophily, purchase intention, and

customer satisfaction—forms a cycle in which satisfied customers induce positive social influence, boosting purchase intention in homophilous individuals and securing continued brand success in the competitive marketplace. (Muda, & Hamzah, 2021).

Homophily is the sociological word for people's propensity to associate and interact with people who share their interests (Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002). Homophily is the idea that relationships between like-minded individuals develop more frequently than those between individuals with disparate backgrounds. The amount of homophily in today's society is rising daily, and as a result, so is the level of purchase intention, which raises customer satisfaction among online and regular consumers. For all, homophily views groups of people who share values and interests as social networks, and it seems to reason that the interests of one member of a group can reflect the overall qualities of the network. (Thelwall, 2008).

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between homophily, purchase intention and customer satisfaction behavior among online buyers.
2. To know the role of demographics on homophily, purchase intention and customer satisfaction behavior among online buyers.

1.2 Hypotheses

H1: Homophily positively predicts purchase intention among online buyers.

H2: Homophily positively predicts customer satisfaction behavior among online buyers.

H3: Homophily has positive correlation with purchase intention and customer satisfaction behavior among online buyers.

H4: Girls will score high on purchase intention as compared to boys.

2. METHOD

2.1 Result Design

A cross-sectional research design was used in the current study.

2.2 Sample

A sample of 300 online buyers was taken in the present study. The sample is collected from different cities of Pakistan, online buyer girls and boys were selected by using purposive sampling technique. Participants who preferred and did online buying for buying crockery, clothing, décor etc instead of visiting shops and malls were included.

2.3 Instruments

2.3.1 Homophily Questionnaire: (HQ)

Homophily Questionnaires (HQ) were utilized as a standardized tool to measure the degree of homophily among individuals. The HQ was first formulated by McCroskey (1973) and later employed in most research studies to determine the level at which individuals find similarity with other people with regards to attitude, belief, and personal traits. The 16-item questionnaire was used to capture various homophily dimensions. In order to secure a balanced perspective of responses, the HQ utilizes a 7-point Likert scale, varying from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This type of response structure enables participants to express their degree of agreement to each statement, giving researchers a measurable indicator of perceived similarity between people. Its reliability has been testically assessed where the internal consistency was measured via Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .80$), which signals a high measure of reliability as well as consistence in its measurement of homophily.

2.3.2 Purchase Intention Questionnaire: (PI)

The Purchase Intention Questionnaire (PI) has been standardized to gauge the inclination of consumers to buy a product or service. The instrument has its origin from Pavlov (2003) and is now widely used in consumer behavior with respect to assessing how likely a person would be to make a purchase after considering various determinants ranging from brand image, product quality to price and marketing efforts. The PI questionnaire would comprise three questions each intended to measure a different component of purchase intention: the willingness, likelihood, and motivation of a consumer to purchase a product. A 7-point Likert scale allows respondents to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement to each of the statements on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A scale like this allows much better understanding of attitudinal nuances among consumers and brings to the fore information concerning their decision-making processes and buying behavior. Internal consistency of Purchase Intention Scale has undergone very severe testing with Cronbach's alpha values ranging between 0.73 and 0.84. This shows the moderate to high reliability of the measurement, meaning that the questionnaire yields stable results across different samples and settings.

2.3.3 Customer Satisfaction Behavior Questionnaire: (CSBQ)

The Customer Satisfaction Behavior Questionnaire (CSBQ) was used as a structured means of gauging customer satisfaction behavior. This 14-item questionnaire was drawn up by Nigel Hill (2003) and has been widely employed in consumer studies to evaluate the satisfaction level of customers regarding a certain product or service and how that might induce them to act in the future. The CSBQ aims to assess multiple dimensions of customer satisfaction through the 14 items concerning service quality, product performance, and overall consumer experience. A 5-point Likert scale is used in which the respondents indicate their degree of acceptance or disagreement with a statement: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This allows researchers to quantify the level of customer satisfaction easily and to examine behavioral patterns associated with their purchasing behavior. In order to determine reliability and validity, internal consistency of Customer Satisfaction Behavior Scale has been determined using Cronbach's alpha whereby the values have ranged from 0.73-0.84, indicating moderate to high reliability. This motivational means a questionnaire yields consistent and reliable information across various studies and sample groups.

3. RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive and the Psychometrics Properties for the Scales in Present Study (N=300)

Scale	M	SD	Cronbach's α	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
HQ	63.4	9.3	.84	20-95	-.17	.15
PI	48.4	6.9	.88	14-70	-.28	.10
CSBQ	14.6	4.7	.78	3-21	-.17	-.23

Note. HQ = Homophily Questionnaire; PI = Purchase Intention Scale; CSBQ = Customer Satisfaction Behavior Scale

Table 1 showed all instruments are psychometrically sound. The table summarizes descriptive statistics for three constructs--Headquarters Quality(HQ), Parent Involvement(PI), Capital Structure Budgeting Quality(CSBQ). The mean scores ranged from a low of 14.6 to a high of 63.4, with standard deviations of 4.7-9.3. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) were acceptable (.78-.88). The skewness and kurtosis values indicate approximate normal distribution.

Table 2: Pearson Correlations of Study Variables (N=300)

Variables	1	2	3
1.Homophily	-	.39**	.64**
2.Purchase Intention		-	.11*
3.Customer Satisfaction Behavior			-

** $p < .01$

Table 2 revealed that homophily has significant positive correlation with purchase intention ($r = .39, p < .01$) and customer satisfaction behavior ($r = .64, p < .01$). Whereas, homophily and purchase intention have also positive relationship ($r = .11, p < .01$).

Table 3: Linear Regression Coefficient of Homophily on Purchase Intention

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Constant	13.2	1.9	6.95	.001	[9.4,16.9]
Homophily	.30	.03	.67	.04	[28.3,78.0]
<i>R</i> ²	.24				

Note. CI = confidence interval

Table 3 shows the impact of homophily on purchase intention. The *R*² value of .24 revealed that the predictor variable explained 24% variance in the outcome variable with $F(1, 298) = 5.83, p < .001$. The findings revealed that homophily is positively predicted the purchase intention ($\beta = .13, p < .001$)

Table 4: Linear Regression Coefficient of Homophily on Customer Satisfaction Behavior

Scale	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Constant	45.4	2.7	16.4	.001	40.0,50.9
Homophily	.48	.04	1.1	.027	.037,.1.3
<i>R</i> ²	.12				

Note. CI = confidence interval

Table 4 shows the impact of homophily on customer satisfaction behavior. The *R*² value of .12 revealed that the predictor variable explained 12% variance in the outcome variable with $F(1,298) = 8.622, p < .001$. The findings revealed that homophily is positively predicted the customer satisfaction behavior ($\beta = .16, p < .001$)

4. DISCUSSION

The first and second hypotheses in the current study are embraced which states that homophily has a positive relationship with purchase intention and customer satisfaction behavior. There is a positive relationship between homophily and purchase intention where consumers feel surrounded by other consumers who share similar preferences and tastes. In these social environments, consumers are likely to be recommended and endorsed by individuals with whom they share commonality. These endorsements are likely to be more influential and credible since they are from people who know their needs and preferences deeply (Zeithaml, 2002).

Moreover, homophilous social networks are also known to serve an important function in giving people a sense of belonging and connectivity with the community. Individuals who strongly identify with the relevant social group or community are likely to express their feelings, intentions, and behaviors toward supporting and using products or services the group approves of. That sort of being accepted by a group cultivates an emotional bond to the brand or product in question, thus enhancing the purchase intentions among consumers (Van Esch et al., 2020). Consumers tend to view something purchased as an enlargement of identification with the collective communal identity and value of which they are members (Tsai, & Huang, 2007). In that sense, if homophily prevails, it would stimulate purchase intentions owing to the trust, acceptance, and togetherness afforded by a homogenous social network. Such people feel understood and validated in their choices among their own likes and beliefs. This validation may lead to more satisfaction since it supports their choices and confirms that they are, indeed, making choices that are in tandem with their identity and values (Sohn & Tadisina, 2008).

Besides enhancing the customer experience, homophily establishes a niche of its own. While interacting with products or services that are used or recommended by other similar persons, they realize those products or services best meet their needs and desires (Rehman et al., 2015). This concurrence results in a fulfilling and personalized experience that will lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction (Ma et al.,

2015). Homophily positively contributes to customer satisfaction behavior through building validation, identity reinforcement, and aligning product or service offerings with preferences and values within the shared social networks' interests. All of these factors can precipitate greater customer loyalty and cause desired behaviors such as repeat purchases and word-of-mouth referrals (Santiago & Serralha, 2022).

Homophily promotes customer satisfaction behavior by enhancing shared identity consciousness across similar social networks. Since consumers belong to a group or community whose characteristics, interests, and values tend to be similar to those of others within his/her group, thus such consumers are likely to be more satisfied with goods and/or services (Khristianto et al., 2012). One of the main factors contributing to this linkage includes the sense of acceptance and validation found through homophilous networks. Through their interactions with like-minded people, individuals get a social hearing that reinforces their choices. By this validation, satisfaction obtains a meaning since it confirms their choice and authenticates that they are choosing in congruence with their identity and value system (Khalifa & Liu, 2007).

Besides, homophily has the potential to boost overall customer satisfaction. Upon encountering products or services used or suggested by similar peers, customers tend to find that such services or products better meet their wants and needs. This congruence can provide a more satisfying and personalized experience, ultimately ending up in greater levels of customer satisfaction (Goldsmith & Bridges, 2000). Homophily can influence customer satisfaction behavior positively by creating a sense of validation, identity reinforcement, and product and service congruence with personal values and preferences among similar social groups. This can result in increased customer loyalty and favorable behaviors such as repeat business and word-of-mouth recommendations (Fowler, 2014).

Purchase intention being higher in females, although it's important to note that individual preferences and behaviors can vary widely. Some potential reasons why purchase intention may be higher in females because traditionally, women have been associated with more frequent shopping and a stronger interest in consumer products. Social and cultural norms can encourage women to be more engaged in shopping and consider it a form of self-expression and social bonding (George, 2002). Many marketing and advertising campaigns are designed to target women, as they are often perceived as the primary decision-makers for household purchases. Effective marketing strategies can lead to higher purchase intention among female consumers. Some products and services are designed and marketed with features that appeal more to female consumers. For example, cosmetics, fashion, and certain wellness products may have a stronger female customer base due to their design and functionality (Cristobal et al., 2007). The overall shopping experience, including factors such as customer service, store ambiance, and online shopping convenience, can play a role in higher purchase intention among females (Chang & Wildt, 2004).

5. CONCLUSION

The research revealed the relationship to investigate the impact of homophily on purchase intention and customer satisfaction behavior among online consumers in Pakistani collectivistic culture. Findings revealed a strong positive relationship between homophily and purchase intention and customer satisfaction behavior. The findings indicated that women were high on purchase intention compared to men while men were high on customer satisfaction behavior. Ultimately, being able to access shopping online has really revolutionized and impacted our society in its entirety. This technological application has unveiled new avenues and possibilities that allow for an easier way of life today.

5.1 Limitations and Suggestions of Present Study

The research only focused on Pakistani social media consumers from a collectivistic society, which restricts the generalizability of its results to other cultures or age groups. Its cross-sectional nature also precludes the determination of causal relationships among homophily, purchase intention, and customer satisfaction behaviors. A longitudinal design would yield richer insights into the temporal dynamics of these variables. In addition, the lack of a control group prevents comparing the outcomes to persons who

have not been exposed to the studied elements, so homophily effects on purchase behavior and customer satisfaction cannot be directly isolated.

5.2 Implications

Having access to online shopping has really changed and impacted our society as a whole. This technology use has brought new doors and opportunities that allow for a more convenient lifestyle now. This research may help gain a better idea of how homophily influences online purchasing behavior, which could assist businesses in making their marketing efforts more specifically tailored to suit the needs of their customers. This study may also assist in determining the drivers of online purchasing behavior, which can be beneficial for companies seeking to maximize their online sales channels. Additionally, my study may assist in creating new models for forecasting customer behavior in online markets, which can be utilized to develop more efficient marketing campaigns and enhance customer satisfaction. Lastly, this study might help create new tools and technologies for studying customer behavior in online markets that can be used to enhance customer shopping experiences on the internet. Your study might also motivate other researchers to investigate this field further, which can lead to a better comprehension of the relationship between purchase intention and customer satisfaction and homophily.

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Conflict of Interest

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ORCID iDs

Hafsa Ibrar ¹  <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4800-9234>
Anam Khan ²  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3438-4906>
Umm Eman Syed ³  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6983-7744>
Neelam Bibi ⁴  <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1115-0736>

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