

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE PURCHASE OF PROPERTY: A CASE STUDY OF DEFENSE HOUSING AUTHORITY (DHA) BAHAWALPUR

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Abstract

The study aims at studying the effects of social media on the purchase of property in Defense Housing Authority (DHA) Bahawalpur. A quantitative and descriptive research design was used to collect data from a sample of 300 that yielded a 97% response rate from 291 participants from District Bahawalpur using a structured five point likert scale questionnaire. The instrument had good internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.83). The data were analysed with SPSS 25 software using descriptive statistics and independent sample t-test. The results show that social media is having a significant impact on property buying decision in DHA: most of the respondents follow real estate-related social media accounts, use social media to get information about properties and believe that social media platforms are offering accurate and valuable information about properties in DHA. However, there was some consensus that social media advertising, effectiveness of social media marketing, and trustworthiness/credibility would positively affect buyer attitudes, although with varying degrees. There was no statistically significant difference between males and females on any of the key dimensions of the study. The study ends with some suggestions for real estate professionals and developers working inside DHA.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world of social media has completely changed how consumers are searching, rating and choosing properties to purchase. Social media platforms are crucial in the specific context of the Defense Housing Authority (DHA), a housing scheme known for its quality residential development and safe living environment, for buyers to obtain information, explore virtual tours, read reviews and testimonies, and communicate with real estate agents and developers. While these platforms are increasingly used, there is a dearth of empirical evidence that directly investigates the impact of these platforms on the purchase of

property in DHA. The present study aims to fill this gap and empirically studies the role of social media platforms in the decision making process of house buyers in DHA Bahawalpur.

Objectives

The purposes of the study were to:

- To find the rate and amount of social media consumption among participants.
- To explore how social media platforms are affecting decision making of prospective property buyers in DHA.
- To understand the most popular social media platforms among property buyers of DHA and their influence on buying property.
- Analyze the information and content shared in social media about DHA property. To understand the obstacles and opportunities real estate agents and developers encounter when it comes to social media marketing for DHA properties.
- To evaluate real estate agencies and developers' social media marketing and advertising techniques and strategies for attracting buyers in DHA.

Hypotheses

- H1: Potential property buyers are heavily influenced by social media when making their decision to purchase a DHA property.
- H2: The perceived desirability of the DHA properties is significantly influenced by online recommendations and user generated content in social media.
- H3: DHA's use of social media for marketing and promotional activities is essential for attracting potential buyers.
- H4: Social media sites are highly reach and have high users involvement.
- H5: Social media platforms that enable real-time communication have a positive effect on the speed and efficiency of property transactions in DHA.

2.1 Research Design

This study was conducted by descriptive, quantitative, survey method that is considered appropriate to gather attitudinal and behavioral data in large number of samples within a limited period of time that can maintain confidentiality (Mohajan, 2020; Walter, & Andersen, 2016). The main data collection tool was a structured questionnaire.

2.2 Population and Sample

The population consisted of males and females residents of District Bahawalpur (Fraenkel et al., 2019). Accordingly, 300 participants were randomly selected by using the Kothari's (2004) formula of statistical sample size.

2.3 Research Instrument

After consulting with the research supervisor, a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire was created and was divided in two sections: Section 1 collected the demographic data and Section 2 measured the perception of the effect of social media on property purchase in DHA Bahawalpur.

2.3.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted first to assess the reliability of the questionnaires, 26 questionnaires were distributed in District Bahawalpur, which showed Cronbach's alpha of 0.83.

2.3.2 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was achieved through expert review and feedback was utilized to clarify the language of the instrument and to reorder the questions to ensure their clarity. The internal consistency was established through SPSS 20 analysis, which had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83, which shows that the instrument has acceptable internal consistency (Mugenda, & Mugenda, 2021).

2.4 Data Collection

The researcher used face-to-face survey to gather the data from 12 May 2023 to 15 June 2023 by distributing the questionnaire. A total of 300 questionnaires were sent out and 291 of these were returned giving a 97% retrieval rate.

2.5 Data Analysis

SPSS 25 software was used for data analysis. The respondents were profiled and their responses summarized using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation). An independent-sample t-test was used to test for significant differences between male and female respondents.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was achieved for all the respondents based on the principle that research ethics demands conduct that can be justifiably explained in the political and institutional framework of the research (Oancea, & Pring, 2008). Respondents were asked to complete a voluntary, anonymous, and confidential questionnaire, and were not asked to participate in the study and were not penalized for not participating.

3. Results

3.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 291)

Variable	Category	f (%)
Gender	Male	248 (85.2%)
	Female	43 (14.8%)
Age	18–20 years	11 (3.8%)
	21–30 years	162 (55.7%)
	31–40 years	113 (38.8%)
	41–50 years	5 (1.7%)
	51–60 years	0 (0%)
Residential Area	Rural	48 (16.5%)
	Urban	243 (83.5%)

The sample was predominantly male (85.2%), with the majority of respondents aged 21–30 years (55.7%) and residing in urban areas (83.5%).

3.2 Social Media Usage Patterns

Table 2. Preferred Social Media Platforms

Platform	Frequency	Percent
WhatsApp	125	43.0%
Facebook	113	38.8%
Twitter	25	8.6%
TikTok	13	4.5%
YouTube	5	1.7%
LinkedIn	5	1.7%
Snapchat	3	1.0%
Instagram	2	0.7%
Total	291	100.0%

Among respondents, WhatsApp (43.0%) and Facebook (38.8%) had the highest preference; other platforms like Twitter were far behind with 6.1% and TikTok and LinkedIn were both having uptake of 6.0%. On daily usage, the majority of participants (69.1%) said they spend a lot of their day on social media, 94.2% reported following social-media related real estate or property investment related accounts, and 74.9% reported seeing DHA related property advertisements on social media. Sponsored posts (32.6%), real estate groups or communities (32.3%) and word-of-mouth from friends and family (34.4%) were the top three ways participants initially found property ads, with direct search being the least popular method at 0.7%.

3.3 Key Perceptions: Information, Advertising, Decision-Making, Marketing, and Trust

Table 3. Summary of Composite Study Dimensions (Mean Scores, N = 291)

Dimension	Representative Finding	Mean (approx. range)
Information and Awareness	Social media provides valuable, accurate, and timely information about DHA properties and market trends	3.75 – 4.15
Social Media Advertising	Advertisements are relevant and helpful, though trust in them for purchase decisions is comparatively lower	3.60 – 3.99
Influence on Decision Making	Social media content and interactions moderately shape buyers' confidence and choices	3.46 – 3.87

Marketing Effectiveness	Marketing campaigns, targeted messaging, and multimedia content moderately-to-strongly attract buyer interest	3.52 – 3.88
Trustworthiness and Credibility	Official DHA accounts are considered more trustworthy than individual/user posts	3.51 – 3.67

Respondents concurred that social media has a positive and useful role in their understanding of, and attitudes towards, the properties of DHA, across the five dimensions. The highest level of agreement was for information shared on social media being accurate (84.2% agreement) and assisting buyers in finding new property opportunities (81.5% agreement). The lowest, but still majority level, agreement came with trust in social media platforms as a reliable tool for making decisions to purchase a property (65.2% agreement) and interactions with agents/developers influencing the decision-making process (64.6% agreement).

3.4 Gender-Based Comparison

Table 4. Independent-Samples t-Test: Male vs. Female Respondents

Dimension	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	t	p
Information and Awareness	27.44 (4.87)	27.88 (5.77)	-0.530	0.596
Social Media Advertising	22.54 (4.25)	23.67 (3.86)	-1.637	0.103
Influence on Decision Making	21.57 (4.79)	22.42 (3.53)	-1.107	0.269
Marketing Effectiveness	22.27 (4.83)	22.30 (4.17)	-0.036	0.971
Trustworthiness & Credibility	17.99 (4.03)	18.12 (4.06)	-0.187	0.852

The result indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the males and females for each and every dimension of the study as shown in table 4. This shows that the influence of social media on perceptions of property purchase in DHA Bahawalpur is generally consistent across both genders.

4. Discussion

Overall, the results confirm that social media is a significant factor in real estate marketing results, consistent with previous research which found that 97% of real estate agents use social media to market their homes and communicate with clients (NAR, 2020), and that a great deal of consumers find homes on social media platforms (Adtaxi, 2020). H1: There is a significant influence of social media among potential property buyers in DHA. Findings support H1. The respondents indicated high engagement with real-estate related social media content, and social media platforms, with billions of users worldwide (We Are Social, 2021) offer a wide reach for DHA properties. Survey data shows that social media reviews and recommendations are having a meaningful impact on buyer decisions; with a large proportion of buyers influenced by these reviews and recommendations (PwC, 2020), peer recommendations and experiences play a key role in shaping buyer decisions. Online recommendations and user generated content have a significant impact on desirability. Findings support H2. The strong sentiment towards official DHA accounts and endorsements and previous research that found the majority of consumers

read reviews before shopping (BrightLocal, 2020) and that the majority of consumers trust peer recommendations (Nielsen, 2012) further substantiates the strength of user generated content as social proof influencing consumer perceptions. By using social media marketing and promotion, DHA are attracting potential buyers. Findings support H3. As with national-level findings (Pew Research Center, 2021), a meaningful share of respondents said they were engaged with marketing messages about DHA, suggesting that social media is a valuable marketing platform to get in front of potential consumers with visually appealing marketing messages. H4: Social media users have high engagement. Findings support H4. The high level of platform use and content discovery is consistent with the wide distribution reported in the general literature of which the survey participants were a part, where billions of users are engaged with content every day across platforms. H5: Real-time communication has a positive effect on the speed and efficiency of property transactions. Some evidence of H5. Respondents also appreciated the timeliness of information received on social media, but their trust in social media for making real decisions around transactions was somewhat more moderate, consistent with the findings that consumers want instant response from the business (HubSpot, 2021), that they're more likely to use virtual property tours before taking them in person (NAR, 2020), and that agents widely use social media for communicating with their clients and coworkers (Texas Tech University, 2020).

5. Conclusion

The present study finds that social media has a significant impact on the decision-making process of prospective buyers in DHA Bahawalpur when they are purchasing a property. Most respondents are actively utilizing social media, getting accurate and timely property information from it, and that it has a positive impact on their perception regarding DHA properties. Advertising, marketing campaigns and the use of multimedia were widely effective in stimulating buyer interest, but trust in social media as a certain cause for buying is still relatively reserved, especially when it comes to user-generated content by individuals as opposed to official channels of the DHA. There were no statistically significant differences between men and women in any of the measured dimensions; thus, the effects are seen throughout the study population among male and female buyers.

6. Recommendations

DHA Bahawalpur should make sure that they have official accounts on the key platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn) and they are up to date with their listings, project updates and virtual tours. Partner with local real estate influencers and lifestyle bloggers to create genuine and trustworthy content. Invest in social media advertising that is targeted on the platform using demographics and interests. Create and oversee online communities/groups of current residents and potential buyers to encourage trust and peer discussion. Use the virtual tours and 360-degree property previews with VR/AR to improve buyer experience. Keep an eye on and react to online reviews, comments and feedback in a timely and professional manner. Track engagement, click-through and conversion rates to optimize strategy over time using social media analytics.

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